

## The Metaphysics of Separation and Forgiveness

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*Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.*

### Part II

Where we are in the story is that the ego has made up its tale of sin, guilt, and fear, with the specific purpose of keeping the Son of God away from the Holy Spirit. This is the central thing to understand, because this motivation will help account for everything that happens from this point on. Another point to make here—which I will come back to later—is that the ego's fear is really not of the Holy Spirit. The ego does not know about the Holy Spirit. There is no way that a thought of separation could understand a thought of unity. There is no way that a thought of jealousy, competition, judgment, and hatred—all of the ego—could ever understand a thought of love. The ego *is* afraid and it *does* understand that there is a power greater than itself. That power is *the power of the Son's mind to choose*. The ego's real fear is not of the Love of God, because it does not know about the Love of God. Its real fear is of the decision maker. Its real fear is that the Son will change his mind, turning away from the ego and turning back to the Holy Spirit, at which point the ego disappears.

It is extremely important to understand that the ego's goal is not really to bury the Holy Spirit, but to bury the Son's mind, because the mind really is the great threat. The Son's mind can choose against the ego, and choose the Love of God, which means the end of the ego. If the ego can somehow make the Son mindless, then the ego is home free. And it never has to worry about God or the Holy Spirit, however it conceives of them. The ego's real fear, again, is of the power of the Son's mind to choose. We will see now how the ego takes its plan a few steps further to achieve its ultimate goal—rendering the Son mindless so he will never change his mind and will always remain fully identified with the ego. When the Son of God chooses the ego and turns his back on the Holy Spirit, he not only *chooses* the ego thought system, he *becomes* the ego thought system. This is extremely important.

When the Son of God becomes identified with the ego thought system of sin, guilt and fear, he identifies himself as sinful, guilty, and fearful. The workbook says at one point, "You think you are the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pl.93.1:1). We all believe that, because we listen to the voice of the ego. Again it is not only that we believe in a thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, we *become* that thought system—it becomes our self. And the ego wants us never to break that association and identification. The Son could break it only if he says, "You know,

there's something wrong with what I chose. I want to make another choice." That is the ego's fear.

So the ego takes its plan one step further. It already has made the Son afraid of the Holy Spirit, believing there is a place within his mind that represents annihilation and strikes terror in his heart. That place is where the Holy Spirit dwells. So by virtue of its sin, guilt, and fear story—that the Son has bought hook, line, and sinker—the ego has convinced the Son that his mind is now a battleground where he is at war with his Father and the Holy Spirit. At the ego's urging, thus, the Son has turned his back on the Holy Spirit and identified with the ego (represented by the vertical solid line on the chart, separating the ego from the Holy Spirit). So the Son now does not even know about the Holy Spirit. The Love of God has been turned into its opposite, with the Son believing that he is at war with God and in mortal danger.

There is a very important passage in the manual that speaks about this insanity and describes it with the words, "Kill or be killed" (M-17.7:11). That becomes the reigning principle of the Son of God's mind. If he remains within this battleground, it is either him or God. And obviously, he does not stand much of a chance, because this is *God* Whom we are talking about, this raging, insane "beast" Who has been hurt by this puny little nothing who has stolen God's treasure, His power. We can see the arrogance of the ego thought system in believing all this. But that is what sin, guilt, and fear are telling us—God is on the rampage, and if He ever catches up with the Son, which is inevitable, the Son is finished. That is the insanity of the ego system. This is all described in more sophisticated terms in the section, "The Laws of Chaos," in Chapter 23 in the text.

The Son of God now says to the ego—and basically he no longer is really separate from the ego—with tremendous terror in his heart:

Help! I need a defense. I need something that will protect me from God's wrath and vengeance, which mean my certain death. I need a defense against this insane God Who I know is in my mind, because my guilt tells me I must be punished for sinning against Him. I sinned against Him because I believe that the separation from God is real—it has actually occurred and it is going to have terrible consequences.

