

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of red floral and vine motifs on a cream-colored background. The pattern consists of delicate, winding lines forming leaves and small, five-petaled flowers. The text is centered over this pattern.

LET'S FACE IT

by

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Foreword

We sat basking in the light of the beautiful Sufi temple awaiting Swamiji's arrival to talk on 'Unity and Diversity'. In that peaceful atmosphere it was so easy to imagine that, despite the different backgrounds of all those present, we were all the same.

But as usual Swamiji took us by surprise. He suggested that we stop interfering with the world and leave it as it is, seeing diversity as diversity, without superimposing our own ideas upon it and thus distorting it.

To look, to see without judging, condemning, or even overrating, apparently demands one's whole-hearted, total attention and an uncluttered, crystal clear mind. Only such a mind is capable of love. Seeing with such a mind is to recognise the unity underlying all Swamiji's words had power and clarity because they revealed the Truth.

In the same way may, we all see life simply and clearly this coming year, and may we have the courage to act upon it. Let's face it!

Yogeshwari.

The best forewords are 'Serve, love, meditate, realise.'

Let's Face It

A thought that this time we should contemplate one of the fundamental teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Not so much a teaching, as a fundamental view of Hazrat Inayat Khan.

It has been the vision of many of the supreme masters who have directly perceived the truth or reality, that they did not function on the basis of either-or. None of these great masters have really striven to convert anyone from one faith or one belief to another. Jesus said this very beautifully, 'I have not come to destroy.' Krishna pointed to the same beautiful truth when in the Bhagavad Gita he insists 'na buddibhedam janayed'. Never disturb anyone's belief. They did not work on the principle that it is either-or, that either you are right or I am right - and of course I am right, and that means that you are not right.

In the same manner these great masters did not think in terms of either unity or diversity. Most of them did not even try to bring about what we consider a reconciliation between these two. Is it even necessary for us, if we do not want to choose between these two, to struggle to reconcile unity and diversity? When do we want to bring about a reconciliation? When we find there is a conflict. Is there a conflict between unity and diversity? Where there is no conflict, there is no need for a reconciliation, but there may be need for choosing one or the other. Now we are also going to look into that factor - is it necessary to choose between unity and diversity? When you make a choice, you imply thereby that one is superior to the other. As a matter of fact, the great masters have never indulged in this contest - what is superior and what is inferior. That is the sign of a master. He leaves things as they are, and reveals the spirit in all of them. This is not really unity in diversity. These are there, but there is a unity of spirit underlying all this diversity.

There is a bit of a snag here - that while seeming to accept all, you accept none, and you are creating something new. This has unfortunately been the passion of those who profess to follow the great masters. One of the other great masters of India, called Shuddhananda Bharati, says they are not followers, they are swallows. There are no followers, but they who come after the great masters are swallows. I look at this word, I listen to it, and I see that if you follow somebody you 'fall low'. Why do you want to fall low, why do you not become the master himself? A good friend of mine, a buddhist monk who lives in Singapore, said once when introduced as a 'buddhist', that he was not a buddhist but wanted to become a Buddha. That is beautiful. 'I am not a buddhist, I want to become a Buddha.' 'I am not a christian, I am an aspiring Christ.' Then you do not fall low, you imbibe the spirit of the master and while doing so, you discover that to the master there was no difficulty in seeing diversity as diversity and unity as unity. He saw no conflict between them to reconcile, and he saw no superiority or

inferiority between them to force him to choose one and reject the other.

The truth is so simple and in truth there is no conflict or problem. Truth does not create a problem. Conversely, only that which does not create a problem or a conflict within you is true. If it creates a conflict within you, then naturally such a conflict extends from you to others, placing you in a situation of conflict all your lifetime, that is not true whatever it be. That alone is true which does not create a conflict within yourself or between you and others. There is absolutely no problem in truth - truth is. And yet we have made diversity a problem, we have made even unity a problem, because we think unity can arise only when all this diversity has been abolished or somehow reconciled.

If we transplant ourselves in spirit to the battlefield and listen to Krishna, in his message there is absolutely no problem. It is crystal clear. He does not say that this teaching is superior to the teachings of Christ or Buddha. Listen very carefully here, he does not even say that this is the same as the teachings of Christ or Buddha. This is the teaching. This is the truth. Then we transplant ourselves in spirit to a remote corner of India where Buddha addressed the assembled monks. There again the same truth emerges - but not the same. It is Buddha's message. Then we transplant ourselves to Galilee and listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ. There again the truth is revealed. Between one and the other there is no conflict, and there is no anxiety to reconcile one with the other. Truth can shine as the sun shines, without entering into conflict, without needing reconciliation and without proclaiming superiority or inferiority.

