

Duality as Metaphor in *A Course in Miracles*

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Part IV

The “Tiny, Mad Idea”

Now we are going to leave the wonderful world of Oneness—or *think* that we are going to leave the wonderful world of Oneness—where the impossible seems to have happened. In the presence of that wonderful resplendence in which there really is no perceived light, in the presence of that incredibly joyous song in which there are no notes and no ears to hear it, the impossible seems to happen. What the Course refers to as this *tiny, mad idea* seems to arise within the mind of the Sonship. Probably the clearest statement of this comes near the end of Chapter 27 where Jesus says, “Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea...” (T-27.VIII.6:2). That is the *tiny, mad idea* that in effect says I want to be on my own. I want something more than everything; that looks at the reality of Heaven and says, is this all there is? Heaven is boring. I want to be free of the tyranny of being part of the All. I want something beyond the infinite, I want something beyond the everywhere. I want *something* because there is nothing in Heaven, literally nothing in Heaven—no thing.

These are all just terms or symbols to try to explain, in very human terms, what this impossible thought was, what this *tiny, mad idea* was. This is the birth of duality. Again, it is the idea that suddenly—and realize we are talking about something that never happened—it appeared as if a part of God’s Mind, a part of Christ’s Mind split off, so now there were two minds. There is the capital “M” Mind of God, which is totally unified with the Mind of Christ, and now there is the little “m” mind (the split mind or the separated mind) that appears to be co-existing. Still, once again, this never happened.

Everything that we are going to talk about is all part of a dream. It is not real. It never happened. It appears to be very real, and what the Course does—and what we will be doing for a while—is to describe the process of how what never happened seemed to have happened and the course that it took. This is the birth of duality. Non-duality is the condition of Heaven where the Mind of God and the Mind of Christ are totally unified. There is no place where one ends and the other begins. In the dualistic state, which is the beginning of the dream, there is very much a sense of where one ends and the other begins. There is a clear demarcation between the Mind of God (or the Mind of Christ) and the little “m” mind. This is

the beginning of duality. Everything else from here on is totally unreal. That, again, is extremely important. What I will do now in developing this is talk about the process of the separation in terms of four stages, the four splits. The Course never uses the term *four splits*—it certainly talks a great deal about splitting—but it describes what these stages are.

The *first split*, then, is what we have already discussed. That is where the mind of the ego, the mind of the Son, seems to split off from the Mind of Christ. So where there was one, there now appear to be two: the Mind of Christ and the little “m” mind. What becomes extremely important to understand is that when the Course talks about love in Heaven, Jesus is talking about love that is continually extending itself, a concept that has no referent or meaning in this world, which means there is no way anyone in this world can understand the extension of love or the extension of spirit. Because when we think of extension, it is always within a temporal and spatial dimension: I extend love to you. My self extends love to you over space and over a period of time. That is the only way that we understand what extension means.

In reality, extension does not occur in a temporal or spatial dimension because there is no time or space in Heaven. But love is continually extending itself. God extends His Self, which is Love, which creates Love, which is Christ. Christ, being a part of God and sharing in all the attributes of God also extends His Self, which is Love, and that is what *A Course in Miracles* refers to as the creations of Christ. There is no way any of this can be understood in this world, and the Course does not even try to explain it. Jesus introduces the idea of the creations of Christ every once in a while, but then he drops it, basically saying, as we have seen, there is no way you could understand this.

The point here is that love is always extending itself. Love becomes love becomes love becomes love, not in a quantitative sense (see W-pl.105.4). You are not adding up love as you would bushels of potatoes, where you have a quantity and you just add to it and add to it. Or you have two parents who have sexual intercourse and now there is an offspring. Then that offspring grows up, meets a mate, etc. And then you have all the “begats” that you find in the Bible. So love is always making more. Physical life seems to be making more. That is what the Course would refer to as a “cruel parody” or a “travesty” of the process of true extension that occurs in Heaven. There is no way of comprehending that except to understand the concept that love always extends itself and becomes love. Perfect Oneness and unity continually extends perfect Oneness and unity.

Likewise, however, the thought of separation, the thought of splitting off from God will also continually split and split and split. Just as love loves and extends, separation separates and separates, splits off and splits off. That is what the Course refers to as the fundamental law of the mind: love or spirit extends, the ego projects (see T-7.VIII.1:2). They are different words for the exact same dynamic. The only difference is that they start in different places. Extension begins with love and is only love; separation begins with separation and is only separation. But separation is continually separating and continually splitting. It is very important that you

understand that, because that is what we are going to be developing.

