

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF WORDS IN HEALING?

^{21:1} Strictly speaking, words play no part at all in healing. The motivating factor is prayer, or asking. What you ask for you receive. But this refers to the prayer of the heart, not to the words you use in praying. Sometimes the words and the prayer are contradictory; sometimes they agree. It does not matter. God does not understand words, for they were made by separated minds to keep them in the illusion of separation. Words can be helpful, particularly for the beginner, in helping concentration and facilitating the exclusion, or at least the control, of extraneous thoughts. Let us not forget, however, that words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality.

² As symbols, words have quite specific references. Even when they seem most abstract, the picture that comes to mind is apt to be very concrete. Unless a specific referent does occur to the mind in conjunction with the word, the word has little or no practical meaning, and thus cannot help the healing process. The prayer of the heart does not really ask for concrete things. It always requests some kind of experience, the specific things asked for being the bringers of the desired experience in the opinion of the asker. The words, then, are symbols for the things asked for, but the things themselves but stand for the experiences that are hoped for.

³ The prayer for things of this world will bring experiences of this world. If the prayer of the heart asks for this, this will be given because this will be received. It is impossible that the prayer of the heart remain unanswered in the perception of the one who asks. If he asks for the impossible, if he wants what does not exist or seeks for illusions in his heart, all this becomes his own. The power of his decision offers it to him as he requests. Herein lie hell and Heaven. The sleeping Son of God has but this power left to him. It is enough. His words do not matter. Only the Word of God has any meaning, because it symbolizes that which has no human symbols at all. The Holy Spirit alone understands what this Word stands for. And this, too, is enough.

⁴ Is the teacher of God, then, to avoid the use of words in his teaching? No, indeed! There are many who must be reached through words, being as yet unable to hear in silence. The teacher of God must, however, learn to use words in a new way. Gradually, he learns how to let his words be chosen for him by ceasing to decide for himself what he will say. This process is merely a special case of the lesson in the workbook that says, "I will step back and let Him lead the way." The teacher of God accepts the words which are offered him, and gives as he receives. He does not control the direction of his speaking. He listens and hears and speaks.

⁵ A major hindrance in this aspect of his learning is the teacher of God's fear about the validity of what he hears. And what he hears may indeed be quite startling. It may also seem to be quite irrelevant to the presented problem as he perceives it, and may, in fact, confront the teacher with a situation that appears to be very embarrassing to him. All these are judgments that have no value. They are his own, coming from a shabby self-perception which he would leave behind. Judge not the words that come to you, but offer them in confidence. They are far wiser than your own. God's teachers have God's Word behind their symbols. And He Himself gives to the words they use the power of His Spirit, raising them from meaningless symbols to the Call of Heaven itself.