

Module 1 - What The Finite Receives Is A Unique Version of The Divine Life

Video:

<http://logopraxis-institute.online/?p=7625>

Exercise 1

Take a moment now to respond to the questions in the video. There are no right or wrong answers to these – just sit with what comes up for you with each question and write them down. You'll also be asked to revisit these later in the module.

- What do you see in the material, physical world of time, space and person?
- How do you interpret what you see?
- What is your experience of it?
- What does this seeing and experiencing communicate to you about your personal reception and resistance to the Divine?

Reflections

Have you ever had the experience of reading something one day and then again on another day and having quite a different response to it? Or visiting the same place, or engaging in the same activity, but it then being a very different experience each time you visited or were involved?

There is a very repetitive nature to our life. We wake, get up, we eat, we move, we think, we talk, we write, we read, we eat again and yet again, we drink, we sleep, we dream, and then we wake up again. Yes, there are variations *to* these and *in* these – changes in the food we eat, what we wear, who we see, what we do but at the same time there is an underlying foundation to it all that remains constant.

There are many things that we do and imbibe that *are* the same. You might drink a cup of coffee every day. You might even use the same cup. You might use the same stove to warm it, the same beans to prepare it and yet even though it looks the same and tastes the same, it varies in how it makes you feel.

'Yes, yes', you say, 'but that is because the circumstances around me are changing! So, some days I need it to wake me up more than others. And if I'm

cold, its warmth becomes an extra appreciation. If I'm with a friend, then it becomes a communal, shared experience. Or if I'm alone with a good book or a movie that I've been looking forward to watching, then it's an extra delight, an added treat to the experience. So, some days it makes me feel wakeful, or happy, or offers comfort, or delight, or connection - or not much at all, because I'm so engrossed in what I'm doing that I fail to notice it.'

Now you may not even drink coffee but you can substitute this illustration with anything that you partake of regularly, daily. It might be a glass of wine, it might be a glass of juice. It could be certain food that you eat every day. It might be a certain activity that you engage in - putting on your shoes, brushing your teeth, making your bed, sitting in your chair, getting into your car. The activity remains the same and yet your experience of it changes and is never the same.

Spiritual Christianity teaches that the source of all, the Divine Life, is unchanging and always present in its fullness; and it is, instead, the reception and response in us to that Divine Life that changes, in our inner states of mind.

The Divine is not varying and changeable, as everything is which belongs to nature, but is unvarying and unchangeable, consequently the same everywhere and always. (Divine Love and Wisdom 77)

We can go for many years being told the same thing, hearing the same words and phrases, and then one day it sounds different. It sounds fresh, in a way we have never quite heard it before. The words haven't changed, the activity hasn't changed, the cup of coffee hasn't changed – but it is us that has changed. Our response to the experience changes because of our inner state, of how receptive we are in that moment to the life that is flowing in. To what we are open to and what we are closed to.

We can see this illustrated on a larger scale as well. Why is it that we can take a group of people who are all listening to the same speaker or the same music or reading the same text and yet each and every one of those present experiences it differently, not in the same way but individually unique?

The Divine Life is immutable, perfect, infinite and eternal. It is uncreated and underived. All else is subject to this because they are not any of these. All else is finite and created and changing and thus manifests as a unique expression of this Divine Life but as a limited permutation of it. For it is the limited structures

of a finite mind that determines what it is able to be received and not received. These structures being such things as: our patterns of feeling and thought, what we judge to be good and true or evil and false, the beliefs that we live from, what we love and consequently where the affections are focused and to what the attention is drawn to. It is therefore the specific structures of each individual's mind which then gives rise to the unique expression of life that it is.

... the Divine Esse, which is in itself God, is the Same; not the Same simply, but infinitely, that is, the Same from eternity to eternity; the Same everywhere and the Same with everyone and in everyone; and that all variableness and change are in the recipient, caused by the state of the recipient. (True Christian Religion 25(3))

One way to picture this concept is to imagine a piece of paper with little holes all over it in various places. The fullness of the light falls on it but the pattern of light that it projects is subject to these holes through which the light can fall through.

