Q: Is there any western method for stilling the mind? (2-4-23)[1]

*If you have access to recording 0177A and would like to hear Joel answer this question, he begins at approximately **45:24.** If you have a streaming service subscription, you can go directly to this question and answer by clicking/tapping here. The recording will already be queued; simply tap the play button.*

A: I don't think so, but neither do I think there is any excuse for anyone stilling the mind. I don't know why anyone would want to still the mind. I don't see what object they would gain by stilling the mind. The mind is a very, very useful instrument, and the more alive and alert it is, the better off we are. A dead mind and a dead body go very well together, but you can't have a dead mind and an alive body. The mind must be alive.

Now I think what the question meant was: In meditation, is it possible to keep these wild and rambunctious thoughts from going on, when we would like to be still and peaceful? And that's quite a different subject.

We have no right to still the mind, but the mind will still itself in a rightful manner if we will make no effort to still it, but will keep our mind stayed on God. You see, if you force the mind to stop, it is an act of repression or suppression, and even if you succeed, it's going to break out sooner or later and be worse than it was before. We have no right to still the mind, but we have a right to turn our mind and keep it active in the right way.

Now, when you want to meditate, don't try to still the mind. Take a Bible passage, preferably a shorter one like "My peace give I unto thee," and don't repeat it parrot fashion, but take it something like this. Incidentally, we call this contemplative meditation. We're always contemplating God, or we're contemplating a thought of God or an idea of God. We're contemplating something godly.

My peace give I unto thee. My peace, My peace. That My peace means Christ-peace. Christ-peace give I unto thee. I. Oh, I didn't know what that word "I" meant. Oh, do you remember our lesson tonight? "I" in the midst of me is God. God at the center of my being gives Christ-peace unto me.

Oh, then My peace comes from within. I give that peace. I at the center of my being, I give that peace. Christ peace. Not as the world giveth. No, no, I'm not seeking anything in the world. I'm seeking stillness, quietness, bliss, peace, joy, and where does that come from? Why he just said I. I—I give thee My peace. I give thee Christ peace. No wonder it says, "Be still and know that I am God."

Oh, that's what it means—be still and know that I, I. I never knew what God was before. I is God, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet. I in the midst of me is mighty. No wonder It can give me peace. Why My peace doesn't come from outside. My peace doesn't come from stilling the thought. My peace comes from I. Oh, I—I, I in the midst of me.

And you notice how gradually your thought is quieting, and quieting, and quieting, and that's all that has to be. You'll find that after you've learned that type of meditation and done it fifty, seventy-five times, a hundred times, that automatically when you sit down, your mind sits down too.

Those of you who have pet dogs or cats, you notice if this isn't true—that after you learn to meditate, that the moment your dog or cat sees you in meditation, they will either come and jump on your lap, or sit down by your side, and they will remain there immovable and soundless until you're through. And when you're through meditating, you don't have to open your eyes; you don't have to move to let them know; they know that you've resumed thinking.

Now that is how everything around you—your heart, your liver, your lungs, your cat, your dog, even your furnishings—takes on peace and quiet from your state of consciousness. That is why the robe of the Master healed. That is why there have been many people whom others could just come and touch their clothing and get a healing. It is because when you learn to live in an inner stillness, everything external takes on that very My peace, Christ-peace, and it is reflected unto everything.

Now, you can know this: Once your thought becomes quiet, everything external to you becomes quiet, and then you'll know that you're achieving stillness and quietness, even while your mind is active, but it must be active in contemplating God and the things of God. "Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." It doesn't say a word about being still and stilling the mind. Keep your mind active, but keep it stayed on Thee, and of its own accord it will settle down.

Another thing you'll find once you achieve meditation—you will require less sleep. The reason is this: Sleep, actually, is a period in which the heart-actions slow down. Well, you're going to find that when you learn to meditate, your heart action slows down in meditation. Your breathing becomes sometimes so slow that it's almost imperceptible, and you're getting the same rest that you would get if you were asleep.

So all there is really to replenishment is spiritual rest, resting in the Word of God, resting in the consciousness of God, and then you don't have to be unconscious. That is why I

learned years and years ago that three and a half hours is plenty of sleep for anybody to have in twenty-four hours, even those who work twenty hours a day.