Buried in the Son's mind is the Holy Spirit's simple Atonement principle that says that nothing happened. Another way to say it is that the separation is just a silly dream, with no consequences, no effects—nothing has happened. In a lovely phrase in the text, Jesus says that "not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). That is why it is a "tiny, mad idea." God does not even know about it. Nothing happened. But the Holy Spirit's thought of correction has stayed buried in our minds, and instead we have the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear that inevitably leads to the need for a defense. The Son of God needs something with which to protect himself against the wrath of God. And no defense will work as long as he remains on the battleground. He is totally out-armed and out-manned. He does not stand a chance.

Therefore the ego says to him, "I have another plan, which is absolutely wonderful. It's God-proof, and there's no way this plan can fail: We are going to leave the battleground and make a hiding place. I guarantee you God will never, ever find us." And so the Son of God, of course, is overjoyed and says, "When do we leave? My bags are packed. Let's go." The ego and the Son again join, fusing into one. They leave the battleground for a hiding place where God will never find them. The ego tells the Son, "The Holy Spirit exists only in your mind, and so if we leave the mind, we're home free." Psychologically the term that we use to denote the process of taking something from within the mind and placing it outside the mind is *projection*. That something is the ego, which is nothing more than the thought of separation fused with the Son of God. This thought, this self, is placed outside the mind, invariably giving rise to a world of separation. And this is the Course's explanation of how the entire physical world came into existence. When Jesus in the Course speaks about the world—the world of perception, the world of form, the world of separation—he is talking about the entire physical universe, and not just planet Earth, or our own cities, or our bodies. He is talking about the entire universe—the cosmos and all the galaxies that we are not even aware of. All this is the world of separation.

So the world is a hiding place to which the ego, together with the Son of God, has displaced or transported itself. As the Course says near the end of the workbook, "This world was made as an attack on God. ... [it] was meant to be a place where God could enter not" (W-PII.3.2:1,4). Once the ego makes the world to hide in, it does two more things for its crowning achievement. Keep in mind that the ego's purpose is very, very simple—it wants to make the Son of God mindless. The ego's fear, again, is that if the Son ever remembers that he has a mind that can choose, he will recognize that he has chosen wrongly. He would realize that the ego is really the one telling the lie, and the Holy Spirit is telling the truth. And then the Son would surely change his mind.

Since the ego's purpose is to make us mindless so we cannot change our minds, it makes up the world in which we hide. And then, as I just said, it does two more things to ensure that the Son of God will forever more—at least within the ego's system—remain without his mind. First, once the ego has projected itself from the mind—that is, once the thought of separation is placed outside the mind, resulting in a world of separation—the ego causes a veil to fall across the Son's mind so that he forgets where the world came from. We can call this the *veil of forgetfulness*, which basically is the dynamic of denial or repression. The Son of God denies what has happened—he forgets. He forgets that all this began in his mind where he had two choices—to listen to the voice of the ego or to the Voice of the Holy Spirit. He forgets that he chose to listen to the ego, to follow everything the ego said, and that he ended up in the world out of terror. He was afraid that if he remained within his mind, God would destroy him.

So the veil of denial causes the Son of God to forget. Then—and this is the ego's final, crowning achievement—the ego makes the body. The ego tells the Son of God, "Your home is not your mind. Your home is your body." And the ego makes the brain, which becomes the computer of the body. (It *seems* that the brain governs our functioning in the world.) The Son of God finds

himself in a body, forgets where he came from, thinks he was made by other bodies, thinks that he came into a world that was here before him, and has no memory at all of anything that we have been talking about. He has no memory at all about these two alternatives in his mind—either the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle or the ego's story of sin, guilt, and fear. He has no idea of a choice. All he knows is that he is in a body. He does not remember that the body he is in is nothing more than a projection. This is a body that believes in sin, guilt, and fear—the basic experience of everyone in the world. We believe that we are separated and that we are terrible sinners. We do not need the Roman Catholic Church or the Protestant Church or the Jewish faith or anything else to tell us that we are sinful, because we carry that thought within us. We all feel overwhelmed with guilt and self-hatred, and we all are afraid of being punished because of our sins.

