

## True Empathy

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### Part XVI

#### Commentary on the Section "The Greater Joining" (T-28.IV) (cont.)

**(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 5) With faith in yours [our brother's faith in our dreams], he will not be released, and you are kept in bondage to his dreams.**

This is the false empathy, the joining through specialness that we all engage in, wherein we reinforce each other's dreams and both end up in prison.

**(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 6) And dreams of fear will haunt the little gap, inhabited but by illusions which you have supported in your brother's mind.**

This is the joining that the ego fosters. It is a joining in hatred, not a joining in love. The little gap, which is really nothing and seems to separate us from God, becomes the repository of terror. By making the separation real, we make our guilt and the wrath of God real, and the punishment through death inevitable. The gap will then be haunted by fear, because we have made the dream real. We want not to reinforce the dream in each other, but to point beyond it to the dreamer, the one who has chosen it.

**(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 1) Be certain, if you do your part, he will do his, for he will join you where you stand.**

This does not necessarily mean that our brother will do his part within the same time-frame in which we do our part. Just think of Jesus—he did his part perfectly, but within the illusion of time, very few have done theirs afterwards, despite his example.

If I do my part and return my mind to where it truly is, and do not hide out in the world, and I identify with the decision maker and make another choice to be in the holy instant with Jesus, at that point everyone has done the same thing. From that point outside time, I recognize the illusory nature of the dream and the fact that we are all one, and that the dream is already over. Within the holy instant, there is no more dream. It is already over. We still hold on to an image of it as being there, but the separation has already been undone. So the outcome is as sure as God (T-2.III.3:10).

The eighth characteristic of God's teachers is patience (M-4.VIII). Patience comes from the certainty that the problem is already solved. Therefore, Jesus does not wait with impatience. He is not after us, saying, "Hurry up, hurry up." When we feel impatient with people in our lives—whether we are therapists impatient with our patients, teachers impatient with our students, or we are impatient with our children, family members, friends, colleagues, or whatever, it is always because we have lost faith. We have dropped the hand of Jesus and have taken the hand of the ego, which is always involved with time. We are so terrified of punishment that we magically want the problem over so that God's wrath will not

descend upon us. Impatience always comes from an underlying threat of impending doom. When we join with the certainty of God, which is what the love of Jesus or the Holy Spirit represents, then there is no fear that if we do not do it "yesterday" or tomorrow, something terrible will happen. We know nothing terrible will happen because all this is a dream, and *nothing* happens in dreams.

So Jesus is saying to us that we should be certain that, if we do our part, our brother will do his and will join us where we stand. Where do we stand? We stand within the mind—no longer in the body, no longer in the dream—we stand outside the dream with the dreamer, the part that chooses, who is ourselves. When I stand with Jesus—which is the only way that I can know that I stand in the mind, because the ego would never let me know I am there—I stand with all my brothers and sisters.

**(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 2) Call not to him to meet you in the gap between you, or you must believe that it is your reality as well as his.**

That is what we always do with each other. We call each other to meet us in the gap, to meet us in the dream, to meet us in the body, to make the illusion real somehow, to join with us in whatever it is that we are involved with, in terms of the body. Not in terms of the mind, but in terms of the body. It is the same idea when people want to join with other students of *A Course in Miracles*, without realizing that they are really asking people to join them in the little gap, to join them in the dream. You want to join with people on the level of the mind, whether they are students of the Course or not. To believe I can only be happy if I am with *Course in Miracles* people is insane. On all levels, that is insane, because it is an attempt to join in the dream, to join in the form. You want to join with everyone. The joining is at the level of the mind. It has nothing to do with the form.

**(Paragraph 5 - Sentence 3) You cannot do his part [we cannot choose for someone else—Jesus could not do it for us], but this you do when you become a passive figure in his dreams, instead of a dreamer of your own.**

In other words, in reality I cannot do my brother's part, I cannot choose for you. But within the dream, when I identify with your dream, I do your part. Your part within the dream is to separate from God, my part within the dream is to separate from God, and then we do it for each other. We reinforce each other's dreams. In reality we cannot choose for each other, but we can at least point the way and reflect that choice to each other.

