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Soul-Stirrings

Sitting alone in a charming Bavarian home in southern Germany in July of 1964 and looking out at the towering mountains in the distance partially shrouded with a purple haze, introspection came easily, and with it the question: Why me? Why, out of all the millions of people in the world, was it I who should be one of a very few to have had the privilege of knowing and being able to spend so many days, weeks, and months out of the past fifteen years with this great spiritual teacher? The answer to that insistent question came back quickly: "Because Joel Goldsmith was an integral part of your consciousness."

It is not surprising that such a question came at that time. Only a few weeks before, I had been in Joel Goldsmith's suite in London with his wife Emma and two other students when he made the transition, his graduation into another experience. Following that, the work of completing his class and lecture schedule in Europe had been given me as a responsibility to be fulfilled.

I then realized why, for so many years, there had been a closeness and depth of understanding between Joel and me that no storms could dissolve. I could never be separated from what is my consciousness, a universal truth applicable

to every person.

Of our first meeting in Chicago, Joel later told a small group of his special students that Lorraine Sinkler found The Infinite Way on his first lecture trip there in 1949, that at that time she had a spiritual experience and from then on became ever more closely associated with the work, finally giving up her professional career as an educator to devote herself to The Infinite Way, editing the *Monthly Letter* and all Infinite Way published writings.

When I first met Joel Goldsmith I had never read a word he had written nor did I know anything about him, except that I was told that he was a teacher of spiritual wisdom. In my search, I had met many such before, so my expectations were not too great. As I shook hands with him a cursory glance was far from reassuring. Here was a short, plump, stocky, unassuming man who might well have been anything except a spiritual teacher. He had a shock of black hair peppered with a few gray strands, wore a black string tie formed into a small bow tie with ends dangling from it, which I came to think of as his trademark. His suit was that of a successful businessman.

A second glance at him found me looking into dark piercing eyes that held me. Somehow he seemed to be looking right through the outer facade to my innermost being. As we sat in total silence for what seemed like a foreverness, even though it was only for a moment, there was a recognition of a bond that was forged lifetimes ago, and I knew my search was over and I was home. We meditated and then talked animatedly for an hour about the goal of total enlightenment and the possibility of achieving that goal.

Joel was always interested in students with a Christian Science background because of his sixteen years as a

Christian Science practitioner during which time he became widely known for his healing work. I had joined a branch Christian Science church in Chicago when I was twelve years old and attended its Sunday School until I was twenty. Joel laughed when I told him that I became interested in Christian Science as a child and wanted to read its textbook *Science and Health* because I liked the feel and smell of the Morocco leather binding and the thin India paper. I shared Joel's gratitude for its teachings because, for some 25 years, they had carried me through many difficult and trying periods.

Then doubts about certain aspects began to creep into my mind. I found myself agreeing with a man who told me I was too intelligent to "fall" for any of that "religious stuff" which he considered an escape mechanism. I insisted that whatever escape I might seek from facing problems I found in music. Nevertheless, the doubts increased, and I found myself immersed in the ethical but spiritually arid world of agnosticism. However, a firm foundation had been laid and whenever what seemed like a crisis loomed before me, I found myself saying, "God is the only power," finding comfort and courage in that statement.

I poured out to Joel something of the bypaths into which my search for enlightenment had led me. We talked about Ramakrishna and Vedanta, and my particular Vedantist swami, Vishvananda, and also about Yogananda, Gurdjieff, New Thought, Theosophy and Alice Bailey and the Arcane School. Joel's comments on these teachers and teachings were honest, forthright, and direct.

I explained that I had been meditating regularly with Swami Vishvananda and studying in the Arcane School. A book, *From Intellect To Intuition* by Alice Bailey, had had

such a profound effect upon me that I wrote to their headquarters for further information and learned about the Arcane School established by Alice Bailey as an organization whose primary purpose was soul-unfoldment with meditation the keynote. This was exactly what I was seeking. Each student in the school sent regular monthly reports to a secretary relating experiences in meditation and anything else pertinent.

