

Juicy Foods

The force of conviction can be seen in the first chapter of the book of Daniel. Great is the power of the man who has a conviction! He who has no conviction cannot apply his power. Daniel was convinced that he should not eat sumptuous, but rather juicy foods. By sumptuous food we mean the different kinds of meat. By juicy food we mean vegetarian food. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, ordered that every day Daniel and the three young men, sons of Juda, be given sumptuous food and wine of the king. But these men desired for themselves vegetarian food and water. As you see, there are religious people who eat sumptuous food and drink wine, but there are also religious people who eat vegetarian food and drink water. It is a question of one's convictions what type of food one should eat. Therefore, man may have convictions with regard to the physical world, but he may also have convictions with regard to the spiritual world.

Thus, with regard to food, there are two types of men; the first type eat meat, the second eat vegetarian food. Man consumes as much food as he believes in. When man is convinced of something, he believes in it. A conviction is stronger if the faith of a man in his conviction is greater. The slightest wavering or doubt in his faith weakens the power of the conviction. Where the conviction is weak, application is absent. If one applies something of which one is not convinced, one will not see any results. Daniel had a conviction which he applied. He asked the head of the Eunuchs to allow him not to eat the food which was served at the king's table, in order that he might not be defiled. When Daniel applied his conviction, he obtained good results. Therefore, application is preceded by conviction. One must be convinced one hundred per cent of what one is applying. In case there is one per cent exception, that is not a conviction.

Is it possible for man to have a conviction in which there should not be even one per cent exception? Not only is it possible, but according to me a real conviction is that in which there is absolutely no exception. If man does not succeed in something, the only reason for that is that his conviction is not complete and absolute. He is not one hundred per cent convinced; there is some small wavering or doubt in his conviction. The weak side of contemporary Christians lies in the fact that they have no conviction. They say: Christ's teaching is inapplicable to the present life. They do not believe themselves in what they are preaching. Then what remains for us to do is to apply the teaching of the sumptuous food. You hear everyone today talking about comforts, facilities and rich food. Those who do not have those conditions complain to themselves about the fact that some should have everything they wish, while others should eat only vegetarian food and drink only pure water. They complain of the simple food and pure water and say they need more nourishing food and a little wine.

I do not use the terms rich and simple food in the literal sense of the word. The question is not about the external side of a diet. All contemporary people, worldly or religious, rich and poor, meat-eaters and vegetarians, grumble. Worldly men who eat sumptuous food grumble; religious men who eat simple food grumble also. Therefore, the reason for the grumbling is not the simple food, since the rich food does not satisfy them either. The servant grumbles that his master has not paid him enough. The woman grumbles that her husband does not love her as he should. According to her, if her husband does not love her she can not enter the Kingdom of God. The servant represents the worldly man who eats rich food, but who is not satisfied with life. The woman represents the religious man who eats simple and juicy food, but who is not contented with life either. Both complain and seek something which they can not find. The married man is not satisfied with his state and neither is the bachelor; both grumble. The married man is the religious man; the bachelor is the worldly man. Both of them complain and are discontented. The religious man grumbles because he has married. He thinks that marriage prevents him from entering the Kingdom of God. The worldly man is dissatisfied because he has not married. He says: If I had married, I would have sons and daughters and my affairs would prosper. What can a man accomplish alone? I have no wife and children to help me. "One stone can not build a house."

Now I am bringing out these facts to turn your attention to the complaining and discontentment of people, not to explain it. Dissatisfaction is the result of a deep psychic process which takes place within man. Often, grumbling is the result of many small causes. Small, petty things make man discontented. Someone is discontented because he is not good-looking. What does beauty depend upon? Love is the measure of beauty. In other words, when you love someone, he is beautiful; when you do not love him, he is not. Externally, the beautiful person is a mask which a sculptor has molded and placed upon the human face. Take off this mask and see whether the man behind the mask is beautiful. If a man is beautiful behind the mask as well, he can be called truly beautiful. Therefore the truly beautiful person is the one who has no mask; i.e., the one who is both outwardly and inwardly beautiful.

Thus, the real conviction absolutely excludes all doubt, wavering and irresoluteness. Examine your convictions and see whether or not doubt enters into them as an essential element. If doubt is absent, your conviction is absolute and you can boldly apply it. Daniel and the three young men were placed under very unfavorable conditions. They had to live in the king's palace under entirely new and strange conditions. If they had conformed to them, they would have been untrue to their own convictions and manner of life, entering the conditions of the "rich life." However, under those conditions, they still found a way out and remained true to their convictions, eating juicy foods and drinking water instead of wine at the royal table.

What is "juicy food"? It is the food of love. The sumptuous food is that of a lack of love. He who consumes sumptuous food, i.e., the food of no love, is always discontented. No mat-

ter what you offer such a man, he is always discontented. You will hear him grumbling: Why is there no roasted chicken today? Why is there no cake? Why is the food tasteless? Why is the napkin folded in this way? Why is the dish not washed better? He who uses juicy food, i.e., the food of love, is always contented. He who eats rich food, others serve him, while he who uses simple food, serves himself. If your plate is not clean, take some hot water and soap and wash it with abundant water and the matter is settled. Should you call one or another servant for such a petty job and make a fuss about it?

