

## Inner Call Podcast #156 Do Not Waste Time February 16 2022

Hazrat Inayat Khan once said that when a singer gives a concert, there are as many songs as there are members of the audience. Every person will hear it according to their own state and station. Some may be pleasantly entertained, others may be unmoved, while still others may feel they are soaring with the angels. Similarly, if numerous artists gather in a studio to draw a single flower, every drawing will be distinct. Each eye will have its own way of seeing, and each hand will have its particular manner of expressing what the artist has taken in.

Therefore, when students contemplate a phrase from the Gayan, the way in which the thought is caught by individual hearts and minds will vary, like a ray of light scattered by crystals, and we can be rewarded by unexpected sparks and gleams of colour. This was the case not long ago when a group was discussing this saying from Gayan Talas : “He concerns himself in vain who thinks, ‘Why are not others what they ought to be?’ But he who concerns himself with that he is not what he ought to be, is right.”

There were, of course, observations about what could be called the main thought of the saying, the futility of trying to reform others – we know that such endeavours are never successful, even though we often yield to the temptation anyway. People don’t want our interference, just as we do not want theirs, and monitoring others only leads to discord, so as the Buddha said, “Why do that which will make you unhappy?” If we really hope to reform the world, we must begin with ourselves – then we would have more than enough to do.

Some in the meeting also commented on the effect upon our self when we criticise others. The habit of criticism makes us sour and disagreeable to those around us and dims our own enjoyment of the world. Our perception becomes tuned to the unpleasant. It is no exaggeration to say that storing up the shortcomings of others is like scattering sharp stones in our own path.

But there were several in the **group** who also found a disturbing urgency in the phrase; the words ‘in vain’ touched a nerve. We are all on the spiritual journey because of some uneasiness that pushed us out of our slumber. Surely we have all had the experience of waking in the middle of the night, disturbed by the feeling that something needs our attention. Our search may have begun because of an illness, or a sudden loss, or simply a growing discomfort, but something made us climb out of bed and look for the truth, and that impulse to move, that unease can never be far from the surface of our consciousness. When we neglect this need, we feel an inner agitation.

The spiritual path leads toward the only goal that can soothe that agitation, the only goal that has any real meaning in our life. If we concern ourselves with something ‘in vain,’ we are wasting the precious opportunity of life, and that is something that we can never afford. As it says in Gayan Boulas, *Life is progress, and ceasing to progress is death*. The present situation of the world shows us – if there was ever any doubt – that life is unpredictable. We have no idea how long the thread of our life will be, but if it snaps before we have attained our goal, what then?