

## Additional Study Offering for Recording #17A: “Spiritual Healing”

*In this recording, #17A, Joel explains the meaning of “real” and “unreal” and “reality” and “unreality” as those terms are used in *The Infinite Way*. He addresses this topic in many of his books and classes. Here are excerpts from two of Joel’s books<sup>1</sup> that are particularly clear on the subject.*

### Excerpt from *The Master Speaks*, Chapter 13, “Individual Consciousness”

#### *Reality and Unreality*

The next thing we must bring to conscious remembrance is the nature of that which appears to us as error. In the metaphysical world, error is understood to be a negation of truth, a denial of truth, or the opposite of truth. Above all things, we understand it to be illusion, or non-reality. Many students misinterpret the words non-reality, unreality, and unreal. When they declare that sin or disease is unreal, they believe that that means that the sin or disease is non-existent, and therefore, they ignore it. To say that sin and disease are unreal does not mean that they are non-existent. It does not mean that there is not something appearing as sin or disease, but it means that that appearance has none of the qualities of reality.

The meaning of the word “unreality,” in this sense, is not the commonly accepted definition of the word. It is used here as the term is used in philosophy. The word “reality” in that sense means that which is permanent, that which is eternal, that which is infinite, that which always has been and always will be. In that sense of the word, you would understand instantly the unreal nature of disease. There was a time when the disease did not exist and there will be a time when it will not exist. It is not real, because it has no substance to maintain or sustain it. It exists only as a finite sense, as a false sense, in the same way in which two times two are five exists—not as reality, not as an entity or identity; but as an appearance, belief, or illusion, or a false sense of mathematics.

This is of vital importance to us because the whole world is trying to get rid of sin and disease as if they were realities, as if they had an actual existence. The ministry is trying to heal sinners and remove sin. The medical world is trying to remove disease, and many times they succeed. But that is not our work nor our world. “*My kingdom is not of this world.*”<sup>2</sup> If we, as metaphysicians, approach the subject of sin and disease as if they exist as reality, and as if we are expected to do something about them, or to use some power or force to remove them, we are on the same level of consciousness as the material or mental world. Now, remember, spiritual work is not on that level. You will find in *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture* and in other

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<sup>1</sup> These excerpts are from books that are under copyright. We are most grateful to Acropolis Books for permission to provide these excerpts to the participants in the Goldsmith Global online tape group as part of our study program on the body. Please respect the copyright on this material.

<sup>2</sup> John 18:36

Infinite Way writings a complete exposition of the nature of error, and especially the nature of material and mental belief as distinct from spiritual reality.

Let a practitioner begin with the premise that his patient actually has a disease or a sin, and, mark my words, he will not be able to bring about a healing at all, because there is not a spark of spiritual truth in any statement or thought that claims that any person has a condition that is not a part of God's being, because God's being is all.

If you are going to take your stand on the truth that "*I and my Father are one,*"<sup>1</sup> please understand and immediately recognize that what you are beholding with your senses is a false sense of reality; you are not only watching the tracks come together, but actually believing that they do. In the healing ministry of the Infinite Way, our standpoint is God—God omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent; God, the Life of all being; God, the Spirit and the Soul of individual being. Therefore, all is perfection. We let every belief or appearance strike against that spiritual wall, that spiritual consciousness which we have built, and then we say to any and every form of error, as the Master said, "*Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.*"<sup>2</sup> We hold that wall against every belief or appearance that may hit up against it. We do not say, "What caused this?" or "What can I do about it?" No, our response is, "What is there to hinder you? Pick up your bed and walk."

Never forget this. If you forget everything else, do not forget this one point, because you can heal, and anyone in the world can heal, if you can catch one single glimpse of the truth that there cannot be God and reality in sin or disease. In the beginning, you may only heal or bring about improvement in the smaller things, or so-called minor things, of life. But as you build this consciousness, as you become more and more aware of error as unreality—a non-power, a non-force, a non-existent entity or identity, a substance-less form—then healing becomes a very, very simple thing.

All that is necessary after that, is to watch that you do not accept any of the world's prejudice or bias. Never believe that this truth is not equally true of Catholic, Jew, Protestant, Hindu, or Moslem; because if you do not see its universality, you lose your vision. Unless you can see God as the reality of all being; unless you can see that no sin, sickness, or limitation differs from another, that all exist as illusion—unless you can see that, you are lost. If you can see that God, in Its infinite eternal omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, is the life of individual being; and if you can be big enough to include the entire universe in that life, then you have begun your healing ministry. But if you accept into your thought any difference or distinction between one race or another, one nationality, one religion, one creed, one metaphysical movement or another, then you are lost. There is no distinction or difference: we are all one in Christ Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> John 10:30

<sup>2</sup> John 19:11

**Excerpt from *A Parenthesis in Eternity*, Chapter 11, "Reality and Illusion"**

The world that we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell is the world the Master overcame, but it is not a real world: it is a world formed by our sense impressions, by what we like or dislike at the moment. So it is that this world of the second chapter of Genesis, the world of a man created out of dust, of a woman created out of a rib, and of children created from the union of man and woman—this is not a world; this is a dream. This is the world of sense impressions, beliefs, and theories which exists only as a mental concept, just as our man-made God exists as a mental concept, and not as God.

