

# Seeing God

*John Gray:* Greetings to everybody. Wherever we are, it's *here*—and it is good to be here!

I'll begin today with a biblical verse well known to many: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." [Matthew. 5:8] Ever since these words were spoken by Jesus, remembered, and later translated from Aramaic to Greek to English and eventually memorialized in the Bible, how many millions of earnest people have wondered about what they mean and prayed to know how it's done? I don't know about you, but I don't hear of many people walking around claiming they see God, the figurehead of religious belief. The usual idea is that whoever, whatever God is, is unknowable until possibly after we're dead. To me this simply means there may be very few living people with pure hearts.

The heart is the feeling nature, and it permeates all levels of our outer being, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. We have feeling perception in all these aspects of ourselves. The accuracy and validity of our perceptions are functions of the degree of purity of our perceiving capacities. If our feelings are troubled, muddied, how clear can vision be?

The heart is designed to provide two-way circuitry: being a means to receive, to perceive, and to connect with the world, and also to be a radiant, giving and generous means of extending ourselves into the world. In correct alignment the heart is our primary faculty for being in the world but not of it. However, because much of the heart is unconscious or subconscious, the conscious mind has an impossible time trying to understand it. That's not the conscious mind's business anyway.

Being, expressing, projecting our true selves uplifts, illuminates, and blesses the world. Ah! Here's a clue: to be blessed, we must bless. It is by extending blessing that our hearts are purified. As true as this may be, though, neither believing it nor disbelieving it will make anyone any wiser.

The point is to get out of our human selves and let that fake identity dissolve. Lots of people spend their lives working on careers—maybe trying to achieve a comfortable retirement eventually—and are concerned if not consumed with achieving things and accumulating stuff. Many others are just trying to survive day to day. There's nothing wrong with any of this, but we know that involvement in the external world of human making is not where the real purpose of life is found. The purpose of life—our own—is to

be who we really are: divine, angelic beings living a radiant temporal and terrestrial experience.

As this identity begins to be actually experienced and known it's discovered that we are moving in and are part of an already working creative process that is far vaster than human imagining. What keeps the earth rotating, or the moon in orbit, or our hearts beating, or the planets revolving about the sun, or the solar system on its path through the galaxy, and on and on? These are more than mechanical relationships, but give evidence of a far larger order and control functioning throughout the living cosmos. Spirit is present and moving at all levels, all the time, everywhere. We're part of all that! We're connected to everything, mostly by means that operate below and above the level of our conscious minds.

Sometimes the subconscious mind is thought to be a sort of container, but it's actually bottomless. I recall a common illustration which may be helpful here: Picture islands dotting the surface of a sea; from the vantage point of a seagull riding air currents high above, each island appears to be a separate entity; an individual island, each unique in some ways. At the level of the surface of the sea, islands *are* separate; they're separated by water. But imagine the scene from beneath the sea, under water. All islands are connected to one another by the sea floor, shared in common at the bottom.

About four hundred years ago John Donne correctly penned, "No man is an island..." With the aid of a simple analogy we may see that the subconscious mind is both a personal and a collective connection with all the world. We are connected to everyone and everything else, both seen and mostly unseen, and we're connected with the very soul of planet Earth and far beyond. It's actually more than connection, but a thoroughly intimate oneness. The phrase "we are all one" may evoke eyeballs in some, but well beyond the platitude it's a truth worth remembering.

We're connected to everything, but how we relate to everything is through what is closest to us. I can't jump over my neighbor and love my fellow man in some distant location, or love the god of a faraway galaxy. Our connection to the world is through what's closest to us. If we would offer a healing, uplifting influence, a blessing into the world—how about world peace?—it starts and ends with those who are closest to us. We may say, in theory at least, that humanity as a whole is collectively a single body. Indeed, it is. But what do I really know and experience of that?

