**Duality as Metaphor in *A Course in Miracles***

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
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**Part I**
**Introduction**

This workshop is probably one of the most important ones I have ever done, and probably will ever do. Despite that, it was never a topic I thought I would have to present until relatively recently, because of the tremendous amount of misinterpretation that is going on regarding *A Course in Miracles*. And rather than this being a trend that will fade away, I don't think it will. You can already see the seeds for the kinds of misunderstandings that people are having, both in terms of their own study of the Course, certainly their application of what they study to their personal lives, and then, unfortunately, to their teaching of it. This kind of misunderstanding is due to an idea I have commented on frequently: *level confusion*.

Many years ago now, Gloria and I were talking about the Course, what it was, its role, etc., and Gloria said something I had never actually thought of in this way, although obviously I knew it was true. She said she felt that this course really had a hidden level to it that practically no one was aware of. Not hidden in the sense that someone was *hiding* it, that Jesus was deliberately trying to mislead people, or be obscuring, or to hide what the Course was saying, but that this level was hidden simply because of the tremendous amount of fear that was present in almost all students of the Course. Later we will discuss this more in terms of the fear of losing one's specialness and one's identity, and what exactly that means. Because of this tremendous fear and the tremendous investment in maintaining one's identity with one's self—or what one thinks is one's self—this means almost automatically that one will never really understand these deeper levels of what the Course is talking about and what Jesus' message is.

If you do not understand this and are continually screening this out, there is no way you could understand what the Course is saying, and this is what, again, gives rise to all of these misinterpretations. The people who misinterpret and misrepresent the Course are not evil, wicked, sinful people, but most of them, unfortunately, lack what the Course is always asking of its students, and that is humility. It is the arrogance in thinking that you understand something when you do not. It takes the form in many different places of taking statements, concepts, and ideas from the Course totally out of context, and using them as ways of justifying what you really want the Course to be saying to you. This would be an example of what in the Course Jesus repeatedly speaks about: the mistake of bringing the truth to the illusion, rather than bringing our illusions to his truth.

As you know, this is the fundamental process that forgiveness or the miracle represents—that we bring our illusions to the truth of the Holy Spirit's presence in our minds. In doing that, we would finally be able to look at these illusions without judgment and without guilt, thereby letting them go. This course, however, is so fearful to everyone's ego because of what it truly is saying that what one almost inevitably does is translate the Course into the language that one can understand. The problem is that the language that one can understand is the language of specialness that preserves one's individual identity and therefore the identity of everyone else, and ultimately the seeming reality of the world.

The problem is that we do not know this is what we are doing, and we think that we are understanding and mastering the Course. We think that by teaching the Course over and over again we are going to learn it, and we are not aware that learning this course really means that we must question, as Jesus says at one point, every value that we hold (T-24.in.2:1). The most important of these values is the value of our own specialness, the value of our own identity, and believing that we are really here, when we are not here at all. This means that people who are studying *A Course in Miracles* so they can learn it and live it, will not be learning it at all, because they will be going in a totally different direction from where the Course is leading them.

So sincerity, in terms of our approach to the Course, is not enough. That is what Jesus means when he says, "Trust not your good intentions. They are not enough" (T-18.IV.2:1-2). What you really need, as he explains in the next line, is a little willingness (T-18.IV.2:3), and it is the little willingness to be able to admit that you were wrong and, in the end, that Jesus was right, and that what he says in *A Course in Miracles*is right. But to make the point still once again—and I will probably make it dozens of times in the course of this class—you will not know what he is saying, and you will not know the truth of what he is teaching because you are so frightened of what that is. What you will find yourself doing is seeing a part of the Course and not understanding its connection with the whole, because it is this deeper layer, the so-called hidden level of the Course that contains the whole. In a nutshell, and this is a point I will be elaborating on a great deal, what we are really talking about is not really understanding the difference between reality and illusion; not really understanding what non-duality means, and therefore not understanding what duality means. This whole course hinges on our recognizing what reality is and what illusion is.

Many of you are familiar with the Preface that is now found in all editions of the Course. The first two parts were written by Helen herself, and they describe how she scribed the Course and what the Course is as a series of books. The last part, "What It Says," was written by Jesus just as the Course was, and that begins with his talking about the difference between knowledge and perception, reality and illusion. This is central to understanding what this course means, and that is why we will spend a great deal of time talking about what reality is in terms of its being non-dualistic, and what illusion is as dualistic.

You may be familiar with the parable of the six blind men and the elephant: Each of them feels a different part of the elephant, and because that is what they think the elephant is, that is what they define the elephant as being. So one has one leg, one has a trunk, one has a tail, and they think this is what the elephant is. Well, this is what people do with the Course, without realizing they are doing it. They take certain parts that they resonate with because they interpret it as preserving their specialness in the guise of spirituality, and they do not realize what the whole Course is.

To use a musical example, it would be as if you took a bridge passage in a piece of music and disregarded its role as a bridge. A bridge passage is a sequence of measures or bars that link one part of a movement to another. Usually these bridge passages are not terribly important, but they do become significant in getting you from one part of the symphony to another. Those of you who know Beethoven's symphonies recognize that his greatest symphonies really constitute a unit. They are a perfectly intact whole, and these bridge passages become very important. But if all you see in the Fifth Symphony, for example, are the bridge passages and then say this is the Fifth Symphony without realizing how they fit into the whole, you will have no clue as to what Beethoven is really expressing in that Symphony.

