

First
Be
Spiritual

Morning Writings 2014

By Rev. Thomas Janssen

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“First be spiritual and then be spiritualist,” was given to me in an earlier writing session. It is the theme I hope for this 90th convention in a few weeks. It feels more and more that my role in the ISA is to bring more spirituality into spiritualism.

The concept is not unique to spiritualism and is actually quite universal. Whatever label we choose to self-identify will always be secondary, or at least should be, to being spiritual. Whom in your life would you prefer not to be spiritual? Do we not need spiritual teachers, bankers, salesmen, mechanics, waiters, doctors, nurses, piano players and hopefully, ministers and priests?

Spirituality is not passive or always gentle. It is *tough love* at its best - appropriately strong in the right moments and for the highest reasons. As a good parent will love their children enough to say “no” to anything that is ultimately harmful or not in the best interest of the child. The trick is always to know your motivation. Purity of the results from our intentions will always be directly related to the progress we have made thus far with clearing our emotional body of traumas. The old adage *forgive and forget* tells us the first and most vital step in the process and the natural end result at completion of that process.

It is simply not possible to clearly pass our best intentions on without some distortion before our emotional body's healing is complete. Much like the quality of the light passing through a lens will be affected by the purity and clarity of that lens. The earliest glass window panes can be a visual metaphor for this idea. Early window panes passed light quite well but were impossible to see through. You could get diffused light but not clear vision. Today modern glass making techniques not only produce clear glass panes with no distortion, but can have other beneficial properties as well. Too subtle to notice immediately, UV (ultraviolet) glass will block higher frequency light responsible for fading colors on draperies and furniture. However, this same feature makes it the wrong glass to use for a greenhouse as plants use these higher frequencies of the UV light.

Similarly we too are a *lens* that our intentions and inspirations must filter through. We cannot separate our *personal growth* from our *spiritual growth*. Religion is not an end but a road map for *spiritual growth*. This is work everyone must do to be clear and at peace. The specific steps each one may choose will vary. At one time *all roads led to Rome*, similarly there are many paths to *awakened spirituality* but they will all include some form of personal house cleaning. Our *Spiritual Growth* is limited by our *Personal Growth*.

Masters in Eastern religions called it *enlightenment*. However, this is a new time and age that is not only for advanced Masters, Gurus and Yogis. It is a time now for everyone of us to step into and embrace our mastery, our self-mastery. God, the *Creative Force (Infinite Intelligence)*, has given each of us dominion over just one small yet very critical part of this great universe – ourselves. Nothing can be more important than *mastery of self*. For it requires the purifying of the *lens* that we are. Whatever we choose to do with this life is affected by the level of purification we have accomplished. Did you ever intend to help someone but succeeded in

hurting them instead? Your intention no matter how pure filtered through your *lens* producing actions affected by your own distortions - your unfinished business, your unforgiven hurts, your wounded self.

There is a great story that is a powerful metaphor about intention and consequences. The setup to the story varies with the teller but goes something like this:

A man finds a cocoon on his firewood and places it on the mantle. He waits in hope there is a butterfly growing inside. In time the warmth of his room has the cocoon stirring with life. With great interest but growing concern the man watches the struggles of the tiny creature to break free of the cocoon. In time, sensing there must be a problem, he decides to "help." Carefully he takes a razor and cuts the cocoon ever so carefully. Soon the struggles of the butterfly break open the cocoon and it emerges spreading its damp and delicate wings. The man is delighted to finally see this beautiful creature emerge and begin to dry it's wings. The next day the man awakens to see the butterfly still walking his mantle, he watches and waits but again the next day it's the same. Becoming concerned he calls a friend who is an expert with such creatures. After hearing the story his friend declares "this butterfly will never fly." "Why, what is wrong with it," asked the man? "There was nothing wrong with the butterfly, but in helping it escape it's cocoon you deprived it of the struggles it needed to strengthen it's flight," explained his friend.

It is clear in this story that the man's lack of understanding played an obvious role. However, perhaps not so obvious are his inner needs which may have played a role to compelled him to take wrong action. Even without an intellectual understanding he might have had enough patience to allow nature to take its course. Unintended consequences often happen from actions to *help* others when the underlying motivation is our own need to be helped. *Physician heal thyself first*, are wise words.

Our greatest needs for healing are hidden from us. We long ago developed a *blind spot* for our most painful emotional traumas. It was a necessary defense and survival mechanism. But much like trauma care it is *temporary*, like a bandage to protect a tender and vulnerable spot. It allows us to survive long enough to get *proper care* for complete healing. We will hide these emotional traumas until we are strong enough and have enough self-confidence to confront our greatest fears. A tourniquet can save a limb and/or a life but is an temporary emergency measure - left on



too long it goes from helping to causing more damage. It will then cause the loss of the limb and even the life it was intended to save.

Our emotional blind spots must be found by looking for the evidence. By definition they are hidden from our direct observation. Fortunately life is a mirror. It has been reflecting accurately what we need to see but we will not see it until we become ready. Until then we will see it as an attack on us. We will devote great energies attempting to change the world outside – the perceived cause is always someone or something else. Attempting to change what we cannot change is an exhausting, frustrating and fruitless endeavor. Often it is in utter exhaustion that one become *sick and tired of being sick and tired*. Our liberation comes when we finally let go of fighting the world. Then we catch a glimpse of the truth we have been avoiding. The changes needed are not *out there* but *in here* - within our self where we do have power to make changes. We finally realize, “I have no real power to change anyone but myself, however I do have full power to change myself. The next seeming paradox will then present itself, “*I have no power to change the world around me, but as I change myself, the world around me changes.*” The Creator has given us dominion over our own being and nothing more – fortunately changing our self is the most powerful contribution we can make to the unfolding of Creation. This is a *universal truth*.

Lenses work both ways and so does our inner clearings. We become a Clear Channel for Divine Source to flow through so our guidance and inspiration becomes ever more clear. And we become a powerful channel for Divine Love to flow through. Eventually our simple walk through ordinary life becomes a prayer and meditation. All activities become sacred. We become an instant blessing to all we encounter. Miracles follow us and become ordinary.

Does this sound too God-like? To ego-like? The distinction comes from the limitations of ego driven actions. The human ego can only mimic and attempt to look like that which is divinely driven. Most ministers have good intentions for their ministry, but there are some that will be ego driven, not spirit driven. Whether intentional or not an ego driven ministry will appear to be the same as spirit driven ones. The apparent success in the ministry is not an endorsement by God. Good things happen within ministries with corrupt leadership despite the ego-based corruption. How is this? When we come to understand that power only comes through you-through each of us. We each choose what to do with this power. Miraculous healing will take place at large rallies in the name of Jesus. Is it Jesus that accomplishes the healing? Or is it the common belief in Jesus that provides a focus for the many who now act as one? Are we not each created in the *likeness and image* of God?

God, *Divine Source*, projects through each one of us. Like the sun shining on all equally so does the *God Force*. How this energy gets distorted and misused is up to us. We are responsible for the polishing of our own *lens* (self) so that we are a clear and open channel. It is how *Thy Will* becomes *my will*. It is not obedience in human terms. God does not need our obedience, but does want our clear focus. Like a solar array each mirror must be clearly polished and when aligned with countless others to focus on a single spot millions of watts of power is produced. This from the very same sunlight that warms our face. Our collective potential is limitless when we act in concert. The *God Force Energy* is minimal when fragmented and acting alone as separate individuals, but together in alignment it becomes a powerful force.

It is for each one to choose.