

ON THE RENEWING OF RELATIONSHIPS

WORDS FOR THE
FESTIVAL OF RENEWAL

POLYDOX CONFEDERATION

Reader

There are many doors to the world within, to meet our thoughts and wishes, to seek our feelings. We can study ourselves, our dreams and our games. We can see ourselves in others, and in wise stories told by the ages. In the ancient writings of the Bible, we find ourselves in the lives told of others.

Group

Let us speak of ancient stories and tell the lessons they teach. Wise stories do not die, they live in the present within us. They are mirrors of the world within.

Reader

It is written that Adam and Eve, when they were very young, were cared for by a kind guardian. He placed them in the beautiful garden of Eden, and provided for all their needs. For his goodness, the guardian asked only that Adam and Eve obey the rules he commanded them. Yet Adam and Eve did not obey the guardian's commandments. They acted to please themselves rather than do as the guardian wished. After their disobedience, Adam and Eve were deeply ashamed and frightened. The love of the guardian, they felt, had been lost forever. They could not face him. They tried to hide from

the guardian, and even from themselves, but they could not. There was no place to flee.

Group

When young, we live in our parents' homes as did Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Our parents care for us, and we love them. When disobedience and anger come between us, we are sad. Still we need not flee from disobedience nor hide from anger. Stronger than broken commandments are the bonds of love that bring us together.

Reader

It is written that two sons, Cain and Abel, were born to Adam and Eve. Cain farmed the soil; Abel was a shepherd. When Abel received love for good things he had done, Cain believed his brother was more beloved than he, and greatly envied Abel. In deep anger, Cain struck Abel down. Great sadness came over Cain for what he had done. He knew no happiness, and wandered the earth seeking forgiveness and peace.

Group

Envy of others, sisters and brothers, friends and strangers, dwells in every human heart. Still we can conquer envy and rule over it. The world has more love than we need or can use. To receive love, we must first give love, and above all, to our own selves give love. In our own love, we find

pleasure in sharing the love of others. In our own love, we forgive ourselves as we would forgive others.

Reader

It is written that Absalom was one of the sons of David, king of Israel. Absalom wished to be king, and rule in place of his father. He gathered many Israelites about him, and led them in rebellion against David. David's army was victorious and Absalom fell in battle. Despite Absalom's rebellion, David loved him as parents alone love children. When he heard of Absalom's downfall, David cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Group

The wish to take the place of mother or father lies within every daughter and son. At times our wishes make us angry and even frightened. Slowly, with the years, we learn the wise purpose of our desires. They guide us, as we grow, to become like mother and father, to care for ourselves and for others. Our wishes give us courage and strength. With courage we leave childhood to rule our own lives. With strength we become parents and rule our own homes.

Reader

It is written that the Israelites in ancient times sought to free themselves from the sorrow of wrongdoing by placing their feelings of blame upon others. A goat was chosen upon which the people sought to put the blame they suffered for their actions. This goat, named the scapegoat, was sent to wander in the wilderness as punishment for the Israelites' wrongdoing. In time, the Israelites, through their great teachers, the prophets, learned that others could not take the sorrow of wrongdoing from them. Every person must bear her or his own blame. Every person must act to receive her or his own forgiveness.

Group

It is painful to bear the burden of disobedience to the ought within. We all wish at times for scapegoats to carry away blame that is really our own. Yet we know the wound of wrongdoing is healed only when blame is confessed, if just to ourselves. Forgiveness comes when the dark places of the world within open to receive love's renewing light.