

Written by Dannye Williamsen in response to a minister request on the ministers' forum 11/2004. It was used to answer a question from a congregant about dealing with her daughter's questions about Unity.

Dear One,

Rather than try to explain the differences between our faiths since I am not schooled in your beliefs, let me try to explain the basic beliefs underlying Unity.

We believe that God is omnipresent, that is, there is nothing outside of God. When God created the heavens and the earth, He used Himself as the substance for that creation because there is nothing outside of or competing with God. When we were made in the image and likeness of God, we, too, were formed from the substance that is God, but this creation - that is, the human being - was one He chose to make in His image and likeness. This means that he imbued us with his nature, which is creative. Therefore we are creative beings, and we are part of God.

When you look at your little finger, do you consider it separate from you? Of course not. It is part of the being you call by your name. However, it is not the sum total of you. It is simply a functioning part of you. None of us is the sum total of God, but each of us is a functioning part of the consciousness we call God.

In Unity we believe that we are "spiritual beings having a human experience." While in this human experience, we are subject to the duality. The duality is a mistaken belief that we are separate from God. It is sometimes referred to as the veil that separates the physical world from the non-physical. Because of this belief we justify living our lives here in this physical experience according to the rules of the world. In other words, we believe that we are instead "human beings having spiritual experiences."

The earth is a planet of lesson, however, and it constantly offers us opportunities to use the free will which we have been given to make choices that can lead us back to a truer understanding of what it means to be made in the image and likeness. The duality or belief in separation has created the fear and guilt upon which many religions are based as well as the extreme competitiveness and pettiness in our society. It has created the attention to differences between you and your neighbors. Although it may not seem a good thing, the existence of the duality is extremely important in our human experience.

Why? Because it offers the contrast necessary to cause us to seek our spiritual roots. Of course I am not talking about religious roots. No other man can determine your personal relationship with God. Because you are an expression of God, a part of God, there are no rules that can condemn you. Why do you think there is such a feeling of going home attached to leaving this physical experience? It is because we know that once we leave the duality of this physical expression, we will consciously return to the stream of consciousness we call God, and all of the worldly things that seemed so important will become no more than they ever were - opportunities to grow into a greater awareness of our oneness with God.

Finally, none of us believes that we are God in the ego-centered way that this is generally stated. We are simply trying to be all that we have the capacity to be while in this physical expression, and as Jesus instructed - if we treat ourselves and our relationship with God in the way he showed us, "the works that I do shall [you] do also; and greater works than these shall [you] do." It is our creative birthright.

Another very important element of our beliefs is that every one has their own path to God. We do not condemn anyone for the path they choose. It is always the right path for them because they chose it. Each of us has the right without judgment by others to make whatever choices make sense to us on our spiritual journey. So we are supportive of everyone's right to their beliefs and hope others will respect our rights as well.

Another point is about the issue of authority. Because we believe that each individual is responsible for the choices in his or her life and the resultant experiences because we are creative beings, we do not see God as "acting on us." Instead, we see God as "acting through us." That means that there are certain immutable principles in the Universe, such as the Law of Attraction which brings to us that upon which we focus all our attention whether it is good or bad for us. These laws are always functioning, but they are impersonal. It is our choices that direct the laws. In other words, if you are constantly worrying about not having enough money, the Law of Attraction, works with you to bring you the focus of your attention - poverty. If you decided to put your trust in prosperity, it would bring you prosperity. So the Law or God is not acting on you or making the choices for you. YOU are making the choices. God simply unfolds it for you. There would be no point in free will if this were not true. That is why we do not accept for ourselves the attitude that "the Devil made me do it!"

In Unity we do not support the idea that "It's God's Will" when something we call bad happens. We believe that it was simply the working out of the desires of the individuals involved. When something horrific happens, this is hard to swallow. But, because we believe that we are spiritual beings who are just having a human experience, we believe that sacrifices are made on other levels of consciousness by some persons because they chose to serve the needs of another in this human experience. This is extremely difficult to process while using a finite mind, but the knowledge that we are more than this finite mind - that we are a part of God - offers us a slightly different vantage point.

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