

## Inner Call Podcast #147 True Spirituality October 29 2021

It is human nature to look for mystery in everything – we love puzzles. Therefore, when people meet a highly spiritual person who falls outside of their usual experience, they sometimes assume that ‘unseen forces’ are working in all that they do and say. For example, when Hazrat Inayat Khan started his work for the Message in the west, he would sometimes open his lectures by singing a very beautiful invocation called *Subuhan Azil*. In the east, this would be perfectly natural, for he was a talented and highly trained musician, to whom music was sacred, and audiences there would have been deeply moved. Indeed, when Inayat was a youth roaming the Himalayas around Katmandu, and he encountered a Mahatma in the wilderness, he sang for the great soul, and received a blessing in return. In the West, though, some people found themselves unexpectedly thrown into a deep reverie by Inayat’s song, an experience that caused them to suspect that the Murshid was using psychic powers to hypnotize people. Sadly, to avoid causing alarm Hazrat Inayat had to give up this beautiful custom.

Spirituality is not ‘super-natural’ – it is, on the contrary, most natural. Even when an evolved soul displays abilities which are beyond the reach of the average person, and Hazrat Inayat Khan certainly had such abilities, they are not at all unnatural – rather they are the fulfilment of the true potential of human nature, the incalculable light and power which is our divine heritage. Nevertheless, such abilities are not the goal – psychic phenomena and miracle working are merely distractions to the seeker on the path. Swami Rama, the Indian sage who was raised from childhood by his master in the Himalayas and who passed away in 1996, told the story of encountering a swami who could light fire with his breath. He asked his guru’s permission to go and study with this swami, but his master, after learning who this miracle worker was, said, “I know him; we studied together. We never thought he would amount to much, and we were right. He has spent twenty years learning to do what you can do with a match. What use is it?”

For an example of true spirituality, consider the anecdote posted in the Inner Call as The Power of Water on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021. Hazrat Inayat Khan received a visit from an atheist lawyer who was angry about what he had heard of the Sufi teachings, and was determined to demolish the Master with every intellectual argument at his disposal. He came, we could say, with cannons loaded. After an hour together, the lawyer left in quite a different mood, warmly shaking the Murshid’s hand and saying, ‘We shall always be friends.’ The miraculous change was brought about by the Master’s willingness to listen, to show respect, and to decline to engage in conflict. In the end, the lawyer saw that his beliefs and those of the Sufi were not so different after all.

In our own life, we do not need to see auras and hear voices; we can leave walking on water for later. As for predicting the future, one Sufi called that ‘robbing God of His options.’ A much more fitting use for our spirit is simply learning to calm the storms in our own heart and mind, for as it says in Gayan Talas, *Fighting with another makes war, but struggling with one's self brings peace.*