

The Holy Instant

Notes by Allen Watson

I. What is the Holy Instant?

A. Only One Holy Instant

The Course uses the term “holy instant” in two different ways. In the larger sense of the term, “the holy instant” refers to the instant of creation, which we continually experience once we have become right-minded and are living in the real world. When we have ceased entirely to listen to the ego, when we have dropped our last defense, and our trust in the Holy Spirit is total, “this life becomes a holy instant” (W-pI.135.19:1). A life that is one holy instant is lived constantly in the present, and it constantly shares the Holy Spirit’s perception of the world.

The holy instant is a miniature of eternity. It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time (T-17.IV.11:4, 5).(The Two Pictures)

There is really only one holy instant. It is the “eternal instant” of God’s reality. It is what has always been and always is and always will be.

In the holy instant nothing happens that has not always been. Only the veil that has been drawn across reality is lifted. Nothing has changed (T-15.VI.6:1–3).

The experience of a holy instant, then, is simply the experience of that changelessness. “It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time” (T-17.IV.11:5). It is what happens when, for a moment, our mind peels away the layers of illusion we have superimposed on reality, and we see the reality that has *always been there*. We “tap into” the One Holy Instant.

The Little Breath of Eternity That Runs Through Time

In Chapter 20, the fifth section, “Heralds of Eternity,” there are two paragraphs that state very clearly that only one holy instant exists. There, the holy instant is called “the little breath of eternity that runs through time.” Let’s look at the fifth paragraph, beginning with the sixth sentence, “Why should it take so many holy instants...?”

The subject here is the holy relationship. It is talking about learning to see our relationship partner as not being a body, and seeing that bodies are not needed to communicate. And it says,

Why should it take so many holy instants to let this be accomplished, when one would do? There *is* but one. This little breath of eternity that

runs through time like golden light is all the same; nothing before it, nothing afterwards (T-20.V.5:6–8).

There is only one holy instant. It is a “breath of eternity” that runs through time like a thread of golden light. Every time we experience a holy instant we are experiencing the same thing. It is “all the same.” We are simply re-experiencing the eternal and changeless state of reality, now in this moment of time, now in another. But it is all the same instant of reality, the same “breath of eternity.”

You look upon each holy instant as a different point in time. It never changes. All that it ever held or will ever hold is here right now. The past takes nothing from it, and the future will add no more. Here, then, is everything. Here is the loveliness of your relationship, with means and end in perfect harmony already. Here is the perfect faith that you will one day offer to your brother already offered you; and here the limitless forgiveness you will give him already given, the fact of Christ you yet will look upon already seen (T-20.V.6).

One of the wonderful things about the Truth with a capital “T” is that it always *is*. One of the indescribable things that comes into awareness in a full experience of the holy instant is that *nothing has ever been wrong, nor ever will be wrong*. What you are is “unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable.” All experience to the contrary is illusion. There is absolutely no way to describe the peace that comes in such a holy instant, the joy of knowing the utter invulnerability of what you are.

2. The Holy and Unholy Instants

One way of thinking of our life in this world of time and space is that every instant we spend here is the re-enactment of one of two “instants,” either the Unholy Instant or the Holy Instant. There is actually quite a lot of material in the Course that tells us that our ego experience is nothing more than a constant reliving of one unholy instant.

For instance, the next section in Chapter 20, “The Temple of the Holy Spirit,” describes our choice between the two instants quite clearly. Start in the eighth paragraph, sixth sentence:

The instant that the mad idea of making your relationship with God unholy seemed to be possible [referring to the tiny, mad idea, the idea of separation], all your relationships were made meaningless. In that **unholy instant** time was born, and bodies made to house the mad idea and give it the illusion of reality. And so it seemed to have a home that held together for a little while in time, and vanished. For what could house this made idea against reality but for an instant? (T-20.VI.8:6–9)

That describes the *unholy instant* quite clearly, the birth of the mad idea of separation. Time and bodies house the mad idea, and every moment in time is meant by the ego to be an expression of that single idea, that single instant of madness.

Idols must disappear, and leave no trace behind their going. The **unholy instant** of their seeming power is frail as is a snowflake, but without its loveliness. Is this the substitute you want for the eternal blessing of the **holy instant** and its unlimited beneficence? (T-20.VI.9:1–3)

There our choice between the unholy instant and the holy instant is very clearly highlighted. In every moment we are choosing between the two, the unholy madness of separation or the holy joy of union with God. Two instants, and every choice is a choice between the two.