But in our case diversity is a problem because we are unable to see diversity without somehow judging. That is the problem and that is why Jesus Christ said, 'Judge not.' But we are fond of judging. I look at two bodies, naturally these bodies are different, but having seen that, I cannot stop there - I have to say he looks healthier, wiser, cleverer than the other; it is always comparing, always judging, always distorting. Can I not see these two men just exactly as they are? Why not? That is our problem. If we can avoid this judgment and merely become aware of diversity, it is possible that we shall really and truly believe or enter into the spirit of creation and see that this is the most beautiful bouquet that God's own energy, shakti, offers to Him in adoration. There is absolutely no conflict, or problem in this.

Is it possible to abolish this diversity? No, absurd. People have tried this from time immemorial. The followers have always tried this joke. When a teaching appeals to someone, it is not always the spirit of the teaching that appeals to him. That someone has his own axe to grind and so on. If somebody's teaching appeals to you, go ahead, saturate yourself in that teaching. It is not even necessary for you to understand and appreciate someone else's teaching. It is quite possible that if you, in your own heart, in your own soul, embody that teaching, you will find your reflection in all. It is possible that if you are a true christian you might find that your friend who is a total buddhist is your own reflection, except that he does not seem to pronounce 'Christ' very well, he calls it 'Buddha'. And therefore

you do not want to convert anyone, you do not want to transform, reform, lead, mislead. All these things do not arise at all because you already see in the other person a perfect reflection of yourself. In exactly the same way, as you have two eyes, two ears, one mouth, one nose, you look at the other person and find the same thing. You are not interested in changing all that. You recognise him as a human being - as you are. If you are a human being.

It is something else that seems to disturb, that wants to bring about a unity in this diversity, so that the other person may follow me, not so much the master. If you follow my master, you are my brother, but I want somehow to make you conform to a system of which I am the head. This is where all our systems go wrong. There is nothing wrong with systems either. As long as life continues to operate on this earth, there will be systems - just as there will be diversity. That is how the universe has been created and nobody is going to change it. As long as the human being is able to think, that thought will create systems. This also cannot be avoided. Isms, cults and sections will continue to proliferate. No one has been able to find a remedy for this diversity because this diversity does not need a remedy and therefore it resists all remedies.

Everyone who has tried to abolish this diversity has added one more to it. If you look around at the present-day religious scene, you will see this very clearly. There are at least five or six universal religious movements. I am not criticising any movement or anything - as I say, these are inevitable. You can see this for instance in the Indian movements. Buddha's teaching was very simple, very clear, but then the followers started applying Buddha's teachings to the conditions prevailing in India at that time, saying that you should not do that, you should not belong to this school of philosophy, you must belong to Buddha's school. Buddha himself is no more and so you must follow me and then we will abolish all the caste systems, we will abolish all these pernicious elements that prevail in the Hindu system and there will be one Sankhara. Marvellous. And so what happens? Within minutes we hold a council. You do not agree with what I say, she has some other view - three systems come out. We are all very powerful, highly intellectual people, logicians, charismatic, and so each one gathers his or her own crowd and different schools are created. So that today there are as many conflicting and warring sects amongst these major religious groups as there were before they were ever founded.

Can we go to the root of this problem and not merely try to cosmetically treat it? Is it possible for us to look round with both our eyes open, but without accepting or rejecting, without judging one to be right and therefore the other to be wrong? Is it possible for us to observe and to see that what is called diversity and what is called unity are two sides of the same coin? As long as the coin lasts, the two sides are inevitable. You may be able to split a piece of cardboard into several pieces, and it is possible that you can keep on splitting it into finer and finer paper, but you will never be able to make the paper have only one side, it will always have two sides. These two sides are unity and diversity. The world has been created on the principle of diversity, and there is absolutely nothing the matter with this

diversity - it is as it is.

A few days ago we were walking along the seashore, and I was observing the wild flowers and plants; they were most gorgeous and beautiful. There you see diversity, but one does not try to suppress the other. Diversity is nature, nature is diversity. But not quite. The other side of this coin is unity. What is this unity? We observe diversity. This is a girl and that is a boy, this is obvious. It is from this obvious truth that we begin our enquiry into this mystery of unity and diversity. This is a girl and that is a boy, or this is a carpet and these are bricks. Now we begin to enquire into the nature of this diversity. Who created this diversity, and when does this diversity become a problem for us to have to deal with? Why do we have to deal with this diversity? Why are we here discussing this problem at all? If it is not a problem, we would not be here discussing it.