This world of sense impressions is not under the law of God. All kinds of fanciful ideas can whirl around up here in our mind, all kinds of fanciful pictures, but they are not under the law of God; they are not an expression of divine Intelligence. We can have opinions about God, opinions about man, and we can have opinions about one another, but they are not the truth, and they do not come forth from God. The world that we can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell is not under the law of God, and yet this very world that we are living in is under the grace of God when we see through the appearance to Reality.

In this world created by the senses, this unreal world of mental images, we are deceived by appearances because in "this world," unlike in "My kingdom," we are faced always with the pairs of opposites. Everything has its opposite: up, down; health, sickness; life, death; wealth, poverty; good, evil; purity, sin; white, black; gain, loss.

There is nothing in the world of sense that does not have its opposite, and if we analyze human experience, we will see that life is just a continuous effort to change one of the pairs of opposites into the other. We are always trying to change sickness into health, lack into abundance, sin into purity, or evil into good, knowing that even if we attain it, tomorrow it can be reversed again, with a continuation of the same merry-go-round. The reason for this is clear: there is no law of God in human activity. If there were, good would be maintained and sustained. But in the kingdom of God where the law of God operates, we not only do not have all these pairs of opposites: we do not have even one of them. We do not have life any more than we have death; we do not have health any more than we have disease; we do not have abundance any more than we have lack; we do not have good any more than we have evil. None of these things exists in the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is a spiritual universe, and it has no qualities and it has no quantities. The kingdom of God is the realm of being, but that being is divine being—not good being because good has its opposite, evil; not live being because life has its opposite, death; but being—possessing no degrees, amounts, quantities, or qualities. *"The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 139:12

Now close your eyes again, and as you look into the darkness, if you see anything that looks good, it looks good or desirable only because it is a mental image in your thought, and its goodness is based on your concept of good. Someone else might look at that very same thing and find it valueless because nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so: it is the concept of it that a person entertains that makes it good or bad to him.

In this world of the senses, there is good and evil, and there is the centering of attention on changing the evil into good. In "My kingdom," the spiritual kingdom, we ignore the appearances and seek to realize spiritual truth, to realize God's grace, God's presence, and God's power. The moment that we feel a conscious oneness with God, the appearance changes. To our human sense, the evil appearance now has a good appearance, the appearance of lack has an abundant appearance, the sick appearance has a well appearance, sometimes even the dead appearance has a live appearance. But we are not fooled by the changed appearance. We know that in seeking the kingdom of God within, we are merely beholding Reality appearing, the grace of God appearing. We come face to face with God; we see Him as He is, and we are satisfied with that likeness.

To understand the illusory nature of the finite world is to grasp the kernel of all mystical teaching, but if it is misunderstood, it can act as a deterrent to progress as it has in India, which has one of the noblest spiritual heritages of any nation on earth.

Perhaps the greatest of all the Indian seers was Gautama the Buddha whose revelation of absolute truth was so profound that while there are other revelations equal to it, there are none which have surpassed it. Gautama had the full realization of the one Ego, the one *I* which constitutes the Consciousness of the universe, and he himself understood and proved that the appearance-world is maya, or illusion. Because of its fruitage, his message spread like wildfire across all of India, but his teaching of maya was misinterpreted. The belief that the world is an illusion led to a do-nothing attitude, a passive acceptance of the evil conditions in the world. His followers failed to see that it is not the world that is illusory. The world is real: the illusion is in the misperception of the eternal, divine, spiritual universe which is the only universe there is, and which is here and now.

Because of an illusory sense of the universe, however, the mortal scene appears as mortality with all its errors, whereas it is in reality a divine universe. This world is God's world; it is the temple of the living God; but when we see it with finite eyes and ears, what we see and hear is but the illusory picture of the reality that is there. The illusion is in the mind that is falsely seeing the world: the illusion is never out in the world. An illusion cannot be externalized. An illusion is a deceptive state of thought, and it can take place only within a person's mind, not outside it.

With our human eyesight we see a world constantly changing: a world made up of young, middle-aged, and old people, of the sick and the well, of the poor and the rich, of the unhappy and the happy. All this is an illusory picture in the human mind, but because there is only one

human mind, it is an illusory picture in your mind and mine. Such a world has no externalized existence.

We are aware of the world through our senses, but what the senses cognize is illusion, an illusion not outside the mind but in it. To be able to understand and grasp this idea, therefore, is also to be able to grasp the idea that this illusion cannot be corrected in the outer picture. That is why so much prayer fails. Through prayer, people are trying to improve the illusion which, if they succeeded in doing, would still be an illusion except that it would be a good illusion instead of a bad one.

God is not in "this world," contrary to the doctrine of pantheism which teaches that this world is a manifestation of God, that God transforms Himself into the world, so that God and the world are of the same substance though the form is different. If this were true and if the world really were a manifestation of God and made of the substance of God, it would be eternal, and there would be no changing process going on: no aging, no dying, and no decaying of either animate or inanimate objects. There would be no seasons if this world were of the substance of God because it would then be of the substance of eternity and changelessness. God changes not: God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; God is from everlasting to everlasting; and if this world were made of God-substance, it would be as immortal and as eternal as God, but it is not. It is changing moment by moment, dying every minute and every day.