In my first meditation following their prescribed form, a contact with the Presence was made. There was no experience of phenomena associated with it, but a tremendous inner stillness and a sense of fullness and fulfillment from that moment on. That Something had taken over. What had been a shy, timid person became the voice for all the teachers in the district, speaking to groups of several hundreds of parents in the community in the interest of the children and teachers. There were seven fruitful years in the Arcane School, although I never had direct contact with anyone except my secretary and that only by mail. When I wrote to her resigning from the Arcane School, her response to the effect that I was indeed blessed to have found the Way for me was evidence of the broadness and depth of her consciousness. During the seven years of study in the Arcane School, meditation had become an important part of my life and a rewarding and fruitful experience. In those meditations I had followed a particular form, which included meditation on a different "seed thought" each month. When I told Joel of this, he instructed me to drop the form I was using and take for my meditation, "I and my Father are one."¹

Joel's further instructions were to begin reading his writings, of which I had not read a single word up to that point, get some of the writings of Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunchula, and after studying them to write to him.

1. That unfoldment is described in Lorraine Sinkler's *The Alchemy of Awareness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

That night I began avidly reading the mimeographed edition of *God The Substance Of All Form*. Before I had finished I telephoned my sister Valborg saying, excitedly, "This is it! Do you know what it says? Nothing can be added to you; nothing can be taken from you: you are eternally complete and whole." ² It was a realization that came through with tremendous strength and clarity. To this very day I sing the song of Self-completeness in God. Three weeks elapsed after that meeting with Joel before my first letter to him was written.

Evanston, Illinois ³
October 19, 1949

Dear Mr. Goldsmith:

Your lectures in Chicago this fall were a great inspiration to me and lifted me to an all-time high plateau spiritually. This inspiration has continued as I have studied your mimeographed lectures, especially *God, The Substance of All Form*. To have found someone who has synthesized the various systems of metaphysics into which I have delved over a period of years has meant a great deal to me. It is as if I had found what I have always been seeking – certainly I know I have found the next step along the Path.

Following your suggestion, I wrote for a copy of *Maha Yoga* ⁴ which I have been studying with delight. It contains some very challenging ideas, many of which require long periods of meditation before they become a part of one. As I have read, a number of questions have arisen which I submit to you. I do not expect a busy person such as you are to answer all of them, but I would like to have you aware of the direction my thinking is taking since you told me the teaching would continue even when you are not present.

2. Joel S. Goldsmith. (New York: University Books, Inc. 1962 p. 127).

3. Unless otherwise indicated, all letters up to 1959 originated in Evanston, Illinois.

4. Sri Ramana (Tiruvannalai, India: Sri Niranjamanda Swamy, 1947).

I lead off with the \$64 question. If all of our experience on the physical plane is a matter of belief, where and how did the belief arise? This was always a problem to me in Christian Science. Then as I studied certain theosophical and Oriental writings and gained the concept that matter is simply Spirit at a lower rate of vibration and accepted the idea of involution and evolution, I felt I had achieved a rational interpretation of the problem of good and evil. Now once again I am completely at sea.... If the Self is one, than there is no individual consciousness, and yet you say in *God, The Substance of All Form*, "This whole teaching is based on the premise that Consciousness, being universal Consciousness, is your individual consciousness."

In the same work you state that it is not necessary to know the identity of your patient. This I interpret to mean that because all is pure Consciousness there are not two, only One. I can understand how the recognition of this heals, but why wouldn't it heal everyone who ever suffered from the claim which was to be healed?

The above questions are a few problems that have arisen to cloud my thinking. I suppose as I grow in understanding through study and meditation, any apparent inconsistencies will disappear. My attitude is one of open-mindedness. I am willing to believe until it has been proven false.

For the past five years I have meditated every morning or almost every morning for from fifteen minutes to a half hour. My meditation has followed roughly along some such line as this: I am not the physical body. I am not the astral or emotional body. I am not the mental body. I am pure Spirit, and this Spirit which I am flows into these bodies which are my vehicles for expression on the physical plane, filling the mental body with wisdom, all knowledge, etc., into my emotional body, filling it with a vibrating, magnetic, all-embracing love, which warms, blesses, and heals; into my physical body, expressing in activity and

wholeness. This is the substance of my meditation.

