

Inner Call Podcast #153 Give Us Sustenance January 24 2022

We were having a conversation about desires – and when one stops to think about it, isn't that the subject of every conversation? To borrow an image from nature, desires are the differences in atmospheric pressure that cause all the winds of life to blow. Sometimes, desire produces a gentle breeze that barely flutters the leaves in the garden, sometimes there is the gusty wind of a thunderstorm, and sometimes the result is a powerful, high-level jet stream that shapes the weather for whole continents.

Our exchange was stimulated by this saying from the Gayan, "When a desire becomes a steady thought, its success is assured." We all know the experience of unfulfilled desires, typically accompanied by a sense of frustration and failure, and so we were very interested in the theme.

The words tell us that it is possible to bring desires to fulfilment – and that puts before us the question, what do we – and what should we – desire? Do we have desires that are worthy of the effort necessary to bring them to realization? And could we really live with the results? We know the endlessly quoted saying, "Be careful what you wish for..." And then, how clearly do we see our desires? For this saying teaches us that clarity or steadiness of desire is what ensures success.

We experience desire in different ways. There are material desires, for example – the physical wish for food, water, sleep, and so on, but the world's present material intoxication usually makes these more complicated for us than they need to be. A thirsty person might pass over simple water in favour of one of a thousand brewed or bottled products – tea, herbal infusions, endless varieties of coffee, fizzy drinks and all the rest of it. Regarding food, a person to whom real hunger is mostly unknown may be living to eat instead of simply eating to live.

When it comes to spiritual desires, the difficulty is of a different nature. Some restlessness has brought us to this path, we feel some longing – but what is it we are longing for? A person might say, "I am longing for God," but then the question would become, "And what is your God? How is your God? Can you describe Divinity?" If your God is only a vague concept, how can you keep that as a steady thought?

A saying from Vadan Talas might throw some light on the subject: "Food is the nourishment of the body; thought is a refreshment to the mind; love is the subsistence for the heart; truth is the sustenance of the soul." The Divine act of creation has produced separation, and therefore every aspect of being, due to its incompleteness, has its needs – that is why the prayer Saum asks the Creator to "give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls." We fulfil the desires of the physical by eating, sleeping and so on; we sustain the heart by allowing the stream of love to flow and wash us clean, and we nourish the soul by discarding all falsehood in favour of the essence of Truth. The light of the soul is perfect, but while it is veiled by the impression of illusion, the light is unaware of itself. If we wish to make a reality of our spiritual desires, therefore, we could orient ourselves toward the pole star of Truth – and when we seek truth in all levels of our life, surely spiritual success will be assured.