



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

Today's Topic: The Divine Essence

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

The Divine Essence

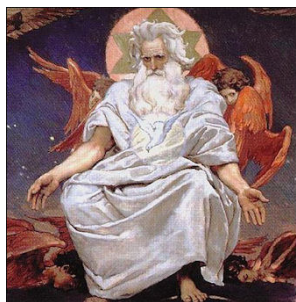
Every culture had some idea of a creator or supernatural being or begins that they worshiped as god or gods. Our understanding comes from the ancient Hebrews and their early writings.

And so it was written: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27) And a few lines later we find: And God looked upon all that He had made, and indeed it was very good." (Genesis 1:31)

The Divine Essence

What kind of image or understanding of God do you hold in your life? As children we grew up with this image of God.

An old man sitting on a throne judging all living things.



The Divine Essence

Everyone in New Thought has an image they hold about God. The founders of Unity and Religious Science state:

"God is not person but Principle...the underlying, unchangeable Truth that is expressed in all creation." Charles Fillmore, Unity

"God is all there is—God includes everything, all possibility, and all action, for Spirit is the invisible essence and substance of all form." Ernest Holmes, Religious Science

The Divine Essence

God as Spirit:

If Spirit is not matter and Spirit is not person, what is Spirit? It is important that we have some personal comprehension of what is meant, for it is the one and only definition that Jesus gives of God. Jesus said, "For God is Spirit." God is the Presence of a love, an intelligence, and a power that is beyond all defining or explaining. God as Spirit, however, can be acknowledged and experienced.

The Divine Essence

As someone once said, "To have God speak to the heart is a majestic experience, and experience that people may miss if they monopolize the conversation and never pause to hear God's responses." In other words...

**God is experiential, for to know
God is to experience God.**

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So this begs several questions:

Can you have an experience of God if you don't have an image of God as a person?

Jesus used the term "Father" to explain his image of God.

Can you experience the invisible essence of God without having a visual image?

Jesus also used "Spirit" to describe the experience of worshiping of God.

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Granted, it is very difficult for some individuals to let go of the notion that God is a person. This is understandable. Almost all the words we are accustomed to hearing about God are words we use when we are talking about persons. Our songs and hymns are filled with words personifying God. When Jesus used the word "Father" he was naming the kind of relationship he had with God, and not "defining" God.

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God as Principle:

As Fillmore stated in his book, Jesus Christ Heals: "The fundamental basis and starting point of practical Christianity is that God is Principle. By Principle is meant definite, exact, and unchangeable rules of action. It is used because it best describes the unchangeableness that is an inherent law of Being."

The Divine Essence

God as Principle:

The word principle, as commonly used, denotes an unfeeling set of rigid rules or formulas. However, this is not the meaning when the word is used as an aspect of God. God as principle is not an unfeeling force. The word, principle, as connected with God, pertains to the perfect and unchanging nature of God. God is the principle of Absolute Good.

The Divine Essence

Absolute Good is the only accurate statement, because Absolute Good cannot be defined, and God is always beyond formal definition.

Jesus himself made the statement that only God was absolute good when he told the young man by the roadside, "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone."

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In Unity we affirm the absolute goodness of God in every Sunday worship service with: "There is but one Presence and one Power in all the universe and in my life: God, the Good, Omnipotent."

Even C.S. Lewis addressed God as good when he explains: "God is not merely good, but goodness; goodness is not merely divine, but God."

The Divine Essence

To understand God as Absolute Good is to experience the divine essence of God as the principle of all good, or law in action, through God as Mind, God as Substance, and God as Love.

God as Mind:

The connecting link between God and man. God-Mind embraces all knowledge, wisdom and understanding and is the source of every manifestation of true knowledge and intelligence.

The Divine Essence

God as Mind is omnipresent intelligence. Our minds are not Divine Mind, but they are connected to Divine Mind. The Absolute is limitless, and God is the only Absolute. All things that exist have limitations. Our minds are connected with the unlimited Divine Mind, and can receive all knowledge and inspiration from that connection.

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God as Substance:

God is substance, not matter, because matter is formed, while God is the formless. God substance lies back of matter and form. It is the basis of all form yet does not enter into any form as a finality. Substance cannot be seen, touched, tasted, or smelled, yet it is more substantial than matter, for it is the only substantiality in the universe. God substance is the creative life force behind and beneath all forms.

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God as Love:

God is the love in everybody and everything. God is love; man becomes loving by permitting that which God is to find expression in word and act. God is the Creator of all love and the eternal Source of all love. For most persons, the most enjoyable of all experiences of the divine essence of God is in the form of His love for us.

The Divine Essence

“God as love,” is a Truth that is being felt more and more strongly in human hearts as evolution proceeds. Religious thinking has come a long way and reached new heights of spirituality and Truth as we discover the divine essence of God in our life and affairs. Jesus ushered in the idea that his God of love replaced the old image of a judgmental and unforgiving God. It’s up to us to embrace that essence.

The Divine Essence

In keeping with today’s Daily Word on “Faith,” and the lesson on “The Divine Essence” I leave you with this tidbit:

Faith is the divine evidence that allows each of us to discern and feel God, and the divine essence of God in our life and affairs.