

## Duality as Metaphor in *A Course in Miracles*

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### Part III

#### Heaven: The State of Oneness (cont.)

Now I want to look at a number of places in the Course where Jesus says very clearly how he cannot tell us what Oneness is. Of all the passages in the Course, these come closest to a description of what Oneness is. But Jesus also makes it very clear that there is no way we can understand that. This is Jesus talking in the first person.

**(T-8.VI.9:1) I share with God the knowledge of the value He puts upon you.**

This would be an example of a dualistic statement. It makes it sound as if God values His Son. That is because there is no way, as he is going to say in a minute, that anyone could understand what the state of perfect Oneness is.

**(T-8.VI.9:2) My devotion to you is of Him, being born of my knowledge of myself and Him.**

Jesus is saying that he is totally one with God and totally one with us. There is no separation. Remember knowledge is not dualistic in the Course. It is not that Jesus knows God or knows us. Jesus is aware, in a non-dualistic way—no subject and object—of the perfect unity of God and Christ.

**(T-8.VI.9:3-5) We cannot be separated. Whom God has joined cannot be separated [from the famous statement in the gospels], and God has joined all His Sons with Himself. Can you be separated from your life and your being?**

Remember, *ideas do not leave their source*, so there is no way we can be separate from our Source, which is all being and all life.

**(T-8.VI.9:6-9) The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Truth can only be experienced. It cannot be described and it cannot be explained.**

That is a clear, succinct, easily understood statement. Truth can only be experienced; it cannot be described or explained. That is why this is not a course in truth, but the *foundation* of the Course is truth. If you are to understand the reflection of truth that constitutes the main body of teachings of this course—namely what forgiveness is and the

miracle is—then you must understand what it is a reflection of. Don't mistake the reflection for the truth. You cannot understand this course if you do not recognize what non-duality is, what a state of perfect Oneness is. Everything else is part of the dream and therefore is not real.

Now Jesus says:

**(T-8.VI.9:10) I can make you aware of the conditions of truth ...**

The conditions of truth are the undoing of the ego's barriers to truth. He says in one important section on special relationships that your task is not to seek for [truth] but merely to seek and find all of the barriers you have placed between yourself and [truth] (T-16.IV.6:1). This is not a course in truth. This is not a course in love. This is a course in illusions. This is a course, on the dualistic level, to help you undo the illusion, because that is what forgiveness does. It is a course in undoing the illusion, which then allows you to remember who you are as God's Son.

Again, if you do not understand that is the basic goal, if you do not understand that is where you begin and that is where you end, you will not understand how to get there. And you will continually stub your toe, fall, and trip yourself up, because you will think you are doing this course, but you will not be doing it. You must understand that duality is unreal. And when, in the Course, Jesus speaks about duality, he is speaking metaphorically, symbolically. He is not speaking truth because truth cannot be talked about; it cannot be explained; it cannot be described. So he says:

**(T-8.VI.9:10-11) I can make you aware of the conditions of truth, but the experience is of God. Together [Jesus and you as a student] we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself.**

Again, this is a very clear, easily understood statement about what he is doing in this course. He is telling you this course is not true. He will tell you later on in another passage that this course comes within an ego framework (C-in.3:1). It is dualistic—not because that is true, but because it is the only way you will learn about your mistakes so you can undo them. Don't confuse the method or the means with the end. That is that hidden, underlying layer of this course, which is to say that if you proceed with open eyes and with an open mind, without arrogance and with deep humility and gratitude for this, you will begin to understand what that deeper layer is, and you will begin to really understand that Jesus is talking about what is in your mind. He says in a very important passage near the end of Chapter 20, "What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it ... are wholly unreal?" (T-20.VIII.7:3-5). He means that very literally.

