

**Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Recording 470B,
“The Consciousness of My Presence”**

In previous class sessions, Joel spoke about the stages of spiritual development and about the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey—the experience of the Absolute. In this class, he answers questions that arose from those sessions about the journey and about initiation, and then he elaborates on the experience of becoming consciously aware of “My kingdom,” “My peace,” and the Presence of God.

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 470B.

Q: Why do some students fall by the wayside, if the teacher knows when a student is ready?

The “personal sense” of self, which we call Joel, or Mary, or Bill, can trip up a student because we try to protect the personal sense of self, and if anything threatens it, we go into battle. We are tempted by fame, money, safety, and security, and until we realize that there is no need for these, temptation can win, especially if the student must provide for a family. Only when a student has completely lost the personal sense of self is there no further possibility of falling away. Personal sense is dead when we experience God incarnated as my Self. Then there is no man left to whom fame, fortune or safety can mean anything. There is only the Spirit Itself, which is self-maintaining, self-sustaining, and needs no help from any human means.

Q: Does not a spiritual teacher sometimes misjudge the readiness of the student?

Yes. It is impossible for a teacher to know that a student will attain the full selflessness. The teacher knows only that the student is ready and has the qualities necessary for attainment. The teacher gives all he has to give, lifts the student, and brings them to discernment. When instructed from within, the teacher can confer initiation. Then it is up to the student, working with the teacher, to complete the journey.

Q: What is the responsibility of the student preparing for initiation, and the responsibility of the teacher?

A student cannot consciously prepare for initiation. Initiation is an act of grace. The goal is never initiation of itself; the goal is the attainment of “that mind that was in Christ Jesus,” or spiritual consciousness. So the responsibility of a student is MEDITATION, in which we develop and unfold our inner Self. This does not happen when the mind is busy with a goal. Everyone who has attained high realization has been given something to do that made it impossible for them to have name or fame while they were doing it. Honors came later. Consequently, the preparation is understanding that I am ready to be nothing, do nothing, and be unknown, and if I were instructed to be in silence for the rest of my days, I would be willing to do it.

The more of a Master one becomes, the more of a servant they are to those who seek the light of truth. The Master of the Master is the divine consciousness that constitutes the Master, not the person who appears to be the Master. The title of Master simply identifies that individual's level of spiritual attainment.

The responsibility of the teacher is to God, not to the student. The teacher must be in the world but not of it, untainted by worldly desires. But when one is a teacher or Master, there is no capacity to be other than pure, so there is really no personal virtue involved. A Master cannot even take credit for losing the fear of death and realizing life eternal, because this was done for them by Grace. If a Master has no problems of their own, it is still no credit to the Master because the problems were dissolved by the same Grace that gave them illumination. Even Jesus could not take credit for his willingness to be crucified. The Master of his being did it.

Q: How is the death of the self exemplified in different teachings?

In the experience of Jesus, the death of the self was exemplified by the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Other spiritual masters before Jesus also were crucified and resurrected. Crucifixion is the death, or "crossing out," of the self until there is nothing left but the divine Selfhood, the *I* of your being. For Paul it was exemplified in "You must die and be reborn of the Spirit." Then there is the story of Osiris and the story of the Phoenix rising from its own ashes. In the wisdom schools and some fraternal organizations, students go through a death experience and are raised up before they are given their spiritual status. All of these symbolize the death of the personal selfhood and the raising up of the divine Selfhood, the *I* that I am.

The day must come when we die, not a physical death, but a death to "self-preservation is the first law of human nature." If you would shoot a burglar, or if you believe that your country should throw a bomb first, you are still under that law of human nature. Essentially, you are saying, "My life is more valuable than theirs." But life is life. No one life is more important than another. In fact, my life is your life, and if you die, I die. "No greater love hath man than to lay down his life for his friend." You find yourself in that which you give up, in the degree of your self-surrender. You are not on the spiritual path until you rise above good and evil, above "me and thee," and you recognize only one; when you are not seeking for the personal self.

Q: Do those who experience initiation when physically asleep bring back into waking consciousness a specific knowledge of the initiation undergone?

Yes, because that experience is an act of Grace, and no act of Grace could result in a loss of the experience. That method of initiation was probably chosen because it was the best way of breaking through the barriers of human thought.

[End of questions]

Before initiation, we go through stages. One important stage is developing the consciousness of the Presence. The main function of The Infinite Way work is to bring that experience to the student. The purpose of a class is not to teach something new or to give you better health or increase your income, but to lift you into the awareness of My Presence and My kingdom; to enable you to enter the "My kingdom" that is already established within you. You know that there is a "My kingdom," and you are in class to EXPERIENCE it; to know what it is. It is a continuing experience that unfolds unto eternity. My kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not of this world, so you cannot pray for the things of the world or be concerned about them. But as you

seek My kingdom and enter it, you find all the other things added unto you. Take no thought for your life. Seek My kingdom and its rightness.

