

Excerpt from Chapter 2, “Peace” in *Consciousness Unfolding*¹

In session 4 of the 1963 Kailua Private Class (Recording 517, Side 2, “Above the Letter into Spirit”), Joel reminds us yet again that God cannot be known through the mind, and if we want the experience of God, of Christ, we have to stop thinking thoughts about God. We must let the mind rest, take no thought, and adopt a listening attitude. Joel emphasizes that when he is asked for healing help, the first thing he does is stop thinking. Then he can be still and let God function. In this excerpt, Joel elaborates on the theme of refraining from thought.

It may seem a bit inconsistent to be focused on the topic of “not thinking” and then offer this excerpt with more words to think about. However, in our experience, many people have difficulty stopping thought, and this further instruction from Joel can help us come to the place where we can—even if for brief moments—cease thought and experience that peace that is the presence of God. As Joel says in this excerpt, “Silence is God in action.”

We must know the nature of God and we must *experience* God. We should not go on for the next ten years as we have been doing up to now, just talking about God: The time has now come when *we must experience God*. Let us not pass lightly over this part of the teaching, because it is the most important part of it all. We must see God while we are yet in the flesh, and that means you and me, individually, here and now, without waiting to die. We must experience God through our periods of silence, our periods of peace.

Each time you sit down, think of the statement of the Master: “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*”²—the peace that passeth understanding. Let yourself be enveloped with that peace. You will find the presence of God in that peace, and in that presence of God you will find power, joy, dominion, healing—healing not only for yourself, but for all those who have brought themselves within the atmosphere of your thought.

In the old method of metaphysical practice, the first thing we did when a problem was brought to us was to “answer it back,” to think up some wise saying, some metaphysical or scriptural statement in some form or other, and quickly to affirm or to deny it. We were always denying some error and affirming some truth. In this new approach, we are not going to affirm, and we are not going to deny. We are going to sit quietly, achieve a sense of peace, and let that sense of peace do the work. We are going to prove that it is not the action of the human mind that heals.

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² John 14:27

You see, the danger of believing that your affirmation or denial is necessary, or that you have to think some kind of a thought, is that if you were in a position where you could not think, you would be without hope. But that could never be true, because so long as God is present, that is all that is necessary. When a thought is unfolded to us from within, however, that is an entirely different thing. That is a divine revelation of God, announcing the presence and the power of God. It is for that very reason that we spend so much time developing "the listening ear," the state of receptivity.

Begin now to change your old basis of treatment. If necessary, do it drastically; do it by forcing yourself to take no thought. I am asking you to come into a higher consciousness of the presence of God, a consciousness higher than that which you can attain through the action of the human mind. Let us move a step higher into that state of consciousness in which we would be if we were students of Jesus, who said: *"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, . . . or what ye shall drink, . . . your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. . . . Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."*³

So it is with us. Let us remember to adopt for ourselves that peaceful attitude of assurance and confidence, which fills us with the peace and the power of God. That consciousness is the very presence and power of God, Itself. When we are not thinking or struggling with thought, when we are not fighting error, our consciousness is the presence and power of God. This divine Consciousness is not really in effect—is not really effective—so long as the human mind is moving around in a circle. It is true that you cannot ever get away from the presence of God, but you do not benefit by It in such a state. You benefit only in the degree that peace descends upon you.

Paul experienced this peace as the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of God in man. These are terms used to describe what appears to us when we are not thinking, when the only thoughts filling our consciousness are God's thoughts. In the silence, God fills our consciousness far more than when any thinking of ours is taking place. It is hard for us to imagine this state of being because we are so used to the idea that we must be thinking, or that we must be holding a thought. That is not true. If we could have silence for the space of half an hour, true silence, we would find ourselves in heaven. **Silence is God in action.** Therefore, when a problem confronts us, whether our own or another's, let us sit down and find that silence, and then let the solution appear.

Suppose that someone comes to us today with a problem. The problem may be one of unemployment, a sinful habit, or a state of ill health. Instead of refuting it, let us look through it in the realization that it exists only as an appearance. With "the listening ear" say, "All right, Father, throw the light on it, so that I may see it as it is." Then, watch what that kind of a treatment will do for you. In other words, when we see railroad tracks coming together, instead of asking, "Now what must I do to separate those tracks?" let us say, "Father, show me those tracks as they really are." Then we do not have to think about it anymore.

Do not try to improve a person, or his health. Do not accept into your consciousness the thought that there is a person in ill health. Sit in a state of receptivity, relaxed, in a state of silence, a state of peace.

³ Luke 12:22, 29, 30, 27

Let that peace permeate your whole being, and when you have accomplished that, sit with a listening attitude, and watch the light dispel the darkness; watch intelligence dispel ignorance. Instead of your being the healer, you are a witness watching this state of peace do the healing. Be a beholder of the activity of the Christ, or God. Watch It work in you, and through you, and ultimately, *as* you.

