

Inner Call Podcast #133 Our Attitude July 16th 2021

'Attitude' is a word that gets special attention from Hazrat Inayat Khan. In Gayan Boulas for example, he says, *'It is not our situation in life, but our attitude towards life that makes us happy or unhappy.'* But what do we mean by 'attitude'?

There is a physical aspect of attitude, of course, in the sense of body posture, and that might make us think of the science of hatha yoga, in which various asanas are maintained for their effect on our physical and mental health. And even if we have no yoga mat, we know that sitting straight, standing erect, and bowing, for example, all have an influence on our consciousness.

But the attitude of which Hazrat Inayat speaks is not merely how we hold our physical being, but how we think about life, how we hold our inner being in regard to the flow of events around us. We may, for example, be passive or combative, pessimistic or optimistic, gloomy or cheerful; we may be selfish or generous; we may have an attitude of despair or of hope.

The reason that attitude matters to us is that it is our attitude that conditions our experience. In his lectures on the intoxication of life, the conclusion of which was posted in the Inner Call on July 15th 2021, Hazrat Inayat Khan tells us that the wine we drink becomes our world – if we drink the wine of failure, we will experience nothing but failure; if we drink the wine of hope, there will be a star of hope always leading us on through life.

It is easy to observe this in others. Surely, we all know at least one pessimist whose negative expectations are constantly borne out by one difficulty after another, and perhaps also a kind person who easily finds kindness in the world around them. What is more difficult is to recognize our own attitudes, for they are settled habits of thought that we seldom notice or question.

Until we touch the mystical point of sobriety, which is not so easily found, we will always see life through the veil of an attitude – but if we can learn to see our attitudes, we can strive to modify them, to make them more helpful. As a guiding example, we could take the words of the prayer Salat, addressed to the Messenger: Thou, whose heart constantly reacheth upward!

Could there be a better attitude than always reaching upward? As every toddler knows, it is an attitude that is sure to inspire the loving parent to lift us up and hold us close to their heart.