We each have innumerable personal memories of life experiences, things we think really happened the way we recall them. But memories are actually pretty malleable. As a memoir essayist, I became aware that just a little below the personal surface, our memories often have a lot in common. One sign that a story works well is if it reminds people of their own stories. Returning to our sea metaphor, those are rather shallow waters. Go a bit deeper and we have what Carl Jung named the *collective unconscious*, a concept which suggests that some of the deeper unconscious mind composition is inherited by everyone and is not shaped by personal experiences. According to Jung's teachings, the collective unconscious is hereditarily common to all human beings and is responsible for a number of deep-seated beliefs and instincts. I am not an expert on Jungian psychology, but this basic idea seems to hold some water. And there's a great deal of stuff deeper down yet, figuratively below the muck and sediment on the sea bottom. If the results of so much of human behavior through the millennia, if the effects of all the diabolical ways human beings have treated one another throughout history, were all brought up, it would make the stones weep.

There may be a great and deep collective backlog of things to be dealt with, but trying to clear it by dredging it up to the surface isn't useful or effective, not to mention that it would take more time than anyone has. A flush toilet, a device most of us have in our bathrooms, illustrates a principle: depress the lever to open the valve, and clean water flushes personal refuse to another level where it is dealt with by natural processes.

We're interested in the source of clean, pure water—symbol of the spirit of truth. Our conscious minds are designed to be moved by spirit, by the presence in expression of the incarnate angel I am. This faculty of mind is designed to be responsive, receptive, and eagerly open to the divine. We are made in the image and likeness of God to be the link between God and creation. Do we remember this, always?

There are far more important things than the muck of humanity's residue on the sea bottom. There's something deeper yet, waiting to rise into manifestation—memories of a garden state that disappeared from the outer awareness of human beings in fallen self-consciousness, but which nevertheless remain in essence. There is a true design, forever untouched, unsullied, unaffected by the effects of inane behavior. We are here to do our parts to let that state be restored.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.” [John 14:26] A couple of chapters later in the book of John, the Lord of Love in the person of

Jesus makes the same promise in different words: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...” [John 16:13]

These are the days in which the spirit of truth is come. The conscious mind is to be moved only by the flowing pure water of truth, the coming of which comforts minds and cleanses hearts, and restores order and beauty.

What is the evidence of a pure heart? Seeing God, yes, but not just in some general, *God is in everything* way, but seeing and knowing the design and control of His truth through which love makes all things new, in us and through us, and in and through those closest in spirit to us. The people you know who have integrity, who exhibit divine character in their living, and who perhaps you’ve known for years—these are divine colleagues, and these relationships matter so very much. How we hold one another in our hearts matters deeply, for this is the connective tissue of the one body.

Among friends with a high degree of heart purity, the more we interact, the more we see one another’s true nature, true light, true colors, we are awed by the magnificence we encounter. We merge in that magnificence. In the midst of it we see God, not in imagination but in the flesh, in the countenances of those nearest and dearest, of those who love with all what we love with all. Blessed are the pure in heart for they really do see God in the beauty all around, yes, but mostly in one another.

#### **After some comments:**

Many of us are old friends; in reality we are ancient friends. To have opportunity to consciously commune, as we do from time to time, has immense value, not because we’re receiving an outpouring from above our heads, but because we share the magnificence that we perceive in one another. What is closest to us isn’t necessarily what’s physically closest; it is what’s closest in our hearts. Distance and space and time actually make no difference at all. Pamela and I have our 48th wedding anniversary coming up in a few weeks. That seems like a long time, and it seems like just a few days. In my quietest moments I know that at whatever distance, the two of us have lived and served together for a very long time. That is likewise true of all of us. How many does it take to let God's will be done on earth? I don't know. I have come to think, however, that it is fewer than I might have once imagined. Whatever the number, all these people are those who are closest to us, and together we are sufficient, we are enough, we are here, and the glory of the Lord shines as a result. So we

draw this little time together in a conscious way to a close, and yet our closeness is unending.

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**Pre-Service Music**

*1. Mu isamaa on minu arm & 2. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrik*

Performed by the King's Singers from their 2020 album *Finding Harmony*