

## Chapter 16

### The Forgiveness of Illusions

To empathize does not mean to join in SUFFERING, for that is what you must REFUSE to understand. That is the EGO'S interpretation of empathy, and is always used to form a special relationship in which the suffering is shared. The capacity to empathize is very useful to the Holy Spirit, provided you let him use it in his way. He does not understand suffering, and would have you teach it is not UNDERSTANDABLE. When he relates through you, he does not relate through the ego to another ego. He does not join in pain, knowing that healing pain is not accomplished by delusional attempts to enter into it, and lighten it by sharing the delusion.

The clearest proof that empathy as the ego uses it is destructive lies in the fact that it is applied only to certain types of problems, and in certain people. These it selects OUT, and joins WITH. And it never joins except to strengthen IT-SELF. Make no mistake about this maneuver, the ego always empathizes to WEAKEN, and to weaken is ALWAYS to attack. You do not know what empathizing means. Yet of this you may be sure, if you will merely sit quietly by and let the Holy Spirit

relate through you, you will empathize with STRENGTH, and BOTH of you will gain in strength, and not in weakness.

Your part is only to remember this, you do not want anything YOU value to come of the relationship. You will neither to hurt it nor to heal it in your own way. You do not know what healing is. All you have learned of empathy is from the PAST. And there is nothing from the past that you would share, for there is nothing there that you would KEEP. Do not use empathy to make the past real, and so perpetuate it. Step gently aside, and let the healing be done FOR you. Keep but one thought in mind, and do not lose sight of it, however tempted you may be to judge any situation, and to determine your response by judging it. Focus your mind only on this:

***I am not alone, and I would not intrude the past upon my guest. I have invited him, and he is here. I need do nothing except NOT TO INTERFERE.***

### True Empathy

True empathy is of him who knows what it is. You will learn his interpretation of it if you let him use your capacity for STRENGTH, and NOT for weakness. He will not desert you, but be sure that YOU desert not HIM. Humility is strength in this sense only; to recognize and accept the fact that you do NOT know is to recognize and accept the fact that he DOES know. You are not sure that he will do his part because you have never yet done YOURS completely. You will not know how to respond to what you do not understand. Be tempted not in this, and yield not to the ego's triumphant use of empathy for ITS glory.

The triumph of weakness is not what you would offer to a brother. And yet you know no triumph BUT this. This is not knowledge, and the form of empathy that would bring this about is so distorted that it would imprison what it would release. The unredeemed cannot redeem, yet they HAVE a redeemer. Attempt to teach him not. YOU are the learner - he the teacher. Do not confuse your role with his, for this will never bring peace to anyone. Offer your empathy to him, for it is his perception and his strength that you would share. And let him offer you his strength and his perception, to be shared though you.

The meaning of love is lost in any relationship which looks to weakness, and hopes to find love there. The power of love, which is its meaning, lies in the strength of God, which hovers over it and blesses it silently by enveloping it in healing wings. LET this be, and do not try to substitute YOUR "miracle" for this. We once said that if a brother asks a foolish thing of you to do it. But be certain that this does not mean to do a foolish thing that would hurt either him OR you, for what would hurt one WILL hurt the other. Foolish requests are foolish for the simple reason that they conflict, because they contain an element of specialness. Only the Holy Spirit recognizes foolish needs as well as real ones. And he will teach you how to meet both without losing either.

YOU will attempt to do this only in secrecy. And you will think that, by meeting the needs of one you do not jeopardize another because you keep them separate, and secret from each other. That is not the way, for it leads not to light and truth. No needs will long be left unmet if you leave them all to him whose FUNCTION is to meet them. That is HIS function, and NOT yours. He will not meet them secretly, for he would share everything you give through him. And that is WHY he gives it.

What you give through him is for the whole Sonship, NOT for part of it. Leave him his function, for he will fulfill it if you but ask him to enter your relationships, and bless them FOR you.

## True Magnitude of Holiness

You still think holiness is difficult because you cannot see how it can be extended to include everyone. And you have learned that it MUST include everyone to BE holy. Concern yourselves not with the extension of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do not understand. Nor do YOU do them. It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you did NOT do them. Why should you worry how the miracle extends to all the Sonship when you do not understand the miracle itself? One attribute is no more difficult to understand than is the whole. If miracles ARE at all, their attributes would HAVE to be miraculous, being part of them.

There is a tendency to fragment, and then to be concerned about the truth of just a little part of the whole. And this is but a way of avoiding, or LOOKING AWAY from the whole, to what you think you might be better able to understand. For this is but another way in which you would still try to keep understanding to YOURSELF. A better and FAR more helpful way to think of miracles is this: you do not understand them, either in part OR whole. Yet you have done them. Therefore, your understanding cannot be necessary. Yet it is still impossible to accomplish what you do not understand. And so there must be something in you that DOES understand.

