

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (5/19/18)

Q: Would you please speak about the appearance of change? Where do we go when we go on? I'm trying to overcome the fear of a so-called transition.

A: All of that can be included in the word "I." Close your eyes and say to yourself "I" several times, and as you do that, remember that that "I" that you just voiced was the same I when you were six years of age, and sixteen, and twenty-six, and thirty-six, and forty-six, and will be the same at a hundred and six, and at a thousand and six. That I is ever with you, and it is that I that looks out upon this world, first from the standpoint of childhood, and so on up to the age of maturity.

That I will never leave you nor forsake you, and should the time come when you make a transition that the world calls death, I will be standing there watching the entire process. You will be standing there watching the entire process, just as you were standing there watching yourself grow from childhood to adulthood. And so you will be standing there watching yourself grow from your present experience to whatever may be the next plane of existence, and it will be so gradual that you will no more notice it than you notice passing from childhood to adulthood, or from youth to maturity.

It is a gradual process, and even though it seems to take but a minute of time, still it is so gradual that you are not aware of a transition taking place in any sense of discord or inharmony. The moment the transition has been accomplished you will find that you appear to be just a few feet—six, eight, nine feet above your body—and the entire room will be visible; the entire circumstance will be visible to you. You will go on with a great deal of joy and rejoicing, just as I am sure that the caterpillar must rejoice when it finds itself flying around as a butterfly.

Because of the appearance of the body, because of theological fears engendered by the idea of punishment for sins, the idea of transition has become fearsome to us. It is only because it is associated in our minds with the possibility of death, with the possibility of punishment for our earthly sins. Probably we deserve it, because that's the way we treat our children—with continuous threats of punishment. When we stop that, we ourselves will be released by the church, and they will stop threatening us with punishment to make us behave.

Now, transition is a natural passage from one state of consciousness to another, and ordinarily it is as painless and as free of discord as passing from twenty years of age to twenty one. Some few who suffer greatly through the fear of the experience only suffer that while they are still on this side fearing the idea of punishment. The moment the transition has been made, that fear is gone. I said that the experience is a natural one. It is. It is. God is infinite. God is infinite in its forms and varieties. God is infinite in its manifestations and expressions, and not only that, but God being infinite and complete is forever unfolding to our view, and as it unfolds in the immaturity of childhood through the maturity of adulthood, so God continues unfolding to us in further forms and expressions of life.

If God stopped unfolding in our consciousness at say thirty-five or forty years of age, and we never went beyond that, we would be at a standstill. We would be at a place of stagnation. Life couldn't go on forever being just whatever it was at thirty-five or forty. It must continue unfolding because there is no end to God's goodness. I know that the age of thirty-five or forty or forty-five seems to be about the best years of a person's life, and from the human standpoint of limitation it would be wonderful to see it continuing at about that degree of maturity forever and forever and forever, but that would be limiting God, and God cannot be limited.

There is no way to stop the activity of God's unfoldment as our good. Let us not resist it, and then we will find that should we make a transition that it will be without disease, without old age, without being pushed out of the body. It would be a normal, natural transition from the caterpillar to the butterfly. It would be a natural, normal, painless, beautiful transition from high school to college. It will be an expanding consciousness of God's grace. When we relinquish the word "death," and when we think of transition as a continuing unfoldment of God's grace, we will find that it will have none of the experiences or appearances of death.

It all must take place within us—this understanding that there is no death. There is no death. That has merely been the invention of churches to frighten people, and I don't only mean the modern churches. It has been the invention of churches all through the ages to frighten people into being good. There is no way to frighten people into being good except to threaten them with punishment. [This idea of death] has no existence outside of their teachings. No one has ever died. No one ever will die. No one has ever been punished, and no one ever will be punished. There is no such thing as punishment, except the punishment that we give ourselves through accepting false standards of existence and violating our own standards.

In the same way, the principle of mathematics does not punish us for getting an incorrect answer in our checkbook, but our ignorance certainly punishes us. Our ignorance punishes us when we give out five dollars for two twos. Our ignorance does that, not the principle of mathematics. And so it is, when we violate what we know to be the spiritual laws of love, of life, of truth, of peace, integrity; when we violate that, there is a punishment—not from God, nor does that punishment come after death. That punishment comes right here and now, and not too long after the sin. As a matter of fact, it begins almost at the moment of the mistake itself.

Sometimes it isn't evident to the outer world. Sometimes the outer world says, "Look at that sinner. He flourishes like the green bay tree and has no punishment." That's because you can't read what's going on inside. When you see the explosion five, ten, twenty years later; when you see them go out in great pain and distress; then you say, "Ah, his sins have caught up with him." They were catching up right from the moment that they were committed, only they weren't visible on the outside. You all know that to be true because it is your own experience. It would be impossible for you to commit a wrong today and begin to get punished tomorrow. No, my friends, you know immediately when the error is committed, and it is that moment that you begin to suffer from it, even though the outer world may only notice it later.

And so we need have no fear of punishment. Our only concern must be the realization of God as an unfolding consciousness, an infinite, unfolding consciousness of good leading us on to ever greener pastures. God has never ordained evil for anyone. The will of God is good for everyone. We miss some of that will of God because of our violation of the principles of good; the principles of love, life, truth, integrity. But God's will for us is good, and the moment we relax ourselves into God's will, that good begins to flow. ... God's will for us is good, and is love, and is harmony. Let everyone accept the will of God as love, and then they will see that they cannot fear the period of transition.

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