



2017 Sacred Reading - Faith and Doubt,

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Faith and doubt are as light and darkness. The moments of faith are like the moments of the day, and the moments of doubt are like the moments of the night. And as both day and night appear in life, so do the hours of faith and the hours of doubt or darkness. Yet it is the seeking of the soul to reach that stage where it feels faith, and it is the nature of the soul to gather doubts round itself; therefore, the soul attracts both faith and doubt. If it happens to attract doubts more, then doubts will be gathered; if it attracts faith more, then more and more faith will come.

Doubts can be likened to clouds. If there is one cloud it will attract more clouds, and if there are many clouds gathered together still more will be attracted to join them. And if there is one ray of the sun shooting through the clouds it will scatter them, and once they are scattered they will be scattered more and more, and more and more light will manifest to view. In the same way doubts cover faith, but faith breaks doubts; thus, faith is more dependable, whereas doubts only come and go. It would not be an exaggeration to say that doubt is a disease, a disease which destroys faith; or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that doubt is the rust that eats the iron-like faith.

It is very easy to allow doubts to do their work, and it is difficult to keep faith. However much a person may be evolved, there comes a time when doubts take hold of him, and the moments when he is in doubt the light of intelligence disappears. Thus, there is constant conflict between doubt and faith; if there were not this enemy who always fights with faith, man could have done great things, wonderful things. Every man would have been perfect. This shows that the greater your faith is, the greater person you are; the more deeply rooted your faith is, the higher you will reach. One might ask whether it is possible to develop faith, whether it is possible to find faith. Yes, in everyone there is somewhere a spark of faith hidden, but sometimes it is so covered and clouded and buried that it needs digging; it needs to be dug out. And under what is it buried? Under the sand of doubt. As soon as you take it away, as soon as this sand is removed, then the water of faith springs up.

One can study this principle in a child. A child is always born with faith. When you say: this is water, this is bread, this is father, this is mother, the child at once accepts that it is so. It is only afterwards that doubts begin to come. When an infant grows up, and when it begins to listen to stories, it says: is it real? Then doubts begin to come. Very often the worldly knowledge gives us more and more

doubts; the experiences of the worldly life makes one doubt more and more. And when doubt becomes predominant in one's nature then one begins to doubt everything and everyone; then one doubts those who should not be doubted as well as those who can be doubted. Then a person will always have doubt before his eyes; no sooner does he cast his glance upon someone than the cloud of doubt stands between them. And in this way inspiration is lost, power is lost, personality is lost, and man has become a machine, a mechanism.

In the business world, in the world of industry, a man does not care about your feelings, about your being, about how much you are evolved, how deeply you feel, what your principles are, what your thoughts are. What a man is concerned with is whether you will sign a paper, and whether you will stamp that paper and see that there are two witnesses present; it does not matter who you are, what you are, as long as the paper is perfect! We are going to mechanical perfection, we seek after earthly perfection. Five hundred years ago, and this shows how gradually the world has changed, a Hindustani poet wrote that the days are gone when a value was attached to a man's personality. And so it is; this downward trend has already been going on for some centuries. It seems that man has no trust, no faith, in his fellow-man. The only thing he trusts is the written word.

The Greek story of Orpheus and Eurydice contains a beautiful teaching on this subject. The first part of the story is that Orpheus loved Eurydice, who lived among a degenerate people. This means that love even tries to lift up a soul which is thrown deep into the depths of the earth. And then Orpheus realized that Eurydice was taken to the other world, and he began to sing a song by the power of which he won the gods of the lower world. And this shows us what the power of the word can do, what power sound has and how it appeals to the cosmic forces. The gods of the lower world were the cosmic forces, the planetary influences, the predestined conditions, the spirits with the power to hold in their hands the reins of destiny. This also shows that Orpheus means the Knower, the one who has the knowledge of life. In Arabic, the knowledge of life is called Arifat, and the knower is called Arif; and the real knowledge is the knowledge of sound, the knowledge of rhythm, the knowledge of the word. It is this knowledge which gives mastery in the higher or mystical or psychological music. As Wagner has said, he who possesses the knowledge of sound knows everything.

