

## Bondage and The Wilderness

To live in a state of bondage is to live in captivity in a way that one's personal freedom is severely limited. To say that in such a state a person has no freedom at all would be to deny the freedom of the human spirit itself. However, in a state of bondage the spirit is devastated and subjected to severe pain. In bondage the major concern is with the oppressor, or whatever else which sets the limits to our existence.

To live in the wilderness is different. Here there may be no oppressor, gun, or whip. The crisis of existence in the wilderness is that one finds life without apparent direction or meaning. Meaning is not to be found in the wilderness itself, rather, in the decisions one makes while there. In this sense, we need to understand that the wilderness is not geographical or physical, but rather a matter of the spirit. In this context one becomes either a wanderer or a person on an intentional journey. The person who adopts a life style of intention will probably not stay long in the wilderness. His or her sense of purpose and meaning will carry them through to new possibilities. The wanderer may wander out by accident or may even wish, after a period of time, to return to some form of well-defined bondage which from the wilderness can sometimes appear attractive.

For most people, the wilderness is the place of greatest danger. This is true because it is usually the place where most of us end up in our flight from pain and struggle. In our escape from what we think might put us in bondage we are not ready to face the great demands that confront us in the wilderness. The demand is for invention and not reaction or rebellion. There are no familiar roads in the wilderness, therefore new paths must be created, and a new sense of authenticity must be established. This is the challenge we face today and the one to which we must respond.