

INNER SPACE, FOCUSED EMPTINESS

My beloved friends, you are blessed in body, soul and spirit. Your path is blessed every step of the way. You may at times doubt this when the going gets rough. But when this is so, it is not because blessings are withheld from you. It is because you encounter parts of your inner landscape that need to be successfully traversed. To traverse difficult inner terrains it is necessary to understand its meaning for your own being and thus to dissolve the roadblocks you find on your way.

We have occasionally discussed this inner landscape. I have made mention of the inner space that is the real world. The term "inner space" is used quite frequently in your world these days, as opposed to outer space. Most human beings think of inner space as merely a symbolic description of a person's state of mind. This is not so. Inner space is a vast reality, a real world. It is in fact the real universe, while outer space is a mirror image, a reflection of it. This is why outer reality can never be quite grasped. Life can never be truly understood and experientially absorbed when it is viewed only from the outside. This is why life is so frustrating, and often so frightening, for so many people.

I can see that it is hard to understand how inner space can be a world in itself -- the world. The reason for this difficulty lies again in the limited time/space continuum of your three-dimensional reality. Everything you see, touch and experience is perceived from a very limited angle. The mind is focused, accustomed, conditioned to operate in a certain direction and is therefore incapable at this juncture of perceiving life in any other way. But this way of perceiving reality is by no means the only way, the correct way, or the complete way.

In every spiritual discipline the goal is to perceive life in this other way, the way that goes beyond the outer reflection, the way that focuses on new dimensions to be found in inner space. In some disciplines this goal may be directly mentioned, or it may never be mentioned as such.

But when a certain point of development and purification is reached, the new vision awakens - - sometimes suddenly, sometimes gradually. Even the suddenness of the vision is only an illusion, because it actually is the result of many arduous steps and inner battles.

Human science has recognized that every atom is a duplication of the outer universe, as you know it. This recognition is very meaningful. Perhaps you can imagine that just as time is a variable, dependent on the dimension from which it is experienced, so is space. Just as there is really no objective, fixed time, so there is no objective, fixed space. Your real being can live, breathe and move, and cover vast distances within an atom according to your outer measurement. When the spirit withdraws to the inner world, the relationship of measurement changes, just as the relationship to time changes. This is why you seem to lose contact with and awareness of so-called "dead"

people. They live in the inner reality which, for you, is as yet only an abstraction. Yet the actual abstraction is the outer space.

In physical death, the spirit, that which is alive, withdraws into the inner world, not as is often erroneously assumed, into heaven. It does not lift out of the body; it does not float into outer space. If, at times, an extrasensory perception seems to reveal such a sight, it is again only the mirror image of the inner event.

In the same way, a majority of humans have, for the longest time, looked for God up in heaven. When Jesus Christ came, He taught that God lives in the inner spaces and He must be found there. This is also why all meditational practices and exercises focus on inner space.

A long time ago I suggested a meditational exercise in which you do not think, in which you make yourself empty. Those of you who occasionally try this exercise experience how difficult it is to do so. The mind is filled with its own material and to still it is not an easy undertaking. There are several ways of doing it. Eastern religions usually approach it by long practice and discipline. This, in conjunction with solitude and outer stillness may eventually produce inner stillness.

Our approach on this path is different. These teachings do not want to take you out of your world. On the contrary, the aim is to be in your world, in the best possible way -- to understand, to accept and to create it in the most productive, constructive way. This can only be done when you fully know and understand yourself and when you traverse, as I said, the difficult spaces, which must make you better equipped to function in the three-dimensional reality. Then there is no split between the inner and outer spaces. As inner truth reigns, perception of outer truth increases. As understanding of self grows, so does understanding of the world. As you learn to re-mold that in you which is imperfect, faulty, so do you learn to restructure -- transform -- your outer life. As you learn of your eternal beauty as a divine manifestation, so does your vision expand to a greater appreciation of the beauty of the Creator and creation. As peace within yourself comes to be, so do you become at peace with this world, even when you are surrounded by undesirable experiences. In other words, you do not require outer conditions of absolute seclusion to reach inner space. You take the other route in which you go right through what seems the greatest of obstructions: the imperfections within and around you. You approach them, you deal with them until they lose their fearsome aspect. This is your path.

Focusing on the inner emptiness is an additional exercise that is very helpful, but it must never be the sole approach to self-realization, just as dealing with the outer adverse conditions in your world must never be the sole approach to your own and your world's salvation.