Sometimes, in fact, usually, I take some seed thought and also dwell on that, seeking illumination. I would be very grateful for your criticism and suggestions since I believe that meditation is the method by which we achieve illumination. It is a very important and necessary part of my day. I have tried to divorce my meditation period as much as possible from any consideration of personal problems and have succeeded except when under great stress.

I cannot be grateful enough to you for the concept that all is within – the universe is embraced within our consciousness – and that consequently all flows *out from* us and not *to* us. It has effected a profound change in my thinking. I look out upon the world with a new perspective, with a vision of joy and beauty. I do not know whether or not the problem I mentioned to you exists any more. If it does, it no longer troubles me. Once again I am free and unafraid. I go forth filled with joy and gladness. My interview with you did that for me. Thank you....

I hope you will understand my writing at such length. It is because I am a seeker and I recognize how much you have to teach me. I am patient and I shall continue to study and meditate. The "I and my Father are one," leading to the "Who am I" and "Whence am I" meditation I find difficult and less satisfying than the form I referred to, but I shall follow your directions gladly. Thank you for opening up to me this marvelous vista of The Infinite Way.

Most sincerely yours,
Lorraine Sinkler

This letter was followed by a somewhat shattering reply in view of what Joel had told me at our meeting about the

degree of my readiness and where I was in consciousness, assuring me at our first meeting on September 28, 1949 that I was one in a billion and ready for the final step of conscious union with the Source. Up to that point I had felt it might take many lifetimes to achieve such a state. Joel evidently felt that I was too involved in intellectual analysis and the doubts of a confirmed skeptic. At first there was a surge of anger that he had responded in such an unfeeling way to my serious attempt to communicate honestly and sincerely with him. It was in sharp contrast to the weekly sessions I had had in the preceding two years of working with Vishvananda, a gentle and understanding Vedantist swami. But my work with him had taught me the importance of humility, at that time easier to understand than to practice.

After several weeks of inner wrestling, I not only came to terms with my priorities but regained the perspective that a healthy sense of humor provides. Instead of answering my \$64 question, Joel had chided me for asking anything so stupid. Nevertheless, the question of how the hypnotic suggestion of the human experience of good and evil came about kept haunting me. Years later I was able to resolve it to my satisfaction after long meditation. When a sufficient depth of silence was attained, I saw that there was no hypnotism: there was only the One. The whole of "this world" did not exist when that Kingdom within was achieved. Only the perfection of this spiritual universe remained. And that was the reason meditation was so important – the key. It lifted the aspirant into a new dimension where the fetters of this world fall away.

December 31, 1949

Dear Mr. Goldsmith,

Your letter of November 11 is certainly that of a teacher – one who goes directly to the heart of a subject without embellishments in order to shift the student's approach from the basis of a human being with problems and unanswered questions to the realization that "I already am." Interestingly enough, a day or two after I had written my letter to you, all of my questions and doubts seemed to melt away. For most of them the answer was there, clear and sharp, and the others were no longer of great importance. I suppose I wanted to be sure that I was on the right track, but you are so right that one must seek and find the answer within.

I have come to realize more fully than ever before the inadequacy of words to convey deep spiritual meanings. There are many things I should like to talk over with you and perhaps that will be possible some day. Yes, I know it must come from within, but sometimes that within may translate itself into the form of a person – and I have caught enough of the East Indian teachings to believe in the value of working with a teacher, to believe that contact with an inspired individual can have a tremendous effect upon the aspirant's spiritual progress and can be a great aid in lifting one to a higher level of consciousness. That's why I hope sometime the opportunity will come to sit down and meditate with you again.