So we have the mind of the Son—now within the dream—separates from the Mind of Himself, which is Christ, and now there is a little “m” mind and a capital “M” Mind. The next thing that happens is that the split mind splits into what we will call the ego or the wrong mind, and the other part is the Holy Spirit, which is the right mind. Let me say again, all of this is unreal. We are not talking about reality. We are not talking about the ego as a real substance, entity, or person. We are not talking about the Holy Spirit as a real substance, entity, or person. This is all within the dream. This is simply another expression of the split. The ego is the part of the split mind that says the separation is real. The Holy Spirit is the part of the split mind that says the separation is not real. So the Holy Spirit is basically that memory or that thought that says nothing ever happened. It is the memory of who we are as God’s Son. It is the memory of God’s Love that is within the split mind. That is the *second split*. The first split is mind splitting off from Mind. The second split is mind splitting into two, because that is what splitting must always do. It just begets more splitting. It cannot help doing that. That is the nature of the mind. What is in the mind continually, in a sense, invents itself or projects itself or extends itself. Love continually extends itself. Separation continually projects itself. So now there are two parts to the split mind.

Now we are going to find the third split. There is a part of the mind that chooses. We call it the decision maker because it decides between the ego and the Holy Spirit. Once more, remember, we are talking mythologically, symbolically. We are not talking about reality or fact. The ego is a construct that we have invented to understand a process in our mind. The Holy Spirit is a construct we have invented to describe a process in our mind. The decision maker is a construct we have invented to describe a process in our mind. And all of them are different. They all are basically illusory because they are all part of the one whole. Ideas do not leave their source, but they appear to be separate.

The *third split* is when the decision maker, confronted with the choice between the ego and the Holy Spirit, chooses the ego and splits off from the Holy Spirit. The decision maker now joins with the ego. This is the third split. The first split, again, is the little “m” mind separating from the capital “M” Mind. And then once you have the little “m” mind, it cannot but continually split because that is in the nature of the mind. Love extends, separation separates or splits off. Then it splits into two, which is the wrong mind and the right mind, what we call the ego and the Holy Spirit. Then the decision maker chooses the ego thereby splitting off and separating from the Holy Spirit.

Again, we are simply describing what goes on in the mind, and we obviously describe it in human, anthropomorphic terms because that is what we believe we are. That is how we experience ourselves. In reality, it is not like this, but there is no way of knowing what it is like. This mind is not the mind of *Homo sapiens*. This is not a human brain doing all this. So we are simply, as *Homo sapiens*, trying to describe a process in our language, in our terms and in our

concepts, but it is an experience that transcends what we are talking about.

One of the characteristics of this process is when the mind splits off, it forgets what it split off from. This will become extremely important later on, so try to get the concept now, and then it will make what we do more meaningful. When the split mind splits off from the Mind of Christ, it forgets where it came from. It believes now it is the only thing that there is—it is on its own. And what happens, of course, is that it likes what it sees, what it finds. It does not remember its source because what you split off from gets denied, repressed, or forgotten. Then, when the split mind splits into two and the decision maker chooses the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, the decision maker forgets about the Holy Spirit. It splits off part of itself, which now becomes virtually non-existent, and from a practical point of view, *is* non-existent. There is no memory of that. We have forgotten we were a part of God. The Holy Spirit gets buried, and all that seems to be the reality is the ego thought system.

What precedes the next step is that the ego likes what it has found. The ego likes being on its own. It likes its freedom. It luxuriates in the idea, “I am free; I am on my own; I am an individual.” It has no memory of the Love of God. For all intents and purposes, it has destroyed the Love of God. It has become a deeply buried memory, if you will. It split off from it and it has forgotten what it split off. All it is aware of is what it has become. It has now become a split-off mind, a separated mind that is on its own and it likes it. It likes being free. It likes its individuality.

Everything that we seem to experience here as human beings is a reflection of that thought. We do not want to give up our autonomy. We do not want to give up our identity. We do not want to give up our specialness, because then we would cease to exist. We like being on our own. That is what the separation thought is. It never occurs to us what we gave up because if we ever remembered what we gave up—as the Course says at one point—we would leap into our Father’s Arms (T-9.VI.7:1-2). That is because deep down no one likes being on his own. It is awful because you are cut off from the very source of your life. No one would like being cut off from what one believes is the source of one’s life: oxygen. It is not a very pleasant experience to be suffocating. That is just a physical expression of what we would feel like—in much, much, much worse terms—if we would allow ourselves to realize that we have choked ourselves off from the Source of our real life. But we are not aware of it because that is part of the dynamic of the ego mind. It forgets what it split off from. It forgets what it left.

Thus, first we forget God, our Source. Now we think we are our source. We think we are our creator. We think we are on our own. We think we are autonomous and independent, and we have fallen madly in love—head over heels in love—with our own specialness and our own individuality and uniqueness. This becomes extremely important later on, when we see that how we live here reflects that original ontological thought that is always with us because we *are* that thought. Then, when we turn to the ego and we split off from the Holy Spirit, that memory of Who we are is also split off. So it is not only that we split off from God, our Source,

we have also split off from the memory that would link us back to that Source. And so now we are left with the ego that we have chosen, that we have identified with and have split off from, and we have forgotten the Holy Spirit, the other part of our split mind. That part of our split mind is the link back to the Christ Mind and to the Mind of God. At this point, of course, there is no hope. But then it gets worse and worse because once we have begun this process of splitting, it is like opening up Pandora's box. There is no way we will ever close it because now the splitting off becomes rampant.