

**Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Recording 470A,
“Initiation and Illumination”**

In this class, Joel continues to teach about the stages in evolving spiritual consciousness. Having spoken in previous class sessions about the various stages of spiritual development, here he sheds more light on the ultimate goal of this spiritual journey: the experience of the absolute, or the experience of "I am that I am," or the experience of full and complete awareness of one's identity as spiritual being.

1) Summary of the Class

We always encourage you to write your own summary of the class, because each person will select the points most important to them. However, if it is helpful to you as a quick review, you are welcome to use this summary of recording 470A.

There are no absolute teachings, because “the absolute” is not a teaching. It is an experience that cannot be taught. There are two ways to realize the absolute. A spiritually endowed individual can have the experience by grace, without a teacher or without even studying. But most people receive it through a teacher who has attained.

Krishna is credited with the first “absolute revelation,” that of God AS individual being; God AS the only “I Am.” Melchizedek, Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, and John attained the experience of the absolute. Jesus and John revealed it but could not teach it, because it is not a teaching. You can reveal that you have attained the absolute, and you can impart it in some measure to those who are prepared, but you cannot teach the experience. Even when the absolute is revealed to you in words, it is still not a teaching, because nobody can teach you to be in that experience. But once it has been revealed to you, you can work toward attaining it.

When an individual attains conscious union with God and realizes in some degree the “I-ness” of their being, they are in the absolute. They are divine Consciousness expressing Itself. At that point, either they depart the earth, or they are given a mission on earth to fulfill, and they remain as long as they are needed. Moses took his people to the Promised Land. John had the mission of writing the Gospel of John. Shankara, who had also attained some measure of the absolute, left behind the Advaita Vedanta. Part of the work of such realized souls is to reveal the absolute to those who have the evolved consciousness to receive it, and who are willing to leave all to follow the path toward its attainment.

No one can attain spiritual illumination by choice. Many seekers receive some degree of spiritual light, but they accept the benefits and go no further. Even so, they have a foundation from which to go further in lifetime after lifetime until they have the illumination of the absolute.

Secret brotherhoods and wisdom or mystery schools existed in India and Egypt thousands of years BCE, and many had knowledge of the true name and nature of God. Initiation began in these schools, and the goal of the initiation work was illumination, which came by degrees.

Man began as a human being, steeped in the belief of good and evil. Everything in his life revolved around himself or his family and friends. At some point, when he did not get what he

wanted, he began to worship God, believing that God would do for him what he could not do for himself. Man invented many gods and made sacrifices to appease them. Even today, people sacrifice, tithe, or make promises to God to get what they want.

At some point along the way, one individual heard the voice say, "Be still and know that I am God," and he realized that the voice was coming from within himself. This was Truth revealing itself in consciousness. That individual sought out others of like mind, and that is probably how the first wisdom school began.

Gradually, these schools revealed the truth of being: that as human beings, we are cut off from God and not under the law of God. We live by might or power, by bread, food, and drink. If you entered a wisdom school, you would learn that you did not know truth, and you would have a trusted spiritual guide, who had the knowledge and wisdom to lead you on the path. Later you would learn that this teacher, this master, actually is *within you*. The light of truth is within you, and you are to follow it. You would learn that there is a God, but that this God doesn't have to be appeased or prayed to. This God is within you, "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

Even today, your initiation begins when your attention is turned to the truth that there is a God, which is a Presence, Power, and Spirit *within you*. You learn that you can trust It to go before you. It is the light. It is your bread, meat, wine, and water. It is the "meat the world knows not of."

The experience of the indwelling Presence opens your soul center and purifies your consciousness. You find yourself free from worldly fears, and no longer can you tolerate worldly people and activities. Your life improves, and you find yourself more at home with spiritually minded people and with spiritual books and Scripture. While you have not yet reached the absolute, you have been elevated above human consciousness and are partaking of divine consciousness in some degree. This is as far as most people go in one lifetime. Going further on the path to illumination requires "dying daily," or "putting off mortality and putting on immortality," which means that while you may have become a very good human being, now you must lose that sense of goodness, as Jesus did: "Why callest thou me good?"

Like Jesus, during initiation everyone faces temptations to use their knowledge to attain fame or fortune or to show their power. But we must renounce all humanhood in the realization that "I of my own self am nothing. There is a Spirit within me, a Presence, a Power that does the works. I am a beholder, and I witness this invisible Presence and Power at work."