Focused emptiness grows, both deliberately and spontaneously, as you remove inner obstacles. At the early stages, you experience just that: emptiness, nothingness. If your mind can quiet down, you encounter the void: this is what makes the attempt so frightening. It seems to confirm the suspicion that there is nothing within you, that you are indeed only your outer, mortal self. This is why the mind makes itself so busy and noisy -- in order to blot out the quietness that appears to herald nothingness.

Once again you need the courage to go through a tunnel of uncertainty. You need to take the risk to allow the great quietude that is, at first, empty of meaning, devoid of anything that spells life or consciousness.

I believe most of you have already experienced how the voice of your inner God, of the higher self, sends its inspirations through your mind, not necessarily immediately after meditation or prayer, but sometime later, often when you least think of it. It is then that your mind is relaxed enough and sufficiently free from self-will to allow the inner voice to manifest. The same is true about experiencing the inner universe -- the real world.

Focused emptiness will bring you in touch with all the levels of your being. It allows the emergence of what was hidden -- the distortions, the errors, the lower-self material, and eventually the reality of your higher self and the vast world of eternal life in which it dwells. There are many stages and phases to go through. The later stages can take place only when a certain purification and integration has been achieved. Unfocused emptiness is a lessening of consciousness. Focused emptiness is a heightening of consciousness. The former is a tuning out, a vague wandering of the mind that may lead to mindless emptiness. Sleep, or other states of unconsciousness are the final stages. Focused emptiness is extremely concentrated, aware, and fully there.

If you focus on the inner world to the exclusion of your outer world, you not only create a split, but also a condition in which you forfeit the purpose of your incarnation. How can you fulfill your task, whatever it may be, if you do not utilize your outer world for that purpose? You would not have come into this dimension if it had not been a necessity for you. So you need to make use of it and always bring outer and inner conditions into a meaningful relationship with one another. You are learning to do so on this path. All your outer experiences are related to your personality, your various levels of self. Your inner being always creates your outer conditions, a truth you soon learn to recognize on this path. If relating the outer to the inner is not a constant way of life, the imbalance must create unfavorable conditions. You can see sometimes in your world how people who do a lot of good work outwardly lose their way just as easily as those who never give others a thought. The outer good intent and good works must have an inner focus in order to avoid a disharmonious condition and a dangerous split.

Focused emptiness brings you eventually to the light of the eternal. Maybe we can categorize certain basic stages, even if we have to somewhat oversimplify. In reality the stages often overlap and do not come neatly in the succession outlined here for the purpose of clarification.

- 1) You experience the noise and the busyness of the mind.
- 2) As you succeed in quieting the noise, you encounter emptiness, nothingness.
- 3) Recognitions about the self, connections between some aspects of the self and outer experiences become clear. New understanding and with it heretofore unrecognized levels of lower-self material appear. This stage is a ray of divine guidance, and not merely an experience of the lower self. Recognition of the lower self is always a manifestation of higher-self guidance.
- 4) Direct manifestation of higher-self messages, or what you call the opening of your channel. You receive advice, encouragement, words intended to give you courage and faith. In this phase

divine guidance still operates primarily through your mind. It is not necessarily a total emotional and spiritual experience. The manifestation may excite and gladden you, but this reaction is a result of the knowledge your mind has absorbed and has found convincing.

5) In this stage a direct, total, spiritual and emotional experience occurs. Your whole being is filled with the Holy Spirit. You know, not indirectly through your mind, but directly through all of your being. Knowing through the mind is always an indirect knowledge. It is a relayed knowledge. The human mind is the instrument necessary for human beings to function on this level of consciousness. Direct knowledge is different.

This phase has many subdivisions, many stages within itself. There are many -- no, limitless -- possibilities in which the real world can be experienced. One is simply total knowing, which affects every fiber of your being, every level of your consciousness. Experience of the real world can also occur through visions of other dimensions, but such visions are never merely things one sees. They are always a total experience that affects the total person.

In the real world, as opposed to your fragmented world, every sense perception is total. Seeing is never only seeing, it is simultaneously hearing, tasting, feeling, smelling -- and many other perceptions you know nothing about on your level of being. In the fifth stage, seeing, hearing, perceiving, feeling, knowing are always all-inclusive. They encompass every capacity God has created. You can hardly imagine the richness, the variety, the limitless possibilities of these capacities.