What if you really knew nothing is here? An *hallucination* is a psychiatric term for a patient who sees something that is not there, who hears something that is not there. This is not an altered state. This is not a spiritually advanced state. This is psychosis, born of terror. Don't confuse psychosis with spirituality. He means that very literally. What if you knew this world was made up, was not here? Later I will go into exactly what this means and how to understand what this means for you personally. This is what he is really saying. If you really understood that, you would understand what non-duality is. Non-duality is everything that duality is not.

Again, "Together we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself." Truth is not the goal of the Course. It is what the Course will lead you to.

**(W-pl.129.4:1) Communication, unambiguous and plain as day, remains unlimited for all eternity.**

*Communication* in the Course is a term Jesus uses to describe the state of knowledge. God is in perfect communication with His Son and vice versa. This has nothing to do with one body communicating with another body. That is how we distort it in this world. That is how we take a non-dualistic principle of perfect Oneness and a sharing of that Oneness and of the Love which is our Being, God in Christ and Christ in God, and distort it so it becomes one body communicating to another body.

**(W-pl.129.4:2) And God Himself speaks to His Son, as His Son speaks to Him.**

Here, obviously, Jesus is using a dualistic term to describe a non-dualistic state. So, in the second stage of his music, Beethoven is looking at the spiritual world through material eyes. Jesus is talking about a non-material, non-dualistic state—God speaking to His Son, His Son speaking to Him—but he is using dualistic words, the words of materiality, because that is the only way we could understand what he is speaking about. In the lovely opening passages of *The Song of Prayer* pamphlet, Jesus talks about the song the Father sings to the Son and the Son sings to the Father (S-1.in.1:2). That is the song of prayer; without words, without notes. That is what he is speaking about here. He is using the language of bodies.

Do not confuse the language with what he is talking about. Do not confuse the symbol with what the symbol is representing. *Accept no compromise in which duality plays a part.* God does not talk to you. Later we will read an important series of passages where Jesus tells us that God does not hear words, and He does not understand words (M-21.1:7). In reality, the Holy Spirit does not speak to you, because no one speaks in reality. In the world of dreams He speaks to you, and we will see later on how very important that is. But do not confuse reality with the *reflection* of reality. Otherwise, again, you will not have a clue as to what this course is talking about, which is why practically no one does. People think it is saying something

else. It is not. Jesus knows the difference between symbol and reality, and he is asking his students to understand that too. Later we will read a number of passages on symbols.

**(W-pl.129.4:3) Their language [the language of God and His Son] has no words, for what They say cannot be symbolized.**

In one sentence he uses the word *speaks* and in the next sentence he is telling you there aren't any words. What They say cannot be symbolized. This would be a statement where he is talking about the spiritual world through spiritual eyes, where he is saying that there is no reflection here.

**(W-pl.129.4:4-5) Their knowledge is direct and wholly shared and wholly one. How far away from this are you who stay bound to this world.**

He is not putting you down. He is simply telling you not to try to understand this. But sentences like this are here for a specific purpose: so that you will understand that what he is saying in this course is not true. It is a *reflection* of truth. It is the closest you are going to get in this world to what truth is, but it is not the truth. God is not a concept. God is not a thought as we define thought. He is a Thought with a capital *T*. God is not a love that is in this world. The reality of Jesus is not of this world. Your reality is not of this world. What you think you are and what you think your brother is, whom you have to forgive, are not of this world. You must really understand that this is the basis of everything Jesus teaches in this course.

As Helen herself experienced, there was a part of her mind that could go to a place that transcended even Jesus, and she was very close to him, as you know, both in love for him and in hate for him. This course came from that closeness, but she would have some experiences that transcended this. Those are the experiences that are revelatory, that are the direct experience of the Unity and the Oneness of Heaven. They are beyond this course, but when you know about that—whether you actually have such an experience or you at least recognize that is what reality is—you again have a standard by which to understand what your experiences are here, and you will not fall into the trap of making duality real. Remember, that is the only assignment he asks of his students. Teachers of God are really his students. That is the only assignment. It is the same thing as saying the only assignment is to accept the Atonement for yourself, which is that the separation never happened. If the separation never happened, there is no duality.