To look out upon the world and see only God appearing is sufficient to revolutionize one's world – "God appearing as." Nevertheless, giving up my old form of meditation for "I and my Father are one," as you told me to do when we talked, has left me for a time like a rudderless boat. I am following your suggestion and working along the lines indicated in your *First San Francisco Lectures*,⁵ which is quite a marvelous book. Right now I am in the sponge stage, absorbing all I can from *Maha Yoga* and your writings....Certainly, they point the way to the path best

5. Joel S. Goldsmith's San Francisco Lectures were later published in book form under the title *The World Is New* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

suited to me at my present stage of unfoldment. Of that there is not the slightest doubt. It is right for me. Joy wells up within me, and I feel such deep and abiding peace. Surely no one could ask for more, and yet I will never rest until I achieve realization.

My heart is filled with immeasurable gratitude for the unfoldment that is going on within my individual consciousness. It has had its effects in the outer world, too, although I hasten to add temporal affairs have not entered into my meditation. May I share briefly one of these effects with you?

Meditation on "What is Your plan for me, Father?" and "God is revealing and disclosing Himself as my individual consciousness, and in this consciousness I am united with all life," has caused many barriers to disappear and has left a great sense of oneness with all people. Tangible results came in a completely undreamed of and unsolicited offer for me to teach an evening class at Lake Forest College beginning in February on "Teaching the Social Studies." This is, of course, in addition to my regular work in Highland Park during the day. It is a real opportunity to be of service to beginning teachers and to share with them the fruits of my own years of experience. It came through my own superintendent, where I felt a "barrier" had existed – interesting, isn't it?

Thank you for your generosity in answering my letter so fully and frankly, even bluntly. Fortunately, I was able to look at it, and myself, and chuckle just a bit – not at your letter, but at me. I am everlastingly grateful to you for pointing out the Way so clearly. Yes, God is appearing to me as the teacher I have sought so long. God does reveal whatever is necessary for one's development. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Lorraine Sinkler

During this interval of almost six months, I immersed myself in such of his books as were available.

July 14, 1950

My dear Teacher:

Summer vacation is always a time of taking stock for me. This past school year, in spite of a very, very full schedule of work and increasing demands upon me, has been a most wonderful year from the standpoint of my own unfoldment. So I take this first opportunity to thank you for your part in it.

It is as if a whole new world, of which I had only a small glimpse before, opened up to me after I heard and talked with you last September. In the first place my talk with you had an electrifying effect on me, the fullness of which I had approached with other teachers but never before so completely experienced....

This unfolding of consciousness, which the study of your writings and regular meditation have made possible, has not been without visible manifestation.... There is much I would like to share with you, but if I do, this letter will turn into a regular testimonial, and you have cautioned us against that. Does that word of warning apply to the teacher, too; that is, between the student and teacher?

At your suggestion in your very kind letter of January 5, I have studied *The First San Francisco Lectures*⁶ very carefully and have tried to apply its teaching in regard to meditation. I have not had any phenomenal experiences during meditation and I haven't looked for or expected any, but the sense of the Presence is very real and very comforting.

Right now I am working on the writings of the Maharshi – *Maha Yoga* and other writings....This year I have also dipped into Ouspensky's works, which made a very deep

6. Ibid.

impression upon me. The approach is different but I feel that the goal is the same. When I read Ouspensky, who lays such stress on the technique of self-mastery and discipline as the way, who makes it seem so difficult to achieve realization, and who also insists most of us are walking about asleep, I wonder if one can achieve the ultimate realization without going through some of the procedures he has suggested or some sort of discipline. Is it really as simple as you make it seem? Or does one go so far and then stop after he has achieved certain material satisfactions unless he resorts to "methods," "techniques," and "disciplines"?

You know I am not interested in just a healthy body or more material possessions, although I am enough a creature of the earth to enjoy having them. If I lacked a sufficiency of them I would probably be running after them like all the rest. But I am searching and seeking for that illumination few have achieved. I accept your statement that it is all within, but what is the best way of touching the within? Certainly I have only touched the fringe – the outer court – but will I reach the inner court, illumination, without the sacrifice of much more than your writings indicate, without the discipline people like Ouspensky emphasize? Did you achieve your illumination without any of the usual methods? Perhaps that's too personal, and if so, skip it.

