

## **Inner Call Podcast #124 Forty Days May 28 2021**

There was, once upon a time, a certain religious man who lived apart from people and who practiced many austerities. He regarded luxury as a great weakness, and did all he could to discipline his impulses.

Then one day he discovered in the scriptures the mention of a certain practice. It was said that if a suitable person would, for forty days, refrain from uttering even a single unnecessary word, heaven would grant him the jewel of divine wisdom, and thence forward every word he spoke would confer illumination.

This practice appealed very much to the man's nature. To keep control of his tongue for forty days would be a challenge, certainly, but he felt sure he could manage it, and he did not even stop to consider whether he was what the scripture called 'a suitable person.' Surely only a 'suitable' person could fulfil such a task! Accordingly, the next day, after additional prayers and purifications, he began his discipline.

Day after day he maintained a stony silence, avoiding people, and also quelling the impulse to speak to himself, for he thought, what could be more unnecessary than to speak to the one who is speaking?

At last, the forty days were done, and he was certain that he had not even once spoken an unnecessary word. That morning, when the peasant who brought him a daily bowl of milk, approached his door, the man fixed a stern gaze on him and said in solemn tones, "Good morning!"

The peasant nodded politely, responded with "Good morning," and went away. He did not seem to be illuminated.

Puzzled, the man sought out other people during the day, but whatever he said to them did not seem to have any life-altering effects. "Is it possible," he asked himself, "that I have misread the scriptures?"

To resolve his confusion he decided to seek the advice of a certain holy man that was known to live in a nearby town. "He is said to be an illuminated soul," the man thought, "one of the Elect, and surely he can explain this mystery to me."

Arriving in the town, the man made inquiries as to where he might find the holy person. He thought perhaps he would be living in a cemetery, amongst the graves, or in some broken-down hut, but to his surprise he was directed to a large residence that seemed more a palace than a home. There was a fountain and flowering trees in the courtyard, and to his astonishment a magnificent white horse, draped with silk and with a golden bridle and flowing mane stood there.

"Surely there is some mistake," the man thought. "How can this be the home of a spiritual teacher? Whoever lives here will know nothing of what I hope to learn."

He was about to turn away when the spiritual teacher himself appeared in the courtyard, and to the man's astonishment and disgust, placed a reverent kiss of salutation upon the horse's muzzle.

Now unable to contain himself, the man stepped forward and said, "What is this? Are you a spiritual teacher? What illuminated soul offers such reverence to a horse?"

The teacher looked at the man with a mild expression, and said, "You don't understand. This is a very special horse. He has just completed forty days without saying an unnecessary word."