

## Optional Study and Practice for the Spiritual Healing Study Program

### Part 4: Issues in Spiritual Healing Session 2: Why Healing Might Not Occur Recording 60A: “Nature of Error”

#### Review of Previous Sessions

**Part 1** of our study program provided an overview of spiritual healing, and **Part 2** focused on the core principles of The Infinite Way and their role in spiritual healing. **Part 3** of our study program concentrated on the practice of spiritual healing.

In **Part 3**, we addressed spiritual healing consciousness, explaining that healing comes only when an *individual* becomes God-conscious, a transparency through which the healing grace of God can be revealed. To review the major points in this session, [click/tap here](#).

We focused on impersonalization and nothingization, noting that impersonalization is recognizing that every individual is God in expression, and therefore, there can be no evil or sin *in* the individual. Nothingization is the recognition that since God is the only power, there can be no other power, and since any appearance of error is not of God, it has no power, substance, or law to maintain it. It exists only as an illusion, a belief in a selfhood apart from God. To review the major points in this session, [click/tap here](#).

We also considered the topic of treatment, which is an activity done in response to a request for help. Treatment is always given to oneself as the practitioner, never to a patient, and it always has two parts: the contemplation of truth and settling into silence and listening. To review the major points in this session, [click/tap here](#).

Finally, in **Part 3**, we worked on the importance of rising above the pairs of opposites in spiritual healing practice. We learned that to succeed in spiritual healing, we must not focus on changing evil into good, but on beholding the spiritual reality. We take the middle path and say, “Neither evil nor good, but spiritual.” To review the major points in this session, [click/tap here](#).

**Part 4** addresses issues that can arise in spiritual healing. In **Session 1**, we considered the statement that Joel brought front and center: “You cannot meet a problem on the level of the problem.” Failure to understand this can be a barrier to doing effective healing work.

#### The Current Session

In this session, Joel takes us deep into one factor he believes is responsible for much of the failure to heal: the practitioner does not understand the nature of error.

#### Key Points from the Recording

*As we always recommend, you can create your own summary of the key points in the class. Or you can use our review below. If you choose to use this review, be sure to add any other points that stood out for you in the recording. Please note that our review may include some personal interpretation of the lesson.*

## **Healing is an important part of the ministry of The Infinite Way.**

When the Master was asked, “*Art thou he that should come?*” he answered, “*Go show John what things ye have seen. The sick are healed; the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.*” He didn’t say, “Yes, I am the Master,” or “Yes, this is a correct teaching.” He showed forth the fruits.

The world is seeking relief from the injustices, inharmonies, and discords of the world, but is not yet ready to seek God to attain freedom. It seeks freedom from its troubles by any other means. Many who come to us for healing are also not interested in God. They will accept it if it must come through God, but they are not seeking God. They are seeking healing of the body, or the purse, or an addiction, or unhealthy desires.

Many of us did the same thing, but often having a problem and turning to God for the solution aroused an interest in God, and we got onto the spiritual path. So we should not be concerned if people come primarily for “loaves and fishes.” We work slowly and patiently with them, and those who have a capacity for experiencing God will flourish. Those who do not have that capacity may need many healings before they awaken to an interest in God.

Healing is an important part of our ministry. Without it, our teaching is apt to be “clouds without rain.” But healing is not the most important part; the most important part is awakening the individuals who come to us to their Christhood, bringing them to an experience of inner God-contact. But first, we must bring healing to them. We may not heal everyone, or we may heal them and not know it. Sometimes healings come much later than we anticipate because conditions must be met within the patient before healing is realized.

Spiritual teaching is an impartation of spiritual truth from one soul to another. It is the awakening of the sleeping Christ by one who is already awakened. That is also the nature of spiritual healing. Healing is evidence of the truth of our ministry, and it takes a healing consciousness to open the spiritual consciousness of another. Spiritual healing has nothing to do with reading, or teaching from books, or telling truth to people. It is to awaken the soul, to awaken that inner light.

### **How is healing consciousness developed?**

How is the healing consciousness developed? There are two ways. One is personal contact with a teacher who is, in some measure, awakened. The other is self-instruction through an understanding of the correct letter of truth and the *constant practice of it* until the consciousness is developed.

