

Spiritual Attitude and Class War

by

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Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

Githeka Series II

The Spiritual Attitude and Class War

At the present time we have just experienced a very important event in the economic and social crisis which may be extending itself before long. No doubt there are very many causes for controversy and the first question that is apt to arise is, that class war being a form of war, and the mystic being against all forms of war, he should labor for peace. There is no doubt that he should labor for peace, but it can be questioned whether peace without righteousness is peace, whether peace without justice is peace.

We have seen that after the Great War the nations of the world came together and instead of working for peace, each worked for its own satisfaction. As a result, although some countries obtained what they thought they wanted, many countries felt that the treatment they received was unfair and unjustified, and they claim today—and there is some basis for the claim—that the evil peace following the war has helped to cause all the trouble that is going on today, so that instead of advancing toward peace, not only nations remain at enmity with one another, but within many countries there is a division of classes.

Therefore in looking at the subject, in striving for peace, one cannot come to any rapid conclusion. Besides, the Healing Service has its prayer and its concentration for peace which are very helpful. But outside of that, there are at least five points of view which the advanced soul may have and you cannot limit the adept to any of these, for he may belong in one group or in two or in several or in none or he may hold another attitude which cannot always be explained. However, mostly the spiritual devotees can be distinguished in five groups.

The first is that of the prophet and in some ways it is the most important, yet at first glance this view may not seem wholly spiritual for the prophet is apt to be very much on one side. You can examine all the books of the prophets from Moses to Jesus and Mohammed and when it is a question of human rights against property rights, their stand is definite, firm and strong, for they see no property rights. This does not mean that they favor a certain social and political order—they see no property rights when the same are in conflict with human rights and this holds equally true of a conflict between humanity and private property as between humanity and socially owned or communal property. All property to them, regardless of the type of ownership is the work of man, while man himself is the work God.

It is true that God did make man “out of the earth”—that is, from prakriti, and breathed into him the breath of life—that is, purusha, but the human personality is purusha and Saum teaches, “Raise us from the denseness of the earth.” If the workers and employers are concerned with the denseness

of the earth they are both wrong, for “the earth is the Lord’s and its fullness thereof.” But the employers are worse than the men from the prophetic point of view, for they claim to own everything and another group should not own.

No doubt there is a vast abyss between the popular Christian point of view and that of Jesus, and an enormous difference between the popular Jewish point of view and that of Moses, and some difference between the popular Islamic point of view and that of the Prophet. But there is not much difference spiritually and metaphysically between the various great prophets who realized their oneness with God.

And what is their thought? They are not concerned with human institutions, with constitutions written or traditional, with codes of laws, with so-called rights, with habits, with customs—these are of human making and they have little to do with God. There is little gained by mere talk about spiritual principles—read Moses, Micah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Qur’an, and you will always find the cry of humanity and for humanity. For the Nabi there is no compromise concerning human exploitation and the miseries caused the poor by the rich. The prophets never have been neutral, they have sounded each their warning cry.

With all the talk of justice and mercy, of divine justice and divine mercy, few pay close heed to the words of the holy ones. If you want to follow the Bible, the sacred books of the Jews and Christians, if you love Qur’an, then from the prophetic point of view it must be said that not only are the workingmen justified, but they are entitled to more than they have demanded. They might even be congratulated upon their forbearance.

According to the laws of Moses it is doubtful whether the modern corporation could find any justification. Moses was interested in the welfare of people, not in the special form of their institutions. He probably would not care much about machinery, or whether business was conducted on a large scale or on a small scale, being indifferent in this regard. His attitude would be determined by whether poverty was increased or decreased, and he would favor any change that would lessen human misery and oppose any change that would increase it in the long run. And the attitude of the other prophets is very similar to that of Moses.

Coming to the consideration of the public. From the monistic standpoint there is no public. If you consider yourself as separate from the workingmen and as different from the employer, you are setting yourself apart from the humanity and are not much better than the animals. When one says, you are different and I am different, he is taking a division; so from the prophetic point of view there is no public, there are no neutrals, all are concerned whether they realize it or not.

So to sum up this point of view, it can be said that it appears to be very radical and it is very radical in that the prophet always views the roots of things, examines their causes. It looks socialistic but is not necessarily so as the prophets were not opposed to private property. That they opposed was the **voluntary enforcement of poverty upon a mass of people**. There is no need of that today and therefore if one were to speak from this point of view, it would be to urge stringent regulations

upon the great owners of property who have collected so much wealth amid starvation. The prophet sees the humanity of the multitude, and repeats in thought the words of Christ, "Let him who would be greatest among you be your servant."

