

CONVERSATIONS WITH
BROTHER LAWRENCE

IMAGINE THERE'S
NO HEAVEN



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Imagine There's No Heaven

A soft tap at my door interrupted my early morning reading. As my door squeaked open and I peered out through the crack and I saw young Brother Anthony.

“Sorry to interrupt Brother Lawrence,” he hurriedly stammered as I motioned him inside not wishing to bother the others brothers. “I just had to talk to you about our conversation regarding sin last night.”

You may recall that dear Brother Anthony had been most disturbed about calling Sin Sin while not wanting to sound irrelevant to the more sophisticated and educated among his flock. I on the other hand focused on how we meet resistance to doing our duties and this resistance we have personified by calling it the Adversary.

“Brother, I so fear not being a true Shepard of my flock that I...” At that I raised my open hand in an effort to stop the flood of nonsense I was sure to hear. Instead I decided to force my Brother to ride on a wild raft race down the torrents of modern thought as it conflicted with religious thought.

My dear Brother. Let me take you on a rapid mental exercise that is hastened by my own need to get to the duties that I have been assigned today. Then you can have all day to think them through and we can further discuss them at our leisure.

Let us say for argument's sake that modern thought is indeed correct as it may with varying degrees of accuracy. But let us say that they are entirely correct and let us then see where they take us.

Are you familiar with the poet/song writer John Lennon? He once wrote a song that said:

*Imagine there's no Heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

“It was all done very beautifully and I still remember most of the words even though I don't believe it as true.”

“Why dear Brother. The words are so beautiful, speaking of a wonderful place of togetherness.”

“Yes but they also contain the destruction of your Faith and are at heart a denial of anything called Sin. Hold on as we quickly ride the crest of the wave before us.”

“If all this talk of a Heaven and Hell is merely a product of our over-active imaginations then really all we have is what we ourselves come up and explains nothing of the true condition of the world. We are simply, as psychology says, maladjusted and in need of some professional care to cure us of our delusions. We must be cured of any notion that our decisions or actions will result in anything like eternal damnation. There really is no penalty for any decision we make. And at death we simply are not, so get used to it. Each is simply a choice and one we are entitled to make on our own. I'll spare you the long ramblings and cut to the chase which is that we take on the role of god ourselves and create our own existence as best we can. Everyone is just fine, only in need of a little enlightenment that will guide them to a better existence here and now with success defined anyway you like.”

“Now on the surface that sounds nice because it takes all

the responsibility for our condition off our shoulders because there are no bad consequences, only choices. But at what price? If there is no Heaven or Hell then there is no religion which our poet also postulates. Then we dear Brother are fools. And if there is no such thing as Sin then our Dear Lord Jesus is confused when he speaks of an Adversary. And if there is no Sin we are in need of no redemption and therefore have no need of our Lord Jesus at all since he is merely a crazed mystic speaking nice things that don't really add up to anything substantial. You choose to listen to him as you will but he is not any more important than any other well-meaning ancient.”

“Brother you flood my mind with so much that I don't know what is nonsense or wisdom?”

“Congratulations! You are in the place of the modern person who must choose what to believe. Who will you listen to? What will you do?”

“Now if you will excuse me, I really must get to my duties or others will have to take up the slack for you see I believe that all actions have consequences and I must do what I can to make the results a blessing and not a curse.”

At that I left.

I write this on my own not wanting to burden my dear Brother Mark with more tasks than he is able to bear especially when the subject is so important and in need of exact recounting. The responsibility is all mine as I try to relate what is at the very heart of my religious belief.

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