

CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY

God has only to say, “Be!” and something is brought into being, it exists. If God wants something to occur it happens, we are subject to these events, we are subject to God’s wishes and intention. However our memory is short, we are so arrogant we forget the nature of our place in the world. When we lived in an agrarian society, to maintain a livelihood we understood our reliance on God’s gifts on a daily basis. We realized that crops would grow if there was rain, but rain was not under our control, nor was drought, the climate, too cold or too hot, this was not under our control.

As time passed we developed methods of manufacturing and production. We used to live on the land in a factory without a roof, then we created factories with a roof, a roof which gave us the illusion we no longer depended on God for our sustenance. Here we could control the weather, control the elements, control our life as we could not before, and this we have called the advance of civilization. With this advance we have drifted away from our reliance on God, drifted away from the belief that control is ultimately in His hands, not ours.

This must have something to do with our short memory span, our inability to grasp reality as we are overtaken by illusion, by the media, by forms of technology. Our technology has so overwhelmed us it has begun to replace our belief in God with a belief in technology and the power of man. We now believe that if we say, “Be!” it can be so, we believe that world governments can dictate peace, world governments can dictate prosperity, can dictate tolerance, and on a more local level, we believe our government controls a variety of situations. Now we seem to believe that we can legislate everything

into existence, we can legislate the reduction of poverty, we can legislate education, we even believe we can legislate peace.

We live in a world lying between prehistory and history, between that agrarian society and this technological society. Different parts of the world exist simultaneously in different stages of history, in different cultures with different levels of technical capacity. Some who live with limited technology believe in its danger, some who live with greater technology believe it can solve every problem.

Thinking, conscious people live in a world where they see beyond their short-term memory, they see certain principles in this world controlling the lives of everyone around them, they have an inkling of the condition of man, the true condition of man not subject to historical change. Were human beings different in the fourth century from the way they are now, were they different in the sixth century, is there a difference between the condition of a man riding a donkey in an agrarian village and a man in the space ship on his way to the moon, are they subject to different things?

There is no one alive from the fourth century or the sixth century, there is no one alive from 1850. It is apparent that we live on this earth for a specific span of what we call time, no matter the advances science has devised; we have not been able to overcome the ultimate situations of life, hunger, disease, old age and death. All this is part of our condition no matter how much we worship our abilities, our technology and the superiority of our intellect, we still cannot overcome these things.

In our struggle with life and memory, we readily forget the problems we cannot overcome, we ignore them until they are presented to us in a powerful way, the sickness or death of a close relative, a mother or father, the sickness or death of a brother or sister,

then we have a perspective on our mortality which we lost sight of and confused with technology. When we reach that point of being truly conscious of our mortality, our limited stay in this world, we are more open to God, an openness which takes us to new areas, new vistas, then our belief in the precepts of religion becomes more important for our existence, for our life.

Perhaps the attractiveness of the things in the world is responsible for our inability to remain focused, perhaps they make us fall away from the understanding of what is real, the reality described for us by God in His scriptures, described by the saints, the prophets and friends of God. They have explained both the nature of reality and this transitory phase of our existence, they have explained there is more than this world, there is a resurrection, a judgment and life after this life. When we are unaware of our mortality we are unaware of this reality; as we come closer to an understanding of mortality, a more realistic view of mortality, we begin to understand the nature of existence in its entirety, instead of our short-term phase of existence in this body on earth.

Let us call being conscious of our mortality being awake and being unconscious of it asleep. When we are awake we are more aware of our inability to control things around us, aware that we are subject to the laws of God, to the way He has disposed events and things, including our involvement with them. We are aware that our push or inclination to have things behave a certain way, to have them develop as we want them to is not in our control, even when we believe we are in charge. The more we are asleep the more we take this world as reality and immortality as the nature of our being. We believe it is up to us to push and pull our existence in different directions.

