

“The I of You Is the I of God”

Joel Goldsmith talks about individual Consciousness as Cause, as Law, as the Power of Being. He uses Christ Consciousness, individual consciousness, God Consciousness, all defining mystical union. There is no hard and fast rule other than the idea that there is no separation between any of these. They are the same. That’s the whole idea of using the word “Consciousness” because it unites all these attributes into this idea of Oneness, whereas the word “God” sometimes evokes emotional or intellectual baggage. If we use the word Jesus to replace the word God we are making God a man. If your upbringing was to pray to the person of Jesus, you have to realize that he was just a man. What is important to know is that he demonstrated Christ Consciousness.

The Trinity is a very interesting idea. I grew up in a religion that didn’t have the Trinity and this was something that I learned later on, the idea of three in one. I remember when I first heard this, all I could think of, and it still pops into my mind today, is a little can of “Three In One” oil. And maybe that’s something to hang onto, the Trinity is multi-purpose, it serves all these functions, but it’s still one substance, oil.

Consciousness is still consciousness no matter if it appears as God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. It’s all one Consciousness whether it appears as the Soul, the Mind, or the Body. In individual consciousness you cannot separate soul, mind, and body from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; they are one.

In the book that we have been using for this class, God the Substance of All Form, Joel conveys that God, the essence of spiritual consciousness, appears “as” form. You can

repeat that a thousand times in your mind, but when you've experienced it, when you've felt the sense of separation dissolve and you've realized that the I of you is the I of God, and that God Consciousness manifests as all creation, then you are One with all creation. That is a deep spiritual experience. It moves you to a place in your spiritual evolution where you look at this world from a different perspective. You do not see this world fearfully. You do not see this world filled with danger, filled with power that can harm, or power that can benefit. What you see is that all life is a manifestation of God appearing as. So when Joel uses individual consciousness, or he uses Christ consciousness, he's talking about that One Essence, the One Spiritual Truth that comes into human experience through the individual realization of the presence of God.

Spiritual realization is an individual experience; it's not a group experience. In a group, the meditations and the silences can be more intense than when you meditate alone at home. The meditations can give you a sense of what the Spiritual dimension feels like, because there is a feeling about this, a feeling of Oneness that is an actual experience. In a class or group meditation you may have a deeper feeling of peace, an enhanced experience of the presence of God, and as you pay attention to that, as you know It, It will "never leave you nor forsake you." You've been made aware of this spiritual dimension of life by an activity of your soul. The "imprisoned splendor" has been released, and you might not have any idea how. You might have been in the presence of someone knowing the truth and that knowing opened something in you that you hadn't been aware of. It could have been an experience in nature where you felt the grandeur of creation. How it happened is not as important as what happens next, how you follow through with that experience. If you recognize that the Spirit within you is universal and impersonal, that It is one and all good,

that It is omnipresent, then you have taken the conscious steps to allow this spiritual nature to function in you and as you.

We all have the capacity for spiritual awareness. I don't know why anyone would want to shut off Spirit, but many people do. Many people have grown up with the belief that the spiritual realm is a bunch of malarkey. They don't believe it, and as a result they block any receptivity they might have to the Truth. But that doesn't do anything to the Spirit within. It doesn't change spiritual reality. An individual's belief does not change what is. You can believe the world is flat and not want to get in a boat and go across the ocean because you're afraid of falling off. That belief held Europe in bondage for hundreds and hundreds of years. Today there are still many crazy beliefs that people believe to be true. Yet belief cannot change or alter the truth. Belief doesn't alter what is.

On a human level, Oneness can be misunderstood. There are websites that discredit Joel's teachings because of his use of the word I. For the religiously orthodox to state, "I am one with God," is heresy. On the other hand, there are those who claim that God told me to do this and God told me to do that, and they're very convinced that there is a power in heaven telling them what to do. They are so sure about what they have heard that they go out and shout it to the world.

