

Viladat Day The 123rd Birthday of our Master

Sunday 12th July 2015

How can we be best attuned to our Master? is a question often asked.

There is of course the way of the heart, but for the heart to resound inwardly, it is helpful to first refer to history, which describes events in visualized pictures, re-creating thereby in ones heart, the atmosphere originally experienced.

When focusing far back in our Master's most unusual biography, one discovers numerous traces of royal status, besides spiritual attunement, as well as special musical gifts in the lives of the historical ancestors in India. Maulabakhsh, the grandfather of our Master as a great spiritual patriarch and a most famous palace musician was Hindu by birth, but he adopted Sufism at a later date.

Maulabakhsh married Khatidja Bibi, a far distant ancestor of Tipu Sultan, the great King of Mysore, allied to Napoleon, who was known to have encouraged the religious activity of all faiths, besides cultural, industrial and commercial enterprises.

Khatidja Bibi, the mother of our Master, had been given in marriage to the famous Indian musician, called Rahmat Khan, a descendant of a great mystic called Jumma Sha, as well as several historical musicians and mystics from family to family.

When referring to our Master's History, it is understandable that events evolved in ways that corresponded to the situation in the last century, yet one of the most astonishing thing was that our Master was more modern in many ways than expected in his time.

He made it successfully with a driving license in Paris, and drove one of the old Ford cars, which was offered by Henry Ford, following a precious advice given by our Master to Henry Ford, in connection with factory working procedures, besides advising Henry Ford to create educational and cultural schoolings offered to the workers of the factories in Detroit, and which suddenly experienced tremendous production growth from success to success.

Our Master was also among the first tourists in the USA to experience a tour in one of the first small touring airplanes. There is a picture of this historical event.

These are just a few stories among numerous unusual ones, and again, one more story offers such a precious example of modesty and democracy of the feeling heart.

One day, as a boy of 6, on hearing that my father was going to Paris, I begged my father to take me with him, saying that I would be able to help him to find the way because he could not speak French, whereas I could. After much pleading, my Father agreed, and as we went out the garden gate of Fazal Manzil, we had to step carefully because there was a man digging in the street just in front of the garden gate. When seeing him, my father took off his Persian hat, and offered a welcome hand - shake to the workman who was absolutely overwhelmed by such a deeply moving experience.

Many years later, when walking up the same street, an old man came to me and asked where was the king who lived in that house, indicating the gate of Fazal Manzil. I replied that the king who greeted him so many years ago was not a palace king; he was the king of the hearts of hundreds of followers. The old man then confessed that he could not read or write and did not believe in God and never went to church, but the brilliant light which he saw in the eyes of that king was constantly with him, and had guided him during his whole life. When recalling together the event that took place so many years ago, when I was a child of 6, and when the old man was digging that day in front of the gate, and my father kindly greeted him, the old man then burst into tears, while we both hugged each other in thought of that king. We kept contact till the war broke out. That event has always been a precious lesson and a reminder of the words of our Master who said:

"How can we know who is spiritual, and who is not".

Perhaps the most humble among us all in this hall is the most spiritual.

Today we are celebrating the birthday of our Master.

It is a happy day.

In the early days, it was celebrated in Suresnes with great joy during the Summer School.

The Sufi Hall was covered with flowers, especially yellow roses, offered by each among the hundred Sufis who came from so many distant countries for that yearly event, although in those days there were no planes, and the train took 14 hours from Amsterdam to Paris. One had to have a Belgian visa and a French one for border crossing, and on arrival one was covered with dust from the smoke of the train engine. The Americans travelled by ship which took days from New York to the port in Calais, and then again a train and old trams from Paris to Suresnes. But the discomfort of the journey was no sacrifice for them. On that special day, the Mureeds felt so strongly the spiritual radiance of the Master, and they deeply appreciated a fatherly attention offered, besides encouragement for the work in spreading the Message in their various countries. The national representatives had the privilege of coming up on the stage and reading their yearly reports concerning the Sufi activities in their countries. In return, the Master offered gratitude and blessings, which touched their hearts deeply.

Near to one hundred years have passed, but the energy of those happy days goes on radiating, overwhelming us all on this Viladat Day, when opening our hearts to our Master's call.