To you the miracle CANNOT seem natural because what you have done to hurt your minds has made them so UNNATURAL that they do not remember what is natural to them. And when you are TOLD about it, you cannot understand it. The recognition of the part as whole, and of the whole in every part, is PERFECTLY natural. For it is the way God thinks, and what is natural to him is natural to you. Wholly natural perception would show you instantly that order of difficulty in miracles is quite impossible, for it involves a contradiction of what miracles mean. And if you could understand their meaning, their attributes could hardly cause you perplexity.

You HAVE done miracles, but it is quite apparent that you have not done them alone. You have succeeded whenever you have reached another mind and JOINED with it. When two minds join as one and share one idea equally, the first link in the awareness of the Sonship as one has been made. When you have made this joining, as the Holy Spirit bids you, and have offered it to him to use as he knows how, his natural perception of your gift enables HIM to understand it, and YOU to use his understanding on your behalf. It is impossible to convince you of the reality of what has clearly BEEN accomplished through your willingness as long as you believe that YOU must understand it, or else it is not real.

You think your lack of understanding is a LOSS to you, and so you are unwilling to believe that what has happened is true. But can you REALLY believe that all that has happened, even though you do NOT understand it, has NOT happened? Yet this IS your position. You would have perfect faith in the Holy Spirit, and in the effects of his teaching, if you were not afraid to ACKNOWLEDGE what he taught you. For this acknowledgement means that what has happened you do not understand, but that you are willing to accept it BECAUSE it has happened.

How can faith in reality be yours while you are bent on making it unreal? And are you REALLY safer in maintaining the unreality of what has happened than you would be in joyously accepting it for what it is, and giving thanks for it? Honor the truth that has been given you, and be glad you do not understand it. Miracles are natural to God, and to the one who speaks for him. For his task is to translate the miracle into the knowledge which it represents, and which is lost to you. Let his understanding of the miracle be enough for you, and do not turn away from all the witnesses that he has given you to his reality.

No evidence will convince you of the truth of what you do not want. Yet your relationship with him IS real, and HAS been demonstrated. Regard this not with fear, but with rejoicing. The one you called upon IS with you. Bid him welcome, and honor his witnesses, who bring you the glad tidings he has come. It is true, just as you fear, that to acknowledge him IS to deny all that you thing you know. But it was never true. What gain is there to you in clinging to it, and denying the evidence for truth? For you have come too near to truth to renounce it now, and you WILL yield to its compelling attraction. You can delay this now but only a little while. The host of God has called to you, and you HAVE heard. Never again will you be wholly willing not to listen.

This is a year of joy, in which your listening will increase, and peace will grow with its increase. The power of holiness and the WEAKNESS of attack have BOTH been brought into awareness. And this has been accomplished in minds firmly convinced that holiness is weakness, and attack

is power. Should not this be a sufficient miracle to teach you that your teacher is NOT of you? But remember also that, whenever you have listened to his interpretation, the results have brought you joy. Would you prefer the results of YOUR interpretation, considering honestly what they have been? God wills you better. Could you not look with greater charity on whom God loves with perfect love?

Do not interpret AGAINST God's love, for you have many witnesses which speak of it so clearly that only the blind and deaf could fail to see and hear them. This year, determine not to deny what has been given you by God, for that is the only reason he has called to you. His voice has spoken clearly, and yet you have so little faith in what you heard because you have preferred to place still greater faith in the disaster YOU have made. Today, let us resolve TOGETHER to accept the joyful tidings that disaster is not real, and that reality is not disaster.

Reality is safe and sure, and wholly kind to everyone and everything. There is no greater love than to accept this, and be glad. For love asks only that you be HAPPY, and will give you everything that makes for happiness. You have never given any problem to the Holy Spirit he has not solved for you, nor will you ever do so. You have never tried to solve anything yourself and been successful. Is it not time you brought these facts TOGETHER, and made SENSE of them?

This is the year for the APPLICATION of the ideas which have been given you. For the ideas are mighty forces, to be used and not held idly by. They have already proved their power sufficiently for you to place your faith in them, and not in their denial. This year invest in truth, and let it work in peace. Have faith in what has faith in you. Think what you have REALLY seen and heard, and RECOGNIZE it. Can you be alone with witnesses like these?

## The Reward of Teaching

You have taught well, and yet you have not learned how to ACCEPT the comfort of your teaching. If you will consider what you have taught, and how alien it is to what you thought you knew, you will be compelled to recognize that your teacher came from beyond your thought system, and so could look upon it fairly, and perceive it was untrue. And he must have done so from the basis of a very different thought system, and one with NOTHING in common with yours. For certainly what he has taught, and what you have taught through him, have nothing in common with what you taught before he came. And the results have been to bring peace where there was pain, and suffering has disappeared, to be replaced by joy.