**(W-pl.129.4:5-6) How far away from this are you who stay bound to this world. And yet how near are you, when you exchange it for the world you want.**

The "world you want" is the real world. He is saying that you could come very close to this true world, to this true reality, by totally letting go of this world. But you cannot let go of it if you first do not know how much you are clinging to it, and we will get to that later.

This is probably the clearest statement of how impossible it is to talk about what the state of Oneness is:

**(W-pl.169.5:1-4) Oneness is simply the idea God is. And in His Being, He encompasses all things. No mind holds anything but Him. We say "God is," and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless.**

That is the only true statement you can make: God is. You are still using words, but you are not using any reference to anything in this world. This is not a helpful statement. If Jesus began this course to Helen and said, "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes. God is, and you are finished," she probably would have said, "God is what?" Jesus does not do that because this is not a course in God. This is not a course in love. This is not a course in truth. This is a course in undoing our version of what God is and what love is, which we will discuss later on. But you cannot speak about what God is. So any time you think you understand this course and are speaking about it, realize that you are not speaking truth. This is not a course in truth. This is a course in undoing illusion with a helpful illusion. "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless." Words mean absolutely nothing when you compare them with what truth is because truth is beyond words. It is non-dualistic.

**(W-pl.169.5:5-7) There are no lips to speak them, and no part of mind sufficiently distinct to feel that it is now aware of something not itself. It has united with its Source. And like its Source Itself, it merely is.**

In truth, in Heaven, in Oneness, there are no lips that could speak words. Again, "God is," and when we awaken from our dream, *we are* also. We do not have a mind that can understand this. We do not have words that can speak this. We do not have a brain that could understand this.

**(W-pl.169.6:1-3) We cannot speak nor write nor even think of this at all. It [this knowledge that God is] comes to every mind when total recognition that its will is God's has been completely given and received completely. [This knowledge, this awareness comes when we have let go of everything else.] It returns the mind into the endless present, where the past and future cannot be conceived.**

The "endless present" is a term for eternity. The holy instant, which is another key concept in the Course, is a reflection of eternity. It is not eternity, which means it is not real. It is a reflection, not reality. We all know that we are creatures of the past and future, and our present experience is always seen through the filter of the past and our needs that we project into the future. Therefore, how could we possibly understand "God is"? That is why, again, Jesus does not talk about it.

**(W-pl.169.6:4) It [the experience of the knowledge of God] lies beyond salvation; past all thought of time, forgiveness and the holy face of Christ.**

Jesus is saying, "My course is limited in what it will do. It will take you up to the gate of Heaven, but not through the gate." This experience is past the world of time and the world of duality; it is past forgiveness and past the holy face of Christ, which is the Course's great symbol for forgiveness.

**(W-pl.169.6:5-7) The Son of God has merely disappeared into his Father, as his Father has in him. The world has never been at all. Eternity remains a constant state.**

In other words, nothing happened. In order to disappear into the Father you must have no specialness. You have no individual identity in God. You have no personal self. You have no experience of love in relationship to someone else, even if that someone else is God or Jesus. This is a love that transcends duality. It transcends subject and object. It transcends separate persons. That is what makes this course so different.

On the one hand, Jesus speaks about this and makes it clear that this is the only level of truth. On the other hand, he gives us a dualistic way of reaching beyond duality. But, again, the caution is clearly implied, and I will make it much more than just clearly implied, so that you do not fall into the trap of confusing the means with the end. That is where people get tripped up with the Course. I will be elaborating on this later.

**(W-pl.169.7:1) This is beyond experience we try to hasten.**

The experience that he is trying to hasten here is the experience of forgiveness, which occurs within the dream of duality.