Orpheus pleased the gods of the lower world, and they gave him their promise that Eurydice would be permitted to follow him; the only condition was that he would not look back. Now this is the point which refers to the subject of faith and doubt. It means that faith should continue to the end. And there is another point: that when climbing a staircase of a hundred steps one may have faith for ninety five steps, and one may lose it at the time when only five steps remain to be climbed and doubt comes. Then the whole climb is spoiled. It often happens in the lives of many people that they are face to face with their success, and yet they fall. They have nearly approached what they wanted, and then they lose it. You see this happen in nearly every person's life, and the greater the person the more

you see it. For the greater he is, the more powerful is his faith, and therefore he is able to see the play of faith; yet it is like sending a kite up high, and just before it reaches its summit it suddenly drops, and the enemy that causes this is doubt.

As long as Orpheus went by the power of faith Eurydice was drawn to him; his faith was drawing Eurydice who came and followed him. He could have gone to the other side of the world and Eurydice would have followed him. But then there came doubt, the worst enemy of man, and said, "Look if she really is there!" and as soon as he turned round Charon was there to lift her up and carry her back to the lower world. A man may do something for his whole life and accomplish it to a great extent, and by the lack of a little more faith he will lose it, and all that is done may be spoiled in a moment's time. How long does it not take for a house to be built, and how long does it take to destroy it? How long does it not take to make a business prosperous, and how long to fail? One moment. When one learns this principle and ponders on it, one begins to see that in the face of faith the whole world with all that we see and hear and touch and feel is illusion.

Faith alone is reality, and compared with faith all else is unreal. But it is very difficult to call faith real and all else unreal, because faith we do not see with our eyes, and we do not know where it is.

And now there is a question: how can one find faith in oneself? How can one develop faith? One can find faith by practicing, as the first thing, self-confidence, to have self-confidence even in the smallest matter. Today many people have the habit, especially in France, to say with everything 'perhaps'. For everything they say 'perhaps'. "Perhaps it will happen." It has become a kind of polite word, or a word for refined people to show themselves pessimistic. The reason for it seems to be that people fear to be considered fanatic or presumptuous, and also that it would be too simple to say: it will be, it will come, it will be fulfilled or accomplished. When they say 'perhaps' this frees them from the responsibility of having committed themselves. And the more pessimistic a person is, the more he uses the word perhaps, and this word has gone so deep into the people's souls today that they cannot find faith.

Once self-confidence has been developed, the second thing is to trust another with closed eyes. One might think that this is not always practical, that it might lead to great losses, yet even that loss will be a gain, and even a thousand-fold gain, when compared with the loss of faith. A person is richer if he has trusted someone and lost something than if he had not trusted someone and had preserved something, for that will anyway be one day taken away from him. He could just as well have given it up.

One might object that it is the simple people who trust another implicitly. Indeed, but there is a great difference between a wise man who trusts bravely and a simple man who trusts blindly. If someone tries to influence a wise person who is trusting, saying that he should not trust a certain person, even if he is shown an irrefutable proof, this habit of trusting will remain with him. But a simple

person, as soon as you say to him, "O, but what are you doing? You are trusting someone who is not trustworthy!" – his trust will change. That is the difference between the wise and the foolish. The foolish person trusts because he does not know better; the wise person trusts because he knows that to trust is the best.

And the third step towards the development of faith is trust in the unseen. To trust in something which one does not see, which reason does not show what it is, where it is, how it is, or how it should be gained, how it can be obtained, how it can be brought about, or how it can be reached. One does not see the reason, one only sees that it will be done; it must be done, it must come. And it is this trust in the unseen which is called trust in God. Then when you do not see before you any sign of something that should happen, and yet you think, "Yes, it must happen, it will happen, it will surely happen", and you have no doubt, then your trust is in God.

The first principle of the Sufi Message is faith. It is not occult study, and it is not scientific analysis, nor does it consist of psychic phenomena. The first lesson of the message is faith; and it is through faith that the message will spread. We shall each work in our own way in serving, in spreading the message, and it is with faith that the message of God will be fulfilled.