

**Message by Kyoshu-sama, Yoichi Okada,  
Grand Autumn Service, October 1 & 2, 2011  
Hall of Worship, Atami Sacred Grounds, Japan**

Good morning everyone. Congratulations on today's Grand Autumn service, and welcome to the Atami Sacred Grounds.

With a deep sense of awe, I acknowledge that each breath we breathe is the breath of God. God, the one and only God, is alive within each one of us and within everything in the universe.

God's purpose of the Creation, as Meishu-sama has taught us, is to establish paradise on earth. This earth, where paradise can be established, belongs to God the Creator. However, we human beings have mistakenly felt that we own the earth and treated it as if it were our own. Instead of punishing us, God has forgiven this wrong attitude of ours with His unconditional love, as He wants to make the earth as truly belonging to Him and welcome the earth back into His world, heaven. If paradise is to be established on earth, we must first acknowledge that we treated the earth as our own and return it to God.

We who live on this earth also belong to God. We often say that we receive our life from God, and that God allows us to live. The true meaning of these phrases is that God lets us sense His own life as if it is ours in order to nurture us.

Our life, consciousness and soul are not ours. They belong to God. I believe this is why we should treat them with respect and treasure them. We should return our life, consciousness, soul, as well as everything on earth that we regarded as our own, to God through Meishu-sama, so that they can be used as God's own.

If we want to be of service to Meishu-sama and contribute to the establishment of paradise on earth, the most fundamental attitude we should have is to hand everything, including ourselves, to God and always wish to live and serve in heaven, the true home of our life, existing at the center of our consciousness. I trust that serving God with this attitude will no doubt make our life more meaningful and the various activities of Meishu-sama we practice more fruitful.

I understand that you members of Izunome Kyodan are making efforts to practice Gratitude Sonen and "one more gesture of love for others" with the goal of achieving "self-realization" and creating paradise-like conditions around you and in your personal life. I also understand that you are channeling Johrei, which is the crystallization of Meishu-sama's love for others, to connect the people surrounding you to Meishu-sama. I am grateful for your sincere efforts. I hope that these practices further cultivate your ability to see yourself objectively and guide you to become a person who can serve God joyfully and with gratitude.

I would like to say that the very fact that we can put our faith into these practices is only because God has already forgiven us and the new heaven has already been established within us. This is why we must always remember that we have been forgiven by God in the name of Messiah Meishu-sama and why we should not lose our pure heart of faith with a sense of reverence for and

awe of God.

It is very difficult for us to really know that we human beings needed to be forgiven by God. This is because usually, we cannot feel that we have gone against the will of God and disobeyed him. Even though God is the Creator of the universe, we regarded everything as ours. We treated life as ours and used words as our own. We have been unconsciously using the words "God" and "faith" for our own benefit to preach to others with human wisdom. We have been using the labels of "good" and "evil" as our useful yardstick to judge people and society, and we regarded ourselves to be superior to other people, even superior to God. We now must come to the realization that we exist today only because God forgave this ignorance and arrogance of ours.

Then, where does this forgiveness come from? According to Meishu-sama, the power of forgiveness comes from God. And Messiah, being the expression of God Himself, is entrusted with this power and brings God's forgiveness to all.

Messiah, "the One who forgives", exists at the center of our consciousness. God's forgiveness is within us. This is why it is important for us to accept Messiah as "the One who forgives" and always be grateful for being allowed to receive God's forgiveness through Messiah Meishu-sama.

Sometimes we have doubts and anxiety; sometimes we feel anger and fear. We tend to think that these negative feelings are ours. However, in truth, we are sensing the negative feelings of our ancestors who are not aware that they have already been forgiven by God. God strongly wishes to let these ancestors know of His forgiveness and welcome them back to His heaven. And we, who have come to know God's forgiveness, are the only ones who can relate this to them. This is why God uses our feelings and lets us sense the feelings of our ancestors to fulfill His mission of forgiving and welcoming all to His heaven.

When we sense doubts, anxiety, anger and fear, it is in fact our responsibility to respond to the wish of God and entrust our ancestors who held these negative feelings in the hands of God through Meishu-sama so that they can be forgiven, purified, saved and welcomed into heaven. That we have been assigned this task by God of informing our ancestors of God's forgiveness is, in my opinion, the true meaning of the phrase put forward by Meishu-sama, "we are the sum total of our numerous ancestors."

God has brought the "Age of Night" to an end in order to nurture us in the "Age of Day". Now it is our turn to follow God's footsteps and end the Age of Night. Then, it should be asked, "What is the 'Age of Night' and how do we end it?"