Another place in which this idea is illustrated is in the Gospel of Matthew in the parable of the sower:

A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matthew 13:3-8)

Each of these places where the seed falls are like different inner states of reception in our mind into which the Divine Life flows. They are like different permutations of the little holes in the paper, with each offering a unique light-pattern which is created when the light hits, it and is either reflected back or falls through to the ground below. Some states of mind that we experience are in struggle to know how to receive the seed of life. It lands on the path instead of the fertile soil where it simply cannot grow. It eventually gets devoured by affections that have a love for high ideals but would rather keep it for themselves then have to tend to a plant that needs attention, care and water for it to grow. Other states like the *idea* of working with truths that could

potentially be life-changing, but the state of the soil of our mind is not quite ready to fully *accept* it. There are hard, cold, stone-like inflexible ways of thinking that get in the way. Or our own ideas of what we think truth is, which choke the growth of anything new and different so that the seed starts to take root and grow, but there are patterns of thinking and feeling that will have to change in order for these to thrive. The sense of self is too attached to its old ways and so these habitual patterns become like weeds that insist on sharing the garden bed with the new seed, eventually fighting to dominate and suffocating any new growth that sprouts from it.

But then, there are other states of mind that are able to nurture the new seed. The soil of the mind is ideal for germination of new truths, new ways of seeing, new ways of being, and is open to being directed on how to care for it. It welcomes instruction on how to make sure it gets sun, water and is tended to; how to look for weeds that grow, or to be vigilant of the high-flying ideas that want to come down and claim them as their own rather than acknowledging them as gifts of the Divine Life that belong *only* to Divine Life. And depending on the other conditions – of ongoing sun, water and care and attention – these new ideas will yield fruits of many or much.

Can we then become the attentive gardener of our mind? To look up at the sky and be watchful of the weather conditions, making sure the soil and plant gets what it needs to remain healthy? To be mindfully tending it and pulling out weeds when we see them? Can we become as a servant gardener to the Lord in His care for that plant? Taking on this responsibility in service to Him - for what that plant then might offer in its place in the garden as a whole? Where each plant is another finite permutation of reception of Divine Life, similar to us but unique in its own manifestation and use in what it contributes to the heavenly garden. What we receive then, is dependent on what we consciously cultivate.

Exercise 2

- Read through the set of numbers from the Heavenly Doctrines that accompany the video.
- Choose 1 that you are drawn to. You don't have to be conscious of why – just pick two that stand out for you.

And now for each one:

- Write down, in your own words, what the passage is saying.

- Reflect on whether you are able to give an illustration of this occurring, of observing it in your own life.
- Create a task that would prompt or remind you to observe this next time the opportunity might arise.

Here is an example:

Text: *Because men and angels are such, they are recipients of life.*

Consequently, if any man suffers himself to be so far misled as to think that he is not a recipient of life but is Life, he cannot be withheld from the thought that he is God. (Divine Love and Wisdom:4)

My words: If I forget or believe that I am not a recipient of life then I will make decisions and actions as if I am God and no one else is right but me. But if I can remember that I receive life then I can remember that I don't have all answers, or know everything as an absolute truth and this will make me less judgemental of others.

Task: The next time I am in a negative state with someone – see if it's because I am forgetting that I am a receiver of life; and see if remembering this changes my attitude to the situation.

Exercise 3

Use the following meditation to give yourself space to centre yourself and to let the Word guide you in sitting gently with all that you have worked through in this module so far.

Psalm 1: <http://logopraxis-institute.online/?p=11602>

This mediation is also offered to prepare you to revisit the initial questions from the video.

Exercise 4

Now go back to the questions from the video. This time pay attention more specifically to what you are observing right now in your immediate surroundings and state of mind.

- What do you see in the material, physical world of time, space, and person?
- How do you interpret what you see?
- What is your experience of it?

- What does this seeing and experiencing communicate to you about your personal reception or resistance to the Divine?

Reflect on how this exercise was experienced this time compared to at the start of the module.

- What new things have arisen for you?
- What things has it affirmed for you?
- What questions are you left with?

Before Moving on to Module 2 ...

Remember.... Like anything new, these ideas may feel difficult to work with at first and may give rise to many questions. It is enough however to just have them. Not all of them need immediate resolution or answers.

Also, be mindful of allowing yourself enough time between each module to work with the practise task that you set for yourself in Exercise 2. One day might be enough for you, or a few days or longer. It need not be a lengthy task but just enough to allow you more time to consider the illustrations of it in your own day to day life.

You might like to keep a journal or a notebook – something you can write down your observations in at the end of the day or during a short time set aside for reflection. This is also a place that you can write down the questions you are carrying.

Support In Your Work

This type of inner reflective work can give rise to states of resistance or conflict, as well as opening up many questions. If you would like to talk with someone to explore this more, then you can email us at logopraxis.institute@gmail.com.

Optional Further Reading and Exploration

This section is optional as it's not part of the work that that is in the module, but it offers an opportunity to further explore around the subject and concepts.

Keys to Finding Happiness – Psalm 1 (audio& text)

<http://logopraxis-institute.online/?p=923>