

## God in the Dryness

Most seekers, at some stage in their life, have felt a powerful call to the spiritual life. It may have been a meeting with a teacher, it may have been reading a book, it may have been an inner spiritual experience, or it may have been finding a teaching that awakened something within. It is a compelling call. It is both an intellectual conviction and a feeling experience.

Sometimes this high lasts for months; sometimes for years, but ultimately the intensity of it will fade, sometimes to such an extent that the God we thought we had found, the thrill that was there, is not only absent, but totally absent. We enter into a period of great dryness. If we stick with the spiritual life in spite of that period of dryness, eventually we will have a new period of progress and insights and experiences. However, it is the experience of most that that will be followed by another dry period, and this repeats itself again and again.

Our reaction to these swings depends upon our nature, especially if we tend to be emotional. When things are going well, we are on top of the world. When we are going through a dry period, it seems as if it is the end of the world. But then, allowing our reaction to be up or down, because of the inner content of our spiritual life, is a fundamental denial of the truth that attracted us to the spiritual life in the first place. The truth that we experienced or felt was that God alone is. Everything is divine. It is the most important thing in the world.

But if everything is divine, is not the Divine equally present in the dry periods as in the progressive periods? In fact, if we will examine it from the perspective of time, we may discover that when things were going well, we were so caught up in our insights and experiences that in spite of the fact that we seemed to be in communion with God, we had forgotten about the real God. Whereas in periods of dryness we are intently looking for God, searching for God, conscious of God, unable to find Him until ultimately, if we remember that the God we are seeking is ever present, we will begin to see Him in the darkness.

This is true spiritual progress, to see God in the darkness as well as to feel Him when the darkness disappears. But then, there is still another vital discovery. The important thing ultimately is not to feel God in our good

periods and to discover Him in the dry ones, but to recognize that these are simply alternating experiences. God is equally in both these experiences, no doubt, but who is it, or what is it, that equally knows both these experiences? It is, of course, I, our own Self. And that I never changes. It is always with us. We can never grasp it, but it knows all our experiences and, indeed, has the power to choose how we react to any of them.

Thus our life and the living of our life is in our hands if we will only recognize this truth. It is we who choose how we are going to respond to the experiences of our life, whether they are outer experiences or inner experiences. To know this truth, and, above all, to act on this truth, is to be free, to be free of the changing world and established in the eternal.