

CHEON-HWA-DANG

THE HOUSE OF HEAVEN'S HARMONY



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CHEON-HWA-DANG

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As Unificationists we believe that practicing self-transformation (mind and body unity), cultivating deep spousal relationships and creating strong and healthy homes, we will better prepare to serve society and make true and lasting peace for the world, God and True Parents.

TO THE READER

On May 13, 2003, True Parents came to the cottage house where my family and I reside within East Garden. They had returned from overseas and had the chance to visit that day and Father felt compelled to grace us with a beautiful Chinese calligraphy. That calligraphy read, "Cheon-Hwa-Dang" or in English, "The House of Heaven's Harmony." He also wrote my name along with my wife's and under it wrote, "Cheon-Eh-Bu-Bu" or "Couple of Heaven's Love."

For us personally, we see the calligraphy as prescriptive rather than descriptive; as something to achieve rather than something that we are. We have come to know and be Blessed to each other by the Love of Heaven and we certainly do not feel that we are the "true model" of Heaven's Love (we as a couple believe that we must deepen and renew our relationship daily). However, the main section of the calligraphy that True Father wrote that day was "Cheon-Hwa-Dang."

True Father explained that the character "Cheon" or "Heaven" is comprised of the characters "two (Du-I)" and "person (Saram-

In)." He said that when husband and wife, symbolizing "two people", who have united mind and body, come together there can be the character Heaven. This created the foundation for "Hwa" or Harmony and when that occurs then they can become the "House of Heaven's Harmony."

Theologically this was an incredible statement—that when we, united in mind and body, come together with our spouse, we can be the locus or the wellspring of the Harmony of Heaven. From each united spouse comes the seeds for a harmonious family, and from a harmonious family can come a harmonious society, nation and world. This teaching was the catalyst for me to bring together elements in my own life and the book that you now read is the direct outcome of that, profound, three character teaching that True Father wrote that day—"Cheon-Hwa-Dang."

On the one hand, I had already been undertaking a serious, daily monastic regimen beginning at 2:30 A.M. and consisting of several hours of mind and body training. However, on the other hand, I was then a father of three. At the time, I felt there to be an irreconcilable difference between the religious life of ardent spiritual practice and the family life of very, very ordinary things like potty-training for the kids, or cleaning the house, or doing laundry, etc.

I was conflicted. I lived within two modalities that were incredible, but that seemed, at times, to be diametrically opposed to each other. Traditionally, within religion there have been these two categories or types of religious membership: the contemplative and that of religious layman (having a family). These two types or modalities of religious life have been almost mutually exclusive—the role of the contemplative has been separated from the role of one that raises a family.

The monastic traditions of Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Daoism, Hinduism, etc. have sought to relegate the contemplative life to a variety of ardent and demanding spiritual curricula. The role of a family person was more conventionally applied to laypersons not able to make the commitment to such a stringent religious path. In other words the "highest" role of spiritual practitioner was afforded to the celibate monk, while the layperson with a family was typically a follower of such monks.

There is no doubt of the value of the monastic tradition where monks and nuns offer themselves to the sacrificial life of celibacy and rigorous spiritual exercise and service. These communities of monastics have given up all personal desires and comforts being exemplary in their level of commitment and devotion to their respective faiths. Because of the celibate tradition alive in these monastic traditions, monks and nuns have what scholars refer to as the "excess energy resource" that other people raising families and having "worldly" commitments do not have.

This resource of excess energy has been directed, throughout various times in history, to the service of others. During the Great Depression of 1930's America, Catholic nuns in New York took up the explicit practice of taking and raising orphans that were abandoned during the hard times. Similarly in Buddhism, monasteries have been places where abandoned children were raised and in the modern case of Sri Lanka, monks were the first to provide food, shelter and comfort to victims of the 2004 tsunami disasters.

This being stated, let me state my position from the outset: it is my own belief that these seemingly incompatible sides of religious life, namely that of a monk and that of a family man/woman, must be integrated and unified in Unification practice and that the key to doing so is in *expanding* the definition of "religious,"

and "spiritual practice." In my own life, on the one hand, I have taken on a full monastic lifestyle comprised of serious practice and training. On the other hand, I have had the blessing of being a husband to my good wife of eight years and a father to our beautiful children.

For many, we may individually go and do "religious" church work or do "spiritual practice," but when we come home we may view time with our families or with our spouse as "worldly" or "mundane." THIS IS THE PROBLEM!—we have effectively taken "the sacred" and the "religious" out of our homes and relegated it to only "church" work. From a Unificationist perspective this is theologically and doctrinally inconsistent, as forming healthy, "true" families and uniting our minds and bodies are a central theological imperative in how we believe we can create a world of peace, harmony and unity. We must *not* divide the sacred from any aspect of our lives even that which we consider most "mundane."

When we breathe we should be with Hananim, understanding how we are infused by the Divine breath of life. When we walk we should be and walk with God and when we listen to a bird's song, we should listen with gratitude for all who cannot hear. All such things are most definitely religious practice as it increases our awareness of the sacredness of the simplest of things and fills us with gratitude and awe for the gift of being alive. However, we must also *expand* the definition of "spiritual, religious practice" to include even the most mundane, normal, repetitive, and/or seemingly "boring" times in our lives—especially as Unificationists, time invested with our families.

True Father states that in the ideal world there would be no need for dogma and religion. He states that humankind would be

able to live in complete union and communion with God. There would be no need for the formalities of religion as we would so intimately feel and experience the presence of God in our daily activities and lives. This is a critical point to remember—Unificationism is not only something to know, but more importantly something to *be lived*.

When we are doing homework with our children or even when "potty-training" them we should transform it to be *serious* and *authentic* "religious, spiritual practice." When we are taking the family to a healthy movie we should transform it to be "religious practice." When deepening our relationship with our spouse through healthy communication we should transform it to be "religious practice!" Every moment in life is a fresh and new experience. Even though we may take the children to school each day or do homework with them daily, each day and moment is unique, new and precious.

This change in our perspective is not only an intellectual or perceptual shift. It requires a total transformation of how we *experience* and *live* in the world. That is the reason for Mind-Body Unity (MBU) practice. It is not enough to simply view being with our children or with our spouse as religious practice. We must truly *feel* the sacredness and holiness of such experiences, we must learn how to control our fallen natures, and we must become aware of the awesomeness of the gift of life—right NOW! This new awareness is strengthened first in our own MBU—in the transformation of the mind and body.

Though training in MBU we will experience the holiness and profundity of a single breath of life. We will cultivate a deep gratitude for such simple, often taken for granted "God-gifts." When we can experience such deep and profound religious states, when

we spend time with our family we will not only know that it is "religious" but we will *feel*, to the very marrow in our bones, the preciousness and the greatness of such a significant blessing and gift.

Thus in this work we will be dealing with, first, the issue of unity of mind and body on the individual level. Why? Because individuals comprise married couples, families, societies and the world. We have a tendency to emphasize family without understanding or making an adequate emphasis on the cultivation of the individual. Thus, in the worthy goal of creating a "true family," but without the discipline learned in individual spiritual cultivation, we try to force our family to fit a mold of a "true" family.

We may find ourselves blaming other people in our family when we get upset, while the truth of the matter is that we could not control our anger. We may say "I am screaming at you because you are not being a true child" but inside we may be masking or justifying a lack of self-control. We may try to pressure our children to appear happy or not to ask questions in the name of being a true family. We may blame others for making discord or being displeased with the family situation, and the list can continue *ad infinitum*.

This is the problem of skipping the more fundamental unit of the family—which is the individual—of which the family is comprised. We have a tendency of claiming that the real distinction between Unification thought and other religions is the centrality we place on the family. Although this may be partly true, it is forgetful of the major Unificationist tradition of the requirement of individual perfection, the necessity of mind and body unity at the individual level, and the first level comprising the eight stages of perfection (individual, family, tribe, society, nation,

world, cosmos, Hananim).

In other words, my point is a simple one: we cannot and will not truly create a "true family" without investing first in the cultivation of ourselves at the individual level. If everyone in a family is vying for authority or are all judgmental towards everyone else, or quick to get angry and violent, it is clear that this will not likely be a "true family." In becoming united in mind and body, in subduing our anger, hate or resentment, and in cultivating gratitude, inner harmony and joy, we will increase the chance of creating healthy blessed marriages and families.

Surely, if one is honest, we can see that we may commit such infractions as blaming our spouse for our children's misbehavior, or wanting everyone in the house to listen to us because we are the authority, or living in our inner "theatre of torment" feeding an inner anger towards a family member, or not being able to admit one's fault when at fault, etc. We must understand that living within the context of a family is very "real," as opposed to the dreamy images of a "happy family," with a man dancing with his wife and children on a beach as the sun is setting. Admittedly, this may happen in one's family time, but certainly is not the *only* thing that family does—I would definitely tire of dancing on the beach forever, especially when it became night and the children were cold and tired out and screaming "I want to go home!"

These images are beautiful and inspirational giving us a picture of what kind of happiness and joy can arise out of a strong and healthy family. But to assume that family members will just be happy because of family per se is delusory. Statistically, violence is perpetrated most between family members and/or loved ones. Historically, bitter feuds and sibling rivalries have decimated families and nations. Modern horror stories of children murdering their

parents, and vice versa, clearly indicate that the family has been a major place of disharmony and discord.

Theologically speaking, because of the importance of the family to God, it has been the target of Satan, and given the statistics he has unfortunately been a success. However, it is my intention through this present work to not only theologically contextualize the practices but to offer practical, systematic practice to strengthen individual mind-body unity and to help build a healthy and strong family. This being stated, I will admit that my realm of "expertise"(if one can call it that) will fall more heavily on the side of mind-body unity as opposed to parenting. Our oldest son is only six years old and my wife and I have yet to experience the more trying times of our children's lives that many readers will have already experienced.

Although this may be true, I hope that all may profit, ideally from the entire work, or at least parts of the present work. I do not know the particular family situations of you, the reader's life. You may still be single, or may have children that are in their midlife years, or maybe your blessing has not worked out. Whatever the circumstance, I wish to say that there is always the opportunity to make things right and begin anew.

Of course, if our lives are not completely in order, it will take time to rebuild and revitalize our lives, our families, etc. However, we are still alive, breathing and have the opportunity to make our lives more fulfilling and deeper. As long as we have our breath we have the chance to choose to transform ourselves—we have the chance to be alive and create a Cheon-Hwa-Dang (House of Heaven's Harmony).

For my own life, balancing a rigorous spiritual discipline while at the same time being a father and husband has been a challenge

that I wholeheartedly admit is difficult but that I believe is one that is not only worthwhile but also a very "Unificationist" concern and endeavor. Many members have expressed their desire to pursue spiritual training while at the same time learning how to be a better parent and spouse. When we do spiritually train on the individual level, we will learn to *transform* our time with our children and loved ones into an *extended type* of spiritual training and practice—we will learn how to *expand* the definition of "spiritual/religious practice!"

Thus in this present work I will deal with 1) mind-body unity on the individual level; 2) unity on the spousal level; and, 3) unity on the family level. I do realize that True Parents desire more from us than having individual perfection and raising true families, such as working in the community, building a nation, etc. However, I also realize that doing the most fundamental things, in this case individual unity and creating a true family, will be a springboard and a source of inspiration to achieve such larger goals as world peace.

Fundamentally, making world peace and creating the Cheon-Hwa-Dang "House of Heaven's Harmony" in mind and body, in our blessing, and in our families are *not* separate. God's suffering and the suffering of the world and the individuals that comprise it, are not separate. We work hard to change the world without changing ourselves; seek to mold our family without molding ourselves; strive to transform society without individual transformation—this cannot be done. We must begin at the most basic level where individual man and woman, with unity of mind and body, come together as husband and wife and create healthy and strong "true" families and homes—we must begin by creating the Cheon-Hwa-Dang.

INDIVIDUAL _MIND-BODY UNITY (MBU)

Already Unificationists, as in most religious traditions, have internal, mental spiritual practices that are in application. We have lengthy fasting and prayer conditions. We have *ansu* and cold water conditions. We have witnessing / blessing conditions, and the tradition of fundraising in addition to Protestant-like Sunday worship. In the East, it is a commonly seen Unificationist practice to perform repeated (sometimes thousands of) prostrations, or *kyung-bae's*, as conditions for purification, petitionary requests for blessings, or redemption of sins.

The following exercises and trainings are supplementary, not substitutes for such extant practices. My direct study, observation, and give and take with Abonim's *living* practice, on the boat, in Hoon dok hae, and most importantly when he privately gave me the calligraphy "Cheon-hwa-dang have led me to offer what you now read.

As we can see, Unificationists have adopted many indigenous religious practices to enhance their religious life. Many members

visualize True Parents in prayer or in moments of danger or difficulty to gain strength and feel True Parents are there with them. True Father states that,

Religion is a training center and educational institute to repair dysfunctional man and return him to his original state...The mission of religion is to cultivate our character through a life of faith that embraces enlightenment and personal growth, so that we can attend God in our everyday lives...all faiths should attach greater importance to educating and training individuals to perfect their character, thus raising them to become people of faith, than they do to merely bringing people to a path of faith through witnessing and sermons".

These are powerful words for religions! Unificationism is no exception!

Thus, what I have tried to do in the present work is provide systematic, step-by-step training exercises to strengthen and enhance our capacity to cultivate true character so that we *can* attend God in *everyday* life. True Father has said that we as a movement must be "Cho-jong gyo, Cho-gook ka, Cho-il yu (transcendent of religion, nation, and race)." Father said that Cheon-il Gook is in a true family. And each member of the family as a pre-condition must unify his/her mind and body. To me this teaching was central but I never knew how I could perfect my mind and body unity. Drawing from various time-tested spiritual traditions, which have thousands of years of technical refinement, I have come to develop the art of, "Mind/Body unity practice"—a curriculum and method to actualize substantial unity between the mind and body.

The problem with many modern emotive, under-developed "New Age" forms of spiritual practice is that, although they may heighten a sense of awareness and make one "feel good about oneself" or "feel God" they lack the long and arduous history of refinement and reworking of techniques. Thus, many times once the feelings of self-worth wear away a great void can be experienced resulting in addiction to the "spiritual high." When that spiritual high is craved for, it will likely not reappear which can lead one into clinical depression, serious psychological trauma and even suicidal tendencies. So when engaging in practices of the mind it is essential to have a systematic, disciplined, and refined training method.

Some forms of spiritual practice have made the grave mistake of believing that one can circumvent or "transcend" conventional morality, such as "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; thou shalt not bear false witness; etc." However, great and lasting spiritual traditions caution us against such a terrible pitfall. I assume that you the reader are already practicing to restrain yourself from killing, stealing, lying, adultery, pre-marital sex, and addictive substances.

There are pragmatic as well spiritual reasons for upholding such basic morality. Spiritually speaking, one is creating the space where one can begin deep communion and reflection with the Divine. Pragmatically, these preliminary morals keep the mind clear of powerful, distracting and destructive preoccupations. As a student of religious traditions, I find it instructive that all major world religions, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, etc. make *explicit* the need to observe basic moral practice before the fruits of more interior spiritual practice can be enjoyed.

There are those people who may believe that they have attained full perfection, enlightenment, divinity, or mind/body unity while violating these fundamental precepts. In other words, the process of "spiritual practice" becomes a self-justification to further the delusion of spiritual perfection—it becomes another product or commodity, which one can buy and use to justify one's sloth, stealing, killing, lying, sexual transgressions, etc. This work seeks to afford no solace to those who wish to exploit spiritual practice while pursuing a delusional and pathologically immoral lifestyle. No one is an exception to this principle and I certainly include myself under its authority.

WHY MIND BODY UNITY ANYWAYS?

If one reflects there is probably no religious tradition that has a greater emphasis on achieving mind-body unity than that of the True Parents. Through my own spiritual training I have come to realize that we cannot escape the challenge of uniting our mind and body if we seek to reach True Parenthood. This, of course, does not mean that I believe myself to have reached Perfection (as anyone who makes the claim has probably not). However, it does mean I have a method that has helped me become a more self-critical but peaceful and happier individual. As with forms in martial arts, spiritual exercises, patterns and forms are also to be thrown away at the time of battle, for a battle is never predictable.

Thus with these "mental forms" of training, it is my hope that you will be able to train your mind and body for unity. On the battlefield of life, there will be numerous surprises, failures and obstacles to overcome. Thus your training will arm you with the courage and fearlessness to overcome adversity when many others cannot.

We may speak of the cultivation of knowledge or experience

that is essential but it is many times the spirit of the warrior that determines the outcome of a battle. By spirit I mean the internal landscape and whether or not that landscape is filled with doubt, fear, cowardice, or confidence, fearlessness and courage.

There is an ancient saying in the East that says that, "From enormous strength comes weakness." This means that it takes much strength to be gentle, compassionate and kind to others (qualities that many refer to as "weakness"). Thus, the warrior's spirit is not always fierce. It can also have the strength to be patient and silent. It is completely adaptable to any situation and open to change thus enabling the warrior to succeed in unpredictable environments.

