

CHAPTER 2

THE VOICE WITHIN: HOW TO LISTEN

As the momentum builds within us in our search for Truth, we find ourselves motivated to go to lectures, to read books, to listen to new approaches and new teachers, and to examine new ways of looking at life. As we progress in our discovery of the Truth of life, we hear that small, quiet voice within beginning to speak, until finally one day it is so loud and resonant in our ears that we stop and really listen, and discover that all it has ever been saying is, "Here...I AM."

Through prayer (asking God to reveal Himself to us), meditation (listening to God speak to us) and daily disciplines, we become open and responsive. And everyone who is open and responsive begins to really hear the words, "I am God individualized." We may not understand it, but in response we feel ourselves agreeing, perhaps hesitantly, perhaps even fearfully, yet we cannot deny that sense of recognition. We discipline daily by putting our house in order on all three levels of our being: mental, emotional, and physical. We put our relationships in order by changing our attitudes towards them. We change our life by changing our attitude. Our vision becomes expanded so that we see more than we have seen before; our vision becomes deeper and our understanding is deeper than it was before. Through prayer and meditation we at last stop wanting to know the Truth and in fact, we do stop "knowing" the Truth-instead we become conscious of ourselves as individualizations *of* the living Truth.

As we progress on our spiritual journey, we discover that the path of "positive thinking" is not enough. It is not enough to think we know the Truth. We find that sometimes we create more illusions through the use of mind power. We discover instead that it is by clearing the mind that Truth can be experienced.

Then key to allowing the Truth to enter, to knowing who we are, is meditation. We often use all kinds of excuses to delay our meditation: work, children, family routine and all our other responsibilities which do not seem to leave time. However, when we finally decide that the mystics and sages are right about meditation, then we begin to experiment with it. And it moves us in a completely different direction from the one which we had been traveling. It moves us backward, not forward. We have to travel back along the way we have come. We move our attention into the subconscious levels of our mind to discover the deep-seated attitudes, assumptions and beliefs that have shaped us to the point of obscuring the knowledge of our real nature. Meditation is an exercise that leads us beyond the conditioned mind into a state where the mind is at rest, where there is no mental activity. As our awareness grows as a result of meditation, we become conscious of the content of the subconscious mind. We discover things about ourselves we never knew before. We may find, for example, that we are inwardly angry, and we never knew it before because, "It is not nice to be angry." All of our resentment, negative thoughts and emotions begin to surface and this makes us feel very uncomfortable.

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Usually, by this time in our journey, we have learned to control our mind and we are able to exercise this power to release all of the negative aspects emerging from our subconscious. More and more is revealed to us over the years as we continue in the deep and steady practice of meditation.

Meditation leads us to the experience of cosmic consciousness. At the moment of awakening, we come to know that, "I am a Son of God." Even though we may have believed it before, we now know it. This awakening is very important in our evolution in consciousness because a person who knows the Truth is participating consciously in the mystical activity which is taking place on earth today. In time, as a result of his work in consciousness, the individual has a revelation similar to this: "There is only one God, but the disparity between what I know and what I am experiencing indicates that there is still much in me to be resolved." This is quite a shock for the individual who has been blessed with a glimpse of cosmic consciousness. During this period, he is cleansed throughout his emotional nature so that he doesn't feel things in the same way as before. Life is very difficult at this point. We discover that it is difficult to think, difficult to plan, difficult to find meaning in life, and this is why it is sometimes called "the dark night." It may last a few hours for some and several years for others. It is an individual experience. I call this experience partial enlightenment, because the light is so powerful, so strong, so awesome, that everything else is clouded or negated. When the time is right, the individual, through grace, is led further into the process of Self-Realization.

As we begin our journey, please watch the inner activity in your own consciousness as you read the following simple questions. These questions contain within them their own answer. Read each question fully, with conscious attention; bring the question down to your heart area and witness the response or feeling that you experience as you work with each individual question. Take your time and pause after each question.

What do you suppose would happen if you totally accepted revealed Truth right now? All teachings have one basic principle, and all great spiritual teachers, sages, and mystics say that there is only one Reality. Whatever we perceive, we are always perceiving manifestations of this reality. This is revealed Truth throughout the ages. What would happen to your mind if you accepted Oneness? What would happen to your sense of separation? Do you sense a separation between you and the spiritual masters right now—a sense of separation of time, space and consciousness? What would happen to your sense of separation if you realized Oneness? What of your relationships? Revealed Truth is that there is only One. We have been looking for Truth, studying about it, reading about it, meditating on it, and perhaps experiencing it occasionally. But what would happen if you totally accepted that one simple statement: "There is only One." Can you see how this would affect you, your home life, your attitudes towards your church, your town, your government, the nation and the world?"

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Allow yourself to respond to these questions. Allow yourself to inquire into the possibilities which these questions raise. How do you relate to the Divine when you realize that the universe is not divided, but is only One in manifestation? And then how does the Divine relate to you?

Now that you have some idea as to the nature of his message, its utter simplicity, yet its utter power, we can go on this journey together and experience living the true spiritual life. It is ever-new, each day and each second. God is ever-new, yet ever-changeless.

Many readers, I would suspect, are probably tired of reading endless books and attending lecture after lecture, searching for answers. We finally reach a point at which we give up looking for answers outside of ourselves. A teacher never really gives us the answer, but encourages us to realize who we are; and not only to realize who we are, but to become on earth an expression of who we are. There is only one Presence, and you and I are personifications of that Presence.

There is no other Reality to be known, nor any other Reality to be studied. Until we come consciously to know the truth about ourselves, there is no possible way we can consciously be this Truth in expression. Our destiny is to know That which we are. Until we come into conscious awareness of this Truth, we should align our mental and emotional attitudes with our actions. In this way we prepare ourselves to experience God. Acceptance of this Truth is one of the most difficult steps on the mystical path. Once one knows the Truth, he also knows that he is still very much a human being and still subject to human conditions. Most of the time the Truth student lives in two worlds, even though he knows there is only One. Until he decides for himself to accept the Truth that he knows, he experiences much frustration. When he accepts the Truth that he knows, he experiences much frustration. When he accepts the Truth, a new life begins. As this new life begins to unfold, usually the student finds a temporary period of strain because the subconscious mind and the body both resist the need to let go and to surrender completely. However, after a conscious decision is made, that Presence within him begins activity at the person's innermost depths, and begins to manifest Itself more and more outwardly.

In this process, we learn to give up what we have already been given, and this leaves us free for further revelations in our progressive journey. We give up what we have learned in the past as "spiritual knowledge" because we learn to live in the present and in the Presence. We become free of bondage to conditioning, and are able to live as truly spiritual beings right now.