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IV. The Two Pictures

T-17.IV.1. God established His relationship with you to make you happy, and nothing you do that does not share His purpose can be real. 2 The purpose God ascribed to anything is its only function. 3 Because of His reason for creating His relationship with you, the function of relationships became forever "to make happy." 4 *And nothing else*. 5 To fulfill this function you relate to your creations as God to His. 6 For nothing God created is apart from happiness, and nothing God created but would extend happiness as its Creator did. 7 Whatever does not fulfill this function cannot be real.

T-17.IV.2. In this world it is impossible to create. 2 Yet it *is* possible to make happy. 3 I have said repeatedly that the Holy Spirit would not deprive you of your special relationships, but would transform them. 4 And all that is meant by that is that He will

restore to them the function given them by God. 5 The function you have given them is clearly not to make happy. 6 But the holy relationship shares God's purpose, rather than aiming to make a substitute for it. 7 Every special relationship you have made is a substitute for God's Will, and glorifies yours instead of His because of the illusion that they are different.

T-17.IV.3. You have made very real relationships even in this world. 2 Yet you do not recognize them because you have raised their substitutes to such predominance that, when truth calls to you, as it does constantly, you answer with a substitute. 3 Every special relationship you have made has, as its fundamental purpose, the aim of occupying your mind so completely that you will not hear the call of truth.

T-17.IV.4. In a sense, the special relationship was the ego's answer to the creation of the Holy Spirit, Who was God's Answer to the separation. 2 For although the ego did not understand what had been created, it was aware of threat. 3 The whole defense system the ego evolved to protect the separation from the Holy Spirit was in response to the gift with which God blessed it, and by His blessing enabled it to be healed. 4 This blessing holds within itself the truth about everything. 5 And the truth is that the Holy Spirit is in close relationship with you, because in Him is your relationship with God restored to you. 6 The relationship with Him has never been broken, because the Holy Spirit has not been separate from anyone since the separation. 7 And through Him have all your holy relationships been carefully preserved, to serve God's purpose for you.

T-17.IV.5. The ego is always alert to threat, and the part of your mind into which the ego was accepted is very anxious to preserve its reason, as it sees it. 2 It does not realize that it is totally insane. 3 And you must realize just what this means if you would be restored to sanity. 4 The insane protect their thought systems, but they do so insanely. 5 And all their defenses are as insane as what they are supposed to protect. 6 The separation has nothing in it, no part, no "reason," and no attribute that is not insane. 7 And its "protection" is part of it, as insane as the whole. 8 The special relationship, which is its chief defense, must therefore be insane.

T-17.IV.6. You have but little difficulty now in realizing that the thought system the special relationship protects is but a system of delusions. 2 You recognize, at least in general terms, that the ego is insane. 3 Yet the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different." 4 Yet we have looked at it far closer than we have at many other aspects of the ego's thought system that you have been more willing to let go. 5 While this one remains, you will not let the others go. 6 For this one is not different. 7 Retain this one, and you have retained the whole.

T-17.IV.7. It is essential to realize that all defenses *do* what they would defend. 2 The underlying basis for their effectiveness is that they offer what they defend. 3 What they defend is placed in them for safe-keeping, and as they operate they bring it to you. 4 Every defense operates by giving gifts, and the gift is always a miniature of the thought system the defense protects, set in a golden frame. 5 The frame is very elaborate, all set with jewels, and deeply carved and polished. 6 Its purpose is to be of value *in itself*, and to divert your attention from what it encloses. 7 But the frame without the picture you

cannot have. 8 Defenses operate to make you think you can.

T-17.IV.8. The special relationship has the most imposing and deceptive frame of all the defenses the ego uses. 2 Its thought system is offered here, surrounded by a frame so heavy and so elaborate that the picture is almost obliterated by its imposing structure. 3 Into the frame are woven all sorts of fanciful and fragmented illusions of love, set with dreams of sacrifice and self-aggrandizement, and interlaced with gilded threads of self-destruction. 4 The glitter of blood shines like rubies, and the tears are faceted like diamonds and gleam in the dim light in which the offering is made.

