

True Empathy

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Part XVII

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

(Paragraph 7 - Sentences 6-7) He has dreams that he was separated from his brother who, by sharing not his dream, has left the space between them vacant. And the Father comes to join His Son the Holy Spirit joined.

In these two lines we are getting, in a sense, the undoing of the whole drama of the ego: You and I have entered into a special love bargain or a special hate bargain, in which we reinforce each other's dreams of lack, deprivation, attack, cannibalism, pain, suffering, etc. This means that we both have filled this little gap, this tiny, mad idea, with the seriousness of what has happened. We are saying that the separation thought has had terrible effects, and each of us is responsible for the other's pain. When one of us steps aside from that bargain and decides not to see it that way any longer—not just a verbalization, but something that is believed and begun to be experienced—then the battlefield is gone, because it takes two to have a battlefield. At that point, that person can laugh at the seeming seriousness of the thought that the tiny, mad idea had an effect. If I am that person, I am now able to say that whatever is going on in your dream has had no effect on me. I love you just as much now as I did before you seemed to attack me. It has no effect on me. I am now reminding you of the same choice, and that wipes the gap clean. By laughing—not a mocking or an attacking laugh—at the tiny, mad idea and the belief that this thought could have an effect on me as Christ, the gap is wiped clean. And so now we join with the Holy Spirit, with the Son of God, the whole world vanishes, and God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself. That is what that last line means: "And the Father comes to join His Son the Holy Spirit joined."

We first join with the Holy Spirit and with the Son of God, which includes you. The Son of God is not just me. It includes everyone, especially you who are my special love partner. When we join together, we rejoin the Holy Spirit and the whole thought system of the ego disappears back into its own nothingness. Everything is gone and we awaken from the dream. The Course's symbol for awakening from the dream, again, is God reaching down and lifting us back unto Himself. That is God's last step (T-11.VIII.15:5).

(Paragraph 8 - Sentence 1) The Holy Spirit's function is to take the broken picture of the Son of God and put the pieces into place again.

This does not mean that He is a puzzle maker, or that He sits with all the pieces and puts them together—it is not something that He *does*. This is an image. His very Presence in the mind, His Love, represents the Oneness of Christ and the unity with God—and that Oneness unites all the seeming fragments.

Right at the beginning, we were like one huge pane of glass which seemed to shatter. But before it shattered, the memory of God's Love was already within it. When the fragmentation occurred, the whole thing shattered into billions and billions and billions of fragments—the entire physical universe. The memory of that Love of God is still within each fragment, and that memory is totally unified. Despite the seeming fragmentation of the dream in which we are all separate, the reality is that we are all one. From the point of view of the fragmented pane of glass, we appear to be very different. But from the point of view of the mind which is totally one, that is, from the Holy Spirit's perspective, we are all one, simply having a silly dream.

Jesus gave Helen an image (it is not in the book, but it was an image to help her understand time) of eternity as a solid unbroken line, with time a downward spiral coming off it. The spiral represents the illusion of time and the world. From any point on the spiral it appears as if the line is broken. From the point of view of the line, nothing has happened. The line, which represents the unity of God and Christ—the unity of Heaven—is totally unbroken. But from the spiral, which is where we believe we are, the line appears to be broken, and at each different point on the spiral everything looks different. So we all have different experiences of each other, God, and Heaven on the spiral. The truth is, of course, that the spiral never happened.

Jesus told Helen that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to straighten out the spiral, so that it becomes one solid line. Everything then becomes the same, and we realize that we are all the same. From the point of view of the fragmentation—any part on the spiral—we all appear to be different, and the thought that we could be totally unified, as I mentioned before, is absolutely impossible to comprehend. But we can comprehend that we share the same purpose. The idea that we are all one makes no sense to us. But to the Holy Spirit, Who is that Thought of Oneness, this is the only idea that makes sense, because nothing else has happened. This is how the Holy Spirit unites the whole Sonship. Again, He does not literally put the pieces back, because the pieces were never fragmented in the first place. It is the memory of perfect Love in the mind of each of us that unites us and heals the seemingly broken pieces, the broken picture.