It is in this context that I am now sharing "Unificationist Mind/Body unity practice"—a curriculum of internal Mind-Body training developed for fellow Unificationists throughout the world. True Father has taught us that the battle between Mind and Body is at the very root of the battle between God and Satan.

We can never fully believe it if we don't experience it, and it is through training that you will experience the great tensions and battles of the Mind and Body. But it is not even enough to stop at the experiential level of learning; there is still another element to an effective pedagogy of Mind-Body unity.

After experience we must have analysis—only then will the experience be increasingly effective and not merely repetitious. After we have experienced, we analyze, then through continuation of practice we can "become the word." We can make real or substantial what True Parents have taught us. We must not only talk about the problems, we must have a method to solve them. It begins here at the root—the divided Mind and Body, and our vehicle is Mind-Body unity (MBU) training.

On the 50th anniversary of the founding of the HSA-UWC, True Father said:

Ladies and gentlemen, your conscience is your master. It is your teacher. It stands in the place of your parents. Your conscience is the first to know everything about you. Your conscience knows all your thoughts. It knows before your teacher, your parents or even God knows...Do you intend to idle your life away, embracing only your physical body and enslaved by its desires, allowing it mercilessly to trample the conscience. ²

This is precisely the essence of Mind-Body Unity training. We must train to clean off all the selfishness that covers and tramples our conscience. Through the practice of Mind-Body unity we seek to strengthen and fortify the natural wisdom of the conscience. With the cultivation of our natural intuition or conscience as opposed to intellectual learning we can unite with the untainted wisdom of our original mind and nature.

It is my hope that these training practices will be of help to your personal attendance to God and True Parents, and upon that foundation a help to your family, tribe, society, nation and eventually our world, cosmos, and the Heavenly God. Train hard! And as always—more training, more training, more training!

HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

What is good communication in a relationship comprised of? Both speaking *and* listening. In our prayers, as Unificationists, usually we are just speaking, and practicing what is known as petitionary prayers—asking God for things. Yet, many times we don't listen, we don't quiet ourselves; we don't participate in the silence that is God revealing Himself.

When we speak, when we say a certain phrase, there are many moments of silence that give the talking an overall character that punctuate the sentence. If you listen carefully to the moments of silence you will see that they add an enormous amount of quality to what it is we say. It is in the same manner, in silence, in the purposeful rejection of our desire to just want to overwhelm by just talking or communicating in that manner, and instead just simply listening, that we practice something profound.

Linguists say that 90% of our communication is non-verbal—that only 10% is verbal. If you think in terms of that, how limited is our communication with God if we are simply speaking to Him in our prayers? We are only experiencing 10% of the relationship.

So how is it that we practice in such a way that we are able to tap into the full resources of that relationship—the full power of grace and forgiveness; the full power of Love that is always accessible to us. The biblical tradition advises us to "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10). And it is in the infinite silence that we can experience and find an infinite wisdom; an infinite source of renewal, hope and goodness; but also we can tap into and feel the great sorrows and pains of God.

You see this is a response to the Kantian notion of religion as simply being a "moral postulate"—helping people be moral. This is a direct riposte to that. It says "no," there is something in our religious experience and practice that even goes beyond our categorizing rationality. In the moment of silence, contemplative prayer and meditation, MBU, there are moments of prayer that are so deep and profound, that words cannot describe them, simply one does not even know one is experiencing it, it is completely beyond one's comprehension—the grasp of the intellect.

The Kantian conception that all experience is confined by mental categories and that there is always a distance between subject and object fails to comprehend the profundity of mind body unity and the divine-human union. However, as a direct riposte to that Kantian reductionism, we have in the practice of MBU training, a union with the infinite, where we transcend our finite notions, rationale and intellect, wherein which we can tap into the ultimate source of goodness, Love, wisdom, and our Original Mind.

During practice you will encounter these moments of profound silence. You will not even know you are in them. Any demarcations or boundaries between you and another, me and God, me and the world, even me and that tree outside, fall away. You will be directly

touching the Original Mind that is infinite, that is powerful, that is God pervading everything.

The silence is so profound, so penetrating that your intellect will not be able to fathom it. It will just stand awe-struck, so to speak, in the infinite expanse of this silence. It is a space wherein all notions of duality or me and you disappear. Everything becomes One.

You will not even be aware of yourself. Your awareness of the boundaries of your body and mind, the shape of your body, will expand so far that you will not be able to conceive of "your" self. This is the great fathomless infinite that we experience, outside of our reason's grasp. Here, in the silence, we feel one with God, we can sense His love, we can experience His suffering, His agony.

Because of his Love for us we dissolve and conjoin in a moment of vastness, open horizons, infinite unity. Our hearts, by God's Love, are able to open to feel the sorrow and suffering of the world. Because of this type of prayer we fundamentally experience the unity of the world—that we are *all* God's children. Our sense of the boundaries of our self is utterly challenged—it is expanded to include all of humanity and creation.

We can feel so deeply the pain of the mother who cradles her dying child that we actually become that mother. We also become that child dying in her arms. We are the fathers who kill other fathers in the name of righteousness. We are the oppressed being sold into slavery and prostitution; we are the sellers of the women being sold into slavery and prostitution; we are the rich, the poor, the "free," the oppressed; we are not separate from the world—we are part of humanity's joys but unfortunately its ills as well.

Our heart becomes so vast in such moments of silence. We cannot even rationalize it during those moments of pure silence,

but when we stir and emerge from that prayer, our intellect is ignited and tries inadequately to understand what has just been experienced. We try to describe the silence in terms of "this or that" but ultimately fall short of explaining its profundity. This being the case, however, we are changed.

We have experienced something utterly different from our normal mode of consciousness that we use in our daily life. You know the one that says, "oh, he's black, she's white, he's Spanish, she's Korean," etc. But when we have a profound experience of prayer, in the stillness and wisdom of profound silence, all these labels stop, all the differentiations halt, we experience God's heart that is within all.

Even the worst of individuals have an Original mind. Even the most hardened criminals are God's children. This, of course, does not mean we let people commit crimes and hurt others. In fact, it means that we should do the opposite, we must prevent them from doing such acts because it is not the Original mind that guides such actions. Many times it is anger generated from a personal feud with another, many times it is a selfish motivation, or a cowardly act of harming others to boost oneself.

But the Original mind is not like this. God is not as such. In the experiencing of listening to the silence in our hearts, we hear God. We hear His vastness; we hear His infinite love for all the faces of humanity; we hear His cry for us to emerge from the selfish preservation of just ourselves. God speaks in that silence and after—maybe not in actual words but in the lessons one learns during and after such prayerful training.

MBU training is that vital and essential. It is like exercise for the spiritual body—to strengthen it by eating healthy foods that help make the body healthy. Our spiritual bodies need to be nour-

ished and fed, they need to have exercise, for certain chronic illnesses to diminish and to build the adequate spiritual musculature around those places to support it. This is developed and engendered in our training.

In MBU training we must be able to sharpen and train the mind and body so that we may naturally respond to certain stimuli—"condition-reflex-response." For example, in martial arts or any other sport, we condition our bodies and when there is a certain attack we reflexively defend in a trained reflex-response. It is the same in MBU training. It is like the systematic uprooting of bad mental habits and then "reprogramming" of our mental "reflex-responses" so that we can create peace of mind for ourselves and others.

Have you ever been around someone who has no peace of mind—someone who is always criticizing others, or with their attitudes are souring an uplifting experience? This type of negativity that is first engendered within affects all who are around. Conversely, if one has a stable, peaceful, united mind, then he/she brings peace, stability, and unity to those around. In other words what we must realize is that internal peace and external peace are not disparate—they are deeply connected to each other.

In training we see, battle and encounter the Satan that is within—ego, frustration, impatience, cravings, hatreds, lack of concentration, disunity. We see that the ego is like a slave to fallen nature, and is greedily reaching out and trying to own other objects, be they concepts or people or money, etc.; or to vehemently defend itself from things that it doesn't like, be they attempts to change egocentric tendencies, stop our greed, or forgive an enemy. From this, it is quite clear that our minds have been operating on a very egocentric basis.

The ego is not a passive receptacle that simply mirrors the information sent to it by an external stimulus. It is very active. It is very greedy. It has been thoroughly shaped by self-centered conditioning and at first we will have to fight it. We will have to still this ego—to stop it from being so possessive and greedy. We will have to calm it down. When it has calmed down, and is not so self-serving, we can begin the process of training to become more *self-less* and more virtuous.

THOUGHT-TRAINS "ALL ABOARDT"

In the process of prayer, your mind will be disunited; you will experience this without exception. Thoughts will invade your mind. Your concentration will be disrupted. Your mind will actively sprint out and cling to these thoughts and entertain, engage and indulge in them.

Much energy will be wasted in disunity. When thoughts emerge in your mind, it is like a train that arrives at a train station, calling all passengers to board. We are not aware that we frequently board such "thought-trains" and are unknowingly taken for a ride and then it connects to another thought-train, and that to another thought-train, and we are off in day-dream land. This is going to happen in the silence of prayer as well.

When we try to still our minds we will see that we are often stuck on thought-trains of the past or the future. We are blaming ourselves or another for something in the past and not letting go. We live through that experience again and again, feeling the anger, fear and hate welling up inside. On the other hand, we also are stuck in fear of the future or fear of failing or fear of not being appreciated.

Wherever we are, either on a "past" or "future" thought-train, we are not alive in the most important place—"now." The present moment is the only moment actually accessible to us and it is infinite and constantly renewing itself, revealing great treasures as we speak. The past is gone and the future remains to be experienced. If we don't remain in the here and now then we cannot let go of the past and become better for the future. The time is always and only NOW!

On the one hand, when we train, we may begin to regret some past experience or blame others for our lack of self-control. On the other hand, we may become scared of what the future has to hold, or that we will have more misery. We may say things like, "One day I will be a better person," or "One day I'll change my attitude," etc. However, instead of working and being present and actively becoming a better person or actively changing our attitudes that get us stuck, we hold onto past experiences or future dreams and fears. Unfortunately, we thus cannot get over the past or create a better future—we can't be alive with the people around us now because we are always in the past or the future.

The problem is that we get taken on these thought-trains. We ride these thought-trains and our Ego begins to delight in a relationship with some past experience or some future dream. We play the "Should've, Would've, Could've" game saying, "I could've been happy but she did this or that and that's why I'm miserable," or we may explain away our lack of effort in something saying, "I should've been the best I could be but *I really* never wanted to." We blame our present circumstances and the obstacles that arise on convenient mental scapegoats, whether it is someone we feel has wronged us or some external circumstance that made us suffer. Thus we live as prisoners of the past, explaining our present state

of suffering as being a result of such external circumstances.

But the reality is that *all* have stress and suffer to some degree. It may not be physical hunger or sickness but many are in mental anguish or torment. We may constantly blame others or ourselves for the past, or put limitations on our futures. We may also play the "Can't, Won't, Never" game saying, "I can't do this or that" or "I'll never be able to do that," but these are merely mental limitations imposed on ourselves. This mindset unfortunately determines our futures; if we believe we can, we can, if not then we can't (in this high stress world, those who can calm their minds, and proceed with peace of mind will much less likely experience "burn-out" and will have more mental endurance and clarity).

But when we try to still our hearts in training, when we try to stop all the disunity and confusion that numbs us to what God is giving us now, the "devil" gets scared. He gets paranoid. He will send all sorts of thought-trains to break, distract and tempt us.

There will be both happy and delightful thought-trains and fearful thought-trains, jealous thought-trains, angry thought-trains, hateful thought-trains and many many more. To sit in silence, at first, will not be silence at all. Your mind will be quite noisy!

However, don't despair. The noise will quiet down. Just like every storm must come to an end, so too will every thought-train have its end. When you notice that you are on the thought train, you are empowered. You now have the freedom to *get off of it!* If you don't you'll be transported from train to train, and the connecting stations will be so seamless and so smooth that the devil will have stolen all your time that you committed to training and prayer.

How many times in our lives do we cling to feelings of pleasure? When someone praises us, or when we feel we are "wonderful" we

have a great high from such a thought-train. We may feel unappreciated, sometimes we even try to force others to acknowledge our wonder, getting upset because they don't give us all the praises we wish to lavish in. Then we fall into a depressing low. Usually we are in these cycles of highs and lows, self-confidence when others praise us and self-doubt when others are not praising us—cycles of elation and depression.

In the process of noting your thought-trains, whether happy or depressing, you realize that all those trains are not permanent. *They will pass.* Thus, when you are feeling happy you will learn the discipline of not just indulging those feelings, but experience them and at the same time reflect on what can be of long-term value towards making you and others more joyous. Similarly, when you are depressed you will not just indulge in self-pity, but will learn the discipline of knowing that the depressing thought-trains will pass—that there is always hope!

Simply understanding that our emotional states, whether great joy or sorrow, pass is an amazingly liberating realization. Because one knows that the joy of a particular occasion won't last forever, one can face "good times" with more gratitude and maturity *while* one is able to experience it. In the same way, understanding that emotional and psychological feelings and states pass, when one is encountering hard times, one can do so with more hope that there will be a new day, and a new chance.

But, the Devil, is no fool. He wants you to throw away your time, to waste your mental and spiritual energy. He will send the most beautiful, most tantalizing, most scintillating thought-trains to take you to "fantasy land," or "sin city," or "ego-central." He loves you when you are disunited in mind and body—you're much easier to tempt with jealousy, fear, anger, hate, greed, ignorance,

etc., if you always make your daily spiritual commute on those thought-trains.

You may think of a past spiritual experience that you had and may crave such an experience. I remember speaking with a brother and he was telling me of the first time he had a spiritual experience with God. He said that he was filled with the feeling of God's Love flowing through him and it lasted the entire day. Of course he said it faded the next day and for thirty years he said that he has been waiting for another such experience.

I immediately told him upon hearing this, "Don't want such an experience. Why are you waiting or expecting or wanting such a thing from God? If you wait you will be expecting some incredible experience. Even if God gives you an experience equal to, if not greater than your first experience, you will not see it because your expectations have become so great that everything God gives you pales in comparison. Let go of your expectations."

Let's say, that I had a great experience with True Father in the past. If I crave another such experience, reliving how great it was in my head, over and over again, even if Father blesses me with something I won't be able to recognize it. Maybe he praised me and I now seek to constantly be praised by him, which of course will not happen. When what I expect, which is now growing with each passing day, is not met then I feel unloved or uncared for and can easily lead to blame, resentment, and hateful thoughts.

However, if I have no expectations, if I don't expect any praise or adoration from Father then everything can be a pleasant surprise. If he says something nice I can be grateful and let it go. If he says something critical I can learn from it and let it go. When we have unreasonable, self-centered expectations with our spouse, or friends, True Father or God, we will unfortunately meet disap-

pointment and frustration.

So thus in training it is essential to always be a beginner. The beginner is always fresh and the horizon for learning is unlimited. Be a beginner with each new day. Why do we crave to be a Master? Masters are imprisoned by their self-mastery. They feel they have mastered everything and thus cannot be open and grow.

However, *real* masters are always beginners. They try to learn all the time, anywhere, anytime, they can learn something. They know that they must train today just as intensely and with just as much freshness as a beginner. The "master" is trapped thinking that he knows all. That is why True Father is a *true* master. He is always a beginner, a student before God. He even says that he learns the most from a little baby.

Whenever I have the blessing of teaching mind-body unity, I always remind myself that it is *I* who need it most. It is so alluring to believe that I am some kind of master. This is a deathtrap. I try not to get stuck in thinking how much I've trained or how advanced I am, etc.—these are all pitfalls for the Ego. The key is to face each new day, each new moment, each new training session, with freshness, openness, and a willingness to be a novice.

I ask people all the time, "why do you want to be a master? Being a beginner is so much better." I have met many who believed to reach Enlightenment, or Perfection, or attained the highest state of consciousness, etc. To such individuals, I always say, "who cares? Be a beginner." If we are stuck in our perceived Perfection, we become so self-absorbed and everyone else appears as less and thus we have the potential to become even more demonic—everything becomes a comparing game and all sense of interconnectedness and thus compassion disappear immediately!

So it is critical to always remain a beginner. If we always remain

beginners and students to God, True Parents, and even to those around us, we will find a wealth of constant learning and growth. If not, we will get caught in the prison of self-perceived greatness and hurt more than we help, including ourselves. Thus we must train and practice with care.

So be aware. See what is happening. Recognizing and admitting that you don't have it all together is part of the training. "Train-ing," is realizing what "trains" you are habitually on. Realizing that you have been totally unaware, that you spend probably more than two-thirds of your waking life commuting on thought-trains is an enormous insight into what you are doing with your life.

It shows us that we are usually living life in a state of "waking confusion." We may notice that we are deluded with many toxins and grimy oil spills of our minds. We are not using our energy to work to become and manifest unity in mind and body. We realize that we are not using our energy to manifest true love in the way we deal with the thought-trains, manifesting a reflective and profound spiritual life.

MBU is a process, we must be patient and diligent. Just like lifting weights, if you want to lift 1,000 lbs, you must increase the weight incrementally, starting with 10 lbs., then 20, 50, 100, 180 lbs., etc. Sorry, there are no shortcuts. There is much hard work to be done in the spring, to reap the fruits and harvest in autumn.