One of the mystical principles is that this knowledge is secret and sacred. Secrecy toward what is sacred goes back before Moses; it goes back to the early priesthood of the Hebrews when to mention the sacred word for God was forbidden. They represented the Divine with four consonants that were unpronounceable. Only the high priest knew what Moses revealed when he asked the name of God – "I am that I am." The idea was that if you said those words you knew the truth; you knew you were talking about the one Self. But

that couldn't be voiced to those who did not understand, or did not have the desire to know the truth. The unenlightened tend to attack that idea, hence the need for secrecy.

To bring spiritual awareness into the physical plane requires an individual with a consciousness of truth. Without an individual, without a Jesus, Christ consciousness would not have come through in the way it did. It has come through many other individuals, but the particular revelation of Christ consciousness through Jesus was the greatest gift given mankind. His gift proved that even death, which is the greatest material power, is not a power in the realized presence of God. "I can lay down my life and pick it up again." We all can do this if we have a clear enough understanding and realization of the Presence.

The mystical idea that I am One with God has many components that make up the whole, it is universal, and has been with mankind since the beginning. It has been voiced and expressed over millennia – and it has been veiled. The veil comes about by exposing the Truth to the unprepared individual, and exposing it to materialistic thought. Those living in a materialistic way of thinking will discredit it. So, there's no reason to voice it unless somebody comes to you who has seen something in you that they recognize as the Truth.

"The Secret," the film and book released a few years ago, portrays the idea of visualization: holding something in your mind and then having it appear in your experience. It's absolutely possible. It's been done many, many times. But visualizing is not spiritual. Why is this? Visualization is dependent upon projecting, or holding in your mind a concept and that is entirely a mental activity. You can only visualize something that you can conceive, whereas Spirit is infinite. We can't conceive the infinite. When we are in the Presence, we are without any desire, without any sense of wanting a particular thing, and

in that consciousness we enter a state of Oneness. What unfolds in our life from that point comes out of the Infinite. It enters our experience through the omniscience of Consciousness, and that divine wisdom informs us, guides us, reveals the nature of spiritual reality, and brings us into harmony with the Whole of Life. Life, then, lives Itself as our experience. It will be a blessing not only for us individually, but for all those around us and in contact with us. It doesn't mean that visualizing is something bad, but it's still on the mental-material level and limited to mortal thought. When we turn away from the material to experience the Spiritual, our freedom is going to be boundless, unpredictable, and our experience in life will be rich.

Abundance is not necessarily going to come through traditional means. It doesn't mean you'll get a job as an investment banker. Abundance manifests in many ways. You can live like a millionaire without money. It's an attitude. You see the world with love, you see the abundance of nature, and you see the harmony of Truth within individuals and you realize that you are living in the atmosphere of spiritual abundance. You are living in harmony with others and with the world around you. How does that come to one person and pass by so many? Someone can have millions and millions of dollars in the bank, and be so lonely and miserable that they think of suicide. Nothing in this material world can bring happiness. It might appear so at certain points in your life, but really, happiness and infinite joy are activities of Spirit, activities of God.

In our spiritual unfoldment, we do go through stages. In the esoteric schools, such as Masonry, these stages are patterned after ancient traditions where there are degrees and initiations to take you through each stage of spiritual realization. Joel was a Mason. There have been volumes of books and papers written about Masonry and it's really not

that secret. Yet they're some aspects of the rituals and oaths that can't be revealed and are only known among members. Again, the purpose for secrecy in Masonry is to deflect materialistic thought and keep the esoteric meaning pure. The purpose for the degrees, as in all the mystery schools, is to dramatize the individual's unfolding experience of the Divine. The degrees are milestones on the path to spiritual union, and they continue to point the initiate towards the Light. In one of the rituals the Master of the lodge asks, "What is it that you seek?" And the initiate answers, "The Light." "What is it that you want?" "Illumination." "What is it you desire?" "The presence of God." Spiritual Realization is a journey, and those who have the inclination or the interest to enter the mystery schools are taught not only the nature of Spiritual Reality, but also how to see through the appearance world that seems to have such power. They were also taught about the nature of the mind. The mystery schools have never been accepted by orthodox thought. Some were labeled White Brotherhoods and some Black Brotherhoods. Because these steps toward illumination are still in the realm of the mind, these brotherhoods could be used for good or evil. And often, evil in the eyes of the orthodox priesthood was anything that took power away from them. The priesthood would discredit a brotherhood by labeling them heretics – believers in the occult, practicing psychic rituals – because they didn't conform to the rituals of the church and challenged its power. The churches, especially the early churches, wanted to eliminate the individual's direct access to spirit because it gave the individual power. An individual empowered by the knowledge of the true nature of Life is free. We don't have to go through a priest to learn what the nature of God is. God Is, and always has been, and is available to all who seek the Truth because God is within each and every one of us. What is prevalent in all traditions, societies, particularly the mystery schools, is the

