

## The Nature of Prayer Comes from the Nature of God Selected Excerpts from the Writings of Joel S. Goldsmith<sup>1</sup>

*In Recording 519A, "Prayer as We Must Understand It," from the 1963 Kailua Private Class, Joel emphasizes that our understanding of prayer depends on our understanding of the nature of God. He says, "It has been the world's ignorance of God that has prevented it from learning how to pray aright. When we know the nature of God, we can understand the nature of prayer." Joel presents this same theme frequently in his writings and classes, as exemplified by the two excerpts given below.*

"Let us review what we know about the nature of God and the nature of prayer, and then see how our meditations can fit into that. In the Infinite Way Writings, it is revealed that God is a state of divine being, ever-present, ever-available, filling all space. God has nothing to give, and no power to withhold. God is the creative principle and power, the maintaining and sustaining influence of this universe. God is being God all of the time, and He is being God without direction or petition on our part, and without affirmation or prayer of any nature.

"As this is being written, there is no sun in the heavens—it is nighttime, yet there is no trace of fear about tomorrow. It would be useless to pray that the sun rise tomorrow, simply because God requires no information or prayer from us. God will go about Its business of governing this universe, and in due time the sun will rise. Praying in the manner of petitioning and beseeching will not change the orderly rhythm of God's universe. God's work is done; God's laws are in operation; God's processes are already in work. That which *is*, divinely and eternally *is*, and we cannot influence God to make it so, or to prevent its being so.

"This gives us quite a different concept of God than many we have entertained heretofore. We have felt that it was important and necessary that we acquaint God with our needs and the needs of the world. The Master has told us, '*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him,*<sup>2</sup> and '*It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*<sup>3</sup> This should have taught us that the nature of prayer is a realization of the nature of God, of God's laws and God's love, and that the prayer which attempts to tell or ask God is not of much avail."<sup>4</sup>

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"Probably the very deepest teaching in the message of The Infinite Way is on the subject of the nature of God. Perhaps you think that you know God. Perhaps you believe that the synonyms for God which you have studied really constitute an understanding of God, but this is not so. If once we attain a knowledge of the nature of God, we shall at the same time understand that man is the Son of God, and we shall understand the nature of prayer which unites us with all the presence and all the power of God.

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<sup>1</sup> The quotations in this document are excerpted from a book that is currently under copy protection. They are provided for educational purposes to participants in the Goldsmith Global Online Tape Group under the Fair Use clause of the U.S. Copyright Act.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 6:8.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 12:32.

<sup>4</sup> *The Heart of Mysticism*, pp. 117-118

“Do not be surprised when I say to you that once you realize the nature of God, you will never again pray to God in the way that men ordinarily do pray. Since God is not a giving God or a withholding God, it is never necessary to ask God for anything. More especially, since God is Spirit, it would indeed be a waste of time to ask God for something of a material nature. The Master, Christ Jesus, revealed that when he said, *‘Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on.’*<sup>5</sup> He told us something of the nature of God when he said, in effect, that God is divine intelligence, *‘Your Father knoweth that you have need of these things’*<sup>6</sup>; and then he told us more of the nature of God when he implied that God is divine love by adding, *‘for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’*<sup>7</sup>

“Here you see two aspects of the nature of God. One is that God is divine intelligence and, therefore, there is never any need for you to tell God what things you have need of, nor to attempt to influence God to give you these things since God is not withholding them, for it is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Once you recognize God as infinite Intelligence and divine Love, the whole nature of your prayer will change. This, you, yourself, will realize as you learn to approach God, not in the nature of a power that you would beseech for favors or ask for gifts, but rather in the knowledge that you can rest in that same realization in which David rested when he was enabled to say, *‘The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.’*<sup>8</sup> Do you not see that calm and certain assurance: *‘The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want’*? No need there to beseech God, to ask or to beg of God, but rather to abide in the awareness that *‘He leadeth me beside the still waters; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.’*

“The Master further revealed the nature of God, when, to John’s question, *‘Art thou he that should come?’* he answered: *‘Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’*<sup>9</sup> This, then, is the nature of God, that man should be alive, eternally so, immortally so, and never know death, since the Master in raising the dead proved that death is never the will of God for man. Therefore, man could rise above the need for death.

“And, of course, it was God’s will that man be eternally well, since Christ Jesus said that he came to do the will of the Father, and the will of the Father was that the sick be healed. So you see that God’s will is that we be well, and therefore, the nature of the Christ is to restore us to our God-given heritage of health, abundance, and life eternal...

“To understand the nature of God in this way and to understand the Christ-mission must, of course, reveal to you the nature of prayer. Now, you can no longer pray for anything, but must confine your prayers to asking, seeking, and knocking for spiritual wisdom, spiritual guidance, spiritual bread, wine, and water. When you learn to turn to the Father for the revelation of God in your experience—for the actual demonstration of God in your experience—then, and only then, are you beginning to understand the nature of prayer.<sup>10</sup>”

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 6:25.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 6:32.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 12:32.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 23:1.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 11:3-4.

<sup>10</sup> *The Heart of Mysticism*, pp. 524-527