The sumptuous food implies banquets, feasts and the employment of servants. The juicy food expresses itself in simplicity, purity and love. Here we do not find banquets, servants, etc., but rather one who serves himself. Here a man does his own work. That is why the first kind of food represents a lack of love, wherein things are attained by force. The second food represents love, wherein things are done voluntarily. We can call the rich food not only the food of no love, but also the food of the holy human egotism. We call juicy food by its only name, the food of love.

Can Christ's teachings be applied today? Can any new teaching be applied? If you have a firm conviction or if you are in favor of the "food of love" - the juicy food - then you can apply anything you want. If you are in favor of the "food of the holy human egotism" - the rich food - then you can not apply anything. The happiness of man depends on the convictions which he cherishes deep in his soul. His happiness depends upon his observance of the great laws of nature. The laws which the scientists study are called "natural", but they do not enter the Divine world. Why? Because there are exceptions to these laws. They may be authorized by superior, rational beings, but if there is even one exception to them, they are not Divine. If there is one exception, it brings about the slightest doubt. In the Divine laws, however, there are no exceptions. That is why everyone must strive for the Divine life in which there are no exceptions. As long as man lives in a world with even the smallest exceptions, he is outside of the Divine world. This world is not bad, but you must remember that at any moment it may surprise you with a contradiction with which you will have to cope. Sometimes this doubt may spoil your entire plan. For instance, you buy a nice candle for ten cents. You light it and start to read by it, approving its flame. You come to the most important part of the book and you notice that the flame begins to flicker and die. Why? The wick ends in the middle of the candle. You try with several matches to light the candle, but it does not burn. You say: I lost ten cents, and my work remains unfinished. An exception perplexed you; half the candle had been without a wick.

Therefore, when you want to know whether or not you live according to the Divine laws, see if you have any exceptions in your life. If you find the smallest exception, you know that you are not in harmony with the absolute Divine laws. Every thought, every feeling and every act to which there is the smallest exception, belong to the human world. If there is no exception to them, they belong to the Divine world. All discomforts,

all failures in life are due to the exceptions which characterize the human world. When a man does not have this fact in mind, he considers his life Divine; consequently, he encounters a number of contradictions and illusions. When a man does not know himself and is unaware of his deceptions, he accepts a certain idea or conviction, thinking that these are aspirations of his soul. In reality, his hidden wish is, with the help of this creed, to improve his life. How does he wish to improve it? Materially. However, he does not know that the possibility for one to better his material conditions by means of a conviction or creed, is barely one per cent. And when one can not satisfy his desires, he becomes disillusioned.

I meet someone and he tells me: Since I became a Christian, all my affairs have gone well. I meet another one who says: Since I became a Christian, all my affairs have gone wrong. Both men are right. Which of the two men lives in the Divine world? I meet two other men, one of whom tells me that before he became a Christian, he did not have the desire to give. The other man said that he began to give after^d became a Christian. To me, the latter is on the right path. Of the two, he who gives has a conviction. That man thinks only of today and not of tomorrow. If I am by a mountain spring and a man asks me for a cup of water, should I fear that if I give him a cup of water, there will be no water for me tomorrow? The spring flows constantly - it has a conviction. A spring which dries up has no conviction. Why? Because there are exceptions to its conviction. The springs of the Divine world never become dry. There are no exceptions to their convictions. The springs of the human world dry up. There are exceptions to their convictions.

Suppose that love enters a person and begins to spring forth. However, from day to day that love diminishes until it stops flowing. After a while it starts flowing again. Does this love move along the path of a conviction? No, for there are exceptions to it. Therefore, when there are exceptions to love, it is temporary, human and not Divine. As soon as you face such love, you have a right to feel troubled. It will by all means surprise you with an exception. How will you deal with love's exceptions? For instance, every day you have bread, but one day you return home from work and you are told that there is no bread that day. There is no bread at the bakery, at your neighbors or at your friends - you can not find a piece of bread anywhere. This is an exception in your life. You go to bed that evening hungry, and you can not fall asleep. How will you deal with this exception? You say that a great misfortune has befallen you - you have no bread.

Imagine for a moment that you live on the bottom of the ocean where you are tied to a bag of gold weighing one hundred kilograms. As long as the gold is with you, you can have everything: bread, food, clothes - whatever you wish. You hear that somewhere high above you, there is another world where the sun is shining. You want to enter that world, but you are tied to the gold and cannot release yourself. One day, by a strange chance, your ties break, you become free of the gold and immediately rise to the surface of the ocean and enter the light, spacious world. What did you lose? You lost the gold, but you

gained the conditions of the new world. Is it not worth while then to stay hungry one night, in order to leave the world of exceptions? Hunger may become the cause of your entering into the Kingdom of God.