People do the very same thing with the Course. To shift to another milieu, if you look at Shakespeare's works, his greatest tragedies have what are usually referred to as scenes of comic relief. As the tragedy builds to an inevitable end, which is filled with tension, he inserts a very comic scene. If you know *Macbeth*, there is the very famous drunken-porter scene, which is very funny. In *Hamlet* there is the graveyard diggers scene, which is very funny. If you just look at those scenes and say this is *Hamlet*, this is *Macbeth*, this is very funny, Shakespeare is being silly, or he is being stupid, or he is being a comedian, you will not realize the role that particular scene plays in the whole play, and you will miss what the play is about. That is, again, exactly what people do with *A Course in Miracles*.

To use a few examples of what people do with the Course: People who have an ax to grind in the sense of trying to demonstrate that one can achieve physical immortality will take sentences from the Course out of context that seem to say that, and they will say this is the proof—this is what Jesus is saying, exactly what they always knew was true. If you have an investment in proving that the Holy Spirit or Jesus is a magician who does things for you in the world, waves a magic wand like Merlin, you will prove it in terms of something in a relationship, a job, or even a check that arrives in the mail to pay for next month's mortgage. Or, when you want a parking space and you want to prove that is what the Course is about, you will find passages that will prove that to you, because there are sentences that seem to say that. If you want to prove that physical relationships are important, you will find statements in the Course that will prove that to you. Someone once took a very meaningful and beautiful section in the Course as proof that this is a course on homosexuality, and if you read it a certain way, that is what it says. If you want to prove that relationships are real in the body, then you will read this course in a way that it tells you that you forgive someone else.

We will spend a great deal of time understanding why that is an absolute impossibility, but you will not know that if you have an ax to grind, which is to prove that you are right and Jesus is wrong. But your fear of him will be so great, that rather than say he is wrong, you will say he is right because he agrees with you. It is extremely important that you approach this course with an air of humility so that you can look at it, not as if you know what it says, but because you want to *learn* what it says. This course will teach you what it says, and it will lead you, step by step, around and around the same material from the first miracle principle to the glorious end of the text. You will hear the same thing over and over again, and if you follow it along, month by month, year by year, decade by decade, you will be led to that deeper layer of the Course, and you will suddenly realize what it is saying. And each time you read this course, you will swear you are reading the book for the first time. But in order for that to happen, you must give up your cockiness, you must give up your arrogance, and you must say, I don't know.

The simple fact that you are in this world is proving to you how identified you are with your specialness, how identified you are with your individuality, and how sure you are that you are right. Over and over again in this course, Jesus makes it very clear that we are wrong about everything. How many times does he say to you in this course that you are insane? Every once in a while he throws you a bone and says you are no longer wholly insane. How often in this course does he refer to you as a little child who does not understand anything? In a couple of places he calls you a baby who cannot even speak the language, just as babies cannot speak the language that they are hearing. He is not putting anyone down. Obviously, he is not speaking with disdain about anyone, but he is trying to say to his students, "Please trust me and realize how you don't know anything, and let me teach you. All of your dualistic concepts of the Course are wrong."

The sentence from a passage near the end of the teachers' manual section on death says, "Teacher of God, your one assignment could be stated thus: Accept no compromise in which death plays a part" (M-27.7:1). Death is the greatest symbol of the ego thought system that we have, because that is what proves that sin is real, and that God is a punishing agent Who punishes by murder. It is the exact same thing if we were to substitute the word *duality:* "Teacher of God, your one assignment could be stated thus: Accept no compromise in which *duality* plays a part." We will spend a great deal of time talking about what duality is, and you will be surprised what it really is, and you will also then be surprised to learn what non-duality is, and therefore what reality is and what truth is. Then you will realize how, over and over again in this course, Jesus is speaking metaphorically. He is speaking about the *reflection* of truth, not truth itself.

As we will see in looking at many passages, he keeps telling us there is no way we could understand what truth is and therefore he must speak to us in symbols and metaphor, and about the reflection of truth. All too often what students do is they take the reflection of truth that is found in the Course and say, this is the *Course in Miracles*. It is about hearing the Holy Spirit's Voice. It is about finding parking spaces. It is about forgiving this person who hurt me. It is about joining with other people. If every student kept in mind this statement, *accept no compromise in which duality plays a part*, then these students would be able to understand what these hidden or deeper layers of the Course are all about.

**Part II**
**Heaven: The State of Oneness**

We will begin talking about what Heaven is, what the state of Oneness is, what early in the text is called One-mindedness. Then we will talk about what the Course refers to as wrong-mindedness, the thought system of the ego, which is the beginning of the thought system of duality, just as Oneness is the thought system of non-duality. Finally, we will talk about the correction or the undoing of the wrong-minded thought system of the ego, which is through the right-minded thought system of the Holy Spirit that centers around the teaching of forgiveness. These teachings of forgiveness all have to do with the reflection of truth. They are not true. They all belong to the world of duality, which means they should not be taken literally. When Jesus speaks about God and about the state of Heaven, he should be taken very literally. When he speaks about the ego, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit's role, he is talking metaphorically or symbolically.