These thoughts and feelings are not a result of what we think goes on in our lives here. Rather, we have simply transplanted what is in the ego mind into the world and into our individual experience. It is similar to sitting in a movie theater: Everything on the screen in front of us that seems so very real, with the power to bring up so many reactions, both positive and negative, is nothing more than the projection of what is on the film running through the film projector in the projection booth. It is impossible there be anything on the film that does not show up on the screen. And it is impossible there be anything on the screen that does not come from the film.

That parallels exactly what I am describing here. As the Course repeatedly tells us, there is nothing outside us. It is impossible that anything that we feel here not come from our own minds. The problem however is we do not know about the mind, because it seemingly has been forever blocked from us by the veil of forgetfulness. All that we know is that we feel terrible here in our bodies. We spend years in analysis or psychotherapy, with the therapist telling us that we are the products of all the terrible things that happened to us as children. Of course we are upset! Look at all the terrible things happening to us as adults. All of our explanations for our distress are based on the sin, guilt, and fear that we believe occur within our bodies or brains. When psychologists talk about the mind, they are not talking about this mind. They are talking about the brain.

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The Course is telling us that we are not upset because of what is happening with the body. We are upset because we chose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. Our identification with the body, then, is basically the end of the ego's story and the ego's plot. The ego has achieved its purpose by making us mindless, because from ever on now, we experience all kinds of problems, both on an individual level and in terms of a collective or societal level. And all our problems are focused on the body, one way or another, psychologically or physically. When we talk about the body, it includes our physical self as well as our personality, our psychological self. Both are what the Course means by "the body." Since we experience all of our problems here in the

world and in the body, this is where we look for the solutions or the answers. It seems there is nowhere else to look. We do not know about the mind, because of the veil of forgetfulness (see chart). Helen woke up one morning and heard herself saying to herself as she was getting up, "Never underestimate the power of denial." That later came out in the Course as, "Do not underestimate the power of the ego's belief in it [guilt]" (T-5.V.2:11). This veil of forgetfulness is the most powerful and the most primitive of all our defenses, and it works perfectly. If I am not aware that I have a mind, how could I possibly change it? That is the purpose of the world: to distract us from where the problem really is. Another term we could use to describe the world is that it is a *distraction device*.

Very briefly now—because we will come back to it later—the miracle, to round out this whole picture, simply reverses what the ego has done. That is why it is extremely important not to confuse the Course's meaning of a miracle with anything external. The miracle simply takes our attention, which has wandered from our minds and ensconced itself in the body, and brings it back to the decision maker. So the miracle simply reminds us that we do indeed have a choice. The miracle says my problem is not outside me in the body—it is not what the world is doing to me, it is not what my body is doing to me, it is not what my family has done to me. My problem is what *I* have done to me. The one mistake that we all made as one Son, right at the beginning, is the same mistake we make all the time, over and over again. We simply made the wrong choice. We dropped the hand of the Holy Spirit, and we took the hand of the ego. The miracle simply brings us back to our minds, so we can make another choice.

One extremely important definition of the miracle is that "the miracle is the first step in giving back to cause the function of causation" (T-28.II.9:3). *Cause* is the mind, the world is the *effect*. The ego tells us that the world causes our distress. In reality, the world is simply the *effect* of a decision made in our minds, which is the *cause*. The miracle restores to the mind, restores to cause, its function of being the causative agent. Once I know that I have a choice—the basic and primary purpose of the Course is to help us know this—I can choose between my ego's thought system with *its* evaluation of me, and the Holy Spirit's thought system with *His* evaluation of me. That is a very simple way of understanding what the Course is about—it is simply a way of reminding us that indeed we have a choice.

To preview something I will discuss later: The role of Jesus or the Holy Spirit is to be that place within our minds, that beacon of light, that lighthouse that simply shines out its presence as the constant reminder. As a lighthouse shines out its presence for the boats that are lost or trapped, Their role is to remind us that we do indeed have another choice. That is why over and over again in the Course, Jesus says, "Choose again."