The erroneous assumption in the teaching of pantheism and of much of modern metaphysics is that man is spiritual, that his physical body is spiritual, that trees and flowers are spiritual. This is true of the reality of these, but it is not true of the physical manifestation as it is appearing to us through the senses. If the world were spiritual, we could eat our food and have it too, we could drive automobiles that would never wear out, and we could have trees that would grow forever. But the substance of the forms we behold is not of that substance which is God, and once we perceive that, we shall understand the true meaning of the word "illusion," which is that our perception of what we behold constitutes the illusion. It is not that there is an externalized illusion: it is only that what we behold is not the real substance of which it is made: it is of the substance of mind, the substance of *universal* mind.

Theism goes to the opposite extreme. Theism regards God and the world as two distinct substances, each having its own independent existence as a creation of God, yet not made of the same substance as God. How impossible it would be for God, the creative Principle, to create anything unlike Himself, anything different in nature and character from Himself, anything other than Consciousness! If Consciousness is infinite, there is no other substance beyond Consciousness, and the world of God's creating must therefore be Consciousness formed.

The next question then is: What about this physical universe? The answer to that is the Master's statement: "My kingdom is not of this world." "This world" is the world of the Adamic dream; this is the world of mortal conception; this is the world of mental projection. When we recognize this and are able to close our eyes and realize the *I* in the midst of us, this body loses its sense of

mortality; even the material universe loses its mortal sense and becomes what God's world really is—harmonious and perfect.

The truth is that God is Spirit, Consciousness, and therefore all that really exists is God formed, God in manifestation. The world that we cognize with the five physical senses, however, is not the world of God's creating: it is the finite sense of the world which universal mind has created. With our mind, we cannot discern the world of God's creating. We do not see God's kingdom: we see only the human, limited, finite concept, or mental image, only the physical concept of the spiritual universe. That is why it is changeable and changing, sometimes good and sometimes bad, sometimes sick and sometimes well, sometimes alive and sometimes dead, all these conditions existing only as concepts and not as reality. It takes spiritual discernment to know the things of God.

Let us not look at this visible world and call it spiritual, but on the other hand let us not look at it and call it a creation separate from God. Let us rather cleave to the Middle Path which leads to our inner spiritual center where we are the Christ of God, and where we can see that we are one with the Father.

Some of the people we see on the street, on television, and even those around us certainly do not appear to be one with the Father, and surely many of us must wonder how this can be. Of course, we know it cannot be because a person who is one with God would look different and act differently.

To call a human being the Christ is an indication that we either have been endowed with interior vision and are able to see the person as he really is, or that we are lying to him and to ourselves. No human being can look upon physicality and with his mentality detect anything Christlike. All the human mind can be aware of is a physical body, and with it probably a personality, a personality that he may or may not like, or one that he may like today and not tomorrow. Only inner discernment, inner light, only an inner vision that beholds something the eye does not see and the ear does not hear can discern the Christ in any person.

To go into a prison, look at the assortment of men and women there, and say, "You are spiritual; you are the Christ," would be ridiculous, but if we went there clad in the Spirit, the Christ is what we would see. We would never make the mistake, however, of voicing such a statement to them or to anyone in charge.

When the Master asked, "*Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?*"<sup>1</sup> he was referring to an inner vision, an inner hearing, which we call spiritual discernment or Christ-consciousness. Only the Christ can recognize the Christ, and when we understand this, we will never look at a human form and declare, "You are well! You are healthy! You are young! You are spiritual." We would never do that, but if we could look through the appearance to the Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 8:18

of God, the Christ ever-present, although not apparent to our human eyesight, we would be able to break the mesmerism that looks at the body with the mind and believes the evidence of what it sees, hears, tastes, touches, and smells; and in breaking the mesmerism, we would be able, through our inner discernment, to behold the spiritual nature even of a dying or a sinful person. This is the difference between The Infinite Way and such teachings as pantheism and theism, and that is what makes it possible for healing work to be carried on in this teaching. In our spiritual work we are not deluding ourselves with the idea that this physicality that is wasting away with sin, disease, and death is spiritual, nor are we trying to spiritualize it and make it perfect: we are looking through the appearance with inner discernment and there beholding the invisible, spiritual child of God who was never born and will never die, eternal right here on earth.

Miracles can be performed by the person who does not try to heal disease and who understands that he is but the instrument of God; that God constitutes individual being; and that any appearance to the contrary is illusory, a picture in the mind, without spiritual substance, spiritual cause, spiritual law, and without spiritual entity or identity—maya, illusion.

On the spiritual path, we do not try to change the external world; we do not try to change our friends and relatives—their temperaments, their dispositions, or their health—but we recognize that the very omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience of God within our own being make it impossible for sin, disease, death, lack, and limitation to exist as externalized reality. These can exist only in the mortal dream which consists of the belief in two powers. As that belief in two powers is surrendered, so is the dream punctured.