Ponder the truth that “My kingdom is not of this world.” It is a state of immortality, from which neither life nor death can separate you. Then seek the next step: “My peace give I unto you, not as the world giveth.” This message of peace comes up to you from within. You are not saying it; you are hearing it. As soon as you feel a sense of peace, you have the consciousness of the Presence, because only the consciousness of the Presence could give you that peace.

Each time you meditate or are in treatment or prayer, finish by waiting a few moments in the attitude, “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.” Any sign that comes from within—a feeling of peace, a sense of weight falling from the shoulders, an impartation in words, a deep breath, or an inner release is an indication that you have experienced the Presence. You have the consciousness of the Presence; you are aware of the Presence. This is the goal of The Infinite Way: the experience of the Absolute, the conscious awareness of the Presence of God. Then you can live and move and have your being in a constant consciousness of God’s Presence.

The consciousness of the Presence removes the fears of the world and the fears of human existence. Nothing else can make them disappear. When you have this conscious awareness of the Presence, you know that *I* am ever with you; *I* will never leave you nor forsake you; *I* will be your food, housing, shelter, fortress and high tower. You have something that transcends health and wealth because even if they are lost, My Presence restores them. But first, you must become aware of My Presence within you and live in the conviction and assurance of that Presence. When you can be without words and thoughts and just feel the Presence and rest in the Word, you are in prayer.

The Infinite Way is not a way of changing disease into health. It is a way of becoming conscious of My Kingdom, My Presence, and My Peace, and then LETTING the other things be added to you. When you are in that state of awareness, your outer life is transformed. So BE a temple of God, and LET God fill that temple. LET My Presence go before you to make the crooked places straight. Rest in the assurance of My Presence. Then “I can do all things through Christ. I live, yet not I, Christ lives my life.” The responsibility is lifted from you as you LET the Spirit fulfill Itself within you.

2) *Meditation and Practice*

Since this class is about developing the conscious awareness of the Presence, and since Joel tells us that the responsibility of the student is meditation, we are refraining from offering additional reading or listening resources. We encourage you to simply spend more time in meditation, developing the conscious awareness of the Presence, and to practice in the way that Joel lays out at the end of the class. Here is what he said:

“The moment you can be without words and thoughts and just feel, this is prayer. You feel that *I* am with you, that *I* am closer to you than breathing, nearer than hands and feet. You feel that *I* am come that you might have life, and you might have it more abundantly. You don’t have to say it, you don’t have to quote it, you don’t have to think it. There is just this feeling: *I* am here. It’s not an exhilaration, because that would come into the realm of emotion. It’s really certainty. It’s conviction. It’s assurance. Above all things, it’s peace. Peace.

“You are not in prayer when you are wanting anything. You are in prayer when you are abiding in the Word; when you are ‘abiding in Me and letting Me abide in you.’ When you are resting in the Word, you are in prayer. If your mind is rushing around looking for truth, you’re not in prayer. You are in a mental treatment. And that has its place too, on the human level. But we are not on the human level at this moment, and The Infinite Way doesn’t function on the human level. It functions only from the mystical realm of ‘Rest in Me and let Me abide in you.’

“[The Infinite Way] is a way of becoming conscious of “My Kingdom,” “My Presence,” “My Peace,” and then *letting* these other things be added unto you; a way of being a beholder as your outer life is transformed. You don’t transform it with treatments or prayers. You only transform *yourself* into that state of awareness.

“‘Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God?’ Well then, BE a temple of God and LET God fill that temple. LET My Presence go before you to make the crooked places straight. LET “My Presence” walk beside you. . . . This *I*, this *I* within me, is God. This is the very presence of God. I am that **I AM**. . . . *I* in the midst of me is mighty. I need only realize “I am,” and then REST. That is a recognition of the Presence. That is a conscious awareness of the Presence. That is really the glory of the Father being made manifest as the glory of the Son.

“Can you see yourself back a little bit and feeling this Christ living your life? And all the responsibility is gone from your shoulder. All the responsibility is gone from you. All you are called on to do is be pure. Don’t go searching around to get something. Be pure. LET the Spirit fulfill Itself within you.”

It can be helpful to begin a meditation by contemplating a verse from Scripture. These are some quotations that Joel uses in this class that relate to developing the consciousness of the Presence:

- “I can do all things through Christ” (Philippians 4:13)
- “I live yet not I, Christ liveth my life.” (Galatians 2:20)
- “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink or wherewithal ye shall be clothed . . . Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6: 25, 33)
- “MY Peace give I unto you, not as the world giveth.” (John 14:27)
- “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5)

And, whenever we contemplate or meditate, we should remember Joel’s counsel:

“Every time that you meditate, every time you are in treatment, prayer, or meditation, you end by waiting a few moments. ‘Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth,’ and wait. And when a deep breath comes to you, or any sign from within—a feeling of peace, weight falling from the shoulder, any sign—you have experienced The Presence. And you now have the consciousness of The Presence, the awareness of The Presence. You are now conscious that there is a Presence there. You are aware that there is a Presence there.”