You can't force yourself to that any more than you can force yourself to stop thinking, but gradually, as you contemplate God, keep your mind stayed on God, your breathing quiets down, you become more peaceful, restful. In that rest, you are renewed and automatically you'll find that you're not sleeping that many hours out of the twenty-four.

So it is. Please remember that in The Infinite Way, no suppression, no repression, no forcing a demonstration. All demonstrations will come to those who learn to keep their mind stayed on God. "Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He will give thee rest." You don't have to still the mind, but the mind will still itself, and instead of thoughts racing through your mind, there will be peaceful thoughts, gentle thoughts.

In quietness and in confidence shall be my rest, in quietness and in confidence. Peace, peace, be still. In quietness and confidence, "My peace give I unto thee." Be still. "Be still and know that I Am God." "I in the midst of thee am mighty." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. I will be with thee unto the end of the world."

My peace I give thee—My peace, Christ-peace, spiritual peace, eternal peace, the peace that isn't dependent on how many dollars you have, or how many hours sleep you have, or what your name or reputation is, or fame, or lack of it; an inner peace, a grace that flows from God. Once you know that I am the bread of life; I am the wine; why shall I seek for these things in the world when I have them in the midst of me? Why not sit back?

He leadeth me beside the still waters. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. I shall not want, because the Lord is my shepherd, the Lord in the midst of me. He that is within me is greater than he that is in the world. He performeth that which is appointed for me to do. He perfecteth that which is . . . Oh, He perfecteth. Whither shall I flee from Thy presence? Why Thou art here, and Thou art now. Son, thou art ever with Me, all that I have is thine.

Be at peace. Be at peace. There is no other power to alarm you or disturb you. Nothing shall in any wise come nigh thy dwelling place. The enemy? They have only the arm of flesh. What is that to thee? Follow thou Me. Is there any other God but Me? I in the midst of thee, I formed thee in the womb. That means God even formed my physical body. I formed thee in the womb; I was there with me in the womb; I is here now. Wherever God Is, I am. Wherever I am, God is. All that I have is thine.

And do you see how by the time you get to that place, your thought is quiet, still? It's in confidence, in assurance, and that's all there is. There's no stilling of the mind. It becomes still, and in becoming still it becomes receptive, because you're listening now for more of those promises to come through. You're listening more for God's word to come through to you, to give you further assurance, further grace, further promise. And it's very simple to be still, but don't repress, don't suppress. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

And that we call contemplative meditation, and after the period of contemplation we settle back into a stillness that requires no words and no thoughts, in which we are waiting for God's grace to be made evident to us.

Now perhaps it won't happen to you on the first try, or twentieth try, or fiftieth. You must learn to be as patient with this as you would be in learning a musical instrument, or voice, or a new language. Be patient with it, but it will only take a few months. Contemplate the things of God. Do it for five minutes. Don't wait for results. Get up and go about your business and try it again later in the day. Try it again at night, and if you awaken in the middle of the night, don't try to go back to sleep. That's more suppression and repression—don't do it. Just use those few moments for meditation, and you may go to sleep while your meditating—and probably will.

"Thou will keep him in perfect peace, always, whose mind is stayed on Thee," and whenever you find your mind getting ruffled, whenever you find the world forcing itself in upon you, try to get away for five minutes and contemplate God again. Contemplate some aspect. You may be able to look out a window and see trees or flowers. If not, you may see clouds in the sky, or sun, or moon, or stars, and begin contemplating those. But don't merely look at their beauty. Begin to ask what formed them. How did they get here? What brought them into existence? Whence came this beauty, and color, and perfume, and regularity?

And then you'll find that you've gone *behind* the thing, the creature, to the Creator, and again you'll be contemplating God. You'll be looking at all the beauties of nature, but you won't be seeing them anymore. You'll be looking right into the face of God that created those forms of beauty, and then you'll have a deeper sense of gratitude for all nature than you ever had before.

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[1] *This excerpt is from Recording 177A: 1956 New York Laurelton Hotel Closed Class, "The*

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