

The Loss of Intuition

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explores the concept of intuition and how it was intended to be a guiding force in human life, but was lost after the fall of man.

Scripture: Genesis 2:16, Psalm 139:14, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 30:21, John 16:13, Romans 8:14, 1 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 2:8

Topics: "Divine Guidance", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the ancient civilizations of the Incas, Egyptians, and Chinese, marveling at their mathematical, engineering, and architectural feats that surpass our modern understanding. He explores the concept of intuition as a divine gift for navigating life, contrasting it with the detrimental effects of relying solely on human intellect and precedents. Reflecting on the Garden of Eden, he emphasizes the importance of intuition in man's early existence and the subsequent decline caused by choosing independence over intuitive connection with God. O'Neill highlights the remnants of God's image in us, urging a return to intuitive living and a departure from the limitations of accumulated human knowledge.

Transcript

The ancient civilizations of the Incas, Egyptians, and Chinese have left us countless examples of mathematical, engineering, and architectural achievements that amaze us. We simply cannot understand how they did this when science and mathematics were at such a primitive stage of development.

Of course, we suppress any thought that these disciplines might have been much more highly developed than we have suspected because of its dreadful implication that we have actually deteriorated as the centuries have passed. Yet you yourself know that there are two paths to knowledge-the conscious, painstaking study of precedents-things that others have done or discovered-and the flights of insight or genius that seem to come effortlessly from outside ourselves. Even we ordinary mortals have had those moments when we just knew we should do something-we did it-chose a certain path, took a certain job, married a certain person-and everything turned out better than we could ever have thought. So, even we have experienced "intuition": a perception, a discernment, an awareness, a premonition that simply occurs to us over and above the natural working of our intellects.

The Garden of Eden

In the noblest, most ancient account of the creation of the world, there is no record of Adam attending school. Indeed, there is no evidence of him being a child. The implication is that God, the Creator, made a mature universe. There may or may not have been all kinds of evolution within the species, but the fossil evidence implies that there are gaps which the Creator crossed by significant innovations that owed something to what went before. But the leap over that gap occurred by adding some substantial new element.

In man's case, it was intellect and self-consciousness. Nevertheless, this first man faced a mature universe with fruit trees, rivers, and his own existence of which he was suddenly aware. And there were no precedents to follow—he couldn't go next door and ask his neighbor where to buy the orange juice for breakfast. The only way he could proceed from that to the stage where his immediate descendants were working with bronze and iron was by "intuition". As you think back to those days, you can see that the only way man could have survived was by intuition: survival of the fittest could only operate if there was an inner drive to survive, but that motivation required some innate knowledge to preserve man until precedents were set.

The Voice of God

Man's first experience of intuition was God's voice within saying "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Genesis 2:16). Man sensed right from the start that His Maker's plan was for him to live by intuition through his moment-by-moment friendship with God while he used his intellect to apply the fruits of that intuition to the practical world. The moment he began to live independently by precedent knowledge of good and evil, he would die to his awareness and experience of His Maker.

As we know, man did just that! Our Maker made him free-free to listen to what he was told or ignore it. Our forefather chose to live by his own unaided wits, separated himself from intuitive relationship to God, and gradually suffered the deterioration of mental and spiritual powers that resulted. The fact that this was a gradual deterioration over centuries is apparent not only from the longer life enjoyed by our ancient predecessors but also by the remarkable achievements of ancient civilizations.

The Remains of God's Image

But God has been gracious to us. He leaves each of us with some experience of the intuition that He planned for the normal functioning of our lives. We catch glimpses of it when we come to critical moments of our lives—and children seem to live by it at the beginning. But soon even they learn to operate by studying the weary precedents of the knowledge of good and evil we have built up over the centuries. As Wordsworth says:

"At length the man perceives it die away

And fade into the light of common day".

This is why so many educators lament what schools too often do to the fresh, intuitive curiosity of children. It's also why society still treasures the creativity of artists and poets—though this now is corrupted by the deception of the elemental spirits of the universe.

Is it possible to live by this intuition now? Can you yourself find your way back to it? Let's discuss this next.

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