After having formed all nature, God created our human consciousness, that is, our sense of self, as His final touch to the work of the Creation. This consciousness of ours is characterized by our deep attachment to "self" or "self-love". It makes us want to become superior to others and be proud of ourselves. We also repeatedly repent and endlessly ponder within the realm of this human consciousness. It is difficult for us to correct and mend these tendencies by our own efforts.

Here, I am not suggesting that we should view our human consciousness negatively. Quite the contrary, human consciousness is such a precious part of God's creation that if we let God use it in His world, or in the Age of Day, it has the potential to make us newly born. However, as long as we refuse to accept that human consciousness is God's creation, we, I believe, are bound to live in the "Age of Night" or What Meishu-sama called "the world of materialism" or "material civilization". The "Age of Night", therefore, refers simply to our inadequate recognition that human consciousness is ours and not God's.

As I said earlier, for us, it is not easy to change the way we use our consciousness. Also, we, by our own efforts, cannot recognize that human consciousness is God's. It is God who, out of His love, has already forgiven our ignorance and incorrect recognition, and decided to put an end to our "Age of Night". God has already decided to nurture us in the "Age of Day". This is why we can recognize our mistakes and regard human consciousness as God's, a thinking that is only possible to manifest in the Age of Day. We should sincerely thank God for this and respond to His love by handing back our sense of self, our human consciousness, together with our egoistic feeling of self-love, to Him through Meishu-sama. We must return human consciousness, as well as all nature, to God's heaven where the work of the Creation began and where everything in the universe originated. I believe this act of handing human consciousness back to God is how we humans can put the "Age of Night" to an end.

Meishu-sama composed a *tanka* poem, "I will demolish the age-old, provisional civilization of today and establish a true civilization." Another poem he wrote says, "The current religions and science are all provisional ones until the true civilization is to be established." Meishu-sama called the civilization during the Age of Night a "provisional civilization" or a "semi-civilization". He has taught us that, in the Age of Day, God creates a world of true civilization where both the material and the spiritual civilizations develop harmoniously, hand in hand. I don't think that developing a "true civilization" necessarily means that we have to start creating some special or unique civilization from now on.

Our daily life is surrounded by many aspects of human civilization such as politics, economy, religion, science, and ideology. It seems, on the surface, that they have been made possible by human efforts. In truth, God prepared all of them. A true civilization, I believe, must be a civilization of God, where a living God can appear and manifest Himself. A living God can appear only when we admit that God is alive and manifesting Himself at this very moment.

Since we have learned that the turning from Night to Day has been accomplished, it is possible for us to contribute to the establishment of this true civilization of God. The way to do this is by returning various cultures and civilizations into the hands of God. Put it simply, we should voluntarily hand back our materialistic way of thinking and living to God through Meishu-sama. We should pray that the human civilizations be absorbed and integrated into the spiritual world or heaven within us where God lives. This act of returning the human civilizations to God is in itself how we serve God's plan of creating a true civilization where both the material and the spiritual civilizations develop harmoniously.

When our human-centered activities, like the current materialistic civilization, are used as God-centered activities, I believe the words and teachings of Meishu-sama will start shining within us, and their deeper meanings will be revealed to each of us gradually. In this way, everything we do in our daily life will become different from yesterday. It will not be a continuation from the past; it will look fresh, and we can find new meaning in our life.

The fact that we have learned from Meishu-sama that God is the Creator of all and the Parent of our life is in itself an enormous blessing. It is with this blessing that we can call out to God from our hearts and say, "I am your child", and God would graciously respond to us and say, "I surely have given birth to you". Meishu-sama taught us this because it is God who wishes to become the true Parent of our life both in name and reality.

God created the word "Messiah" to fulfill this wish. The sound of the word "Messiah" has a special spiritual power and contains God's wish to have us newly born. This spiritual word, Messiah, has been implanted by God within each one of us so that God may nurture and raise us as His true children. Meishu-sama was able to respond to this wish of God and was newly born as a true child of God, as a Messiah.

I should make it clear that Meishu-sama is not the only one who can become a Messiah. We too, if we are able to be newly born as a child of God, can be a Messiah. In other words, Meishu-sama is our model and predecessor who has shown us the way to become a child of God. As followers of Meishu-sama, we are now given a chance by God to follow his footsteps and become a Messiah. In addition, to be born anew is what I meant by "self-realization" earlier. Meishu-sama has achieved self-realization before us, and that is why we treasure Meishu-sama's life and work.

We have been blessed with God's unconditional forgiveness because of this Messiah Meishu-sama. This is why you should, no matter whatever happens, advance your life with a firm conviction and gratitude that God already has brought you back to heaven and is nurturing you every moment to become His children.

To conclude, I offer my deep gratitude to God who accomplishes all with His new breath from His new heaven, and I pray that God's blessing and peace be shared with all through your incoming and outgoing breath in the name of Messiah Meishu-sama.

Thank you very much.

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