Does diversity itself create a problem? Then the enquiry flows in a different direction, takes on a very different quality. While you are aware of diversity, your awareness flows towards those objects and recognises them as a carpet, bricks, shoes, men, and women, chairs, and becomes aware of diversity. There is the ever-present danger in that awareness of judgment, appreciation, criticism, conflict and all the rest of it also arising. One recognises that. Is it inevitable? This is a carpet, these are bricks, shoes, human beings, chairs. Suddenly a question arises, a quest arises. The carpet did not tell me, 'I am a carpet.' I called it a carpet, I called these bricks, I called this a building. What is this phenomenon that thus christens all these objects and calls them by various names? What is it in me that calls these objects by various names and then creates a diversity of a different sort? The first form of diversity has been created by God, and in that there is no problem. Now we are enquiring into the second phase - you can spell it p-h-a-s-e or f-a-c-e of diversity which seems problematic, which is the creator of all problems. That is, it is a sort of diversity that I have created. I call this a carpet or those bricks and then somewhere within me there is a computer which works out the comparative values and determines that this is more important than that, that is more valuable than this, etc. etc. That is the diversity that is dangerous. A danger to harmony and the source of all conflict, and therefore problems. Who creates them and what are these diversities?

The external diversity is there, but there is a conceptual diversity, a subjective diversity, and this subjective diversity is always in terms of right and wrong, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, superior and inferior, and all the rest of it. Who is the creator of that diversity? As you go deeper and deeper into this question, you inevitably arrive at an extremely simple answer, that, 'I have never bothered to understand what exists, even including this diversity in nature. I have never tried to understand, to look for what it is. I have completely ignored it and I have created my own world'. Out of ignorance comes this thing called 'my own world'. Remember that. Whether it is willful ignorance or careless ignorance, this 'my own world' of diversity is born of a complete and total ignorance of the factual diversity that exists in this world. This 'my own world' of diversity is fictitious. One simple factor can be suggested to you immediately - the notorious beauty

competition. Fashions keep changing every two or three years, and side by side with fashion the vital statistical descriptions of beauty queens also keep changing, and that is the idea of beauty for the time being. And if you go to Central Africa, they would probably laugh at most of these beautiful people here. What about the back hump where you carry your babies, that must be beautiful So, where does that beauty arise? It is a concept within you.

There is beauty in nature, there are some things which are universally beautiful - a brilliant sunrise for instance. That thing has been created by God, the other thing is self created. When you ignore that beauty, the diversity that is, God's creation, then you create an internal diversity which is the source of all problems. This is beauty and you run after it, that is ugly and you reject it. You consider this good and seek it, you consider that evil and run away from it. And there you are torn into a thousand pieces.

Is it possible, as you investigate this phenomenon of diversity, to appreciate that all these are conceptual, unreal? Thereby arises a tremendous revelation - truth does not cause a conflict or become a problem. The factual diversity in nature is no problem at all, but this inner diversity that I have created is a problem. It is born of ignorance of the truth concerning diversity in nature or natural diversity. This diversity, with all its judgmental factors, evaluating factors and so on, is born of that ignorance, is 'my own world' - that the is source of all my unhappiness, sorrow and conflict.

Thank God that this inner world is not real. It is a problem because it is born of something that is not real; and when this is seen directly, that very moment it disappears. It is a problem because it is based on unreality, the unreal does not exist and therefore it ceases to be a problem. Do you see this? One step further and you realise that this awareness which became aware of the diversity in nature, and which then became aware of the problems that 'my own world' created and thus dispelled them, this awareness 'is' - and this awareness knits together all these diverse phenomena in the whole universe. It enters into them and those phenomena are reflected in it. That is unity. There is a unity, there is this oneness of awareness in which the entire diversity is reflected. That is one and that alone is one. That consciousness or awareness is indivisible. In this indivisible consciousness, everything is reflected. That diversity is reflected in this consciousness. Consciousness exists but not independent of this diversity. Diversity exists but not independent of this consciousness. The two are two sides of the same coin, one complementary to the other and therefore without any conflict whatsoever.

Then we learn how to live in love. Life has to go on with its diverse functions. You and I have to do all sorts of things from morning till night, but that life of diverse activity is also flavoured by love which seems to link all these diverse activities in life. Once again we discover that there is diversity and unity. You know, even in relationships, especially domestic relationships, we have all sorts of crazy ideas - that if I love you I should not spank you. Why not? What is wrong with that? You

can return the compliment with great joy. Or that we should never quarrel with each other, never have hot words. Never is never right, always is always wrong! Why should we not, with the greatest joy and affection, tease each other, even disagree with each other. Must we always agree with each other because we love each other?

Is it possible for the thread of love to bring together all these various beings, different colours, different textures? One does not even feel the need for the abolition of diversity or the forgetting of the unity. Unity cannot be forgotten. If unity is forgotten and you get lost in this diversity, then you create problems out of that diversity. If the diversity itself becomes absolute, it causes a headache, because the next moment you have to say that one is superior to the other, one is different from the other. So, this diversity has to be seen, observed, realised, simultaneously with the other side of the coin which is the unity of consciousness, intelligence, cosmic being. When the two are seen together, it is then that true love arises which is capable of loving in all circumstances. The circumstances and appearances will be diverse and yet this thread of love can be unbroken. That, I feel, is the essential quest of all truly religious people in this world.