

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (5/15/21)¹

Q: Will the study of Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, or Steiner Spiritual Science, be a help or a hindrance to progress in The Infinite Way?

A: Well now, that depends on the point of view. If a person is searching for God, searching for Truth, I think they're very foolish to stop searching until they have found it. That means that they may well study any of the teachings that exist anywhere in the world. One thing is certain, that if behind their study is the basic desire to know truth, they will be led from one to another until they reach that one which is their own.

That doesn't mean that there are any wrong ones, but it means that there is only one that is a right one as far as we are concerned. And so it is that my sense of freedom, my sense of religious freedom, my sense of taking advantage of the privilege that is given to us in the Constitution of the United States, is that as long as we are searching for Truth, we should conduct that search in any way and in every way that suits us, regardless of what suits our neighbor or our family. Now, when an individual, finds the particular way that is theirs, there is no further purpose in studying the others.

Now that doesn't mean that there isn't a very good reason sometimes for reading some of the others. For instance, I can't possibly see how anyone who had ever studied the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, could ever believe that a time would come when they wouldn't find some message, some joy, in reading it. Certainly, I cannot believe that anyone gets so almighty spiritual, that they can't find something in Lao Tzu's *The Way* as inspirational reading, as truth. Certainly, there is nothing more beautiful than the Persian mystics, and how one could ever be harmed by reading such magnificent poetry, I wouldn't know, and I really wouldn't believe.

But, to read these with the idea that one is going to mix one teaching with another, there is where the mistake comes, because that's an impossibility. Each teaching has an approach of its own. Each teaching has principles, and in every case, the principles contradict the principles in the other teachings even though there is a thread of truth that goes through all of them.

We can read, for instance, the *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*. Oh! The inspiration and joy that there is in reading that! But don't expect to look in it and find a principle of life because you won't. And in the same way, don't expect that the Bhagavad Gita or the Persian mystics are going to give you a way of life or a healing principle. They won't. There are very few teachings that embrace healing principles, and very few of those are correct, so one has to watch their step.

¹This excerpt is from Recording 190B, 1957 First Halekou Closed Class, "Prayer in Action – Isaiah 68-60." It is posted with kind permission from the Estate of Joel Goldsmith, which holds the copy protection on the recorded classes and the copyright on the transcripts. The full transcript of this recording is available at www.joelgoldsmith.com or by calling **1-800-922-3195**.

But, on the way up in the search, no one should limit themselves and everyone should follow the leading that they get from within. Certainly, if they're wise—and they are wise if they're being spiritually guided—when they find the one that meets their particular need, they should stay with that one, because otherwise they leave themselves open to confusion. And again, that doesn't mean we should shut ourselves off from good spiritual literature, Bibles of the world, and so forth and so on. But it does mean this: When we have found the teaching that is ours, let's stay with it. If it ever fails us, then it'll be time to go on the search again to find another, but unless it does, let us stick to the one that has met our need, and not confuse ourselves with other approaches.

Now, there are some religious teachings which are actually profane. They're actually fraudulent, but that is no reason not to read them if you're led to them. If you are being divinely guided, you'll see what's right in it or what's wrong in it, and you'll quickly drop it. Certainly, the Master says, "By their fruits you shall know them,"² and if you stay with a teaching for a while and it doesn't give you fruitage; if it doesn't give you some hope inside that this is the way; why stay with it? And so it is you are led even to go through the wrong ones, and in time throw them aside.

Always remember this: What would you do if you were the librarian of some large library? Or what would you do if you owned a bookstore? Would you sit down and try to judge or to censor the reading matter of those who came into your library or bookstore? No. You might recommend, but you wouldn't censor, and if somebody wanted the wrong thing, they would have to have it. And I say that to our students. Those who are our students, those who have found that The Infinite Way is their way, I'm certainly willing not only that they read anything that they like, but if they ask my advice, I'll tell them very honestly what I think is wrong. But otherwise, I won't because I recognize everybody's right to do what they want. Only don't ask for my opinion unless you're willing to take it, because I'll give it to you.

Now, and so the answer is, no, these other teachings cannot help, except that they may be stepping-stones. But certainly they cannot harm, if you're a person of enough intelligence to read and read objectively, and know what's right when you read it, know what's wrong, and learn to cast out what is wrong. Let none of us try to take from this world the freedom to read what anyone likes. On the other hand, let none of us be afraid to truthfully give our opinion, if someone honestly and sincerely wants it.

² Matthew 7:16