

REALITY AND ILLUSION

Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Recording 325B, “From the Law to Conscious Knowing of the Truth, continued”

*In the first session of this study program, Joel taught the meaning of Reality and unreality, or Reality and illusion. In the second session, he explained that what appears to be good is just as unreal as what appears to be evil. He emphasized that **what** we behold is not the illusion. Our **sense** of what we behold, our **perception** of it, is the illusion, and that an illusion is always in the mind; it is never externalized.*

In this session, Joel connects illusion with the spiritual principle of one power, pointing out that if there is only one infinite power, there can be no other power, so what is perceived as another power must be an illusion. He speaks about the practice of protective work, and he explains the role of the mind in forming illusions.

Brief Summary of the Lesson

As always, we 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 325B.

The principle of one power was one of the first revealed to humanity. It said that this world and the powers of this world—sin, disease, death, poverty—are all maya, or illusion, and that the only reality and the only power is Spirit, the Invisible. Both Buddha and Jesus taught this principle, and it was the basis of their healing work.

The followers of Buddha made the mistake of believing that the illusion was “out there,” whereas it was actually an erroneous mental image in thought. Mrs. Eddy, too, knew that error had no externalized reality and called it “mortal mind,” meaning nothingness. But her followers also made the mistake of believing that mortal mind was an entity unto itself. Even Paul made the carnal mind an entity, calling it “enmity against God.”

“Mortal mind” meant the same thing as maya—a misperception of what we behold. The principle is that there is only **one** power, which means that there is no power external to you, either for good or evil; that so-called material and mental powers are illusion, or nothingness. God is the ALL-mighty, and there is no other might or power, and the kingdom of God, this kingdom of power, is **within you!** This power cannot be used, because there is nothing to use it on. God has no opposition. God is **one**, and God is **infinite**, so there can be nothing else. When you realize this, you are free. You no longer look for good to come to you or expect or experience evil from mortal mind, or maya. You can rest and relax, knowing that there is only **one** power, and there is nothing to overcome, destroy, or protect yourself from.

Everything that happens to you happens through your consciousness. The mind is like an antenna that picks up everything from the atmosphere. So you do protective work, but you are not protecting yourself from the carnal mind **as an entity**. You are protecting yourself from the

carnal mind that is a **belief in two powers**. You must **consciously** come out from under the belief in two powers and make yourself entirely separate from it through your understanding that God is one power, all-power, the only power, and that this power is within you. It flows out from you when you “open out a way” by acknowledging that the kingdom of God is within you and that the kingdom of God is the **only** power.

The mind is your avenue of awareness, and it acts in two ways. First, mind is the **substance** of everything that concerns you—your body, your business, your home, relationships, and all other aspects of your life. Second, mind is a reflector, and what you entertain in mind, you experience. Whatever you put into your mind reflects as the condition of your body, business, home, relationships and other aspects of your life. If you do not **consciously** know the truth, and you entertain the world’s belief in two powers in your mind, it can manifest in any form—poverty, sin, disease, limitation, addiction, and other forms of discordant living. But when you instruct and condition the mind with truth and give it **conscious** direction, you protect yourself from this belief and the mind becomes the substance of harmonious forms. Your life is conditioned by that truth, and you are no longer an antenna for the world’s belief in two powers.

When I do not consciously know the truth, the world pours its belief in two powers into my mind, and it manifests as sin, disease, lack, limitation, and other forms of discordant living. Evil is impersonal and reaches us through the atmosphere, through conversation, or through the media. But the persons or things through which evil seems to come are not evil. They are but the instruments. Evil is always the result of a belief in two powers.

When you stay in the world, filling your mind with truth, you benefit those still in ignorance, and you play a part in overcoming the world’s appearances. You help dissolve the pictures of sense for yourself and for others, so that some measure of harmony begins to show forth. The reason you can do this is because **none of these dangers or evils are externalized conditions**. They are mental images in the mind of man, projected onto the screen of life, but they have no externalized reality, form, substance, or law. Evil exists only as maya, illusion, mortal mind, carnal mind, hypnotism, or appearance.

Each day we choose whether we will serve Spirit, the **one** power, or the belief in two powers. We are suffering from nothing more than hypnotic suggestions, which we pick up from the atmosphere, from conversation, or from the media. So our work is to prevent them from entering our mind, and we do that through the **conscious** rejection of the belief in two powers and the **conscious** acceptance of the truth that the presence and power of God is within me, and Its name is *I*. Then no world beliefs can enter. But few will dedicate themselves to **conscious** thinking, **conscious** knowing, **conscious** studying, **conscious** pondering, **conscious** meditating. Those who will not be actively **conscious** all the time are the living dead.