(Paragraph 8 - Sentence 2) This holy picture, healed entirely, does He hold out to every separate piece that thinks it is a picture in itself.

Each of us believes that we are a separate part, a whole unto ourselves. Our lives seem to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. We have a body that demarcates our position vis-a-vis someone else. We have a personality and a thought process that is only within ourselves. We have private thoughts that do not have to be shared with anyone else. We believe we are a picture and a universe entire unto itself. The reality is that we are simply an aspect of the one picture that has never been broken. Earlier, the text talks about the whole as being greater than the sum of its parts. The unified picture of Christ is more than just the sum total of all the fragments (T-2.VII.6:3), because Christ is the total unity, and that unity transcends the individual fragments even if they are all added up.

(Paragraph 8 - Sentence 3) To each He offers his Identity, which the whole picture represents, instead of just a little, broken bit that he insisted was himself.

To each seemingly separate piece, the Holy Spirit offers the total identity. In other words, each time I am tempted to see you as separate from me, the Holy Spirit's presence in my mind is the reminder that you and I are both one. And in not seeing you as separate, as sharing a separate dream, as having a separate identity, or as sharing a different purpose from me, I am beginning the process of recognizing we are

one. In that process of recognizing we are one, I will come to the recognition that we are one in Christ, and that we share that Identity as one Self. I become aware that I am not this separated person who has an identity separate from your identity, that has a body with a parentage and a personality separate from you. We all share the same need to get back home and the same Identity within that home.

(Paragraph 8 - Sentence 4) And when he sees this picture he will recognize himself.

When I can recognize that we are all one, and that you are part of Christ, I will recognize that I am part of Christ, too.

(Paragraph 8 - Sentence 5) If you share not your brother's evil dream, this is the picture that the miracle will place within the little gap, left clean of all the seeds of sickness and of sin?

The word "evil" is a very strong word. But this means that even a dream of sickness, a dream of being an innocent victim, is an evil dream, because it is a vicious attack on the unity of Christ, on the unity of the Sonship, and on God. I am saying that I am a body that can suffer. If I am a body that can suffer, I am saying that I have killed off God, and my body now, even if it is dying, is proof that I have defeated God. And I will feel guilty over that. That is where the thought of evil will come in. Jesus is not saying it is evil. He is reflecting back to us our guilt over our belief that we have killed off God, and that is an evil, wicked, sinful thought. He is not judging these dreams as evil. He is reflecting to us the fact that we have judged them as evil.

If we do our part in undoing our belief in the reality of the dream, we are making clear or cleaning up that little gap. Within that gap we would then recognize that, just as we are all one in this world in yearning to get back home, we are all one in God's world as well. That is what the miracle does—it brings us back to the mind. Within that mind, when we stand with the Holy Spirit or Jesus and look at the dream, we realize we are standing with everyone else as well. And the seeds of sickness and sin have been washed away.

Paragraph 8 - Sentence 6) And here the Father will receive His Son, because His Son was gracious to himself.

This parallels exactly what was said in the previous paragraph. There is a wonderful section called "Where Sin Has Left" (T-26.IV)—here within the little gap that has now been made clean is the place where sin has left. This place in the mind, to which we have moved back by no longer identifying with the ego's story of sin, is the place where sin has left. That is the real world. The Course explains—but not within the context of time—when we attain the real world we "will barely have time to thank God for it" (T-17.II.4:4) before He reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself. In other words, we pause but for a brief moment and then the whole world ends. This is written, not from our point of view, but from the other side.

Our job is to make clean the place where we had welcomed sin in and had identified with it—now detaching from it, looking on it, and saying: This is the dream that I chose, but I can now choose another dream. These are the happy dreams. And when all the happy dreams have replaced all the nightmare dreams, God comes in.