Focused emptiness is the ideal state to be filled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the whole world of God in all its splendor, in its indescribable magnificence. Its richness cannot possibly be conveyed in human language. There is no way of describing what exists when fear, doubt, distrust -- and therefore suffering, death and all evil -- are overcome. Focused emptiness is therefore nothing but a threshold to a fullness that exists only in the world of spirit.

The practice of focused emptiness must never be undertaken in an attitude of immediate expectations. In fact, it is necessary to have no expectations whatever: expectations create tension, and tension prevents the necessary state of total inner and outer relaxation. Also, expectations are unrealistic, for it may take many incarnations of development before a human being can come anywhere near these experiences. So to have any kind of expectations will cause disappointments which, in turn, set off a chain reaction of further negative emotions, such as doubt, fear and discouragement.

I am talking about this topic because I want to prepare you for an important practice within meditation. I have discussed this in the past in connection with the various ways of meditation, particularly those of impressing and expressing. Many of your meditations have dealt with impressing, and should continue to do so. Impressing is a cleansing of the mind and serves to make the mind into a constructive tool. Then the tool becomes a creative agent.

The aspect of expressing has begun to manifest to some degree with those of you whose channels are open, perhaps only occasionally. But you need to know that there are further stages, further phases and possibilities, and you should approach them with patience, awe and humility. You should understand that these experiences will open the vast inner spaces in which many worlds,

many universes, many spheres exist, endless plains, mountains, seas of indescribable beauty. You should know that these inner spaces are not abstractions or symbolic expressions; they are much more real and accessible than your outer, objectified world that you believe to be the only reality. Inner space is based on different measurements, on a different relativity between time/space/movement and measurement. Even a vague and hazy consideration of this concept on your part will change your outlook and will create a new approach to your further work on your path.

You need not spend hours practicing focused emptiness. That is not the purpose. But you may attempt it to some degree every time you pray and meditate, after you use your mind to impress your soul substance and align it with divine intent.

Your primary aim is still reaching autonomy, in its fullest sense and meaning. You, as a group, have made progress, but there is still a lot to be accomplished. Everything depends on this basic prerequisite. Your ability to respect yourself and discover your values; your capacity for loving and finding the fulfillment you yearn for; your fulfilling the spiritual task you have entered this earth for; your experience of the living God within and around you; your ability to be a true leader and to be a follower as well; and, last but not least, your ability to let go of the mind and find the inner space which is your real home and which, alone, can convey eternal life to you and thus remove all fears from you forever. You cannot surrender to the will of God unless you are in possession of yourself. Nor can you truly find and be yourself unless your surrender to God is unconditional.

Since this is such a fundamental necessity, we need to spend some time again on this topic, although I have said much about it in the past. But still I see much resistance to reaching the all-important state of autonomous selfhood. You still crave an authority figure who will take over for you when life becomes hazardous, when your inevitable mistakes force you to pay the price for them, when your unavoidable imperfections create conditions that you need to experience, explore and fully understand on all levels. You still crave the "perfect life" in which none of that is necessary. You still delude yourself that it is possible to avoid mistakes and avoid paying the price for them. This illusion is dangerous, all the more so because it is so subtle and can so easily be glossed over. The manifestation of this delusion can be rationalized -- hence denied.

Whenever you are unsure and confused about yourself, your environment, the events around you, see it as a sign that you still suffer from this delusion and thus deliberately avoid growing into full selfhood. Whenever you rebel against authority figures, take it as a sure sign that you are still craving the "right" authority, the super-person who protects you from the vicissitudes of life and thus from experiencing your reality.

When autonomy exists, there is no need for rebellion against authority. There is no confusion. You have a clear perception of what is true and what is false and therefore you can agree or disagree without rebellion or fearful submission. The road to the clarity and ability to discriminate is the willingness to search, question, probe, be open, to explore. Such a course requires patience, rather than quick, ready-made answers, regarding any specific issue in your life. But the childish, dependent person abhors the patient way of probing and finding out, for this means labor. The childish dependent person wants quick, easy answers and therefore tends to jump to conclusions. When you are afraid of making mistakes, you do not question your quick conclusions, and so your stiff insistence on them will bar the way to clarity and truth. The resulting

inner confusion then breeds correspondingly confusing experiences. If the connections to the ways in which these negative and confusing experiences have been created are lacking, life appears too difficult and unfair. Then you demand a perfect authority to put things right.

