

**Special Relationships:
The Home of Guilt**

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

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**Part VI
"Guiltlessness and Invulnerability" (cont.)**

Let us stay in Section I of Chapter 13, and move to paragraph 8. This paragraph is a nice succinct summary of what guilt accomplishes and why it is so important for the ego, and therefore why it is so important to us.

(T-13.I.8:1) You are invulnerable because you are guiltless.

This means that when you make guilt real and feel guilty you will feel vulnerable. Guilt says you have done something terrible in the past for which you have to be punished in the future. Then you will be afraid of the punishment that your guilt says is inevitable, and therefore you will feel vulnerable. That means you will expect punishment, and whether it is forthcoming or not, your ego will demand that you be punished. And so you will see punishment and retribution even when it is not there. That does not mean it may not be there, but you will see it even if it is *not* there, because your guilt will tell you that you deserve to be punished. If someone says something that is critical of you, for example, you will immediately take that as punishment. Even if the person—a parent, friend, boss, or anyone else—may be objectively correct, you will take that as punishment, whether it was meant like that or not, because your guilt demands that you be punished.

One thing about the ego thought system is that it is all of a piece, just as the Holy Spirit's thought system is all of a piece. If you believe one aspect of what is in that wrong-minded box of the ego (on the chart), you must believe all of it, because it all hangs together. There is a logic that interconnects all of the pieces, and if you believe one aspect of that system, you must buy the whole package. So any thought that you have of the ego, any thought of separation, any thought of specialness, any thought of *one or the other*, automatically means that you feel guilty and deserve punishment.

On the other hand, if there is no guilt, it means that you are rejecting the whole of that thought system, which then means in that moment when you have chosen guiltlessness over guilt, there is no sin, no guilt, and no fear of punishment. That is why you will experience invulnerability, regardless of what may or may not happen to your body. This means the origin of all fear has nothing to do with the external. It has to do with that inner sense: I have been bad, and I deserve to be punished for it.

(T-13.I.8:2-3) You can hold on to the past only through guilt. For guilt establishes that you will be punished for what you have done, and thus depends on one-dimensional time, proceeding from past to future.

"One-dimensional time" is what we call linear time. It goes one way: there is a past, a present, and a future. Our whole world rests on that. The solidity or *seeming* solidity of our existence rests on the belief that there is linear time. The world was made to demonstrate that. We all have a past; we all have memories; we all have experiences of what we think of as the present; and we all have anticipations of the future based upon what has preceded it in the past. Our existence and this world would be unthinkable without linear or one-dimensional time. And what the Course helps us recognize is that one-dimensional time—past, present, and future—is nothing more or less than the projection of the thoughts in the mind of sin, guilt, and fear. Thus, taking the thought in the mind that we have sinned in the past, we experience the guilt right now over the horror of what we believe we have done, and we are afraid of the anticipated punishment in the future. When that whole constellation gets projected out into a world of form, making up a world of time and space, the sin becomes the past, the guilt becomes the present, and the fear becomes the future. That is what Jesus is speaking of now, and he is making a very clear parallel between feelings of guilt and sin and the fear of the future that are concomitants of that within the world of time.

Again, a major metaphysical premise of *A Course in Miracles* is that time is not only illusory, but it all seemed to have happened in one instant. In the "Little Hindrance" section that I quoted from earlier, Jesus speaks of the "tiny tick of time" (T-26.V.3:5), explaining that all of time, the whole world of time and space, occurred within that "tiny tick of time." He also explains that the whole world of the Correction, the Atonement, also occurred in that "tiny tick of time." It is as if in the instant the world seemed to have happened and rolled out like a long carpet—an image Jesus uses once in the Course (T-13.I.3:5)—in that same instant it was rolled back and undone. So everything has already happened, and in truth of course, nothing happened.

What keeps this whole masquerade and charade going is guilt, because the ego tells us that we are guilty because of what happened in the past, and we will be punished for it in the future. That is our world. That is the world of sin, guilt, and fear in our mind, now taking shape and form in a temporal world of past, present, and future.

