

Our Gratitude to God

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Part XXI

"The Happy Dream" (T-18.V)

We return now to "The Happy Dream" section, re-reading sentence 3 and then continuing:

(T-18.V.6:3-4) But forget not that your relationship is one, and so it must be that whatever threatens the peace of one is an equal threat to the other [that is within *my* mind]. The power of joining its blessing lies in the fact that it is now impossible for you or your brother to experience fear alone, or to attempt to deal with it alone.

This is all within my mind. If you are having the same ego attack as I am, and I am fearful and angry, then obviously I am reinforcing what you believe, just as your being angry and fearful is reinforcing what I believe. If I change my mind, however, then your mind is already changed, because minds are one; but you may not yet choose to accept it. The fact that Jesus had no fear or guilt in his mind, only the Love of God, means that that same presence is also with us. The problem is that we still choose to deny it and not accept it.

(T-18.V.6:5) Never believe that this is necessary, or even possible.

This refers to "it is now impossible for you or your brother to experience fear alone, or to attempt to deal with it alone." It does not mean that I have to do something with you. For example, I can be in a relationship with someone who has not been healed and that person dies. That does not mean that I no longer have any hope of healing the relationship. Because minds are joined, I do not need your physical presence or your approval. You do not have to be *A Course in Miracles* student for me to forgive you and to have the relationship healed, because it is all within my own mind. It could be that I would do or say things to you on a behavioral level, but it would not be my self who is saying them or doing them; whatever it is would come *through* me.

Our function is to accept forgiveness. The extension of forgiveness through us is not our function. Our job is simply to accept the Atonement for ourselves, to forgive, and to change our minds. What happens after that is not our function; it is the Holy Spirit's function. Love will automatically come through us, and therefore it will be love that will guide us in what we say and do. It is not the ego that does that.

(T-18.V.6:6-7) Yet just as this is impossible [that I act on my own], so is it equally impossible that the holy instant come to either of you without the other. And it will come to both at the request of either.

The main point here is that minds are joined. Thus, this does not mean that both people have to agree on a conscious level or feel peaceful and forgiven. It does not mean that the other person even has to know what is going on in my mind. If I am upset with you—which is a relationship that may appear to be external, but is really within my own mind—and I change my mind about you, then the loving thought in

my mind joins with the loving thought in your mind whether you accept it or not. In other words, you could still be in the grips of the ego and not be aware at all that I have changed my mind. That is why the Course says earlier that the Holy Spirit holds all our forgiveness or the miracles within our mind until the time we can choose them.

Jesus was just an extension or manifestation of love in the world. How many people accepted it? That did not jeopardize his own Atonement path, obviously. If it were not that way, it would mean that we have to wait for everyone to be holy and healed for ourselves to be healed, which would make us dependent on someone else. That is a way of describing special relationships. Thus, all that occurs is that my mind is healed and then part of my mind is aware that you are healed as well, whether you choose to accept it or not. That is what the teacher's manual means when it discusses healing and asks the question, "Should Healing Be Repeated?" (M-7). The answer is no, because once healing is offered, on the ultimate level it must be accepted since minds are joined. Then it says that to doubt a healing because the symptoms continue seems to be loving and kind, but it is really hateful because it is a way of making the person's ego real (M-7.4:4). Healing is not of the body; it is of the mind. If love is in my mind, then you are healed as well, and my part is complete at that point.

(T-18.V.7:1) Whoever is saner at the time the threat is perceived should remember how deep is his indebtedness to the other and how much gratitude is due him, and be glad that he can pay his debt by bringing happiness to both.

On a purely practical level, if two people are fighting in a relationship, at some point one of the two will get the idea that there is another way of looking at this. That is the meaning of "whoever is saner at the time" One person will blow the whistle and say this is crazy. Whether that person actually does it verbally, behaviorally, or simply in his or her mind does not matter. But then at least one of the two people lifts him or herself above the battleground and looks back down, at which point the battle has ended.

It does not matter what the other person does or does not do. It only takes one. The one who lifts himself above the battleground will feel peaceful. The person who does not still has the choice. If I am the one who has lifted myself above the battleground, then my peace does not depend upon what you do or do not do. The message I am giving you is what we had described earlier: I become the reminder of a choice you can make—simply by not getting involved with the battle anymore. Therefore, I feel gratitude because it was through my fighting with you that I now recognize I was not fighting with you at all—I was really fighting with myself and with God.

This is purely an internal experience that I believed and pretended was outside me. I would not have known it was inside me if I had not had this terrible fight with you, and you had not done or said what I perceived to be terrible and unconscionable things to me. It is not gratitude for your ego in the sense of what you have done or have not done. It is gratitude for the opportunity that the circumstance has given me to change my mind about myself, recognizing that if I do that, I am also letting you off the hook.

Then I become aware of whether there is still a part of me that does not want to let you off the hook, still believing that you do not deserve my forgiveness because of what you have done and keep doing! I become aware of the part of my mind that does not want to let go, which means I am right back down on the battleground again. I acknowledge that I am right back down on the battleground because I am

not feeling totally peaceful. I become aware that I do not want to let you off the hook because I do not want me to be off the hook either. By keeping you outside the love of Jesus, I am keeping myself outside the love of Jesus, too. I am aware that that is what I am doing, and I tell myself that that is what I am doing, and it is okay. It may not be the smartest move in the world, but it is not a sin.