We can't just wait until autumn and try to plant the seeds. This is simply not possible. It is the same with a strong and united mind and body. Usually, we are like autumn leaves just riding the emotional river of our thought-trains—totally controlled by the river's power. But through MBU we can become like rocks that are solid and stable, not pushed around by the currents of our minds.

If we are going to be able to transform our "demons" into angels—the thought-trains of distraction into unity—we must start first by quieting down and listening. We must watch those thought-trains and simply observe with patience and professionalism. We must learn where it is we are being tempted to go. What kind of destinations am I arriving at? Are they self-aggrandizing or self-justifying destinations? Are they destinations of fear? Are they destinations that make us hate or want to hurt another? Where are we being taken?

Just watch, listen and be aware. Don't fall asleep! We must be vigilant and see what is there, not what we want to see. Be truthful. Be honest. "Be Original" with a big "O" for the "Original Mind" and learn from the silence that is God teaching many wisdoms.

You see MBU is so critical; you can only simply listen to any speech that True Father gives us to hear the essential, critical, centrality placed on MBU. Why? Because fundamentally if we are divided in Mind and Body, then the world will be divided. If our mind and body are divided then our nations will be divided, our communities will be divided, our families will be divided. Why so? Because individuals with disunited minds and bodies make disunited families, divided communities, split nations, and a disunited world. How sorrowful must God be to witness this!

If we only seek to serve ourselves and are egocentric, then it shows that we are not united in mind and body; we have not trained or exercised our MBU. Through our experiences gained in training there is a certain type of maturity that arises—a certain type of calm like a clear lake that reflects the mountains, the blue sky, that even reflects a thunderstorm. The lake may be struck by the rain and beaten by the winds, but remains calm at its base; it remains clear and allows the dust and confusion to settle.

We can tap into a fundamental resource, a fundamental personal relationship to God who is a constant source of energy, inspiration, and peace. Not just a temporary inspirational motivational talk or experience — that's not enough. If we're deriving our energy from wanting simply to be excited, then we are living on just the other side of loneliness and despair—that kind of energy cannot last long. Our energy must come from something more fundamental, more stable, more reliable.

It must come from that stability, that prayerful life, that contemplative, meditative life, in that personal relationship to God and True Parents that we develop in the practice of stilling our greed and quieting our minds. In uniting our mind and body we actualize the peace that Father has taught us about and thus develop a deeper connection to Father's words—they are not only learned but they are actualized. Then, even in moments when we are seemingly doing "nothing" we can be in deep communion with God. We should be listening and learning what thought-trains we habitually get on, ride on, and indulge in—this is the first step in understanding what is distracting us from God.

INTOXICANTS OF THE MIND

As we breathe we are given a new life, a new chance, a new breath. Yet so many times we may forget and are consumed by fantasies of ourselves and of course this leads to missing the chance to be fully present and alive, in deep prayer, with each breath. If we were given a \$300 gift from a friend we would be grateful and express our thanks, but what if we were given *Life!*? Shouldn't we be, with each breath, overwhelmingly grateful to the One who bestows it? I think so.

When we deepen our relationship; deepen our eyes, hearts, minds, to see the great gifts that are subtle yet extremely powerful, we become more attuned. Often, the greatest gifts are subtle and not seen. Many external gifts are simply manifestations of internal thankfulness. But it is that internal heart that is the real gift, although we may not be able to "see" it.

There is a saying that "championships are won in the details." Well, relationships, trust and love are won in the details—the small things that we do for each other, the small sacrifices we make. It is the same way with God. Why would it be different? The small

acts of gratefulness that we partake in every day, in our prayer life, in noticing each breath, in staying alert to our relationship with God, all seek to reinforce our living relationship with God.

We have to invest in our relationship with God and True Parents, just as with any meaningful relationship. Could you imagine a couple that never invests in their relationship? We've seen those couples: they are living separately in their hearts, long before the divorce. To create meaningful and lasting relationships, constant investment and "deposits" in the "spiritual bank account" must be made. We can't always be taking from the other—making "withdrawals" when our bank account of trust and care is at zero.

When we walk do we not see that a flower blooms underneath each footstep? Do we not see that the earth lifts us up? Do we not see the winds that embrace and carry us along valleys and hills? Do we not see the clouds that yearn for us? Do we not see the God that gives us all this?

You see it is fundamentally this simple—be awake! But the simple things are really hard to do, aren't they? We may speak of loving our enemies or even just trying to listen to our spouse, but is it easy to do? Is it easy to practice? Do we want to dominate and colonize the other? It is no simple task to take down all the walls, barriers, fortresses, that we have created to protect ourselves from people seeing our weaknesses. It is not easy to take them down, to strip them away—to be fully "naked" before God, like Adam and Eve before the Fall—with nothing to hide.

We, at times, can be those that are using self-intoxicants. We may not drink alcohol but we consume of "spiritual" alcohol, such as the fantasies and self-portraits of ourselves that we may exult in. They may make us feel "high," releasing dopamine and epinephrine in the brain just like cocaine, or other deadly "hard drugs."

But if we scrutinize ourselves deeply we may realize that we unknowingly indulge in such fantasies. We may say, "I am not selfish," or "I am the only one who understands what real suffering is," or "I am an enlightened and perfect being"; etc. We may vehemently want to dismiss the idea that we indulge in such "fantastic fantasies"—in such "inebriating intoxicants" of the mind. The devil loves to "get us drunk" and addicted to egoistic dreams.

We may not kill people physically but in rage, we may wish to "kill" people who we are jealous of—in our minds (Oh dear!). We may hate them, or wish for them to fail and suffer, or show them that they are evil because they don't like us, and if they are in failure we laugh at them with self-righteousness. We see them in their squalid state and derive a macabre sense of pleasure from watching them suffer.

We may tell untruths to ourselves by not acknowledging that there is a wide gulf between how we paint ourselves and how we really are. We may be deceiving ourselves with our fantasies of ourselves, with our beautifully painted and constructed egos that we secretly worship—not only on *An-Shi-il* but on the days between as well! We may not rob money from people but we often "rob" time and energy from ourselves when we are in prayer as we are distracted or doing it to get praise. We may think we are those with fidelity, but when a stunning vixen trots by our minds are racing and we may sin in our minds!

These are all the drink, wine and drugs of "the devil." He gives them to us, because they are subtle, they are internal—they are below the radar screen, unseen. And many a time we are intoxicated, inebriated by them, aren't we?

Before God we have to see these things. We have to have humility strong enough to *admit* that the devil has intoxicated us, that we have

drunk his wine—that he has often seduced us in our minds, with beautiful temptresses, drink, anger, fear and hate. We must see the reality of what is there, because only then is there hope to change. If we are sick we have to see our sickness to get better. Hiding behind walls and hiding in the shadows from the mirror, from seeing ourselves with truthfulness is not going to help. If we do not act with truth before ourselves, others and God, then we are simply hiding behind the bushes, clothed in fig leaves to cover our shame, just like Adam and Eve, ashamed of their nakedness.

If we can realize our dependencies, we can start addressing the habits, the cycles and the chronic problems that prevent us from happiness and an honest and deep, spiritual relationship with God. We can experience a great liberation and freedom, because we are not trying to live a fabricated life. We are being authentic and true—true to our True, Original nature and God who is Truth.

Drugs induce "highs" in the brain but so do self-indulgent fantasies. Ego-feeding elicits chemicals in the brain that give addictive "highs." But when these highs wear out, we need another "hit" just like an addict. Satan loves it if we are addicted to his drugs of anger, hate, resentment, fear, etc. Then how much easier we are to control. If we cannot prevent ourselves from self-aggrandizing we are becoming more and more dependent and needy—more unstable and more controllable by divisiveness and evil.

But what do we often do? We may tell ourselves how great we are, or believe that we have reached "sainthood", or say how this or that person should be grateful to us, or that we are "great" or "enlightened." Look at all these intoxicants! Imagine a society where all were mesmerized by such self-perceived greatnesses.

That would be a society of fear, jealousy, and hatred. Everybody would live in fear of admitting anything— they would feel threat-

ened by anything that would challenge their self-portraits. It would be better to live a life of deception than to admit our propensity to abuse ourselves and others by being constantly unwilling to acknowledge our contribution to problems. How many times have we blamed our loved ones while we had equal if not greater part in the problem? All would be hiding behind feel-good phrases, and it would be taboo to admit one's mental delusions of grandeur. No one would be able to be true to themselves or others, because everybody would be practicing dishonesty with themselves.

I do not believe that we are "angels of light," or "Enlightened," or "Perfected"—(those who proclaim themselves Enlightened or Perfected are probably not, because they don't understand that Enlightenment or Perfection, etc., is a *process* of constant, moment to moment effort and renewal). We should not indulge in such absurd, addictive substances of the mind. We are *human—who* are the closest to God. Why can't we be grateful for being just human?

Personally, I don't wish for "greatness" or being a "historical figure" or being a "saint." I wish that I would have the constant humility to find God in the most humble of activities—to train in gratitude for God, knowing that I can walk and am not paraplegic; to notice an incredible sunset on a wintry evening; to smell the fragrance of the cherry blossoms in spring; to hear my children playing in the fields; to gaze into my wife's eyes and see God; to find God in breathing and deeply bowing in gratitude for new life; to be on this earth, alive. This is enough for me.

It is said that "when an ordinary man becomes enlightened, he becomes a sage and when the sage becomes enlightened, he becomes an ordinary man." There is something very simple and basic that we miss out, when in our desires, ambitions, and greed,

we seek to be something that the mass media, or our "friends," say is living well, or being successful. We lose something foundational, we lose that fundamental relationship, that silent relationship to God—that living, powerful relationship.

This does not mean that if we are successful we cannot have a deep and meaningful relationship to God. But it does mean that as with any relationship, the more time we invest, even though it is hard to have faith in that relationship at times, the more we can receive and be blessed by it. The blessings and bounty of that personal relationship are endless, but we will realize them one by one, step by step—that is perfectly normal and okay.

Maybe at first, the blessings we discover are a sense of comfort—knowing God loves us unconditionally. Maybe, having a peaceful and happy mind is the blessings that we are grateful to God for. Later, having the courage and the strength of extreme honesty in admitting our weaknesses to ourselves will be a great power and gift that God has given us—a great strength.

DIVISIONISM OR UNIFICATIONISM?

Many times in life we are dissatisfied and down. We are in anguish. If our perspective is one that is selfish or self-centered we effectively stratify ourselves from others. There are many more "others" than "me" and they are all against "me" and so thus we know, deep inside, that it will be a losing battle. Because we separate ourselves so radically from others, we need to protect this Self more, put up more barricades, more defenses, more armaments, more pride, ego, etc. We live in a constant battle, and tension with the others of this world. They are all out to get us, they are all competing with us, they are all jealous of us, etc.—this immediately clamps our hearts cutting off all compassion, concern and love for others.

You see, when we create great division between our self and other we forget our common Humanity, that we are all children of God, that we all have within us the Original Mind, pure and selfless (Abonim defines Fallen love as "selfish" or centered on self, and True Love as "self-less" completely for the happiness and well being of the other). When all are so radically separated from "me"

I can hurt them, I can step on them, I can exploit them, I can use them for temporary pleasures, and in the most insidious case, I can kill them etc. Because we have so thoroughly in our minds, disconnected the other from our lives we can rationalize and justify hating others, or resenting others, or blaming them for our problems—we are Divisionists (as opposed to Unificationists).

Think about where all the fallen natures, hate, jealousy, envy, anger, etc. arise from. When we are absolutely separated from others we are in destructive competition with them. We have to protect our ego more so we build a fortress around it that constantly reminds it that the world is trying to infiltrate, so we put up more walls, more barriers, etc. Then someone has more than us and we get envious. We instinctually judge anyone that we meet as "superior," "somewhat equal," or "inferior" to us—we class people and put them in caste systems of our minds.

When we determine someone to be "inferior" we feel good and pride or hubris sneaks in. We judge someone to be "more or less equal" to us and immediately we are in an intense rivalry. We classify someone as "superior," which is of course most distasteful, and we feel less confident and jealous and envious of what they have and angry and hateful that they have it and we don't. So we see arrogance, rivalry, jealousy, hate, anger, etc; all emerge fundamentally from the self-centered, "self-full," perspective of "me" versus "other."

Speaking theologically, this is exactly what caused the Fall of Adam and Eve. Lucifer was the first Divisionist when he felt jealous rage of Adam. He saw Adam and Eve as rivals to God's Love and affection. He felt separated from God. He forgot that God also loved him as a created angelic being. He wanted what Adam had, he lusted it. He was full of a self-centered mind, thus everything was

against him, he felt betrayed, confined, like he had no options, and who was the cause of all this, it was the other—it was Adam and Eve. It was *their* fault, *they* were forcing him to be jealous, to be envious, greedy—or so he rationalized it.

Unfortunately this is not so far fetched, even in our own lives. We can see the many instances where we may operate in precisely the same manner. It of course starts from that inflated view of self, disconnected and *totally* separated from all else. This view justifies itself hurting or resenting the other—it is "Divisionism" as opposed to Unificationism where we remember that we are all interconnected as a human family. .

Imagine if we did not do that "Divisionist's binary split" of self and other. Imagine if we, in fact, saw ourselves in others. It would not be saying that all are just one, or just two, but one *and* two. We would recognize the uniqueness of our self, BUT *simultaneously* see the similarity and oneness of our humanity with all others. If we did so we could fully respect the other, and give him/her the dignity that they deserved for being of the same, "One Family under God." We would be practicing Unificationism and not Divisionism.

We could be truly happy and empathetically joyous for them when they succeeded because we didn't bifurcate our self with them. Normally, because we are ignorant and self-absorbed, we do separate "them" from "us," and thus feel envious, or jealous, or resentful for others who are happy, calling them "selfish," or "just thinking of themselves," effectively projecting our self-centered view onto them, assuming that they think like us. But if we could see that we are interconnected, and that we are part of each others destiny—that we are all children of God and need to be united as a family, then we should be able to be sincerely enthralled for the

other when they do succeed.

Because we don't make that radical "Divisionist" move of radically splitting self and other, we are not in rivalry or competition with them. In fact, because we can see our self in them, we can also experience happiness through their happiness, joy through their success, etc. We may feel happy for our child when they succeed but what about when someone we are jealous of or are hateful of has great success? We also must be able to escape the trap that we place ourselves in by separating, with such exaggeration, ourselves and others—even our enemy!

When we can do that the world doesn't seem against us, it doesn't seem out to get us, it actually is working with and for us. We can be happy for others when they get a good job, or get good grades or get first prize in a town contest, etc. We can feel happiness *with* them and *through* them. We can experience the joy they feel, being intimately and sincerely joyous with them, if and only if, we don't separate ourselves from that common humanity that defines us all, namely, that we all are striving to find lasting happiness and avoid suffering. (which is the starting point of the Divine Principle).

When we recognize that just as I search for happiness (not just temporary or fleeting pleasure, but enduring happiness and joy) so to, does every other human being, even God searches for happiness to share, we are able to see our common cosmic endeavor. We are able to witness that we are more similar to each other regardless of race or weight or nationality, religion, etc.

However, we can also see that if we divide our self from other and have a self-centered perspective our motivation can quickly become happiness for *only* me and not you. If we practice, Unificationist self-lessness, not being self-centered and seeing that

we all wish for happiness, we can respect the other fully, without any conditions. We can be joyous *for* them and joyous *with* them. We can be truly empathetic for them in their struggles and successes. We can practice True Parent's love. A world, or movement like this would be very different indeed.

When we reconfigure ourselves so that we can more clearly see the areas of weakness and dishonesty, we are empowered to overcome such impediments. Let's think. Have you ever been in a situation when you were happy about something, and you notice that there are some people whispering and mocking about you? What happens next is, all of a sudden that happiness disappears and defenses come up. We may be filled with hate at that moment, or fear of the others seeing some flaw or insecurity. However, instead of reacting in such a way, what if we gave our compassionate mind to those people. What if we reminded ourselves that they are also striving for the same things as I am, sincerely praying for them saying—"may you always have happiness, may you not suffer, and may you be kind to yourself and to others with ease."

Personally, in times when I felt judged or accused by someone, I have said this prayer. What I found was that instead of becoming defensive, when I offered benevolence and compassion, my vengeful mind was pacified. When I offered such a prayer to those who criticized me I found myself to be able to regain a sense of inner calm and peace, instead of riding the thought train of reactivity, anger or hate.

Unfortunately anger, hate, and such afflictive emotions can grow our sense of Ego. When we practice judgmentalism or anger towards another we immediately bifurcate ourselves from the other—we are the wronged and the other is wrong-doer. We separate ourselves from the other—the other being fully culpable and

ourselves fully innocent. Of course, I do admit, there are times when we *must* stop others from doing heinous wrongs, but one must do so with professionalism and compassion for the other, not with anger and vengefulness.