Let me go back to another musical example as a way of summarizing these three different types of mind: One-mindedness, wrong-mindedness and right-mindedness. About 30 years ago, I read a wonderful book on Beethoven by the British writer Marion Scott. She talked about Beethoven's three stages, which most music scholars talk about, the early, middle, and the late stage. The early stage is the period of the first 30 years of Beethoven's life, wherein the music he composed was very much based upon the formal technique that he learned from Mozart and Haydn. These are not his greatest works by any means. They are very much involved with form, and you can watch Beethoven learning how to master his craft. Then he entered into the second phase with the Eroica Symphony. His Symphonies Three to Eight, his last three piano concertos, some of his greatest piano sonatas, the middle quartets, and his opera Fidelio all belong to that period. Usually, this is the music that is the most accessible to music lovers and that really gave him his great reputation. His final stage, which begins with the Ninth Symphony and then goes into his late sonatas and the last quartets, is clearly his greatest music and probably the greatest music ever written. He transcended all the form, all the conventions, and basically gave a wonderful expression to the end of the spiritual journey.

Marion Scott spoke about Beethoven's first stage as where he looked at the material world through material eyes, where he basically was mastering the world of form, the world of materiality. In the second stage, he looked at the spiritual world through material eyes. Here he was really beginning to express the development and the deepening of his spiritual journey, which could be traced very clearly in his music, but he was still doing it within the framework of the world's forms. It was at the end of his life that he broke with all of these forms. Scott talked about this as when he looked at the spiritual world through spiritual eyes. That is why when you listen to this later music, especially the late sonatas and quartets, you realize that he was inhabiting a totally different realm from anything else he or anyone else had composed. That is what makes his music so other-worldly.

One could make the same kinds of statements about these three levels in A Course in Miracles. Wrong-mindedness is looking at the material world through material eyes. That is what the ego is all about. So those are all the passages in the Course that detail the dynamics of the ego and what specialness is all about, which was all predicated on the seeming reality of our guilt, our sinfulness, our need to project onto other people, cannibalize other people, and kill in order to get what we want.

The correction for this, right-mindedness, is Jesus looking at the material world, the ego thought system, but from the perspective of the spiritual. That is where he speaks very often using the term reflection. That is where he says that love is impossible in this world, but forgiveness, which is love's reflection, is possible here. He talks about the reflection of holiness here, which is what the holy relationship is. He talks about the holy instant. He uses the word holy even though holiness is not possible in this world, but the holy instant and the holy relationship are the reflections of what is true. Again, he is looking at the ego's thought system, a dualistic thought system, from the perspective of the spiritual, but the way that he writes about it, the way that it is presented, and the way that we are asked to practice it is as if we were here. It is looking at the material world, but through the eyes of vision. It is still within the world of duality, which means it is still illusory.

One-mindedness is looking at the spiritual world through spiritual sight. This is recognized in the passages that deal directly with what the state of Heaven is like. There are not many of them, because there is no way we could understand them. These are the passages in A Course in Miracles that tell us what truth is, what reality is, what non-duality is. When you understand that, at least intellectually, you have a perspective by which you can understand what illusion is, and what duality is. That is what would help you not fall into the mistake of taking passages out of context, twisting them around so they will mean what you want them to mean, which will always be to affirm the reality of your specialness at the expense of truth. When you truly understand what oneness, reality, and non-duality mean, you will not make that mistake. You will then have a perspective, a context, a framework in which to understand all of the statements of right-mindedness in the Course, all of the statements in the Course that deal with the role of the Holy Spirit, and that deal with the role of the miracle and the role of forgiveness. If you do not have that perspective, you will think that what Jesus is talking about should be taken as literally true. It should not be taken as literally true, but he must speak to us on this level because that is where we believe we are.

Later we will look at passages that basically show us how Jesus was aware of this problem, and how he is aware of what he was doing in his course. The problem is that his students are not aware of what he is doing in the Course, and so in some way they skip over these passages because they do not seem that important, and therefore they miss the whole point. This will help you not miss the point, so that your lifetime's work with the Course will become a truly productive one and will be one that will truly lead you on the journey, which in the end will help you transcend your ego. If you are a student of the Course, you would not want to settle for anything less. That would always be the fundamental question you should ask yourself. Why would I settle for less when I could have everything? Why would I settle for a little glimpse of love when I could have that total experience of love? Why would I want Jesus' pinky when I could have his whole being? Why would I settle for less than everything? Yet that is what people do when they work with the Course, because they are not aware of what it is saying.

The state of Oneness or the state of Heaven is the perfect Unity and Oneness of God and Christ. The Course talks about the Mind of God, which is the Creator, and the Mind of Christ, which is what God created. This is always spelled with a capital M. The Mind of God and the Mind of Christ are totally unified. When we speak of something being non-dualistic, it means it is non-dual. There are not two; there is only one. This is the most important point to always keep in mind. This is the only level of reality. This is the only level of truth. Anything else that smacks of duality is only a reflection of reality or a reflection of truth, but not truth. Truth is only God and Christ and there is absolutely nothing else.

There is no way that this can be understood here, as we will see. The words God and Christ have no meaning in Heaven. The words Creator and Createdhave no meaning in Heaven. They do have meaning for us here, but these are dualistic terms. Obviously, we talk about God and we talk about Christ. We talk about the Father and we talk about the Son. We talk about God as the First Cause; we talk about Christ as the Effect. These are important words to us here because they are meaningful to us. In Heaven, there is no state of duality. There is no God as a separated consciousness that perceives Himself in relationship to His Son, Christ. There is no Christ as a separated consciousness that perceives Himself in relationship to His Creator. Again, these are dualistic terms; these are words. Later on, we will read an important passage where Jesus says that "words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality" (M-21.1:9-10).

