

## **Inner call Podcast #112 One Year of Marriage April 12 2021**

There was once a certain Shaikh of advanced years who lived in an isolated place in the company of a small group of devoted followers. Together they strove to be conscious with every breath of the Divine Beloved. One day the Shaikh was visited by a young man who pleaded to be allowed to join the group – but to the surprise of the students the master would not accept him, and kindly but firmly sent him away.

Afterward, one of the students asked the Shaikh about this. “He seems very sincere,” said the student. “Surely he would benefit from your teaching. Please enlighten me as to why you would not receive him.”

“He thinks he stands at a crossroads right now,” responded the master. “He is hesitating between marrying and giving everything up for the spiritual search. But he is wrong to think that the choices lead in different directions. The river of life is one.

“Long ago,” the Shaikh continued, “as a young man, I also had such doubts, but I married, and through that I learned a great lesson. In those days I had many preconceptions about life – what young man does not? Preconceptions about love and marriage, and all that comes with living in the world. Through the years, though, I saw that my ideas mostly stood in the way of love and family harmony. Experience slowly ground my preconceptions to powder.

“Then, when the children were grown, it happened that my wife passed away. Left on my own, with no responsibilities in the world, I began to pay attention to the spiritual call. And soon I saw that, just as in human love, it was my preconceptions that stood between me and Intimacy. Thanks be to the One, it was then not so hard to toss my ‘self’ aside, because I already had some practice at it.

“That young man,” he concluded, “will learn more in one year of marriage than we could teach him with ten years of prayer and meditation.”