(T-13.I.8.4-6) No one who believes this can understand what "always" means, and therefore guilt must deprive you of the appreciation of eternity. You are immortal because you are eternal, and "always" must be now. Guilt, then, is a way of holding past and future in your mind to ensure the ego's continuity.

This is another way of saying guilt is what ensures that the ego will continue and continue and continue. And we have seen exactly how that works. Guilt says you must leave your mind instantaneously, and we do, making up a world of time, making up a world of past, present, and future. All of this ensures that we will forever remain in a state of mindlessness, which means that we cannot change our mind and withdraw our belief in the ego.

(T-13.I.8:7) For if what has been will be punished, the ego's continuity is guaranteed.

That is why *the* book of the Western world, the Bible, begins with the story of Adam and Eve. Death comes into the world as punishment for Adam and Eve's sin. This is a myth, but as with all myths, it represents in form what is in the unconscious mind, what Jung referred to as the collective unconscious. We all have this thought of sin, guilt, and fear. Thus, we are punished in this world through death is because of our sin. Death is a reality. Everything of the body, whether animate or inanimate, will eventually deteriorate, decompose, and die. In human life it could be fifty, sixty, a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. In the "life" of a rock it may take millions of years. Everything on the level of form will change, decompose, and cease to exist. In the ego thought system that is the ultimate punishment for our sin—except what the ego then does is invent the idea of an afterlife. We need an afterlife since we all die, but the sinless people will go to an afterlife of heaven and the sinful people will go to an afterlife of hell. That is why there are the doctrines of heaven and hell.

As Jesus explains in the opening to Chapter 27, whenever we choose to suffer, we are pointing an accusing finger at someone saying, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die" (T-27.I.4:6). But we say that not so much that you will feel guilty, although that we obviously like, but we say it so that God will hear it. In that same section, Jesus speaks about how our brother's sins then "are writ in Heaven" (T-27.I.3:2). God knows that you have sinned, and He knows because of what you have done to me. Now it becomes that you have sinned against me in the past, sin is real, I am suffering in the present, but you are going to get yours in the future. I may die, but God will take me back with Him to Heaven. You are going to go with Him to the other place. What ensures that that will happen is the projection of my guilt onto you. My suffering proves that you are the guilty one, and you are the one who will be punished. That is how we hope to cheat God.

The answer implied here in terms of the idea of "always" is the holy instant, which does not really appear until Chapter 15, the first place in *A Course in Miracles* where the holy instant is talked about at some length. The holy instant is simply that point that the miracle leads us to when we choose the miracle instead of the grievance, as the workbook says (W-pl.78), when we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher instead of the ego. And in that holy instant we have chosen against the ego thought system, which is all of a piece, as we just saw. So when we choose the Holy Spirit, the ego's thought system disappears in that instant, which means the world of sin, guilt, and fear disappears. If there is no separation, if there is no guilt, then there is no fear, no fear of punishment, no experience of vulnerability. All there is is that remembrance of the Love of God. That is what "always" means here. That is why we could say that the holy instant in a sense is a reflection of eternity. It is not eternity, because we are still free to choose against the holy instant and go back and forth. But in that instant when we have chosen the Atonement as our principle instead of separation, we get a reflection of eternity, because it is the absence of the whole thought system of the ego.

Then, of course, that little voice whispers in our ear that if we keep this up, we will disappear. And that is the little voice that is always with us, just as the Holy Spirit's Voice is always with us. It is that voice that is a constant warning saying not to take this forgiveness stuff too seriously: "You can do a little bit if you want, but don't get carried away with it, because if you do you will be carried away into oblivion." We then go back, as the Course says, to our ancient "friends" of guilt, sin, fear, attack, death, and we are safe again (T-19.IV-D.6.2-3). What is safe is this individual self. But of course what we are safe *for* is the

whole ego world: hate, judgment, guilt, including momentary pauses when everything is wonderful, when specialness works; and soon afterwards we are right back into the ego game again.