So the words God and Christ symbolize something, but we, who are creatures of duality and specialness, have no way of understanding what the concept of oneness means, what the concept of non-duality means. The idea that "nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something separate from Him" (W-pI.132.12:4) makes no sense to us. There are many passages in the Course that reflect this. There is not much we can say about it, but it is, once again, extremely important that you understand this is the bottom line. This is the only truth there is, the only reality. Everything else is a dream, everything else is totally made up.

This is one of the few places in the Course where you can actually see not only a description of Heaven, but almost a definition of it.

**(T-18.VI.1:1) There is nothing outside you.**

This is a perfectly clear non-dualistic statement.

**(T-18.VI.1:2) That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you.**

There are many places in the Course where Jesus says things like this. When he says this is something you must ultimately learn, he is telling you this is very important. If you read this course with colored markers ready, this is one of the statements you should underline. He is telling you this is what it is all about, that you learn "there is nothing outside you." That means there is no God outside you, there is no Holy Spirit outside you, there is no Jesus outside you, there is no world outside you. If you keep statements like this in mind, you will not fall into the trap of making the error real, of believing there is a world out there that you must do something about, that you must heal, save, run away from, want to join with, or to forgive.

**(T-18.VI.1:3) For God created only this** [namely the Kingdom of Heaven]**, and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself.**

This is a classic non-dualistic statement. This is a reflection of the other important principle in the Course, ideas leave not their source. We are an idea in the Mind of God and we have never left our Source. That means the separation never happened. Early in the text, Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is not within you. "The Kingdom of Heaven is you" (T-4.III.1:4). You are the Kingdom of Heaven because you are one with God and God is the Kingdom.

**(T-18.VI.1:4-6) The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him.** [Once again, these are expressions of that perfect Oneness of God and Christ.] **Heaven is not a place nor a condition.** [And here is the definition:] **It is merely an awareness of perfect Oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within.**

If we truly could understand this, we would not need anything else in the Course. Later on I will read a passage where Jesus says, "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak . . ." (W-pI.169.5:4). There is nothing else to say. God is. If God is, then His Son is also and there is nothing else. That is probably the closest we will get in the Course to a definition of Heaven. It is the "awareness of perfect Oneness and the knowledge that there is nothing else . . . ." When Jesus uses knowledge, he is not talking about knowledge in the conventional sense where you know something, you are aware of something. That is because these all occur within a dualistic framework. Knowledge in the Course is just a synonym for that state of perfect Oneness. It is the state of the Kingdom, of pure Being. It is the "knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within."

Some of you are familiar with the book Gloria and I wrote many years ago called Awaken from the Dream, where there is a lovely (if I might say so, speaking for both of us) description of this unity of Heaven:

… in the Beginning, before there was even a concept of beginning, there is God, our Source and the Source of all creation: a perfection and resplendence whose magnificence is beyond comprehension; love and gentleness of such an infinite nature that consciousness could not even begin its apprehension; a pristine stillness of uninterrupted joy; a motionless flow without friction to impede it; a vast, limitless, and all-encompassing Totality, beyond space, beyond time, in which there is no beginning, no ending, for there was never a time or place when God was not. …

Creation, like spirit, is abstract, formless, and unchanging. Its nature is unity, knowledge of which is that there is nowhere the Creator ends and the created begins. There is no boundary, no differentiation, no separation. Yet, included in this knowledge is the fact that we are not the Source of creation, though we remain One within It.

Can the Mind of God begin? Can the Mind of God end? Can a Thought that is part of that Mind be something other than that Mind? Surely not, since there is no subject or object in the state of Heaven; no observer or observed. There is no perception, simply the total knowledge of who we are: a glory of such unified resplendence that concepts of within-without have no meaning (Awaken from the Dream, pp. 3-4).

There is no way of understanding what that is, but you could at least begin to understand that nothing in this world has anything whatsoever, to do with that, in any way, shape, or form. We are talking about a concept of oneness and unity that totally transcends anything in this world. It transcends the role of the Holy Spirit. It transcends forgiveness. It transcends the miracle. It transcends A Course in Miracles. Those of you who are familiar with my book on Helen, Absence from Felicity, may remember that I discussed that Helen, who obviously had a very close relationship with Jesus and certainly experienced him as very real, occasionally would tell me of an experience she would have of a voice that was basically soundless and that transcended the voice of Jesus. That is what we are talking about. That experience transcended the dualistic experience of having a relationship with Jesus. It was something beyond even what the Course is about, because the Course says it is not about Heaven and it is not about truth. It is about removing the interferences that we place between ourselves and truth.

Over and over again Jesus says, in one form or another, that knowledge is not the goal of this course, oneness is not the goal of this course. Peace is the goal of this course. And peace in A Course in Miracles is accomplished through the undoing of the ego's specialness. One does not have to understand or know what that oneness is. But, again, if you are going to really understand this course, then you must understand there is something beyond what you think these words are telling you. These words are telling you one thing on the level of form, but on the level of content, if you follow them along without pre-judging them, you will be led by them beyond everything in this world, as the Course says, right up to the gate of Heaven, and then the Course stops. It has carried out its purpose. Then, as Jesus says, God will reach down and lift you back unto Himself (C-4.8:3). That is not the Course goal. That happens afterward.

**(W-pII.11.2:4) What God has willed to be forever One will still be One when time is over; and will not be changed throughout the course of time, remaining as it was before the thought of time began.**

**(W-pII.11.4:1-5) We are creation; we the Sons of God. We seem to be discrete, and unaware of our eternal unity with Him. Yet back of all our doubts, past all our fears, there still is certainty. For love remains with all its Thoughts, its sureness being theirs. God's memory is in our holy minds, which know their oneness and their unity with their Creator.**

Here we see another very clear statement that the world of separation, of separate personalities, of individualities, the world of discreteness has nothing to do with Heaven. It is all part of the illusion. It is all part of the dream, and we remain, as the Course says, at home in God yet dreaming of exile (T-10.I.2:1). We remain at home with God in that state of perfect Oneness with Him.

