

## **Inner Call Podcast #137 The Essence of Harmony August 10 2021**

The relationship between the inner and the outer life is sometimes very perplexing. What looks one way on the surface may look quite different when we turn the coat the other way around and look from within. Take love for example: in the outer world, we hope to be loved, we want people to love us, for feeling loved is a great booster to the ego, and we tend to think of love as a constant shower of goodness. It is that, of course, but there is a profound difference between being loved and loving. The lover is greater than the one who is loved, and when love for another person does burst forth – as for example when parents experience the volcano in their chests at the sight of a new-born child – we are initiated into another, more fundamental aspect of love, which is sacrifice. The more purely and brightly the flame of love burns, the more willing we are to sacrifice whatever is necessary for the happiness of the beloved, including our own self.

If we examine harmony in the same way, we may also make a discovery. At first glance, harmony seems to mean a lack of discord, and therefore all that is smooth and pleasant – in music and in all the arts, in human relationships, and in nature. Certainly, that is one face of harmony, but it is not all. We cannot label just sweetness or softness as ‘harmonious,’ because to achieve harmony there must be different forces in play. Think, for example, of the harmony of the weather: to bring into accord all the complex energies of the atmosphere, there are times when the sun shines, and other moments when rain must fall, and storm winds must blow. In the turning of the year, there is a time when trees blossom and bear fruit, and then there is a period when they rest, sleeping bare-branched through the snows of winter.

To sing in a choir can be exhilarating, but as every chorister knows, it is essential to listen not just to one’s own part, but to the other parts as well. Feeling the various voices interacting, melodically and dynamically, and vibrating through our body is where the real joy resides. If we could only hear our own part, very much would be lost.

This tells us that the real essence of harmony is in awareness, and the wider our awareness, the more will harmony be perceptible to us. We can explore this when we think about human relationships. With some people we find it easy to harmonize, but with others there are difficulties. But if we make an effort to expand our awareness and see from the other person’s point of view as well, we might find that the path to harmony is not that long. Seeing from the other person’s point of view means that their pain is also our pain, and – if we can find the right tuning – their happiness is also our happiness.