

**Inner Call Podcast #138 Learning Stillness August 16 2021**

If you want to hear, you have to learn to be quiet. That was one conclusion of a recent conversation about the beautiful phrase from the Nature Meditations :

My heart is tuned to the quietness  
*that the stillness of nature inspires.*

(By the way, if you would like to work with this meditation, find some spot in nature where you can be undisturbed, place the first part of the phrase on your inhalation, and the second part on the exhalation. Sit with it as long as you can, just letting the breath and the contemplation do their work.)

A quiet heart should be of especial importance to someone who is treading the spiritual path, since the prayer Khatum tells us that the divine voice is constantly coming from within, and that it is by way of the open heart that it can be heard. If we can learn to hear that voice, among other blessings we would find it to be a remedy for the ailment of a frozen heart, the illness that is now so common that it seems to be a natural condition.

We might wonder, though, what 'the stillness of nature' could be. If we sit somewhere away from the noise of humanity – in the woods or by a stream, on the seashore or perhaps on the slopes of a mountain with a fine view of the distant horizon, and then listen with steadfast attention, what will we find? The sighing or roaring of the wind, the laughing and splashing of water, the chirping of birds, the humming and buzzing of insects, and numerous other beguiling and sometimes mysterious sounds. There will never be a moment of what could be scientifically labelled 'stillness,' because nature is always in movement. And yet, the more we listen, the more quiet we shall become, outwardly and inwardly, both. Why? Perhaps part of the answer is that nature itself is listening. The city is noisy because humanity is constantly chattering and even screaming; we feel compelled to make noise, the more the better. Many people, if they are alone at home, will turn on some music or a television program to fill the emptiness because in our daily life silence seems uncomfortably poor and 'unnatural'. When we leave our man-made racket behind, though, we enter a different rhythm, one in which activity is balanced by stillness, and expression is surrounded by reception.

In such an environment, we also become listeners, like the moss and the trees and the mountains, and of course the act of listening means suspending our own sound, letting go of the habit of noise. That is the quietness that nature inspires.

We could not give ourselves – and the world around us – a better gift than to learn this stillness. It really is the remedy – or the root of the remedy – to all that ails us, and to all the disharmony of the man-made and the natural world.

Try it – turn off this podcast – it's finished anyway – and feel the silence spread around you.