

Inner Call Podcast #117 Going to the Doctor April 29 2021

We are always searching for ways to describe the relationship between our limited selves and the unlimited, infinite Truth. The late Rabbi Sacks, of the United Kingdom, is said to have declared that the two most significant words in the teachings of Jesus were, 'Our Father,' for this way of characterizing the Divine as a loving, intimate parent was revolutionary – it never appears in the Torah.

In Persia, where the stream of Sufism was greatly enriched by the poetic language, the imagery often employed was the tavern and the wine of intoxication – useful for subverting the constraints of pious formality – and the fascinating subject of love and the beloved. Rapturous descriptions of the eye, the lip, the cheek and the curling, perfumed tresses of the beloved serve as a bridge between seen, material experience and the ecstasies of the spiritual realm.

In our present age, though, the imagery of the Beloved is not so effective as it was. From the mystic's point of view, love is not well understood now – and how could it be, when the common illness of our time is a frozen heart? The intense focus on material culture must have a consequence, and no amount of heart emojis and feel-good video clips will bring about the necessary melting. In the highspeed internet world it is possible to find a new partner on a weekly basis, but what is treated so matter-of-factly gives no place for learning, no scope for humility, no time to penetrate the mysteries of the Unseen.

Perhaps a better image for our time, especially since we are living through a global pandemic, is the patient in search of a Physician. We are roaming about, searching for something, because we are restless; we are restless because of some disorder. Who can cure us? Only the Physician.

Seek the waiting room, then, and when you find it, be patient, and stay there as long as it takes – until you are called to have your moment with the Healer. Someone may offer you pills or other remedies, but these are only temporary measures, and worse than useless if they persuade you to go away and give up your search. Sit in the waiting room – we have all done this. It is tedious to wait, but it is a comfort to think that we are there at last, and that the call may come at any moment. Be still, and look at your fellow patients with compassion for their suffering, for you know something of what they feel.

Sit and wait, for our ills, however we experience them, can only be removed by the presence of the Healer.