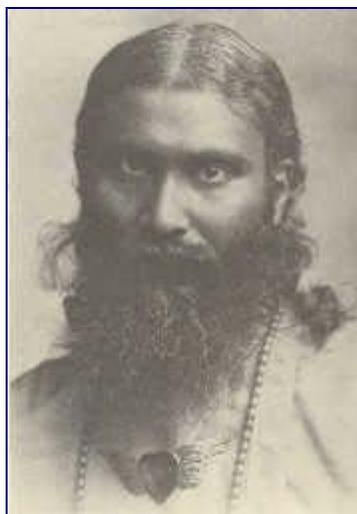


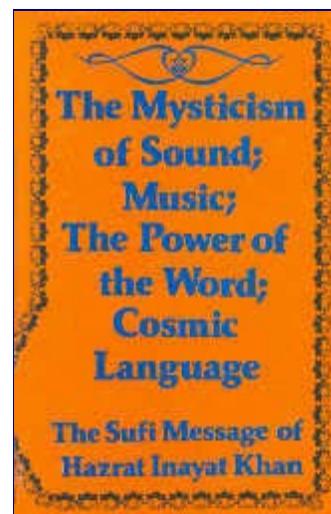
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A READER'S JOURNAL:

**The Power of the Word and Cosmic
Language
From Volume II of The Sufi Message
of
Hazrat Inayat Khan**

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With our senses of sight and touch

we only experience the surface of things, but with hearing we can experience the inside of things. Who can deny that the sound emitted by a drum, by a trumpet, or by a human voice reveals to us the center of what is sounding forth? Thus it is that sound reveals to us the center of things. When we speak we reveal what is in our soul to others. If we lie, we reveal that aspect of ourselves as well. The words we speak through our mouths are like a carrier wave of the feelings in our soul which are there independent of the meanings of the words we express. This is why we cannot lie — because the very sound of our voice carries the meaning of our soul. If we would dissimulate, we must mask our soul feeling and that masking itself reveals the presence of an untruth.

What Hazrat Inayat Khan reveals in Chapter IV of "The Power of the Word" is that the words we speak also have an effect upon ourselves, our body, mind, and spirit. Words can help us or hurt us, especially the ones we say with our own mouths.

[page 172] One might ask what it is in a word that helps, and why it helps. In answer to this I would say that there is no expression of life more vital than words; because the voice is an expressive manifestation of breath, and breath is life itself. Therefore the spoken word not only makes an

effect upon another person but also upon oneself; and every word one says has its effect not only upon one's body but also upon one's mind and spirit. If one utters a tactless or foolish word it not only offends another, but can prove to be of great disadvantage to oneself.

After Hurricane Katrina, many people were in a pessimistic mood about the prospects for New Orleans. Some moved to other areas, saying they couldn't go through this again. Others, like myself, had been through Hurricane Betsy forty years earlier, and knew that such terrible storms are unlikely to return to the same area within forty years. Before Betsy, I believe there was a big storm some forty years earlier as well. Those who express pessimistic wishes about big storms coming back indicate to everyone that their lives are still so stifled that only a big storm could shake them out of their own torpor and bring some relief. And by expressing that wish, they increase the probability of a big storm visiting them. What they dread, they attract to themselves.

[page 173] Often a person in a pessimistic mood or in a disturbed condition may express the wish for death or failure or wish for anything to happen. If he only knew what effects such wishes have he would be frightened. Even in pain, if a person could only refrain from saying, 'I am in pain', he would do a great deal of good to himself. If a person who has met with misfortune would avoid saying, 'I am experiencing a misfortune', it would be a great thing. For when a person acknowledges the existence of something he does not want, he only gives it a greater life. And when a person says, 'Oh, I have waited and waited and waited, but my ship never comes', he is keeping his ship back; his ship will never arrive in port. But the one who does not even see the ship but says, 'It is coming, it is coming', is calling it and it will come.