Being "gracious to himself" means that I learn to be gracious to everyone else. Rather than attacking you and reinforcing your dreams of sin and attack and fear, I become gracious to you, realizing ultimately

you are a part of me. And I no longer attack you or myself. From that experience of being gracious, and kind and gentle, all the judgment and attack of the ego is undone. What is left, then, is what was always there—the Love of God.

The next paragraph begins with a prayer from Jesus to God the Father. There are several places like this in the Course where the narrative breaks off and Jesus launches into prayer, which obviously is always on our behalf.

(Paragraph 9 - Sentence 1) I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son.

Clearly Jesus is not praying to God from God's point of view. Obviously, God does not even hear words. This is a literary form through which Jesus is teaching us that the outcome is as certain as God is—and that the broken pieces of God's Son will be healed through our acceptance of the Holy Spirit's presence. Once we do that and let go of all the seeds of sin, guilt, and sickness that are in this little gap—so that the gap is left clean—what is left then is God's last step.

(Paragraph 9 - Sentence 2) Your holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them.

This is somewhat reminiscent of the Course's version of the Lord's Prayer, which comes at the end of Chapter 16. The holiness and the perfection of God, the perfection of Christ, is within each of us. This does not mean, as I will elaborate on, that it is within our bodies. It means that the memory of God's Love is still within the mind that has been projected into the body. That memory of God's Love in our mind is what is complete and holy and perfect. And that is the Holy Spirit.

(Paragraph 9 - Sentence 3) And they are joined because what is in one is in them all.

All of the seeming fragments are joined—minds are joined—because the presence of the Holy Spirit is in each of us equally. From this side we all seem different. And the idea of the perfect Oneness of Christ seems impossible and inconceivable. But on the other side, from the holy instant, it is not only possible, but it has always been.

(Paragraph 9 - Sentences 4-7) How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part.

This is an important passage that can easily be misunderstood to be an expression of pantheism—namely, that God is in everything in the world: He is in the smallest grain of sand, a chair, a coat hanger, in people, in animals, etc. This is not what it means. It means that the presence of God is total within everyone's mind. Within each of us as a mind is that perfect presence of God's Love—that is the Holy Spirit.

As egos we have walled this part off, and then identified with the opposite of God's Love, which is our hatred of God. We experience ourselves as a guilty and limited self, then take that thought and project it out, so that it now seems to have taken form. I say "seems to have taken form" because in reality there is no form. But there appears to be form here—so there appear to be grains of sand and other minerals and vegetables and animals and all forms of what we call animate and inanimate objects—things that are "alive" and things that are "not alive." All of these are different forms and different ways of trying to disguise the Love of God that is within the mind that has made all of these forms.

God is not in the forms, God is not in the dream. God is in the *mind* of the dreamer. That is the key idea that will help you avoid getting caught believing either that God is in everything or that the Course is saying God is in everything. There are a number of passages such as this one, and I will mention them in a minute—which seem to say that about God—but that would mean that God is part of the dream. We have seen how we are asked not to be a part of the dream but to be part of the mind. So if Jesus is asking us to do that, obviously God is not involved with the dream either.

In the first of two successive workbook lessons there is the statement, "God is in everything I see" (W-pl.29), and in that same lesson we are asked to say that God is in this coat hanger, God is in this lamp, etc. Then the next lesson states that "God is in everything I see, because God is in my mind" (W-pl.30). Since God is in my mind and I identify with Him, then God is in everything I see. And when the Course says "God is in my mind," it really means that the memory of God—which is the Holy Spirit—is in my mind. In many places, especially in the workbook, the Course uses the word God when it really means the Holy Spirit, the presence of God in the mind. So Lesson 193 says, "All things are lessons God would have me learn," yet God does not teach. The Course is quite clear about that. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher and is referred to as our Teacher. God does not teach. So the lesson really is saying that all things are lessons that the presence of God, or the Voice, the Holy Spirit, would have me learn. The Holy Spirit is the memory of God's Love and represents God's presence in the mind. When we identify with that memory of Love, we look out from that point of view and see that Love reflected everywhere.

