

The Metaphysics of Separation and Forgiveness

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Roscoe NY

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Part III

I want to go back over the development of the ego system, but now specifically in terms of the notion of separation. Another term we can use for separation is *splitting off*. Basically, everything that I have spoken about can be summarized as a sequence of four splits or four separations. Understanding this will make it easier to grasp why the Course speaks about forgiveness as it does, and why Jesus talks so much about joining.

The **first split**, or the first separation, happens when the tiny, mad idea seems to occur—the one Mind seems now to coexist with a separate mind. So the first split, the first separation, is mind from Mind. In the Beginning—the capital "B" helps us realize that we are talking about a timeless, eternal state—there was only the totally unified Mind of God and Mind of Christ. Once the dream seemed to occur, there appeared to be two minds, the Mind and the mind—the Mind of Christ and the split mind.

The **second split**, or the second separation, follows next, as the split mind itself separates and splits. There are now two parts to the split mind—the part where the ego is and the part where the Holy Spirit is. With the first split, the mind seems to exist as separate and split off from the Mind, which seems to establish the mind as being on its own. It has an existence independent of the Christ Mind, and obviously independent of God. That mind then splits into two—what the Course refers to as the *wrong mind* and the *right mind*. The wrong mind holds the ego thought of separation, and the right mind the Holy Spirit's Atonement thought—that the separation never happened.

I am speaking of this as if it occurs in a sequence, just as earlier when I described the development of the ego system, it seemed to suggest a sequence. In reality none of this happens in a sequence—it does not happen across an interval of time or space. What we are seeing here—and it will become even clearer as we continue—is that the ego's separation thought follows the same law as God's Thought does. The thoughts are totally different, but the *principle* is the same. God's Love simply extends Itself. Since God's Love is perfectly unified, whole, and eternal, It continues to extend Itself and becomes Itself. This makes no sense to us here, but the principle is that love simply extends itself.

The ego thought follows the same law of the mind—extension (God, the Holy Spirit) or projection (ego). Since the ego thought is separation, division, and fragmentation, that is what it continues to extend or project. All I am doing now is describing that process. So the first separation is the mind from the Mind. The second separation occurs within the mind that now appears to be two. As we saw earlier, the Son of God as the decision maker then joins with the ego, believing that he has become that self—sinful, guilty, and deserving to be punished. And that justifies his fear.

This is when the **third split** happens. After mind first splits from Mind, and then splits itself between the wrong mind and the right mind, the wrong mind itself now splits. This is the third split, and it is extremely important that this be understood. We have this sinful, separated self, which I will denote by a vertical line (see chart). This is the Son of God who experiences himself as the home of sin and guilt, as a sinful, guilty creature. The ego tells the Son that he can escape from the sin and guilt by splitting himself in two. So the self splits in two: it splits to the wrath of God. This is the birth of fear. The Son begins as sinful and guilty, and then splits himself off, projecting the guilt so there now seems to be a separate being. Where before there was only one self in the ego mind—the sinful, guilty self—there are now two selves. They constitute the cast of characters on the battleground: the sinful, guilty Son who now believes he is at war with his wrathful, insane Father. In reality, of course, there is no wrathful, insane Father—the whole thing is made up. *It is a split-off part of the Son's mind that appears to be outside it.*

Basically that is projection. We simply take something within us, put it outside us, and then forget what we have done. And what seems to be outside us is, in reality, still part of our minds. Effect and cause always remain united—ideas never leave their source. We think there is something outside us, but it is simply a projection of what is inside us. This guilty, sinful self of the Son has split into two, and the part of the self that he hated, the sin and guilt, now appear to be outside the self, placed onto a being that has suddenly come into existence. The guilt is no longer within the Son. It is projected onto the Father. And now this Father—this wrathful, vengeful God—is "the heavy." He is the One Who attacks, the One Who is filled with vengeance. He has become the victimizer.

In reality, the Son believes *he* is the victimizer, because he believes he has victimized God—God is really the victim. That is why the Son is sinful and feels guilty. But once he projects the sin and guilt out, God becomes the heavy. God becomes the victimizer and the Son is now the innocent victim. That is what is found in the great western myth of Adam and Eve. At the end of this biblical story, God is the heavy. He is the One Who punishes. And it is a hell of a punishment! He destroys His own children. He tells them that they will die, and then banishes them from His Kingdom. Obviously, a *loving* God does not act like that.

This marvelous story from the Bible describes in graphic terms the ego thought system and how it arose. And God ends up having all the attributes of the sinful, guilty Son. Of course He has all the attributes of the sinful, guilty Son, because He *is* the sinful, guilty Son. He is simply a split-off part of the Son's mind—the third split. There is no battleground in the Son's mind. The whole

thing is made up. And on another level, there is no sinful, guilty Son in the first place. That is made up as well.