Is the malevolence of the unholy relationship, so seeming powerful and so bitterly misunderstood and so invested in a false attraction your preference to the **holy instant**, which offers you peace and understanding? Then lay aside the body and quietly transcend it, rising to welcome what you really want (T-20.VI.9:4–5).

[In the holy relationship] the **unholy instant** is exchanged in gladness for **the holy one** of safe return (T-20.VI.10:4).

For another instance in which the Course speaks of the *unholy instant*, turn to Chapter 26, the fifth section, “The Little Hindrance.” (Page 511/549.) We’ll start with the third paragraph, third sentence.

Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. [Time here is the unholy instant; eternity is the holy instant.] And so all time is past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. What God gave answer to is answered and is gone (T-26.V.3:3–7).

The tiny instant [the unholy instant] you would keep and make eternal, passed away in Heaven too soon for anything to notice it had come. What disappeared too quickly to affect the simply knowledge of the Son of God can hardly still be there, for you to choose to be your teacher. Only in the past,—an ancient past, too short to make a world in answer to creation,—did this world appear to rise. So very long ago, for such a tiny interval of time, that not one note in Heaven’s song was missed. Yet in each unforgiving act or thought, in every judgment and in all belief in sin, is that one instant still called back, as if it could be made again in time. You keep an ancient memory before your eyes. And he who lives in memories alone is unaware of where he is (T-26.V.5:1–7).

Each day, and every minute in each day, and every instant that each minute holds, you but relive the single instant when the time of terror took the place of love. ...Such is each life; a seeming interval from birth to death and on to life again, a repetition of an instant gone by long ago that cannot be relived. And all of time is but the mad belief that what is over is still here and now (T-26.V.13:1, 3, 4).

Our life, apart from the holy instants we experience, is nothing but a repetition of the unholy instant, calling back the ancient memory of the mad idea of separation and trying to make it real again in time. All of our life, apart from holy instants, is a reliving of that time when “terror took the place of love.”

In the Manual for Teachers, the second section, the identical idea is restated, although in the context it is talking about how teachers of God and their pupils come together in time.

The instant the idea of separation entered the mind of God’s Son, in that same instant was God’s Answer given. In time this happened very long ago. In reality it never happened at all.

The world of time is the world of illusion. What happened long ago seems to be happening now. Choices made long since appear to be open; yet to be made (M-2.2:6–3:3).

Time really, then, goes backward to an instant so ancient that it is beyond all memory, and past even the possibility of remembering. Yet because it is an instant that is relived again and again and still again, it seems to be now (M-2.4:1–2).

All of time is a remembering of that single instant, both unholy in the idea of separation and holy in the reality of God’s Answer. We live that one instant, “again and again and still again.”

Our choice—or what seems to be our choice—is which adjective to apply to the instant. Holy, or unholy? Joy, or pain? Heaven, or hell? Do we focus on what we think we made, or do we listen instead to God's Answer?

B. Many Experiences of the One Instant

Let’s look now at the second sense of the term, “holy instant:” a moment in time in which we experience, to a greater or lesser degree, the reality of the eternal holy instant.

When we experience a holy instant, what we are actually doing is tapping in to that one, eternal, holy instant. The Course uses the term "holy instant" to refer both to that one eternal instant and to the many different experiences of that instant we may have in our lifetimes. Like anything eternal, “the” holy instant is formless, but it appears in this world in many different forms and

expressions. The holy instant contains the whole thought system of Heaven, and so it can take on appearance as any aspect of that thought system showing up in our lives.

For as the whole thought system of the ego lies in its gifts, so the whole of Heaven lies in this instant, borrowed from eternity and set in time for you (T-17.IV.11:8).

One way of thinking of it is that at times we just touch lightly upon the holy instant, and other times we enter in more fully. Some of the descriptions of the holy instant in the Course sound like a full-fledged mystical experience that totally overwhelms your consciousness; other descriptions sound more like something we might not even be consciously aware of at the time. For instance, Helen and Bill's initial joining, in which Bill said "There must be another way" and Helen agreed to help him find it, is often referred to as the holy instant which initiated their holy relationship and totally changed its purpose, although they were not aware of that at the time. It was hardly a time when the heavens opened up, the body receded from awareness, and time gave way to eternity—at least it was not that consciously. But apparently, in some part of their minds, *exactly that really did happen*. In their right minds, they responded completely to the presence of God with a joyous "Yes!"

