

## Inayat's Secret & the Path of Love

The Arabic phrase *Ya Hazrat [name of saint] Qudus, Allahu Sirrahu* is a standard phrase to honor a Sufi Saint. For Inayat Khan this phrase reads *Ya Hazrat Inayat Qaddas Allahu Sirrahu*, meaning 'May the One sanctify (and preserve) the secret of Hazrat Inayat'.

Here is the literal meaning of the words:

Ya	O
Hazrat	Hazrat (or hadhrat) literally means 'presence'. It is an honorary address form for a deceased saint, used to invoke the presence of the saint. In this case the chant invokes the Indian mystic and founder of the western path of universal Sufism, Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882, Baroda - 1927, Delhi).
Inayat	Name of Inayat Khan. Inayat means 'grace'.
Qaddas	Sanctify. From the same root as the <i>wasifa</i> QUDDUS (holy).
Allahu	God, the One
Sirrahu	Secret.



This phrase is often presented as a *tughra*, a calligraphy in the shape of the headgear of the founding *pir* (leader) of the specific Sufi order. As Inayat Khan did not wear a specific hat or turban, the artist here has used the symbol of the heart with wings.

The calligraphy is widely used in the Hope project in Delhi, near the Dhargah (tomb) of Hazrat Inayat Khan, where poor people

receive medical care and education to earn a living, for instance as tailors, embroidering emblems like this one on scarfs and robes. For more on this emblem, please visit the website of the artist at <http://www.illuminedliving.com>.

This phrase does not say that Inayat's secrets should be hidden. On the contrary. In Sufi psychology, *sirr* (secret) and *sirr-ul-asrar* (secret of secrets) are the names for the innermost parts of the soul, located in the depth of the spiritual heart where the soul is always connected with the One. From this understanding we can understand the deeper meaning of this phrase as a prayer that even Hazrat Inayat Khan's deepest secrets may be safeguarded for future generations.

We can link this phrase with Hazrat Inayat's Khan's Sufi creed '*Ishq Allah Mah'bud Lillah*, as his poetical translation 'God is Love, Lover and Beloved' comes from this deepest 'secret' part of his soul where all is merged, the self (*nafs*) is gone and only the One exists.

Merging with the Beloved is the highest ideal in Sufism, expressed most eloquently and elegantly by many Sufi poets.

This is the Perfection of the Invocation and the reason for going 'toward the One', unaware that this very One already resides in the depths of our heart. It is the God-

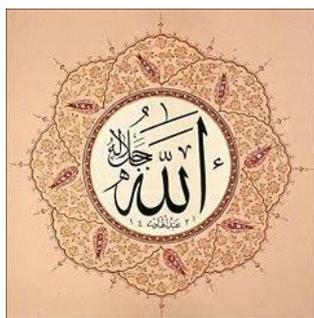
realized or enlightened state of the Indian saints, the Buddha nature of the Buddhists, the 'perfect human being' (*insan kernal*) of all Sufis since Ibn al-'Arabi.

Here's a poem of Inayat Khan on this theme (from his *Vadan/Alankaras*):

*I have loved in life and I have been loved.  
I have drunk the bowl of poison from the hands of love as nectar,  
and have been raised above life's joy and sorrow.  
My heart, aflame in love, set afire every heart that came in touch with it.  
My heart has been rent and joined again;  
My heart has been broken and again made whole;  
My heart has been wounded and healed again;  
A thousand deaths my heart has died,  
and thanks be to love, it lives yet.  
I went through hell and saw there love's raging fire,  
and I entered heaven illumined with the light of love.  
I wept in love and made all weep with me;  
I mourned in love and pierced the hearts of men;  
And when my fiery glance fell on the rocks, the rocks burst forth as volcanoes.  
The whole world sank in the flood caused by my one tear;  
With my deep sigh the earth trembled,  
and when I cried aloud the name of my beloved,  
I shook the throne of God in heaven.  
I bowed my head low in humility, and on my knees I begged of love,  
'Disclose to me, I pray thee, O love, thy secret.'  
She took me gently by my arms and lifted me above the earth,  
and spoke softly in my ear,  
'My dear one, thou thyself art love, art lover,  
and thyself art the beloved whom thou hast adored.'*

*The Complete Sayings, p. 83-84*

### 'Ishq Allah Mah'bud Lillah



'ISHQ and MAH'BUD both are words for love and often are used without any distinction between the two. Originally, 'ISHQ is the more passionate love. The word is derived from *ashiqha*, a vine that strangles itself so strongly around a tree that the tree eventually dies.

It is probably Hallaj, the 10<sup>th</sup> century Sufi martyr, who introduced this word for also sexual love in Sufi context. Ever since, Sufis have used this word for the love of the One, as this love wants to suffocate the lower self (*nafs*) until nothing remains. In the words of Kwaja Nizamuddin Awliya (1242 - 1325), the Delhi Sufi Saint and predecessor of Hazrat Inayat Khan:

*When 'ishq seizes a man,  
it will not part from him until it has nullified his mortality.*

MAH'BUD (also written as ma'bud or mahabud) means the Beloved. The root of this word for love (HABB) is sometimes translated as loving-kindness, similar to the Buddhist idea of Metta.

Together, *'ishq* and *habb* form a similar pair as the Christian concepts of *eros* and *agape* (in Latin *amor* and *charitas*).

In the Volumes (mostly transcriptions of his lectures, written down in shorthand), both the forms ALLAH and LILLAH are used. In dance circles, LILLAH ('everything is for Allah') is the more common form, possibly because of the more flowing rhythm. This may be bad Arabic – *lillah* is normally not used as a separate word, but only in compounds (as in ALHAMDULILLAH) – but it sure is good mantra.

Hazrat Inayat Khan made *'ishq Allah mah'bud Allah* his Sufi creed.

In his Confessions, he describes his first encounter with this saying. As a young man, prior to his initiation into Sufism, he visited the Dhargah (tomb) of Moineddin Chisti (1135 – 1229), the founder of Indian Sufism. There, he witnesses a procession of dervishes, all shouting: 'Be conscious of your breath and watch every step you take, and thus experience solitude in the crowd.'

Inayat describes:

When the Murshid arrived at the assembly of his disciples, each one greeted the other, saying, *'Ishq Allah, Mabud Allah!'* – God is love and God is the Beloved!

It was this very greeting which later unveiled for me the Bible words that God is love.

(Volume XII, p. 141)

Toward the end of his life, he refers to the same phrase in his lectures on psychology, stating:

The Sufi in the East says to himself: *'ishq Allah, Mahbud Allah'*, which means 'God is Love, God is the Beloved'; in other words, it is God who is Love, Lover and Beloved'.

Volume IX, p. 188

Here is an inspired melody to these words:

D (C)                      A (G)                      Bm (Am)                      E (D)                      A (G)

Ya Haz- rat I- na- yat Qad- das Al- lah Hu Sir- ra Hu

D (C)                      A (G)                      Bm (Am)                      F#m (Em)                      G (F)                      A (G)

Ishq Al- lah mah- bud Lil- lah - - Ishq Al- lah - -

G (F)                      A (G)

Ishq Al- lah -

Wali van der Zwan