Too often it is the case that many confuse egoism with confidence. This is a terrible mistake, that I admit I have made in the past. I realized that those who strut with "puffed chests," are the most scared and insecure. They have classified everyone as inferior so they are prideful, or more often they have classified everyone as superior and they mask the jealousy and envy, and anger and hate of others by arrogance and pride. They need acknowledgment from people to continue their self-portraits and they unfortunately exploit others to reinforce themselves.

So they always have to be the show, they need to prop up a self-fabricated portrait to God, to themselves, to the world. Because if it all came crumbling down, then they would be seen for what they are—someone anemic from spiritual malnutrition. They would be revealed as cowards hiding behind engorged muscles, pumped with spiritual steroids, only to have terrible spiritual health and bodies; at a certain point in my life I was as such.

Thus when we speak of health we cannot only think of the physical. We should not take steroids physically but even spiritually we should not take steroids. They may make us look big, they may make us look strong and powerful, give us big flexing muscles, but when they wear off we have failing kidneys and lungs, failing respiratory and circulatory systems; our body is breaking down, because of the side-effects of these drugs and substances. It is the same way with the spiritual body (that is why I am using these metaphors to bring out pitfalls that are unfortunately very common on the "spiritual" path).

We may deny that we are these kinds of people. But my point is that we have to look clearly and we will see that, spiritually, we take many of these substances, many of these intoxicants—we are "drunkards," and "addicts" to our Self that we have reified and secretly made an object of worship.. When we can address these things (which I admit is extremely painful and unpalatable) and can admit that we use them, then that is really when our practice can really burgeon. When you understand you have a problem then you can be empowered to fix it.

But it is not enough just to admit it and make no effort in self-transformation, saying "Okay, look! I have the strength to admit it! I'm no coward." Admitting a problem and not fixing it is simply a mechanism that is employed to create the appearance of self-honesty. However, one who is truly honest with oneself not only admits a problem but actively engages it and changes it for the better. Admitting a problem is only the first step—it is basic for our spiritual health—it is a *prognosis* of the illness. Next we must invest ourselves fully in the grunt work of uprooting those addictions and illnesses—we must employ the *remedy*.

THE PATH

The spiritual path is not about just feeling good about oneself, in an egoistic manner. It is the facing of our chronic illness, and problems—of insecurity and hatred to others, our lack of relation to God, and our internal weakness, with a deep honesty and *shimjung* . We have to be like a doctor who sees illness (diagnosis). We have to be professional. We have to see what the causes of that problem are (etiology) and then proceed with identifying the illness (prognosis) and then continue with treatment (remedy).

It will be shocking at first and we will definitely be in denial, just like someone who finds out they have a deadly sickness. We will not want to believe it at first. But slowly we must come to grips with the reality of our sickness. In admitting our sickness we can paradoxically obtain greater freedom—freedom to see weakness and change it. When we develop this inner freedom then and only then can we truly begin to deeply and gratefully live life authentically.

At times, however, we will want to relapse and use the devil's intoxicants, wine, liquor and such things to forget about such

issues and problems. We even at times, may rely on spiritual teachers to get these wonderfully numbing pleasantries—an authorized stroking of the ego, so to speak. But we must be strong and mature; skilled and professional.

That is why I delight when Abonim speaks. He is so blunt, so clear, so penetratingly shocking. He shocks one out of all conceptions of what the Messiah should speak about. He shouts, he speaks unabashedly of "absolute sex" in front of dignitaries, he reveals deep insights into the mind, he strikes down our egos with shocking even scandalous statements like that we must sell our spouses and children and marry communists to make peace, or that we must run streaking through the streets unashamed of our nakedness.

Now, I do not take such statements literally as they are quite extreme, but, I have found it helpful using the discipline of comparative religion here. Perhaps he uses such seemingly outrageous statements like a skilled Zen master who gives an indecipherable "koan" to enlighten the student, such as the famous, seemingly heretical statement "if you see the Buddha, kill him!"—to shock one out of delusion and into grace—the grace of losing all the barriers and attachments, emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual, that we create to separate ourselves from the divine and pure original mind.

We *must* have the courage to face our problems; we have to face them with deep compassion. We have to face them with honesty and truth. We have to be truth-embodiment. Truthful.

Once we practice truth we are in connection with God, because God is Truth. So thus we are being supported and aided along this path to spiritual cleansing, purification, healing, and ultimately a profound thankfulness and relationship with our healer—with God who gives us grace, forgiveness, a new life and relationship.

When we are only self-centered, believing that the world revolves around us, we are going to only experience disappointment. If it is "me" versus and fighting the world we will always be the victim and will ultimately lose—we are significantly outnumbered by all those "others out there." If we stratify ourselves and bifurcate ourselves from everyone else, practicing Divisionism, we slowly and inevitably become increasingly insular to protect ourselves. Because we know, deep inside that we will lose to all the "others" out there, we need to put up *more* walls, *more* protections, *more* defenses to protect our self and our ego.

Once we do that and then we see that the "other" is greater or bigger or wealthier than us, this immediately leads to greed for what they have. Then we want to take and obtain more of what "he/she" has so that we can feel "secure" and pleasurable. Then we see someone else that has more money, more success or is just simply happier than us—this immediately leads to jealousy, then anger, then hate. We may find ourselves saying, "how can they be so happy? They have such an easy life when I am in the real world struggling and fighting the world." Then we want more and maybe we get more short-term wealth or fleeting joy, but that simply leads to pride and sense of greatness over the other. Then that temporary pleasure fades and we are once again miserable and alone, once again comparing our "things" with others and once again resenting the world for our plight.

You see we cannot separate our self from the rest of the world. We are interconnected to everything. You are here because your parents bore you. If they were not together on the day of conception you would not exist. If they were separated by even a moment someone else would be here. Then you were raised and fed food that was nourished by the sun, the moon, the wind, the rain, the

farmer that tilled the land, the animals that fertilized the land with their waste, etc. etc. etc. If you think of all the innumerable things that had to be in place for you to be born, it is absolutely miraculous. Being alive is a miracle. Being able to walk is a miracle. You are actually a miracle, if you think about it.

Nothing is separate from us. We are the product of all your past ancestors and simultaneously we have within us the blood lineage for our descendents—the past and the future is here in us now, not separate from us. When we pass away your body will nourish the earth and its inhabitants. The life you have, the natural world, the sun and the moon, the cosmos are all animated and brought to life by the same One.

We are a part of all things created and they are a part of us because as those things were created so too were we created by Hananim. That is why when we have concern for others we have concern for our self. When we are self centered, practicing Divisionism, then we separate and divide ourselves from all others which puts us at odds and gives us a life of constant struggle and tension. However, when we can realize that we are so intimately intertwined with God, Creation, all of humanity and all living things, (practicing Unificationism) that clamp over our hearts is released and we can feel liberated and released in the vastness of our connection with God and the Created Universe.

When we live in constant union and oneness with God and all Things, we transcend the small, limited and fundamentally false notion of our Self as totally separate from all things. We can then feel an intimate connection to all people and all Creation. We understand that we have been nourished by the Creation, from the sun and the rain, and the plants and the animals. We can see that we have been raised by compassionate people that kept us,

nurtured us and protected us. We can see and feel that humanity is one family under God and that we are all exceedingly important just as children are to their parents.

But as we think we are important to God, so too must we realize that the other person is just as important as a child of God. Thus, when we see them suffer due to their restricted, Divisionist notion of themselves in competition with everything and everyone else, we must feel sorrow and have love for them. We can respect their life and try to compassionately help them, as skillfully as possible, to find happiness and leave a world of self-centered displeasure and frustration. However, we must first leave that self-centered worldview ourselves, in order to help others out of their feeling of disconnectedness to the world and to God—If two are sinking in quick sand, one must first get out to help the other or else they will both perish.

This is why Mind-Body Unity is so critical, so profound, so real and so transformational, because we fundamentally have to face ourselves—our demons. We have to get to the core of the problem of why there is no peace in our own hearts, with our spouses, or friends, families, communities, nations, and world. We have to face the fact that we have separated the well being of the other from the well being of ourselves.

You see if we continue to live in untruths, if we don't fundamentally practice a life of truth—then we create suffering for ourselves and those around us. True Father uses the word *true* all the time—true love, *true* parent, *true* husband/wife, *true* sibling, *true* child, *true* person, etc. But how much truth, do we, as True Father's disciples, practice and embody? How much truth is in our lives?

We say it so easily, but we suffer, because many times we are

living untruths. We are not being true parents, true brothers and sisters; we are practicing untruths to ourselves. We are practicing being seduced by the devil's wiles and his tantalizing magic tricks. I know that I was.

We have to be very careful. We have to face the truth about ourselves—be real, be raw, be naked before ourselves and God. Then the process of uprooting those chronic illnesses can begin. If I have a bonsai that is dying, I have to honestly see the illness; I can't cover it up with a little paint, ignoring the problem. The leaves are wilting; the roots are in danger. I have to look clearly at the troubles. Are the branches too long for the size of the roots, so that there are not enough nutrients being brought to the leaves? Is it being thoroughly nourished internally? Are there parasites or is the root harmed?

Many times we are just withering, I know at times in my life, I was. We are many times empty and filled with despair. We are slowly passing away, a bag of flesh and bones with a titanic ego, instead of being empty of self-centeredness and filled with compassion and grace.

If we look deeply, we see what is there. That is why I think the insight of True Father in using the word *cham* or "truth, true, realness," is very poignant; when we use that word it is powerful, because it fundamentally points us to where we should be centered. We should be truthful, not only in words and actions but in our hearts and minds. This is the practice of MBU. Be true. This is the training of MBU—unity of Mind and Body.

If we are untrue to ourselves we can never be at peace with ourselves. If we are untrue to the world then we feel that the world is always judging us, while it is us that can't stand ourselves and assume that everybody else sees through our deceptions. If we are

untrue before God we will never have a deep and meaningful relationship.

The spiritual path is raw and not always pleasant and "feel-good." I do not intend to intoxicate you with pleasantries. "Highs" felt from such niceties are impermanent and will fade in a matter of minutes—leading to cycles of craving and withdrawal. We must courageously address the root problem of our divided mind and body with compassion, honesty and realism.

I do not see myself as an "enlightened" or "perfected" being. I do not envision myself as one who knows all, but rather I see myself as something like a health-food cook. I can try to help identify "bad" foods you may be eating and do my best to give you "good" foods. I can't tell you the "bad" foods are "good" or that the "good" foods always taste the best, but I can try to make the healthiest foods I can. I can't exercise for you, or make sure you eat five servings daily of fruits and vegetables, but I can try to give you some exercises and methods that will help you stay fit and in shape.

I am not the person with God's telephone number so I can call Him, whenever I need to get updated on where the Providence is going. For *that* information I turn my attention to True Father. Father gives you the direction to go to Gaza, or to make your mind and body one, or to create inter-religious harmony. All I can do is try to help you be as united in mind and body while you're in Gaza or on the steps of Capitol Hill uniting religious leaders.

I am certainly committed and hope to participate in such endeavors in my life as well, but right now I am just trying to make the healthiest, most raw, and natural, MBU foods fresh from East Garden Holy Ground. I hope that it helps.

SO HERE WE GOT

True Father said,

The starting point to unravel the problems humanity faces today is the certain knowledge of God, the Parent of all creation and, on that foundation, the building of true families that live in attendance to God...First each member of the family needs to complete his or her individual character. Each person has to shed the fallen nature that has passed from the fall down through the generations, and achieve the perfection of his or her character. In other words, each person must be victorious in the struggle between mind and body. Then the world of harmony will bear fruit in each individual's perfected character, a state of one heart, one mind and one thought. Fallen nature which causes jealousy, envy, greed, hatred and all other evils, will never again take root in the person who has achieved this state³

This is where we as Unificationists must begin...

What is this business with Mind and Body? Why is this consistently one of the most central themes in True Father's teaching? How are we supposed to unite Mind and Body?

We shall begin this training sequence by playing a game. We'll call it the "10 count game." Here are the rules for the game. Inhale and exhale deeply, then simply count the number "one" in your mind. Inhale and exhale deeply, then simply count the number "two" in your mind and so on until ten. There is one catch however: focus on the *entire* breath from the very beginning to the very end and don't let a single thought enter your mind.

If you are thinking about breathing that's a thought. If you're at number "seven" and you're thinking that you have just three more to go that's a thought; etc.

Why did we play this little game? If you participated, you learned something profound, not logically or intellectually but *experientially*. You just witnessed how *disunited* your Mind and Body are. We say, "Okay we're going to count to ten," but the mind does not follow. It is lost in thought by "three" or "four" (most probably—if we are honest with ourselves). It's thinking about what groceries you were supposed to buy, or the person you were supposed to call; etc. Satan has invaded, has created disharmony, has created disunity.

I often ask fellow Unificationists, "How is it that we think we will bring world peace when we can't even count to ten?" You see, we may speak about making world peace, of making unity, of building bridges, but when True Father asks, "Raise your hand if your mind and body are one," no one raises their hand. This is a

little problematic if we are the ones supposed to be making world peace, especially because True Father says that as long as individuals' minds and bodies are in conflict there will be conflict in families, nations and the world. This is at the very core of our True Father's teaching.

Without our mind and body as one we will not be able to perfect our individual character; without mind and body unity we will not be able to create True families composed of "perfected" individuals; without mind and body unity ourselves, we will not be able to lead the world to unity and to exist for the sake of others; etc.

This, however, cannot be learned intellectually simply because it is not some knowledge that can be possessed. Instead, it is a state that must be "becomed" not just once or twice, but constantly. We have to bring peace and happiness by *being* peaceful both internally and externally, to ourselves and to others. In other words, internal peace (which many judge for being self-centered, due to an attempt to justify their own lack of effort) and external peace are not separate, but are inextricably tied. But if we do it only for one second then peace is gone. Peace must constantly be manifested, instance to instance with constant vigilance. We have the power to *choose* peace.

I asked True Father to bestow upon me the one Chinese character that is the most important character of all. I usually refer to this character as the center of what a Unificationist is or must be. Out of tens of thousands of characters Father gave me, on that treasured day, just one: it wasn't "love," or "obedience" or "dedication" etc; but rather the character *jung-sung sung*: "Sincerity." [insert Chinese character] It is a combination of the Chinese character meaning "words" and the character meaning "to become." In short, we must "become our words."

It does no good just talking about peace or love; it is more essential to *become* peace to fully *become* and manifest God's Love. Then peace or divine love does not have to be sought, it is already here—manifested in us and thus substantially manifested in the world. This is why mind-body unity practice is so critical for us as Unificationists.

If we do not make peace between the warring mind and body, then we are not only *not* solving the problem but we are also part of the problem! So this is the work that I am now undertaking. This curriculum is about practice. It is about Unificationist practice to be more precise. Each of our training practices will consist of a "Reflection," "Training," and "Dedication." Training to unite the mind and body is essential—it is the pathway to the center of God: *jung-sung sung*—"Becoming the Word."

GETTING STARTED

Before you begin training there are some basic things that we must cover. These are such things as environment, posture, breathing, etc. These aspects are critical for you to truly maximize every precious minute that you train. They will support you in keeping yourself focused and alert, as opposed to numb and drowsy.

Environment—The space is a reflection of ourselves. If we live in a cluttered space, our minds are undoubtedly affected. In fact, some elementary schools now opt for clean simple white walls, rather than cartoons and pictures plastered all over the place. Research has shown that people, children and adults, have certain reactions to "messy" space that can affect frustration, anxiety, and stress.

Thus this space should provide you solace and calmness. It should not be too disturbing. This space should be set apart from your other "busy" rooms. It can be a simple corner of a room, or a clean and uncluttered room altogether. It can be a prayer or altar

room with a candle and pictures or sculptures of True Parents and the great religious saints. Wherever it is it should evoke a prayerful and spiritual atmosphere.

Posture—There are eight points of posture that you must pay attention to:

1. **Seat**—this is your contact with the earth. It is the seat of your humility. Notice how you can feel a sense of solidity from the ground, or your chair. Even though you are 85 stories up, you can still feel the strength of the ground where you sit.
2. **Legs**—cross your legs Indian style or sit in a chair (if you must). Your legs should be crossed. This is because when we cross our legs we send very subtle messages to our brain that we are not going to run away. We are going to train. We are going to commit this time for deepening our hearts. So we cross the legs to remind ourselves of this.
3. **Hands**—rest your hands gently on your knees. Your palms may either be down or up. They need not be in some special hand posture.
4. **Back**—your back should be straight, but don't over-strain. You will have to hold your posture for some time during training. The back should represent your internal honor and dignity. You should have a posture of royal kingship—not arrogant but not weak. When the back is held straight it aligns the entire body, and puts the mind in a wakeful and aware state. Your straight spine, will also help you control your abdominal breathing and increase oxygen and blood circulation to the brain and rest of the body.
5. **Head**—the head should not be held arrogantly up. The

chin should be tucked in so the head is pointing gently down. Make sure your head and neck are aligned with your straight back. When we sit with a straight posture aligned with the head, we are dignified. To be dignified is to respect your inner Original Mind and to respect the environment around you—it is to respect the Original Mind of all else who happen to be in your life.