What started out as a single self has now split into two, just as a cell divides through mitosis. The ego has split off itself, and the Son forgets what he split off. One of the characteristics of this whole procession of splitting is that, because of the veil of denial (see chart), once the Son splits off, he forgets where he split off *from*. When the mind comes into existence, it forgets what the Mind of Christ and the Mind of God is like. All it knows is that it is on its own. That is the first split. Once the split mind splits and the Son chooses the ego, the Son forgets about the Holy Spirit. What the Son splits off *to* he identifies with, and what he splits off *from* he forgets.

With the third split, the Son of God forgets that he is sinful and guilty, because the sin and the guilt rest on what is placed outside him. The sin and the guilt now rest on the Father Who is seen as the avenger, the attacker, the victimizer. What is split off *to* is remembered, and what is split off *from* is forgotten. It is important to keep in mind that there is no one outside the Son. The God Who is seen as external, Who has the power to hurt and victimize, literally does not exist. He is simply a split-off part of the Son's mind. Likewise, the sinful, guilty self does not exist—the whole thing is made up. The ego just keeps splitting. What it splits off *from* is made up, and what it splits off *to* is made up. But what the Son splits off *to* becomes more frightening than what he split off *from*—each successive step brings with it a new fear that requires a new defense, which involves another split.

This leads us to the **fourth and final split**.

Once the ego has split itself into two, with the innocent-victim Son now at the mercy of the victimizing Father—this victimizing God Who will destroy him—all the Son can do is run for his life. So now comes the fourth and final split, where the mind splits from itself, making a body split off from the mind. At this split we find an incredible explosion, which is a metaphor for the one Son of God fragmenting into billions and trillions and zillions of pieces. There is no number large enough to describe and encompass what this split has entailed. Let us look at a part of the text that deals with this, the section called "**The Substitute Reality**" (T-18.I.4:1-3). This section is probably the best account in the Course of the origin of the world. The last section in this chapter, "The Two Worlds," is probably the best account in the Course of the purpose of the world: to conceal our guilt.

You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution.

When we believe that God is fear, which is what the ego has told us, we have made only one substitution—there is only one mistake. We substituted the ego's thought system for the Holy Spirit's. There was only one mistake, one substitution.

It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation for wholeness. It [that substitution] has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was.

This very important passage is describing the fourth and final split, when the mind splits off from itself and becomes a body, fragmenting over and over again. It is as if all hell breaks loose. That one ego thought, that one Son of God, fragments into billions and billions of pieces. The resulting world becomes a very effective hiding place, distraction device, and smokescreen, because we end up with what the Hindus refer to as the "world of multiplicity." This world becomes so incredibly complicated, so incredibly vast, that it is almost impossible to conceive that the error "once was one and still is what it was"—nothing has ever changed. There was only one mistake—the Son of God turned to the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That mistake is carried within every fragmented mind and every fragmented body—each of us carries within us that one mistake.

We each also carry within us the ability to make another choice. Basically, the Course views the split mind, especially as we experience it here, as *holographic*, even though Jesus never uses that term. And one of the principle characteristics of a hologram is that the whole is found in every part. Any part or fragment of a holographic picture contains the whole of it. You can reproduce a whole picture from just a fragment. Within each tiny fragment that each of us represents is contained the whole of the ego's thought system, the Holy Spirit's thought system, and the decision maker's ability to choose one or the other. But it all comes from this process of splitting off, where we continually split off one from the other.

Let me run through the splits one more time. First the mind splits off from the Mind, and forgets where it came from. Then the mind splits into two—the decision maker chooses the ego, or the wrong-mind part, and forgets the Holy Spirit, or the right-mind part. The wrong mind, which consists of sin and guilt, then splits off into two—a sinful, guilty Son and a wrathful Father. But the wrathful Father has taken on the attributes of the sinful, guilty Son, so that the Son forgets that he really is guilty. What was one now seems to be two, except what seems to be the other being, is simply a split-off part of the one self. Finally, these two selves split off and the seeming split-off reality of a battleground in our minds now takes form outside us. And the entire world appears to be a battleground. But if the battleground in my mind is a conflict between two beings that are really one being, seemingly split into two, that means that the battleground I experience here in the world, where I am the victim and you are the victimizer, simply involves split-off parts of my one self.

