

## **Inner Call Podcast #109 What to do with Willpower – April 2 2012**

In response to a question about free will, posted in the Inner call on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021, Hazrat Inayat Khan says that although the universe is going on automatically, and we are born helpless, yet even so every baby wants to be able to do as it wishes – and this is the proof of free will, although that power may be undeveloped.

But as we grow in strength, and there comes the real possibility of making choices in our life, there also arises the question, especially for those on the spiritual path : what may we do and what may we not do? The attempt to define what is permitted is as old as the human race, and throughout the ages great souls have given various instructions to their people. The law that Moses brought down from the mountain is just one example of an effort to show us in what ways we may direct our unruly, sprawling will power, and in what ways we should contain it.

Yet, although we say, ‘my will,’ in truth the will is a Divine gift. We may be very proud of our independence, but we have not made free will, just as we have not made our body or our mind; our will is merely an expression of a greater Will. As it says in Gayan Ragas, “Thy will is behind my every impulse.”

When we recognize this, then comes another question : if the origin of every impulse is divine, why must we struggle to control some of them? This is because the divine power, like a powerful artesian spring rising from within, takes every available pathway, but not all pathways lead to good outcomes. There may be a reward, but there will always be a cost as well, and often the cost is much greater than the reward. In Vadan Chalas we find this saying : When you do not concern yourself with the consequences, then alone you may freely express your impulse.

In other words, we must weigh carefully every act, even if the impulse seems to come from all the way from heaven. There is a story in this connection, about a Sufi who had been saying prayers and keeping vigils for many years, and one night, as he went to his prayer place, a magnificent angel suddenly stood before him. ‘O man,’ said the angel, ‘I am sent from the highest to tell you that God is satisfied with your service. You need no longer pray and keep vigil. Tonight you may sleep.’

“Away, devil,” said the faithful man, “before I strike you with my prayer beads. You stand between me and my Creator. Can sleep be more important than that?”