

Inner Call Podcast #131 Opinions and Truth June 23 2021

People have often expressed opinions about religion, but these days it seems more common to make a religion of our opinions. Points of view are defended with the ferocity once reserved for guarding sacred beliefs, and other ideas are attacked as being something close to demonic. But truth is not so easy to pin down, and in a spiritual sense, fact and truth are not the same.

Facts have their uses in the practical world. If I wish to make something, a chair, say, the materials must be measured, and I can write the dimensions down as facts. But if I wish to know the Truth that holds all of creation, that breathed forth the materials and the chairmaker and the impulse to create, there is no measurement for that. Facts, we could say, are a little like the countless empty seashells that litter a beach after a storm: each one represents a living truth that has moved on, and even a whole pot full of empty shells will give us no nourishment.

Real truth is not definable according to the terms of the outside world, it is something we may discover if we turn inward. There is no point in looking elsewhere, we have to study ourselves to find it, and in particular, we must study the heart – but how? In a lecture about Truth, Hazrat Inayat Khan said, *“Is any effort required for realizing the truth? Yes... there is a work that one can do, which is as the work of a farmer, it is to cultivate the heart. But where man makes a mistake is that when he cultivates the heart, he wishes to sow the seed himself instead of leaving the sowing of the seed to God.”*

Allowing God to sow the seed is a way of surrendering, and this could make us think of the beautiful phrase from the prayer Khatum, *“Open our hearts that we may hear Thy voice which constantly cometh from within.”* The divine voice is never absent, but often when we turn our attention inward, we hear only the echoes of our own story, the apparently unending personal monologue rehearsing innumerable claims and complaints, instead of the whisper and thunder of perfection. We listen to the clatter and rattle of our empty opinion shells, instead of allowing the sea to speak.

If we could practice letting go of our opinions, we might finally recognize the meaning of the words from the psalm: ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’