

## STRESA, ITALY 1ST PUBLIC TALK 2ND JULY, 1933

**F**RIENDS, IN MY TALKS I am not going to weave an intellectual theory. I am going to speak of my own experience which is not born of intellectual ideas, but which is real. Please do not think of me as a philosopher expounding a new set of ideas with which your intellect can juggle. That is not what I want to offer you. Rather, I should like to explain that truth, the life of fullness and richness, cannot be realized through any person, through imitation, or through any form of authority.

Most of us feel occasionally that there is a true life, an eternal something, but the moments in which we feel that are so rare that this eternal something recedes more and more into the background and seems to us less and less a reality.

Now to me there is reality; there is an eternal living reality - call it God, immortality, eternity, or what you will. There is something living, creative, which cannot be described, because reality eludes all description. No description of truth can be lasting, for it can only be an illusion of words. You cannot know of love through the description of another; to know love, you yourself must have experienced it. You cannot know the taste of salt until you have tasted salt for yourself. Yet we spend our time looking for a description of truth instead of trying to find out the manner of its realization. I say that I cannot describe, I cannot put into words, that living reality which is beyond all idea of progress, all idea of growth. Beware of the man who tries to describe that living reality, for it cannot be described; it must be experienced, lived.

This realization of truth, of the eternal, is not in the movement of time, which is but a habit of the mind. When you say that you will realize it in course of time, that is, in some future, then you are only postponing that comprehension which must ever be in the present. But if the mind understands the completeness of life, and is free from the division of time into

the past, present, and future, then there comes the realization of that living eternal reality.

But since all minds are caught up in the division of time, since they think of time as past, present, and future, there arises conflict. Again, because we have divided action into the past, present, and future, because to us action is not complete in itself, but is rather something propelled by motives, by fear, by guides, by reward or punishment, our minds are incapable of understanding the continuous whole. Only when mind is free of the division of time can true action result. When action is born of completeness, not in the division of time, then that action is harmonious and is freed from the trammels of society, classes, races, religions and acquisitiveness.

To put it differently, action must become truly individual. Now I am not using that word "individual" in the sense of placing the individual against the many. By individual action I mean action that is born of complete comprehension, complete understanding by the individual, understanding not imposed by others. Where that understanding exists, there is true individuality, true aloneness - not the aloneness of escape into solitude, but the aloneness that is born of the full comprehension of the experiences of life. For the completeness of action, mind must be free of this idea of time as yesterday, today, and tomorrow. If mind is not liberated from that division, then conflict arises and leads to suffering and to the search for escapes from that suffering.

I say that there is a living reality, an immortality, an eternity that cannot be described; it can be understood only in the fullness of your own individual action, not as a part of a structure, not as a part of a social, political, or religious machine. Therefore you must experience true individuality before you can understand what is true. As long as you do not act from that eternal source, there must be conflict; there must be division and continual strife.

Now each of us knows conflict, struggle, sorrow, lack of harmony. These are the elements that largely make up our lives, and from them we try, consciously or unconsciously, to escape.

But few know for themselves the cause of conflict. Intellectually they may know the cause, but that knowledge is merely superficial. To know the cause is to be aware of it with both mind and heart.

Since few are aware of the deep cause of their suffering, they feel the desire to escape from that suffering, and this desire for escape has created and vitalized our moral, social, and religious systems. Here I have not time to go into details, but if you will think the matter over, you will see that our religious systems throughout the world are based on this idea of postponement and evasion, this searching for mediators and comforters. Because we are not responsible for our own acts, because we are seeking escape from our suffering, we create systems and authorities which will give us comfort and shelter.

What, then, is the cause of conflict? Why does one suffer? Why does one have to struggle ceaselessly? To me, conflict is the impeded flow of spontaneous action, of harmonious thought and feeling. When thought and emotion are inharmonious, there is conflict in action; that is, when mind and heart are in a state of discord, they create an impediment to the expression of harmonious action, and hence conflict. Such impediment to harmonious action is caused by the desire to escape, by the continual avoidance of facing life wholly, by meeting life always with the weight of tradition - be it religious, political, or social. This incapacity to face experience in its completeness creates conflict, and the desire to escape from it.

If you consider your thoughts and the acts springing from them, you will see that where there is the desire to escape there must be the search for security; because you find conflict in life with all its actions, its affections, its thoughts, you want to escape from that conflict to a satisfactory security, to a permanency. So your whole action is based on this desire for security. But actually, there is no security in life - neither physical nor intellectual, neither emotional nor spiritual. If you feel you are secure, you can never find that living reality; yet most of you are seeking security.

Some of you are seeking physical security through wealth,

comfort, and the power over others that wealth gives you; you are interested in social differences and social privileges that assure you of a position from which you derive satisfaction. Physical security is a crude form of security, but since it has been impossible for the majority of mankind to attain that security, man has turned to the subtle form of security which he calls spiritual or religious. Because of the desire to escape from conflict, you seek and establish security - physical or spiritual. The longing for physical security shows itself in the desire to have a substantial bank account, a good position, the desire to be considered somebody in the town, the striving for degrees and titles and all such meaningless stupidities.

Then some of you become dissatisfied with physical security and turn to security of a more subtle form. It is security still, but merely a little less obvious, and you call it spiritual. But I see no real difference between the two. When you are satiated with physical security or when you cannot attain it, you turn to what you call spiritual security. And when you turn to that, you establish and vitalize those things which you call religion and organized spiritual beliefs. Because you seek security you establish a form of religion, a system of philosophical thought in which you are caught, to which you become a slave. Therefore, from my point of view, religions with all their intermediaries, their ceremonies, their priests, destroy creative understanding and pervert judgment.

