

Q: Why is it not all right to smoke or drink if these things are neither good nor evil? (8-3-24)1

A: Well, to begin with, I do not know who has said that it is not all right to smoke or drink. Who says it isn't all right to smoke or drink? If it is a manmade rule, that's one thing, and thinking makes it so. On the other hand, if the drinking of alcohol and the smoking of tobacco is not a part of God's kingdom, and if it is not provided for in God's kingdom, the moment an individual turned in their life to seeking the kingdom of God, smoking and drinking would fall out of it.

Now that is in the same way that everything—and again I come up to the eighty or ninety percent—everything that does not have its rise in God takes its departure from those on the spiritual path. Smoking is one thing I have witnessed, drinking of alcohol, card playing. Even though it is not a sin, it may be a pastime. Nevertheless, you'll never find a spiritual . . . or a person who has had a spiritual experience . . . you'll never find them playing cards, nor telling off-color stories, or attending burlesque. There may be nothing wrong about them, but they are just not part of God's kingdom, and if they are not part of God's kingdom, they do not take place in the experience of those who have received the spiritual touch.

As a matter of fact, all those whom I have met in these years who have received the spiritual touch have found that everything of a gross nature is taken from them. And it isn't a question of right or wrong; it is a question of "Is it of the kingdom of God?" And that is why you will find that lack and limitation depart from those who have been touched by God. You will not find those who have been touched by the Spirit in lack or limitation. They may have no desire for a lot of wealth, but the point is, they know nothing about lack or limitation because the Spirit Itself is the supply and the source of supply, and as in the case of Elijah, if it were necessary, a raven would bring the food, or a poor widow would share, but it would be there. Or as in the experience of Moses, manna would fall from the sky, or water from the rock, or in the experience of the Master, supply would be multiplied.

Let me make this clear, too. Our friend here said that I was the founder of The Infinite Way, and that may give you a wrong impression. There is no Infinite Way that has been founded. There is no such thing as an Infinite Way; there is only a book entitled *The Infinite Way*, and what we call the message of The Infinite Way is merely that which has been written in its books or carried on its tapes. So that there was nothing to found—there is nothing to found, and there never will be.

Everything that I have said here to you today can be found within the four Gospels, and in the experience of the great Hebrew leaders who were definitely spiritually conscious, and of the Orientals who were deeply conscious of the Presence; so that there is really nothing left to found. It is only necessary to announce it, and then those who feel a response within themselves and wish to go back two thousand years to an ancient teaching are welcome to do it, and those who do not feel that response are under no

obligation to do it.

And so it is that in our work, nowhere does it appear that anything is evil, or anything is to be given up, or anything is to be abandoned. Nowhere are there any rules or regulations for conduct. The reason is that these things are not necessary. There are the Ten Commandments which are very explicit, and they cover the ground of what we would call the more serious human sins. And any person seeking to improve their humanhood really needs no other commandments, no other rules than those ten for their guidance.

But when they are ready for an advancing step; when they are ready to emerge out of living under the law, they evolve to the Sermon on the Mount. There they no longer need to be warned about the penalties for misconduct, nor need they be told that envy, jealousy, or malice is wrong. They have advanced beyond that; they already know right from wrong, but they are now in the Sermon on the Mount, lifted into a higher elevation, where no thought of violating the Ten Commandments even enters thought, where such temptations do not even present themselves anymore. They are then prepared to take the higher step of returning good for evil, of praying for the enemies, of praying, not to be seen of men, but praying only in secret. They are now ready for that higher step of almsgiving, but without letting their neighbors know, without letting their fellow church people know, without having their names appear on lists; because they are now ready for a higher step, in which life is governed from within, not from without.

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