**(W-pl.169.10:1) There is no need to further clarify what no one in the world can understand.**

Now this should put every Course student in his or her place. If you read this and understand it, then you will learn what humility is. He is telling you there is no way that you could understand what he is talking about. (He goes on with this in the paragraphs that I skipped.) There is no way you could understand this, but he is asking you to be aware that is what you do not understand, so when you learn and teach this course, you will not be teaching duality, and you will understand that you do not forgive the person you think you are forgiving. Just to foreshadow what I will be talking about later, you forgive a split-off part of yourself. You cannot forgive anybody else out there because that is not true. There is no one out there. Your experience will be that there is someone out there, and that experience is very important. That is what the Course builds its process on. But you will not get too far up that ladder of prayer, which ends in the real world and then beyond that in Heaven, if you stubbornly and arrogantly think that you are actually doing something when you are not doing it. *You must understand the difference between symbol and reality.*

**(W-pl.169.10:2) When revelation of your oneness comes, it will be known and fully understood.**

He is saying this is not our concern. People who tell you that they have experiences of God's Love are lying to you. If they make a big deal about having an experience of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, they are talking about an illusion anyway, so they should not brag about it. That does not mean the experience is not very important and very helpful. It is. It is mandatory to progress in this course, but why in God's name should you boast about something that is unreal? When week after week people come to their *Course in Miracles* groups and brag about what the Holy Spirit did for them, they are bragging about something that is nonexistent. What is so wonderful about that? God is wonderful. God is *truly* wonderful. He is the only wonderful thing in the world. Why would you settle for anything less than that?

This is not a course in reveling in duality. It is a course in making your way through duality to the real Love that is beyond it. But when you get caught up with how wonderful you are because of what you are doing and what you are teaching and what the Holy Spirit is doing for you, then you will never get your feet off the ground. You will just barely get on the first rung of the ladder. It is really important that you understand the difference between duality and non-duality. Please do not listen to anybody who talks to you about duality. *Accept no compromise in which duality plays a part.*

It is very easy to tell when people are teaching duality. They talk about the Holy Spirit doing things for them. They talk about forgiving other people. They talk about joining with other people as if there is something sacred about joining with other people. What could be sacred about joining with someone who is not even there? That is psychosis because you are hallucinating. "What if you recognized this world is an hallucination?" (T-20.VIII.7:3) What if you understood the figures in it are all made up? What if you understood that? Then you would not fall into the trap of bragging about your getting parking spaces, or getting lovers, or getting new jobs, because you do not understand what a miracle is if that is what you think this course is about. And you certainly do not understand what Jesus is about.

It is critically important that you recognize the difference between reality and illusion, between fact and symbol, between non-duality and duality. That is what this is about. Again, what makes this course so exceptional as a spiritual path is that its dualistic teachings come clearly within the framework of non-duality. There is nothing else that I know of that does it quite like this course. And you get this now in the remainder of this paragraph. After talking about revelation of your oneness Jesus says:

**(W-pl.169.10:3-4) Now we have work to do, for those in time can speak of things beyond [which is what we have been doing], and listen to words which explain what is to come is past already. Yet what meaning can the words convey to those who count the hours still, and rise and work and go to sleep by them?**

Jesus is telling all of his students: "As long as you think you are a body, and as long as you think you are regulated by the body's laws of eating, sleeping, resting, and playing, how could you possibly understand what I am talking about when I tell you what God is, what love is, and what eternity is? Therefore I will not spend too much time on that. But I will tell you enough so you will understand that what I am talking about in this course is not real. It is the closest thing to reality you will ever get in this world, but it is not real."

That is this underlying layer of this course. That is the real truth that is hidden. Not hidden by Jesus' design, but hidden because of your own fear. He says over and over again how clear and simple this course is (e.g., T-11.VI.3:1; T-11.VIII.1:1). He means exactly what he says. "Reality and truth are non-dualistic. They have nothing to do with subject and object, but there is no way you could understand it, so let me help you get out of the mess that you are in. Let me help you look at this world and yourself differently, and by doing that, you will realize that nothing is here and that you are not even here."