**(T-2.VII.6:1-3) It should especially be noted that God has only one Son. If all His creations are His Sons, every one must be an integral part of the whole Sonship. The Sonship in its Oneness transcends the sum of its parts.**

That last line is an extremely important one. It is repeated several times in the Course in different ways. What Jesus is saying is that what constitutes Christ, what constitutes the one Son of God, is not adding up all of the seemingly separate fragments. What constitutes Christ is its perfect unity and wholeness. The Oneness transcends the sum of its parts. What defines Christ is this perfect Oneness, not the conglomerate or the sum total of all the seeming fragments. That is how we think of it here. That is why the whole thought of the hundredth-monkey idea, which many Course students adopt and think that is what the Course is talking about, misses the point entirely. That is a wonderful example of the kind of thing I was discussing earlier, where people will take things from the Course out of context and basically understand them within the context of their particular thought system, or their form of spirituality. If you understand that what defines Christ is His perfect wholeness and oneness, then you cannot add up a certain number of members of the Sonship, get a magic number that tilts the rest of the Sonship and everybody falls into God's lap. If you understand and you accept no compromise in which duality plays a part, you will not fall into that trap.

People take the section called "The Circle of Atonement," which talks about how teachers of innocence are gathered together and the implication of that section is that you get more and more people within the Sonship—people interpret that as saying that they have got to get more and more people studying the Course; governments, national and world leaders must study the Course. So we get more and more people into this circle and when we get enough people, everybody will be pulled into it and, again, we fall into Heaven. That is a very nice spirituality. It could work for people. It is not A Course in Miracles. Please, do not fall into that trap. If you accept no compromise in which duality plays a part, you could never fall into that trap because that is a dualistic statement, that you get people who are seemingly separate, and you just get enough of them in one place and something magical will happen. That is not what this Course is about.

If Christ is totally one, if as Jesus says in the teachers' manual, it is true that only one teacher of God is needed to save the world (M-12.1:1), then you do not add up numbers. This is not about getting converts. It is about each individual student of A Course in Miracles learning this course, accepting the Atonement for oneself, and then realizing that they are that one. Later on I will explain to you how that works psychologically, how that really works, how everyone really is part of the one. When you start adding people up, you are making the error real, you are making separation real, and you are saying a certain number of people are needed to save the world. The manual makes it very clear that only one is needed, and Jesus is not talking about himself. He would be an example of the one, but we are all examples of the one. Jesus is an example of one who has accepted the Atonement for himself, whose mind is perfectly healed, but in that awareness, in that healing, in that acceptance of the Atonement, he knows there are no separated Sons. He becomes the Christ because he now realizes that he is the Christ. He, as a separate personality, disappears because we are all Christ, we are all part of that whole.

There is no way anyone in this world can understand how that works, and Jesus does not ask us to understand how it works, but what he does ask us to do is understand how nothing else works. If you understand how nothing else works, then you will leave the door open for what truly works and in fact is the only thing that does work. This is very, very important. If you try to superimpose on A Course in Miracles your own spiritual path, which may have thousands, hundreds of thousands, and even millions of devotees, you will never learn what this course is saying. There is nothing else in this world like this course. It is not saying that you will not find God in other pathways, but you will not find God if you try to do that other pathway with the Course. And you certainly will not find it with the Course. You may construct your own spirituality based on little fragments from the Course and little fragments from this and little fragments from that, and that might work for you, but that has nothing to do with A Course in Miracles. If you change one teaching in this course, if you omit one teaching in this course, you have omitted the whole Course.

That is why Jesus says you either believe all of this course or none of it (T-22.II.7:4). This is not a course you can pick and choose from. It is not sinful, wicked, or bad, if you do, but then it is no longer A Course in Miracles. It is something else. It is eclectic spirituality. There is absolutely nothing wrong with anyone doing that, or promulgating it, or teaching it, but they should have the humility, the good sense, and the self-respect to be clear with the world that they are no longer teaching A Course in Miracles. Blend this with anything else and you will have lost what this is.

Just as Christ is defined by "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" this course is the same way. This is greater than the sum of its individual teachings. Its individual teachings form a perfectly integrated whole that transcends any one statement or any one principle. That is what you must understand. That is what this hidden level of the Course is, that you realize the perfect totality that this thought system represents. Again, you do not have to be able to accept it totally. You do not have to live it totally. You do not have to understand it totally, but do understand that there is nothing else like it, and nothing else that you think it is saying is what it is saying. That will leave the door open.

This course, just like Christ, is greater than the sum of its parts, and if you want to know what it is teaching, you must give yourself to it totally. And the way you give yourself to it totally is to realize how much you do not want to give yourself to it totally, how much you want to withhold yourself from it. There is nothing wrong in doing that. In fact, there is something wrong in your not doing it, because if you think you are not doing it then you are a liar. You should assume you will do it. You will withhold from it; you will take out certain things that you are not comfortable with; you will blend it in with other things; and you will make the Course a statement of dualistic thinking instead of non-dualistic thinking. Don't be surprised when you do it, but don't be arrogant in thinking you don't do it. It is in realizing that you are trying to change the Course, just as you tried to change Heaven, that will help you get past all of your guilt over your seeming sin.