Somewhere in the vicinity of Shumen there were many wolves one year. The forest keepers pondered for a long time as to how to get rid of them. Finally, they decided to kill a calf and put poison in it. They wanted to attract the wolves with the calf and poison them. An eagle flying high had noticed the calf and decided to taste it. He had not tasted such meat for a long time. When the two men withdrew from the place where the calf lay, the eagle along with twenty of his friends attacked the calf and began to eat it. After a short time, one by one the eagles fell down dead. The first, greatest and strongest of the eagles managed to fly near Kaspitchan and started to roll on a meadow. For a long time he fought with death until finally he regurgitated all the meat. He was the only eagle who escaped death, but he learned the following lesson from his experience: when someone offers you rich food, know that death is hidden in it; do not eat it. It is preferable to eat a dead calf than one killed by educated men.

Thus, he who has a conviction without exceptions, can attain everything. Such a conviction is possible only in love. There is no conviction outside of love. Only he who lives in Divine Love can have a conviction. With such a conviction man attains all his desires and aspirations. Nothing can be attained without a conviction. In this respect Daniel gave us an example. He was one of the first vegetarians thousands of years ago. He had been a vegetarian, but not like the present vegararians. Modern vegetarianism has a tendency toward rich food, but it must pass into the juicy food, that is, pure vegetarianism. Man must have an inner conviction which must always support his spirit and his life. A conviction in which man's spirit fails, his mind wavers and his heart is troubled, is not a real conviction. Man must be convinced of the truth! The man convinced of the truth does not waver and does not faint.

Someone reads my sermons and doubts himself whether or not this is the Word of Christ; whether or not he should hold to this Word. That man is like a young man who wants to marry, but does not know which maiden to choose; the richer or the poorer, the more beautiful or the homelier. Whichever maiden he may court, he must know one thing: to keep ten miles away from her. This is a good conviction. If you want to know whether or not my Word is Divine, try it, put it to a test. Everything which is applied and tested is real. You want to build a bridge. They offer you willow and oak beams. Is it necessary that these beams be recommended? You take a willow beam and put it in the bridge, but it does not hold. Since it does not hold, put it aside. Then you take the oak beam and put that in the bridge; it supports the bridge. Since it holds, put it to work. The experiment is the best recommendation of a thing. For me it is not necessary to have a recommendation about a certain food, if it agrees with my organism.

And after all this, ministers come to recommend Christ's Teaching and to preach it to people. Why do they preach? There

are several things which cause men to preach Christ's teaching. One of them is their desire to win souls, in order that when they go to the other world, their souls should shine on their heads like precious stones. After that they will say: Lord, we saved and brought these souls. If this is true, how will these preachers explain the words of Christ: "That none of the sheep Thou gavest me should perish." Therefore, Christ himself said that He had come to save those sheep which God had given him. Yet an ordinary preacher will say that he has saved several souls and led them to God. He places himself higher than Christ.

Other preachers say that they have turned someone to Christ. A minister once met a person and began to preach to him. In a short time he succeeded in turning him to Christ. After that the minister invited him to his home. Early in the morning his guest disappeared. Where did he go? He proved to be a thief who robbed the minister and escaped. The minister said to himself: I turned him, but he turned me even better.

Now the main idea which I wish to remain in your minds is that man must have a conviction. One day Christ asked his disciples whom they thought He was. - Some say Thou art one of the prophets. Then He turned to Peter and asked him: And who do you think I am? - Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Christ said to him: "Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father Who dwells in you." Therefore, in order to believe in the truth, one must have an inner conviction about things. You will say: But who are you? - Ask God. If I say anything about myself, I shall speak like an interested man. I shall say something which in reality is not so. Whatever God tells you, that is true. When Christ was sent to earth, God said: "This is my beloved in Whom I am well pleased. Believe in Him."

The idea of self-denial which Christ expressed, is not an idea for the poor. It concerns only the rich. The rich man has something of which he can deny himself. Of what shall a poor man deny himself? He has no father, no mother, no brother or sister, he has nothing to deny himself of. The poor man has not a cent in his pocket. The rich man has millions in his treasury; he has something to deny himself of. Therefore, the idea of self-denial concerns the rich in the broad sense of the word, that is, those who have. Give freely and generously - out of love. Those who think they have nothing, must know that this teaching does not concern them. Those who have must give freely out of love.

Thus, the act of giving has a relation to the external side of love, while conviction has a relation to the inner side of love. The power of conviction can be seen in its application. There is no conviction without application. If a certain conviction cannot be applied to the physical world, it cannot be applied to the spiritual world either. The Divine Teaching has application in all worlds. Man must only know how to apply it. The difference lies only in the method of application and not in the possibility or impossibility of application.

Now read for yourselves the first chapter of Daniel and think about what food to choose: rich or juicy. Experience showed that when Daniel ate the juicy food, his face became more beautiful, while at the same time, he had more knowledge and

wisdom than all the sages and educated men of that time.
"The Spirit of God brings all the blessings of life."

Rila, August 25, 5 A.M.