

The
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ISBN 0 901269 30 1
Cover design by Joan Rundell

Published December 1977
by Grosvenor Books,
54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ.

Reprinted December 1978

Printed in Great Britain
by Manton Print and Litho Co Ltd,
Portslade, Sussex.

The skills of discernment

I HAVE SPENT four months this year in the Mediterranean area, in six out of the nineteen countries that share its coasts. I have had the privilege of being in the company of men and women who are shouldering responsibility in a number of very difficult situations: in cabinets and government offices, in universities and business life.

In circumstance and character they differ greatly. One thing I found in common. Beneath the self-confidence, and the hard work and care which they put into their professional work, there seems in many of them to be an undercurrent of desperation. Not despair: that is to be found in the irresponsible, those who have given up—or who have never taken on—the essential tasks of our generation. But a sense of need, of inadequacy for a task too great. It is moving to hear such people humbly say that they feel called to something too big, beyond the scope of their own foresight and experience.

When I received the invitation to give this talk I was in Malta preparing for a conference on the theme: 'Reconciling the Irreconcilable'. I need not spell out the number of conflicts around the Mediterranean where this has to be done. The men and women of whom I have spoken are all faced with this necessity in one form or another. It is they whom I have had in mind in considering what can be said about increasing our

ability to draw on a wisdom and discernment greater than our own.

One of them who has been to an assembly here at Caux said to me, 'I found deep refreshment, and new courage. It was a turning point. But that time of quiet in the morning which so many recommend—I have often tried, but does it not need a very special form of training to practise it?'

Her question has been working in my mind ever since. The facile answer is, 'Go on trying.' And there is much truth in this. The experience of the inner voice, of the guidance of God, is an area of personal experiment, in which each individual is privileged to find his or her own way. No one can hear God's word in your heart for you. But this is not all there is to say. There is no place for a casual, hit-or-miss approach. The question is a challenge to a person like myself, who started the practice of a morning quiet time as a young graduate and has continued it through more than forty years of strenuous working life, to think out what that first hour of the day is meant to hold. And beyond this, its relevance to the affairs of men and nations. If one believes in God, how is the wisdom and love of the Creator of the world to find its way into the actions of men? Is a willing heart, open before God at the beginning of the day one of the channels through which this mighty process can take place?

That is the practical approach. There is another one, which points to a radical reassessment of many ideas current in this century. I mentioned the subject of this talk to a young scientist. He said, 'What an important subject. The inner promptings which men experience have been explained as the results of a rational brain, storing up all it learns and processing the results. But it has long been debated whether there is

some outside force pushing in, helping the process along.' He put in simple terms one of the major shifts of thinking today.

Before he died Arnold Toynbee published, with others, a book on *Life After Death* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1976). Reviewing it, *The Times* (3.6.76) said, 'The chief surprise is the recent convergence of the mystic and the physicist. The materialism which was the legacy of the nineteenth century is now largely untenable. We seem to be entering an age when the feeling of mystery is no longer confined to the religions, and begins to reappear in the sciences.' The neurologist, Sherrington, is quoted as declaring, 'That our being should consist of two fundamental elements offers, I suppose, no greater improbability than that it should rest on one only.'

The Oxford biologist, Sir Alister Hardie, is researching on these lines. Arthur Koestler has written a book entitled *Roots of Coincidence* (Hutchinson, 1972). In it he puts forward the concept of synchronicity: clusters of events that occur together, linked by what is usually called coincidence. These are often ordinary events of everyday life, but they point to something else. Some scientists detect in such coincidences a non-causal principle or agency in the universe, operating apart from the laws of cause and effect, and of equal importance with them. Koestler also quotes a Nobel Prize winner, Eugene Wigner, in support of the view that intellect is woven into the physical structure of the universe; that intelligence is not something that some animal on this planet developed at a certain stage of evolution, but something that is basic to the structure of the physical universe.