### **Why has there been a decline in spiritual healing?**

Mrs. Eddy wrote the first edition of *Science and Health* when she was about fifty-five. Yet she saw Christian Science develop to the point that there were 1,500 churches worldwide, and her writings were translated into a half-dozen languages. The reason for that phenomenal growth was the almost miraculous healings brought about by Mrs. Eddy and the early Christian Science practitioners. The Unity movement began in 1892, and within an individual's lifespan, it developed into a worldwide movement. Again, its rapid growth occurred because of the healings that were brought forth.

Yet overall, Christian Science and Unity have experienced great decline, except where there is a fine group of practitioners. Why, since they originally had the principle of healing? Joel's answer, based on his experience of twenty-five years, is that wherever there has been a falling off of healing work, it is because **students have refused to understand the nature of error.**

**All healing work is based on an understanding of the nature of error.**

All healing work is based on an understanding of the nature of error. You might think that healing depends on an understanding of the nature of God, and that would be true if we could comprehend the meaning of the nature of God, but we can't. Anyone can say "God is all," and of course, that is the nature of God. But it is quite possible to say, "God is all," and the next minute say, "But how are we going to protect ourselves from this weather," or "How are we going to protect ourselves from a disease?" We have declared "God is all," but now we are concerned about the weather or disease, so our declaration is insufficient.

There have been so-called "absolute teachings" based on the truth of God's allness. But none of these have lasted as a healing teaching, because no one can accept the complete teaching of God's allness unless they understand the nature of error. We have learned to use the nature of God in treatment; we use God as the first word of every treatment, seeing God as allness, as the mind of the individual, the life, the soul, the spirit of the individual, and God as the only activity. That form of treatment—keeping the mind stayed on God—is very effective. But it presupposes that you know the nature of error. Wherever there is not satisfactory healing, whether in Christian Science, Unity, or The Infinite Way, **the reason is a lack of understanding of the nature of error.**

**Never expect God to do anything for you.**

Throughout history, people have believed in two powers: the power of God and the power of Satan, or the devil; the power of good and the power of evil. There is always a greater power overcoming a lesser power. We hear statements like, "Oh, God (or the indwelling Christ) will do this for you," as if there were some negative power for God to operate on. The secret is that God will not do anything for you. God does not heal disease, or reform or supply anyone. God *is*, and God's work was done in the beginning. There is no use praying to God to do something; we must lift ourselves into the atmosphere where God is already operating.

Joel tells the story of a patient who came to him with the claim of a serious disease, and after he worked with her for several weeks, she suggested they discontinue the work because she did not think that God would heal her, because she was apt to go back to sin after she was healed. Joel responded that he never thought or expected God to heal her. He explained that the principle he held was that God is infinite good, and she was God's offspring. Therefore, she was already in His kingdom, in His perfection. He said that he was ignoring the appearances of her former sins and the present claim of disease, and by ignoring them, he was holding to her true identity. Because he knew God's allness, he did not give any power to the claim.

No one should ever expect God to heal disease. If God could, God would do it long before we get around to giving just the right treatment. Our treatments are not meant to influence God. They are never an attempt to bring God into your experience. We never expect God to do something. God *is*. God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient.

### **The belief in two powers blocks healing.**

If it is true that God already is and is all that you expect or hope for, what is blocking the activity of God from your being, or your body, or your business? Joel answers that the block is that you still have two powers—a power of evil, and a power of God that you want to overcome the evil. That is the error. There are not two powers. There is one power, God, and there is *the belief* in a second power, the power of evil. But the power of evil is a suggestion of “mortal mind,” which is not a thing, an entity, a presence, or a power. Mrs. Eddy coined the term “mortal mind” and said that it is a term denoting nothingness or illusion. Yet students still ask for help, saying, “Will you help me get rid of my illusion?”

To know that something is an illusion is healing. It is recognizing that a condition does not exist as an entity or identity, or as something with a name or a form. You may see an appearance, but when you know it is an illusion, healing occurs.