The more strident your protestations for independence, the more suspect they are. The more you need to prove that you are a free agent and not influenced or influenceable, the more likely it is that you abhor real autonomy, that you do not wish to take full responsibility for your life, your experiences, your decisions. The greater the rebellion against those authority figures in your life whom you accuse of denying your selfhood, the more you secretly resent them for not living up to your demands.

What exactly are these demands? They are, as I said, that you be prevented from making any mistakes, from having to pay any price and going through any consequences of your errors, distortions, negativities, or unwise decisions. You want an infallible key handed to you that equips you with this kind of magic, while you still remain "free." This "freedom" means to be able to do whatever you want, whether or not it is desirable for your real self or for others. You do not want to experience any frustration or necessary discipline. When these goals remain unreachable, you resent and blame authority figures, often accusing them exactly of the opposite of what you really expect from them. To be specific, you blame them for infringing upon your freedom when limits are set. You refuse to see that these limits are the limits of reality, of life's laws. Perhaps unconsciously, yet deliberately, you create a specific confusion in which you distort the limitations as if boundaries implied enslavement.

I ask all of you to explore this aspect in you; see if you can find to what degree it may still exist in you. Also ask yourself some deeply probing questions. Are you really willing to assume full self-responsibility, with all that this implies? Are you fully reconciled to the fact that you are still imperfect, that you are unable to avoid making mistakes? Are you truly willing to pay the price for them? The more willing you are to do so, the lower the price will be. The price will turn out to be a stepping stone, a threshold, a necessary lesson.

The strength to do this can come only from surrendering to the will of God. Only then can you truly stand in the middle of life as it unfolds around you, never fleeing it, never denying it, never using spirituality as a means to escape from it.

All dualistic confusion will dissolve when your surrender to God is genuine and when you are willing to be your autonomous self. If you follow through you will no longer be confused about individuality versus community; about self-surrender versus selfhood and real independence. True selfhood creates a social being who is not at odds with his or her surroundings. On the contrary, this kind of person is intimately connected with others and always contributes to them. Truly autonomous people can be strong leaders, as well as willing followers, because their vision is clear and their selfhood is centered in divine reality.

If you go through every lecture I have given you so far this season, you will discover a note of another dimension that has not been touched upon previously. I have opened new vistas for you, even if you may not yet be capable of taking direct steps toward attaining these states. But the knowledge of their reality is important for you at this point. What prevents you most from going through these doors is exactly the problem of still avoiding full self-responsibility, autonomy,

accountability. Your freedom is directly dependent on that. Your ability to let go in strength, rather than weakness, depends on that.

Of course, autonomy, or its lack, is always a question of degree. Many of you are perfectly able to stand on your own two feet as far as earning your livelihood is concerned. You may do it in a healthy and productive way that you therefore generally enjoy. In this area you may be realistic and able to accept that you will also encounter difficulties, boredom or strife. You can lend your best to such times. This is precisely why you are successful and why you enjoy your work. But there may be other areas, more subtle, less easily noticeable, in which you still want to depend and not be your own self. It is up to you to explore these areas. The telltale sign is how you feel about authority figures in your life, how you can distinguish between those whom you can trust and those who are not to be trusted. Where do your intense feelings go? Your positive feelings may tend precisely toward those who are not to be trusted, while you view with suspicion those who encourage your autonomy and deserve your trust.

If you cannot trust yourself, you can never know who is trustworthy. And, of course, you cannot trust yourself if you do not know which part of you deserves to be trusted. Only too often you want to insist that the part in you that is most childish, most destructive, most shortsighted, is the self that is autonomous. You want to believe that the line of least resistance and what feels momentarily most pleasurable is tantamount to your autonomy. This may occasionally be so, but by no means always. You can only trust yourself if you have learned to listen to the true inner authority that is capable of saying no to momentary pleasure, because that, in the long run, defeats you.

True maturity -- health and selfhood -- is the prerequisite for a healthy, fully lived and satisfying life. It forms the underpinning of spiritual self-realization. Without this state, spirituality must, sooner or later, bend into some distortion, no matter how well-intentioned the person may be when starting out.