It looks as if the sharp division between the material and the spiritual which has structured

the thinking of the West for centuries past is disappearing. Reason and revelation, which parted company in the scientific age, may yet reach a rapprochement. Koestler himself says he is a sceptic, letting his imagination soar into the unknown but very cautious about any certainty. However, one finds the same line of thinking in men with a faith in God: for instance, in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Director of the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran. Himself both a scientist and a mystic, he speaks of science as embracing the qualitative as well as the quantitative aspect of things: and he reaches out towards the 'travail of thought' needed, he says, 'to find once again a sacred foundation for science itself'.¹

The scientist's probing and the mystic's vision are both tremendous subjects, with which I am not competent to deal. My own experience over the past forty years has been of a very ordinary nature. It has centred in the use of that unemotional hour in the morning when, like it or not, come wind come weather, one has to get up. No tongues of flame, no flashing lights, no ecstasies: the cooling and redirection of passion, rather than the rousing of it. I have lived a normal and in many ways very ordinary life, with personally little of the dramatic or traumatic to report. Perhaps the normality of the sense of inner direction that has accompanied it is the notable point. For this unromantic experience has been lived in circumstances far from ordinary.

The events of the past decades have been extraordinary in every way: the terrors of war, the fall of empires and the rise of nations; the struggle of ideologies, the gathering speed

¹ SH Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature*, Allen and Unwin, 1968, p15

of communications, the shattering of known securities. My generation have undergone a rapidity of change greater than any other in history, and the stress on the human spirit has been great: witness the soaring figures of suicide, alcoholism, drug-taking, divorce.

Through all the varied conflicts of these years, I can say that the inner experience of God's guidance, and the pattern of life it represents, have made sense. In air raid shelters and food shortage, in company and in isolation, in professional work and household chores, in the humdrum and the hair-raising, the way of life that I chose when I was twenty-two has proved to be valid. It has never been easy, but it has worked. In my own experience and that of others, it has a good record of durability in the harsh tests to which the turbulence of the twentieth century has put it.

Man is richly equipped with perceptive powers. There is no denying that these have been neglected. We live in a world where numbers are spiritually deprived. Neglect of the normal produces the abnormal. It should be normal living for people to take in a healthy mental and spiritual diet. Mind and spirit need to be treated with as much respect as the body: to be fed, cleaned, exercised, nourished. Instead of this, what do we find? A steady intake of dirt and depression leads to strange forms of revulsion. Professor Theophil Spoerri talks of people who 'hate what is ordinary and turn to dangerous ways of escape into the extraordinary.'² Many today are left without hope, without purpose, and without the equipment for a healthy discernment into what goes on around us. Then rescue

²T Spoerri, *Dynamic Out of Silence*, Grosvenor Books, 1976, p11

work is needed: but the real answer lies in developing the skills of discernment that are essential and enriching to a normal life.

All I can do in a paper like this is to point to lines of thought and experiment. I shall indicate three areas of perception where training is possible, and has been shown to enhance the powers of the individual. These areas are:

- 1 The capacity to listen.
- 2 The sense of right and wrong.
- 3 The sense of purpose.

Listening

The capacity for speech is rightly regarded as one of the distinctive characteristics of *homo sapiens*. The twin capacity for listening, for absorbing and interpreting words and meaning, is at least as important and has received less attention. To hear is to perceive with the ear. To listen is to pay attention, to make an effort to hear, says the dictionary. This is a basic skill, capable of the most subtle development.

One of the busiest people I know talked to me about listening, from the professional point of view. She is a woman who for years was head of a school, and is now a pioneer of social work in her country, Malta. In retraining for her new career, one of the needs was to develop the capacity to take in what the other person is saying. One exercise used in training for this was a three-sided discussion. The first person spoke on a controversial topic for three minutes. The second repeated what was said. The third commented on the accuracy of the repeat. Not until Number One was satisfied that her argument had been fairly understood and reproduced, could Number

Two have her say. Often at first it took some time. The tendency to distort what the other person says, and the eagerness to put forward one's own view, were both delaying factors.

I went from this conversation to the opening session of a small conference, which included thirty varied people from a number of Mediterranean countries. The convener, a Catholic priest, said, 'There is just one thing we need to do. Listen to each other. I ask you to give your whole mind and attention to what each one says. Then we shall find ourselves of one mind.' Judging by the ripple that went round the room, I was not the only one who had been thinking more of what I was going to say myself, than of what was actually being said by the person speaking. It was to me a flash of insight into the importance of really listening with one's whole heart and mind, and I realised how slack I had become in this regard.