You have taught freedom, but you have not learned how to be free. We once said, "*By their fruits ye shall know them, and they shall know themselves.*" For it is certain that you judge yourself according to your teaching. The ego's teaching produces immediate results because its decisions are immediately accepted as YOUR choice. And this acceptance means that you are willing to judge yourself accordingly. Cause and effect are very clear in the ego's thought system because all your learning has been directed towards ESTABLISHING the relationship between them. And would you not have faith in what you have so diligently taught yourself to believe? Yet remember how much care you have exerted in choosing its witnesses, and in avoiding those which spoke for the cause of truth and ITS effects.

Does not the fact that you have not learned what you have taught show you that you do not perceive the Sonship as one? And does it not also show you that you do not regard YOURSELF as one? For it is impossible to teach successfully wholly WITHOUT conviction, and it is equally impossible that conviction be OUTSIDE of you. You could never have taught freedom unless you DID believe in it. And it must be that what you taught came from YOURSELF. And yet, this self you clearly do not KNOW, and do not recognize it even though it functions. What functions must be THERE. And it is only if you deny what it has DONE that you could possibly deny its presence.

This is a course in how to know yourself. You HAVE taught what you are, but have not let what

you are teach YOU. You have been very careful to avoid the obvious, and not to see the REAL cause and effect relationship that is perfectly apparent. Yet within you is EVERYTHING you taught. What can it be that has NOT learned it? It must be this that is REALLY outside yourself, not by your own projection, but in TRUTH. And it is this that you have taken in that is NOT you. What you accept into your minds does not REALLY change them. Illusions are but beliefs in what is not there. And the seeming conflict between truth and illusion can only be resolved by separating yourself from the ILLUSION, and NOT from truth.

Your teaching has already done this, for the Holy Spirit is part of YOU. Created by God, he left neither God nor his creation. He is both God AND you, as you are God and him together. For God's answer to the separation added more to you than you tried to take away. He protected both your creations and you together, keeping one with you what you would exclude. And they will take the place of what you took in to replace them. They are quite real, as part of the self you do not know. And they communicate to you through the Holy Spirit, and their power and gratitude to you for their creation they offer gladly to your teaching of yourself, who is their home. You who are host to God are also host to them. For nothing real has ever left the mind of its Creator. And what is not real was never THERE.

You are not two selves in conflict. What is beyond God? If you who hold him and whom he holds ARE the universe, all else must be OUTSIDE, where NOTHING is. You have taught this, and from far off in the universe, yet not beyond yourself, the witnesses to your teaching have gathered to help you learn. Their gratitude has joined with yours and God's to strengthen your faith in what you taught. For what you taught is true. Alone, you stand outside your teaching and APART from it. But WITH them you must learn that you but taught YOURSELF, and learned from the conviction you shared with them.

This year you will begin to learn, and make learning commensurate with teaching. You have chosen this by your own willingness to teach. Though you seemed to suffer for it, the joy of teaching will yet be yours. For the joy of teaching

is in the LEARNER, who offers it to the teacher in gratitude, and shares it with him. As you learn, your gratitude to your self, who teaches you what he is, will grow and help you honor him. And you will learn his power and strength and purity, and love him as his father does. His kingdom has no limits and no end, and there is nothing in him that is not perfect and eternal. All this is YOU, and nothing outside of this IS you.

To your most holy self all praise is due for what you are, and for what he is who created you as you are. Sooner or later must everyone bridge the gap which he imagines exists between his selves. Each one builds this bridge, which

carries him ACROSS the gap as soon as he is willing to expend some little effort on behalf of bridging it. His little efforts are powerfully supplemented by the strength of Heaven, and by the united will of all who make Heaven what it is, being joined within it. And so the one who would cross over is literally transported there.

Your bridge is built stronger than you think, and your foot is planted firmly on it. Have no fear that the attraction of those who stand on the other side and wait for you will not draw you safely across. For you WILL come where you would be, and where your self awaits you.

## Illusion and Reality of Love

Be not afraid to look upon the special hate relationship, for freedom lies in looking at it. It would be impossible not to know the meaning of love, except for this. For the special love relationship, in which the meaning of love is LOST, is undertaken solely to offset the hate, but NOT to let it go. Your salvation will rise clearly before your open eyes as you look on this. You cannot LIMIT hate. The special love relationship will not offset it, but will merely drive it underground and out of sight. It is essential to bring it INTO sight, and to make no attempt to hide it. For it is the attempt to balance hate with love that MAKES love meaningless to you. The extent of the split that lies in this you do not realize. And UNTIL you do, the split will remain unrecognized, and therefore unhealed.

The symbols of hate against the symbols of love play out a conflict which does not exist. For symbols stand for something ELSE, and the symbol of love is without meaning if love is everything. You will go through this last undoing quite unharmed, and will at last emerge as yourself. This is the last step in the readiness for God. Be not unwilling now, you are too near, and you will cross the bridge in perfect safety, translated quietly from war to peace. For the illusion of love will NEVER satisfy, but its reality, which awaits you on the other side, will give you everything.