On the other hand, you cannot reach this state of health and autonomy by merely psychological means. Your psychologists have the right idea and strive toward this goal in their approach to their patients. But unless one learns that there are several inner voices to listen to; unless choices are made about which voice to trust or to reject; unless these voices are explored, the goal will forever remain elusive and only a beautiful theory. In effect, the voice of the higher self is often the weakest at the beginning, yet you need to listen to it more than to the loud clamoring of the other voice, which never wants to tolerate any frustration.

It must become clear to you, my beloved friends, that only a community that consists of autonomous people is autonomous, safe and creative as a group entity. In the New Age everything tends in that direction. Your whole society can be transformed to the degree that more and more individuals develop and reach emotional, mental and spiritual maturity. When all of society, at least as an overall attitude, represents values that express this state, then not even those who come from the lowest spheres, with destructive intent and/or spiritual ignorance, will be capable of wreaking havoc on your earth. Their influence will dissolve like snow in the sun. This is not so now, because too many individuals hanker after authority figures who allow everything and forbid nothing, who promise to take away all hardships of living.

Deep, intense, realistic contact with the Christ is possible in an extended way only when true autonomy exists in the human personality. Otherwise the road is blocked, the experience is inaccessible, the voices are confusing. The idea of total surrender to God becomes confusing. The wish to surrender to the false authority figure who permits all and sets no limits to the line of least resistance, who never imposes any frustration, who offers this kind of utopia, also creates a sense of fear in those who somehow, in their inner being, know the dangers of such surrender. The weaker ones will surrender to the false prophets, as the Bible says. The slightly stronger ones, who are still partially in this unfinished state, while partially striving for real autonomy, fear surrender in all forms. What they really fear and distrust is their own desire for the false prophets who promise what they should never promise. These promises may not be made in so many words, but they are implicit in their messages and reach the consciousness of those who are most vulnerable due to their unwillingness to take charge of their own lives.

So, no matter how much you may be willing to surrender to the will of God, and therefore to His guidance in whatever form it may be given you, the resistance to doing so cannot be overcome unless you establish full selfhood in all areas of your being.

From the evolutionary point of view, spirit can penetrate matter to the degree that spiritual truth, spiritual law, spiritual health are being established. The individual's self-responsibility is indeed the key to this. When the self becomes stronger, more of life can penetrate matter; more of the spirit can be born in the flesh. You will see, as you grow in stature through gaining selfhood, that more of your real being is born into your physical manifestation. More talents may come to the fore of which you had known nothing before. Suddenly a new wisdom manifests, a new understanding and capacity to feel and love, a hitherto unsensed strength unfolds from you. All these manifestations are the real you that lives in the inner space -- the real world. As you make room for these aspects, they will push into the life of matter and you will fulfill your part in the evolutionary scheme. These attitudes do not grow from outside; they are not being added on to you. They are a result of your outer manifest being making room for the inner, as yet unmanifest being. This happens by the growing process, the hard work you undertake on this path. And, after a certain point in your development, it can be helped along by focusing on the inner emptiness until you discover that the emptiness is illusion. It is a fullness, a rich world of glory. You can receive all you need from this inner source and translate it into outer experience.

Christ has come in many forms, many times, as different enlightened ones, throughout the ages. But never has he come as fully and completely, as freely as in Jesus. You can see that, here too, it is a question of the degree to which spirit can flow through into matter, how unobstructed matter has become, so that the maximum of spirit, of life, of consciousness can manifest as matter. The point will come in evolution when the sphere you now inhabit will yield to spirit so much that matter will have spiritualized completely. Matter will no longer be an obstruction to spirit. The void will be filled with life.

By approaching the void without fear, you also remove an obstruction to life. Focusing on the inner space means, to begin with, approaching what appears as emptiness. Through this void you reach the fullness of spirit, the totality of life in its pure, unobstructed form. This stuff of life contains all possibilities of expression, of manifestation. The joy of experiencing this reality is greater than any other. In this joy is your oneness with the Creator, where you are indeed one.

You can see, my friends, that nothing in your personality, no aspect of it, is insignificant in terms of creation and evolution. There is no such thing as a "merely psychological aspect." Every attitude, every way of thinking, feeling, being and reacting reflects directly on your participation in the greater scheme of things. By knowing this you will perhaps find it easier to give your life, your pathwork, your endeavors greater value. You will learn to unify an arbitrary duality -- spiritual versus worldly concerns.

Make room for unobstructed life, for unencumbered spirit! Let it fill every part of your being so that you will finally know who you really are. You are all blessed, my very dearest ones.

Edited by Judith and John Saly

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