

THE EMPTY CUP

A young man once went to a minister and said, “Tell me the difference between comedy and tragedy, I want to be a playwright.”

The minister looked at him and answered, “You see that roof over there, how steep it is? Two days ago as I looked out my window, someone was putting new shingles on it to stop the leak. When he fumbled with a few shingles he slid down the roof, fell to the ground and broke his leg. That is comedy. Yesterday as I was preparing my sermon, looking through the papers I planned to read, I got a paper cut. That is a tragedy.”

The way we understand things sometimes has to do with how close they are to us, how much impact they have on us. We give different importance and thought to things which affect us directly. Since we all walk around in a body, every time we collide with something it makes an impact; we are always bumping into things that affect us. Now the question we should ask is, how subtle is this body? If we were composed of gas, when we collide with a wall there would be very little impact. Because we are not gas, when we hit the wall there is a major impact. We also have to examine our inner subtlety. Be like smoke, not easily damaged. What kind of collision makes a dent in us, a dent so overwhelming it needs to be repaired?

If someone looks at us the wrong way, does that make a dent in us? If someone cuts us off when we are driving, does that make a dent in us? If we are in a certain situation which becomes difficult, does that make a dent in us? What is the level of drama in our existence, how much credence do we give these outer manifestations we keep bumping into? What is our level of involvement, how intensely do we react to things

which react to us, how much credence do we give them, how much praise do we give them, how much importance, how much time and effort? How much thought do we give these smaller things in life, how obsessed are we? Do we have priorities, how much importance do we give to this body, how much to our soul? How much time do we spend on our interaction with the world and how much on our interaction with God?

Let us call our interaction with the world the small interaction and our interaction with God the large interaction. When we are engaged in petty thought or petty things, the small things that deal with the world, there is no room to engage the large thing. Being obsessed with the small things fills our cup, there is no room for anything else; we have to empty that cup to make room for God. If we ask someone a question when we are full of answers, we cannot hear the answer—we are merely waiting for them to stop talking so that we can tell them. If we are full of the world and turn to God, there is no room for Him to interact with us. This is the work we have to do, learning how to empty ourself.

We need to be rid of comparisons, comparing ourself with other people, with other levels of wealth, status or fame. Comparisons become a burden as they give importance to certain worldly things. When we allow these comparisons we lose ourselves to status, to emotions, to thoughts, we abandon our good qualities to worldly status. If we look around to count what other people have or to count what we do not have, we forget what we have, we forget the blessings we have. When we consider someone else's fortune we forget our own, suddenly there are differences to consider. If we look at worldly fortune we have lost ourself in our concern for status, for what the world has to give, we are immersed in the small things which fill our cup. When our cup is full of small things there is no room for the large thing.

When we engage petty obsession there is no place for what is important, when we are obsessed with the world there is no place for true majesty, no place for real grandeur. Involving ourself with small things means we become small, but God is not small. When we think that what we have been given is limited, we limit ourself. We create our state with our attitude: if we think we have not been given enough, we have created a situation in which we have not been given enough. That is our attitude and our state, but God does not live in insufficiency, He exists in a cornucopia of giving while we wrap ourself in veils of insufficiency which drive us away. He is not the one pushing us away, we push ourself away with an inability to accept His grace, infinitely available from Him, as we limit totality to the things we want. Millions of gifts are given, yet none of them are satisfactory because they are not the right size, the right shape, the right color.

We have to stop interfering with glory, with grace, we have to stop thinking we know what we need, we know what we want. God is the One who knows, and what He provides is not only sufficient, it is also glorious; we have to accept the glory of what He provides and exult in it, be joyous in it, be loving in our acceptance of it. We should correct our attitude so that the drama of the world is less and our ability to go to a place of silence is increased. We need to go to that place of silence because alignment with Him occurs in this silence. When we are still the vibration and resonance of truth can touch us, can affect us.

If we are overwhelmed by obsession, by thoughts of measuring things, having things, wanting things, being resentful of things, engaging qualities which are not His, we have separated ourself. We need to go within, be less pulled by magnetizing attractions, affected less by hypnotic fascinations and slow down, become quiet, slow down and lose

interest in the comedy and the tragedy. We should be interested in glory, interested in what God is, what He has to offer, what He makes available at the place where we meet.

This meeting comes by being very still, by allowing moments in our life for absolute stillness, for quiet and sanctuary with Him away from the ordinary, away from the small and petty. We are with Him for His sake, to be in His glory, for His qualities, for His words given to the prophets and the friends of God, the holy ones. As we make that withdrawal, as we withdraw to Him we escape from the obsessions of the world which no longer affect us. When the world no longer affects us we are free to vibrate, free to resonate with His vibration, His resonance. When this resonance overtakes us we know there is a place where truth exists, we know we can be in that place, we can merge with that place, we know there is love.

Then we know the truth of sustenance and mercy, we know the truth of compassion and kindness, we know His greatness and the generosity of His spirit as we enter that place. His generosity becomes our generosity, His love becomes our love, His spirit becomes our spirit, His resonance becomes our resonance, and that is a blessing for us and for others. Now we are no longer here, He is here, He is here in our midst because we have allowed Him to be here. This is our work, why we come together, allowing Him to be in our midst, allowing the sanctity of His existence to be present, to be felt and seen.

The aura of grace on each face emanates His resonance when we enter that space together, we reinforce it for each other, we strengthen our knowledge, we strengthen those who are weak as they now believe what they witness. The confidence of those who have less is increased as they realize it is not about the self, it is about making space for Him, the most glorious. The self-esteem of those who have too much confidence is

reduced as they realize it is not about esteem, it is about His glory. When we make a place for this realization everyone begins recognizing we are all one family, we are one funny family of mankind, a glorious family of unity, of gentleness, kindness, mercy and compassion. We know it is possible, it can exist, and when we have this recognition together we witness that it does exist, we have felt it, we have resonated with it, we have become part of it. This has so overwhelmed us we have forgotten ourself and remembered only Him.

We all have dramatic situations in our lives, every paper cut is dramatic. Understand our drama, realize how much time we spend on it, how obsessed we are with it, as if we were playwrights. We are, in a very real way, the playwright of our life, we write our script then wait to see if it turns out the way we want, but when it does not we are upset. We should let Him to be the One who writes the script and learn how to take direction. We propose, we keep making proposals even though we need to propose less and understand the flow of things, understand where it takes us, be on an adventure not on a script.

We try to align the future, yet when it does not coincide with our expectation we have serious anxiety, depression or sadness. There is a flow to things we should understand, know how to be in it, how to be part of it. We ought to be agile enough to take the twists and turns without resentment, without looking back, without regret. If we go through life building up regret then regret is what we become, and regret is not one of God's qualities. Anything which is not one of His qualities literally crowds His qualities out.

We need to start over again each day, start over with the intention to be on His path, allowing Him to guide us, accepting what happens. This does not mean we do not work hard, this does not mean we do not have to make a great effort, it means we should not be too involved in results, we should be less concerned about results, we should be more concerned about effort. God has only to say, “Be!” and it is. If He wanted everything to turn out perfectly, it would. What He expects from us is correct action and effort. Realize what we are about is effort, effort, correct action and intention. Things turn out as He wills, not as we will. We are capable of intention, effort and correct action; be satisfied with doing things correctly and be less attached to results.