Be careful not to translate the appearance of a sin or disease into another term, such as “illusion,” and still think of it as something to be removed or healed. Translate it into something that means nothingness to you, whatever that word may be. In *The Infinite Way*, use “appearance,” “mirage,” “illusion,” “mesmerism,” and “hypnotism.” A hypnotist or a mesmerist may be able to make you see a dozen snakes, but cannot produce even one real snake. All he can produce is the illusion of snakes, a mental image without form or substance.

The basic error of this world is hypnotism. We have been hypnotized by appearances. We look at train tracks coming together for so long that we may actually believe they come together and fear getting on the train. For nearly fifteen hundred years, people were so hypnotized by the belief that the sky and water came together at the horizon that they would not venture out very far in a boat. They had looked at that image for so long that they were hypnotized. Similarly, there is a universal hypnotism that presents to us appearances of sin, disease, death, lack, and limitation, and we come to believe they are real.

Our freedom comes when we realize God as infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, the only law, the only power, the only substance, and the only cause, and say, “Then this appearance (or temptation, or claim) of sin, disease, or death cannot be a reality, cannot exist, cannot have power, presence, activity, or law. It is a nothingness, an illusion. When we understand the nature of evil as nothingness, appearance, suggestion, claim, or hypnotism, we can ignore it and begin to abide in God’s allness.

You cannot bring forth healing when you have two powers. You will never recognize the infinite nature of God’s good power until you understand that evil, error, sin, or disease, regardless of its name or nature, exists only as an appearance that has no substance, no law, and no cause. It exists as a state of ignorance because the truth of being is God’s allness.

### **How Joel realized that God alone is power**

You must find a way, in your own words, that helps you realize that God alone is power. The way it came to Joel was that he could only understand the word “God” as something that couldn’t be seen, heard, tasted, touched, smelled, reasoned, or thought; as something invisible and infinite. So he said to himself, “If that’s true, then all power in the world is invisible.” As a result, he no longer feared anything visible. If he could see it, hear it, taste it,

touch it, or smell it, he let it go because no power could be in it. When claims were presented to him, he would say, "If you can see it or hear it, don't worry about it." Gradually, he built a realization that all power is in the invisible.

All power lies in that which you cannot see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or even think about. Even when you think about God, it isn't really God; it's your concept of God, and your concept has no power. Let God act, and you will be aware of God by the effect. We can see healings, but they are the result of an *invisible* action that has nothing to do with your thinking; it is beyond the realm of thought.

Statements are not power. If they were, the whole world would be healed. It is the consciousness behind the statements that brings forth the power, and it is the individual's response to that consciousness that helps him. We cannot go about healing everyone we see because they are not receptive to this state of consciousness.

### **Do you believe that God is law?**

In our work, we are rising above belief and faith. We cannot have faith in God because faith in God also carries with it the faith that God will do something. God doesn't require faith. The faith is really the understanding of God's oneness, God's allness.

For example, we have learned that God is law. Then why don't we say, "I don't need any more books or teachers since this is the whole truth."? If God is law and God is infinite, God's law must be infinite. Then, is there a law of sin? A law of disease? A law of limitation? A law of climate, weather, food, or medicine? No. There are no laws but the law of God.

Yet none of us believes it or fully accepts it. It is too deep for the mind to grasp. Only as you come into spiritual consciousness can you grasp—and then only momentarily—the tremendous fact that *God's law is the only law*. In that instant, you could raise the dead. But five minutes later, you are believing in another law—a law of climate, or heredity, or vitamins, or food. It isn't your fault. Joel said that even he has moments when God's law is the only law, and he sees beautiful things from it, but then, some other law comes to plague him in his own experience or in that of a patient or student.

The secret is that God is law, but that *God is the only law because God is infinite*. And since God is good, self-created, self-maintained, and self-sustained, this law of God is self-maintained and self-sustained. It is eternal, infinite, and omnipresent. Any other law is but illusion. When you grasp that, you have done your healing work. You will have good results in healing as long as you are not trying to use God *over* error, or trying to use God's law to nullify another law, or trying to get God's presence to do away with another presence.