understanding that there is a spiritual dimension to life, that man can experience it, and when he does he lives in freedom. It's a very simple premise. It's a very simple idea.

Living in the world and putting this spiritual knowledge into practice occurs in stages. It's by degrees that we make the transition from human life to living in spiritual consciousness. Everybody goes through initiations on the path to illumination, though they might not call it an initiation at the time. They might call it a disease. They might not have thought about spiritual things before, but when a doctor tells them that they've got six months to live, they begin to think about things they've never thought of before. Maybe there's another way to approach life and suffering. And during those six months the doctor said that they have to live, they discover a spiritual practice, and during that time the disease dissolves. That is an initiation that has taken a person from gross material thought (that they are going to die), through a change of perception, which is religiously termed repentance, into a demonstration that spiritual realization restores the perfection inherent in individual life and nullifies power in material cause and effect. That is as great an initiation as a crucifixion, because that individual was willing to lay down his life to gain his life. When the individual is willing to exchange the material concept of life for the spiritual reality of life, he or she has opened the door to a life based on Truth. This brings one into a certainty about the nature of God. No longer does one live by belief, but by conviction. They know the Truth, because it has been experienced.

The stages we go through begin with our introduction to spirit: whatever has drawn us to the spiritual way of living, moves us out of the belief structure that binds us to this world. As these beliefs start to fall away, we are surprised that we ever held onto them in the first place. They seem silly. As spirit unfolds in individual consciousness, we evolve out

of these beliefs. It is like stripping off layers of concepts to arrive at the truth. To the degree that we believe a material concept, we give it power, and that power seems to affect us, because with the belief comes the material appearance. On the other hand, every time we go through a situation that seems to have power, and we nullify it, not by might, not through mental concentration, nor through affirming or denying, but through the activity of Christ within – the activity of Christ Consciousness – we free not only ourselves, we diminish the power of that belief for all humankind.

The Outer Mind that I mentioned earlier in the class is the conditioned mind, and it is impersonal, constantly assessable, and it is where we pick up material beliefs. Every time one of these ideas that such and such has power is nullified by knowing the truth, it not only frees you, but it takes a notch out of the power of that belief worldwide. That's evolution of the species. This is the nature of world work. The individual doing their work not only affects their own life, they affect all of human consciousness. It's what was meant when Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I draw all men unto me." It's a very humble statement. Jesus faced just as many human conditions and beliefs as we do today. "If I be lifted up..." If I can be free of this human concept of life and experience the Father in Oneness, that experience will lift all mankind from whatever the material belief is. The bondage to material sense of power will be broken.

Returning to the idea of stages or degrees on the spiritual path; in the first degree when we become aware that there is a spiritual dimension to life and we learn the spiritual principles, we start to experience the Presence and it is euphoric. You've never felt like this before. You feel this tremendous peace and you want to be in that peace all the time. And sometimes that becomes almost a trap. You don't want to do anything else, you just want

to be in that Consciousness, so you try to organize your life in a way that you can be in Consciousness as often as possible. Everyone does this. When the Presence is experienced, human beings want to make a ritual out of it so that they know what to do to experience it again. They personalize it so they can repeat it, but this actually veils it. Rather than simply going into the Infinite Universal Consciousness, the initiate thinks that they have to create a ritual, or go to a priest, or to church, or pray to Jesus, or go to someone because they have the Consciousness, and somehow by attaching themselves to that person, or that ritual, they will re-experience the Presence. The point is, we all have that same consciousness, and a good teacher constantly tells the students, "Yes, I'll help you experience this spiritual dimension, but you've got it all within yourself." So as you evolve you realize that this Consciousness has always been with you and has always been inseparable from your being. You don't have to organize your life around certain people or rituals to be in this state. In this first degree you also learn the principles. Once they're in your mind, then you apply the principles to your daily life until you know them, like you know two plus two is four. Just as you use arithmetic every day without thinking about it, these principles are anchored in your consciousness and come to your awareness when you need them. As you get more proficient you won't even think about them, they will be inseparable from your being-ness.

