

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (1/18/20)¹

Q: When we turn to God, when we are seeking divine guidance in our daily affairs, how do we know whether or not it is divine guidance?

A: First of all, when we seek divine guidance, we must have no outlined thought of an answer, and of course, when the answer comes, it is something that we have never thought about, never known about and couldn't possibly have conceived humanly. That would be one way. Another way of knowing, of being sure, is that with the unfoldment comes the conviction that this is divine guidance. Usually if that conviction isn't there, it may itself mean that it isn't divine guidance; that you're getting an answer in accord with what your desires were.

Now, in seeking guidance, we should have no desire because to have a desire would not be to seek guidance. It would be to seek a fulfillment of desire. Actually, this thing of following inner guidance is a matter of gradual development and unfoldment. What I mean by that is that as you turn now for guidance, should you by any chance be led to some course of action that isn't in accord with divine guidance, you would have to retrace your steps. You may make many slips or failures until you reach that consciousness where only the right answer comes through.

None of these mistakes will ever be fatal. None of them will ever be of such a nature that you can't retrace your steps, for the simple reason that just a simple turning to God, to the spiritual wisdom, will keep you from any fatal mistakes. And so, through trial and error, through turning within and getting the right answer and turning within and sometimes not getting it, you evolve to a point where you do reach the center of your being and get only right answers.

Now the wrong answers usually indicate that you're not pure in going to your center; in other words, if you did have a desire in the matter, and the answer came in accord with your desire. But if you go to the center of your being completely pure, completely free of any desire in the matter, perfectly willing to accept Thy will and not my will, the chances are that the answer will come in a way that will convince you that there is a spiritual way, and the fruitage will prove it.

Now, my experience has been that when undertaking a morning meditation, the first morning meditation should have no relationship at all to our human experience. In other words, it should have nothing to do with our daily living. It should be more in the sense of merely going to God for the experience of God. Now, if we follow that and receive an answer, an assurance, a click, a feeling of the Presence, then as we go to God with specific things, we will get the right answer. When we attempt to go to God only for the purpose of guidance on specific things, we are apt to miss the way because we haven't cleared ourselves of our human needs, desires, and wishes.

But let us suppose that this is seven o'clock in the morning, and the day is fresh, and we are fresh, and we are not going to God for any problem, with any problem, for any decision. We're merely going to God now for the experience of God, just for the joy of being in the Presence. That is the way our day should start. It should have no relationship to human affairs. It should just be a visit to God for the sake of being in God's presence, much in the same way that if we had a spiritual teacher available in the city and were permitted to go to that teacher at seven o'clock in the morning with the understanding that we wouldn't bring any problems there; that we would only come to hear what the

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teacher had to say. You can see what your day would be. You would go to the teacher; you would sit at the feet of the master; you would not have any idea of what the teacher was going to say or impart; and you would have no desires or wishes, no questions. You would just go there in the sense of "This is a new day, so teacher, let us have whatever God gives you." In that pure state, you see, you would receive a message or illumination or contact that would start your day off.

Now, after that, you could go to God with anything that came up, and because of the fact that you already demonstrated God's presence, you would get the answer. But you see, in our human experience, very often when we turn within, we haven't first demonstrated God's presence, so there is no way of getting an answer from God. In other words, if we pick up that telephone receiver and start to talk to our friend before we dial the number, we're not going to get any answer from our friend. First we dial; first we make the contact with our friend; then we can expect to get an answer from our friend. So it is with this. If we first make our contact with God and have the assurance of God's presence, then when we go to God with anything for a solution, we can be sure that the answer is coming from God. Now, do not go to the Father with anything unless you first are sure that the Father is there listening; and the way you do that is through meditating for no other reason and with no other object in view than attaining a realization of that Presence. Do you see that? That is the way.

Let us learn to start our day with a communion with God for no other purpose than the communion. Nothing else—just the joy of being in that Presence. Then we can go to God throughout the day with anything that concerns our existence. But as we proceed in this study, let us learn to go to God twice a day for communion—not for a purpose, not for a solution to anything—merely for the joy of communion; just for the joy of sitting in the Presence, of having that feel of the Presence. Then, later you will find that it will be absolutely necessary to do it three times, because the appetite for God grows, just like the appetite for anything in our human experience. The more we indulge it, the greater our appetite becomes. And so it is, the more we indulge the appetite for God, the hunger for God, the satisfying of the hunger for God, the greater grows our appetite until absolutely in time, we become very gluttonous in our desire for God and find it impossible to have enough of God to satisfy.

Then, when we get to that state, you will find that you won't have to turn to God for guidance. You will receive the guidance before you know you need it, and that is when you have come to the state of existence that is the idea stated in *The Infinite Way* and the one described by Paul: "*I live, yet not I. Christ liveth my life.*"² In other words, if I awaken in the morning, the Father tells me what to do before I even have a chance to get there to ask. Do you see that? And in that way, we are given our work, our direction, our guidance, without ever turning for it. It comes to us before we go to it, but that is only when the contact has been made and maintained. That is when we live and move and have our being in God. That is when we dwell in the secret place of the Most High.

Then we live so completely in the atmosphere of God that we don't turn to God. God is continuously pouring Himself out to us; and then, as you review the day from the standpoint of evening or night, you will have an opportunity to see that God was a step before you all day; not that you were a step before God, turning back to God, but God was a step before you and that as you went through the day, you were merely fulfilling the plan that God had laid out for you. But the way had been prepared for you; the Presence had gone before you. That's what you find after the contact has become a permanent one, and that is the goal toward which we work in this message.

² Galatians 2:20