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Having faith in God or believing in life after death is a personal choice for everyone. Some people live in accordance with a religious custom they were taught about; others choose to explore different options for faith or beliefs in search of wisdom; many have been groomed by institutions or have come to their own conclusion that such beliefs are delusional; and some will claim they don't have a real opinion on the matter because they just don't know.

If you are a leader or aspiring to be a leader, it is important for you to have an understanding both in your faith and in others' faith in order to motivate people to take appropriate actions for intended purposes. Why? Because “faith” can always be a guiding (and motivating) factor for both you and your people. Of course there will always be times when people are expected to do what they're paid to do regardless of their faith or lack of faith, but having a fundamentally sound faith can affect one's mindset, which in turn affects their attitude, which in turn affects their judgment and behavior, which in turn affects their performance. Never discount other people's beliefs and be sure you abide by the moral code to which you have subscribed. And, on the other hand, no one should feel so inclined to use their faith as an excuse to get out of something they're legally obligated to do.

Some people will claim they have no faith and that their lack of faith has no bearing on anything they do or don't do. However, whether they realize it or not, we are all born with a belief in God. It may not have a name or a face. We may not even see it as God. But it is there.

It is a sense that comes over us as we stare into a starlit sky or watch the last fiery rays of an evening sunset. It is the morning shiver as we wake on a beautiful day and smell a richness in the air that we know and love from somewhere we can't quite recall. It is the mystery behind the beginning of time and beyond the limits of space. It is the occasional overwhelming feeling that someone else is present when you think you are alone.

Some people will tell you that there is no God. They will claim that God is a crutch for people who can't face reality,

a fairy tale for people who need myths in their lives. They will argue for rational explanations of the origin of the universe and scientific explanations of the perfect movements of nature. They will point to evil and injustice in the world and cite examples of religion being used to start wars or to hurt people of different beliefs.

You cannot argue with these people, nor should you. These are the people Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu spoke about when he said, “A frog in a well cannot be talked to about the sea.”

If you have any sense of the mystery of the universe around you, then you are hearing the murmur of the sea. Your task is to leave the well, to step out into the sun, and to set out for the sea. Leave the arguing to those who wish to discuss the size and shape of walls that close them in.

If you can hear the call of the distant sea, do not be turned away by the lack of experience, wisdom, or judgment, as well as the contradictions of the beliefs around you. There are many paths to the sea and the sea looks different from each of them. Find the path that suits you and don't judge others for the paths they chose.

Many paths are already established. Perhaps you were born on a path you like. Perhaps you were born on a path and want to find another path. Perhaps you weren't born on a path and want to find a path. Perhaps you weren't born on a path and don't care to find a path. Regardless of which scenario applies to you, if at any point in time you come upon a tradition that fits you spiritually, do not be afraid to follow it. Religious traditions exist because they give voice to fundamental spiritual truths that many people share. They offer a path to the sea that has been taken before, and their footsteps are well marked for those who choose to follow.

If you find a tradition that engages your spirit, give yourself to it with your whole heart. Read its texts. Participate in its rituals. Give yourself over to its ways of spiritual formation.

If, however, you find that your faith in God is something silent and personal to be found in the solitude of your own heart, do not be afraid to embark upon that path. Seek out the wisdom of the mystics and the visionaries who met their God face to face, and cultivate the habits of the heart that will allow you to grow

closer to the experience of God every day.

Spiritual growth is honed and perfected only through practice. Like an instrument, it must be played. Like a path, it must be walked. Whether through prayer, meditation, worship, or good works, you must move yourself in the direction of spiritual betterment. Spiritual understanding never becomes deep unless you subject yourself to the spiritual discipline of practicing your belief.

There will be times when you feel you have lost your way. You will be too tired to go on, or other things will seem more important. Maybe you will start to feel that your belief was just a momentary enthusiasm. Maybe you will feel a growing meanness of spirit. Maybe you just won't care.

Don't be too hard on yourself when this happens. Your whole life is a spiritual journey, and you will find yourself in arid lands as well as lands rich in possibility. Just be certain to continue to push forward. A few more steps and you will once again hear the call of the great waters.

Most of all, have faith in your path. Follow it as you can; change it when you must. But do not give up the search for the sea. As you get closer, the murmur will get louder, and your certainty of its existence will grow. You may not find yourself on the path you expected, but you will be on a path nevertheless.

Do not refuse to see God because you cannot find the one truth. We live in a pluralistic world, and only the most hard-headed refuse to accept the fact that truth--whether spiritual, cultural, political, or otherwise--is given to different people in different ways.

There is something greater than ourselves. That something is a creative and loving Spirit, which most people call God, that created the entire universe from supposedly nothing. Although the so-called experts have explained what happened in the Big Bang event, they can't explain why it happened.

Perhaps all of this is too deep for most people to wrap their minds around. But the fact that we can wonder about it may be the most proof of all that there is something greater than ourselves out there.

~ The End ~