

Q: Please define Soul. (3-3-18)¹

A: You cannot define Soul because Soul is God. Therefore, it is an impossibility. Nobody has ever been able to define God. Nobody knows what God is; nobody ever has known. God can never be known. God can be experienced, but God cannot be known.

Lao Tzu (500 BC) said, "If you could name it, it isn't that." Every mystic has said it is an impossibility to know God. Maimonides, the Hebrew mystic of the eleventh century, said this: "If you say that God is good, or that God is love, or that God is all power, or that God is grace, or that God is infinite, you are saying no more than if you say, 'God Is.'" There it is. To try to say that God is good is to try to define God, and at the same time set up the belief that perhaps something else isn't good, which couldn't be true if God is infinite.

Now, who can embrace infinity in their mind? Who can begin to visualize what infinity is? Nobody. It's outside the realm of our ability to comprehend infinity or eternity or immortality. Therefore, it is outside the realm of possibility to define God. There is only one certain thing that we know beyond all question of doubt: God IS. That is self-evident.

We wouldn't be if there wasn't a God. The sun, the moon, and the stars wouldn't be going around in their courses if there weren't a God. Apple trees wouldn't give off apples one hundred percent of the time if there weren't a God. Like begets like. That is only true because something is maintaining the "Is-ness" of that law, and that something we call "God." But now define it. It is an impossibility. The word "Soul," then, cannot be defined.

This we may know: God is the soul of man, and as the soul of man, it is the source of man's purity, spirituality, eternity, immortality. But that doesn't define it. God is the soul of man, but you can also say God is the spirit of man, and you can also say God is the life of man, and God is the law of man; God is the activity of man. God is the body, even as the body is the temple of God. God is the substance of man's being, of his life, of his soul, of his mind, of his body. But define these? That is impossible.

In the experience of God, you have another thing that enters there. You have an experience in which you are aware not only that God IS, not only that God IS right now the Presence which is felt, but you still do not know *what* God is, even in the experience.

Now, when you go to the next stage after meditation; when you go to the stage of

communion; it is as if there were two. There is Joel and there is God. And Joel sits here with eyes closed, and it seems as if there is a Presence and a communion between them, as if there were a flow of warmth, a gentleness, a gentle Presence, a something back and forth. Here, Joel is aware of

something, something greater than himself. But evidently this something that is greater than Joel is also aware of Joel, because It is embracing him within. It is a flowing back and forth.

That may not be what is actually happening. That's the way it *appears* to me to be happening, and this sets up twoness—I *and* the Father. That's exactly what Jesus did. He set up twoness: *"I and the Father are one, but the Father is greater than I. I of my own self can do nothing, the Father within me doeth the works."* This sets up twoness until you commence to realize that it isn't twoness. It's a communion between one's self and one's Self; or between one's self and one's "other" Self; or between one's self and one's "higher" Self. There are **not** two beings here. There is only one, and yet there is something within me that governs me, maintains and sustains me. And yet it **is** me, only it is not me on the conscious level. It is me on the level of Consciousness.

I described that last night, when I spoke of the difference between the conscious use of the mind in healing work, or being utterly still and letting Consciousness Itself, without the benefit of any words or thoughts of ours, take over and function, and it does this without words or thoughts, and yet the effects are wonderful.

After the stage of communion, there is a still higher stage, and this one has been reached by many, many mystics throughout the ages. It is that stage where there is no longer a *communion* between me and the Father. There is no Father. There is only me, but not a conscious, thinking me. It is where I become that Consciousness which operates without thought or action, which just **is** a state of **being**.

Now in that consciousness, that union, union with God, complete oneness, I am not only aware of me, but I am aware, for instance, of looking down at me from up on a star. And at the same time, I'm conscious of myself looking up and seeing the star, and even seeing me up on the star, as if I were in two places at the same time. And then all of a sudden I find myself looking out at me from the branch of a tree, and I'm inside the branch of the tree looking out, and yet I'm down on the ground and looking up at me in the branch of the tree, inside the branch, not on the branch, as if I were the branch or the trunk.

The next thing you know, I am looking down at myself below the sea, and seeing myself look up at me on the shore, for I am in the sea and I am on the shore. As a matter of fact, I am the sea and I am the shore. It's the shore looking at the sea, but it's me—both of them. This is conscious union with God, and this has been described; this is an actual thing that has been described by more than a hundred mystics who have experienced it.

The one that we know best in this country is Walt Whitman when he tells you that he is the life of the grass beneath his feet, and he is the life of the trees, and he is the life of everything that there is. He has had this actual experience of conscious union not once, but many times, and yet even after attaining that height, Walt Whitman came right down to earth again and went into the hospitals to help nurse soldiers, and sit by their bedside and write letters home for them, and mail their letters for them, and so it goes. Even with that experience, no one has ever described God or Soul.

¹ *This excerpt is from Recording 213A: 1958 Second Chicago Closed Class, "Questions and Answers on the Mystical Life and Healing." It is posted with kind permission from the Estate of Joel Goldsmith, which holds the copy protection on the recorded classes and the copyright on the transcripts. The full transcript of this recording is available at [The Infinite Way Office website](#) or by calling 1-800-922-3195.*