Is it essential for a student, at some point in his spiritual development, to be physically present with his teacher in order to receive his spiritual teaching? Joel says yes¹, and when the student is ready, the teacher appears. Until then, the student abides within himself, perfecting himself, accepting guidance that feels right, and praying for his day of illumination. At some point, there is an experience when the teacher recognizes his student, and the student recognizes the teacher. It is like love at first sight.

¹ In another class (612A), Joel says, "It may be a teacher on the outer plane, or it may be a teacher on the inner plane, or it may be a teacher on the outer plane for a while, and then a teacher on the inner plane. Each one's experience is different. I have never had a teacher on the outer plane." So this idea of whether the student must be physically present with the teacher warrants further study and contemplation. What do you think Joel would say about this today?

Is initiation always a conscious experience? Yes, but it does not always take place during the waking hours. Consciousness never sleeps. Sometimes we are more alert spiritually when asleep because the conscious mind that is concerned with I, me, and mine, is resting, and there is an opportunity for divine revelation. Initiation can take many years, and sometimes several lifetimes, before we attain the full and complete realization of the absolute.

As we ascend, we learn the secrets of the human mind. The human mind is not a personal mind; you do not have a mind of your own. There is only one mind. Therefore, all ills must be treated from the standpoint of the *one* mind. But this is revealed only when you are on the spiritual level, looking down into the human mind. Mind is not a power; it is *an avenue of awareness*. You can know through the mind, but you cannot create with the mind. Through the mind, you have access to the infinite, all-knowing consciousness that embodies all the knowledge and wisdom of the world. To access that consciousness, just turn your mind within in an attitude of receptivity and *let* the divine consciousness, which you are, manifest Itself through the mind to your individual awareness.

The higher you go in spiritual consciousness, the more you know about the body, too. Our [real] bodies, as differentiated from the “concept,” or “physical” bodies, are spiritual and immortal. They are not finite, and they are not material. Furthermore, we are not *in* the body. We exist as infinite divine consciousness. Because “I and my Father are one,” I am as infinite as God.

Initiation carries you to the awareness of the indwelling Presence, the Spirit of God within you. It brings you to a place of relaxing, where you *let* It perform that which is given you to do. Initiation purifies you. You no longer seek God to destroy your enemies. You forgive them; you love them because you know that they are living in ignorance. You no longer try to gain your way by personal might or power, and your life becomes a dedication to others.

Often the death of personal selfhood and the lifting into a higher consciousness comes after a long “dark night of the soul.” But eventually you witness the Light taking form; God incarnating Himself as man; the Father becoming the Son. Then you know “I am that I Am. I am He.” That light, God manifest as man, is now your teacher, your savior, your guru. What appears to be the power of man is really the power of God incarnate. The man is not God; God is the man.

2) Further Study

If you wish to pursue further the topic of initiation—also called “illumination” or enlightenment—we recommend three possibilities.

Use the Electronic Library Search Tool

The Electronic Library Search Tool will help you locate other places in the books or recordings in which Joel talks about initiation and illumination. Using this tool, you can search all of Joel's books and transcripts for any word or phrase. “Initiation,” “Illumination,” and “initiate” are a few obvious search terms to use, but others may come to you as you study the recording. [Click here to go to the Electronic Library Search Tool.](#) If you have never used the search tool, [this page](#) provides instructions.

Read the Chapters Associated with the Recording

Recording 470A was used as source material for Chapter 14, “And They Shall All Be Taught of God,” and Chapter 20, “The Meaning of Initiation,” in [*A Parenthesis in Eternity*](#). You may find it helpful to read these chapters.

Hear Another Class on the Same Topic

Recording 321B, from the 1960 Chicago Open Class, titled "The Way of Prayer," is a wonderful complement to our current study. Joel addresses the nature of the spiritual journey toward illumination and talks about what is required of the "initiate." This recording is said to be one of Emma Goldsmith's favorites.

To hear this recording, just use the player bar below. Recording 321B is one of several used as source material for Chapter 13, "The Illumined and the Unilluminated," in [A Parenthesis in Eternity](#).

To hear recording 321B by telephone, call **1-641-715-3900** and enter **923600#**.

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