

THE RESONANCE OF PEACE

May the peace and blessings of God be with you, now and always. Much of the difficulty in the world is caused by the need of some individuals to distinguish themselves, to identify themselves as superior, different, as better. This need for distinction, the need to be separate is directly opposite to the need for unity, for merging. The path to God requires the disappearance of the self. It should be evident that the path of purposeful distinctiveness, purposeful separation is opposite to the work required for genuine peace.

The prophets came to bring the message that there is a path to God, there is a way to approach Him, there are instructions and rules governing the state of being which allows this. Different prophets came to different groups of people. Many of us today have known holy men whose circle we have stepped into, not a large circle, a small circle where we began to learn. At times, now and in the past, some people have wanted their circle to be bigger, some people have thought the circle was more important than the message, that increasing the size of the circle was more important than the path itself. If this process evolves without any checks, eventually the religion becomes more important than the prophets, the religion becomes more important than the message.

This phenomenon begins with individuals wanting to distinguish themselves, proceeds to groups wanting to distinguish themselves, then to religions acting as individuals who want to distinguish themselves, to be separate, to compel others to join them. Their sense of superiority is enhanced by the number of followers.

This problem at the root of many religious troubles is difficult to eradicate.

Change makes the hierarchy of religions feel threatened. Take for example, the teacher who talks of tolerance for all religions, who teaches there is no significant difference among them, at their core they all carry a message we can follow to take us to God. This teacher who explains how following the truth of any religion can bring us to our destination, how that gives us the right to practice as we choose, this teacher will clearly have trouble with the authorities in any group trying to promote its own way.

Religions have become, in a large sense, not only a business but also much more than a business, they have become identities for people, what makes them tick, what makes them think they are who they are. For many the religion has become their reason for living; for some the support and spread of a certain religion, finding converts for their religion is paramount. What happens eventually to those who want to distinguish themselves most, who strive for distinction, who will gain converts at whatever cost, these people end by imposing their version of the truth, their way of seeing things by whatever means necessary. They lose any sense of boundaries, any sense of limits.

Scriptures talk about such people who have lost their sense of limits—we are to speak to them, bring them back to the permissible, we are not to compel them, we are to advise them, remind them. If we present ourselves as purveyors of religion, if we are trying to get our religion into the marketplace, if we use force, if we compel, we have lost our sense of limits. If we lose our tolerance we have lost our sense of limits, we have also lost our sense of the way, our sense of the true path. All the religions need to be reminded that their path is the path to God, and this path to God is an individual relationship between each man or woman and the Creator. Religion prescribes a method of return to the place we came from. Once we lose sight of this, if we think of world dominion for religious

purposes, or for any utopian purpose, we have changed the basic function of religion.

We do not believe in this world alone, we know that everything here will disappear. If we think we need to build religious monuments in this world to the glory of God, we do not understand the glory of God. God does not need our monuments, God does not need us to proclaim Him, God needs us to be like Him. If we do not understand that, we have lost the understanding of the difference between words and a state of being, we have lost the understanding of the difference between slogans and a state of being. We have come to the point where we are talking instead of being, we have lost the vibration which is God and no longer understand resonance. The true path is about His resonance.

Creation is what God has made. He does not need us to create temples, to create monuments, to create marches or movements on His behalf. He does not need us to wave His flag, He needs us to be like Him. He needs us to carry the vibration of peace and tolerance within us so that when we walk into a room peace and tolerance enter the room, so that people can feel peace and tolerance are with them, His truth is there understood with loving kindness. His truth is not understood with harshness, it is not understood with separation. Peace among human beings exists when we are peaceful, and peace is available through oneness with God, not in any other way. We cannot merely proclaim we are peaceful.

Wars and civil wars occur because there is no peace in the hearts of the people. Even in the absence of apparent differences people create occasions for separation. Without a relationship with God, without love in the heart, without that peace of the inner being, without the reality of individual peace, there is no true peace even if we proclaim it. We have to understand the reality of peace, and as people of religion, as people who

walk a path, we have to be first to proclaim tolerance, first to proclaim kindness, we have to be first to proclaim love, not just for those who are like ourselves, but for everyone.

This does not mean we should lose our own way, that we should separate ourselves from our own way, but it does mean we should make our way pleasant to those we meet. We need to let them understand we follow this path because it has melted our heart, because there was a genuine conversion, the way opened within us, the way of God's kindness and love. This is what we need to represent, and when we encounter people who are not like that, our love needs to be strong enough to be constant at that meeting. We need to be those who sell the message, not the package, and we need to know the difference. A well-wrapped package with nothing inside is a great disappointment. We have to show that we are more than the wrapping paper, that there is more within than meets the eye. In any case, this eye cannot see the truth, the inner eye sees the truth. We should learn how to perceive things differently.

