

## The Meaning of Judgment

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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### Part VI

#### "The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX) (cont.)

We will return now to "The Forgiving Dream," beginning with paragraph 5.

**(5:1-5) Nightmares are childish dreams. The toys have turned against the child who thought he made them real. Yet can a dream attack? Or can a toy grow large and dangerous and fierce and wild? This does the child believe, because he fears his thoughts and gives them to the toys instead.**

Here, as in other places in the Course, Jesus speaks specifically about what little children do, but then takes that example and generalizes it to all of us. A child has a lot of guilt and fear. A sleeping child suddenly awakened by a sound outside his window may think it is a bad man who is going to hurt or kill him. It is really just the wind rustling through the trees. But his guilty, fearful thoughts now have a reality outside him because he first made them real within himself. He first believes that he is guilty and fearful, which means he believes he deserves to be punished. He then projects that outside and takes a neutral stimulus—the wind rustling through the trees—and translates it into a man who is going to break into his room and kill him. Yet this is exactly what we all do. The child "fears his thoughts and gives them to the toys instead." We believe that we are a fearful thought, that we are the thought that killed God. Now we do not have to get in touch with that original ontological thought of destroying God, because we are in touch with it all the time in various specific forms. Any time I have a negative thought about myself, on any level, it is an expression of the original guilt. Any fear or anxiety that I attribute to something outside me is coming from the original fear that God will punish me. And that thought comes from the idea that we have made the thought of separation, the original thought of judgment, real and powerful. Once we make the thought real and give it a reality, we project it out into the world.

**(5:6) And their reality [the reality of the toys] becomes his own, because they seem to save him from his thoughts.**

The toys would be anything in the world to which we give importance. We are coming back again here to the *purpose* of all idols: specialness. It seems as if I am afraid of something

outside. In reality, I love what is frightening outside me, because I would much rather deal with the fear of something outside me than with the fear of God within me. It seems there is always something I can do with the fear outside me, but there is nothing I can do to escape from the wrathful, vengeful, maniacal presence of God within me. And so we deny the fear within and put it outside us. And again, that is the purpose of the toys outside: they seem to save us from the thought within. I would much rather hate you and believe you are plotting against me than to get in touch with the underlying horror that God is plotting against me.

**(5:7) Yet do they keep his thoughts alive and real, but seen outside himself, where they could turn against him for his treachery to them.**

This is the same idea that is expressed earlier in the text in "The Two Pictures" in the important statement, "defenses *do* what they would defend" (T-17.IV.7:1). The purpose of any defense is to protect us from our fear, from whatever we are afraid of. But the more we believe we need a defense, identify with it, and have an investment in it, the more we are saying that something within us is vulnerable and deserves punishment. So "defenses do what they would defend." They are supposed to protect us from our fear, but instead they make us even more fearful. This line expresses the same principle.

The more I believe there are things outside me that can give me pleasure or pain, the more real I am making the thoughts that gave rise to them. The only reason I need the external idols—idols of pleasure or idols of pain—is to protect me from the thought of judgment. The fact I have these idols outside me is telling me I have a thought of judgment that I am protecting. And I see the idols outside me turning against me in punishment for the treachery I believe I did to them. Deep within me, I believe /am a killer. My very existence here as a separated, individual being is saying I killed God. And not only did I kill God, but I took that thought of murder, split it off, fragmented it, and now I believe I am going to kill off everyone else. That is how specialness functions. I want my special partner, my special love, my special object—and I will kill anyone who stands in the way. And of course everyone stands in the way because everyone wants the same specialness I do. So I am always in a state of war. This world is a perpetual battleground of specialness. I believe that everyone out there is going to do to me what I secretly believe I did to them. I secretly believe I am the killer; but now I project it out and believe everyone else will kill me.

**(5:8) He thinks he needs them that he may escape his thoughts, because he thinks the thoughts are real.**

Each of us is the child, thinking we need these idols of specialness. We think our thoughts are real and we have to escape them. And that is the purpose of the world. We can tell we are still a slave to our specialness simply by realizing how invested we are in certain things in the world. The idea, though, is not to deny all of our judgments and our specialness. Rather, we want to look at them. Jesus is not asking any of us to let go of our greed and our idols of

specialness: our friends and all the external things we think we need. We are asked only to look at them for what they are.