I recall a therapist from the 1980s who recommended that a person never make a thing out of a behavior because the very reification of a process embeds it stronger and stronger into the body. Thus, one is much better off saying, instead of, "I have acne," the following: "I am acne-ing." One is going through a temporary condition which is visible upon one's face which likely disappear quickly, the quicker the more one does not name it as a permanent condition and instead one merely describes a currently occurring process in one's body. I recognize a similar wisdom in Khan's advice above, but he goes even further; he recommends not even mentioning the acne-ing (the "misfortune") at all.

The Newman Club has a motto that I recall from my college years, "Heart Speaks To Heart", and I daresay I didn't understand what it meant, except in the most general of terms back then. Now I understand it to mean this: when we speak from the deepest center of our soul, what we refer to as the *heart*, our voice reaches the deepest center of the other person, their *heart*. When we do that, we are truly speaking heart to heart.

[page 175] This world is to a mystic like a dome; a dome that re-echoes all that is spoken beneath it. What is spoken from the lips reaches only as far as the ears, but what is spoken from the heart reaches the heart. The word reaches as far as it can, and that depends from what source it has come and from what depth it has risen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson knew of the power of the word. "Every word was once a poem," he wrote. He also knew that the word sounding out from a human being speaks volumes, independent of the words being spoken. It is Emerson who first spoke the saying that Khan quotes in this next passage.

[page 176] But what is a word? Is the word just what we

speak? Is that the word? No, that is only the surface of the word. Our thought is a word, our feeling is a word, our voice, our atmosphere is a word. There is a saying, 'What you are speaks louder than what you say.' This shows that even when man does not speak, his soul speaks.

Khan asks us to imagine an exhibition room through which we walk and the only illumination comes from a flashlight in our own hand. What is revealed to us of the contents of the room through our own action of searching can rightly be called revelation.

[page 194] There is another form of [artistic inspiration] which is attained by a greater enlightenment, by a greater awakening of the soul; and this form can be pictured as a person going through a large room where there are all kinds of things exhibited, and yet there is no light except a searchlight in his own hand. If he throws its light on music, on notes and rhythm, the music becomes clear to him; if he throws his light on words, the words becomes clear to him; if he throws his light on color, all colors become distinct; if he throws his light on line all lines in the most harmonious and beautiful form become clearly visible to him.

This passage inspired me on October 25, 1986 to write the following lines:

**Paint a song of sculpture
Sketch an azure sound
Listen to the velvet moor —
Those tinkling apples all around.**

**Fly on wings of reason
Inside a mason jar,
Buzz your yellow season
Pollinating yonder Star.**

We pollinate our own yonder star as we walk through the world shining our flashlight of reason, perception, and imagination upon what we find around us. We are born into this world as a baby crying. We are lost in an empty world until we turn on our flashlight and begin to make sense of the mason jar world into which we are born.

[page 194, 195] It is this form of experience, this way of knowing, which may be called revelation. Through it one accomplishes the purpose of life, or as the mystics have said, the word that was lost is found. Every child is born crying; his crying conveys that he has lost something. What has he lost? He has lost the word. This means that all he sees conveys nothing to him, he knows not what it is. He seems to be lost in a new country where he has been sent; but as he begins to recognize either his mother or those around him, the colors and the lines and all the things of this world begin to communicate with him. He begins to know things with the hands, ears, nose and mouth; and in this way he begins to know the word which is within.

It is this communication which is the sustenance of life. It is not food or drink which keeps man alive; it is this communication through the different senses, to the extent he understands what they have to say, that makes a man live.

Rudolf Steiner writes about [elementals](#) which are created by us in the process of thinking. Jane Houston said that, "We have leaky margins." I think she recognized that nothing that we think in the privacy of our minds stays there. "What happens in the brain does *not* stay in the brain!" is my paraphrase of a popular expression. Instead — what we think about literally takes on a life of its own and flows around us and other people of the world. Khan explains further:

[page 221, 222] ". . . thought [is] an entity; it lives as an

entity. It is these entities that are called in the Sufi terms *Muwakkals*, which means elementals. They live; they have a certain purpose to accomplish. They are given birth by man; and behind them there is a purpose to direct their life. Imagine how terrible it is if in a moment's absorption a person expresses his wrath, his passion, his hatred; for a word expressed at such a moment must live and carry out its purpose.