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity,"*⁴—have not love, it availeth nothing. It would not make any difference how wonderful my speech, how marvelous the statements of truth which roll off my tongue. If these statements and this speech are not imbued with a sense of God's allness, they will be of no avail in the healing ministry. It is not the speech; it is not the letter of truth which is important: It is the degree in which the consciousness of the practitioner is imbued with an understanding of God as love and life; the degree in which the practitioner has lost the ability to fear, to hate, or to love error of every kind.

We read in John: *"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."*⁵ There is the crux of the whole matter. No mortal, nor any human being, can see God or know God. Only the Son of God, the Christ consciousness of you and of me, can ever witness and behold the presence of God. In other words, it is not our human mentality that will know God. Never with the human mind shall we see or know or understand God or spiritual living. But the Son of God, the Christ consciousness, our spiritual sense, can behold God.

A Developed Spiritual Sense Is Requisite

There is the heart of the Christ teaching. And that is where the human world has failed—trying to know God through thinking, trying to know God with the intellect, trying to "explain" God. It cannot be done. God is discerned only through spiritual sense. Only through a developed spiritual sense can you and I, individually, discern truth, the things of truth, and the formations of truth—the spiritual universe. We develop that spiritual sense in many ways: through our reading of metaphysical and scriptural literature; through teaching and being taught spiritual living; through association with people who are on the same path. Being together in one place, of one mind, develops that spiritual sense, which is called "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." Paul called it, "the Christ that liveth in me." In most cases it is a developed sense, and we must consciously develop it.

You can help to bring about the realization of God by acknowledging God throughout the day, and once or twice during the night. Realize God as the center, the reality, of your being. Realize God as the mind and Soul of you, functioning as your individual being.

*I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*⁶

⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:1

⁵ John 6:46

⁶ John 6:51

This bread, which is understanding, is the Word made flesh. As you, through the human mind, behold your body, you are beholding only the mortal and material concept of body, and that is all that you will ever behold with the human mind. But, through the development of this *I* which I am, this Father consciousness or Christ consciousness, you learn to look out on the universe through spiritual sense, and you, ultimately, begin to see the body "*not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*"⁷ That was John's vision of the Christ, his vision of heaven, while yet on this earth, while he was right here, walking, talking, and moving about among his people. He saw what no human brain or human eye can ever see. He saw the temple not made with hands; he saw the spiritual universe, the spiritual body. That is what you will behold when, instead of using thoughts, you become a state of silence, a state of peace. When you have felt that divine Reality, then you have seen the temple not made with hands, that body which is life eternal.

*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*⁸

That, again, is but the Christ revealing Itself. Unless you eat and drink, unless you absorb, unless you realize, unless you see the temple not made with hands, you will not have life eternal. To eat and to drink means to take in, to absorb, to realize. The more you look out on the world through human reasoning, through human thinking, the more you have of a fleshly body which dies somewhere between sixty and a hundred years of age. But the more you take in, that is, the more you carry in your consciousness this truth of being, the truth about God and God's creation, the more will you manifest intelligence and life as long as you are using this body.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

*When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?*⁹

The human mind is always offended at truth because truth is a reversal of everything that the human mind knows. Imagine saying to the human mind that when it is still and doing nothing, great and wondrous works of healing can be accomplished! That is an insult to the human mind. Think of saying to the man who prides himself on his intellect that all of his mental gyrations will not do as much for him as one moment of silence will do!

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

*But there are some of you that believe not.*¹⁰

⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:1

⁸ John 6:53

⁹ John 6:60,61

¹⁰ John 6:63, 64

What was it they could not believe? It was that the Spirit quickeneth and not the flesh; that it is the silence, the peace, that really does the work, and not the mental gymnastics, not what is learned in books or through the intellect. We, like the disciples, are not doing too well, either; we are not making such great progress. Today, just as in Jesus' time, the human mind is offended; it feels itself rebuked at the suggestion that there is a Spirit which works without words or thoughts; that there is a Spirit in man which can lift him up and guide him through life, and can still all the storms of life without his thinking a thought, saying a word, or giving a treatment.

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.¹¹

And what happened?

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.¹²

Is it strange that so few, even in this day, can grasp the great fact that it is the Spirit which quickeneth, that there is a Spirit in man that does the mighty works of healing and regenerating? The human mind takes offence when we try to give it up.

The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.¹³

The world will never hate anyone who uses the world's weapons, or who uses accredited and accepted forms of activity. The world hates only those who say that all that is unnecessary, that there is a higher power, the power of Spirit. It is then that persecution sets in, not that any persecution is necessary. Today, we are learning to let the impersonal Christ absorb all the persecution, instead of allowing our human selves to take it on. We accept persecution by believing that the message we are presenting is "my" particular message, "my" particular truth. Instead, we should realize: "This is not my truth, but the Christ truth, and if you are going to hate anything, hate it, and not me. I am merely showing forth what the Master gave of the Christ teaching of the presence and the power of That which is invisible to human sense, of That which is the state of your own being, the divine Consciousness of your own being, the Comforter which is within you. If the world wants to hate that truth, let it do so." That is the secret of the Master, that my peace "passeth all understanding,"¹⁴ and that peace is power.

¹¹ John 6:64, 65

¹² John 6:66

¹³ John 7:7

¹⁴ Philippians 4:7