Why is it that the holy instant appears to us in different degrees, aspects, strengths and intensities? The Course explains that we can bring some of our illusions along with us, and that they weaken the full experience. In "The Light in the Dream," T-18.III, our first brush with a holy instant is compared to "A little flicker of the eyelids, closed so long" in dreaming. We just let in a flash of light and can barely sort out any images from it. That little flicker, Jesus says,

...has not yet been sufficient to give you confidence in yourself, so long despised. You go toward love still hating it, and terribly afraid of its judgment upon you (T-18.III.3:4–5).

The shreds of illusion we cling to filter out the pure light of the holy instant and diminish our experience of it. But the pure bliss is always there; only our awareness of it is limited.

For a time you may attempt to bring illusions into the holy instant, to hinder your full awareness of the complete difference, in all respects, between your experience of truth and illusion. Yet you will not attempt this long. [Jesus has a different perspective on time than we do; "not long" to him may seem long to us.] In the holy instant the power of the Holy Spirit will prevail, because you joined Him. The illusions you bring with you will weaken the experience of Him for a while, and will prevent you from keeping the experience in your mind. Yet the holy instant is eternal,

and your illusions of time will not prevent the timeless from being what it is, nor you from experiencing it as it is (T-16.VII.7:1-5).

The pure holy instant is pure bliss. But it is a mistake to sit down with the intent of having an experience of bliss, and then getting up frustrated after fifteen minutes when we don't get it. *The bliss is there whether you experience it or not.* That is what we should be reminding ourselves about. We are advised to "practice the mechanics of the holy instant." The experience is just an experience, it is just my conscious mind allowing itself to connect to the bliss that is always there. "The holy instant is eternal." It IS, always. Our failure to experience it does not diminish it; our right mind is in that bliss right now. "Spirit is in a state of grace forever" (T-1.III.5:4). Or as it says in Chapter 11, "The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it" (T-11.I.5:10).

Let us look, now, at several passages in the Course which offer a definition or description of what the holy instant is. Robert will be talking tomorrow morning about this same subject and will add a number of different aspects that I am leaving out, or only touching upon very lightly, this evening.

1. An Instant Offered to the Holy Spirit

An instant offered to the Holy Spirit is offered to God on your behalf, and in that instant you will awaken gently in Him. In the blessed instant you will let go all your past learning, and the Holy Spirit will quickly offer you the whole lesson of peace (T-15.II.1:6).

One simple definition of the holy instant is simply that it is an instant that you offer to the Holy Spirit. Offering the instant to Him entails taking your own hands off of it; letting go all your past learning, and putting Him in charge. As the final Workbook lesson has us say:

This holy instant would I give to You. Be You in charge (W-pII.361)

Another way of saying the same thing is that in the holy instant you let go of your independent will and accept the Will of God as all there is:

For the holy instant is given and received with equal willingness, being the acceptance of the single Will that governs all thought (T-15.IV.8:6)

This aspect of giving the instant to the Holy Spirit, and letting Him make the decisions and judgments in place of your own, can also be seen in another passage. Here the picture begins with a new aspect: accepting the idea that "I am responsible for what I see" because I am the one responsible for deciding to give the instant to the Holy Spirit or not.

This is the only thing that you need do...Say only this...I **am** responsible for what I see...[The Son's] power of decision is the determiner of every

situation in which he seems to find himself by chance or accident...Suffer, and you decided sin was your goal. Be happy, and you gave the power of decision to Him Who must decide for God for you. This is the little gift you offer to the Holy Spirit...In the holy instant is this exchange effected and maintained. Here is the world you do not want brought to the one you do (T-21.II.2:1-3;3:3,5-7; 4:5, 6).

The “world you do not want” is the result of deciding for the unholy instant, while the “one you do” want is the result of giving to the Holy Spirit the power of deciding for you. That “exchange” is brought about in the holy instant, and it is maintained by continuing to enter holy instants with Him.

As we said before, when you stop projecting blame outside yourself, you pave the way for the holy instant.

But grant that everything that seems to stand between you and your brother, keeping you from each other and separate from your Father, you made in secret, and the instant of release has come to you (T-21.II.13:3).