These directions can be either moral or immoral; the point is we think we can push and pull, we think we can control events. When we have a true understanding of what morality is, that belief in control is immoral in itself, whether the events we push towards are moral or immoral. It is immoral because we have taken upon ourselves something which does not belong to us. We do live in the world, we have been given instructions for life in the world by God, we have to do what is moral and right not only for ourselves, but for everyone we engage as well, everyone we touch or encounter, everyone we influence or who influences us.

We are in a dual situation, two positions at the same time, a situation which might not seem possible as we float between them. We might never find a place where it all comes together, yet we have to deal with it, we need the patience, the perseverance and faith that we will eventually find the place where we can see both worlds simultaneously, where we understand them both. We should move forward with the understanding we are obligated to do all we can, knowing at the same time the results are not in our hands, giving homage and praise to the One in whose hands everything is. We must never forget the dual obligation.

This is the detachment we lose in our sleeping state; when we lose that detachment, no matter what we do, if it is right it is only by accident. If we fail to understand that our positive acts are not ours—they come from compliance with His will—we have lost our way. When we recognize that our way belongs to Him we can truly learn who we are, we can grasp reality and know that the two worlds are located next to each other.

This path means we act as if we believe in the world, but understand there is nothing here to believe in. We do our duty, we do what is necessary in this world as if it were reality, knowing that it is not. None of this is easy because our first responsibility is always to Him, we have to know that our first responsibility is always to Him. By behaving this way we change, we become less in a positive sense, less arrogant, less demanding, less insistent, less all-knowing. It is not simple, the solutions here are not simple, to act when we do not exist is not simple.

To understand that when we look at each other or at the world where everything appears to be one way, but is actually different, this is not easy, yet it is what we have been handed. We can choose to deal with it or go to sleep, we can walk through the dream as if it were reality, giving homage to the dream, giving praise to the dream and nothing to the reality of our existence, no thought to the limits of our existence. Accepting the dream means not thinking this body will decay in time, not thinking it will disappear, it means giving no thought to resurrection, to the judgment which will come, no thought to any of this as we act. We do not remember that God provides for each of us, that He holds each of us dear; if we mistreat any of those He holds dear, we are mistreating our relationship with Him.

The ability to make things happen is not in our hands, although we have to act in the world as if it were. More important than the results of our actions are the things we do to produce results. If we act in inappropriate ways because we believe in specific results, we have violated the core of our existence and being. We need to neutralize every aspect of the self which acts against God's will, we need to neutralize every aspect of the self

which acts beyond the bounds of the behavior prescribed for us by those who know both worlds. Even though we do not know both worlds, we have to act as if we did.

Performance for both worlds must be carried out simultaneously. The only thing which can hold everything together until we exist in reality is strong faith in what God and His prophets have prescribed for us. First, we need to be sure the teachers we follow are teachers of truth, then follow them. We cannot make up our own rules. By following theirs it opens something up for us, a sweetness, a taste of what is available, the reward for following and understanding reality. This available sweetness is greater than any treasure the world can give us, it is an understanding which protects us from all the fluctuations of existence.

When things are not going the way we think they should, we think things are out of control. At that time we are incapable of seeing reality and we think perfection has slipped away even though we are incapable of seeing perfection. Everything is in God's hands, He controls everything. When we think we are in control we have lost sight of reality, when we think that armies and navies control power in the world we have lost sight of reality, when we think politicians make ultimate decisions we have lost sight of reality. Still, we have to protect ourselves, we need appropriate government, we must move in careful, positive directions knowing that final control is in His hands. This knowledge must temper us because the only person we can control is ourselves, the only control we have is to put ourselves in His hands. This is the only true choice, any other means we have lost our way, it means we have taken the wrong fork in the road, we have taken a path which leads to desolation and death, not for the world but for ourselves, for our true life.

May the focus necessary to find our way be given to each of us. When we are not focused, may He give us the faith to restore our sight, to heal our blindness so that the truth will be clear again.