

## Inner Call Podcast #105 About the Thought of God - March 22 2021

Hazrat Inayat Khan's recollection of a moment with a Pir brother of his own Murshid, posted in the Inner Call on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021, is touching on several levels. To catch sight of a mystic through the eyes of a mystic is in itself a precious insight, similar, perhaps, to the wordless education we might receive by listening to a musical performance in the presence of a great musician.

And then we might consider the kernel of the anecdote, the counsel that the mystic gives to the seeker. Surely we can feel sympathy for the question, for who has not had the experience of the mind being tugged this way and that by worldly thoughts while we are attempting to meditate? But rather than tell us how to clear the mind and dedicate a little time purely to the Divine, the mystic deftly turns the question inside out, and tells the seeker not to limit God to just a few moments a day, like a business transaction, but to look on every thought as a thought of God.

Perhaps this sounds like an easy solution, a way of wiping away all responsibility for our thoughts – whatever comes to mind is a thought of God, we might tell ourselves, so where is the problem? But what would happen if we make an effort to practice the advice?

It means, first of all, looking much more carefully at our thoughts. If every one of them is a thought of God, then a sincere seeker would want to be present, attending to each one like an honoured guest, offering them respect or even reverence. And for some categories of thought, this is not difficult. When we admire the smile of a child or a beautiful sunrise, for example, it is easy to find the divine in that thought. But what about less beguiling thoughts? Take, for example, the mental recalculation of time as we adjust our daily schedule to the unexpected – '...missed the bus, next one is at... ... have to try to delay that meeting...' and so on. Such thoughts are often running in the background, maybe as we dodge through traffic; it takes an effort to bring them forward, and still more effort to recognise the Divine in them. To do this successfully means looking at our life in a different way.

But there are also thoughts which are neither practical nor beautiful – negative comments, anger, spite, greed, selfishness and all the rest of it. If we take the advice of the mystic seriously, then we have to look directly at such thoughts, acknowledge them, and then ask ourselves if this thought gives any space for the Divine. If not, then from the discomfort and shame we feel, we will inevitably start to change our way of thinking, a change that Hazrat Inayat Khan refers to in this saying from Vadan Gamakas: *How did I rise above narrowness? The edges of my own walls began to hurt my elbows.*