2. Remembering Your Union with God and the Sonship

One description that really says it all is that the holy instant is an instant in which you remember God. You unite directly with Him, and since all the Sonship, all our brothers, are also united with Him, you unite with them as well.

Yet in the holy instant you unite directly with God, and all your brothers join in Christ (T-15.V.10:8).

In the holy instant God is remembered, and the language of communication with all your brothers is remembered with Him (T-15.VI.8:1).

What is the holy instant but God’s appeal to you to recognize what He has given you? (T-21.VIII.5:1)

In the holy instant you may *feel* the unity with God and your brothers that is always there, given us by God’s gift of creation.

What is the face of Christ but his who went a moment into timelessness, and brought a clear reflection of the unity he felt an instant back to bless the world? (W-pI.169.13:3)

3. A Moment of Shared Faith in the Sonship

In the holy instant we share our faith in God’s Son because we recognize, together, that he is wholly worthy of it, and in our appreciation of his worth we cannot doubt his holiness (T-15.VI.2:5).

When you remember God you remember His Son. You recognize the Holy Spirit in your brother. I think this might have been a central factor in Helen and Bill's holy instant, when they joined in a common purpose. Bill somehow recognized something in Helen that would respond to his appeal; Helen recognized in Bill a heart like her own. And they joined together. In that moment they believed in one another, they shared a faith in the Sonship. That was a holy instant.

4. A Moment in Which Desire for Vengeance is Gone

Against the ego's insane notion of salvation the Holy Spirit gently lays the holy instant. We said before that the Holy Spirit must teach through comparisons, and uses opposites to point to truth. The holy instant is the opposite of the ego's fixed belief in salvation through vengeance for the past. In the holy instant it is understood that the past is gone, and with its passing the drive for vengeance has been uprooted and has disappeared (T-16.VII.6:1-4).

Chapter 27 refers to "an instant of your love without attack" (T-27.V.4:2). That is one way of describing the holy instant. Your desire for vengeance is gone because you understand the past is gone. Most experiences of forgiveness fall into this category, and an experience of forgiveness is therefore a holy instant. I remember a close friend of mine who had been in an abusive relationship for years, and had been filled with bitter hatred and resentment, her sleep bothered by dreams of vengeance in which she stabbed her husband to death. After experiencing a deep holy instant of forgiveness she was astonished at what had happened inside her. "I'm not even angry at him any more," she said. "I used to hope he'd rot in hell, but now I really want him to find happiness and peace for himself." "The drive for vengeance" had simply disappeared.

5. A Moment in Which Self-attack Ceases

A dying world asks only that you rest an instant from attack upon yourself, that it be healed (T-27.V.5:5).

For in that instant does the Son of God do nothing that would make himself afraid (T-28.I.12:6).

I don't think we have the slightest idea of how constantly our minds are attacking themselves. We exist in a sea of self-judgment. We earnestly believe that large chunks of ourselves are despicable. The Course says you lack "confidence in yourself, so long despised" (T-18.III.3:4).

When that self-attack ceases for a moment, that is a holy instant. When you let yourself love yourself, that is a holy instant, because it is getting in touch

with the eternal truth about yourself, instead of looking at your track record. Marianne Williamson has said, “You are not your resumé.”

6. A Time of Perfect Communication

The holy instant is a time in which you receive and give perfect communication. This means, however, that it is a time in which your mind is open, both to receive and give (T-15.IV.6:5).

A holy instant can be a moment in which your mind is perfectly open to another mind. You are willing to receive, or to give, as the moment calls for. Your mind, therefore, “seeks to change nothing, but merely to accept everything” (T-15.IV.6:8).

7. A Recognition of Love in Yourself

In the holy instant you recognize the idea of love in you, and unite this idea with the Mind that thought it... (T-15.VI.5:3).

The holy instant is not an instant of creation, but of recognition. For recognition comes of vision and suspended judgment. Then only it is possible to look within and see what must be there (T-21.II.8:2–4).

When pressed to distinguish between the terms *miracle* and *holy instant*, Ken Wapnick once said in a workshop that the miracle is that moment of suspended judgment that leads to the holy instant, while the holy instant the recognition of the Love of God within, the joining with the Love of God in our minds. When we withdraw the projection of guilt, and realize that we are responsible for what we see, that is what enables the holy instant to “happen.” But in a larger sense, remember, the holy instant is not “happening” at all. Being eternal, it always *is*. What “happens” is that we remove the barriers to experiencing it.

