

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (9/21/19)¹

Q: You have said that our bodies are ours, but not us. You have likened them to an automobile. I understand that the natural sensations of hunger and thirst are not in our bodies, but in the universal belief. Should our minds, and therefore our bodies, be as free from these so-called natural feelings as an automobile? If not, what place have these in our life? How do we deal with them?

A: No, absolutely, you cannot rule out of you a hunger for food or a desire for water. You cannot rule out of you entirely the sensations of pain, although there are ways to develop such a high consciousness that even if you had pain, you wouldn't know it. But ordinarily speaking, and for the ordinary student, the average student, oh, even for the advanced student, unless you have taken pains to develop that faculty, you are going to have hunger, and you're going to have thirst, and you're going to require some exercise. You're going to require proper food. You're going to require bathing. And, the natural affections must be fed.

You are not supposed to rule those out, but when the Spirit touches us, all of those things are under control. Then you can say, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but that doesn't mean that man won't eat some food. Man isn't living by water, but that doesn't mean that he won't take some water into his system. Man doesn't live by taking baths or exercises, but that doesn't say that in our present development we won't bathe and we won't take exercises. But those things are incidental to our lives. They are not important, and therefore, the appetites are always under control.

If you are acquainted with people who have been for some time on a metaphysical path such as Christian Science, Unity, or The Infinite Way, you will find that alcohol drops away from them entirely. Smoking drops away from them entirely, and as a rule, overeating and overindulgence in foods. And that is without any special treatment. It is just a normal, natural happening that the desire for alcohol, the desire for smoking, the desire for overindulgence in any way, drops away. Also, the desire for overindulgence in amusements drops away, whether it's the overindulgence in theater, or the overindulgence in dancing, or the overindulgence in card playing, or the overindulgence in sex relations. That doesn't mean that a person may not enjoy an occasional good show or good music. It doesn't mean that they will not occasionally enjoy a good television show or a good movie, nor does it mean that they will not be happy in their married life, if they are happily married.

But it does mean this: that when the Spirit touches you, it absolutely rules out overindulgence in the senses, and the proof of that is that in the people with whom I've mingled in Christian Science, and in Unity, and in The Infinite Way for these twenty-seven years, very seldom do you find anyone that still partakes of alcohol. Oh, I don't mean that they may not take a glass of wine or a glass of beer, more especially in Europe, but that is not the indulgence in alcohol. That is no different than our indulgence in an ice cream soda or a Coca Cola. But the use of alcohol or tobacco as a stimulant drops away.

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The desire for gambling drops away. Can you see the reason for it? Gambling has behind it the desire to gain, and let's say an easy gain. But if one has been touched by the Spirit, what do they want that the other fellow has got? Certainly not his money—certainly not without giving something in exchange for it. And so there is no longer an appetite for gambling, because the product of gambling, which is money, is no longer needed, except that which comes in our normal, natural way.

And so, these things have a rightful place in our experience at our present level of development, but by reaching Spirit, or when Spirit touches us, be assured of this: all of the human senses are under control. Is that clear? We are not ascetics in the sense that we give up all of what the world calls normalcy.