

A friend of mine recently entertained four Russian University professors in his home. These men informed him that recently for most Russians God was dead, and they considered the universe merely as a chance combination of matter and energy. We like to criticize the Russians for their indifference to religion, but the truth is that most Americans operate without any awareness of God in their personal lives. If Americans do not, indeed, believe that God is dead, most of them act as if He were!

Most of us seem to think of God in much the way as a famous French man of several centuries ago. As Voltaire and a friend walked down the streets of Paris, a priest passed by carrying a religious symbol. Voltaire immediately drew himself to his full stature and gave a military salute. "Why did you do that?", asked his friend, "you claim not to be an advocate of religion". "Nor am I," replied Voltaire, "God and I salute, but we do not speak!" It is probably fair to say that most Americans have only a saluting acquaintanceship with God. We formally acknowledge His existence, but we cannot vouch for that fact of by personal experience.

One of the reasons many of us do not seek to establish a personal relationship with God is that we find it difficult to believe in an old man with a beard who sits up in the sky and runs errands for those who make demands upon him. Most of the present generation finds it difficult to accept a religion presented in these old-fashioned terms, but we make the mistake of assuming that if God is not as our grandmothers pictured Him to be, then He has no existence at all. We moderns have been quite courageous in creating a new scientific concept, but we have been most unimaginative where religion is concerned and, perhaps, we have even been fearful of doing some original thinking on the subject. Our experience with science should teach us that there are many powers existing in the world which are awaiting discovery by man.

For example, the human voice has always been transmitted through the atmosphere yet no one heard it until the principles behind radio were mastered. The laws and the possibilities for radio have always existed, yet we were unaware of this concrete reality. Because we were unaware of this power, we were unable to tap it, and to use it. It is equally possible that God is speaking to us at this very moment, and yet we are unable to hear His "voice" (however we understand this term) or to understand the ways in which He makes His presence felt.

The discovery of radio was made possible by the creation of a receiving set which could receive the sounds that are transported through the air. The discovery of God for modern man may well be dependent upon our conscious attempt to receive the messages which at this moment are being beamed towards us. The Hasidic Rabbis in Eastern Europe taught, "God dwells wherever you let Him in." It could be that we moderns think God is dead, simply because we have not developed the ability to "let Him in". The fault, then, may well be with our receiving sets, with our prayer ability, rather than with God's presence and power.

The Russians believe that the world came to be by chance and it consists merely of matter and energy. They find it impossible to believe that the great order in our universe is the product of design. They believe that it "just happened" that the invisible parts of the atom work with an efficiency never achieved by any clock. The Russians believe that the world came into being for no reason. The Jewish Prayer book dating back some 2500 years tells us that the world is not only magnificently planned but it was created for a reason. It was created because God was filled with love and had to express his love. In other words, the Russians teach that any one



who is mechanically trained can create. Judasim has always taught that only those who are imbued with the love spirit will create properly, for the creation must itself be sustained, and it will run down unless it is sustained by love and care.

Look around you, can you not find evidence of this love in the created universe? If you do not find it flowing from your own heart, can you not find it in the hearts of other human beings, and from whence do they draw upon this power of love? If you cannot find love in your own heart, can you not find it in the face of the rainkissed flower that looks up at you and says, "love me". Can you not find the love-spirit shining from the face of the infant who has not yet learned to deny the spirit. Can you not find the evidence of God in the fruits of the field and the trees that are placed there by a thoughtful host so that you and I might avail ourselves of all that we need.

Everywhere we look there is law and love, order and giving. These are the symbols of the presence of God. These are the outlets of His continuing power, and we can come face to face with God by studying any one of these symbols, by learning all that we can about any one of God's created things of laws. When we know all that it is possible for the mind of man to know, we come to the "unknowable behind the reality", that which Professor Einstein called the "mysterious that really exists", the evidence of the highest wisdom and beauty that is beyond our own. We can come to God through any one of His created things, but He is behind all of them, and His power is immediately present in all of them.

If God is dead, then this world could never be sustained, but He can be dead for us as individuals unless we attempt to tune in to His power and presence, unless we try to make the quivering miracles all around us our own. And when our receiving sets are better attuned, we will then say, in a personal way, what our prayerbook encourages us to say daily, "B'col yom M'chadash Ma'seh B'rashit, "Every day God renews the miracles of the first creation, and at every moment He renews the miracles in you and me.