In the next stage, the second degree, we live out from our spiritual center; and it is in this second degree, where we begin to confront the problems that have been latent in our experience. We confront beliefs that we didn't even know we had accepted until a problem comes and all of a sudden we are faced with a challenge. This is another form of initiation. We put these principles into practice, and every time we are successful, we witness the

activity of grace in our lives. This reinforces the activity of spirit in our experience. It's a growing circle: bearing witness to the truth activates more truth in our experience, and we begin to live a more spiritual way of life.

The second degree is where you are in the world but not of it; in the mystery schools, it's the working degree. In the first degree you're an apprentice, so you're learning the tools, you're learning the craft and the trade. In the second degree you're a journeyman, you are "on the job" building consciousness. You are putting brick and mortar together and building the temple. You are building your awareness of Truth. And that is built brick by brick, where every brick represents a nullification of a material limitation. At the same time you are recognizing the spirit as active in your consciousness, as in Joel's favorite quote; "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Every time you realize that an appearance doesn't have power, you add another brick to your temple until you have built, through this activity of the Christ, a Consciousness of Truth, and then you enter the third degree.

The third degree is the Master Consciousness, or Christ Consciousness. The initiation for that degree requires death. In the Masonic tradition it is symbolized by climbing into a coffin. In the ancient Egyptian mystery schools that symbolic death was actually by trial. If you survived that initiation, it demonstrated you really had overcome fear and the sense of power that this material world projects. In the same way that the old wine must be poured out of the wineskin for the new wine to be poured in, so must the material concepts in us be released so that the Truth of our Being, our Spiritual Nature, may be born and we may live out of our spiritual faculties.

In the Hindu tradition there's a great story about a master who is completely detached from a material sense of power, and who creates images that his students believe to be real, and then tests his students to see if they are hypnotized or not. For his students to see through them, to see the substance-less nature of them, they must rely on their transcendental faculties. This Master knows that people see what they've been conditioned to see and not what is really there. As a result they do not experience life as it is. Our beliefs appear as things, and as we want to possess those things we attach ourselves to them. The second degree is where we begin to exchange the world of sense for the reality of soul.

Virginia Stephenson published this idea in a book called "The Cave Story" where a psychologist decides that he's going to prove the Western mind is more powerful than the Eastern mind. He challenges a Hindu master to a contest. If he can go through the master's cave without being hypnotized, then the empirical mind is stronger than the transcendent mind. (We would term the transcendent mind the unconditioned mind.) The Hindu agrees, pointing out that those who succumb to the images never leave the cave.

The psychologist enters the cave and immediately begins to see images that appear real. He comes upon snakes and spiders, a tiger, horrible things, but the psychiatrist knows these are apparitions, nothing but appearances suggested by the Hindu and they aren't real. He doesn't have to fight them, or to pay attention to them because he knows that they don't really exist, and walks on. He then comes to a river. He forgets that there was no river when he went through the cave before the contest, but the water is wet and cold and too deep for him to swim across. He needs something to get him to the other side so he can get out of the cave. He looks around and sees a raft not far from him on the riverbank. He uses

the raft to cross the river, and once on the other side, rather than finding the exit to the cave he comes upon a banquet of food, and wine, served by beautiful women. He feels very thirsty and hungry, and wonders what harm there would be in drinking a little of the wine or having a little of the food. He eats of the banquet and indulges in the pleasures offered to him, and doesn't find the way out of the cave.