Sincerely yours,
Lorraine Sinkler

Joel immediately put to rest any doubt about sharing one's experiences with one's teacher, emphasizing the necessity of doing just that so the student's unfoldment could be carefully watched and supported by the teacher's awareness. Joel was less than enthusiastic about

Ouspensky's work and his emphasis on techniques, feeling that none of the great spiritual masters ever reached the goal of full illumination through such methods. Instead he invited me to meditate with him and a group of ten other persons at a special hour, thereby making me the 12th person, which I felt was a signal honor and opportunity.

August 1, 1950

My dear Teacher,

I'm so grateful for your last letter which arrived a week ago last Monday and for the opportunity you have given me to share in your period of meditation.

My humanhood comes to the fore and I think of how I can ever be worthy to work with you in your hour of meditation and with those others who have achieved inner realization -- and I'm not an especially humble person. Yes, I very much want to be a member of the group. I do so want to justify your having sufficient faith in me to give me this opportunity. I hope I'm far enough along the Path and not too much a hodgepodge of widely diverse philosophies and metaphysics. You know I sip a bit of most everything -- only of your teaching do I take long, deep draughts.

For almost ten days now I have been meditating at the appointed time. Arranging to meditate at 11:00 P.M. Pacific time -- 1:00 A.M. Central time -- is no mean feat....I should be able to stay up until that hour but that also has its complications. I'm still pretty much in bondage to sleep, seeming to require almost nine hours to have a real sense of well-being or else my "body starts to make a noise." That's pretty awful, isn't it? And wasn't it Patanjali who warns against sleep? I have always read that with tongue in cheek

and thought, "Well, of course, but not for me – yet." And now it's for me. Nine hours or no hours, sleep or no sleep, there is this inner compulsion driving me on, and I know I must do this thing.

Since your letter arrived on Monday I have meditated at 1:00 A.M. The first evening I sat up *reading The Master Speaks*⁷ for three or four hours before 1:00 o'clock. The short meditation following – about fifteen minutes – was one of the best I've had. In the stillness and quietness all about me I had a real sense of oneness. My "click" always seems to be an intense fullness in the head, and this time in the throat area, too, as if more were pouring in than I could receive. Monday, this feeling was very intense, not pleasant or unpleasant, you understand, but just an awareness.

From that first night until two days ago the struggle to be awake has somewhat nullified the effectiveness of the period. I continued the work and knew that when the new rhythm was established, the seeming difficulties would vanish. Then I would realize the *I*⁸ cannot be sleepy or inactive, nor lapse into unconsciousness. The meditation on Sunday and Monday, July 30 and 31, evidenced considerable improvement – not sufficient one-pointedness it is true, but there has been a real stillness. It has seemed so clear that as God unfolds as your individual consciousness and mine, the teaching goes on regardless of bodily proximity. So I continue.

This summer I have been a member of the group Laura Perkenpine has gathered together. She is a most consecrated individual and is doing such an excellent job, giving leadership of a high caliber. It is a privilege to know her.

As I read the first chapter in *The Master Speaks* for the nth time today, I was again impressed by your emphasis on brotherhood and the universality of your approach. It was your recognition of the beauty in all teachings, whether stemming from the Orient or Occident, that struck me so

7. Joel S. Goldsmith, *The Master Speaks* (New York: The Julian Press, 1962). Originally published by the author in mimeographed form.

8. I, Me, and Mine, capitalized and italicized refer to God.

forcibly when I first heard you. For the few who are alienated by the broadness of your view, there must be many more who are drawn to a teaching that is an answer to bigotry and dogmatism. A teaching, which eliminates a sense of inferiority and littleness, with its wonderful vision of the limitless capacities of every individual as the fullness of God pouring through, strikes at the real basis of prejudice and discrimination.

Hourly, I thank you and bless you for your generous sharing of the vision, your kindness and understanding. I know that my real thanks will be expressed to the extent I realize that vision and make it my own, showing it forth in my daily experience as a light to the world. I'm grateful to be welcomed into the inner circle.