Everyone is going to "sin" with this course, because no one wants to hear what it says. If people wanted to hear what it said, then they would already know what it says and they would not need it. No one wanted to hear what Jesus said two thousand years ago either. That is not a sin. That is just a reflection of the original thought when you did not want to hear what God said either, which is the word of perfect Oneness. Therefore, you want to be aware of your attempting to subvert, pervert, distort, and change this course, but forgive yourself for it. Just don't arrogantly think you are not doing that.

Remember, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. How many people are really ready to totally give themselves to the whole of this course, to the whole of Jesus' love without any reservation? That is what you want to look at in yourself and be humble about. That is what will allow you to forgive yourself, not for what you think you have done to Jesus or A Course in Miracles, but what you think you did to God and to Christ.

**Part III**
**Heaven: The State of Oneness (cont.)**

Now I want to look at a number of places in the Course where Jesus says very clearly how he cannot tell us what Oneness is. Of all the passages in the Course, these come closest to a description of what Oneness is. But Jesus also makes it very clear that there is no way we can understand that. This is Jesus talking in the first person.

**(T-8.VI.9:1) I share with God the knowledge of the value He puts upon you.**

This would be an example of a dualistic statement. It makes it sound as if God values His Son. That is because there is no way, as he is going to say in a minute, that anyone could understand what the state of perfect Oneness is.

**(T-8.VI.9:2) My devotion to you is of Him, being born of my knowledge of myself and Him.**

Jesus is saying that he is totally one with God and totally one with us. There is no separation. Remember knowledge is not dualistic in the Course. It is not that Jesus knows God or knows us. Jesus is aware, in a non-dualistic way—no subject and object—of the perfect unity of God and Christ.

**(T-8.VI.9:3-5) We cannot be separated. Whom God has joined cannot be separated** [from the famous statement in the gospels]**, and God has joined all His Sons with Himself. Can you be separated from your life and your being?**

Remember, ideas do not leave their source, so there is no way we can be separate from our Source, which is all being and all life.

**(T-8.VI.9:6-9) The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Truth can only be experienced. It cannot be described and it cannot be explained.**

That is a clear, succinct, easily understood statement. Truth can only be experienced; it cannot be described or explained. That is why this is not a course in truth, but the foundation of the Course is truth. If you are to understand the reflection of truth that constitutes the main body of teachings of this course—namely what forgiveness is and the miracle is—then you must understand what it is a reflection of. Don't mistake the reflection for the truth. You cannot understand this course if you do not recognize what non-duality is, what a state of perfect Oneness is. Everything else is part of the dream and therefore is not real.

Now Jesus says:

**(T-8.VI.9:10) I can make you aware of the conditions of truth …**

The conditions of truth are the undoing of the ego's barriers to truth. He says in one important section on special relationships that your task is not to seek for [truth] but merely to seek and find all of the barriers you have placed between yourself and [truth] (T-16.IV.6:1). This is not a course in truth. This is not a course in love. This is a course in illusions. This is a course, on the dualistic level, to help you undo the illusion, because that is what forgiveness does. It is a course in undoing the illusion, which then allows you to remember who you are as God's Son.

Again, if you do not understand that is the basic goal, if you do not understand that is where you begin and that is where you end, you will not understand how to get there. And you will continually stub your toe, fall, and trip yourself up, because you will think you are doing this course, but you will not be doing it. You must understand that duality is unreal. And when, in the Course, Jesus speaks about duality, he is speaking metaphorically, symbolically. He is not speaking truth because truth cannot be talked about; it cannot be explained; it cannot be described. So he says:

**(T-8.VI.9:10-11) I can make you aware of the conditions of truth, but the experience is of God. Together**[Jesus and you as a student] **we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself.**

Again, this is a very clear, easily understood statement about what he is doing in this course. He is telling you this course is not true. He will tell you later on in another passage that this course comes within an ego framework (C-in.3:1). It is dualistic—not because that is true, but because it is the only way you will learn about your mistakes so you can undo them. Don't confuse the method or the means with the end. That is that hidden, underlying layer of this course, which is to say that if you proceed with open eyes and with an open mind, without arrogance and with deep humility and gratitude for this, you will begin to understand what that deeper layer is, and you will begin to really understand that Jesus is talking about what is in your mind. He says in a very important passage near the end of Chapter 20, "What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it … are wholly unreal?" (T-20.VIII.7:3-5). He means that very literally.

What if you really knew nothing is here? An hallucination is a psychiatric term for a patient who sees something that is not there, who hears something that is not there. This is not an altered state. This is not a spiritually advanced state. This is psychosis, born of terror. Don't confuse psychosis with spirituality. He means that very literally. What if you knew this world was made up, was not here? Later I will go into exactly what this means and how to understand what this means for you personally. This is what he is really saying. If you really understood that, you would understand what non-duality is. Non-duality is everything that duality is not.

Again, "Together we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself." Truth is not the goal of the Course. It is what the Course will lead you to.

**(W-pI.129.4:1) Communication, unambiguous and plain as day, remains unlimited for all eternity.**

Communication in the Course is a term Jesus uses to describe the state of knowledge. God is in perfect communication with His Son and vice versa. This has nothing to do with one body communicating with another body. That is how we distort it in this world. That is how we take a non-dualistic principle of perfect Oneness and a sharing of that Oneness and of the Love which is our Being, God in Christ and Christ in God, and distort it so it becomes one body communicating to another body.