Can you see the mistake that's just been made? The raft is just as illusory as the river, but it looks good and it looks like it's going to facilitate his goal of getting out of the cave. His reasoning mind accepted what it saw, even though deep down he knew it wasn't real. He lost contact with the transcendent mind, if he ever really believed in it, and because he reasoned that the raft would help him win his bet, he used it. He's already hypnotized by these good appearances. He cannot get out of the cave until something wakes him from the dream. The whole point of the cave story is that if you don't come out on the other side, you die in that cave. Maybe it's better to die in luxury, with food, drink and women than to die by being eaten by a tiger, even if it is all illusory. In this situation the psychologist is still caught up in the human dream, limited by a fear of death and the desire for good. This is how the outer mind pulls us into this world, and how our personal conditioning – our ego nature – affects our perception of life. This is how beliefs come to us as appearances. Your mind doesn't form them, it doesn't create anything, and all it can do is take what already exists, cover it with its own concept, and give it its own reality. If we accept that reality we are stuck.

This is the same pattern that Buddha experienced under the Bodhi tree when he attained enlightenment. While in meditation, all the fear, hatred, conflicts, and suffering in the world came into Buddha's mind, and he saw the goddess Kali watching him. Every evil

image in the world came at him but he knew that if he reacted to the images, he would be giving them power, and they would interrupt his peace. So he didn't react. He didn't give them power, and they left his consciousness. But Kali was still there. She changed her form and Buddha's mind was flooded with images of pleasure, of beautiful women, of food and wine, and luxurious surroundings. Again, the Buddha realized that these were just thoughts, projections of fulfillment coming from outside his own being. He saw they were no different than the projections of evil and that they had no power. That realization dissolved any sense of power that this world had. No longer would he fear or desire that which came from material thought, and then he was free. That is the illumined consciousness.

The psychologist got out of the cave when his transcendental mind, that spiritual link to the Soul dissolved his attachment to what he perceived as material form. The hypnotism was broken, not through empirical knowledge, but through his realization of oneness. That oneness can only be spiritual, so the images and rivers that seem to bind him dissolved, and he freely walked out of the cave. The Buddha lived the rest of his life in freedom because he no longer feared evil nor desired good. He realized that the end of suffering was in direct proportion to his ability to see through the appearances of this world.

Our spiritual faculties are awakened when we have gone through a crucifixion, through a cave experience, or sat under a Bodhi tree. When we are able to walk through the horrors and negativities in life, and also life's pleasures, the so-called good of this world, without being attached to them or fearing them, we have arrived at this impersonal state of equanimity where we no longer react to good or evil. The substance of all form is God, and

It is One – one Good, one Spirit, one Consciousness. When we can maintain that sense of peace, of goodness, knowing there is no power in whatever form might appear in our experience, we are in illumined consciousness. Illumined consciousness is entirely individual. It is the manifestation of God in and as individual consciousness. This is the resurrection and this is the point of the story of Jesus.

When Jesus came to Thomas in his resurrected state, he still had the holes in his hands; he still had a physical body. Thomas put his finger into Jesus' side because he didn't believe it was really Jesus. He thought it was a ghost. Even in a resurrected state, Jesus had an injured body, and he still had to deal with people's perceptions of him. But is this the end of our mystical journey, living in the Resurrected Consciousness? Would we remain on earth forever in a physical form, even if that form was under spiritual law? There is another step in our spiritual fulfillment and that step is the Ascension. Our true identity, and our true freedom is the Ascended Consciousness.

Ascension is not the death of the body. That takes place in the crucifixion. As Paul said, you die daily to this world, to the attachment to the material concerns, and this lifts you out from the law of material cause and effect. When you attain an Ascendant state of Consciousness you move out of material limitations completely. Then death has no sting because it is a transition into the unseen reality. It is filled with joy, with angels' trumpets and great celebrations, welcoming you into Oneness with the Divine. In that Consciousness your spiritual body is revealed even as your resurrected body dissolves as the mind that formed it shifts into the avenue for pure Being. The Ascended Consciousness here and now. We experience It when we are in a state of peace, when we see our body as Consciousness, and there is a total oneness between us and our environment.