

September 11, 2000

- *The nature of God*
- *Evil is a part of creation*
- *Corporate prayer and meditation*

You are blessed by God's ever-present love. You are blessed by the energy that emits from God's presence, and you are empowered by that presence to become sources of great love energy, compassion energy, prayerful energy, sacrificing energy, giving energy. All of these forms of energy describe in a small way the nature of God.

It is always helpful for human beings to imagine a God that takes on human characteristics, but we see God in a far different light. It is not necessary to imagine God as a human being. The history of religious art has involved "how does one depict God." For some, it is felt improper to have anything that depicts God, for by trying to give God human characteristics, you are limiting the very concept of God. There are countless other religions that have tried to depict God in one kind of human form or another, insisting that God takes on human personalities of love, anger, vengeance. But God is not a god of vengeance, God is not a being surrounded by anger. God is beyond human descriptions of ideal relationships with others. To say that God is compassionate limits the power of God, for compassion in the minds of human beings is limited. You cannot conceive of compassion unless you accept the existence of a lack of compassion, and in God, those characteristics are so all pervasive in their power and presence that indeed there are no limits.

If one draws a picture defining an interpretation of God, that shaping of God creates a distinction between what is God and what is not God. But such is not the character of God. God's presence has no defining pitch. It is a power, it is a force, it is a presence that envelops everything. There is nothing that can be described that is not a part of the creation and the creator as a single unit. Nothing lies outside that which has been created nor that which creates. God is the Creator, but God is also What Has Been Created. There is no distinction. Just as we explained there is no real space and there is no differentiation in time, there is actually no distinction between the Creator and What Has Been Created. All are extensions of a single unit.

You are all equal, as you know, and as has been explained you are equal because each of you contains a spark of the Creator. That Which Has Been Created is a part of the Creator. It is God the Creator and the Created which ensures the unity of everything. The stone is part of God. It may not think, but it is a part of God's creation. Any inanimate object is as equally a part of the creation as you are. You have a soul; a stone does not, but a stone is no less significant for lack of a soul. You have a soul; it makes you unique, but it also helps you to see the bond connecting all of creation. It is not an exaggeration to say you, each of you, are God. It is an undeniable truth.

September 11, 2000

But if God is perfect and you see so much imperfection in the world, how can imperfection be God? The truth is God creates everything, and as part of that creation there will be differences. There are differences in appearance between individuals. There are differences in opinions. There are differences in philosophies. There are differences in health, in age, in geographic location, in color, in beliefs. The garden has many varieties, but it is still a garden. There are many varieties to creation because there are many varieties of what has been created, but all that has been created is a part of God and serves a purpose.

Conflict serves a purpose because human beings grow through resolution. Illness serves a purpose because human beings grow in their ability to accept imperfection—imperfection in their own bodies as well as imperfection of the behavior of others. Suffering brings about an appreciation for what it means to be free of suffering. It is because of the darkness that the sun is so bright. Without the darkness, the sun loses its importance. It loses its identity. The presence of suffering makes one appreciate the gifts of health. What a blessing it is to feel healthy! What a blessing it is to have health at whatever level of completeness!

All that has been created, the good and the bad, are part of this total creation. They are part of God. Evil is a part of God's creation. It is not the purpose of God, but it has been created by God, and it is because of evil that one learns justice, that one learns love, that one learns peace. Without evil, how is good to be understood? Without hatred and animosity, how can love be given value? Without the night, what good is the light?

So you are all God. Each of you is godly. Every human being who has lived, every human being that shall live is a creation of God. Because of that creation, no one is entirely evil. You can name individuals who are associated with great suffering being inflicted upon others, but those individuals who caused the suffering are also a part of God's creation. There is really nothing that separates any of you from any part of this creation.

So God is not a figure with human attributes, but it is very understandable that human beings apply those attributes to God because it is a way of understanding God. Because you are all One, because all that has been created is actually a part of the Creator, there is no need for time and space.