When Jesus in the Course says that your brother is your self, he means that literally. There are many passages in the Course that should be taken metaphorically, such as Jesus saying that God is lonely without His children (T-2.III.5:11), that He weeps for them (T-5.VII.4:5), and that God gave us the Holy Spirit in response to the separation (e.g., T-5.II.2:5). These are metaphors, not to be taken literally. But when Jesus says that your brother is a part of you, he means that

literally. And the splits explain why this is so. The vengeful, wrathful God Who we believe is the victimizer, making us His victim, is really a split-off part of ourselves. That thought is buried in the mind under the veil of denial. We project that thought out and make up a world. The victim-victimizer split in the mind—the battleground—is seen outside the mind. But the principle is exactly the same, because nothing has changed. My victimized body, which is outside my mind, seems prey to your victimizing body, which is also outside my mind. But they are both parts of my one self.

So basically, forgiveness means I really am forgiving what never happened: we never split off. When the Course talks about healing relationships—changing a special relationship to a holy relationship with my special partner—it means that the special person in whom I have invested so much hate or so much need is literally a split-off part of myself. I am literally joining with myself—not the self that has a name—because the person I identify with as the victim, and the person I identify as the victimizer are really split-off parts of a larger self. The whole message and the whole plan of the Course—to whatever extent we can speak of a plan, because Jesus does not have a plan as such—is that everyone that we split off from we gradually reunite with. That is the *circle of Atonement*. And that is why the Course has such an emphasis on joining with each other. And that joining is not on a physical level—it is not joining between one person and another. It is remembering that we are really parts of a larger self. As I rejoin with you—which means I no longer see you as the victimizer—I must be doing the same thing with God, because I am really running away from the split-off God I made up. The whole dynamic of projecting my guilt onto another being whom I literally made up—that I think is God—gets repressed and is then seen outside.

Let us turn to a passage in the "The Dreamer of the Dream" in Chapter 27 of the text that makes this strikingly clear. At the beginning of paragraph fifteen Jesus says, "Dream softly of your sinless brother, who unites with you in holy innocence." Then at the end he says, "He [your brother] represents his Father [your brother represents God], Whom you see as offering both life and death to you" (T-27.VII.15:1,7). He seems to be offering both life and death to me because I have a split mind. My ego tells me that God is offering me death; the Holy Spirit says that God is offering me life. Since this is the split in my mind that I have made real in the world, then anyone that I am relating to will carry the same qualities that I projected onto God. I am re-enacting the splitting off that we all did when we split off our sinful, guilty self and put it onto God. You then become the representation of God for me. Since I see God as representing life or death, that is also how I see you. And then Jesus says, "Brother, He gives but life." God only gives life—this is just another statement of the Atonement principle. And he continues, "Yet what you see as gifts your brother offers represent the gifts you dream your Father gives to you" (T-27.VII.16:1-2).

With this passage we can begin to see the connection I mentioned right at the beginning between the Course's metaphysics and its very practical emphasis on how we live with each other—it is all the same thing. We can begin to understand why forgiveness is so central in the

Course, and why it is so important for us to recognize our hatred and all the specialness that we feel for each other. They are a reflection of the original hatred we feel towards God. And I do not have to get in touch with that original hatred. I only have to recognize that in feeling victimized by you, I am re-enacting the third split in which I felt I was being victimized by God. If I can heal my relationship with you, which simply means changing my mind (we will come back to this shortly), then I am really healing my relationship with God, because it is the same problem.

Everything is the same problem. No matter how often I split it off and fragment it, the substitution remains what it always was. The immense significance of that passage from "The Substitute Reality" is that it shows so clearly that the problem always remains the same. It remains one, despite its seeming appearance as billions and billions of relationships, each with its own problems. There is only one relationship. It begins with my seeing myself as guilty because I listened to the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That guilt is so horrible that I split it off so I see it outside me. But that in turn becomes horrible because it means I will be killed by God. So I split that off and make believe it never happened. I make up a world and people it with billions of bodies. And I re-enact with every single fragment the same problem I have with God: I see myself as an innocent victim of what someone else has done. The form of the relationship is either special hate or special love, but it always ends up the same.

I do not have to go back in my mind to my relationship with God. I simply have to be able to choose to let Jesus help me look at the split. (We will discuss this further a little later.) Jesus helps me understand that the problem is not you. The problem is that I have split off something in myself that I do not want to look at. So I see it in you. If I can say your seeming sin has no effect on me, I am in effect saying that you do not exist outside me. And so I am really beginning to rejoin with myself.

Some of the ancient Gnostic texts have Jesus speak about how he is "regaining himself," or "rejoining with himself," how he is "collecting all the fragments and reuniting them within himself." Those were very brilliant ways of describing this process through which we will all end up as one self. The Course's concept of the Second Coming is that all of the seemingly separated fragments of the Sonship will reunite as one Son.

The process begins wherever I am, whenever I feel there is someone outside me who can either hurt me or save me—it does not matter, it is the same mistake. I want to learn that whatever I am seeing outside is a split-off part of myself. By forgiving you and joining with you, I am really joining with myself.