**(W-pI.129.4:2) And God Himself speaks to His Son, as His Son speaks to Him.**

Here, obviously, Jesus is using a dualistic term to describe a non-dualistic state. So, in the second stage of his music, Beethoven is looking at the spiritual world through material eyes. Jesus is talking about a non-material, non-dualistic state—God speaking to His Son, His Son speaking to Him—but he is using dualistic words, the words of materiality, because that is the only way we could understand what he is speaking about. In the lovely opening passages of The Song of Prayer pamphlet, Jesus talks about the song the Father sings to the Son and the Son sings to the Father (S-1.in.1:2). That is the song of prayer; without words, without notes. That is what he is speaking about here. He is using the language of bodies.

Do not confuse the language with what he is talking about. Do not confuse the symbol with what the symbol is representing. Accept no compromise in which duality plays a part. God does not talk to you. Later we will read an important series of passages where Jesus tells us that God does not hear words, and He does not understand words (M-21.1:7). In reality, the Holy Spirit does not speak to you, because no one speaks in reality. In the world of dreams He speaks to you, and we will see later on how very important that is. But do not confuse reality with the reflection of reality. Otherwise, again, you will not have a clue as to what this course is talking about, which is why practically no one does. People think it is saying something else. It is not. Jesus knows the difference between symbol and reality, and he is asking his students to understand that too. Later we will read a number of passages on symbols.

**(W-pI.129.4:3) Their language** [the language of God and His Son] **has no words, for what They say cannot be symbolized.**

In one sentence he uses the word speak and in the next sentence he is telling you there aren't any words. What They say cannot be symbolized. This would be a statement where he is talking about the spiritual world through spiritual eyes, where he is saying that there is no reflection here.

**(W-pI.129.4:4-5) Their knowledge is direct and wholly shared and wholly one. How far away from this are you who stay bound to this world.**

He is not putting you down. He is simply telling you not to try to understand this. But sentences like this are here for a specific purpose: so that you will understand that what he is saying in this course is not true. It is a reflection of truth. It is the closest you are going to get in this world to what truth is, but it is not the truth. God is not a concept. God is not a thought as we define thought. He is a Thought with a capital T. God is not a love that is in this world. The reality of Jesus is not of this world. Your reality is not of this world. What you think you are and what you think your brother is, whom you have to forgive, are not of this world. You must really understand that this is the basis of everything Jesus teaches in this course.

As Helen herself experienced, there was a part of her mind that could go to a place that transcended even Jesus, and she was very close to him, as you know, both in love for him and in hate for him. This course came from that closeness, but she would have some experiences that transcended this. Those are the experiences that are revelatory, that are the direct experience of the Unity and the Oneness of Heaven. They are beyond this course, but when you know about that—whether you actually have such an experience or you at least recognize that is what reality is—you again have a standard by which to understand what your experiences are here, and you will not fall into the trap of making duality real. Remember, that is the only assignment he asks of his students. Teachers of God are really his students. That is the only assignment. It is the same thing as saying the only assignment is to accept the Atonement for yourself, which is that the separation never happened. If the separation never happened, there is no duality.

**(W-pI.129.4:5-6) How far away from this are you who stay bound to this world. And yet how near are you, when you exchange it for the world you want.**

The "world you want" is the real world. He is saying that you could come very close to this true world, to this true reality, by totally letting go of this world. But you cannot let go of it if you first do not know how much you are clinging to it, and we will get to that later.

This is probably the clearest statement of how impossible it is to talk about what the state of Oneness is:

**(W-pI.169.5:1-4) Oneness is simply the idea God is. And in His Being, He encompasses all things. No mind holds anything but Him. We say "God is," and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless.**

That is the only true statement you can make: God is. You are still using words, but you are not using any reference to anything in this world. This is not a helpful statement. If Jesus began this course to Helen and said, "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes. God is, and you are finished," she probably would have said, "God is what?" Jesus does not do that because this is not a course in God. This is not a course in love. This is not a course in truth. This is a course in undoing our version of what God is and what love is, which we will discuss later on. But you cannot speak about what God is. So any time you think you understand this course and are speaking about it, realize that you are not speaking truth. This is not a course in truth. This is a course in undoing illusion with a helpful illusion. "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless." Words mean absolutely nothing when you compare them with what truth is because truth is beyond words. It is non-dualistic.

**(W-pI.169.5:5-7) There are no lips to speak them, and no part of mind sufficiently distinct to feel that it is now aware of something not itself. It has united with its Source. And like its Source Itself, it merely is.**

In truth, in Heaven, in Oneness, there are no lips that could speak words. Again, "God is," and when we awaken from our dream, we are also. We do not have a mind that can understand this. We do not have words that can speak this. We do not have a brain that could understand this.

**(W-pI.169.6:1-3) We cannot speak nor write nor even think of this at all. It**[this knowledge that God is]**comes to every mind when total recognition that its will is God's has been completely given and received completely.** [This knowledge, this awareness comes when we have let go of everything else.] **It returns the mind into the endless present, where the past and future cannot be conceived.**

The "endless present" is a term for eternity. The holy instant, which is another key concept in the Course, is a reflection of eternity. It is not eternity, which means it is not real. It is a reflection, not reality. We all know that we are creatures of the past and future, and our present experience is always seen through the filter of the past and our needs that we project into the future. Therefore, how could we possibly understand "God is"? That is why, again, Jesus does not talk about it.