On the other hand there are passages that seem to imply that the miracle happens *in the holy instant*, and other passages that seem to say the miracle *follows* the holy instant or comes from it.

In the holy instant, you are your brother stand before the altar God has raised unto Himself and both of you.... There will you see the miracle of your relationship as it was made again through faith (T-19.I.14:1, 3).

Seek and *find* His message in the holy instant, where all illusions are forgiven. **From there the miracle extends** to bless everyone and resolve all problems...(T-16.VII.11:1, 2).

The miracle comes quietly into the mind that stops an instant and is still. It reaches gently from that quiet time, and from the mind it healed in quiet then, to other minds to share its quietness (T-28.I.11:1, 2).

I don't think, therefore, that you can establish some kind of temporal order here. The miracle brings you to the holy instant; in the holy instant you see the miracle; and the miracle extends from the holy instant to other minds. It seems to me that the holy instant, being eternal, is always present; the miracle is what allows us to tap into it and share that experience with others. The holy instant is what we experience; the miracle is the lifting of the veil that allows us to experience it.

Your judgments are the root of your seeming desire to attack. When the judgments are gone, attack is gone, and when that happens you discover that, in the core of your being, you are love. You recognize the idea of love in yourself. You experience yourself *as* love, because that is what you are. When you experience love, free from attack, flowing through you, that is a holy instant.

8. A Miniature of Heaven and Eternity

The holy instant is a miniature of Heaven, sent you *from* Heaven... The holy instant is a miniature of eternity. It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time (T-17.IV.11:1,4).

In the holy instant, you experience now, in time, what is true in eternity. You catch a glimpse of Heaven. You get a foretaste of eternity.

9. A Shift to Vision

As the ego would limit your perception of your brothers to the body, so would the Holy Spirit release your vision and let you see the Great Rays shining from them, so unlimited that they reach to God. It is this shift to vision that is accomplished in the holy instant (T-15.IX.1:1, 2).

The holy instant shifts you from perception to vision. You see past the limits of the body to what lies beyond the body. You catch a glimpse of a reality that transcends everything you thought was real until then. It could be a very brief recognition of the Christ in one person. It could be an extended, mystical experience of the oneness of all beings. Both would be a holy instant.

10. A Way of Reaching Another State of Mind

Chapter 27, Section IV, "The Quiet Answer," contains one of my favorite definitions of the holy instant. The holy instant is a "state of mind in which the answer is already there." It speaks of how our normal state of mind is conflicted, and in that state of mind no answer is possible to our problems. And yet, there is another state of mind in which the answer exists already. The holy instant consists in reaching to that other state of mind. We'll read pieces of the first two paragraphs.

A problem set in conflict has no answer... You *are* in conflict. Thus it must be clear you cannot answer anything at all... Yet if God gave an answer there must be a way in which your problems are resolved, for what He wills has already been done.

Thus it must be that time is not involved and every problem can be answered *now*. Yet it must also be that, in your state of mind, solution is impossible.

One side of the coin is that every problem can be answered right now. The other side is that, in our state of mind, “solution is impossible.” The resolution obviously must be *a different state of mind*.

Therefore, God must have given you a way of reaching to another state of mind in which the answer is already there. Such is the holy instant.

The holy instant is that “way of reaching to another state of mind.” The holy instant, then, is a moment in which you connect with a state of mind in which all your problems have already been answered. It must be that, if you just think for a moment. We associate peace of mind with the holy instant, but how could you be at peace if your problems were unanswered?

The holy instant is the miracle’s abiding place. From there, each one is born into this world as witness to a **state of mind** that has transcended conflict, and has reached to peace (T-27.V.3:2).

The Workbook, in Lesson 50, is talking about the holy instant when it refers to this same state of mind:

Only the Love of God will protect you in all circumstances. It will lift you out of every trial, and raise you high about all the perceived dangers of this world into a climate of perfect peace and safety. It will transport you into a **state of mind** that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God (W-pI.50.3:3).

The thing to notice is that this is speaking about a state of mind that *already exists*. It must exist already if, in it, your problems have been answered already. This is your *right mind*, and it is part of you. It exists within you and you are, in the holy instant, connecting with it, becoming aware of it. You are letting go of all the ego’s defenses against peace and accepting the peace that is always, already there, an inherent aspect of your being.