Sincerely yours,
Lorraine Sinkler

January 4, 1951

My Dear Teacher and Guide,

During August and September I kept the midnight vigil, meditating faithfully at the appointed time. During September, with the hay fever season in full flower, I found meditation at any hour very difficult for every effort was punctuated by intermittent sneezing. I wanted to write for help. Instead, it seemed so utterly ridiculous that I should not be able to rise above such a suggestion that I didn't write.... There were moments of discouragement, not about the hay fever, but that I had made so little progress that anything like that could come to what seemed to be a very clear consciousness of truth.

Since that time it has been somewhat of a problem to reestablish the regular rhythm of midnight meditation. While I'm limping along a bit now, I want very much to continue. The stillness and quietness of the night is a beautiful and ideal time for communion. I experience no

phenomena but continue to feel great peace, joy, and a very great stillness.

My meditation work is usually along the line of oneness with the Father as you have suggested. Even after this length of time I have but skimmed the surface of that vast subject and have only begun to realize the tremendous implications of that idea. I am interested in your reference to the work of the "Brotherhood." I like to think of a Brotherhood of Light, serving as a beacon to the world.

I have been thinking a great deal about time in relationship to the meditation process and the making of the contact. Meditating at the same hour, as you and a small group do, seems wise, and I welcome the opportunity to participate in the work. But if one had your understanding of time as one of the dimensions to be surmounted, a realization of all that ever was and ever will be compressed in the ever present now, would that not bring us all together regardless of when each of us meditated? Well, I'm very far from that for I don't always make the contact at a specific time. It's an interesting subject for speculation though.

School has been satisfactory, happy and harmonious... Increasing opportunities to serve are coming in the form of calls to speak on the subject of good human relations and the methods by which modern education can make the brotherhood of man a fact rather than a lofty ideal. I have several such engagements in the next few months. These I welcome as evidence of the unfoldment of consciousness – the fruit of meditation which I believe must always find expression in service.

In the area of spiritual unfoldment, I have devoted myself almost exclusively to the message of The Infinite Way this year....I know your teaching is the way for me at present. I am not yet ready to shut out these other avenues of awareness – Ouspensky, Vedanta, and Theosophy as interpreted by Alice Bailey. With the exception of your

work, these have made the most significant contributions to an awakening consciousness. Recently I have begun studying Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*,⁹ a truly magnificent book. It helps to clarify a number of ideas which are in the "fuzzy" stage. I seem to need the stimulation of these various approaches. Then when I need a "lift," a bit more courage or strength, I turn to your writings and with that turning comes the wonderful feeling of being at home once again.

Sincerely yours,
Lorraine

The months that followed were a time of assimilation and study, punctuated by meditation, with little of significance occurring until the latter part of May, 1951, when the study and meditation received an added impetus through one of those crises that always push a disciple further along the way.

After an especially deep meditation in which the sense of the Presence was most pronounced, I set out for school at seven o'clock in the morning, picked up the three colleagues comprising my driving group, and engaged in pleasant chit-chat with them as we drove along. We were suddenly stopped short by the head-on collision of two other cars, one of which catapulted into my new car, damaging a fender beyond repair, leaving my passengers badly shaken up and me with a severely sprained ankle.

A friend, Laura Perkinpine, immediately sent a cable to Joel in Hawaii while I was taken to a nearby hospital for emergency treatment. The prognosis of the attending physician was that I would be unable to walk for several weeks, to say nothing of the inevitable pain accompanying

9. Sri Aurobindo. *The Life Divine* (New York: The Greystone Press, 1949).

such a sprain. A few uncomfortable hours followed after I returned home that morning, but about five o'clock in the afternoon a significant change took place. It was as if warm, reassuring arms were enfolding me, lifting me up, and filling me with an ineffable peace. The following day I was able to return to school, with the aid of a cane walking with considerable ease.

June 15, 1951

Dear Friend and Teacher,

Every day I have been making steady gains until today I am walking about quite normally with the bandage removed and no cane. I even went for a walk this morning just for the sheer joy of walking. There seems to be pain in both legs and hips at night, but I am fine in the daytime.