The capacity to take in what the other person is saying is an essential element in all relationships. I suppose the most widely felt division in the divided human family is that between *them* and *us*. One universal attribute of *them*—whoever *they* may happen to be—is that they do not listen. They are unable or unwilling to hear what *we* want to say. This is an irritant in every single dispute. Children say, 'I cannot talk to my parents, they never listen to me.' Parents say the same of the children. So do management and labour. Each side in international disputes says, 'We try, we make reasonable proposals, but there is no response.' Black and white, Arab and Israeli, Greek and Turk, at least have this in common.

Rare indeed is the ability to give full attention to an opinion that differs from our own. An official from a much criticised country said to

me, 'We do not expect you to agree with us, but we do wish you would give us a hearing.' The willingness to consider different points of view is at the heart of democratic practice. A senator, who chairs innumerable committees in his country, told me that several times in discussions he has made a persuasive speech in favour of one alternative, to find himself persuaded to the contrary by a subsequent speaker. With the result, he said, 'that I have voted publicly contrary to my speech, thus making myself appear a person not wholly to be followed, which is good because people should make up their minds and not follow anybody else.' He also told me that he found if he as chairman listened to what each person honestly thought was best, the committee usually reached a consensus on the necessary action.

Training in a respect for other people's opinions and customs can start at an early age, and in places where there are mixed communities—as today in the cities of Britain—it is vitally important that it does so. Mr Habibur Rahman, Chairman of the Manchester Muslim Parents Association and teacher of mathematics in a comprehensive school, makes a plea for this. 'It is essential to make friends with your neighbours of a different culture,' he said to a conference on 'Britain, the Commonwealth and an Impatient World' held in May 1977 in London. 'When you talk with them, make sure you tune in to the same frequency. If you are to understand, and be understood, you must find the same wavelength.'

The importance of silence to the spirit of man is widely recognised, yet many grow up deprived of it and therefore afraid of it. Many parents and teachers realise the importance of an experience of silence for children. The capacity to be quiet

and still is essential for the most sensitive forms of listening, for instance the appreciation of music. A piece of modern music which I heard was written for five wind instruments. Each of the short movements consisted of a few notes, followed by a long pause. The sounds were a frame for the silence. It was an original idea. And silence itself is a frame, a setting in which the whispers of the heart can make themselves heard. Silence is the condition for the inner promptings to reach the conscious mind of man.

If this seems strange to modern, western man, it is because he has forgotten his heritage. Laurens van der Post writes of the tribes of bushmen in the Kalahari Desert. He says that these almost vanished 'first people' of Africa have their voices: 'the tap-tap' in their hearts, and the sound of the stars. 'Can't you hear them?' his Bushman interpreter asked. 'Do listen to what they are crying. Come on! You are not so deaf that you cannot hear them.' One is impelled to think that the capacity deeply implanted in man for communication with the divine is an instrument of greater subtlety than any radioscope. It remains one of the most mysterious and least explored aspects of human nature, whether it 'hears' the sound of the stars, the promptings of conscience, the warnings of danger, the 'still, small voice' that spoke to the prophets, or opens the mind to new truths as some scientists—Einstein among them—have thought.

Every religious tradition respects this inner voice in the heart of man. But no study of the deepest manifestations of man's power to listen can afford to neglect the prophets of the monotheistic religions. Historically, these have been man's greatest and most practical teachers in this sphere. 'Listening to the inner voice is important,' said a Muslim. 'God sent His prophets to teach

us how to do it properly.' From Abraham onwards, throughout the Old Testament and the New, there is a wealth of teaching and experience on hearing the Voice of God, and the same is true of the Qur'an. Strong words are said in all three holy books on the fate of those who refuse to listen. There is a definite relation, too, between our ability to hear our neighbour and to hear the word of God. St John says we cannot expect to love God, whom we do not see, if we do not love our brother whom we do see (I John 4:20). In the same way, the person who is too self-absorbed and inattentive to listen to his neighbour is no more likely to pay attention to the inner voice in his heart. Training in either form of listening will help the other.

The sense of right and wrong

The clearest promptings in the heart of man are those of what is generally known as conscience. Some of the cleverest brains of this and earlier centuries have done their best to argue away this sense in man that some things are right, and some wrong: that there is a straight path from which he deviates at his peril. But conscience is a fact of life, a rudimentary discernment in the human heart. Every human society has framed some rules which are partly an extension of this sense of right and wrong. The point I want to make is that this process of lawmaking is essentially an advance in liberty, not in restriction. It extends the range of man's capacity to think and feel and act. Take the Ten Commandments, for instance. A society in which murder and adultery, robbery and envy, go unchecked is a very restricted one for the individual. He has to spend much of his

time and thought on protecting his life, his wife, his property. If numbers six to ten of these commandments, which deal with these matters, are respected, he will be much freer to explore the service of God and of his neighbour with which the first five are concerned.

