

Inner call Podcast #120 - Where to Look May 12, 2021

There is no doubt that the world is going through a time of trouble right now. What seems particularly difficult is the accumulation of one problem on top of another. To put it in physical terms, it is not only that we are being tossed up and down, but we are also being shaken from side to side and rolled over and over as well, all at once. This kind of complex motion might be all right if you want to design a thrill ride at an amusement park, but that only lasts for a few minutes. The compounded disturbances the world faces right now – illness, armed conflict, hunger, environmental crisis, economic uncertainty, social inequality and all the rest of it – don't show signs of letting up any time soon.

What could help us all, though, is the advice of a nameless sailor, whose counsel was passed on to us by Hazrat Inayat Khan. (If you want to read the anecdote, it was posted on the Inner Call on November 27th, 2018.) Hazrat Inayat asked the sailor if there were any remedy for seasickness, and the sailor told him that the only help lay in looking at the horizon. The master said that he found this advice very helpful, and he also recognized a spiritual seed within the sailor's wisdom.

We can understand that, in a physical sense, the signal through the eyes of a steady horizon can help to subdue the shouts of confusion and alarm that come from the organs of balance. Metaphysically, the steadiness of our ideal can help us to rise above the changes and shocks of daily life. If we are fixed upon the Infinite, the lurching and shaking of the limited becomes much less significant. It does not remove the problems, not at all, but it helps to keep them in perspective.

To apply this advice, though, we need to *have* an ideal. Hazrat Inayat Khan used the word 'God,' but does that word awaken any feeling in us? Can we say with any clarity what our ideal might be? One Sufi said, 'One's god is that which one thinks of when one is suddenly confronted by trouble.' If we apply this as a sort of diagnostic tool, we can learn a lot about ourselves.

A horizon, like an ideal, is the limit of our vision; it surrounds us, but no matter how far we journey, it remains before us. This is not because the horizon retreats from us, but because it is inherent in us.

If you are troubled, then, and uncertain as to what your ideal might be, look deep within yourself for your own horizon, and that will help you through these times.