In the sixth paragraph there is a very clear definition of the holy instant in just these terms:

The holy instant is the interval in which the mind is still enough [that is, sets aside the ego’s noisy thoughts for a moment] to hear an answer that is not entailed within the question asked (T-27.IV.6:9).

11. A Moment of Stillness

The preceding quote says the mind becomes still enough to allow the answer to be heard. *Stillness*, or quiet, is another aspect of the holy instant that is frequently mentioned. Our right mind is naturally quiet and calm; it is the ego that is noisy, raucous, and filled with shrieks of terror. The ego is constantly busy, frantically in action; when we connect with our right mind in the holy instant, the noise drops away and we are still.

The miracle comes quietly into the mind that stops an instant and is still (T-28.I.11:1).

Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away (T-31.I.12:1-4).

Then let us wait an instant and be still, forgetting everything we thought we heard; remembering how much we do not know (T-31.II.6:4).

Be very still an instant. Come without all thought of what you ever learned before, and put aside all images you made. The old will fall away before the new without your opposition or intent... Nothing will hurt you in this holy place, to which you come to listen silently and learn the truth of what you really want (T-31.II.8:1-6).

You won't always feel that stillness or experience it. But it is always there, within you. There is a place within you that is always at peace.

There is a place in you where this whole world has been forgotten, where no memory of sin and of illusion lingers still... There is a resting place so still no sound except a hymn to Heaven rises up to gladden God the Father and the Son... The changelessness of Heaven is in you, so deep within that nothing in this world but passes by, unnoticed and unseen. The still infinity of endless peace surrounds you gently in its soft embrace, so strong and quiet, tranquil in the might of its Creator, nothing can intrude upon the sacred Son of God within (T-29.V.1:1-3; 2:3-4).

Sometimes when I sit down to practice my Workbook lesson, looking for what the Workbook calls a period "of wordless, deep experience," —which is one way it describes the holy instant (Part II, Int.11:2)—my mind will be just filled with thoughts. I can't get still. I can't seem to quiet my mind and let go of its busy-ness. I may practice some meditation technique like focusing on the breath; sometimes that works. Sometimes it doesn't. The point is, it doesn't matter. The Holy Spirit is grateful for my effort. The gift of the holy instant is always given to my right mind, and my right mind is grateful to me also. "Give thanks to every part of you that you have taught how to remember you," the Text says. My right mind is grateful for my efforts. I receive the

benefit every time I practice the holy instant, whether I feel it or not, whether it seems like anything happens or not. The bliss is there whether or not I experience it. The spirit is in a state of grace forever.

When there is a storm at sea, the surface of the ocean may be violently agitated. The waves may crash and clash together. Foam may spray up into the air. But deep, down deep, there is a placid calm. Our mind is like that. On the days when I cannot seem to get beyond the whitecaps of my mind, I remind myself that the peace is there; I'm just unable to be aware of it.

One image that often helps me drop through the clouds of fear and into peace is the image of "going home." "I will be still an instant and go home" (Lesson 182). "Be still an instant and go home with Him, and be at peace a while." I think of going home to my Father's house and just resting there a while. I don't try to have any feelings or thoughts; I don't try to *not* have any feelings or thoughts. I just picture myself walking in to a place and *feeling at home*, and sitting down to rest. I'm not trying to accomplish anything. I'm not trying to achieve anything. Just for a moment, just for a little while, I am resting, here at home.

12. An Interval of Light, Knowing Yourself

Thus what you need are intervals each day in which the learning of the world becomes a transitory phase; a prison house from which you go into the sunlight and forget the darkness. Here you understand the Word, the Name Which God has given you; the one Identity Which all things share; the one acknowledgment of what is true (W-pI.184.10:1-3).

This is, perhaps, the best single description of what a holy instant is in the Course, although it does not use the phrase. A holy instant is an interval in which you leave behind the prison house of the world and "go into the sunlight" for a while, forgetting the darkness. You don't stay there—the next sentence in the Workbook says, "And then step back to darkness...", and we will discuss that later—but just for a moment, just for a brief interval, you allow yourself to experience the freedom that is ours beyond the body and the world.

The holy instant is an experience of grace, an instant in which we set aside some or all of our identification with the ego and our belief in the reality of the world it has projected, and allow the reality of our true Identity to shine through.