If a man has no code of conduct he is confused by every petty decision. For a full and healthy life, man needs some standards which he respects, and to which, if even for his own self-respect, he adheres. Every great religion supplies such guidelines. Moses was given the Ten Commandments. Christ taught the Sermon on the Mount. The Qur'an calls on man to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

Personally, I have found the summary of the Sermon on the Mount, under the headings of Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, a simple and invaluable test. These four standards of conduct represent universal moral values held in common by all the great faiths. They went into my head like a bullet when I first heard them—I was twenty-one—and argue as I might I could never get them out again. If my conscience is uneasy—a not infrequent occurrence—I refer back to them to pin-point what has gone wrong.

But they are much more than this. They are pointers along the road to a new society. A world in which they become the norm will be a very different place. For one thing, corruption will disappear. For another, it will become normal to think of the other person's needs as at least as important as one's own. Even these two obvious possibilities open the way to settling quite a number of difficult questions.

The rebellion against conscience goes very deep. Here is a passage which relates conscience to what happened on Good Friday. 'That day's

deeds are a revelation of all that guides men into sin. No evil has ever happened which does not originate in this will of men to slay their conscience and extinguish its light. The events of that day do not simply belong to the annals of the early centuries. They are disasters renewed daily in the life of every individual. Men to the end of time will be contemporaries of that memorable day... The same darkness will be theirs until they are resolute not to transgress the bounds of conscience.' That is the insight of a Muslim writer, Dr Kamel Hussein, in *City of Wrong*, his remarkable study of the motives of the men who decided to do away with Christ.³

Professor Spoerri describes the 'inner compass' in the heart of man, with its four compass points of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. The promptings and thoughts that come into our minds need to be referred to this yardstick of conscience. To keep the lines of communication clear, there must be a regular putting right of what is wrong, a purifying of motive; a moral centre. The exercise of conscience is one of the most essential areas of training.

The sense of purpose

Some form of rudimentary sense of direction is, I believe, observable in the most primitive forms of life. But in man we find this developed to a very high degree. He is capable of forming a life purpose and pursuing it against great odds. How is such a purpose formed? For lack of it, people live small and boring lives, and walk down all sorts of dead-end roads. They may even

³ M K Hussein, *City of Wrong, A Friday in Jerusalem*, translated by K Cragg, Bles, London, 1959, p3

lose the will to stay alive. The psychologist Viktor Frankl has based his work on his experience in Nazi death camps. Under terrible stress, he says, those who had some sense of purpose survived. Those without any aim died.

It is one of the mysteries of modern life that in a world so dangerous, so fascinating, so full of potential, apathy and boredom should be problems. I begin to understand this when I find myself thinking too much about myself. This is of course sometimes necessary. Adequate attention must be given to health, to order, to enjoying one's own family life. But on the whole I find myself a narrow and depressing topic: there are more interesting things to think about. For many people, their education has not provided the necessary avenues out of themselves into the lives of others and into the world. They stay inside the walls of self, and miss the fascination and the need around them. They miss their destiny, and a needy world misses the contribution they were meant to make.

The spark of purpose is kindled in individual ways. In a democracy it is not to be dictated. But the perspective can be given in which great aims are possible. Geography can open up the needs of mankind. History can stress the value of the individual. It is vitally important to restore the conviction that what I do counts. This is a necessary spur to finding an aim and direction for life.

With an aim comes discernment. If it is a big aim sooner or later I shall meet opposition. If it is an aim that affects the world, I shall find myself involved in the battle of ideologies that is perhaps the major feature of our times. There are a number of people with aims for our world, and they come into collision. Not always openly. The simplest disputes are surrounded with confusion,

often because forces of ideology have another use for the dispute than settling it.

Jesus Christ expressed His aim in the Lord's Prayer. It was that God's kingdom might come and God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. That, and nothing less, is supposed to be the life-purpose to which Christians are called. It is a universal aim, which excludes no one, and in which everyone can find a part. It cuts across many lesser, sectional aims, and threatens the vested interests of corruption. It is therefore a fight, and once you engage in it you find the need to develop what the New Testament calls a sense of what is vital. A sense of purpose becomes an instrument of perception, an addition to the skills of discernment.

