

Inner Call Podcast # 161 The Voice of Silence March 29 2022

From the day that we stand up and begin to walk in the world, we are puzzled by questions. Some are not complicated – shall I take the bus or the bicycle? Or shall I eat an apple or an orange? are questions that are simply solved and quickly forgotten. But other questions are more persistent. When we begin to identify them, they show themselves everywhere. ‘Where is happiness?’ is an example. Many of our behaviours are supposed to make us happy – and perhaps for the moment they give us some light – but then one mishap or another occurs, and we are unhappily struggling again. We try other behaviours, but the same frustrating pattern repeats, and our disappointment becomes a chronic condition. A similar enduring question might be ‘who am I?’ Much of what we say and do is supposed to express our identity. We label ourselves with our activities and our preferences – and yet some people, no matter how many labels they try, feel restless, unsatisfied; the question seems unanswered. In whatever way we frame these deep puzzles to ourselves, it is they that matter, for until we solve them, we feel like a fish out of water, alarmed, uncomfortable, helpless in an environment we do not understand.

In the Gayan Alapas we find this saying, that ‘*God is the answer to every question,*’ and that must certainly be true, for God is all and all knowing. If we have not yet ‘found’ God, though, not as a concept but as a reality, if our Divine Ideal is not yet a living presence, then this doesn’t help us with our deep-felt need. One solution to the question conundrum, then, would be to put all one’s attention here, to focus all one’s life and breath and spirit on making the Divine a present part of one’s consciousness, for in this way all the other questions will be resolved. Those who follow this way will certainly be blessed.

Another path up the mountain, inevitably leading to the same summit, could be found in this saying from Gayan Boulas : *The answer is in the question; a question has no existence without an answer.* This tells us that if we feel a restlessness or a need, we are looking for something we already know; we cannot feel a lack of something we are unaware of. We look for happiness, the Sufi teachings tell us, because happiness is our own nature, and we have lost sight of it. Or if we long for peace, it is because our soul is a ray of the Divine Spirit which is peace itself, and the activity of the world distracts us from this knowledge. In other words, if we are conscious of the question, we must also have the answer within us. And how to find it? By discarding all that does not answer the need. If we steadfastly reject all the clutter of concepts, prejudices, assumptions and labels that we carry in our consciousness, we will begin to experience a beautiful, transcendent stillness within. When we reject our little self as well, there in the silence we will find revealed the answers we have been looking for.

That must be the origin of this saying of Hazrat Inayat Khan, from Nirtan Gamakas : *People often ask me questions which I cannot very well answer in words, and it makes me sad to think they are unable to hear the voice of my silence.*