T-17.IV.9. Look at the *picture*. 2 Do not let the frame distract you. 3 This gift is given you for your damnation, and if you take it you will believe that you *are* damned. 4 You cannot have the frame without the picture. 5 What you value is the frame, for there you see no conflict. 6 Yet the frame is only the wrapping for the gift of conflict. 7 The frame is not the gift. 8 Be not deceived by the most superficial aspects of this thought system, for these aspects enclose the whole, complete in every aspect. 9 Death lies in this glittering gift. 10 Let not your gaze dwell on the hypnotic gleaming of the frame. 11 Look at the picture, and realize that death is offered you.

T-17.IV.10. That is why the holy instant is so important in the defense of truth. 2 The truth itself needs no defense, but you do need defense against your acceptance of the gift of death. 3 When you who are truth accept an idea so dangerous to truth, you threaten truth with destruction. 4 And your defense must now be undertaken, to keep truth whole. 5 The power of Heaven, the Love of God, the tears of Christ, and the joy of His eternal Spirit are marshalled to defend you from your own attack. 6 For you attack Them, being part of Them, and They must save you, for They love Themselves.

T-17.IV.11. The holy instant is a miniature of Heaven, sent you *from* Heaven. 2 It is a picture, too, set in a frame. 3 Yet if you accept this gift you will not see the frame at all, because the gift can only be accepted through your willingness to focus all your attention on the picture. 4 The holy instant is a miniature of eternity. 5 It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time. 6 If you focus on the picture, you will realize that it was only the frame that made you think it *was* a picture. 7 Without the frame, the picture is seen as what it represents. 8 For as the whole thought system of the ego lies in its gifts, so the whole of Heaven lies in this instant, borrowed from eternity and set in time for you.

T-17.IV.12. Two gifts are offered you. 2 Each is complete, and cannot be partially accepted. 3 Each is a picture of all that you can have, seen very differently. 4 You cannot compare their value by comparing a picture to a frame. 5 It must be the pictures only that you compare, or the comparison is wholly without meaning. 6 Remember that it is the picture that is the gift. 7 And only on this basis are you really free to choose. 8 Look at the pictures. 9 Both of them. 10 One is a tiny picture, hard to see at all beneath the heavy shadows of its enormous and disproportionate enclosure. 11 The other is lightly framed and hung in light, lovely to look upon for what it is.

T-17.IV.13. You who have tried so hard, and are still trying, to fit the better picture into the wrong frame and so combine what cannot be combined, accept this and be glad:

These pictures are each framed perfectly for what they represent. 2 One is framed to be out of focus and not seen. 3 The other is framed for perfect clarity. 4 The picture of darkness and of death grows less convincing as you search it out amid its wrappings. 5 As each senseless stone that seems to shine from the frame in darkness is exposed to light, it becomes dull and lifeless, and ceases to distract you from the picture. 6 And finally you look upon the picture itself, seeing at last that, unprotected by the frame, it has no meaning.

T-17.IV.14. The other picture is lightly framed, for time cannot contain eternity. 2 There is no distraction here. 3 The picture of Heaven and eternity grows more convincing as you look at it. 4 And now, by real comparison, a transformation of both pictures can at last occur. 5 And each is given its rightful place when both are seen in relation to each other. 6 The dark picture, brought to light, is not perceived as fearful, but the fact that it is just a picture is brought home at last. 7 And what you see there you will recognize as what it is; a picture of what you thought was real, and nothing more. 8 For beyond this picture you will see nothing.

T-17.IV.15. The picture of light, in clear-cut and unmistakable contrast, is transformed into what lies beyond the picture. 2 As you look on this, you realize that it is not a picture, but a reality. 3 This is no figured representation of a thought system, but the Thought itself. 4 What it represents is there. 5 The frame fades gently and God rises to your remembrance, offering you the whole of creation in exchange for your little picture, wholly without value and entirely deprived of meaning.

T-17.IV.16. As God ascends into His rightful place and you to yours, you will experience again the meaning of relationship and know it to be true. 2 Let us ascend in peace together to the Father, by giving Him ascendance in our minds. 3 We will gain everything by giving Him the power and the glory, and keeping no illusions of where they are. 4 They are in us, through His ascendance. 5 What He has given is His. 6 It shines in every part of Him, as in the whole. 7 The whole reality of your relationship with Him lies in our relationship to one another. 8 The holy instant shines alike on all relationships, for in it they *are* one. 9 For here is only healing, already complete and perfect. 10 For here is God, and where He is only the perfect and complete can be.

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