Discipline

We have looked at the skills of discernment in terms of listening, of conscience, and of purpose. There is another ingredient to be added if training is to be effective. Discipline. The world accepts rigorous training for sport, for music, and for certain professional skills. It shies away from a similar discipline in other fields. Yet every one of the great traditions of faith calls for discipline, not least the Christian.

I myself greatly respect this element in Muslim practice. In a number of the Muslim homes in which I have been privileged to be a guest, the parents are regularly up before dawn for the first prayer of the day. I met a young Libyan diplomat at dinner. Our party had been out in the fresh air on the Bosphorus, and the meal was good. He did not eat, and explained, 'I am fasting.' It was nowhere near the time of Ramadan, and so he

added, 'By my own choice.' Then he said with conviction, 'I thank God I am not the slave of any habit. I feel myself a free man. Fasting is a good discipline in self-control. If I had children, I would teach them to say no to themselves, and fasting is one way of learning this.' It is an interesting point. Fasting has dropped out of the practice of most Christians. It may not be everyone's way, but we need to think out how people can become free of the compulsions of desire and greed—the drive to take what I want when I want it—which keeps many in life-long chains.

The prophets have much to say about discipline. It provides the framework in which listening, conscience and purpose can operate. It is the road-building type of activity. Isaiah talks of building a highway for God in unpromising terrain, and says it means making the crooked straight. The greatest exponent of this road construction in the hearts of men was John the Baptist, whose destiny it was to prepare the way for Jesus. He trained his followers with the most uncompromising discipline. St Paul tells us to 'make straight paths for our feet to walk in'. In the *Fatiha*, the prayer which opens the Qur'an and which is used many times a day, the Muslim prays, 'Guide us in the straight path.' Discipline of this sort frees the mind and will from a lot of unnecessary clutter, and enables one to go faster and farther towards a given goal. It is only in the absence of a goal that it becomes burdensome.

Conviction that is rooted in discipline reasserts itself under stress: the onslaught of fear or passion, pain or catastrophe. Last time I was in danger I learned something about fear. It is a deep-seated warning, but it inhibits, paralyses, makes you shrink away. It is often a liar, and is a very poor guide. A sense of danger is different. It

alerts you, and turns you towards the wisdom and direction you need. Most of us know stories of war-time danger, when such guidance meant survival. One man I know was in a tank when shells began to fall. Momentary panic changed to a search for God's guidance. A clear thought came. In gunnery practice, the aim is first beyond, then behind the target, then the direct hit. The safest place therefore is where the last shell fell. He and his crew zigzagged for hours—and are alive today.

Few of us go through life without at some point desiring something we cannot immediately have. It may be a possession, or a position, or a relationship with a person. If we try to manipulate or wangle our way to get it, we lose our self-respect. Whether or not what we want proves to be right or wrong, the issue at stake is a different one. Are we to be absorbed and possessed by what we desire? Or are we to be free men and women? The outcome of this battle for freedom may be determined by the disciplined set of the will towards God's purposes. I learned something about this from a woman who said to me, 'I cannot trust my heart. I have to search for something deeper. God is greater than my heart.'

Years ago I was in conflict myself about a decision concerning my career. My excellent education had not equipped me for decision-making. Someone said, 'Face honestly what your human will is, and lay that down before God. When you are willing to let it go, you will know what God's will is.' I have never forgotten that prescription. People talk about the criteria for decision-making. Practice in this kind of honesty and choice, where God's will cuts across my will, is a helpful preparation for the crisis points of decision that come later. Often the willingness to let go what I want is beyond me. It needs a power

greater than mine, the grace and love of God, to enable me to do so.

Catastrophe can strike a man or a family overnight. In our world thousands find themselves refugees, without home or possessions. In Cyprus in 1975 this happened to Greeks and Turks alike, but the majority were Greeks. One family spent thirteen months in a refugee camp. 'At first we were shattered,' says the father, 'but we kept faith. We were sleeping on the floor, one room and thirty people: yet how rich we were, with the plus of listening. We were trying for people to regain their faith, and not to blame others. The power of God enables us to forgive. We realise that the Greeks have made mistakes also, and the Turks have suffered too.'

