

“The Last Step”

(T-6.VIII)

The ego demands reciprocal rights

The ego demands reciprocal rights, because it is competitive rather than loving. It is always willing to make a deal, but it cannot understand that to be like another means that *no deals are possible*. To gain you must give, not bargain. To bargain is to limit giving, and this is not God’s will. (4:2-5)

Bargain: an arrangement in which I agree to give you *this* if you agree to give me *that*

Why does the ego want to bargain?

Because “it is competitive rather than loving” (4:2). If it is the only one giving, it thinks that others will have more than it does. It will be on the losing end.

It therefore “demands reciprocal rights” (4:2). “Reciprocal” means “shared, felt, or shown by both sides” (Merriam-Webster). The ego, in other words, demands that *both* sides lose something and *both* sides gain something.

Can you feel this in yourself—the need to not be the only one giving, but to have both sides giving? And the belief that if you’re the only one giving, you have lost?

This causes two problems that the ego has with the way things are.

First “problem”: In creation, we are not in reciprocal relationship with God

In creation, you are not in a reciprocal relation to God, because He created you, but you did not create Him. We have already stated that only in this respect your creative power differs from His. (1:4-5)

In relation to our creation, God has all the power. He brings us into existence. He determines what we are, including all our attributes. And He even holds us in existence.

He has all that power over us, and we don’t have it over Him. It’s not reciprocal.

Can you feel something in you having a problem with that?

This arrangement, however, is a good thing. Because God gives us everything, we get to pass on what He gives in the form of our own creating in Heaven, and through this, the Kingdom gets to increase forever (rather than go in circles).

Second “problem”: “To gain you must give, not bargain” (4:4)

“To bargain is to limit giving” (4:2-5).

Bargaining is a limit on giving because I will *only* give you a certain amount and *only* if you uphold your part of the bargain.

Yet it giving is how we gain. Anything that limits our giving limits our *gain*.

Love simply gives, without limits, “because it cannot be contained” (3:6).

God does not limit His giving “in any way” (4:7).

Exercise

Think of a situation in which you have been bargaining with a friend or loved one, where you have in essence been saying, “I will give you this (or love you or forgive you), if you will give me what I want.”

Now repeat the following to yourself:

Love gives without limit, for it cannot be contained.

Do I want to know love in me?

God does not limit His giving in any way.

Do I want to think like God?

To gain I must give, not bargain.

Do I want to gain here?