

Principle and Presence

by Rev. Arthur W. Chang

The Two Pillars of Principle

Jachin and Boaz are the names of the twin columns that stand imposingly at the entrance to Solomon's Temple. Visitors wishing to enter the Holy of Holies must first pass through these pillars. New Thought theologian, Thomas Troward, says that Jachin symbolizes the impersonal unity of creation while Boaz-love in the world. Ernest Holmes speaks of them as symbolizing the Law and the Word, or the Universal Principle and the Universal Presence. The Temple itself represents the Self. To arrive at a fundamental understanding of the Self in the world we must understand that the Universe is built on these two great Principles of Reality: the Personal as Presence, and the Impersonal as Law, and come to terms with how to use them. Using Principle lies at the heart of the meaning of the Science of Mind.

Dr. Holmes notes that the High Priest meets visitors at the Temple doorway, after they pass between the pillars, and conducts them to the Holy of Holies. The High Priest represents the Divine incarnation in each person. The High Priest is the one who conducts all to the Holy of Holies in which reposes the Ark of the Covenant. "Ark" means a vehicle containing the Life Principle, while "Covenant" means the eternal and immutable Laws of God that are forever established. In this Ark is the Scroll of Life upon which is inscribed the name of God, the I AM.

As the Universe consists of a balance between the impersonal and the personal, so it is that human consciousness oscillates between these two in various forms-the undifferentiated unity of life, Purusha, and the world of duality or pairs of opposites, Prakriti, as the ancient Hindus call them.

Dr. Holmes considers the impersonal and the personal aspects of the Universe as the nature of the Universe and our relationship to it. Further, he speaks of two fundamental principles as the "Secret of Secrets" for they reveal the Spiritual Truth-a truth when known sets us free-about our own being.

Principle and Presence

In the Science of Mind these two fundamental columns, holding up the roof or the umbrella principles of the Universe, are named Love and Law. Dr. Holmes regards them as the umbrella principles of the Science of Mind. He says in the Science of Mind text book, ". . . the great Love of the Universe must be One with the great law of Its Own Being, and we approach Love through the Law. This, then, is the teaching: Love and Law. As the love of God is perfect, so the law of God also is perfect. We must understand both."

He further emphasizes the importance of these principles in our lives. Dr. Holmes writes, "Whatever the nature of any principle may be-in so far as it is understood by anyone-it may be understood by all who take the time to investigate. This does not require an unusual degree of intelligence, but, rather, a practical application of what we now know in order that we may increase our knowledge." Applying the principles deepens our knowledge of them.

Law or Principle, Love or Presence, these are the two essential ingredients of Creation and as such, become the prerequisites for us to create the life we desire to live. Presence represents the executive, thinking, feeling consciousness, with a penchant for choosing what is to be created. Principle is the responsive, creative consciousness whose nature is to create with monotonous regularity what it is already programmed to do but having no volition of its own to do so. Presence initiates and Principle executes.

In regard to Presence and Principle, when the Epistle of James says, "God is love . . ." we are to understand that statement as referring to the Presence of God. When Jesus says, "To God all things are possible," that is a statement of the power of Law or Principle.

As a car is equipped with both accelerator and brakes, so it is that for us to create our desires we have words of denial and words of affirmation. The purpose of words of denial is putting a brake on undesirable experiences by changing the mental patterning principles that through the Law produce a set of undesirable experiences with spontaneous regularity and ease. Alternately, we may see negation and affirmation as we do apple seeds producing apple trees and pear seeds-pear trees. When we no longer desire apples or pears we must take out those crops and plant something else of our choosing. As the seed of each fruit holds the genetic pattern for the fruits produced, so it is that our thoughts hold the mental pattern of the experiences we create.

A spiritual denial is not to be confused with the attitude of pretending we are not having an undesirable experience we are in fact having and hoping, by ignoring it, it will go away. Rather it is a pattern-dismantler, aimed at neutralizing or altering the mental genes of our undesirable experience. When properly used, denial brings consciousness to a creative neutral point, in regard to a particular experience, and affords us a new designing condition for the Law to be used differently in bringing into our experience the new we desire.