The special love relationship is an attempt to limit the destructive effects of hate by finding a haven in the storm of guilt. It makes no attempt

to rise ABOVE the storm, into the sunlight. On the contrary, it emphasizes guilt OUTSIDE the haven by attempting to build barricades against it, and keep within them. The special love relationship is not perceived as a value in itself, but as a place of safety from which hatred is split off, and kept apart. The special love partner is acceptable only as long as he serves this purpose. Hatred can enter, and indeed is welcome in SOME aspects of the relationship, but it is still held together by the illusion of love. If the illusion goes, the relationship is broken or becomes unsatisfying on the grounds of disillusionment.

Love is NOT an illusion. It is a fact. Where disillusionment is possible, there was not love but hate. For hate IS an illusion, and what can change was NEVER love. It is certain that those who select certain ones as partners in any aspect of living, and use them for any purpose which they would not share with others, are trying to LIVE with guilt rather than DIE of it. This is the choice they see. And love, to them, is only an escape from death. They seek it desperately, but not in the peace in which it would gladly come quietly TO them. And when they find the fear of death is still upon them, the love relationship LOSES the illusion that it is what it is not. For then the barricades against it are broken, fear rushes in and hatred triumphs.

There are no triumphs of love. Only hate is concerned with the "triumph of love" at all. The illusion of love CAN triumph over the illusion of hate, but always at the price of making BOTH il-

lusions. As long as the illusion of hatred lasts, so long will love be an illusion to you. And then the only choice which remains possible is which illusion you prefer. There IS no conflict in the choice between truth and illusion. Seen in THESE terms, no one would hesitate. But conflict enters the instant the choice seems to be one between ILLUSIONS, for this choice does not matter. Where one choice is as dangerous as the other, the decision MUST be one of despair.

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find ALL of the barriers within yourself which you have built AGAINST it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it IS necessary to seek for what is false. Every illusion is one of fear, whatever form it takes. And the attempt to escape from one illusion into another MUST fail. If you seek love outside yourself, you can be certain that you perceive hatred within and are AFRAID of it. Yet peace will never come from the illusion of love, but ONLY from its reality.

Recognize this, for it is true, and truth MUST be recognized if it is to be distinguished from illusion: the special love relationship is an attempt to bring love into fear, and make it REAL in fear. In fundamental violation of love's condition, the special love relationship would accomplish the impossible. How but in illusion COULD this be done? It is essential that we look very closely at exactly what it is you think you can do to solve the dilemma which seems very real to you, but which does not exist. You have come very close to truth, and only this stands between you and the bridge that leads you into it.

Heaven waits silently, and your creations are holding out their hands to help you cross, and welcome them. For it is THEY you SEEK. You seek but for your own completion, and it is they who render you complete. The special love relationship is but a shabby substitute for what makes you whole in truth, NOT in illusion. Your relationship with them is without guilt, and this enables you to look on all your brothers with gratitude, because your creations were created in union WITH them. Acceptance of your creations is the acceptance of the oneness of creation, without which you could never BE complete. No specialness can offer you what God has given, and what you are joined with him in giving.

Across the bridge is your completion, for you will be wholly in God, willing for nothing special,

but only to be wholly like unto him, completing him by YOUR completion. Fear not to cross to the abode of peace and perfect holiness. Only there is the completion of God and of his Son established forever. Seek not for this in the bleak world of illusion, where nothing is certain, and where everything fails to satisfy. In the name of God, be wholly willing to abandon ALL illusions. In any relationship in which you are wholly willing to accept completion, and ONLY this, there is God completed, and his son with him.

The bridge that leads to union in yourself MUST lead to knowledge, for it was built with God beside you, and will lead you straight to him, where your completion rests, wholly compatible with his. Every illusion which you accept into your mind by judging it to be attainable removes your own sense of completion, and thus denies the wholeness of your Father. Every fantasy, be it of love or hate, deprives you of knowledge, for fantasies are the veil behind which truth is hidden. To lift the veil which seems so dark and heavy, it is only needful to value truth beyond ALL fantasy, and to be entirely unwilling to settle for illusion IN PLACE of truth.

Would you not go THROUGH fear to love? For such the journey seems to be. Love calls, but hate would have you stay. Hear not the call of hate, and see no fantasies. See in the call of hate, and in every fantasy that rises to delay you, but the call for help which rises ceaselessly from you to your Creator. Would he not answer you whose completion is his? He loves you, wholly without illusion, as you must love. For love IS wholly without illusion, and therefore wholly without fear. Whom God remembers MUST be whole. And God has never forgotten what makes HIM whole. In your completion lies the memory of his wholeness, and his gratitude to you for his completion. In his link with you lie both his inability to forget, and your ability to remember. In him are joined your willingness to love, and all the love of God, who forgot you not.

