

**1 THE FORGOTTEN SONG Nov 16, 2008 Rev. J. Keene**

**I came home last Sunday afternoon and cried. I cried because my heart was touched by what I was seeing - the Para-Olympics on television. These Olympics took place in China one month after the regular games. The participants all have serious handicaps, and I'd like to tell you a little bit about what I saw and why I was so moved. Each athlete had a moving story. The first one was a wounded Iraq vet, paralyzed from the waist down who developed his upper body strength to become a champion shot putt thrower. A variety of people participated - Physical challenges came from accidents, battle or disease. Some were wheel chair racing; others were running on blades. A man with slurred speech from ALS competed aggressively in the sailing races. Marin Morrison, a young high school swimmer, had several surgeries for brain tumors but still managed to swim. The fact that she finished last did not diminish her victory. Her victory was being there and finishing the race. When we witness events and people such as these, we can see that we are more than we think we are. We falsely believe that we**

are defined, confined and limited by our bodies. However, the truth is, as the Course in Miracles reminds us:

**“I am not a body; I am free; I am as God created me.”** How did God create us? What IS our Reality? We seem to be limited by our Earth Suit - this overcoat that our Spirit walks around in while in Earth School, but it is not who we are. It's good to take care of our Earth suit, appreciate it for the communication device it is. Yet it is only temporary, therefore in the grand scheme of things, unreal. Spirit is eternal God Life that never ages and cannot die. What came through those para-Olympic athletes was the Spirit that transcended all Earth Suit handicaps. They demonstrated tremendous courage and strength of mind and heart.

Watching them in action and hearing their stories was a great blessing. It seems we all need to be reminded to wake up and to stay awake to the truth that there is so much more to us than our physical body and its limitations.

James Dillet Freeman reminds us in his book ANGELS SING IN ME: “Soul has a substance of its own, no less permanent for being immaterial, no less real for being invisible. We cannot feel it with our fingers or see it with

**our eyes. But it is there, substantial, real. This visible form, this audible voice, this aggregation of organs, this network of ideas - we are more than these. These are the trappings of visibility. We are an expression of the spirit of Life. . . .”**

**By the Grace of God we are surrounded by teachers, books, and circumstances that point the way home. We have some copies of a book entitled THE SHACK in our bookstore. It is a book of fiction that reminds us that we are not a body; we are free and we are here to extend love and truth.**

**Mack is the sad and suffering hero of the book who receives a note from God in his mailbox with instructions to meet him at the shack where it is suspected his daughter was murdered. Mack meets God, Jesus and Holy Spirit who appear as “regular folks” who impart much healing and wisdom. Just a quote or two to give you the flavor - Jesus talking to Mack:**

**“The world system is what it is. Institutions, systems, ideologies, and all the vain futile efforts of humanity that go with them are everywhere, and interaction with them is unavoidable. But I can give you freedom to overcome any system of power in which you find yourself, be it religious,**

**economic, social, or political. You will grow in the freedom to be inside or outside all kinds of systems and to move freely between and among them. Together, you and I can be in it and not of it.”**

**More words Jesus speaks to Mack:**

**“Mack, I don’t want to be first among a list of values. I want to be at the center of everything. When I live in you, together we can live through everything that happens to you. Rather than a pyramid, I want to be the center of a mobile, where everything in your life - your friends, family, occupation, thoughts, activities - are connected to me but move with the wind, in and out and back and forth in an incredible dance of being.”**

**EAT, PRAY, LOVE is a non-fiction book in which author Liz Gilbert shares her “beyond the body” spiritual experience. It speaks for itself & I hope it motivates you to read the whole book in case you have not done so already:**

**I don’t want to say that what I experienced that Thursday afternoon in an Indian ashram was indescribable, even though it was. I’ll try to explain anyway. Simply put, I got pulled through the wormhole of the Absolute, and in that rush I suddenly understood**

**the workings of the universe. I left my body, I left the room, I left the planet, I stepped through time and I entered the void. I was inside the void, but I also WAS the void and I was looking at the void, all at the same time. The void was a place of limitless peace and wisdom - conscious & intelligent. The void was God, which means that I was inside God, but not in a gross, physical way - not like I was Liz Gilbert stuck inside a chunk of God's thigh muscle. I just was part of God. I was both a tiny piece of the universe and exactly the same size as the universe. The sage Kabir wrote: "All know that the drop merges into the ocean, but few know that the ocean merges into the drop."**

**I was experiencing Heaven - the deepest love I'd ever experienced - but it wasn't euphoric or exciting. There was not enough ego or passion left in me to create euphoria and excitement. I had my thoughts but they were quiet and observing. I felt unhesitating compassion and unity with everything and everybody and I wondered how anybody could ever feel anything But that. My earthly identity felt obsolete. Imagine cramming yourself into such a puny box of identity when you could experience your infinitude instead! I wondered, "why have I been chasing happiness my whole life when bliss was here all the time?"**

**And then it happened - the thought: “I don’t want to leave here.” And that thought sent me tumbling back to ordinary reality. I felt a tremor of panic, mildly heartbroken to have lost this divine experience. But parallel to that panic I could also sense a witness, a wiser and older me, who just shook her head and smiled, knowing this: If I believed that this state of bliss was something that could be taken away from me, then I obviously didn’t understand it yet and not ready to inhabit it completely. Then God let me go with this last compassionate, unspoken message:**

**You may return here once you have fully come to understand that you are ALWAYS here.”**

**Dear soul companions in Earth School, that is the message I want to impress upon you today: God is here and now and always has been with us, nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet. We don’t always experience that because we are distracted and pulled out into the world of separation, the world of material limits. But remember, Pure Truth cannot be seen with the eyes of the body. We must get in touch with a deeper, broader and more expansive reality. We must get in touch with our Forgotten Song. One of the most**

**beautiful pieces in the Course in Miracles is in the text, Chapter 21 at the beginning. It's entitled The Forgotten Song. I'd like to share a part of that with you. Please embrace it and carry it away in your heart today. May it serve as a continual reminder of the magnificence of the truth of you.**

**“Listen, - perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar, like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything in particular. But you remember, from just this little part, how lovely was the song, how wonderful the setting where you heard it, and how you loved those who were there and listened with you. The notes are nothing. Yet you have kept them with you, not for themselves, but as a soft reminder of what would make you weep if you remembered how dear it was to you. You could remember, yet you are afraid, believing you would lose the world you learned since then. And**

yet you know that nothing in the world you learned is half so dear as this. Listen, and see if you remember an ancient song you knew so long ago and held more dear than any melody you taught yourself to cherish since. Beyond your body, beyond the sun and stars, part everything you see, and yet somehow familiar, is an arc of golden light that stretches as you look into a great and shining circle. And all the circle fills with light before your eyes. The edges of the circle disappear, and what is in it is no longer contained at all. The light expands and covers everything, extending to infinity forever shining and with no break or limit anywhere. Within it everything is joined in perfect continuity. Nor is it possible to imagine that anything could be outside, for there is nowhere that this light is not.—Here is the memory of what you are; a part of this, with all of it within, and joined to all as surely as all is joined in you. Accept the vision that can show you this, and not the body. You know the ancient song, and know it well. Nothing will ever be as dear to you as is this ancient hymn of love the Son of God sings to his Father still. “

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**Dear God, may we remember and sing this forgotten song. May we remember who we are beyond our bodies. May we be ever more open and receptive to the truth of our being. May we more fully understand how greatly we are loved and blessed. Thank you God. Amen.**