6. Eyes—The eyes, during visualization training should be closed, to maximize concentration. However, during other forms of training, the eyes will be slightly opened and pointed naturally downwards, so as to stay more alert, and not get drowsy.
7. Mouth—the mouth should be closed and the top and bottom rows of teeth should not be touching each other. Don't clench your jaws—this will only create mental tension and agitation. There should be a gap between your upper and lower rows of teeth. Place your tongue naturally behind the top row of teeth—this prevents over-accumulation of excess saliva in the mouth and creates a slight suction within your mouth that helps hold your lips closed.
8. *Jung sung sung*—this is your heart's "sincerity" your mind-state. Your body is now in place to create an environment most conducive to mental training, but now you must muster up sincere determination and strength to have a calm and sincere mind.

Breath—Your breathing will guide you through the training. It is a constant. Even though you are not conscious of your breathing your respiratory system automatically controls your breathing. You don't have to put effort into breathing, otherwise every time

you are thinking of something else you would be suffocating! So breathe evenly and deeply.

When you breathe your upper chest should not be rising and falling but rather you should be trying to breathe from your abdomen—your abdomen should rise and fall with each breath, not your chest. However during training, if the abdominal breathing becomes uncomfortable, you may breathe by expanding your chest and ribcage, but try to return to abdominal breathing.

The reason for this is because your abdomen is the center of your entire body. Even in athletics the abdomen and mid-section is critical to strengthen for peak performance. In order for you to develop deep breathing you must learn how to use your abdominals and mid-section. Thus, from the start try to breath from this center, and not the chest.

As you breathe you will notice that you will have a relatively short in-breath but that your out-breath will be much longer. This is normal, and with more practice you will be able to breathe once every few minutes. Your breathing will be so calm and deep that it will be the ideal place for the cultivation of deep spiritual traits and habits.

Length of Training—Some will find 20 minutes extremely difficult and taxing. Others who are spiritually more mature will be able to train for multiple hours per day. But remember, five minutes of training where we can become conscious of God's love and feel humbled by God throughout the day is superior to five hours of nodding off into sleep! Whatever the time frame, try to begin with 20 minutes, daily, and then you will see that incrementally you will need more training. You can work yourself to thirty minutes, or even a couple hours of training, but remember to take 5-10 minute mindful walking breaks in-between training sessions.

VIBL PRELIMINARIES

Mind-body unity is frightening. In training we seek to "die" so that we may be "born." The fallen nature (which I will refer to as "selfish self," "ego") that is always envious, greedy, selfish, hateful, calculating, grasping, jealous, etc. perishes. This ego self must perish and the Original Mind and conscience within our hearts must become alive. We (our ego) must "die" so that our True Self (that is one with God) may be "born."

But how in the world are we supposed to do this? It sounds great, and I want to do it but how do I do it? Well, first before doing any type of exercise we have to warm up. True Father says, "Shedding the fallen nature is not easy...it is impossible by human effort alone. We need to stand on the foundation of absolute faith, establish God as our vertical axis and struggle our entire life."

So let us begin our training. We know we cannot do it alone. So we first must set the foundation. Before any practice, we have to pray and ask God to give us the strength to unite mind and body (establishing God as our vertical axis) so that we may rid ourselves of our selfish egocentric self, and bring God substan-

tially through our True Self to our lives, our families, tribes, societies, nations, worlds, cosmos, and back to God. In other words, God must be the center from the beginning to the end—the "eternal center" so to speak.

But still we need to set a deeper foundation. We cannot simply ask God and True Parents to do everything for us. We have to invest ourselves. We have to make the determination to become a true parent to humankind, a true spouse, true brother/sister to humankind, and a true son/daughter, not so we can boast about how realized we are, but rather so we can live for the sake of all things.

This determination must not last only for a week, a month, a year, but for our lifetime and beyond. True Father once said that the first place he must go to in the spirit world is hell, so he can save all beings there. This is a critical perspective.

Let me share part of my own testimony. Since the passing of my elder brother, one year my senior, I have risen morning after morning at 2:30 a.m. to train mind-body unity—it is my personal commitment and promise to him. There have been moments of intense doubt and frustration, even anger and self-judgment as to the stupidity and actual "benefit" of training, especially because I was a full-time student, a father, a chairman of the board, and involved in other responsibilities as well.

But it has been my own personal commitment to God and my brother to continually practice and brutally evaluate myself with respect to these eight spiritual training principles:

1. Sincerity (Jung-sung sung): The training of "becoming the Word" or "being what you preach." The practice of sincerity requires unrelenting, consistent effort and honesty with oneself.

2. Devotion: The training of recognizing and renewing the realization that there is a Transcendence—more than just myself and my selfish heart.
3. Self-Honesty: The training of having the courage to not hide cowardly behind arrogance or self-deception of how great I may be, or how smart I may be, or how much people should appreciate me, etc.
4. Respect: Training to treat others with respect. Earning respect not demanding it.
5. Fearlessness: The training of identifying my fears and confronting them. This may be the fear of trying to love others more than myself or the fear of failure, or being scared to always seeing hope in others.
6. Discipline: The training of finding joy in the constant challenge of uniting Mind and Body.
7. Purity: The training of throwing away and removing any obstacles/defilements between practicing care and compassion for others (such as selfishness, unbridled greed for material luxury, self-worship, self-aggrandizement, etc.)
8. Honor: The training of making conditions/promises and keeping them.

Of course, I must admit that, at times, I failed and still fail with regard to the above trainings. But I do try to be brutally honest with my assessments of self and training. One must see the failures honestly and only then can one learn and deepen one's heart. There was once a student who asked the master, "Master, why is it that when you fall down, you can get up?" The master said, "Because I just get up."

For the student, making a mistake was devastating. It was hard to admit to himself his failure. He would end up excessively blaming himself when his mind wandered during training. It required much effort to "get up again" from his failure during training. He wanted to remain on the floor, blaming himself for being inadequate, castigating himself for messing up, but really he simply was lazy and didn't want to get up. It was much more comfortable to be lying down, but he had to at least pretend that he was struggling.

But the master, when he fell down, immediately got up. He was always spiritually vigilant. He was not spiritually indolent. Thus the student was awed by the master's ability to identify mistakes, recognize them, grow, and move on. When the master "failed" in his training, he immediately recognized it, and returned to training—thus when his mind and body became disunited, he saw the division, and he simply united them again. He did not endlessly go on in bouts of self-hatred or reprimanding (all the while just laying around), but immediately saw an imperfection, noted it, and fixed it.

If I told you it was easy to wake up and train day after day, month after month, year after year, all the while fulfilling all my other responsibilities, I would be lying to you. Every single day when that alarm would ring I would have to fight the devil—the devil of sloth, indolence, and skepticism. Regardless of how many hours — or on many occasions — minutes I could sleep, I tried never to break the condition. I tried to see "training time" as my own "appointment" or time with God, True Parents, and members of my family who passed away.

On that note, it is my belief that our determination and commitment, if it is to be true, must not be for a few days or months, but rather every moment. It must be renewed every second, every

minute, every time that we forget—it must be constantly revived, as with our relationship with God, True Parents and our responsibility for humankind.

We have to become "one with God" so that we can help all in the physical as well as spiritual world. This sets the commitment for our practice. We are determined to actualize, to *be* peace, unity and one with God. If we think this will be easy we are more than a little foolish. This will be a long and arduous road. There will be thousands of satans along this path. There will be many egos and devils that will lead us astray. There will be many fears and failures to overcome. So let's be ready.

Cheonju Cheonji Cheonji-in Bumo nim, allow us to make the determination lasting beyond the confines of time, to live for the sake of all, and to practice unity of mind and body so that we may be of most benefit to all beings both physical and spiritual. May all find true and lasting Happiness. May all be free from suffering. May all find true and lasting peace. Amen...

Now that we have made an invocation to begin our practice we have to first set a stable foundation. Just as a house must be built on a sturdy foundation so too does the "temple of God" or our mind-body unity.

Let's begin training.

THE EIGHT PREPARATORY PRACTICES

1. Honor God and True Parents with *okmansei* for their unconditional True Love for us (does not have to be done vocally)
2. Offer all precious things to God and True Parents. These can be things we have or don't have. We can offer our talents and virtues, our goodness, our resources, our mind, body and heart.
3. Remember our vows by reciting the *ka-jong meng sei*, either vocally or in your heart. (You can also just repeat the word, *ka-jong-meng-sei*, as an abbreviated version).
4. Confess and repent with clear self-honesty, for inadequacies, weaknesses or sins that you have thought, said and/or done. Ask for forgiveness and make the commitment not to repeat them.
5. Take time to admire God and True Parent's virtue, as well as recognizing your own virtues. Give yourself positive feedback for virtues you have.
6. Ask True Parents to help continue to teach us how to

become true parents so that we may help those who suffer with a true parental heart

7. Pray that God and True Parents' sacrifice will never be forgotten
8. Dedicate all these practices to becoming a true person, perfecting the Four Great Realms of Heart (becoming a true parent, spouse, sibling, son/daughter for the world)

MIND-BODY UNITY (VIBU)

REFLECTION

True Father states, "God breathes the air of Love. That is the way it is in spirit world. What is air? It is Love. Love." ⁵ God gives us life through His Love—Love for us. The breath is the life force that *sustains* us. It *connects* us to the natural world as we breathe together with plants, giving and receiving oxygen and carbon dioxide. Without the breath we die within minutes. Thus the breath is the invisible "food" for our existence—and it is a profound "God gift." The first thing we do at birth when we enter this world is *inhale*. The last thing that we do when exiting this world is *exhale*. Thus in one breath there is the value of our entire existence. It is that precious.

The problem is most of us are totally unaware of this unfathomable "God gift."

We are too busy ruminating on the past, calculating plans, day dreaming of future things, or just "too busy." We are never present in the here and now—never attending to the details that God has given us. The point is to become more fully present and aware of something we take for granted, but yet something that is so deeply

profound. When we appreciate something as simple as the breath, we can more fully appreciate life and the other innumerable gifts that we are given. We start by first recognizing our breath, our life, our existence.

TRAINING

1. Find an environment that will provide you the least distraction—a quiet place is best for now.
2. Sit comfortably with back straight in a chair, on a cushion, or if for health reasons you need to lie down, be sure not to fall asleep! Keep hands on knees in a relaxed manner. Relax completely. Be prepared to not move your body (except for the things not in your control) for the *entire* duration of the training. Don't let yourself be tempted; notice even subtle things like when you are being tempted to swallow saliva for comfort or when you are craving to scratch an itch. Once you committed the time for formal training stay strong and disciplined in unity. Resist these small temptations and over time, this training will help strengthen the spiritual muscles that help to *notice* and *resist* larger and more difficult temptations.
3. Breathe deeply and naturally three or four times allowing the abdomen to rise as you inhale and contract as you exhale. While exhaling, empty all the "stale air" out of your body (you will have to gently contract your abdominal and pelvic muscles to expel all the "stale air" out).
4. Return to normal breathing and try to stay with the breath. Continue to take note in your mind repeating, "Breathing in—I know I am breathing in. Breathing out—I know that I am breathing out."

5. Now, extend your awareness and notice the texture, the tone and the temperature of the breath. Notice how it flows in the nostrils down the larynx, how the chest and/or abdomen rise and fall, etc. Try to be as perceptive as possible (we are trying to notice with detail what God gives us to experience but what we are usually completely unaware of). We are increasing our awareness of "God's gifts" to us (this leads naturally to a greater gratitude of the value of God's Love).
6. Notice, that at some point, your concentration will be broken. This is normal at this stage (our unity is weak). Satan will distract you from increasing your awareness and Love for God. Your mind has wandered away, lost on a thought-train. When this happens do *not* be violent to yourself or your mind. Just let go of feelings of failure and gently guide your awareness back to the breath and to the Life that God is giving you at this moment. Stay fully present.
7. If your mind wanders use the technique of "mental noting" by not judging yourself but noticing where your mind has gone. For example if your mind is wandering in thought, *label* it in a calm and peaceful mental voice, saying, "wandering—wandering—wandering." If you are becoming anxious, say, "becoming anxious—becoming anxious...."; if your attention is drawn to your knees or legs, gently say, "knees—legs—knees..."; if you are getting frustrated or angry note it saying, "angry mind—frustrated mind, angry mind—frustrated mind" and so forth. You will find that once you mentally note where your awareness is, that distraction will slowly weaken and fade away. Then you

can naturally let go of the distraction and gently return to the breath. Breathe deeply and evenly exhaling all the "stale air" out and continue this prayer of mentally noting and returning to the Divine breath for 10 -20 minutes.

DEDICATION

May any peace of mind, unity, or virtue that is gained from my training be for the sake of helping others. May the heart of True Love shine forth from the true self, spreading God's light and Love upon all beings, spiritual and physical. May I vow to become a true person to help all those who suffer find true and lasting happiness. May we dedicate this practice to Hananim, True Parents, and all of Humanity. Amen. Amen. Amen...

In this foundational training, we have trained in stabilizing Mind and Body Unity. We quickly find out, once we begin our meditation, that our mind and body unity is not stable. Our body is here but our mind is there. We are not one. The devil of distraction subverts our unity.

In this practice it is essential to NOT be judgmental of yourself. However, it *is* important to be *self-honest*. Don't be fooled, self-honesty is not the "touchy-feely-just-accept-yourself-and-all-your-flaws-and-don't-try-to-become-better" kind of sentimentality. Honesty requires great courage and the ability to sometimes sternly address your weaknesses, but it always leaves room for hope—hope to become less egocentric and more mindful of all the "God-gifts" in our lives.

Self-judgment says, "you failed and you're condemned to being a failure!" Self-honesty says, "you may have failed, but let's notice

it, address it, fix it and move forward." With self-judgment there is no hope of becoming better, but with self-honesty there is an inner humility, a patience, and an awareness that one's mistakes can help one learn.

But what are we practicing at a fundamental level? We are practicing powerful principles—the principles of regaining dominion and becoming mindful (as opposed to mindless—which is the way we usually are, especially in matters of our relationship to God), "letting go" and "beginning anew." When we fail in our practice and the mind wanders, we don't just become reactive and start judging ourselves as failures; we become mindful of the self-judgment and mentally note it. For example, when we get angry, anger comes and takes us over—it has become the subject and we have become the object; thus we are controlled, often unknowingly, by this anger (this could be any afflictive state like envy, jealousy, hatred, resentment, etc.). However, when we "mentally note" the anger, and put a label or sticker on it, we not only recognize it we actually strip away its power—we become the subject and anger becomes the object! When we do this, we regain dominion and control of our minds. Then, since we are in control, we can choose to "let it go" returning to our breath—we practice "beginning anew."

Think how much this simple practice of being in dominion of you mind can be. If we could learn to be more mindful, "letting go" or harmful emotions and "starting anew" this could greatly benefit our lives and that of others. After a difficult event in life, instead of falling into self-pity, depression and/or violence to oneself or others, if we could become actively mindful of our anger, frustration, agitation, and hatred (instead of simply being passive and letting these states take one over), and then let it go, moving on

preoccupying our minds with a thousand other distractions. We can find God profoundly revealing His love for us in every simple thing. While we are washing the dishes, we can notice the water, the texture of the porcelain, how we stand, our breath, we can notice that God gives us the opportunity to simply be aware, alive and awake.

It will also allow one to become more acutely aware of how selfish, self-centered states control us—how Satan cleverly tempts us. *But* it will also be the tool by which you can learn to master such states. This training is absolutely fundamental. It is where the house of God will be built, so make sure you invest yourself in creating a strong foundation. There are no shortcuts to becoming a better person. Be mindful! Be heartfelt! Be spiritfull! You can do it!

with a fresh beginning, think about how practically helpful that would be. When a gang member is insulted and pulls out a gun to kill another person, if he could not get fixated to the insult (becoming mindful of his tendency to defend his ego, and his fear of admitting his sense of insecurity), let it go and begin anew, it would save another's life.

This is why Mind-Body Unity is so critical. It allows us a gap between "stimulus" and "response." A certain stimulus may infuriate us and our reactive response would be to hit, attack either verbally or physically, or get angry. But if we train enough in Mind-Body Unity, when that stimulus comes, we can have a space, a "breath," between that stimulus and our "fight or flight" response. By utilizing "mental noting technique," we become the subject to those violent and afflictive mental states, which then gives us distance from them, allowing us to regain dominion of our minds, instead of becoming overwhelmed by the affliction. We begin anew by simply returning to our breath, our center, our life. We can choose to become peace.

Many think that this won't help the world or that it won't prevent violence. But imagine if everyone could simply, when angry to the point of wanting to harm another, become mindful of that anger, objectify it, putting distance between it and them, and then let go of it and begin anew, this world would indeed be a different world. This is the immense power of actualizing our own Mind-Body Unity. This is why uniting the Mind and Body has been a central theme throughout True Father's entire ministry.