**(Paragraph 5 - Sentences 4-5) Identity in dreams is meaningless because the dreamer and the dream are one. Who shares a dream must be the dream he shares, because by sharing is a cause produced.**

Identity in dreams means nothing. In other words, identity with the various forms we take, identity with the body, means nothing. And we always identify ourselves with the body. We identify ourselves by our sex, religion, color, place of origin, families, professions, spiritual paths, etc., and Jesus is saying this is meaningless. The mind is important, not the body. Identifying the dreamer with the dream is meaningless. The dreamer is not the dream, because we can choose something else.

The next line—that a cause is produced by sharing—is important. That is the same idea as sickness being caused by two people agreeing to it. Sickness is an illusion, because the Holy Spirit never joined with us in the illusion. The separation is an illusion, because God never shared in it. We believe the separation is truth and sickness is truth, because we have separated and have joined with other people in that illusion.

From the beginning, God did not recognize what we thought happened, which means it never happened. He did not share in the illusion. It is important to understand that God does not even know about this world, and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit do not do anything with the dream. If They did, They would share it, which would mean that the dream had a cause and would be real. The fact that God did not share in it means that the dream is causeless. Two people agreeing on something makes it real. Since God did not agree on the separation, it never happened. At the beginning, there were only two characters in this play: God and His Son; and the Son believed that he and God were separate. God did not acknowledge the separation, because it never happened. Therefore it was not real. The ego wants God to be upset and to do something about it.

Within the ego dream, there is a joining of illusions. Within the ego dream, the Holy Spirit has been turned from the Love of God and the expression of truth into the wrath of God. Within the dream now there is agreement. The ego is at war with God and, within its dream, God is at war with it. Within the dream, the dream appears to be very real and to have a cause. The cause is that God and the ego, God and the Son, both now agree that something has happened. They disagree on who started it—just as in any war there is always disagreement about who started it—but both parties agree that there is now a state of war. Within the dream there is a definite cause; God and the ego have joined in that and have agreed. Yet the reality is God does not know about it; there is no battleground and, therefore, there is no separation. That is the Atonement principle. Two have not agreed on the separation. But within the dream we agreed, because we made up the other characters in the dream. The dream began with only one character: the separated Son of God, now identified with the ego. The ego then makes up other characters in the dream, so there is an illusion of joining. It makes up a God who is angry, so now the battleground is real, caused by our sin against God and God's wrath against us. Then the dream increases and fragments over and over again, so now it appears as if there are all these fragmented sons around, all of whom agree that there is indeed a world. Within the dream, which now has become reality for us, there is a definite cause, because we have shared the dream with each other. When we leave this dream and go back to the dreamer in the mind and join with the Holy Spirit, we are joining in truth. We are joining with the Atonement principle, which says there is no separation, the dream is causeless, and therefore it does not exist.

That is the basic underlying logic of the Course. When we share in each other's dreams, we are reinforcing the original illusory joining and are saying that reality has been destroyed and illusion is triumphant. At that point there is no way out, because the battleground has been made real. We are asked to dissociate or split off from the battleground gradually, and say this is only a dream.

That is what Jesus taught us. He did not share in the illusions of the world. Within his mind, therefore, by not sharing in them, they ceased to exist—they never existed anyway. He asks us to join him in that holy instant, in that space of love in the mind. At that point there is no sharing of illusions, there is only sharing of truth. At that point we become part of the true Cause and Effect. The joining of God and Christ, which is the true sharing, is the Creator and the created. This is the true Cause and Effect. The ego replicates that, but on its own terms, and the true Cause and Effect then is turned into an illusory effect caused by an illusory thought, which is sin and separation.

