

SINCERITY IN FAITH

As we proceed through life we discover we have certain things and we lack certain things, there are times when we feel a sense of want, times when we think we need something, when we are caught by the desire for something we want. In this state of intense desire or longing we can be overcome by emotion, overwhelmed by the fear we will not get what we want. This desire can be excessive longing for a certain man or woman, convinced our life is incomplete without that person; it can be the desire for money, convinced our life is incomplete without wealth; it can even be the desire for health, convinced our life is threatened by some terrible illness.

The mind approaches any desire much the same way—to understand how desires affect us we have to understand the mind's approach to desire. The mind looks for satisfaction in the world, it assumes the world is a place which will give us what we need to be satisfied, to satisfy our existence and our desire. But the world is a place of limits, not a source of abundance, fulfillment is necessarily incomplete. When we look at things which are limited for fulfillment, we fail to understand their limits.

Until we look for fulfillment in a place which is limitless abundance we cannot be satisfied, we cannot find peace. There are different ways of understanding this, easy enough on an intellectual level, talking about it on an intellectual level, but this is basically hypocritical: if our understanding resonates only mentally all we are doing is discussing concepts, it is hypocrisy until we absorb it entirely, in the totality of our being. Until we make this recognition a functioning part of who we are we are not engaging reality. This means sincerity, the depth of our sincerity. If our beliefs are not sincere we

are not at peace, we exist in fear of what is missing, what is lacking. This fear can be paralyzing, it can keep us from moving on, it can paralyze us emotionally and physically, it can make us sick.

To understand our own nature we need to realize that our base desires, which are incapable of sincere belief in God, want to keep us in this state of desire. The lower self is attached to the world, its life exists in the world where it wants to keep us, and so these desires go on reminding us of what we need, what we do not have. With this insistence on what we need, what we do not have, what we have to be afraid of, they accomplish their purpose. They paralyze us and the forces of darkness and illusion have us in their grip; they have paralyzed us, made us their own because we believe in the world.

To transfer our belief from belief in the world to belief in God entails more than just talking about it. To have sincerity, to be in that place of faith, certitude and determination with deep strength and conviction requires a complete change in who we are. There is a difference between someone who believes in worldly things and a person who does not, reactions are quite different in those who do not have such ties to the world, who are not bound to it in the same way. They float more easily in the world because it has little effect on their priorities.

If the world is all we know, if we have not spent time trying to know something beyond it, if we have tried to search for kindness from the world, tried to find positive things there, suffering about everything which needs correcting in a place we wanted to make utopia, this worldly dream becomes our reason for existing. But perfection already exists in the world, what is missing is our ability to see it, our failure to believe sincerely that God is in control. We do not see perfection because we lack absolute faith, certitude

and determination, because we do not believe deeply what the scriptures and other holy books tell us about God, about His existence within creation.

We see things and make judgments from our own limits and perspective, just as the angels made judgments from their own perspective before the creation of man. The angels, seeing to the extent of their capacity, told God that man would cause problems in the world, why should they bow to someone who would cause problems? Human beings were created to know more, even though there are degrees in our capacity. We might think we are in tune with who we are, that we have some idea of human capacity, that we are enlightened although we remain at some lower level. This means we have created an idol of our self for our self, believing in our own version of reality, of truth, when this is contrary to what has been revealed. We must always believe in the possibility of enlightenment, we must also always believe there is more.

This is the necessary humility which allows progress, which keeps us functioning in this world with His will, not ours. As soon as we think we have achieved a certain state, we have lost the understanding that we come from Him, we belong to Him and go back to Him. If we are afraid to go back to Him we love the world too much, we believe in it too much. The reality of our belief that we want to go back to Him must be sincere.

To understand sincerity we should look at the stories of Abraham, the stories of Rabia. They would accept no substitute for Him, an essential understanding. Rabia said, "I do not want heaven and I do not fear hell, I want only You." When Abraham was in the fire he rejected everyone who came to save Him because he wanted God, He wanted only God's help. This hunger for God must develop in us, this desire for God must develop in us. What is inappropriate for the world can be appropriate for God; we must

be sincere in our desire for Him, He must be a genuine part of our daily existence. We have to walk with Him, we have to talk to Him, we have to integrate our existence in His.

Secular society will never understand this relationship with God—as we move towards secularism, this relationship is less and less understood. In ancient cultures there was no separation of church and state, and in reality there is no separation, but for harmony among different beliefs we have developed this to deal fairly with each other politically. It is necessary because there can be fanaticism and intolerance in religions, still, we have to live as though there were no separation between God and anything. We have to live in the world pretending to believe in it. This world demands certain things of us, we have to be actors here without bringing that act into our life; if the act becomes our life this world is our stage, and it is not real. We should distinguish our world from reality, and integrate them correctly.

May we each be deeply sincere in our beliefs, sincere enough to feel the presence of the divine at every moment, so aware of His vibration we are free of every fear. May we be content with our understanding of the perfection in His creation, content to know He is caring for us at every moment, He does not forget us for a moment. He is closer to us than our own jugular vein, closer than the beat of our heart, than our thoughts. May we know He is the essence of our life, may we be exalted in that certitude wherever we go, whatever we say or do.