

Inner Call Podcast #106 Struggling with Shadows - March 26 2021

At the conclusion of his session of questions and answers about the theme of harmony, posted in the Inner Call on March 23rd 2021, someone asked Hazrat Inayat Khan what we can do about advancing armies of 'Germans and Bolsheviks.' The wording of course reflects the speaker's view of a certain moment in history but at every time, in every place, there will always be some threat appearing over the horizon to make us uneasy. The Master's answer, which he wishes could be proclaimed through a trumpet all over the world, is that, "Fight with another is war, and struggle with oneself is peace." Since everyone wishes for peace, we could ask, why don't we follow this wise advice?

One possible reason is that these words are not easy to understand. If I fight with my neighbour, for example, when I manage to capture all his cows and goats and chickens, and take his crops as well, then I have won. If I fight with myself, there is no clear image for the average person to understand. It sounds more like the famous Zen koan about the sound of one hand clapping. A fight should have two parties, a winner and a loser, we think, but if I fight with my self, then who can be called the winner, and who the loser? And if there is no winner, then does the fight go on forever?

Another possible reason we don't wholeheartedly take up this battle is that it sounds uncomfortable, to say the least. If we compare the thought of fighting with oneself to the numberless, endlessly repeated social messages about loving ourselves, then social media will win the popularity contest every time. Are we seriously being asked to eternally torment ourselves to achieve something called peace? That doesn't sound very peaceful.

If we study ourselves carefully, though, we will always conclude that the real turmoil is not outside of us but inside. A person may have all the material comforts imaginable, but if they lack inner harmony, they will feel no peace. Conversely, if a person has found stillness within, the outer storms of the world will mean very little.

And those who are opposed to violence of any kind may be assured: in the fight with oneself, no blood is shed, for one is, in truth, fighting only with a shadow, with an illusion that keeps us small. Once we recognise that the separation, the duality, upon which the ego built its kingdom, is only a dream, we awaken in an endless ocean of peace to which we belong, and which belongs to us. As it says in Gayan Boudha, "*When man touches the ultimate truth he realizes that there is nothing which is not in himself.*"