The problem is to effect a fair settlement...I have a lawyer trying to arrange for a settlement with the insurance company of the man responsible for the collision. I do not want to go to court but feel it should be settled speedily and satisfactorily for all concerned....

Friday marked the close of the school year, and now I am free for three months. Problems seem to be on the increase, pulling me down to earth when all the time I want to be up in the clouds. Maybe that's good, though not too comfortable. I remember Alice Bailey once wrote to the effect that crises are the measure of one's growth. If you do not find yourself faced with one crisis after another, you are in all probability standing still. If that is true, I am well on my way.

Mother and I would very much like to attend your class in Vancouver which you so kindly said you would open to us. It is still a vague hope. Our mother, who had her eightieth birthday this year, is a remarkable person, and as

Laura Perkinpine says, "She has naturally what we are all trying to achieve." If it does unfold that we go, I trust you will permit her to join the class also. Well, you can see a little of the picture. Family relationships, and very dear loving ones they are, and the settlement of my case are the uncertain quantities at the present moment. I do feel that none of us can be deprived of what is necessary for our unfoldment. That is a deep abiding conviction. Your class seems so very important to that unfoldment.

I am studying all of your material on treatment and healing as you suggested in your letter. Right now I am trying to organize the material taken from all your writings in a detailed outline which I will send you when it is completed.

Frequently, I think with gratitude and love of all the individuals through the years who have contributed to making possible that moment when I first heard you and knew instantly that this was the way for me. Since then there has never been the slightest doubt as to the rightness of that first recognition. You have that which people talk about and strive for. Maybe that is why I have a silly idea that if I could talk with you and hear you, I might "catch" some of it. It's that Grace you talk about. As it is, my debt to you is very great. The little dribblets of checks I send you from time to time are only a small and insignificant symbol of a deep and lasting gratitude that is always flowing to you.

Gratefully yours,
Lorraine

A not-to-be-denied demand to know what brought forth such a seeming miracle as the quick healing of the sprained ankle led me to Joel's class in Vancouver in July of 1951. That gave me my first opportunity since that hour-long appointment almost two years earlier, to have direct

personal contact with my teacher, significant and meaningful time for me.

Prior to the Closed Class, six lectures were given on three successive days, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The class itself began on July 12th with each class session lasting two hours for seven consecutive evenings. Joel's earlier lectures and classes, later published under the titles *The World Is New*,¹⁰ *Conscious Union With God*,¹¹ *Consciousness Unfolding*,¹² *The Master Speaks*, and *God The Substance Of All Form* had been taken down on a wire recorder and the records destroyed after the material was transcribed. In the 1951 Vancouver Class, however, no recorder of any kind was used. Because I wanted to be able to review the message which was coming through and having such a powerful impact on me, I took copious notes only for my benefit. In the years that followed, however, salient points were shared in some of my classes with students around the world.

In one of the first lectures, Joel spoke of birth as the beginning of death, the death of the personal sense of self. We were not born at a certain time but co-exist with God. We are as old as God. God manifested Itself infinitely right from the beginning as stated in the first chapter of Genesis: "In the beginning, God." This is not an ephemeral God, but God, the Substance of the universe, formed Itself from the beginning. We have been conscious entities since time began, evolving states and stages of consciousness, and yet always the same individual. These unfolding states are all happening to the same person. We play many parts, each involving a continuing evolution or unfoldment of individual being throughout time.

During that week of work, I had the privilege of an hour

10. Joel S. Goldsmith, *The World is New* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

11. Joel S. Goldsmith, *Conscious Union With God* (London: L.N. Fowler, Ltd., 1960; New York: The Julian Press, 1962).

12. Joel S. Goldsmith, *Consciousness Unfolding* (London: L.N. Fowler, Ltd., 1958; New York: The Julian Press, 1962).

of private work with Joel every day. My first appointment was on Friday, July 13, at 1:00 P.M. after which he asked me to return at 4:00 P.M. for more meditation with him. At that time he emphasized that the surest way to ultimate realization was through personal contact with an illumined teacher, the importance of which I had recognized long before. I was touched by his thoughtfulness at the end of the one o'clock appointment, when he sent me away with a huge pitcher full of immense bing cherries for my mother, who had accompanied me. When I returned the pitcher at my four o'clock appointment, he again filled it up for us.

