

KNOWING WHERE TO LOOK

One type of insanity has been defined as doing the same thing again and again, expecting different results. If we apply that definition to world history, we might conclude the world has been engaged in mass insanity. One reason we have so much individual insanity is excessive involvement with that world when we should be spending time trying to figure out who we are.

If we look to the world for answers, for responses, if we look outside ourselves for specific things, all we get is what these outer things have to offer, they can only give to the extent they have something to offer. A cobra can only offer poison, things can only give what they truly are, nothing more, this is what they can give. If we expect anything else we are disappointed, a dangerous disappointment in certain circumstances.

There is an old teaching story about a boat on a river, a large boat with animals in the hold. When a storm came up rocking the boat to pieces, the animals were all very frightened as the boat began to come apart. While the boat was breaking up a scorpion jumped on a camel's back. "Get off me!" said the camel.

The scorpion pleaded, "The boat is breaking up and I can't swim. I beg you, please carry me to the shore."

The camel answered, "You're a scorpion, I can't trust you."

The scorpion replied cleverly, "Look at it this way, you can swim, I can't. When this boat is destroyed I will be utterly dependent on your mercy for survival. Since I have to depend on that alone, I would be a fool to do anything to harm you. If I hurt you it will mean my own death."

With this in mind the camel decided to accept the scorpion and began to swim ashore. About two-thirds of the way across the river the scorpion stung the camel. As the poison entered its bloodstream the camel asked, “After everything you said, everything we talked about, why did you do that?”

The scorpion replied, “It is my nature.”

This is the situation in the world. We should understand the nature of the things we deal with, we should understand specifically what we are looking for and know where to look. Here is another teaching story. Late one night, about two o’clock in the morning, an old man was crouched down in front of a building in a small town, the only building on the street with a light. He was crawling around on his hands and knees when another man who was going home passed by. He saw the old man on his hands and knees and asked, “What are you doing?”

“I am looking for my keys.” The second man got down on his hands and knees to help him look.

The old man said, “It won’t make any difference if you help me look.”

“Why won’t it help?” the second man asked.

“Because I didn’t lose my keys here.”

“Where did you lose those keys?”

“In the woods.”

“Then why are you looking for them here?”

“Because this is the only place with a light.”

We have to know where to look, we have to know what we are looking for, we have to know that what we are looking for is available in the place where we are looking.

Most of the world, most of its people, spend a lifetime looking for things in places where they do not exist. The experience of so many people should have taught us where certain things are not to be found, but this is not the case, we have a common malady, a malady so common it might even be said that this sickness, this insanity is part of the collective karma of human consciousness. It is so pervasive that everyone shares it; we need to wake up to this aspect of our consciousness, we should fight to eliminate this insidious misunderstanding which is so deeply rooted that people are deluded, actually persuaded they have what they do not really have at all.

How does this happen? Some think they find peace with alcohol, others think they find peace with drugs. They have actually given up on the world because it has caused them nothing but pain, nothing but difficulty, concluding they can find the peace they are looking for with drugs or alcohol. In the 1960s a whole generation was caught up in that illusion, a pill to change our consciousness, to change our state of being. There was no need to work for change, all we had to do was take the right assortment of drugs. A Harvard professor preached that drugs were the answer; he was famous for what he advocated, his slogan was turn on, tune in and drop out, as if it could happen by magic. A lot of people were injured by drugs, people were deranged, crippled emotionally or physically, unable to function normally.

As we look at the false messiahs who have come and gone through history, as we look at the recurrence of messianic movements in different parts of the world, followed by the disappointment when that movement flounders, when the utopia is not established, we should understand there is another way, in spite of this mass hypnosis which convinces us something external can change us, take us, transform us.

A few years ago certain people were waiting for space ships to take them, committing mass suicide to allow themselves to be taken. There are witch doctors pretending to confer magic powers. Religions proclaim the coming of a messiah, yet there is already someone among us who will take us this very moment. He is that One, a messiah might come, but we do not know when that will be, nor do we know when Judgment Day will come, but until that day comes, until we are taken, there is another approach.

We need to become our own messiah, become that being who can open the path, transform our state so that we can reach the place we are looking for. We need to look to ourself to become, to be transformed, to become. Each of us individually needs to become, the work we need to do in our life is the work of becoming.