Your Father can no more forget the truth in you than you can fail to remember it. The Holy Spirit is the bridge to him, made from your willingness to unite with him, and created by his joy in union with you. The journey that seemed to be endless is almost complete, for what IS endless is very near. You have almost recognized it. Turn with me firmly away from all illusions NOW, and let nothing stand in the way of truth. We will

take the last foolish journey AWAY from truth together, and then together we go straight to God, in joyous answer to his call for his completion.

If special relationships of any kind would hinder God's completion, CAN they have value to you? What would interfere with God MUST interfere with you. Only in time does interference in God's completion seem to be possible. The bridge that he would carry you across lifts you from time into eternity. Waken from time, and

answer fearlessly the call of him who gave eternity to you in your creation. On this side of the bridge to timelessness you understand nothing. But as you step lightly across it, upheld BY timelessness, you are directed straight to the heart of God. At its center, and ONLY there, you are safe forever, because you are COMPLETE forever. There is no veil the love of God in us together cannot lift. The way to truth is open. Follow it with me.

## Specialness and Guilt

In looking at the special relationship, it is necessary first to realize that it involves a great amount of pain. Anxiety, despair, guilt and attack all enter into it, broken into by periods in which they SEEM to be gone. All these must be understood for what they are. Whatever form they take, they are always an attack on the self to make the OTHER guilty. We have spoken of this before, but there are some aspects of what is really being attempted that we have not touched upon.

Very simply, the attempt to make guilty is ALWAYS directed against God. For the ego would have you see him, and him ALONE, as guilty, leaving the Sonship open to attack, and unprotected from it. The special love relationship is the ego's chief weapon for keeping you from Heaven. It does not APPEAR to be a weapon, but if you consider HOW you value it and WHY, you will realize what it must be. The special love relationship is the ego's most boasted gift, and one which has the most appeal to those unwilling to relinquish guilt. The "dynamics" of the ego are clearest here, for counting on the attraction of this offering, the fantasies which center around it are often quite open. Here they are usually judged to be acceptable, and even natural. No one considers it bizarre to love and hate together, and even those who believe that hate is sin merely feel guilty, and do not correct it.

This IS the "natural" condition of the separation, and those who learn that it is not natural at all seem to be the UNNATURAL ones. For this world IS the opposite of Heaven, being MADE to be its opposite, and everything here takes a direction exactly opposite of what is true. In Heaven, where the meaning of love is known, love is

the same as UNION. Here, where the illusion of love is accepted in love's place, love is perceived as separation and EXCLUSION.

It is in the special relationship, born of the hidden wish for special love from God, that the ego's hatred triumphs. For the special relationship is the RENUNCIATION of the love of God, and the attempt to secure for the self the specialness which he denied. It is essential to the preservation of the ego that you believe this specialness is not hell, but Heaven. For the ego would never have you see that separation can ONLY be loss, being the one condition in which Heaven CANNOT be.

To everyone Heaven is completion. There can be no disagreement on this, because both the ego and the Holy Spirit accept it. They are, however, in COMPLETE disagreement on what completion IS, and HOW it is accomplished. The Holy Spirit knows that completion lies first in union, and then in the extension of union. To the ego, completion lies in triumph, and in the extension of the "victory" even to the final triumph over God. In this it sees the ultimate freedom of the self, for nothing would remain to interfere with IT. This IS its idea of Heaven. From this it follows that union, which is a condition in which the ego CANNOT interfere, MUST be hell.

The special relationship is a strange and unnatural ego device for joining hell and Heaven, and making them indistinguishable. And the attempt to find the imagined "best" of both worlds has merely led to fantasies of both, and to the inability to perceive either one as it is. The special relationship is the triumph of this confusion. It is a kind of union from which union is EXCLUDED,

and the basis for the ATTEMPT at union rests on exclusion. What better example could there be of the ego's maxim, "seek but do not find?"

Most curious of all is the concept of the self which the ego fosters in the special relationship. This "self" seeks the relationship to make itself complete. Yet when it FINDS the special relationship in which it thinks it can accomplish this, it gives itself AWAY, and tries to "trade" itself for the self of another. This is not union, for there is no increase and no extension. Each partner tries to sacrifice the self he does not want for one he thinks he would prefer. And he feels guilty for the "sin" of taking, and of giving nothing of value in return. For how much value CAN he place upon a self that he would give away to get a better one?

The "better" self the ego seeks is always one that is MORE special. And whoever seems to possess a special self is "loved" for what can be taken FROM him. Where both partners see this special self in each other, the ego sees "a union made in Heaven." For neither one will recognize that he has asked for hell, and so he will not interfere with the ego's illusion of Heaven, which it offered him to INTERFERE with Heaven. Yet if all illusions are of fear, and they CAN be of nothing else, the illusion of Heaven is nothing more than an "attractive" form of fear, in which the guilt is buried deep, and rises in the form of "love."