One form of religious security is the belief in reincarnation, the belief in future lives, with all that that belief implies. I say that when a man is caught up in any belief he cannot know the fullness of life. A man who lives fully is acting from that source in which there is no reaction, but only action; but the man who is seeking security, escape, must hold to a belief because from that he derives continual support, encouragement for his lack of comprehension.

Then there is the security created by man in the idea of God. Many people ask me whether I believe in God, whether there is a God. You cannot discuss it. Most of our conceptions of God, of reality, of truth, are merely speculative imitations. Therefore

they are utterly false, and all our religions are based on such falsities. A man who has lived all his life in a prison can only speculate about freedom; a man who has never experienced the ecstasy of freedom cannot know freedom. So it is of little avail to discuss God, truth; but if you have the intelligence, the intensity to destroy the barriers around you, then you will know for yourself the fulfillment of life. You will then no longer be a slave in a social or religious system.

Again, there is the security through service. That is, you like to lose yourself in the bog of activity, in work. Through this activity, this security, you seek to escape from facing your own incessant struggles.

So security is but escape. And since most people are trying to escape, they have made themselves into machines of habit in order to avoid conflict. They create religious beliefs, ideas; they worship the image of an imitation which they call God; they try to forget their inability to face the struggle by losing themselves in work. All these are ways of escape.

Now in order to safeguard security, you create authority. Isn't that so? To receive comfort, you must have someone or some system to give you comfort. To have security, there must be a person, an idea, a belief, a tradition, that gives you the assurance of security. So in our attempt to find security, we set up an authority and become slaves to that authority. In our search for security we set up religious ideals that we, in our fear, have created; we seek security through priests or spiritual guides whom we call teachers or masters. Or, again, we seek our authority in the power of tradition - social, economic, or political.

We ourselves, individually, have established these authorities. They did not come into being spontaneously. Through centuries we have been establishing them, and our minds have become crippled, perverted through their influence.

Or, suppose that we have discarded external authorities; then we have developed an inner authority which we call intuitional, spiritual authority - but which, to me, differs little from the external. That is, when mind is caught up in authority - whether

external or inner - it cannot be free, and therefore it cannot know true discernment. Hence, where there is authority born of the search for security, in that authority are the roots of egotism.

Now what have we done? Out of our weakness, our desire for power, our search for security, we have established spiritual authorities. And in this security, which we call immortality, we want to dwell eternally. If you look at that desire calmly, discerningly, you will see that it is nothing but a refined form of egotism. Where there is a division of thought, where there is the idea of "I", the idea of "mine" and "yours", there cannot be completeness in action, and therefore there cannot be the understanding of living reality.

But - and I hope you understand this - that living reality, that totality, expresses itself in the action of individuality. I have explained what I mean by individuality: the state in which action takes place through understanding, liberated from all standards - social, economic, or spiritual. That is what I call true individuality, because it is action born of the fullness of understanding, whereas egotism has its roots in security, in tradition, in belief. Therefore action induced by egotism is ever incomplete, is ever bound up with ceaseless struggle, with suffering and pain.

These are a few of the impediments and hindrances that prevent man from realizing that supreme reality. That living reality you can understand only when you have freed yourself from these hindrances. The freedom of completeness is not in the escape from bondage, but in the understanding of action, which is the harmony of mind and heart. Let me explain this more clearly. Most thinking people are intellectually aware of many hindrances. For instance, if you consider such securities as wealth, which you accumulate as a protection, or spiritual ideas in which you try to take shelter, you will see their utter futility.

Now if you examine these securities, you may intellectually see their falseness; but to me, that intellectual consciousness of impediment is not full awareness at all. It is merely an

intellectual conception, not a full consciousness. Full consciousness exists only when you are aware, both emotionally and mentally, of these hindrances. If you are thinking of these hindrances now, you are probably considering them only intellectually, and you say, "Tell me a way by which I can get rid of these impediments." That is, you are merely trying to conquer impediments, and thereby you are creating another set of resistances. I hope I have made this clear. I can tell you that security is futile, that it has no significance, and you may intellectually admit this; but as you have been accustomed to struggle for security, when you go from here you will merely continue that struggle, but now, against security; thereby you merely seek a new way, a new method, a new technique, which is but a renewed desire for security in another form.

To me there is no such thing as a technique for living, a technique for the realization of truth. If there were such a technique for you to learn, you would merely be enslaved by another system.

The realization of truth comes only when there is completeness of action without effort. And the cessation of effort comes through the awareness of hindrances - not when you try to conquer them. That is, when you are fully conscious, fully aware in your heart and mind, when you are aware with your whole being, then through that awareness you will be free from hindrances. Experiment and you will see. Everything that you have conquered has enslaved you. Only when you have understood an impediment with your whole being, only when you have really understood the illusion of security, you will no longer struggle against it. But if you are only intellectually conscious of hindrances, then you will continue to struggle against them.

Your conception of life is based on this principle. Your striving for spiritual achievement, spiritual growth, is the outcome of your desire for further securities, further aggrandizement, further glory, and hence this continual and ceaseless struggle.

So I say, do not seek a way, a method. There is no method, no way to truth. Do not seek a way, but become aware of the impediment. Awareness is not merely intellectual; it is both mental and emotional; it is completeness of action. Then, in that flame of awareness, all these impediments fall away because you penetrate them. Then you can perceive directly, without choice, that which is true. Your action will then be born out of completeness, not out of the incompleteness of security; and in that completeness, in that harmony of mind and heart, is the realization of the eternal.