Now the question is, becoming what? How do we become? What is missing from our life? What leads to depression, what leads to anxiety, to unhappiness, giddiness or despair, to emotional states which are out of control? What is it? What is missing? That missing aspect of our existence is often described as inner peace, serenity, an existence without the need for something else, complete within itself.

This peace is available, its availability has been announced through the centuries, peace which comes with a specific kind of work. We are told that if we want to go to a certain place we must develop the state allowed in that place. To be a certain way we have to become what is allowed to be that way. To understand the nature of peace we have to be peaceful. We are what we become; there is a process of transformation, of becoming. To be successful we have to understand this process, understand where we are trying to go, where this transformation is possible.

It has been said that only God can pray to God, it has been said that only God can experience the qualities of God in their truest way. It has also been said that we are created in God's image, that when we were created God blew the breath of His spirit into us. Then who are we? Where did we come from, where are we meant to be, what are we meant to be, what is the true nature of a human being, what is this nature we have adapted to?

Are we defined by the degrees we have from universities, are we defined by the clothing we wear, by the language we speak, by our cultural institutions? Are we defined by the prophet we follow, defined by the name of the religion we say we belong to or do not belong to? How are we to be defined? Does God have a form, a religion? Does God have children, a style of dress, does He have degrees? Is God definable? Are we definable? If God is without form, without definition, beyond the scope of our understanding, as long as we are definable and within the scope of what can be explained, we have not come to the place we are trying to reach.

We need to enter the realm of the inexplicable, a realm beyond words where there is only experience. We have to go to a vibrating realm where the qualities of the Being who created us exist. We should understand that what our eyes see has limits, everything we see will disappear, including this thing we call our body. We should believe it is possible to connect with a reality greater than this body, it is possible to change our beliefs, a change which will transform our relationship with the world and with truth.

As long as we do not change our beliefs, as long as we hold onto the illusion we call the world and treat it with reverence, as if our life depended on it, we are incapable of change. Our life, our eternal existence depends on something else. Until we give our

reverence to that something else, until we give our respect to it, be obedient to that something else, until we make it our priority we are locked in wherever we are. What keeps us there is the inability to break through our system of belief, we are stuck in our beliefs which hold us in place, flypaper holding a fly. We shake our arms and legs but we are not moving, we take a plane from New York to Amsterdam but we are not moving.

All this movement is illusory because it is external. Slowly we learn that every external manifestation is unreal, illusion in a gold-plated frame, a lie. A title does not mean we have ability, doing something means we have ability.

Because we are confused we create a semblance of order by establishing grades of illusion, then we look for our place within the gradations, we aspire to reach certain plateaus of illusion as if that raises us higher. This is the same as moving from one place to another on sticky flypaper. We need to understand that real movement does not occur by taking one step and the next, real movement occurs by traveling through worlds while we are sitting still. We can go everywhere in the universe sitting in our chair.

There is a light within us, but our attention is focused on the world. Compared with this light, the world is an atom. When we cannot see the light we treat it as if it did not exist, and bow to the atom. We take what is less, much less, and treat it as if it were more, much more. We need to change our perception, understand how that change of perception can be reality. It begins with establishing a center which allows change to occur, with understanding the conditions relevant to that center. Where is it, what is it, what allows change to take place, where does that change take us, what must we do to go to that place?

They say it is more difficult for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Understand these metaphors and why they apply to us. What does a rich man mean? It is a man who has large quantities of the world, quantities of things, a man who takes these things with him as he tries to squeeze into a small place.

It is no more complicated than that, we cannot go to certain places if we are carrying certain things, we cannot swim carrying a house on our back. We are trying to swim, trying to swim from here to another world, to escape from a place where we are stranded, hoping to end up somewhere else. We need to learn how to do that, this body we carry has a limited duration, a limited time span and limits on what it can do. We should act with the understanding of these limits, something the world has forgotten. Once we do we can look for things which have no limit.

When we study the world we see that all creation has certain limits, but the divine qualities have no limit, they are the qualities which persist from generation to generation sustaining the existence of everything. We should study these qualities carefully, where do they come from, how do they take us from the pain of the world to peace? May we learn the reality of those qualities and be transformed.