There is also another consideration which the prophets have and that comes from the principle expression in Saum; "Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls." There can be no compromise about it. You cannot be neutral or compromise when a robber is arrested and tried. No doubt the robber would be willing to compromise and divide his theft and you would regard that as unjust. But from the spiritual point of view as interpreted by the prophet, there is neither any compromise when bodies, hearts and souls are deprived of sustenance, of maintenance, of full opportunity for living. Such matters the prophet would no more compromise than would the average person compromise a criminal law suit.

Now the point of view of the saint is very different from that of the prophet even with the same realization. For he is not interested in issues at all, as issues divide men; he is interested in humanity, especially in the human hearts and he acts almost as if there was no property. He is not a socialist, or an individualist or an anarchist; all that concerns him is the humanity itself. He does not belong to any sphere which contains right and wrong for he reflects the angelic sphere where there is no property as we understand it, and no good and no evil as we conceive them. In Djabrut there are only hearts and the saint is interested in human hearts; he is moved to sympathy by all human suffering, no matter whence the cause.

From his point of view all suffering is wrong and to cause suffering is wrong. But he recognizes the inevitability of human suffering in Samsara and consequently he extends his good will. He does not necessarily want to compromise although he might see the expediency of it. His wisdom is, therefore, of a different order than that of the prophet. The prophet will see things from the standpoint of eternity, while the saint is in a certain sense more practical and wishing to bring peace he will strive in a practical way although it is always possible that his suggestions are not able to root out the evil, that is, to uproot the basic cause of evil, nufs.

He recognizes nufs in strife, the strife proving it to be in all parties, but his attitude is not neutrality so much as spiritual indifference. What is meant by spiritual indifference? It does not mean being indifferent with the idea that one or both parties are wrong, or even that they are right; it does not mean having no interest and it does not mean having interest. The saint is not interested in turmoil and yet he is interested in humanity and like the Mother of that World, he feels the human suffering and must do all he can to allay it. Therefore it is with this in mind that he acts and you cannot explain it by reason, although on the surface his attitude appears much more reasonable than that of the prophet.

The point of view of the master is different from that of the saint or the prophet. He also sees the nufs but he seeks moral reform and he dislikes the attacks of groups upon each other which are based in part upon hiding their own faults, seeing only the evil in others. He is more analytical and he despises unclean hearts, but only in the sense that he sees the futility of doing anything until

this problem is faced. Therefore he arrives for this end, but he does not come out openly and attack anybody, for that would not help. This is the difference between the spiritual and the lay reformer and moralist.

What, then, is the attitude of the master? It may be that he will ignore the situation altogether, put no thought upon it. Yet this is not indifference. It is based upon the metaphysical principle that if you give no thought to a difficulty, if turmoil is not supported by thought, the turmoil will pass away, and the difficulty will go. According to this view every problem is fed by the thought put upon it, the same being its mental supports. Therefore the master may not think on the subject, and often being of the class called **rind** he does his work without confiding in anybody.

There is another spiritual point of view and that is expressed by the sage and he is not always a master or saint or prophet. He is more likely to be in the world and even directly involved in the trouble. He may be a most practical man and yet be of the spiritual brotherhood. Therefore he does not strive like the master to keep his thought entirely free, for he must be a seer, which means, he has to face the situation and he cannot abolish it by refusing to think about it; his own ego is involved in it.

But he has his course of right action and that is, he concentrates upon peace or righteousness or God, or upon some divine attribute and by his steadfastness in that direction he helps to bring about some adjustment, first in the unseen and then in the seen world. He is not necessarily neutral or indifferent, he may take sides because of necessity, yet he keeps the peace in his heart, feeling that will lead toward a better solution, which may or may not be satisfactory as the average man views it. Yet wherever there is a sage, there will be some settlement and the Sufi who is directly involved often turns out to be the best peace-maker.

From all this it will be observed that there is no one spiritual right way or wrong way. And if one asks if it is possible to combine any of these views, it may be answered that there is still another possibility and that is the attitude of the mystic who combined more or less all of these attitudes within his own personality and at the same time his view may be very different from them all. For instead of observing the suffering as outward phenomena, he may be experiencing it within and he will be able to do nothing except to try to clear up his own condition.

The mystic may have a disturbance or pain and he may appear to be rather selfish trying to settle his own affairs. Yet there are no affairs which are necessarily his own, for he feels within himself all the cosmic conditions, his world within is not separate from his world without and in his consciousness he touches the hearts of many people. In bringing peace to his heart within, he brings peace and justice to the world. For that reason that is a prayer for Murshid in the Healing Service, the idea being that by his peace, the world has peace, by his disturbance the world is in disturbance, as he himself taught.

All these matters merit considerable thought and meditation. They show how difficult it is to indicate one "right way." Five different spiritual paths have been pointed out here and whichever one the

holy person takes, those who favor the other methods may criticize him, so he cannot escape the condemnation of the generality. But all five ways are the ways of God and His paths ultimately lead to peace.