### **Reprise: the nature of error is of paramount importance in healing work.**

You can see how important the nature of error is in healing work. Always, we must be certain that we are not thinking of God as a great power, as overcoming something, or doing something to something or somebody. We must come to a place within ourselves where we know absolutely that whatever the nature of the error is, it cannot exist as a presence or power.

Joel tells of an experience with a doctor who said he became ill through his research work. Joel said, "You were looking for a law of disease, weren't you?" The doctor replied that if

they could find the law of the disease, they would be able to find a remedy for it. “No,” Joel said, “If you find the law of disease, you’ll perpetuate it because anything that has a law is going to be perpetuated by its law. So, if disease has a law, you’re going to have it forever.” Though he was stunned by this statement, the doctor subsequently did more healing by knowing that there is no law of disease than by traditional medical methods.

Simply knowing God’s allness will not bring you to the fact that there is no law of disease. It is only when you probe the nature of error that you see that error says there are laws of disease. But we know that God is law, and since God is the only law, disease has no law. So we don’t need a God to heal it.

We really don’t have to pray; since God is the only power and the only presence, we don’t need God for anything. God has only one function in our lives: we live with God and abide in this spiritual awareness. We don’t need God to bring us supply, because God is the only supply. God can’t bring us supply because that would mean there is a God *and* supply. There is not God *and* supply. There is only God, and God *Itself is* the supply. You don’t need God *and*. God *is*, so we don’t need God for any purpose. We only need God for God.

### **Realization of God’s allness comes when you realize there is no law other than God.**

When we have the conscious realization of God, we have the abiding place, the fortress, and the high tower. We have the law of God and no other law. We have the life of God, and we don’t have to pray to prolong a life because God *Itself is* individual life. We simply have “God is,” and that is enough. But notice that we have not ignored appearances and simply said, “Oh, God is love. God is all.” That is not enough. If it were, healings would happen everywhere. The one thing that will do all things for everybody is the *actual realization of God’s allness*, and that comes when you have the conscious realization that there cannot be a law of disease, because the law would perpetuate the disease. God is the only law.

You will encounter claims of physical substance, the substance of the body. Because it is physical substance, it is always changing, aging, and weakening. But the truth is God’s allness, and God is spirit, so the only substance must be *spiritual* substance, which is infinite. So, there can be no physical substance, and we do not need a God to change bad physical substance into good physical substance. We only need the realization of God’s allness as spiritual substance.

Joel recommends that we read chapters on the nature of error and review them frequently to remind ourselves that, in *The Infinite Way*, we do not reach out to God to do anything for us. God is an omnipresent God of love that is always functioning without any help or influence from us. We realize the great truth that whatever the nature of the trouble, it is not an entity or identity, a substance, a law, or a cause. It is a mirage, or illusion, and there is no such thing as an externalized illusion. You may believe that you see water on the desert road, but the water isn’t on the road. It is in your own false seeing.

There are no externalized sins to be healed; no externalized diseases to be met; no externalized lumps or fevers, and no externalized paralysis. These are all illusory states of thought—not your thought, but universal thought. You see them because of the degree of mortal thought that remains in you. That is why we never blame a patient for their erroneous thoughts. It is not their fault; they are accepting a universal belief.

The question is often asked, “Why do even the best practitioners and teachers have discords?” Joel’s answer is that in the degree that they still have some phase of mortal consciousness that they have not risen above, and that mortal consciousness will be externalized.

### Optional Practice

In answer to the question “How is the healing consciousness developed?” Joel said that there are two ways. One is personal contact with a teacher who is awakened in some measure. **The other is self-instruction, through an understanding of the correct letter of truth and the *constant practice of it* until the consciousness is developed.**

Since most of us do not have the opportunity to be in personal contact with a teacher regularly, if we wish to develop a healing consciousness, we must take the second path: “self-instruction, through an **understanding of the correct letter of truth** and the ***constant practice of it*** until the consciousness is developed.”