Of course, we are terrified of doing even that. And so everyone misunderstands what the Course is saying, even though it really is very clear. We know at some level that if we really look with Jesus on our specialness, he will not take it away from us— *we* will let it go. The part of us that still is identified with the specialness does not want to let it go. If looking at the various forms of our specialness is how to let them go, then it is obvious: to keep them, do not look at them! And if the Holy Spirit's only role is to look with us at our specialness, then to deny Him that role, we simply have to believe that He does things for us in the world. That is why people misinterpret the Course's teachings and have such an insane investment in believing the Holy Spirit does things for them in the world. If we realize His purpose is not to give us parking spaces or heal our bodies or find us new lovers or give us a thousand dollars, but rather to be within our minds so we can join with Him and look at our ego, then all our guilt and specialness would disappear. And so in order that they *not* disappear, we say, "No, that's not what the Holy Spirit does. He does things in the world."

**(5:9) And so he makes of anything a toy, to make his world remain outside himself, and play that he is but a part of it.**

A child sitting all alone who has any kind of ingenuity can make a game of anything. He simply takes something and starts playing with it, which means he projects a meaning onto it. And that is what we all do. We make of anything an idol of specialness. The workbook says, "Another can be found" (W-pl.170.8:7). If this doesn't work, I will find another or another— anything to occupy my mind and distract it from where the problem and the answer really are: in my mind. We all believe the world is outside us and we play within it. I come into it, I play with it while I'm here, and then I leave it when I die, and it stays for the next child to come in and play.

**(6:1) There is a time when childhood should be passed and gone forever.**

This is taken from a statement of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 13:11). Jesus is saying, "You don't have to remain a little child anymore. Take my hand and let me teach you to look at the world as I tell you it is. And if you let me show you how to look at your ego—as something not to be afraid of—then you will gradually grow up and become like me." A child learns to grow by identifying with adults. We say that if a child does not have good models, that child will not grow up right. The idea is to find a model who will help us grow into mature adults.

So Jesus is telling us, "I am that model for you. Take my hand let me teach you, and grow with me. I will help you grow up. I will help you look at everything in your world as simply being a part of a child's game, even though it seems to be so real and terrible. If you think it is real and terrible, you have dropped my hand and you are not learning from me. You are believing

that you know by yourself." That is the arrogance of the ego. We think we understand what is going on. The truth is we do not understand anything.

Here is someone who has given us a book and remains to teach it to us, to help us learn. We want to be aware that whenever we make a big deal about anything, we have dropped his hand again. Jesus would never tell us anything is a big deal. He does not even think *he* is a big deal. The only big deal is God. But since He is the *only* deal in town, even *He* is not a big deal, because big implies a contrast. Nothing in this world is a big deal. So whenever you find yourself tempted to make such a judgment, know that you have forgotten who your teacher is. And it is not really that you have forgotten who he is—you have driven him away because you are too afraid.

**(6:2-4) Seek not to retain the toys of children. Put them all away, for you have need of them no more. The dream of judgment is a children's game, in which the child becomes the father, powerful, but with the little wisdom of a child.**

This describes what we believe we have done with God; we believe we are now the father. Many places in the world's literature extol the great wisdom of a child. But that is not Jesus' view. He is not very big on children. He thinks children do not understand anything. That is why he uses this as an image. Children are not pure or innocent. They are silly—they have little wisdom. And that is what he is saying about us—not that we are evil or sinful, but just that we do not understand. Our arrogance is in thinking we do.

**(6:5) What hurts him is destroyed; what helps him, blessed.**

This in a nutshell is special love and special hate. Whatever we believe hurts us, which of course is a projection of our own need to hurt, we destroy—physically or verbally or within our minds. Or we do it by plotting with people against others. Whatever we believe helps us—in other words, helps our ego—we feel is blessed. That is special love.

**(6:6) Except he judges this as does a child, who does not know what hurts and what will heal.**

This is another major point in the Course. Over and over Jesus tries to convince us that we do not understand anything. We confuse pain and joy, he tells us (T-7.X). We confuse imprisonment and freedom (T-8.II) and advance with retreat (T-18.V.1:6). We do not understand anything. We do not know what is in our best interests (W-pl.24). What we think will help us, which is the indulgence of our specialness, will really hurt us. And we think not getting what we want will hurt us, but that will really help us.

**(6:7) And bad things seem to happen, and he is afraid of all the chaos in a world he thinks is governed by the laws he made.**

Bad things seem to happen, and we forget we are the ones who made up everything. In reality, nothing is happening.