The appeal of hell lies only in the terrible attraction of guilt, which the ego holds out to those who place their faith in littleness. The conviction of littleness lies in EVERY special relationship, for only the deprived could VALUE specialness. The demand for specialness, and the perception of the giving of specialness as an act of love, would make love HATEFUL. And the real purpose of the special relationship, in strict accordance with the ego's goals, is to destroy reality and substitute illusion. For the ego is ITSELF an illusion, and only illusions CAN be the witnesses to its "reality."

If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you WANT it? Let us not think of its fearful nature, nor of the guilt it must entail, nor of the sadness and the loneliness. For these are only attributes of the whole religion of the separation, and of the total context in which it is thought to occur. The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so YOU can live. And it is this theme which is acted out in

the special relationship. Through the death of YOUR self, you think you can attack another self, and snatch it from the other to replace the self which you despise. And you despise it because you do not think it offers the specialness which you demand. And HATING it, you have made it little and unworthy because you are AFRAID of it.

How can you grant unlimited power to what you think you have attacked? So fearful has the truth become to you that UNLESS it is weak and little, you would not dare to look upon it. You think it safer to endow the little self which you have made with power you WRESTED from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless. See how EXACTLY is this ritual enacted in the special relationship. An altar is erected in between two separate people on which each seeks to kill his self, and on his body raise another self which takes its power from his death. Over and over and over this ritual is enacted. And it is NEVER completed, nor ever WILL be completed. For the ritual of completion CANNOT complete, and life arises not from death, nor Heaven from hell.

Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is CONTENT, and not form of ANY kind. The special relationship is a RITUAL of form, aimed at the raising of the form to take the place of God at the EXPENSE of content. There IS no meaning in the form, and there will never be. The special relationship must be recognized for what it is - a senseless ritual, in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in his killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning. Would you WANT this to be possible, even apart from its evident impossibility? For if it WERE possible, you would have made YOURSELF helpless. God is not angry. He merely could not let this happen. You CANNOT change his mind.

No rituals that you have set up, in which the dance of death delights you, can bring death to the eternal. Nor can your chosen substitute for the wholeness of God have any influence at all upon it. See in the special relationship nothing more than a meaningless attempt to raise other gods before him, and by worshipping them, to obscure THEIR tininess and his GREATNESS. In the name of your completion, you do not WANT this. For every idol which you raise to place before him stands before YOU, in place of what you ARE.

Salvation lies in the simple fact that illusions are not fearful because they are not TRUE. They but seem to be fearful to the extent to which you fail to recognize them for what they are, and you WILL fail to do this to the extent to which you WANT them to be true. And to the same extent you are DENYING truth, and so are making yourself unable to make the simple choice between truth and illusion, God and fantasy. Remember this, and you will have no difficulty in perceiving the decision as just what it IS, and nothing more.

The core of the separation delusion lies simply in the FANTASY of destruction of love's meaning. And unless love's meaning is RESTORED to you, you cannot know yourself who SHARE its meaning. Separation is only the decision NOT to know yourself. Its whole thought system is a carefully contrived learning experience, de-

signed to lead AWAY from truth and into fantasy. Yet for every learning that would hurt you, God offers you correction and complete escape from ALL its consequences. The decision whether or not to listen to this course and follow it is but the choice between truth and illusion. For here is truth, SEPARATED from illusion, and not confused with it at all.

How simple does this choice become when it is perceived as only what it is. For ONLY fantasies made confusion in choosing possible, and they are totally unreal. This year is thus the time to make the easiest decision that ever confronted you, and also the ONLY one. You will cross the bridge into reality simply because you will recognize that God is on the other side and nothing AT ALL is here. It is impossible NOT to make the natural decision as this is realized.

## The Bridge to the Real World

The search for the special relationship is the sign that you equate yourself with the ego, and not with God. For the special relationship has value ONLY to the ego. To the ego UNLESS a relationship has special value it has NO meaning, and it perceives ALL love as special. Yet this CANNOT be natural, for it is unlike the relationship of God and his son, and all relationships that are unlike this one MUST be unnatural. For God created love as he would have it be, and gave it as it IS. Love has no meaning except as its Creator defined it by his will. It is impossible to define it otherwise and UNDERSTAND it.

Love is FREEDOM. To look for it by placing yourself in bondage is to SEPARATE yourself from it. For the love of God, no longer seek for union in separation, nor for freedom in bondage! As you release, so will you be released. Forget this not, or love will be unable to find you and comfort you. There is a way in which the Holy Spirit asks your help, if you would have his. The holy instant is his most helpful tool in protecting you from the attraction of guilt, the real lure in the special relationship. You do not recognize that this IS its real appeal, for the ego has taught you that FREEDOM lies in it. Yet the closer you look

at the special relationship, the more apparent it becomes that it MUST foster guilt and therefore MUST imprison.