Revisiting our car parts metaphors we may think of the accelerator as representing our words of affirmation or our affirmative prayer. For having decided on our new destination or desire, our words of affirmation will establish a new mental pattern and thereafter will be used to keep us on course towards this goal. It may take us some time to embed this new mental pattern in consciousness but once this is done we will discover we have acquired the "habit" of succeeding at our new intention. Demonstrating our good is then spontaneous and natural. It is the same principle we used in learning to drive a car. At first we gave it our intense and undivided attention. Once the skills were embedded we came to our driving with a kind of Buddhist no-thought driving: a Jamaican, "No problem mon!" It is the nature of Principle when embodied or embedded to act with ease and flow.

The use of Law or Principle changes our experience of the Presence and the change in the presence, locally and individually, changes the way we can use the Law. That is why Lao Tzu says, "The way to do is to be." We must become what we want to do. From the perspective of Presence, we will experience this change as a new confidence in ourselves that will lead us to the realization that something different and wonderful about ourselves has occurred. We are a part of that Great Whole that is God and all our desires are the Universe's way of nudging us to awaken to our true relationship to It.

Considering the Temple of Solomon symbolically, the door of the Temple must be opened by the self by our own volition. But to arrive at the Holy of Holies, the Secret Place of the Most High or the Presence that lies within us, we must meet the High Priest, who is our Spiritual Being or incarnation of God within us, as Holmes calls it. Our higher Self must lead our lower self to that special place. When this happens we are said to have "a mystical experience."

Unity and Multiplicity

Mystics agree that Creation is made for God's delight. The Hindu mystic Aurobindo says "We are here for the delight of God." The vibration of every particle is filled with the excitement of God's delight in Creation. This is why the Book of Genesis portrays God like that, "And God saw everything he had created and behold, it was very good." "Very good" is a vessel of delight for us and for God. Very good is an indicator of the value of Process that this life is a journeying rather than an arriving; that this life was never meant to be perfect, but good in parts and very good as a whole. Perfect is a steady-state affair with no change and, therefore, no creativity or transformation. This life gives the Eternal time to change in and as It's own creation.

Emerson observes that Unity passes into multiplicity. This means that this life is a sacred and spiritual experience now-just the way it is with all it's alleged flaws and faults. Life, in spite of all that can be so horrific, is really wonderful as a whole.

Principle in Practice

The practice of Principle is good for prayerfully changing our experiences but also effective in bringing greater clarity into our lives in moments of confusion. For example, when working as part of a group, it is invaluable to work on the principle of finding the best solution for your challenge rather than being vested in whose idea it is. This means the individuals comprising the group must be willing to give up their position for the best ideas for the stated vision. That will allow everyone to always bring forth her best ideas and ensure the greatest success and the greatest commitment. A person getting stuck on his way as being the only way, no matter how good that person is, will soon find great resentment and friction in the group, and even when his idea prevails and the group succeeds, few will want to work with that person again. Each member of the group needs to be treated as a valued stakeholder. Fundamentally, it is our relationships in life that are important.

The use of Principle as your guide is especially valuable when attempting to make good decisions from an emotionally charged situation. This may be in a dysfunctional personal, or a business relationship. Pause, take a deep breath, take time to still your anger or anxiety. Ask yourself, "What is the highest principle of good in this situation?" In this way, we will enter ". . . into our closet," as Jesus advises, "and pray to the Father in secret, and our Father who sees in secret, will reward you openly." Entering into your closet means to

leave your ego and your hurt out of the issue and see the highest principle.

It also means to ascend, like Moses, alone to the summit of Mount Sinai of consciousness and be inspired by God. Lao Tzu speaks of this as, "The good man does not seek culprits, he seeks solutions." In spiritually centering yourself, you have in fact, stepped back from the activities of the turning world and have gained the vantage of its still point. Here in perfect equanimity, you will be able to see how best to apply the principle to protect relationships with your deepest compassion. In such a principle-centered moment, as the Egyptians came sweeping down on the panicking Israelites in the desert, their great prophet, Moses, declared, "Stand still and see the glory of God!" This is an example of the powerful use of Principle when you wish to cultivate a deeply spiritual presence in the face of adversity and to gain mastery over your conditions.

In our next issue, I will discuss Principle and Process and also Miracles: Instantaneity vs. Process.

Walk well, my friend.