In Part 2 of our study program, we spent a good deal of time on the correct letter of truth by studying the four major principles of The Infinite Way: the nature of God, the nature of individual being, the nature of error, and the nature of prayer. If you feel you would benefit from reviewing the lessons on the nature of error, you can find them in the Study Center.

If you feel that you already have a sound foundation in the correct letter of truth, then the work becomes “the constant practice of the principles until the consciousness is developed.”

When we begin to work with the principle of the nature of error, we learn the principle, and we know it mentally. We learn that error is impersonal, a suggestion, with no real power. But when a problem appears, we may still react or become fearful. While we understand the principle intellectually, we have not yet fully realized it.

To achieve realization, we must practice by actively applying the principle whenever discord appears. We can practice by recognizing every appearance as a suggestion that is impersonal and refusing to react to the appearance. This takes **constant awareness and discipline**, but eventually, the recognition occurs **automatically**. When discord appears, we instantly realize, “This is hypnotic suggestion; it has no power; God alone is reality,” and this happens **without effort**.

### Practice the Principle of the Nature of Error

Clearly, for this lesson, we should focus on practicing the nature of error.

#### 1. Find a way that works for you to help you realize that God alone is power.

Joel says, “**You must find a way, in your own words, that helps you realize that God alone is power.**” The way it came to Joel was that he could only understand the word “God” as something that couldn’t be seen, heard, tasted, touched, smelled, reasoned, or thought; as something invisible and infinite. He said to himself, “If that’s true, then all power in the world is invisible.” As a result, he no longer feared anything visible. If he could see it, hear it, taste it, touch it, or smell it, he let it go because no power could be in it. When claims were presented to him, he would say, “If you can see it or hear it, don’t

worry about it.” Gradually, he built a realization that all power is in the Invisible, in that which you cannot see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or even think about. We can see healings, but they are the result of an *invisible* action, or invisible truth, that has nothing to do with your thinking; it is beyond the realm of thought.

That is the approach that worked for Joel. See if you can come up with something that works for you.

**2. Practice meeting every appearance of error that comes to your awareness. Whenever error appears, mentally identify it as *suggestion* or *hypnotism*, the universal belief in two powers—God, and something other than God. Refuse to accept it as person, condition, or power.**

Joel has said that students often struggle with the nature of error for a long time because they react to appearances as though they were real conditions. From birth, we are conditioned to believe that disease, death, lack, limitation, and other evils are real, and those conditioned beliefs can persist, even when we understand the principle intellectually.

Joel illustrates: “Say that someone comes in here and hypnotizes you, and he says to you that that plant over there... has three snakes, and you accept that because of his hypnotic suggestion... You fear them, you run away from them, you even pick up a knife and want to chop their heads off, all based on the one premise that there are snakes there.”<sup>1</sup> The snakes are never actually there. Yet the person fears them and reacts to them because **the suggestion was accepted as reality.**

Joel offers these suggestions for practice:

- “When you see a person in sin or disease, immediately lift your thought and say, ‘I can’t be fooled! That’s the appearance, but actually it’s nothing but a hypnotic suggestion, a mesmeric suggestion, or a universal belief that is appearing to me as a sick person or a sinful person.’”<sup>2</sup>
- “I have found it helpful to me, when I am first presented with any form of error... to realize quickly, ‘I’m not dealing with a person or a condition. I am only dealing with a suggestion that wants to get in and make me do something about it.’”<sup>3</sup>
- “Once we recognize that the only error operating in this universe is hypnotism, then all we have to do every time we see a form of it is say, ‘Uh-uh... you are not person, place, thing, circumstance, or condition. You are hypnotism.’”<sup>4</sup>
- “You are not dealing with people or conditions: you are dealing with the world of appearances... the substance of an illusion is nothingness, whether it appears as a cold, a headache, a cancer... a broken bone, poverty, or unemployment.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Recording 12A: 1952 Honolulu Class Series One, “The Thunder of Silence,”

<sup>2</sup> *Consciousness in Transition*, Chapter 5, “The Nature of Error.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Recording 804A: 1957 Inner Working Group Series, “Function, Action, Law of Mind.”

<sup>5</sup> *Living the Illumined Life*, Chapter 1, “The Now Activity of the Christ.”