Beyond conscious activity, you can be governed by grace, recognizing that only God’s grace functions as *I*, my true being, and lives my life. Then there is no need to take anxious thought because at the right moment, God, or Truth, gives us the thoughts we think. As we become increasingly receptive to the inflow of God’s thoughts, we are God-governed.

This is why we devote so much time to making ourselves receptive. We do not live by yesterday’s manna, or yesterday’s thoughts, or yesterday’s truth, or yesterday’s ideas about anything. So act as though you can go to God at any time for fresh illumination, guidance, or instruction. Make time for Truth to reveal Itself to you from within.

Relevant Questions and Answers

In the archive of Questions and Answers that we have posted over the years, there are several that relate to our study of Reality and Illusion. You might find it valuable to review them.

[3/4/17: What is the story behind the use of the term 'white poodle?'](#)

[3/18/17: Please explain illusion.](#)

[7/15/17: Would you please explain the unreality of death and life eternal?](#)

[8/5/17: When I look out upon the world and see selfishness, unkindness, and false sense, should I recognize that none of this is taking place out there, but is really an image or conception in my own mind?](#)

[3/17/18: How is the body to be regarded?](#)

[5/18/19: Christian Science teaches that the body is a sensual concept. The Infinite Way teaches that the body is the temple of the living God. Would you clarify this, please?](#)

[7/6/19: Is it the material body which manifests God?](#)

[12/21/19: Where does error come from since God is all in all?](#)

[8/7/21: If God created all, and everything was perfect, how did there arise even a suggestion of the illusion of evil and a universal belief in two powers?](#)

Protective Work

Joel mentions protective work in this class, emphasizing that we are not protecting ourselves from the carnal mind as an entity, but from the carnal mind that is a belief in two powers.

Joel refers us to Chapter 3, "Protection," in the [1955 Infinite Way Letters](#). (This chapter is also [available as a pamphlet](#).) "Protection" is one of the eight most important chapters that Joel identified in the writings, and we studied this chapter in 2018, as part of our study of these eight most important chapters.

The references and study materials that were used for the chapter "Protection" are [still posted in the Study Center](#). Just scroll down the page to item 3.

No source recording is known for the chapter "Protection," but we found a recording that was an excellent fit and used it in our study program. This is recording [314B from the 1960 Denver Closed Class](#), titled "Foundation of Our Day." This recording is no longer posted on our site but can be [purchased from The Infinite Way Office](#). Or, if you have a subscription to the [Joel Goldsmith Streaming Service](#), you can listen to it there.

The reference materials for that chapter included a collection of several [quotations from Joel on the subject of protective work](#), and these are still posted, should you wish to reference them.

Practice

Once again in this class, Joel makes the case for study and practice:

The Master said that the way is straight and narrow, and few there be that enter. The reason is that so few dedicate themselves to conscious thinking, conscious knowing, conscious studying, conscious pondering, conscious meditating, and since life is consciousness, those who won't be actively conscious all the time are the living dead. They are walking around in a dream, unaware of where they are going or why, or even what is influencing them.

In this current recording, Joel suggests a contemplation that can help us recognize that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of all power, is within you. When he emphasizes the point that what you accept in mind determines the nature of your life; that what you accept in mind becomes the conditioning that appears as your body, your business, your home, and other aspects of your life, he suggests this contemplation, starting with the word "I."

I know this truth: that God is closer to me than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. I know the truth that the kingdom of God is within me. I know the truth that all power is within me, and that this power is God. It is not a power over something. It is infinite all-power. I know that my life is the life that is God, the God-life expressing Itself as my individual life, so I have no short life or long life, no young life or old life, no sick life or well life, no moral life or immoral life. I have only the unconditioned life which is God.

I in the midst of me, will never leave me nor forsake me. I within me is my bread, meat, wine, and water. I need not look to man whose breath is in his nostrils, put my faith in princes, or look outside of my own being, for I will never leave me nor forsake me. I will be with me unto the end of the world. I embody the power of resurrection, so that even the lost years of the locust will be restored unto me.

Joel says that with this, you are filling your mind with truth, and this truth becomes the substance, or the conditioning, of your life, mind, body, and business. The only conditioning that your mind can have comes from you, the *I* that you are, and that *I* imparts truth unto your mind.

Recommended Reading for the Study Program

The recommended reading list is for the entire study program was given at the end of the [Optional Study material for Session 1](#).