

## HOLINESS

Since we spend so much of our life in the mundane, the transition from mundane to holy is something we need to think about. In the midst of the worldly we need to take ourself to another station, another state, another place. We know that already, but how does it happen, what does this juxtaposition of the mundane and the holy mean, how do we accommodate these two aspects of our life?

Many religions have ritual ceremonies for this transition, most involve water. In Christianity there is baptism, acceptance of the way, usually a thing which occurs once signifying entrance to the holy. In Judaism there is the *mikvah*, a purifying bath the rabbis in older times used to take before the Sabbath, immersing themselves completely in water, making a transition. In Islam there are ablutions, the ritual washing before prayer five times each day. In all of them we have the understanding of transition, the understanding that transition is necessary to enter another state.

Let us go beyond the outer signs of transition and talk about its inner actualization. What occurs within us to make this movement from one place to another, what attaches us to the movement taking us to holiness? We are born into the world where we develop a certain ability to deal with it, a belief in that ability as we become confident of the things we learn, our ability to survive, to take care of ourself. We love our abilities, especially if we are good at things and confident—that very confidence impresses us and we love with this too.

Now those who are not as competent find themselves in a different situation, perhaps one reason why some say the transition is easier for simple people, easier

because they are not so in love with the world, they have less authority, they are not so in love with themselves. The role of mind and desire functions at the root of this. Our mind is a tool dealing with the world, desire drives that tool; they are at the root of our attachment to the things of the world. To shift into the unworldly we have to activate what is not run by the mind. In the opening stages of this shift we are not certain of these other areas, we still have to use the familiar tools to go where have not been before, even though that place requires other tools.

Our desire for the world takes us deeper and deeper into the world, yet we can use desire to move away from it. For our first steps then we use desire, although we use it in a different way. The desire we once had for the world we turn towards God with a new understanding. As long as we are using desire our path is to that extent impure, but if we use that one desire to blot out all the others it can be a cleansing process. If the desire to know God, knowledge not possible in the context of desire, if the desire to know God brings the understanding that we have to give up desire, we are using it to do away with worldly desire. We are still using something we are familiar with, yet we are using it in a different way, using it as a transitional tool to take us towards God.

As we cleanse ourself of attachment to the world we need patience, the desire to know God is not going away until desire goes away. As long as we are attached to desire which originates in our elemental, physical self, there is no cure for desire. Only when we go beyond desire do we enter purity; we must have the patience to outlast our unfulfilled expectations. Patience is the ability to do away with expectation, the ability to be peaceful and nothing else, to be calm and nothing else. There can be no expectation because

expectation creates anxiety, reinforcing the elements. Serenity cannot exist with expectation or desire which both limit our connection to truth.

This is our struggle, our daily battleground. One way we can focus is to keep examining our motives, keep asking why, why am I in this state, why am I doing this, what is my intention, what is the purpose of this intention, what's in it for me? When we recognize there is something in it for me, for the egocentric self, we know our attitude is wrong.

The self functions in everything we do, difficult to give it up, difficult to give up the clamor to exist, to see the world in a new way which does not include the self, does not see it as the focus of whatever we think or do. We have spent a lifetime building up this self, making it disappear is difficult, hard to analyze. We need to imagine the world without us, ourself without us. This sense of 'without us' offers a place where motive becomes a mirror which is wiped clean, a place where we have no agenda but God's. This place is a different existence.

God is everywhere, we cannot package Him, put Him in a corner or hold onto Him for safekeeping. What we can do is let His essence flow through us, this is a way to know Him within us. We have to be a vacuum tube, empty, but something can be pulled through. When truth is pulled through it is there, when we are completely empty truth flows through us, but we cannot hold onto it if we are not consistently empty. Once we fill ourself up again the truth can no longer flow through, we have created blocks, obstacles. Truth comes and goes, purity comes and goes, emptiness comes and goes.

Learn how to go to a place of emptiness, a place without motive, without expectation, a place where everything goes on without us, without our image. Here there

is serenity, peace, the great understanding that existence goes on without all our pushing and pulling, without our participation. This is so unlike the way we have lived and the record we keep of our history. Our life has been based on the things we pushed and pulled, we have recorded an autobiography, we know what we have been through, what we still go through; in our limited way we know what works in terms of pushing and pulling. No matter our worldly status we all go through this, we have taken care of washing ourself, feeding ourself, we have to take care of these things. No matter how we do it, we do it whether we are a beggar or a king.

On whatever level we live, our life certainly fascinates us. If this is our only point, if we are so fascinated by the self we are lost in the same fascination we had at the age of three, “Look at me, look what I can do!” We can spend a lifetime doing this, and we probably have had moments when we knew success or accomplishment, as if they had been our achievement, our responsibility.

We should stop being clever, get over the need to feel special, get over our sense of a separate life. God exists in everything, everywhere; if we define ourself as separate our definition is exactly opposite to His. As the definition of our separateness grows our ability to converge with His totality falls away. We have been told to examine the major religions because together they constitute what has been sent. Study them, incorporate everything, be tolerant, be inclusive.

As we separate others we separate God. If we separate ourself from Jesus we separate Jesus and what he taught, if we separate ourself from Moses we separate Moses and what he taught, we are missing that. Unity means including everything, there is no

unity with just a portion or part of the whole. This means we need to be a repository for every good thing, we are not separate, we are inclusive.

This state of inclusiveness, the state of nonseparation means certain other qualities naturally abate. When we are part of everything there is no resentment, no caste, no status, no difference of religions, we are inclusive, everything is part of who we are. We should see ourself in this expansive way, we need to be like God, expansive and all-inclusive. He created everything we see, both the right and the wrong, the wrong must be eliminated but everything right must be included. Every step of the way we have to be inclusive, we have to keep bringing everyone in, not pushing anyone away.

There are dangers in this world we need to be aware of, certain things we have to stay away from. This does not mean we cannot be inclusive, it means we have to be careful, understand what we can safely integrate and what we cannot, understand where we can walk safely and where we cannot. Our openness should be intact, if openness shuts down God cannot pass through us.

This understanding must be strong, our understanding, cleansing motive must be strong. To make the transition from the mundane to the holy is something we have to practice because we do always return to the world, like dolphins who dive but still need to come up for air. We have bodies, we are not without bodies, we do have our worldly nature. When we are engaged by that worldly nature we must be able to come back to our spiritual nature, we should know what makes the transition and practice it, make it part of our capacity.

Focus can help with this transition, we need to be aware, know when we are too worldly, too separate, and make the transition, we need to pray for the transition allowing

us to recognize His grace. We have an outer performance and an inner performance which the outer can represent, we need both. What is not the same inside and outside is hypocritical; be attuned to the inner and the outer, make that unity complete, do not be separate, do not have one way of acting here and some other way there.

Truly enlightened teachers treat us all the same way whether they have known us for twenty years or we have just met, there is no difference for them, but we react differently with everyone. For the luminous teacher there are no strangers, everyone is included, everyone is a friend.

We need to develop all the qualities of such holy beings. Our ability to go to a mosque, a church, a temple or a synagogue, to pray sincerely there is a sign of growth, a sign of our ability to be inclusive, to be an umbrella protecting everyone without differentiation because God does not differentiate. He does not give more to one and less to another, He does everything fairly, with justice, and we should also be fair and just.

These are basic things, part of being human in the true sense of being human. If this humanity spreads real change will occur, if even one of us becomes truly human change will occur. We do not recognize how great an influence one true human being can have on the world. If a few come to the place of holiness everything will change. May we search for light, may God bring peace and tranquility to the world.