- “The secret of the handling of error lies in knowing the nature of error, and the nature of error is summed up in one word: hypnotism.”<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Practice impersonalizing error.

Be sure that you do not look for the cause of the discord *in* the individual. Error is impersonal. The problem is not personal thinking but universal belief.

We can apply this to ourselves as well as to others. Joel advises:

“Every time that we are tempted to indulge anything that we recognize as foreign to our own spiritual nature, we can instantly reject it with that realization: ‘You are no part of me; you are no part of the divinity of me; you are no part of that which God implanted in me. Therefore, you are a temptation, and I have the power to reject you. You have no power over me.’ It may even be a temptation to be sick, but we have the power to recognize that sickness is no part of a man created in the image and likeness of God.

“When a temptation comes to accept sickness, instead of saying, ‘Now let me look into my mind and see what caused it,’ let us go back to our birth: ‘Call no man on earth your father, only one is your parent, the Father in heaven.’ And what is my heritage? Health and eternal life. Therefore, sickness can be no part of my being, and this comes to me as a temptation, a temptation to accept for myself that which is no part of my being.

“Now, once you claim for yourself that heritage of birth, how are you ever going to look into your mind to see what caused your disease? How are you going to accuse yourself of envy, jealousy, malice, hate, lust, animality, greed, or fear? How are you going to do that? And you will know that any teaching that places the source of your troubles in your poor human qualities or wrong thinking has been wrong from the beginning.”<sup>7</sup>

Joel also counsels:

“The very moment that you declare it to be impersonal, you begin to separate it from yourself. You take the condemnation from your own shoulder. . . . I have felt it myself when I have felt my own human errors, the human nature that would work in me. . . . [But then] I have realized, ‘Wait a minute! No condemnation. No self-condemnation! Remember your true identity, and [remember] that this that is bothering you is of the Earth, earthy! It was here before you were born, and it probably will afflict somebody not yet born, unless their parents know enough how to bring them into this world as a spiritual being and never hold them in condemnation.’”<sup>8</sup>

“The very moment that you seek within yourself or within your patient for the cause of the trouble, you are helping to perpetuate it, and you are making it almost impossible to be healed.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Recording 12A: 1952 Honolulu Class Series One, “The Thunder of Silence,”

<sup>7</sup> Recording 309A: 1960 Seattle Closed Class, “The Light Breaking Through.”

<sup>8</sup> Recording 301B: 1960 Los Angeles Closed Class, “The Infinite Way Principles of Healing.”

<sup>9</sup> Recording 318B: 1960 Kansas City Practitioner Class, “Treatment and Law – to Grace.”

“Error is not in *our* thought; error is in the *universal* thought, and we merely accept it. One person accepts it in the form of sin, one in the form of disease, one in the form of lack and limitation. But, in whatever form, it is a universal belief.”<sup>10</sup>

In other words, healing does not come by correcting personal thought. It comes by recognizing and rejecting the suggestion. So as we practice, we do not try to correct the person, change the condition, or remove the disease. Instead, we recognize: This is impersonal belief appearing as a condition. It is not a person, condition, or power. It is impersonal suggestion.

### **Additional Study on the Nature of Error**

Joel cautions us against too much reading or listening and encourages more silent contemplation and meditation. But if you feel the need to study more about the nature of error, here are several book chapters that address it.

*Conscious Union with God*, Chapter 4, “The Nature of Error.”

*Consciousness in Transition*, Chapter 5, “The Nature of Error.”

*The Early Years*, Chapter 6, “The Nature of Error.”

*The Foundation of Mysticism*, Chapter 8, “The Nature of Error”

*The Master Speaks*, Chapter 4, “Error”

*The Mystical I*, Chapter 7, “Impersonalizing Error”

As mentioned before, you might also want to review the two earlier sessions in this study program on the nature of error:

<https://goldsmithglobal.org/part-2-session-3-the-nature-of-error/>

<https://goldsmithglobal.org/part-2-session-4-the-nature-of-error-continued/>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Master Speaks*, Chapter 18, “The Infinite Way.”