Now comes this little prayer:

(T-18.V.7:2-3) Let him remember this [my gratitude to you], **and say:**
I desire this holy instant for myself, that I may share it with my brother, whom I love.

What is important is my first inclination *not* to share it with you. I want the peace of God, and I do not care about you; I do not love you. How can I possibly love you? Look what you have done! That is the seesaw idea, that in order for me to feel worthwhile, you must be worthless to me.

(T-18.V.7:4) It is not possible that I can have it without him, or he without me.

Here again Jesus is appealing to my selfish motives. He is telling me that I cannot have the holy instant, I cannot have the peace of God, I cannot experience His Love unless I include you in that Love. So for purely selfish reasons I want to shift my perception of you, even if at the beginning I do not believe you deserve it. I want to shift because I realize the way I have been going along is not helping me. This is the end of the ego's idea that I can be better off at your expense, that guilt and salvation are the same, or that attack and salvation are the same. Attack and guilt are virtually the same.

I begin to understand that it is really not you whom I am hating; it is not you whom I am crucifying; it is me! It is an image of myself I cannot look at that I project onto you, and that is what I am attacking. Then I can at least understand that this is not going to work anymore. I may not like it because there is a part of me that is still holding on to the grievance. Part of me is still holding on to the belief that salvation for me depends on keeping you outside the Kingdom. At least now I recognize that this is not going to work, and that is a big first step. It means if the ego is not going to work, then there is another plan that will work. That begins the process of disengaging from the ego's thought system and returning to the part of my mind that can choose. I can now make another choice, and that begins the process of identifying with the Holy Spirit's thought system.

(T-18.V.7:5-6) Yet it is wholly possible for us to share it now [this is not something that I am going to reap the benefits of in the future; it is something I can have right this moment].

And so I choose this instant as the one to offer to the Holy Spirit, that His blessing may descend on us [not on me, on us], ***and keep us both in peace.***

The key idea again is that I cannot do this without you. Please do not get caught in the trap of thinking that you have to study this material with me, or that you have to be on a spiritual path, or that you have to love God. That is totally irrelevant. All that is necessary is that in my mind I not feel that my happiness and salvation depend on seeing you as the guilty one and myself as the innocent one. Gratitude is born in my recognizing that you are a part of me, because what the ego has done is taken itself, the one mind of the Son, and fragmented it over and over and over again. Thus we have billions and billions of fragments, each one believing that it is on its own, totally separate from everyone else, and certainly separate from God.

What happens now is that I live in a world where everyone appears to be outside me, reinforcing and witnessing to the reality of the ego's thought system that separation is real and unity is an illusion. Suddenly, because I have this loving presence of Jesus next to me, I can look at you differently. I realize that you are nothing more than a projected image of what is inside me. You and I and everyone else are nothing but a projected image of what is within my mind. You and I and everyone else are part of a much larger mind. We are simply thoughts in that mind that believes we are separate. But the truth is that we are all one.

I am grateful, therefore, for the opportunity this world affords me, because now I see it is not a prison, but a classroom. It was always a classroom, but I chose to have the ego be my teacher, which ended up being my jail keeper. It was a prison from which I could not escape. And I am grateful now that I realize I was wrong. There is a phrase that recurs in different places where in effect Jesus says to us, "And be you glad and thankful it is so" (see, for example, T-16.VI.10:6; T-29.VII.1:10; M-14.5:15). We should be glad and thankful we do have another choice, and that the world is not a prison. It is a classroom. We do not have a teacher who is a jail keeper, but a teacher who is a loving presence who will lead us back home. But he leads us back home two by two. Eventually it is four by four and eight by eight, etc.; and then we realize we all go back together.

Of course, what happens sometimes in relationships is that someone will get the idea this is all silly, but then will become stubborn and say, "I realized this first, last week. Now it's the other person's turn. Why does it always have to be me?" Once you are in that state, then obviously you are caught again. If you really feel a sense of gratitude for this other person and for the situation, then you will not turn your back on that gratitude and complain about why it is always you who has to take the first step. If you realize that what you are doing by taking the first step is saving the other person *and* yourself, then by feeling bad or angry or resentful of having to take the first step, you are depriving *yourself* of salvation, not just the other person. Perhaps that is the role that you have in the relationship. Big deal. In the end, there is no first or second anyway.

There is a workbook lesson that says, "I choose the second place to have the First" (W-p11.328.h). What the ego hated right at the beginning was that from its point of view it was in second place, and God was first. Therefore it changed it around and stole the first spot from God, then believing it was first. It is always by recognizing I am in the second place, dependent on God, and that is wonderful, that I then have the first place, which means I realize that I am Christ and a part of God. Likewise, if I feel resentful that I am always the one who has to take the first step, and I have to be the one who is sane first, no matter; in the end, we are both one and there is no first and no second.