In an hour-and-a-half-long appointment the next day, we meditated and talked at considerable length, especially about the nature of a truly spiritual teaching and the impossibility of mixing a mental form with the spiritual way. At another appointment, the subject of postures and exercises and their importance or unimportance came up. His only instruction was to be comfortable. He mentioned that sometimes he used a simple breathing exercise to attain an inner quietness. Physical exercise he recommended, pointing out that he swam three miles a day when he was in Hawaii. Walking was good, too he said, and food – anything to keep the body functioning normally. At one of our morning sessions, Joel emphasized that if we acknowledged God as Substance, that makes even our bodies immortal, and this we can experience by understanding that there is no such thing as Spirit *and* a physical body. The body itself is a manifestation of infinite Spirit. *It isn't the body that is resurrected or ascended, but our concept of body.* Through our realization that the body is spiritual, we will be lifted up and, as our concept of body changes, so do we ascend. Everything that exists as form is our interpretation of spiritual consciousness, unknown to

material sense but revealed in all its perfection and wholeness to spiritual awareness. That is why our *sense* of body can be healed. The only change necessary must take place in our conscious awareness.

To Joel, the Bible was a story of dark and unilluminated consciousness unfolding and emerging into the light of spiritual awareness. He urged me to think of myself as coming out of the orthodox religion into which I was born¹³ into the gospel of John where the final revelation of *I AM* is given. If, when I read spiritual literature, I first prayed, "Father illumine these pages," I would be led to the passages needed for further enlightenment, and those passages would be illumined.

It was during one of these long appointments that I quite unabashedly astonished Joel when I said, "Before the accident, I wanted none of this healing business and no part in it."

His response was, "But that is the proof of the truth of the message." At that point, to me healing meant changing a sick body into a well body, an empty purse into a full one, or an unhappy or disturbed person into a happy one. Later I came to understand that such was only the outer effect of an enlightened awareness that enabled one to penetrate the fog of misconceptions about life and being which we all unwittingly accept. The greater awareness and clarity of vision is the enlightenment that brings soul unfoldment which is the real function of any truly spiritual teaching. Changing outer effects is but the byproduct.

To have an hour or more a day with my teacher was a priceless boon, during which time many other subjects were discussed quite freely and frankly. Always there were intervals for deep meditation with him.

13. I was baptized in the Lutheran Church.

As so often happens, following a mountaintop experience, circumstances conspired to push me off the mountaintop and send me tumbling down into the valley below. But the groundwork had been well laid, and the vision from the heights of consciousness remained as a bulwark. So, after returning home, on August 4, 1951, I found myself writing to Joel:

I didn't know how much pleasure little simple things can really give one: all the carrots, celery, and parsley one wants to nibble at by just opening the refrigerator; a brisk walk along the lake, now glistening in the sunshine and again gray as clouds fill the sky; the green grass and the kind trees everywhere giving shelter from the steadily shining sun.

Now there is no rest in me. Outwardly, yes. I smile and beam – but inside there is a strange hitherto unknown sadness, a tugging away that will not let me rest. You have brought me to the gates of the Kingdom, and there is no peace for me until I enter it. Sometimes I find myself trying to take it by storm, but whether by storm or a quiet slipping in, inside I must get.

And on August 16, this:

Strangely enough, I find myself wanting to and actually spending more time meditating than reading. Light is most frequently the theme of my meditation, but I feel there is so much more involved in the concept than I have yet

glimpsed. It has come to me that as the light within grows, that is, as I become a better transparency for the light within and it shines forth, it is not unlike the headlights on an automobile and the reflectors one finds along the road. As the light comes within range of the reflectors, it is reflected back. As we let the light shine forth, the light in those with whom we come in contact is kindled and reflected back to us, but it is still the one light. Perhaps that's not too good an analogy, but it makes sense to me. Also, light dispels darkness effortlessly, just by being, but darkness can never dispel light. This light is the activity of truth within consciousness.

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