Thoughts, such as those that we have when we consider how an event might play itself out, create elementals who work to achieve that very result. Note that this applies to negative results equally as it does to positive thoughts. One could easily write a companion volume to Norman Vincent Peale's "The Power of Positive Thinking" called "The Power of Negative Thinking." This process of thinking happens even in such gentle thoughts as "supposing" and led me to pen an acronym, [EAT-O-TWIST](#), to remember the process. The acronym stands for Everything-Always-Turns-Out-The-Way-It's-Supposed-To. Good or bad, your supposing will help to create either kind of outcome. "The thing I have greatly feared has come upon me." Ever hear that saying? It illustrates how EAT-O-TWIST! works. If you must fear something, fear the impending approach of joy!

We live in an area which gets an occasional hurricane. They are simply heavy thunderstorms, many of them, with none of the devastating effects of tornadoes which beset much of the interior of our country. But, being near the Gulf of Mexico, the New Orleans area gets a tropical storm every year or so, and only about every 40 years gets a big storm like Betsy in 1968 and Katrina in 2005. Yet, every year the weather stations and reporters in all media bombard us with such tidbits as, "Hurricanes will be bigger and badder this year!" These reports help to create the very thing feared because of the actions of all those elementals released from the thoughts of those who pay attention

to such sensationalist reports. Best thing to do is wait for a hurricane to approach before taking action and let your action be to imagine it caroming to some area other than the one you live in. Be prepared, but not fearful is the best approach if you wish to be free of the hassle of hurricanes, or any other natural phenomena. Fear hurricanes and you will be beset by your self-created specters of them (elementals) every year, however, pray for rain and blessings will fall upon you and wash your drought away. Khan says something similar in this next passage(1).

[page 222] Elementals are created by man. When the winds blow, and the storms rage and create all destruction, one looks at it as a mechanical action of nature. But it is not only mechanical action, it is directed by man's feelings, by the intense feelings of human beings. These feelings turn into huge beings, the beings that direct. They push as a battery behind winds and storms and floods and volcanoes. And so it is that those thoughts which call for blessing, such as rainfall, must bring the mercy of God on others. . . . This show to us that it is not only a mechanical work of nature, but human intelligence mechanically working, directing the whole working of nature.

The idea that human thoughts and feelings provided the steering currents of hurricanes and other storms was also described by Jane Roberts in her book, [The Individual and the Nature of Mass Events](#). She described how certain areas along the coastline will reach a stagnant time in their development and how feelings that arise, out of the coastal residents' awareness, will steer a hurricane towards them. As Andrew, Hugo, and Katrina, among other hurricanes, have shown, a large hurricane will lead to a new start for many people, an impetus to growth and renewal which was sorely needed. Since no one knew create that individually and consciously, collectively the residents could achieve it unconsciously through the elementals formed by their

thoughts. I quote that imminent philosopher of the twentieth century, Walt Kelly, who had his cartoon creation, Pogo, say, "We has met the enemy, and he is us." To paraphrase Kelly, "We has met our savior, and he is us."

Khan sums the matter up this way:

[page 225] ". . . whatever one does has a meaning, an influence; it is never lost. If it is not materialized, it does not matter; it is spiritualized. Nothing is gone, nothing is lost here. If it has not been produced on this plane, it has been produced on another plane. But it still reflects on this plane, because there is always action and reaction between both planes.

There is much more in this portion of Volume II of Hazrat Inayat Khan's Sufi Message which will enrich you, dear Reader, if you will read and ponder it directly. I have been pondering Khan's Sufi Message Series of books for over twenty years, and re-reading this volume for the purposes of this review brought home to me how much his insights have filled my life since I first read his works. Where do you start? At the beginning. When do you start? Now. Everything happens in the now. Anything put off to another time is never done. Do something now. *[DIRAK!](#)* Pick up a book and start reading Khan. If you don't have his book, order one to read when it comes in. Make friends with Hazrat Inayat Khan — it is the best way I can recommend for you to make friends with yourself.

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Footnote 1. Much of my present thought was formed when I read Khan's complete works in the early and mid-1980s. This book I read first in 1984 and once again in 1986.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