For this there is a need for an individual relationship, a mentoring program. We need mentors for our growth, understand that we need an individual relationship with a mentor. Now this word mentor can be used in many ways, it can mean a teacher, a sheikh, a guru, a rabbi, a minister, it can mean a priest. If the connection is genuine there is a relationship. Then we ourselves must become capable of having such a relationship with others, take on the mentoring we are given and pass it on. This cannot be done unless it is up close, unless it is done by taking on the burdens of those we are with, by having the patience, the time and wisdom to understand those burdens and deal with them, to show through our example, through what we have learned how burdens can be removed.

Such work does not happen with hierarchical commands, it happens on a personal level, it happens one heart at a time. We cannot wave a wand to make people walk the path of peace and truth. The karma, experience and burdens they have accumulated, the fascinations of the world are so overwhelming it might take years of digging for an understanding to develop. Sages have told us it can take many years, yet we think we can proclaim and change states of being when words are all we proclaim, philosophies are all we proclaim.

There is an aphorism going back to the fourteenth century which says that the true path used to be a state of being without a name, now it has many names but no state of being. If they were saying this hundreds of years ago, what about now? Is it something we talk about or is it something we are? Is it something we tell other people about or is it something we are? When someone meets us do they think my God, something is going on here, I am aware of it, I can feel it in the vibratory reaction I have to this person. Is this what is going on, or are we just talking?

In ancient biblical times certain people tried to reach God outwardly. They built a great tower making it as high as they could, thinking if they kept building it higher and higher they would eventually reach heaven. This was an external projection of an inner desire culminating in a worldly creation. The Bible tells us God put an end to this by diversifying the languages spoken by those people building the tower. When they could no longer communicate, they could no longer build the tower.

For those who understand, the lessons here are plain. Initially, we understand we cannot build a stairway made of stone to heaven, but as we look deeply we find our way to God comes by ending the separations among men, and we begin with external

separations like language, culture and race. They are not true separations, we have to see through them, we have to see that we are not separate, that we have been given hurdles to jump, we have been given difficulties to surmount. If we all speak the same language, if we all come from the same culture, the same race, we take it for granted we are going the same way, but these are merely external similarities. Do we stop to understand each other's hunger, do we stop to understand each other's pain, do we feel each other's pain, do we know each other's difficulties, can we see the presence of God in each other? Do we understand that our true sensibilities are found in a level deeper than language, culture, color, race, nationality or religion? They are not the inner unity where the truth is found.

These are things we need to know as human beings, things we need to know and actualize to create a world where we can live as God meant us to live; it happens one heart at a time. When we are more worried about shouting at other people, telling them what they should be doing to promote peace, if this is our path we have lost the purpose of our life. We need to shout at ourself to be peaceful. One person's truth can be tyranny for another. To insist that everyone wants our truth, everyone needs our truth, even if they do not want it we should force it on them, this turns God into a tyrant. We need to understand and be tolerant in a way that does not disturb our true intention, forgiving in a way that does not interfere with our own forgiveness. The commitment to our own path should be strong enough so that our dedication is unswerving. We can only remind and advise, as the prophets did, we cannot compel. If we understand this state and live it as an example, we can show others who might also freely choose to live this way too.

With God's help, the major religions will begin to understand this, the fanaticism

which has taken hold in so many parts of this world, in so many different ways, will begin to fade. Fanaticism is destructive no matter the label. We all believe our own label is acceptable, not fanatic, but we must have tolerance no matter the label we choose. As people of the path we have to be tolerant in every situation, we have to bring love to the table, bring God's way to the table. We must be that peace; if we are not models of peace who will be, where will it come from? If we become human beings who are vessels of God we are filled with peace. To look for it in any other way, in any other place or for any other reason means only that true peace is not available, it is merely an imitation which will fade and crumble.

Do we believe the world is held back from destruction because of the saints, the great holy beings and friends of God, or do we believe we are protected by armies, guns, diplomats, political movements and politicians? Do we believe that those who have purified themselves and become vessels of God can influence what goes on around them, that their resonance can influence what goes on in the world and make it peaceful? Do we believe we can be someone like that? If we do, what are we doing about it, what are we doing to purify ourself, to make peace resonate through us? If we do not engage the process of transformation to become a true human being, we are promoting illusion rather than truth and reality. This transformation is the work we have been given, the work we must do. May we understand it and be transformed into vessels of God's will.