Is that reasonably clear? I will say it a few more times before we end.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 1) You share confusion and you are confused...***

This is obvious. We are confused about who we are. This is the fundamental mix-up, or confusion. We think we are who we are not, and Who we truly are we no longer believe in. We are confused about our identity. So it should come as no surprise that we are confused about everything in the world. We may believe that we are confused about different aspects of the world, but there is nothing in this world that makes sense, because the world was made to hide sense. Thus we are confused about why things happen or go on the way they do. All this reflects the original confusion about who we are.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 1) . . . for in the gap no stable self exists.***

Jesus is talking about stability versus instability, or clarity versus confusion. In the little gap there is no stable self, because the purpose of the little gap is to keep the Self of Christ hidden from us. The self that takes the place, the substitute self, is the unstable self of the ego. It is unstable because it is never sure that its maker may decide at any point not to listen to it anymore. The maker of the ego is the mind, and the ego's fear is that at some point the mind may return to its senses and choose the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, at which point the ego is finished. So the ego is always in terror that if the mind ever gets back to itself, the ego is out of business. That is why the ego makes up a world to be the distraction.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 2) What is the same seems different, because what is the same appears to be unlike.***

What is the same is that we are all part of the same Sonship. We are all one in Christ. Yet we appear to be different—that is part of the ego magic. The truth is that we are all one. The illusion is that we are all different. As I mentioned earlier, the ego, in making up the world and human beings, made everybody different. Everyone has a unique set of fingerprints, for example, as a way of proving how different we all are. But the truth is that we are all alike.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 3) His dreams are yours because you let them be.***

In other words, once I have identified with your dreams, your dreams have an effect on me, but only because I have given them that power. I have given you the power to take away my peace and my love. When you say something unkind to me, my feelings are hurt, and I say my feelings are hurt because of what you said. But I am the one who gave you that power.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 4) But if you took your own away [if I took my own dreams away] would he be free of them, and of his own as well.***

You can see in sections like this how the same themes are just repeated over and over again, within a particular section, from section to section, and from chapter to chapter, so you get a real sense of the symphonic nature of the Course.

***(Paragraph 6 - Sentences 5-6) Your dreams are witnesses to his, and his attest the truth of yours. Yet if you see there is no truth in yours, his dreams will go, and he will understand what made the dream.***

Again, it is the same idea. My responsibility with you is not to teach you in a verbal or behavioral way that your dreams are illusory. My responsibility is to teach you through the decision that I make that the dream is not true. Now, in the overall dream it certainly is true. But on a practical level, your dream of pain or sickness, or my dream of sickness and pain are not true in that they do not have the power to

take away my peace. I realize that what does have the power to take away my peace is my mind, and not anything else. And that is what that last line means: "and he will understand what made the dream." God did not make the dream. You did not make my dream. / made my dream. What made the dream is the mind. So we always come back to the central place that the mind holds in the Course. And it is not a mind that has anything to do with the world or the body.

**(Paragraph 7 - Sentence 1) The Holy Spirit is in both your minds** [The Holy Spirit is in my mind and he is in your mind, too. This was originally written for Helen and Bill—that is why it is written that way.], **and He is One because there is no gap that separates His Oneness from Itself.**

This makes no sense to us here. A passage earlier in the text says that because we believe we are separate from Heaven, Heaven will appear to us as separate from us (T-25.I.5:1). So the Course talks about God the Father as outside us. We address Him, we pray to Him. The Course talks about the Holy Spirit as Someone Whom we talk to. In reality all of this is One. God and Christ, Father and Son are both totally One. Every aspect of the Christ is totally One. Since that makes no sense to us here, Heaven is talked about, as it explains in that passage, as if it were separate. To talk about the Holy Spirit as totally One within Himself and one within us does not make any sense to us.

We can understand that we all share the same purpose, we are all one in purpose. In fact, the very end of the text talks about how we are all "one in purpose, and the end of hell is near" (T-31.VIII.10:8). That we can understand. We cannot understand how we are all one in our true nature, but we can understand that we are all seemingly separate in this world and share the same purpose of getting home.

**(Paragraph 7 - Sentence 2) The gap between your bodies matters not, for what is joined in Him is always one.**

Our experience in this world does not make any difference. We are not asked to deny our experience of difference here, but we are asked to make that difference unimportant. In other words, the difference between us has no effect on the reality of my love and my peace.

