

Inner Call Podcast #152 Getting Free from Fate December 14 2021

Every life faces difficulties – that is unavoidable. And sometimes no matter how hard we try to change the situation, and no matter how sincere our prayers, rocks continue to rain down upon our house, one trouble on top of another. Then we might ask, “Is it me? Is it God? Is it destiny? What is going on?”

In a lecture on fate, sometimes referred to by the Arabic word ‘kismet,’ which means exactly the same thing, Hazrat Inayat Khan gives a typically paradoxical answer, saying that there is something that looks like predestination, but it is not really predestination – it is the continuation of a tendency that has been started. To explain, he gives the example of visiting a certain street in a city. Once you have been to that neighbourhood, then the following week you may visit some other place in the same part of the city, and gradually you will become very familiar with that area, while the rest of the city will remain largely unknown to you. A pattern once begun continues. If we think of the subject in terms of music, once a piece of music has commenced, its rhythm is established; it is not so easy to change a waltz into a march.

This might make us think of the science of impressions. All that we perceive, and also all that we say and do makes an impression on the sphere of consciousness, an impression that continues to vibrate long afterward. A victory stays with us for a long time, and so does the impression of a defeat, and therefore the wise do all they can to guard themselves from unhelpful impressions.

But if the impression is there, if we seem to be stuck in the continuation of a tendency that we do not wish, what can we do? Can we change it? One step is to be more ‘creative’ in our life. Our energy may be either receptive or expressive and creative, jemal or jelal in Sufi terms. To borrow an example from one of Hazrat Inayat Khan’s lectures, suppose that we live in a humble hut that has a hole in the roof. We may wish that the hole will be fixed, a wish that gets stronger when it rains, but without becoming creative, without giving expression to our wish, the hole will still remain.

In this context, though, creativity means more than superficial changes, such as simply wearing our coat inside out, a folk custom sometimes said to change one’s luck. It takes insight into our own psychology to know how to apply creativity to our life. What is also necessary is a willingness to change. This is where many people stumble. Grumbling about our situation is one thing; doing what is needed is another. Many people are genuinely unhappy with their circumstances, but they have not yet understood what is changeable in themselves, or how to change themselves for the better. So, continuing on, they blame God and suffer.

To blame God, though, is to distance ourselves from the best help there is. Beyond all psychology, beyond any consideration of planetary influences, beyond the science and art of jelal and jemal is the One. As Hazrat Inayat Khan says, “However attractive these things are, the name of God is much greater. Without the study of the name of God they are nothing. This is the only thing that is great, the only thing beautiful, the only thing of value, the only thing worthwhile.”