Even more to the point, these lessons explain that they are about purpose. The lessons are saying that the *purpose* of God, or the *purpose* of the Holy Spirit, is in everything I see, because it is in my mind. In other words, every single thing in this world becomes a classroom. The ego sees the world as a prison from which we can never escape, while the Holy Spirit sees the world as a classroom which teaches us not only that we do not have to escape, but that we are not even here. The purpose of everything in the world from the ego's point of view is to imprison us still further in the ego thought system. Once we believe there is something real in the world, we are saying separation is real, the ego is real, and God is not real, etc. That is why the ego made up the world—to be an attack on God.

What the ego made, the Holy Spirit now uses to turn the tables on the ego. The world becomes a classroom in which we ultimately learn there is no world. That is what this is talking about: the *purpose* of God is in the world. Not that it is literally in the world itself, because there is no world itself. The purpose of God is in the mind. But because we believe we are in the world, and we have taken ourselves from the mind into the world, we have also taken that memory of God's Love from the mind into the world and into the body.

So when the Course says that the smallest grain of sand is part of God's Son, it does not mean literally that everything physical is part of the Sonship. Again, that would make the dream real. It means that everything in the physical world is a projection of the thought of the ego which is in the mind, but also contained in the mind is that memory of God's Love. The Course is not saying that we should reverence or worship the different forms that are in this world. The world is not holy, the earth is not holy, people are not holy. Nothing is holy in this world, because there is nothing here. The world is not holy, but it is also not unholy either.

To make anything in this world real and important is to fall into the trap of making the error real. The idea is that we do not join with the dream. We talked about this earlier. We do not join with the dream, we join with the dreamer. And the dreamer is the mind, where the Love of God is and where the hatred

of the ego is. We learn that just as we had chosen the hatred of the ego to be reality, we can now change our minds and choose the Love of God as our reality. What makes everything in this world holy is the *purpose* that we give it, not the world itself.

Many people think that certain objects or certain places are holy. It is true, for example, that crystals have a certain electromagnetic force about them and within them, but people confuse that with spirituality. If we really take literally—the Course tells us we do—the first law of chaos of the ego—that there is a hierarchy of illusions—then we look at a crystal and say it has more spiritual power or spiritual force than an ordinary rock or a piece of stone. Or similarly, there may be a certain place in the world that has a power point, as opposed to another one, and so we call it a sacred spot.

The holiest spot in all the earth is in the mind, which the Course refers to several times as the altar. It is easy to begin to see, from the Course's point of view, all the mistakes people fall into, when you recognize that literally nothing in this world is real—everything is a dream. The Course means it literally when it asks that we not share in others' dreams, whether they are dreams of the holiness of sacred places or sacred people or sacred objects or sacred minerals, or dreams which seem to be attacking. Jesus is asking us not to join with the dream—not to give it any reality or any power. Rather, we look towards the dreamer, where the power is.

Let me read that line again: "The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing." Yet the forms are legion. They are the forms of homo sapiens, of other animals, of vegetables, of minerals—all these are forms. Earlier, near the end of "The Laws of Chaos," the Course says, "There is no life outside of Heaven" (T-23.II.19:1). That is another of those statements meant to be taken quite literally. The division that we make between animate and inanimate is illusory. Of course we do not stop with that. We have an extensive classification system according to which we classify everything that is animate, all the different forms of life—the Great Chain of Being, as people refer to it—and all the different forms of inanimate beings. All we are doing is dividing up the illusion more and more and more. And we never find the answer to what is life, because the answer is not found here. The answer is found in the mind, where we choose to turn against life towards death. When we turn back to life, towards the Holy Spirit, we begin to understand what life is and what it is not. That does not mean that anything in this world is unholy or that to study any of these forms is wrong, as long as we study them with a smile on our face.

Again, the final line of that paragraph: "And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part." There is no hierarchy of illusions.