Regardless of the fact that your dream seems to be different from mine, or that we have the illusion of joining in dreams, our minds are totally unified. Again, that makes absolutely no sense to us here, because our experience is so separated. I am here and you are out there. Everybody is separate from everybody else. We have the illusion of one body talking across time and space to another body, which listens to it and reacts to it. We have the experience of reading the Course in a dimension of time and space. We believe this book has a message for us that comes from Jesus, who is not in the book, and we are here. We are not in the book, and we get the message. But it is all experienced across time and space with bodies. The reality is not like that. Rather, it is mind talking to itself.

**(Paragraph 7 - Sentences 3-5) No one is sick if someone else accepts his union with him. His desire to be a sick and separated mind can not remain without a witness or a cause. And both are gone if someone wills to be united with him.**

This, too, makes no sense if we think of sickness as being of the body. You say you are sick and you are in pain, and it makes no difference to you whether my mind is healed or not—you are still sick. But it does make sense when we redefine sickness as having nothing to do with the body, and having to do only with the thought in the mind. Sickness, then, is a decision to be separate.

Remember, it takes two to be separate, to make a sickness, to make up a world. Within the dream, we literally make up the other person. Again, that is how all of this began. There was only ourselves and God, and God did not know about this. So we made up a god to substitute for the true God, and that god did know about the separation. Once there was a god who knew about it, we had conflict—between the sinner and the sinned against. From that conflict, the ego thought system was born, and from that birth, the world was born. Then in this dream, in this world, all these other fragments have joined in the illusion with each other. But the cause of the world, the ego, and sickness is two people joining in the belief in being separate. It takes two of us to be separate. If I change my mind, the whole thing falls apart.

That is what we live out on a microcosmic level with each other. When I am in a relationship with you, and your dream calls for you to be angry at me, and to accuse me of something—whether I have done the deed or not—if I do not take it personally, the anger does not go anywhere. If I do not fight back and am defenseless, nothing happens. When I do fight back, and my anger meets your anger, we both end up becoming defensive. We lock horns, and the conflict solidifies and seems very real.

Reflecting on these ideas once again in the context of physical illness, we can distinguish two different aspects: the disease itself and the choice of the person to identify with the disease—the person's reaction to it, or interpretation of it. This can be a helpful distinction. It is the same as saying that, once I am sick, it does not matter where the sickness came from. I just deal with the fact that I am sick, and that this is reality for me now. I realize that I have chosen to be sick, and I now can choose which teacher will instruct me: the ego or the Holy Spirit.

That is what underlies a most important teaching in the manual. In talking about the body, the manual says: "Do not despair, then, because of limitations. It is your function to escape from them, but not to be without them" (M-26.4:1-2). This is such a helpful and important line. It is helpful because, when we understand it, it is very gentle. Our function is not to be without the limitations of the body. Our function is to escape from the interpretation of the limitations that the ego has made.

If we translate that to sickness, my function is not to be without sickness; my function, when I choose to become sick, is to see my sickness as a classroom in which I can learn my lessons with the Holy Spirit, instead of seeing it as a prison from which I have to escape by dragging you in and blaming you for it. My function is not to be without guilt, sickness, or anger. My function, rather, is not to take any of them as seriously as I used to, and not to be burdened by the interpretation of judgment.

To state it another way: My function is not to be without sickness, but to escape from the belief that sickness has power over the peace of God within me. I want to escape from the idea that the limitations of my body have any power over the love of the Son of God that I am.

Our job is not to share in someone else's dream. When we can do this, we are then living out on a microcosmic level the macrocosmic principle that God never shared in our thought system at the beginning, and therefore our thought system does not exist. We are not asked to do this on that macrocosmic level. We are asked simply to reflect that same principle by not sharing in the illusion of someone else's dream—by not making it real and having a reaction that takes away from the steady, calm peace and Love of God inside us. When I begin to feel myself losing that peace and becoming agitated, angry, worried, concerned, guilty, depressed, or whatever, I can realize that I have bought into your dream and have made my dream real, but there is another choice I can make. I bought into this

dream, because I was afraid of love; but now at least I know what the problem is. The cause of my distress is not your sickness or your seeming attack on me. The cause of my distress is that I became afraid of being happy and peaceful; I became afraid of the closeness of the Love of God that I was experiencing within. That is the cause of my distress.