This is the *most* fundamental meditative, contemplative prayer practice and cannot be overlooked! Practicing just this training, will increase your mindfulness and awareness of God! When we are walking we can walk, fully being aware that we are walking, not

CONCLUSION: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

In MBU we train, and our "point of departure" is understanding the reality of our division, our lack of concentration, our weakness to the "devil's wiles"—it is understanding our epistemological inadequacy: we are *finite*, God is *in-finite*. Some may try to criticize this as being pessimistic, and not being "positive"—of course because mentioning the fact that we are not completely flawless is totally erroneous—or so they want to believe!

MBU is rather the exact antithesis. Because we begin by understanding our inadequacies, we begin with hope. If we had nothing to be mindful of, or nothing to improve we could simply stagnate and perish. This is more pessimistic to me! However, if we understand our illness we only have room to become healthier and more spiritually well individuals.

Some other forms of training seek to "pump-up" people's self-portraits, to "stroke the ego," create delightful "elixirs," to numb our awareness of our illnesses. But these ultimately result in only temporary good feelings. The problems persist, only to re-emerge, tossing us back into the cycle of craving more pleasantries to mask

our spiritual frailty.

However, when we address compassionately, non-judgmentally, like a doctor, what our problems are we are empowered to work with them. By identifying the sources of our many delusions we can uproot the chronic illnesses that prevent us from true and lasting happiness, for ourselves and for all those we can influence.

Thus it is my hope that with this training, you will have great honesty, courage and determination to be truthful, to yourself and others. Be truthful in the ways that you help yourself grow to become a True Person of God. As we constantly work on the process of becoming more true and loving; more honest and real; then we can manifest the Kingdom in our hearts, in our homes and in our world.

God is always there to heal and support us. We just have to quiet ourselves. We have to hear the wisdom learned in the silence with God. Some of my most profound experiences are just sitting in total silence with True Father, before he goes out to *Hoon Dok Hae*. In that silence, I can quiet my selfish desire to want to be praised or told that he loves me, or other such things that children wish to hear from their parents.

However, in those silent moments, I have experienced the deepest presence of God. I have at times been moved to tears in such silence, together with Father. At times, I have felt such a profound communication, an utterly humbling silence that compels me to bow down and admit in my heart my inadequacies.

In that silence, we discover where our minds really are. We can see that we long to only be praised. We crave to be exalted. We say things like, "I'm such a good person praying so diligently like this," or, "look how amazing I am giving all this effort while my friends are watching dramas" and such. We don't want to hear the

fact that we crave praise so that we can mask our inner weaknesses and such.

So we *must* train to see those weaknesses. We must see the cracks in the dam, or sooner or later, the water will burst through, and we will be shattered. In those moments of silence, in those moments of listening we can see our inadequacies, our selfish tendencies and learn to listen—to let our heart of humility guide us.

Humility is a great strength and should not be mistaken for passivity, or acting like a gentle grandmother. Humility comes from a fundamental understanding of our epistemological inadequacy as humans before God. If that is our point of departure in our prayer lives, then we can be fully open to the lessons, nice or harsh, that God reveals to us. We can be fully receptive to the multitude of blessings and teachings of God's Infinite Love, Wisdom and Grace.

So we have to be awake, alert and aware! If we can do this we can bring deep consolation to God and serve True Parents with a deeper heart. It is my sincere hope that through addressing our strengths *and*, more importantly, our weaknesses, we can become more honest with ourselves and begin anew the process of reliving the excitement of a personal and constantly renewing relationship to God and True Parents. Let us fill each moment of our lives with new gratitude and awareness of God's gifts—and as always—more training, more training, more training!

SPOUSAL UNITY

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE HELPS OTHERS CHANGE

Now that we have trained in mastering the mind and body we must be able to spread the benefits and insights gained in practice to impact other elements of our daily life. One of the key elements that we learned experientially in the practice of MBU was the fact that we are responsible for unifying and making peace within. As we give our effort to create lasting peace on the microcosm of the warring mind and body, we set the foundation and gain the necessary discipline, patience, endurance and experience to help us in our daily lives.

Let us reflect on our relationships. We have a spouse, family, children, friends, co-workers, etc. What is the constant in all of those relationship? Yes, it is us. Usually we try to make others change. We blame them and believe that it is they that need to make the appropriate changes to help the relationship.

However, this we find leads to much frustration and failure. Not only do they *not* change, we end up in a cycle of blaming others for our relationship problems. It becomes constantly the

other's fault and we become less and less observant of our own contribution to such issues. This is why we trained extensively in MBU. Through our practice we cut through our portraits and delusions of ourselves with our sword or self-analysis. We cut through the fabrications and excuses. We see that we blame others in an attempt to protect our visions of ourselves. "How could something so wonderful as *me* contribute to relationship problems" we may subconsciously ask.

The first step in changing our relationships, is understanding that we can only change *ourselves* and our attitudes. We can not try to force others to change—they are individual truth bodies with free will. Forcing others to change is probably the least effective method in engendering change. It usually strengthens the others resolve not to change and one is caught in an endless battle of attacking and the other defending.

The more effective and also efficient way to elicit change in relationships is to change our mind. We must teach it new habits. Once we change our reactive way of responding to relationship problems we immediately change all our relationships. Why? Because we are the constant in *all* our relationships.

In practicing to actively change ourselves we are creating the right type of mindset to help in creating healthy relationships. Our relationship with our spouse is our most intimate of relationships, which also means that little conflicts and disagreements can lead to much frustration and pain. Because of our proximity to our spouse there is the opportunity for powerful love to be expressed but also at times intense anxiety can be also be produced. It is important that, when positive, neutral or negative, with each other, that we first are able to understand that these states *transform* and *change*.

Just as we experienced in MBU, emotional and psychological states such as anger or even intense joy, eventually fade and we return back to equilibrium. Remember when you practiced MBU and your mind became agitated with a thought or a distraction or an emotion, etc.? Once you noticed it and mentally noted it did it continue to persist? No, right? It faded away. But you may have experienced that it came back, but then you countered it again with mentally noting it and dismantling it by labeling it "angry mind" or "anxious mind" or "frustrated mind" etc. and it dissipated again. Through repeating this process of countering afflictive distractions by mentally labeling them and breaking them up into smaller more identifiable and digestible pieces you were able to not only make the state fade, but you gained insight into the nature of such states—that they are ultimately made up of many different states as opposed to one unmanageable "monster" like anger or hate; *and* that they eventually pass by.

This is an enormous insight with very real and practical benefits that apply directly to your unity with your spouse. When frustrated or angry you immediately apply the technique of mental noting your angry thought-train, break it down, and move it along allowing it to pass by. You then return to your breath, breathing deeply and evenly exhaling all the stale, frustrated air out. Finally, continue this process, until your mind settles back to equilibrium and reaches a calm. If that thought train comes by again, label it, and let it pass on by, returning to your deep breathing.

Now, you are in much more control of your mind and body. I have heard of blessed couples becoming violent to one another and this must be absolutely avoided at all costs. It is inexcusable. When angry, frustrated, hateful etc. see the thought-train, don't get on and let it pass by, returning to deep breathing exhaling all the

stale, frustrated air out. Keep your dignity and remain in control of mind and body.

When we do this, we practice respect not only for our spouse but also for ourselves as well. We are much better than being people that deal with problems by getting hateful and angry thus becoming violent. We must be more united in mind and body as Unificationists who are supposed to create unity rather than division, peace rather than hate.

So respect your spouse by respecting your mind and body. Respect the power that you have as you strengthen your MBU. When an afflictive thought-train comes by, label it (reminding yourself of where it is leading to), and let it pass by. You have been victorious. But if it comes by again remain aware, attentive and diligent reapplying the training. This is MBU applied at the spousal level!

You will realize that this practice that you now bring to your relationships will overlap into other less intimate relationships such as with your children or siblings or friends. You see, once you are able to transform and strengthen your MBU muscles, you will be able to master those obstacles in your relationships. When you become jealous of a friend you will have the insight to label it "jealous mind" and let that thought-train pass, returning to your breath.

Someone who gets jealous jumps on a thought-train which goes further and further into "jealousy land," then hops on a thought-train to "judgment land," and then transits to a thought train headed for "hatred land." This is a scary example but unfortunately this is the case and happens in our world today. How many times have you seen on TV that a jealous friend sabotaged another friend's success or maybe even murdered his wife or loved ones.

In the ancient scriptures this theme is apparent in many stories, the most obvious being the biblical stories of Cain and Abel, or

the story of Joseph and his brothers and the more obscure being the stories of King David's jealous lust. In Buddhism, this theme of jealousy is exemplified in the *Samannaphala Sutta*⁶ of the *Digha Nikaya*—*Devadatta*, the Buddha's cousin, who wishes to usurp the Buddha's position as head of the Sangha (community of monks and believers) and jealously tries to get rid of the Buddha.

So we see that even historical religions have had to deal with such human failings like jealousy, envy, greed, etc. Thus to get back to our point, one who can identify when a deadly state arises and can see that deadly thought-train, is empowered to know what may happen if one gets on that train, and thus has the insight and power to let it go right on by, returning to the pure and invigorating breath of life. At least now we can have an effective remedy for dealing with such potentially dangerous mind-states. See why MBU is critical for even making peace in your relationships?

FILL UP YOUR TANKS REGULARLY

Admittedly, peace is *not* merely the absence of violence. But I also recognize that that is indeed a very important first step! As your MBU muscles develop you will also be able to use them to reflect on even the happy times of your relationships. Let's say that you and your spouse are really happy and you are feeling like you are in heaven. At that point you know, through your training, that all mental states fade or change given time, and knowing this you can be more attentive and thankful expressing gratitude in your heart to God or to your spouse who let you experience that joy. So even in times of joy, you can be fully present and not just let precious moments pass you by and when the euphoria passes you can let go of it knowing that you had been truly present and grateful during the blessing.

When you are with your spouse just enjoying some time together, you can breathe in, knowing that you are breathing in and breathe out, knowing that you are breathing out saying "thank you" with each deep exhalation. Thus even though your spouse may not know it you are thanking God with each breathe you take that you can be by your spouse's side. In doing so you can reflect on the many who cannot experience this type of comfort and joy because maybe their spouse has passed away or maybe their spouse is very ill. This type of empathetic reflection training is connected to your own happiness. As you feel joy with your spouse, use that joy as a stimulus to remind yourself of others who may not be able to experience that joy and increase your compassion tank for others.

If both your spouse and yourself practice MBU you can be partners in training (just like you may have someone "spot" you in the gym when working out). Your spouse can help remind you and "spot" you when you both sit down to discuss and reflect upon how to make peace in mind and body, or reflecting on others that are suffering, or thinking about marriage life together. These are all things that add to your relationship tank. Your relationship with your spouse constantly needs to be filled up again and again, or otherwise the vehicle of marriage won't go on without transmission problems and other such mechanical difficulties.

In order to keep moving ahead, you must do the little things that keep the vehicle in tip-top shape. Just like you have to get your oil changed or your transmission fluid checked, in your spousal relationship you must also make regular check-up stops. When you take your car for granted and don't do a regular check up what happens? It breaks down faster.

In our relationship with our spouse if we don't invest in regular

check-ups and reflections we will not only *not* know where we are going, we will, in addition, never get there due to our vehicle breaking down. The endurance and patience that we learned in MBU will be essential as we start applying them to our relationship with our spouse.

In Unificationism, marriage is our most holy sacrament. We must respect this institution and prepare well for it. This is why we covered the mastery of mind-body unity before we start bringing unity to the spousal level. What we must remember, however, is that these different "levels" are not as separate as we think. They are very interconnected.

True Father teaches us about the Eight Stages of Perfection that we are supposed to bring to unity. They are the Individual, Family, Tribe, Society, Nation, World, Cosmos, and Hananim. These levels are of course related to each other. Individuals make up families, families make up tribes, and so forth. However, the most fundamental unit is that of the individual.

The individual is in relation to him/herself and the other. Whether that "other" is another family member or Hananim the individual is always in relation to another. On the individual level the individual is in relation to his/her disunited mind and body that he/she seeks to unite. On the other levels s/he is in relation to all other things, whether it is as great as the world or cosmos, or as close to our families or tribes.

So here at the spousal level, we should understand that we are in relation to the other. We are ideally supposed to complement and "complete" our spouse. The first step is to understand that we are a "we" not an "I" and "you." We are partners.

LISTEN FIRST

Arguments are caused by one thing: misunderstanding, or ignorance of the other. When a man speaks he wants to feel like he is right and appreciated. When a woman speaks she wants to feel heard and understood. Because men and women are looking for different results in the conversation it frequently leads to frustration and misunderstanding.

When our spouse speaks, she needs to feel like she is understood by us. Usually the husband is wanting to get to the point and not have a long conversation, saying, "I know that" or "yeah, so what's your point?" or "that doesn't make any sense"; etc. This leads our wife to feel like she is not being heard and that we don't understand where she is coming from. This will lead her often to begin again and try to explain her feelings ending up in an even longer conversation.

So next time your wife is speaking, just listen! Call your attention to listening when your mind is wandering, or formulating a response to fire back, etc. If you seek to empathize first, God will reward you with a shorter conversation *and* you may actually learn something from your wife! So blessed husbands, listen up with true love, patience and empathy.

Now on the other hand, when the husband is in an argument he usually wants to feel like he is contributing a point or that his statements are logical and make sense. So sisters, when your husband is speaking let him say his point and when he is done try to find a point (even if you don't agree with all of it), that you find helpful and tell him that it makes sense and that it is logical. Saying things like, "you should say this" or "that is so stupid," or "you always complain, shouldn't you be a man!" will hurt his confidence and his sense of contributing positively in a meaningful

blessed central marriage.

So next time you are in an argument, let him know that he makes sense and that certain points you find helpful and poignant. If you empathize with his need to feel like he is contributing with solutions, then he will feel supported and will then want to empathize more with what your needs are. Also, when you do have needs make sure you communicate that to him and be specific, concise and kind. Being more aware of ourselves and each other will be the building blocks of trust and transforming what were arguments before, to supporting and understanding communication with each other from now on—It is Training! Remember to listen to each other!

FIDELITY

One of the greatest vows that we take when we receive the blessing is life-long fidelity. Fidelity to our spouse is an absolute must. There are no excuses for infidelity. We have a tendency to believe that infidelity is caused primarily because of the weakness of the "flesh"—or the desires of our bodies.

However by thinking this way we have missed a crucial step in our analysis of where infidelity really begins—in the mind. From a Unification theological perspective, the Fall was committed first when Lucifer tempted Eve spiritually—or in the realm of the mind. We will see that once we begin to gain control and awareness of our various mind-states through the practice of MBU we will be empowered to stop the temptation before it becomes unmanageable.

We must stop the adultery as soon as it appears in our minds. If we stop it in the mind, then the action will not be able to follow. There are many techniques that can be employed when tempta-

tions of the flesh invade our minds. Some, for example, when tempted, may think of their spouse or pinch themselves, etc.

A powerful and ancient practice that monks would practice to lesson attachment to physical beauty was to visualize the temptress' skeleton, red and bloody musculature, and all the various types of bodily fluids like blood, puss, bile, urine and feces (which all of us have) coursing through the temptress' body. They would keep their concentration on the actual physiological composition of the body, not on the skin level, but deeper, seeing the internal composition, thus taking away its alluring sexual power.

Thus if a person looked physically alluring, once this technique was applied, their once soft alluring skin would immediately seen as slimy, sinewy, and blood-red. The person has musculature, with dark blue veins pumping blood, with gaping eye sockets with eyeballs, intestines, lungs, kidneys, heart, etc. This would immediately remind the practitioner that all persons, no matter how "beautiful" are actually human beings. Thus instead of appreciating them for only their physical beauty, which after this training, is clearly "skin deep", we can understand that they too wish to be happy and free from suffering.

However, this practice should not be utilized for too long, lest it begins to affect your relationship with your spouse. It should only be employed when a temptation is arising and/or reappearing. Once you have gained control of your mind and body, then it should *not* be done further. If you do utilize this training, balance it with seeing your spouse as intensely alluring and beautiful, physically, mentally and spiritually.

A more simple practice is the practice of returning strongly to the breath when any tempting thoughts invade your MBU. When an adulterous thought-train emerges, simply note it, and get off,

returning your full attention to your breath, exhaling all the stale air out. Notice the breath's texture, it's temperature, how the air flows over your upper lip and into your nostrils; etc. Stay focused and with the breath for its whole duration. If you are taken again on a thought-train, return to the practice of deep breathing. Continue this process, until mind-body unity and stability is regained.

If stability is too hard to maintain, then resort to understanding that no matter how beautiful a person may seem (they could be a supermodel with diamonds and pearls and dressed up very alluringly), but they are carrying around about two to three pounds of feces everywhere they go! No matter how physically attractive a person may be there is the very unsavory smell and texture of feces churning around in their intestines that they are carrying around! It may be unpleasant to hear but if you think about it every human being is as such. That should allow you to regain focus on your breathing and on the gift of life and stay away from temptations on the mind!

