

FEAR AND COURAGE (by Sri Chinmoy)
University of Geneva; Geneva, Switzerland

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We are afraid of God. God's infinite Vastness frightens us. God's Transcendental Height frightens us. God's immeasurable Depth frightens us.

God is both Truth and Light. God the Truth tries to lead us to the perfect Truth. But, unfortunately, we feel that God the Truth is always examining us. We feel that since we are a mountain of falsehood, since we are making mistakes at every moment, God the Truth will punish us. But God is all Compassion. He does not punish us. On the contrary, He tries to illumine our mistakes and make us perfect. In the process of evolution, He tells us that falsehood is nothing but lesser Truth. We have to transcend falsehood and then enter into Truth. And for that, we need a constant inner cry, which we call aspiration.

Just as we are afraid of God the Truth, so also are we afraid of God the Light. We feel that God the Light will expose us, since we have done many undivine things. If someone commits a theft, he wants to hide. He is afraid of light. He feels that if he is in light, he will be exposed. But God the Light is totally different. Here the Light does not expose us; it illumines us. The Light tells us that darkness also has a little light, that night, too, has a little bit of light. God, being all Light, is all-pervading. Therefore, He is bound to be in darkness as well as in Light. Of course, when He is in darkness, He will have only a very small amount of Light, whereas, in an aspiring human being, He will manifest boundless Light. Again, even if there is just a little light, this light will grow into boundless Light. It is like the seed that grows into a banyan tree.

Fear and courage. Fear has capacity in a negative way. It rejects oneness. It wants to remain always individual and separate. Fear is like the tiny drop that does not want to merge into the vast ocean. It wants to maintain its individuality and personality. The finite is afraid of the Infinite and, at the same time, it does not want to confess its fear. But the vast ocean knows that its individuality and personality are composed of countless drops of water. The Infinite knows that it has become Infinite precisely because it houses the finite in infinite measure. On the physical plane, there are two types of fear: fear of the imaginary and fear of the real. Imaginary fear is far worse than real fear because we are afraid of something that we can only imagine. We are afraid of death because we feel that death will take away all our earth's wants, all our earth's love, all our earth's oneness. Here we achieve, here we accomplish; but we have no idea what is going to happen to us in the other world. We have no idea if we shall go to Heaven or to hell. Here on earth at least we know that we have our dear ones and relatives to look after us. But we do not know whether we shall meet with our dear ones in the other world or whether there will be anyone to look after us. In fact, we do not even know if there is another world. Therefore, the very thought, the very idea, the very conception of death frightens us.

Like imaginary fear, we can have imaginary courage. The worst possible imaginary courage is the courage of an atheist. He is infinitely more insignificant

than an atom and yet he challenges and denies God's Existence. God is Infinite. God is Eternal. God is Immortal. Yet the atheist challenges God's Existence; he denies God's Existence or speaks ill of God.

There are some human beings who do not pray and do not meditate, yet they feel that they have boundless peace to offer to the world at large. This is their imaginary courage. Or there are some human beings who feel that they can have the world drop down at their feet at the twinkling of an eye. Like Julius Caesar, they feel that they will be able to say, "I came, I saw, I conquered." This is all imaginary courage, for they are still afraid of something or other. They are afraid of a tiny, imaginary thought. A tiny thought will enter into them. Then for quite a few years this wicked thought can command them most mercilessly. Yet these human beings say that the whole world can be placed at their feet if they want it. Fear of the known, fear of the unknown and fear of the unknowable. We have done many things undivine; therefore, we are afraid of the consequences. We know that as we sow, so we shall reap. The law of karma nobody can deny. If we have done something wrong, then we have to pay the penalty. Here what we fear is quite known. But there is also the unknown fear. If we do something wrong today, then we feel that in the near future we are going to suffer for it. We have no idea if the punishment will be severe or not. But we do know that we will be punished. The very thought of the punishment tortures us. Although the real punishment we shall get later on, right now the unknown fear, the fear of the unknown, tortures us.

Fear of the unknowable is fear of what is going to happen in our life or after our death—fear, for example, that there may be a catastrophe and this world of ours will not last. This unknowable can be positive or negative. Infinite Light is an unknowable Reality and it can frighten us. Infinite night, darkness, is also an unknowable reality that can frighten us. The infinite Light is a positive force; the infinite night is a negative force,

We speak of the Universal Consciousness; we speak of the Transcendental Consciousness. We achieve both the Universal Consciousness and the Transcendental Consciousness on the strength of our inner courage. Inner courage is nothing but constant self-giving. Here we are all seekers. Before we became seekers, we stayed with our desire-friends, but now our friend is aspiration. God granted courage to our body before we were spiritual, before we aspired. He thought that with this courage we would be fully alert. He gave courage to our vital. He thought that with this courage our vital would be dynamic. He gave courage to our mind. He felt that with this courage our mind would be completely clear. He gave courage to our heart. He thought that with this courage our heart would be totally pure. Then we became seekers. Now God has given our heart the power of oneness. He has given our mind the power of wideness. He has given our vital the power of compassion. He has given our body the power of sacrifice. Then He tells us, "Children, do not be afraid of the known, do not be afraid of the unknown, do not be afraid of the unknowable. Have courage in the known. And then, after a while, you will have courage in the unknown. And have courage that even the unknowable will one day become not only knowable but completely known.

“Your parents, your grandparents, your ancestors, prayed to Me. Therefore, they received Light from Me. Their light has entered into you and you have become spiritual. And now, if you pray and meditate, you will also get Light from Me. Your light will far surpass that of your parents, grandparents and ancestors. There is no competition, but in the process of evolution I am manifesting Myself in and through human beings more and more. There shall come a time when I, the Unknowable, will appear before you with My infinite Peace, Light and Bliss, and these will all become known to you. At that time, you shall have courage within, courage without. When you dive deep within with your inner courage, you play with God the Creator. And when you bring your outer courage to the fore, you play with God the Creation. This is how you participate in My Cosmic Game.”