The special relationship is totally without meaning without a body. And if you value it, you must ALSO value the body. And what you value you WILL keep. The special relationship is a device for limiting your self to a body, and for limiting your perception of others to THEIRS. The great rays would establish the total LACK of value of the special relationship, if they were seen. For in seeing them, the body would disappear because its VALUE would be lost. And so your whole investment in seeing it would be withdrawn from it. You see the world you VALUE.

On this side of the bridge, you see the world of separate bodies, seeking to join each other in separate unions, and to become one by losing. When TWO individuals seek to become one, they are trying to DECREASE their magnitude. Each would deny his power, for the SEPARATE union excludes the universe. Far more is left outside than would be taken in. For God is left without, and NOTHING taken in. If ONE such union were made in perfect faith, the universe WOULD enter

into it. Yet the special relationship which the ego seeks does not include even one whole individual. For the ego wants but PART of him, and sees ONLY this part and nothing else.

Across the bridge, it is so different! For a time the body is still seen, but not exclusively, as it is seen here. For the little spark which holds the great rays within it is ALSO visible, and this spark cannot be limited long to littleness. Once you have crossed the bridge, the value of the body is so diminished in your sight, that you will see no need at all to magnify it. For you will realize that the only value which the body has is to enable you to bring your brothers to the bridge WITH you, and to be released TOGETHER there.

The bridge itself is nothing more than a transition in your perspective of reality. On this side, everything you see is grossly distorted and completely out of perspective. What is little and insignificant is magnified, and what is strong and powerful cut down to littleness. In the transition there is a period of confusion, in which a sense of actual disorientation seems to occur. But fear it not, for it means nothing more than that you have been willing to let go your hold on the distorted frame of reference which seemed to hold your world together. This frame of reference is built around the special relationship. WITHOUT this illusion, there can BE no meaning you would still seek here.

Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality. Time is kind, and if you use it FOR reality, it will keep gentle pace with you in your transition. The urgency is only in dislodging your minds from their fixed position here. This will not leave you homeless, and without a frame of reference. The period of disorientation, which precedes the actual transition, is far shorter than the time it took to fix your minds so firmly on illusions. Delay will hurt you now more than before, only because you realize it IS delay, and that escape from pain is really possible. Find hope and comfort, rather than despair, in this: you could no longer find even the ILLUSION of love in any special relationship here. For you are no longer wholly insane, and you would recognize the guilt of self-betrayal for what it IS.

Nothing you seek to strengthen in the special relationship is REALLY part of you. And you cannot keep part of the thought system which taught you it was real, and understand the thought that REALLY knows what you are. You HAVE allowed the thought of your reality to enter your minds, and because you invited it, it WILL abide with you. Your love for it will not allow you to betray yourself, and you could not enter into a relationship where it could not go with you, for you would not BE apart from it.

Be glad you have escaped the mockery of salvation which the ego offered you, and look not back with longing on the travesty it made of your relationships. Now no one need suffer, for you have come too far to yield to the illusion of the beauty and holiness of guilt. Only the wholly insane could look on death and suffering, sickness and despair, and see it thus. What guilt has wrought is ugly, fearful and very dangerous. See no illusion of truth and beauty there. And be you thankful that there IS a place where truth and beauty wait for you. Go on to meet them gladly, and learn how much awaits you for the simple willingness to give up nothing BECAUSE it is nothing.

The new perspective you will gain from crossing over will be the understanding of where Heaven IS. From here, it seems to be outside and across the bridge. Yet as you cross to join it, it will join with YOU and become one with you. And you will think, in glad astonishment, that for all this you gave up NOTHING! The joy of Heaven, which has no limit, is increased with each light that returns to take its rightful place within it. Wait no longer, for the love of God and YOU. And may the holy instant speed you on the way, as it will surely do if you but let it come to you.

The Holy Spirit asks only this little help of you. Whenever your thoughts wander to a special relationship which still attracts you, enter with him into a holy instant, and there let him release you. He needs only your willingness to SHARE his perspective to give it to you completely. And your willingness need not be complete because HIS is perfect. It is his task to atone for your unwillingness by his perfect faith, and

it is his faith you share with him there. Out of your recognition of your unwillingness for your release, his PERFECT willingness is given you. Call

upon him, for Heaven is at his call. And LET him call on Heaven FOR you.

## The End of Illusions

It is impossible to let the past go without relinquishing the special relationship. For the special relationship is an attempt to RE-ENACT the past and CHANGE it. Imagined slights, remembered pain, past disappointments, perceived injustices and deprivations all enter into the special relationship, which becomes a way in which you seek to restore your wounded self-esteem. What basis would you have for choosing a special partner WITHOUT the past? Every such choice is made because of something "evil" in the past, to which you cling, and for which must someone else atone.