NON-REACTIVE EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Now, in the course of this work, we will practice Non-Reactive Empathetic Listening. This practice is to help us get to a new level in our spiritual relationship and understanding of our spouse. How often do we really listen to what our spouse says? Most of the time when our spouse is telling us something or sharing his/her feelings with us we are engaged in a conversation with ourselves in our minds. When our spouse is expressing his/her frustrations, "defensive mind" rears its head. Then "judgmental mind" emerges and works with "self-justifying mind" to try find something that we don't enjoy about our spouse to attack back with, etc.

Usually we are totally unaware of such processes and defense mechanisms. Because we are not, we react, and many times end up saying something we wish we hadn't. We thus create scars in our relationship and although we may apologize the hurt still remains. Thus we must be vigilant with our MBU even while with Our spouse.

In training, we saw that we are divided and distracted. We saw that the devil sends thought trains to take us away and confuse and confound our unity. It is the same at the spousal level. If we are not aware of the thought-trains, then we will end up in a bad place very quickly. In the dynamic of a living relationship, it requires more vigilance and focus to see the thought-trains as they come very quickly and snatch us away when we are in an intense situation.

When we feel judged by our spouse, we will have all sorts of thought trains emerge. They will be sent to deliberately make us lose control and contribute in the destruction of our holy marriage. Thus we must be vigilant. We will now, together with our spouse, undertake the practice Non-Reactive Empathetic Listening. Here is our next training:

NON-REACTIVE EMPATHETIC LISTENING PRACTICE

1. Sharing frustration—Each get a piece of paper and both spouses should honestly write *three* things that are frustrating about the other, starting the sentence with "I." (My sister gave me this idea and the reason for this is that we usually start sentences with "you" with our spouse—"you did this" or "you did that" or "its your fault" etc. However, when you begin a sentence with "I" you have to pause and wait and "own" what you say. You have to

include how you are related to the statement, instead of it being an accusation where you are totally innocent. I believe that one should also implement this practice of beginning sentences with "I" when in a verbal disagreement with one's spouse). Be specific. Start your sentences with, "I was hurt when you..."; or "I felt angry when you..."; or "I didn't like it when you..."; etc. While you write, watch your breathing and the various thought-trains of anticipation, nervousness, etc. Don't think about what the other is writing, and don't try to get lost in imagining what they are writing, just stay honest and focused on sharing three frustrations you have (by asking your spouse to write down what they find frustrating about you, you will be able to listen in on a real concern that is frustrating to your spouse and not get caught up in tone, facial expressions, etc.)

2. Sharing strengths—Now, continue by writing *three* things that are deeply wonderful and praiseworthy about your spouse, starting the sentence with "I" and give it calmly to the other to read. Be specific, start the sentences with things like, "I love it when you..."; "I feel loved when you..."; "I am moved when you..."; etc.
3. Read Empathetically—Now go to a separate place and read what your spouse has written in silence. Try to read and keep your body completely still. While you are reading silently, your minds will be racing. Defensive thought-trains, judgmental thought-trains, angry thought-trains, vengeful thought-trains, etc. may be sent to control you. Notice these, and let them pass. Do not be reactive, but be empathetic and understanding. Now, as you read,

notice the totally different thought-trains that emerge. Ego thought-trains, self-indulging thought-trains, attachment to praise thought-trains, etc. Notice that when something negative was said you defended your ego and when something positive was said your ego delighted in it and maybe wanted more.

This is important to recognize about our Egos—that it instinctively rejects things unpalatable and indulges in things that are desirable. When we realize this tendency we can weaken the satisfaction that the Ego derives from such things. In doing so, we can become more reflective, realizing our selfish tendencies and then we can begin to change those tendencies to become more serving of others—more self-less.

4. Be open to your spouse's sharing—I t's up to you to create an atmosphere of honesty, where your spouse can feel comfortable in sharing. Just remember that this is the religious practice of more deeply understanding some frustrations that have not been addressed. You may feel very uncomfortable and may begin shifting positions, or you may crinkle your brow in disbelief, etc.—take mental notes of these physical markers (identifying some of these physical markers now will help alert you to when you are becoming uncomfortable and defensive in the future). Notice that these are reactions to your feeling that you are being criticized—these are also part of your defenses.
5. Admit Imperfection—Now as you notice both the mental thought-trains and the physical markers focus and try to listen empathetically to what your spouse has shared. Unemotionally, admit to yourself, that you may have that

tendency, at least once in a while to act in such a way. This is a good first step (remember, even if you feel you are innocent, a good listener can always acknowledge that the frustration is "real" for the other that shared it).

6. Prayer of Thanks—Finally, you both should conclude in a "prayer of thanks" as you both have contributed in deepening understanding and reflection in your marriage. End in a conventional ending of prayer, praying in your name.
7. Now have a moment of silence and meditation, breathing deeply and calmly, being at peace in mind and body, and feeling joy from deepening your understanding of your spouse.

Now we are building insight into how we are overtaken by anger many times in our relationships. When we are criticized we refuse to admit it and when we are praised we become addicted and don't want anything else. These are problems.

Just like in individual MBU we had to address our illnesses and overcome them, so to at the spousal level must we do so. We must be able to see that when our spouse expresses frustration to us about something we do, they are helping us identify illnesses. Now I must admit, one can get too obsessed with finding fault in the other and that is certainly *not* healthy for the relationship. This is the reason for only sharing *three* frustrations and *three* praises per session of practice, so that the list is not overwhelming and unrealistic for change.

Three things to work on and three things you're doing well will help you focus on what to watch out for as well as what to keep doing. Thus, do not engage in finding fault in the other at every moment you have time, but rather set aside a mutually planned

UNITY WITH OUR CHILDREN

One of the first things we must understand is that the difference between children and adults is about two feet. When we raise children we more often than not raise ourselves. In raising our children, we have to be more forgiving, *we* have to be more patient, *we* have to be unconditionally loving, *we* have to practice mastery over anger or resentment (yes it is true that many parents resent their children for "taking" their "freedom" or "social life" away), etc.

Often, because children are so much smaller and seemingly underdeveloped, we have a tendency of treating them as if they know nothing. Granted that there are certain parts of the brain, such as the frontal cortex that is responsible for long-term decision-making, that are not fully developed until ones mid-twenties. However, other parts of the brain are just as developed as adults, such as the region of the brain responsible for how we feel emotions—the "affective" brain.

Children can teach us to be mindful of the "little things" in life. I have derived a great deal of inspiration in how my children greet each new day with a youthful and refreshing energy. When taking the dogs for a walk with them, they remind me of the purity of youth and the natural love of nature and creatures. Their humor and playfulness in the way they may imagine things or say a simple sentence remind me of how they are so very alive and present in the moment.

However, raising children has challenges as well. I remember when one of our boys was calling the others names, like "you grandpa" or "chicken boy" etc. It got to the point that when he got frustrated while doing homework he called his mother such names. At first she gave him rules saying that he could not call others

"grandpa" or "chicken boy." But he became very creative and innovative, producing other names that were not on the list. She realized the rules were not working.

We talked about this challenge and I recommended that we, instead of creating a list of "rules and regulations," would be better off teaching, what ancient traditions referred to as "virtues." This is because rules are much too specific—"don't call mommy a "grandmamma" etc. With this type of rule the child will create another name to call and we would have to counter with another rules and this would continue, 1) diminishing the potency of rules and 2) making the child more intent on finding other names not on the list. Instead what I suggested was teaching virtues.

I explained that the reason why I enjoyed the art of the Way of Tea (*Chado*) was because it taught students the four virtues of tea, namely, Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquility. It is expressed that when offering someone a bowl of tea one is creating a time for Harmony. As one is being harmonious with a guest, then Respect can ensue. While one is participating in a tea ceremony, the purity of the utensils, the mind and intention must be observed. When all three virtues are realized then the fourth, Tranquility, will naturally arise.

I explained that *Chado* tried to instill within its students the virtues of making Harmony, being Respectful, being Pure in mind and body, and creating Tranquility for oneself and others. These virtues would then shape all other aspects of one's life. Although the ceremony itself is very structured and ritualized, the virtues are applicable to many other parts of life other than the practice of the Way of Tea.

In the same way, we decided to focus on two virtues, "Respect yourself and others" and, "forgive, forget, and move on." Happily,

these virtues helped immensely. When they tried to make up new names or insults, we simply said, "Respect others." When they tried to complain how they had been wronged by someone, we uttered, "Forgive, forget and move on." These virtues were large and broad enough to deal with many differing types of situations and remained flexible and adaptable to changes in situations.

As opposed to being confined by rules and regulations, our children learned these two virtues applying them to a variety of situations. When one of the children, frustrated with homework would say, "I can't do this" or "I'm not good at this" we would respond saying, "respect yourself, you *can* do it." By staying focused on these virtues, we as parents found it useful, effective and empowering even for ourselves.

I remember another instance when our boy was with my wife and I at home when all his brothers and sisters had gone to a friend's house. They invited him to go and we urged him to go play with them but he adamantly insisted that he would remain with us. As soon as they left he began to weep, stating that they would all be playing games and having fun. He then went on to tell of an experience a year ago when he was not allowed to play video games at his friends house. We realized that at that moment it would not be helpful to angrily tell him that this was all due to his immature decision-making and that his complaints were illogical.

We tried to stay sympathetic as even children can feel intense emotional stress and suffering, comparable to adults. There can be an experience that two share, but one breaks down into chronic depression and one moves on with renewed commitment. Thus understanding that he was experiencing strong distress, we tried to empathetically listen repeating the virtues.

We told him that it was important to "forgive, and forget" his

friend, who over a year ago did not let him play his video games. We then told him that he had to "forgive, forget and move on." When he tried to create an alternative way of making the same complaint we simply repeated, "Forgive, forget and move on." The virtue was large enough that it subsumed under its auspices a huge variety of complaints regarding others wrongdoing.

These were great challenges as parents and for our children as well. We all learned the power of such simple virtues and as parents we were able to think about what it really was that we wanted to instill in our children as they made their way through adulthood and maturity—what virtues they would remember when they grew up. Certainly, even as an adult, the virtues of "Respecting yourself and others" and "forgive, forget, and move on" are really important for success.

Now I do admit that these examples will be paltry at best to many parents who have experienced much more demanding and complex issues with their children. I remember one individual telling me that many of my "ideas" of remaining patient or not getting angry were great but that I had yet to experience the more taxing parts of raising children. She asked "what choices do I have when my daughter is coming back at one in the morning, lying to my face about where she has been and not wanting anything to do with me?"

I told her that I believed that she was not as powerless as she thought. During that particular instance she chose to get angry, even to the point of wanting to "beat" her college age daughter. On the other hand, she said that if she just remained nice her daughter would simply walk all over her. I asked, "Why is it that you think you only have two options-1) infuriating anger or 2) being `grandma nice.'

I said, "you are an individual truth body with infinite creativity, infinite innovative ability, and infinite freedom. Between the two extreme choices that you think you have, there are an infinite number of more balanced responses and there is your infinite freedom. I do agree that if you get exceedingly angry it will hurt your relationship with your daughter. I also believe that if you are exceedingly permissive it will also hurt your relationship with your daughter, as you will not be teaching her that actions not only impact self but others as well.

Within that power and freedom to choose the appropriate response is where *your* innovative ability and *your* creativity comes in. You must develop your skill in choosing the correct balance between those extremes. You have free will and so does your college aged daughter. Raising children is difficult, but we are often not as unempowered as we think.

When we feel we are unempowered and that we have no choices we then will blame the external circumstances or in this case our child for making us frustrated and feeling unempowered. As soon as we realize the infinity of our choices and our freedom to choose, we must confront the fact that we simply are not recognizing our ability to be innovative and creative. Within each experience of life there is a choice and an opportunity.

You have the ability and must develop the skill to choose the appropriate response. This is where responsibility comes in. When you recognize that you have *infinite* freedom you recognize that you *choose* to act or react the way you do—you are responsible. This, I admit is frightening, as it does not allow us to scapegoat our external circumstances or frustrations, but turns the responsibility towards ourselves, making us aware that we are free—free to choose to act in a certain way or not, free to use our *infinite*

creativity and *infinite* innovative capacity."

I suggested that she try to do at least two things with her daughter: 1) Make a family date where the whole family spends time together for a dinner or just even an hour a week; 2) Make a date with that particular daughter and not with any other siblings, at least once every month or other month. Of course when I suggested this, the mother immediately believed that it would be impossible to organize such a thing and that her daughter didn't want anything to do with her. I told her that maybe if she searched her feelings it was most likely the other way around.

I told her that it would not be easy as long as she wanted a boss/employee relationship with her daughter—when the mother says do this she does it, when the mother says do that she does it. I asked her what she really wanted in her relationship with her daughter. Silent at first, she said that she wanted peace of mind. I responded saying that if she wanted that, she could not just have it for herself, and that she would also have to actively create an environment where her daughter could also get that "peace of mind" as well—"do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

I reminded her that she was alive, her daughter was alive, that they were both healthy, that they were both infinitely creative, innovative and free and that if they worked together creating that "peace of mind" for each other, that nothing would be impossible, let alone organizing some time to spend together. She said that she would try. I told her to not try but to actively create—as succeeding in relationships is not just trying but a *process of making* and *creating* the relationship to be as both wish—you are the one with the power to recognize your, and the others, infinite freedom, creativity and genius—only you can make it work!

How many individuals are held back when not believing in their potential or living in a life of blaming others for their misery? The virtues we taught our children, we realized, would be important virtues, not only through childhood, but throughout the rest of their lives. The virtues were empowering as they applied to many situations and even provided the children with a simple phrase to repeat to themselves or even to their friends (when their friends were blaming others for something they would tell them, "Forgive, forget and move on!").

So as an exercise sit down with your spouse and try to come up with such virtues that will allow your children to tackle a variety of circumstances as they pass through life. Try to think long-term, about what kinds of people you would want them to be. Such examples of virtues would be having integrity, or being honest to self and others, or doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, or be balanced in your life, etc. Try to stay somewhat practical, but understand that such moral virtues are usually the basis of all great religious traditions—if we can't even get down the basics we certainly won't progress!

Now take some time with your spouse to discuss some virtues that you want your kids to learn but also virtues that you are also willing to learn and practice:

So in sum, teach your children virtues and practicing them yourself. In addition here are three easy but transformative practices to do with your children, no matter their age:

1. Make a consistent family tradition with your children (this can be a reunion every summer, if they live far away, or it could be a time where you spend time playing games together every week. For me and my siblings growing up, and now for my couple and my children, it is doing "kyung-bae" on Sunday followed by candy and snacks)
2. Eat at least one meal a day together as a family (if your children still live with you, if not, then call them "just because" a couple times a week)
3. Make individual dates with each of your children and invest to make meaningful memories for each individual child (it is said that children remember with greatest fondness, when they had meaningful time with their parents *alone* and *individually*—*not* amidst the presence of other siblings, peoples etc.).

Remember, with MBU these are *authentic* and *serious* Unificationist religious practices!—expand the definition of spiritual training and train hard!

INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

We may lavish our children with gifts thinking that we are giving them individual attention but we are often very reluctant to give them the greatest gift of all—personal association with us and our lives. We may take them shopping or buy them gifts when really what they want is time to discuss things that are bothering them or get to know our histories and our life story. They may be reaching out for our guidance but we may feel scared that we will not provide a good enough answer or solution and so to mask this insecurity, we may avoid conversations or harangue them for not being grateful or getting on their case for the smallest things.

One thing that children desperately need is individual attention. They need to know that they each are unique, individual truth bodies and that their parents love them for their uniqueness. We as parents, of course see each child as unique and precious but usually our children do not feel that they are unique.

One of the family traditions that my wife and I have used with our children is making "dates" with our *children—individually*. So for example the first Saturday will be a lunch date with our first boy, the next Saturday, with our second boy, and so on. On that date, we go and do an activity that we planned earlier together. For example, on our first son's date we went and had his favorite potato wedges at Taco Bell. On our second sons date we went to the supermarket to get him his favorite tri-colored popsicles and then went to Burger King.

We plan ahead of time allotting Saturday as a "date with one of the children." We show them on the calendar what day is their date and we then plan together, with that child, what it is we will do. We also remain flexible knowing that on that day they may

want to do other things. It's up to them. The agenda is theirs during the date as long as everyone can enjoy the experience. We will discuss what things we could possibly do and then make our final decision (As parents we try to be as accommodating as possible, but not to the point of teaching the children negative virtues).

This time together allows for very close bonding, and emotional comfort. Usually the child must live in competition with their other siblings in order to get attention. S/he may become creative even doing "bad" things to get negative attention (still a form of attention). Therefore, on our dates the children get to truly feel special and appreciated just for them.

We have a strict rule as parents not to mention the other siblings or compare siblings during the date. The time is *just* for that child. We try to love him/her fully and have a positive and healthy experience that over time we believe will be good investments into a healthy and trusting relationship.

One thing is for sure, as parents: *If you make a promise to your children, you must keep it!* There is nothing more corrosive to trust than constantly making promises and breaking them. Your children will then learn to distrust everything you say as well as potentially hurting their ability to make commitments and keep them. If you are not sure you can do something, *don't promise it*. Be honest, and tell your child that you are not sure and you will try your best.