We have now looked at some of the obvious conditions for growing discernment: the inner promptings, the moral tests, the study of the teachings of the prophets, the world perspective, the discipline. But none of this can prepare us for the total unexpectedness of the Spirit of God.

Last spring I drove north from Amman to Damascus. The hills were clothed with the green of spring, and by the roadside shepherds watched their flocks. I remembered with a shock that to such a boy only a few miles away God spoke in terms so unforgettable that they live 3,000 years later. 'The Lord is my shepherd ... Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.' Later, when after years of guerrilla warfare that boy was the ruler of his people, God led him along a road of repentance which he charted for many to follow. 'Have mercy on me ... Cleanse me ... Create in me a clean heart ... A broken and a contrite heart Thou wilt not despise.' We can still thank God that, as the Qur'an puts it, He gave David the Psalms.

Further up that same road, a very violent man

named Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, was stopped in his tracks by a voice from God.

Such intervention has its modern counterparts. We meet in the setting of an assembly for the Moral Re-Armament of the nations. If we did not think this relevant to our responsibilities, we should not be here. We are entitled to take the propositions put forward by Moral Re-Armament as a basis, and see how they work: just as I did personally, when I was in my twenties. The programme of life outlined is a simple one. God has a plan. You have a part. When man listens God speaks. When men change nations change. Dr Frank Buchman, initiator of Moral Re-Armament, brought these age-old truths into the forefront of the battle of ideas in his times. Philosophers talk about the relationship between the intimate and the global. Scientists speculate about a 'cosmic continuum of the physical and the supraphysical'. Frank Buchman says, 'As I am, so is my nation. If you want the world different, the best place to start is with yourself.' This is, I think, in line with the most daring thought of the age, and there is a mass of evidence on the results.

It is worth studying Buchman's speeches, for their discernment into the destinies of individuals and of nations. Division, he says, has been the mark of our age. The ideas that have dominated this century were shaped a hundred years ago and more, and there are signs that a number of them are played out. The ideas that will dominate the course of the next century are already rising to take their place. Some may even have been shaped and propagated here in Caux. Unity could be the mark of the age which will succeed us. In the nuclear field, we are told that power could more effectively be gained by *fusion*, than

by fission. One of the great shifts of thinking already in motion is the ecumenical attitude between men of different churches and different faiths. There are many other signs of a shift of emphasis towards what unites, rather than what divides.

When World War II broke out, Frank Buchman called for 'one hundred million people listening across the earth'. As he lay dying, he said that the world must be governed by men who are themselves governed by God. This means not only presidents and cabinets, but the whole machinery of government: civil servants, tax collectors, police, councillors and the rest. I am optimist enough to believe that enough people are going to accept the challenge, and pay the cost of living unselfishly, to enable nations to move into a new era. Such a rise in the *quality* of life might help to achieve some of the miracles urgently needed in raising the standard of living among the poor of the earth. To raise up such men and women, who will lead nations in the paths of righteousness and peace, is the urgent and inescapable task of education.

I think again of my friend's question about training for a time of quiet in the morning. Have I answered it? I can only hope that what I have said will tempt her and others to allow God to lead them along the lines of exploration He has in His mind. The very busy woman who talked to me about professional listening spoke also about her own time of morning quiet. 'A piece of paper and a pencil is a good help. God is talking, I am listening: He and I between us, getting myself straight. Take the pieces and let God put them together. If you have a quarrel what the Gospel says is important—go and make it up.' Often busy people like her have great demands made on them, and nobody cares to feed their spirits.

They need guidance about simple things, time to live. To clarify simple and obvious points may be the key to a mind at peace, which can reach wise decisions during the business of the day.

A Muslim mystic, from Alexandria, once said, 'He who is negligent awakens in the morning by considering what he is going to do: and he who is wise by considering what God will do with him.' And finally I quote the insight of an early Christian writer, the great Egyptian saint, Antony. 'Not at one time only did God visit His creatures; but from the foundation of the world whenever any have come to the Creator of all by the law of His covenant implanted in them, God is present with each one in His bounty and grace by His Spirit.' 'Taught by the Spirit, the mind becomes our guide to the labours of body and soul, showing us how to purify them ... The Spirit has a loving partnership with the mind.'⁴

Every single person who enters into that partnership is on the frontier of human progress and is shaping the new age.

⁴ *Letters of St Antony the Great*, translated by DJ Chitty, Fairacres, Oxford 1975, pp6, 2-3

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