The special relationship TAKES VENGEANCE on the past. By seeking to remove suffering in the past, it OVERLOOKS the present in its preoccupation with the past and its total commitment to it. NO special relationship is experienced in the present. Shades of the past envelop it, and make it what it is. It HAS no meaning in the present, and if it means nothing NOW, it cannot have any real meaning at all. How can you change the past EXCEPT in fantasy? And who can give you what you think the past deprived you of? The past is nothing. Do not seek to lay the blame for deprivation on it, for the past is gone. You cannot really NOT let go what has ALREADY gone. It must be, therefore, that you are maintaining the illusion that it has NOT gone because you think it serves some purpose that you want FULFILLED. And it must also be that this purpose could NOT be fulfilled in the present, but ONLY in the past.

Do not underestimate the intensity of the ego's drive for vengeance on the past. It is completely savage and completely insane. For the ego remembers everything that you have done which offended it, and seeks retribution of YOU. The fantasies it brings to the special relationships it chooses in which to act out its hate are fantasies of YOUR destruction. For the ego holds the past AGAINST you, and in your ESCAPE from the past, it sees itself deprived of the vengeance it believes that you so justly merit. Yet without

your alliance in your own destruction, the ego could not hold you to the past.

In the special relationship, you are ALLOWING your destruction to be. That this is insane is obvious. But what is less obvious to you is that the PRESENT is useless to you while you pursue the ego's goal as its ally. The past is gone, seek not to preserve it in the special relationship which binds you to it, and would teach you that salvation is past, and that you must return TO the past to find salvation. There is no fantasy which does not contain the dream of retribution for the past. Would you act out the dream, or let it go?

In the special relationship, it does not SEEM to be an acting out of vengeance which you seek. And even when the hatred and the savagery break briefly through into awareness, the illusion of love is not profoundly shaken. Yet the one thing which the ego never allows to reach awareness is that the special relationship is the acting out of vengeance on YOURSELF. But what else COULD it be? In seeking the special relationship, you look not for glory in YOURSELF. You have denied that it is THERE, and the relationship becomes your SUBSTITUTE for it. And vengeance becomes your substitute for atonement, and the ESCAPE from vengeance becomes your LOSS.

Against the ego's insane notion of salvation the Holy Spirit gently lays the holy instant. We said before that the Holy Spirit must teach through comparisons, and uses opposites to point to truth. The holy instant is the OPPOSITE of the ego's fixed belief in salvation through vengeance for the past. In the holy instant, it is accepted that the past is gone, and with its passing the drive for vengeance has been uprooted, and has disappeared. The stillness and the peace of NOW enfolds you in perfect gentleness. Everything is gone except the truth.

For a time, you may attempt to bring illusions into the holy instant to hinder your full awareness of the COMPLETE difference, in all respects, between your experience of truth and illusion.

Yet you will not attempt this long. In the holy instant, the power of the Holy Spirit will prevail because you JOINED him. The illusions you bring with you will weaken the experience of him for a while, and will prevent you from keeping the experience in your mind. Yet the holy instant IS eternal, and your illusions of time will not prevent the timeless from being what it is, nor you from experiencing it as it is.

What God has given you is truly given, and will be truly RECEIVED. For God's gifts HAVE no reality apart from your receiving them. YOUR receiving completes his GIVING. You will receive BECAUSE it is his will to give. He gave the holy instant to be given you, and it is impossible that you receive it not BECAUSE he gave it. When he willed that his son be free, his son WAS free. In the holy instant is his reminder that his son will always be EXACTLY as he was created. And everything the Holy Spirit teaches you is to remind you that you HAVE received what God has given you.

There is nothing you can hold against reality. All that must be forgiven are the illusions you have held against your brothers. Their reality HAS no past, and only illusions can BE forgiven. God holds nothing against anyone, for he is incapable of illusions of ANY kind. Release your brothers from the slavery of their illusions by forgiving them for the illusions which YOU perceive in them. Thus will you learn that YOU have been forgiven, for it is YOU who offered them illusions. In the holy instant this is done for you IN TIME, to bring to you the true condition of Heaven.

Remember that you always choose between truth and illusion, between the REAL atonement

which would heal and the ego's "atonement" which would destroy. The power of God and all his love, without limit, will support you as you seek only your place in the plan of atonement arising from his love. Be an ally of God and not the ego in seeking how atonement can come to you. His help suffices, for his messenger understands how to restore the kingdom to you, and to place ALL your investment in salvation in your relationship with him.

Seek and FIND his message in the holy instant, where all illusions are forgiven. From there the miracle extends to bless everyone and to resolve all problems, be they perceived as great or small, possible or impossible. There is nothing that will not give place to him and to his majesty. To join in close relationship with him is to accept relationships as REAL, and through their reality to give over all illusions for the reality of your relationship with God. Praise be to your relationship with him, and to no other. The truth lies here, and nowhere else. You choose this or NOTHING.

*"Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with you, in which there are no illusions, and where none can ever enter. Our holiness is yours. What can there be in us that NEEDS forgiveness when yours is perfect? The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember your forgiveness and your love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not your will. And let us receive only what YOU have given, and accept but this into the minds which you created, and which you love. Amen."*