The question was raised about further explaining corporate prayer and meditation. Is it more helpful when many pray at the same moment than it is when many people simply pray? The answer is no. In truth, there is no difference. However, for humankind there is a greater sense of unity, a greater sense of identity and shared purpose if it is organized in such a way that you perceive it to be done simultaneously rather than just continuously. Thinking of simultaneity, you multiply your commitment to that for which you pray, and as your commitment feels stronger, you create more energy. If you can feel the same commitment to the benefit of prayer, each of you praying as you can, when you can, there is no change in the outcome. But it is most human to feel that there is benefit

September 11, 2000

to community, and it is that sense of identity with community which keeps the task at hand in one's mind. It is a way of disciplining yourselves, reminding yourselves of the value of what it is you are doing, namely praying for someone or something. It is therefore of benefit to you, but it is not specifically a benefit toward the object of your prayers merely because you are praying at the same moment.

There is no such thing as time, and therefore when you are gathered in intent to pray, it is the same regardless of what a clock may say. We are not skirting the question, but we are trying to impress upon you the relationship between a lack of real time and your spiritual efforts on behalf of others. Prayer is prayer. Many prayers are many prayers. We don't speak of distance, we don't speak of specific time. Corporate prayer is valuable because you are all praying. That is certainly better than no one praying. Bringing people together to pray ensures that the people who are together pray. That is the effect of corporate worship. It focuses your attention on the same goal. You are gathered together in this room for the purpose of directing your thoughts and prayers to God. For some of you, this is a frequent activity anyway; for others, considerably less frequent. Being together brings you all to that place in your lives when you pray. That's essential.

One of you asks about hearing the sounds of creation. In fact, one is not hearing the sounds of creation for creation has no sound. But one is aware when one is quiet that life exists outside the body. One is also aware of the life of the body—the nerves that generate sound, the body that generates sound. Your body is a part of that creation, so in a sense you are hearing the universe, you are hearing creation because you are part of it.

It is equally true that when you turn to your neighbor, you are looking into the eyes of God. You may not always see your neighbor as being godly, but that is God whom you see. It is God to whom you speak, and when you speak with hatred, you are speaking against the Creator and Creation.

You have significant knowledge of what it means to live in the Spirit, to live in the presence of God. The difficulty is not in the knowledge that you have but in its application. You must be patient with yourselves, but you must also be persistent. The view of God does not come easily. The picture of God will always be incomplete. Those religions that say, "You cannot depict God, and therefore you will not depict God," understand in a profound way the absolute truth of the inability to put a line around God and say, "This is God; that is not God." It cannot be done. For those religions that welcome a depiction of God, it is with the hope that such artwork will bring one to a closer identity with the Creator, and that of course has great merit. You see, both approaches to defining God are very different yet entirely valid. One approach cannot look upon the other as being fool-hearty or ignorant or misguided. Both are valid. It is yet another example of how you are all the same, of how you belong to a single unit.

When you reach the next level of your spiritual lives, you will see God, but you will see God as an energy, as a force, as a power, as a feeling that cannot be defined in any

September 11, 2000

literate manner. For now, it is sufficient to imagine God as you wish if it brings you a sense of identity and if it gives you a sense of direction. God *is* love—wholly love, not just partial. God is not vindictive because that is the antithesis of love. It comes at great cost—there is no room for that in God.

Your lives should reflect a sense of absolute unity with one another and with your entire universe, as you are aware of it.

Take care of God.

Take care of yourselves.

Take care of your neighbor.

Take care of nature.

Take care of what breathes and exchanges oxygen and carbon dioxide.

Take care of all that does not exchange those substances.

Take care of what is green and what is clear.

Take care of your thoughts, for they are as real as the stones that you see.

Take care of your prayers that they be directed at the elevation of all creation.

We bless you with that care. We empower you with that care and love.

Amen.