But when you do promise, make sure that it is kept. Trust is a virtue that must be earned and it cannot just be given. Making promises are good, for they help children understand that they are not all powerful and that their loved ones are resources that will be with them throughout their lives. However, keeping prom-

ises is greater, for no trust can be gained without trust earned. So if you make a promise, have integrity and keep it.

If you absolutely cannot keep the promise due to unforeseen emergency circumstances, it is imperative that you make it up. It may take two or three even ten promises that are kept to build back the damage of one broken—but keep at it. Think of it as building a brick wall. Each promise kept is adding a brick to that solid wall of trust. However, each promise broken is removing a brick from, not the top, but from beneath—many bricks may be needed to be replaced to build back the wall of trust.

Although this analogy may not be perfect, it shows that in order to build trust, sweat and effort must be invested. Relationships are a process and things *can* change for the better but also for the worse if you neglect it. So be aware and mindful of the walls of your "house of trust" that you build with your children. It will pay off in the end. Your children will cherish that hard-earned trust and will learn to keep promises with you and their children in the future.

EACH CHILD A TREASURE

With each of our children my wife has made a beautiful collection of diaries. Each child has his/her diary that we as the parents write in when we are inspired or when we have an unforgettable experience with our child. She will draw a beautiful picture capturing the essence of the emotion and experience.

For example, whenever the children bring their mommy a flower, she tapes in artistically into the diary and writes a brief reflection and the date. Whenever they bring a rock to her that they find outside, she writes the date on that rock and who it was from. We intend to give them, respectively, these books of our

reflections when they are older and perhaps have children of their own. Our intention with such a practice, and I would definitely include it as "spiritual/religious practice," is to show them that we care and love each of them dearly. And that along the way of stewarding them we have had unforgettable and unique experiences that have brought us profound joy and thanks for having them in our lives.

It is so often that children can be neglected and feel unloved. And although we know that we are not perfect parents, we feel that investing in the long-term relationship with our children is central and critical to our lives as Unificationists. There has been no greater joy than being mindful and present when with the children. They are so very wise and pure if we are attentive.

Many times, they can make us think and reconsider issues. They can remind us how to forgive others or how to be alive and present in the moment. Notice the next time your children are in nature—how attentive and attuned they are. They can see the beauty in so many things that adults simply ignore or pass by. They can remind us of our Original Minds, our inner conscience of purity.

In times of challenge, when they need guidance and help from their parents they are not afraid to be vulnerable and to share their feelings (unless we have created an environment where that is not welcome). They can teach us how we must continually better ourselves—to keep being a resource of wisdom for them to lean on as they grow—if we do not they will quickly outgrow us. Children know more than you think, but they also need you to be parents more than you think.

Parents are parents and are not their children's friends. Parents must help children grow to be those who can maintain and develop

healthy and happy relationships with themselves and others. To do so they must learn their boundaries and also learn their unlimited potential. They must learn to be vulnerable and also learn to face adversity with courage. They must learn how to help themselves and then to help those other than themselves.

Parents must provide children with such education. I will admit that it feels extremely daunting at times, and some of the challenges make you feel as if you are a terrible parent (I feel like that often). But again, notice that thought-train and let it pass. Then return to the present moment, "the now," and develop a workable plan to get passed the obstacle at hand. You CAN do it!

THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF BEING WITH OUR KIDS WHEN WE ARE WITH THEM

How many times are we in the same room as our children, even playing or speaking with them, and not really there? Do we sometimes recognize that we are annoyed when our children want to spend time with us? In the course of parenting there are many instances when children frustrate the parents—this is normal and okay.

Many times we may separate parenting and religious, spiritual practice and training. However, as Unificationists, it is all the more important to realize that this separation is because of our own misconceptions. We must view spending time and being in the moment with our children as spiritual training. It is not really that different from MBU training.

When you are with your children what thought-trains are arising? When my boys want to train in martial arts with me or when they want to train with their Star Wars Jedi lightsabers, I

admit sometimes I am too tired—I notice "excuse making thought-trains," or "thinking of my comfort thought-trains," etc. But then I reflect that there are only so many opportunities when my kids will *want* to play together with their daddy, and if I refuse too often they will give up asking me—they will give up on me because they may feel that I am uninterested. Surely, I do not wish to plant those kinds of seeds.

Thus, I try to understand it as a win-win situation. When I play and train with them I help them exercise, use their imaginations, learn coordination and skills, etc. At the same time, I can exercise, and bond with them in something that they like to do—thus a win-win situation for both of us—it's only a matter of changing our perception.

If I see it as annoying, mundane and bothersome then it is. If I see the opportunity as a chance to build trust and bonds of love and interest, then that is what it becomes. *We* are in control of the situation, it all depends on our mind. Staying aware of the thought-trains will help you stay in dominion of your mind. You will be empowered to get off negative, afflictive thought-trains and remain mindful and creative, seeing the experience as a great opportunity.

Let's say that your child is begging you to read them a bedtime story. Maybe you're really tired and have not seen your kids all day, and want to shout at them demanding that they understand that you are tired and "had a long day." But when you are frustrated in such a manner, begin to see what thought-trains you are riding. Simply label them in your mind as "frustration thought-train," or "getting angry thought-train," etc., and return to deep breathing exhaling all the stale air out, being in the moment with your children.

Notice that your child will grow up and one day you may *not* be able to read to them. Notice that feeling annoyed or angry at the children for wanting to spend time affects our subconscious feelings and may emerge later as anger or blame. The time is precious NOW. Try to be there for them when they call upon you—these little efforts will help in creating great trust and faith in you as parents and the belief that their parents are loving and there for them. We should understand reading with the kids, or training and playing with them, or doing homework with them, as *authentic* and *important* Unificationist religious and spiritual training!

I remember one time when I was helping my boy do his reading homework, we spent two and a half hours reading. He was reading and skipping over words, thus not understanding what the story was saying and then getting frustrated that he didn't understand. He would thus get down on himself, calling himself, "stupid" or "not smart." He constantly said such things, even though I told him to respect himself and his potential, so after about the hundredth time I was getting quite frustrated myself.

But I remembered that I was training. I focused on my breathing and noticed the thought-trains letting them pass and returning to reading. We eventually got through the reading and were both tired but happy. He was happy that he read and understood what he read, answering all the questions quickly and with ease, and I was happy because I could train and discipline my MBU while being with him—more training!

Thus when doing an activity with your children, *be present*. Train, and notice the thought-trains. When and if you get frustrated, label the thought-train, and return to your breath exhaling all the stale, frustrated air out, returning fully and completely to

the task at hand. The task could be any number of experiences, like taking a walk with your children, or talking with them, or not exploding when they try to upset you.

By having more control over your reactions, like wanting to get angry when agitated, etc, you will be empowered and will learn to be fully present with your children. You will probably notice little things that your children have always been doing but that you have never noticed. You will appreciate these greatly as they mature. As you invest in your children, you invest in your own happiness, and teach them how to raise their own children. In other words, in raising your children you raise your grandchildren—remember that when they have their own children they will rely on how you raised them as a primary resource in raising their own children.

Thus by training our MBU, we can immediately apply it so that we become more mindful and attentive to the uniqueness of each child. As you reduce the amount of anger or frustration in your own mind, the environment, in this case your household will feel the effects of such a change. You are empowered to make your house a "home" or a "hell." By applying the skills you have learned in MBU to your daily life you will be able to transform your relationship with your life. Spiritual practice will not only be confined to formal sessions of practice but the mindfulness you cultivate will affect other priorities like being mindful of yourself in regards to your spouse and children.

Thus, even doing homework with your children will be spiritual training—we must expand the definition of "spiritual practice." You will get on the frustrated, or irritated thought-train, etc., but now, you will be able to label the thought-trains and keep returning fully to be with your child. You will be more in tune with your own

emotional states and the thought-trains that you ride and thus will have more self-control of afflictive emotions like anger, frustration, etc, transforming them into mindful reminders to return to the moment, to life, to what is important.

Make sure you never neglect the training of MBU. In order to constantly remain sharp in such attention, you do have to constantly sharpen your pencil. Personally, even though I have training when spending time with the kids or talking and listening with my wife, I have found it essential to maintain a constant, formal spiritual MBU training and practice regimen.

If you don't feed your individual MBU, by practicing unity of mind and body exercises, you may find that you are "backsliding" and that old habits are arising quickly. Thus I would recommend that you make time for yourself to simply be in the moment with God and in life by a daily formal practice of individual MBU training—where you commit yourself for at least 10-20 minutes a day to train in stillness and unity. Allow this practice to inform the way you are mindful throughout the day and in the way you treat others.

I will conclude this work by stating that you should not expect to be perfect all the time—nobody can do this. Understand that becoming the Cheon-Hwa-Dang (The House of Heaven's Harmony) is a *process*. Even if you are having hard times in your training, in your relationships, with your children, don't despair!—there is always now to make the change and tomorrow to become better! Just like we learned in training, don't judge yourself but be self-honest. Understand what the causes are for your current state, and then be present and aware now to make the appropriate changes.

Within a journey of a thousand miles each step has the entire

journey within. Each step must be taken, each step is as meaningful as the entire journey itself. If you stop at any of the steps, the journey is over—each step is that important. Being present with each step is being awake and aware of all the rich scenery. Take time to breathe, be present and be mindful of the ways in which you need to improve but know that you are already on a great and courageous start.

Although we have done some very serious and important training, remember to not take yourself overly seriously and to have fun with your training and your family. Even if your getting frustrated along the journey, breath in deeply and know that your breathing in and breath out deeply saying sincerely, "Thank-You." Pray like this along the way, whenever you can, in up times and in down times—both are parts of the path. You will find that with this kind of prayerful heart and attitude everything becomes a blessing from God for you to learn and grow from.

It has been a true pleasure being with you on this journey of training—training to realize and actualize what True Parents have taught us. All of us have our 5%. It is the responsibility of all Unificationists to unite the mind and body and create the seeds for healthy and successful relationships and families. It is my hope that these systematic practices of Cheon-Hwa-Dang will aid you in your spiritual life and practice and will make more apparent the great blessings that are all around us if we pay attention and are alive in the moment.

As True Father recently said in his 2005, *Now is God's Time* speech tour, "The person who ignores the value of each and every moment to love will lose what is truly precious...Therefore, a great person lives his or her life constantly aware of the precious value of each moment, for every particular moment is uniquely special.

Such a person can be included in the ranks of the saints, and even become a divine son or daughter in Heaven and on earth." ⁸ It is my hope that we all may become such individuals.

Be well,

Hyung Jin Moon

East Garden Holy Ground

EXTRA TRAIN IN G

BEING CLOSE TO TRUE PARENTS EVEN THOUGH WE ARE FAR

REFLECTION

As a Unificationist, our redemption from the fallen lineage is directly connected to God's grace through the victories of our True Parents. Through the indemnity and suffering that True Parents had to endure, whether it be in prisons or in the spiritual dimension, we have been engrafted onto the lineage of True Love. It is through this mercy and forgiveness that we can have the inner confidence and strength to live a life that can serve the world.

When we humble ourselves and realize that our life is given to us not because we are great, or deserve it, or are handsome, or accomplished; but that it *is* a God-gift, we realize the value of life—that each life is of ultimate value because it comes from God. When we see the spiritual value of people, independent of what race they are, or what work they do, etc.; there is a constant source of hope for helping people become true people, even though they may be harming themselves in self-centered activities.

When engaging in self-indulgence, hedonism, self-hatred or the like, many fall into the repeated cycles of dissatisfaction, then needing a high, then temporary satisfaction, which is followed by needing a stronger "high," and the cycle of addiction and hurt continues and deepens. Living only to fulfill ourselves leads to continual disappointment, because the more we do it ("it" may be exerting power over the weak, or indulging in gluttony, selfish love, etc.) the more we need it, and when we can't get it we can become neurotic, selfishly motivated and insane. We can't see how we hurt those around us, or we can't see others' pain. We are desensitized to all other suffering and the need for the "high" is the only thing we know (here I use the metaphor of an addict, but that addict is not only a drug or sex addict, but may be a materialism addict, or an ego addict, etc.).

The point is that we fall into habits in our life (most often hurtful than good), and get hurt the same way over and over, running around and around in continual self-defeating circles. These circles not only dizzy us to life, they completely blind us to the suffering that we cause others whether it be through our words or our deeds. We become dissatisfied, disillusioned and angry at the constant frustrations that these cycles bring.

This is why the training to cultivate internal unity of Mind and Body is the critical preparation for the practice of *selfless* altruism. In mind/body unity training we face all the discursiveness, all the bad habits, all the ego trips, all the divisions. But we see these things clearly for the first time, honestly and pointedly. Only then, can we begin the process of creating and learning *new* habits—like awareness of God's gifts; and from that learn humility; and from humility learn the value of our life as given by God; and through that learn the value of another; and through that help another

without any self-serving agendas.

A true person must be able to remain firm in his concentration, steadfast in his mindfulness and gratitude for God's blessings, and unwavering in his ability to selflessly Love. These are some enormous requirements but they are our guides. Like travelers using the North Star to tell which way is north, the true person sees focus, mindfulness, and selfless love as his guides to tell which direction to go.

This begins by first becoming aware of our *living* relationship with God, the Cosmic True Parents (*Cheon-ju Bum-o-nim*) at the most fundamental level—that as we breathe He gives us life. Through this fundamental awareness of the value of life, the true person must forge determination with selfless love. He must think of others and their well being more than his own. He must be heroic in his/her love and concern for humanity, courageously speaking and living for the sake of others.

It is my hope that this next meditation and visualization training will be of help to you and your own, *personal* spiritual connection with the power of True Parents. Before we do that we must rationally dispel some of the poisons that will subvert and destroy any potency that this meditation will have. The greatest of these poisons will be—doubt. This can be the doubt of the reality of this experience or the empowerment received; it can be a doubt that is fed by skepticism; a doubt fed by resentment of past thoughts or past feeling of injustice; etc. Whatever the doubt, it is essential (if one wishes to gain the full blessings of this training) to let go of all thoughts and clear the spiritual mind.

As Unificationists we must be able to use all the faculties of our minds and bodies to embody the True Love that our True Parents have shown and given us. Thus, we embark on the following

training—to understand how we have been saved from suffering, and how we are now empowered to become true parents ourselves and serve this world with humility, courage and compassion.

1. Clear the mind of all thoughts. Gently allow your eyes to close.
2. Breathe deeply and naturally, allowing the abdomen to rise and fall with each breath.
3. As you exhale, expel all the stale air in the lungs and abdomen. You do this by gently contracting the abdominal muscles pushing out all the stale air. (Repeat this deep breath control training for five minutes).
4. Now prepare yourself for visualization. You now see True Parents before you, hovering in front of you. Feel the power of God's presence through True Parents, in the very room with you and gently say, "*Hananim, Cham bumo nim okmansei.*"
5. You notice they are surrounded by a warm, powerful light that radiates forth. Allow a gentle smile to be born upon your lips.
6. Ribbons of brilliant compassionate light gently flows from their hearts and into your heart, filling you with divine happiness and ecstatic calm.
7. The wave-like light now flows from their hearts to your head, forehead and face, filling your mind with warm, brilliant light. Feel the light penetrate into all crevices of the brain and facial muscles washing away any darkness or impurities.
8. Now the light from True Parents' hearts opens and glorious beams of heavenly light cover your whole body filling your

entire being with True Parent's Love and mercy.

9. Notice the feeling of tremendous gratitude for True Parents for the love that they have given unconditionally even though we are inadequate and imperfect.
10. Keeping the eyes closed and continuing to visualize True Parents and God's presence, slowly stand up and perform three *kyung bae's*, offering the mind, body, and spirit to God and True Parents.

True Parents love you dearly. The power of True Parents is always with you. Realizing this I was healed by True Parents even though we were apart. It is my hope that this visualization prayer can help you cultivate and nurture your own, personal relationship with True Parents, to the power of their True Love and sacrificial life. May I give this moment to honor you on your path to being healed, blessed and becoming a True Parent to humanity. May you always be well and happy,

Hyung Jin Moon

East Garden Holy Ground, New York

\OTES

1. FFWPU 50th Anniversary Celebration, Congratulatory Banquet: Founder's Address: Fifty Years on the Providential Path to the Realization of God's Fatherland and the Peace Kingdom.
2. "God's Homeland and the Peace Kingdom are Built on the Foundation of the Realm of His Liberation and Release" Address on the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.
3. "Declaring the Era of the Peace Kingdom" : given by True Father at the United States Capitol, Washington, DC, March 23, 2004. (pp. 1-2)
4. "Declaring the Era of the Peace Kingdom" : given by True Father at the United States Capitol, Washington, DC, March 23, 2004 (p. 2).
5. *Way of Students*, Hoon Dok Hae series, p. 54
6. Samannaphala Sutta, or the "The Sutra on the Fruits of the Contemplative Life"
7. The Digha Nikaya is the set of "long-discourses" of the Buddha found within the Pali canon.
8. *God's Peace Kingdom is the Eternal Homeland for All Blessed Families*, Reverend Dr. Sun Myung Moon, New York, June 25, 2005.