**(W-pI.169.6:4) It** [the experience of the knowledge of God] **lies beyond salvation; past all thought of time, forgiveness and the holy face of Christ.**

Jesus is saying, "My course is limited in what it will do. It will take you up to the gate of Heaven, but not through the gate." This experience is past the world of time and the world of duality; it is past forgiveness and past the holy face of Christ, which is the Course's great symbol for forgiveness.

**(W-pI.169.6:5-7) The Son of God has merely disappeared into his Father, as his Father has in him. The world has never been at all. Eternity remains a constant state.**

In other words, nothing happened. In order to disappear into the Father you must have no specialness. You have no individual identity in God. You have no personal self. You have no experience of love in relationship to someone else, even if that someone else is God or Jesus. This is a love that transcends duality. It transcends subject and object. It transcends separate persons. That is what makes this course so different.

On the one hand, Jesus speaks about this and makes it clear that this is the only level of truth. On the other hand, he gives us a dualistic way of reaching beyond duality. But, again, the caution is clearly implied, and I will make it much more than just clearly implied, so that you do not fall into the trap of confusing the means with the end. That is where people get tripped up with the Course. I will be elaborating on this later.

**(W-pI.169.7:1) This is beyond experience we try to hasten.**

The experience that he is trying to hasten here is the experience of forgiveness, which occurs within the dream of duality.

**(W-pI.169.10:1) There is no need to further clarify what no one in the world can understand.**

Now this should put every Course student in his or her place. If you read this and understand it, then you will learn what humility is. He is telling you there is no way that you could understand what he is talking about. (He goes on with this in the paragraphs that I skipped.) There is no way you could understand this, but he is asking you to be aware that is what you do not understand, so when you learn and teach this course, you will not be teaching duality, and you will understand that you do not forgive the person you think you are forgiving. Just to foreshadow what I will be talking about later, you forgive a split-off part of yourself. You cannot forgive anybody else out there because that is not true. There is no one out there. Your experience will be that there is someone out there, and that experience is very important. That is what the Course builds its process on. But you will not get too far up that ladder of prayer, which ends in the real world and then beyond that in Heaven, if you stubbornly and arrogantly think that you are actually doing something when you are not doing it. You must understand the difference between symbol and reality.

**(W-pI.169.10:2) When revelation of your oneness comes, it will be known and fully understood.**

He is saying this is not our concern. People who tell you that they have experiences of God's Love are lying to you. If they make a big deal about having an experience of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, they are talking about an illusion anyway, so they should not brag about it. That does not mean the experience is not very important and very helpful. It is. It is mandatory to progress in this course, but why in God's name should you boast about something that is unreal? When week after week people come to their Course in Miracles groups and brag about what the Holy Spirit did for them, they are bragging about something that is nonexistent. What is so wonderful about that? God is wonderful. God is trulywonderful. He is the only wonderful thing in the world. Why would you settle for anything less than that?

This is not a course in reveling in duality. It is a course in making your way through duality to the real Love that is beyond it. But when you get caught up with how wonderful you are because of what you are doing and what you are teaching and what the Holy Spirit is doing for you, then you will never get your feet off the ground. You will just barely get on the first rung of the ladder. It is really important that you understand the difference between duality and non-duality. Please do not listen to anybody who talks to you about duality. Accept no compromise in which duality plays a part.

It is very easy to tell when people are teaching duality. They talk about the Holy Spirit doing things for them. They talk about forgiving other people. They talk about joining with other people as if there is something sacred about joining with other people. What could be sacred about joining with someone who is not even there? That is psychosis because you are hallucinating. "What if you recognized this world is an hallucination?" (T-20.VIII.7:3) What if you understood the figures in it are all made up? What if you understood that? Then you would not fall into the trap of bragging about your getting parking spaces, or getting lovers, or getting new jobs, because you do not understand what a miracle is if that is what you think this course is about. And you certainly do not understand what Jesus is about.

It is critically important that you recognize the difference between reality and illusion, between fact and symbol, between non-duality and duality. That is what this is about. Again, what makes this course so exceptional as a spiritual path is that its dualistic teachings come clearly within the framework of non-duality. There is nothing else that I know of that does it quite like this course. And you get this now in the remainder of this paragraph. After talking about revelation of your oneness Jesus says:

**(W-pI.169.10:3-4) Now we have work to do, for those in time can speak of things beyond** [which is what we have been doing]**, and listen to words which explain what is to come is past already. Yet what meaning can the words convey to those who count the hours still, and rise and work and go to sleep by them?**

Jesus is telling all of his students: "As long as you think you are a body, and as long as you think you are regulated by the body's laws of eating, sleeping, resting, and playing, how could you possibly understand what I am talking about when I tell you what God is, what love is, and what eternity is? Therefore I will not spend too much time on that. But I will tell you enough so you will understand that what I am talking about in this course is not real. It is the closest thing to reality you will ever get in this world, but it is not real."

That is this underlying layer of this course. That is the real truth that is hidden. Not hidden by Jesus' design, but hidden because of your own fear. He says over and over again how clear and simple this course is (e.g., T-11.VI.3:1; T-11.VIII.1:1). He means exactly what he says. "Reality and truth are non-dualistic. They have nothing to do with subject and object, but there is no way you could understand it, so let me help you get out of the mess that you are in. Let me help you look at this world and yourself differently, and by doing that, you will realize that nothing is here and that you are not even here."

**Part IV**
**The “Tiny, Mad Idea”**

Now we are going to leave the wonderful world of Oneness—or think that we are going to leave the wonderful world of Oneness—where the impossible seems to have happened. In the presence of that wonderful resplendence in which there really is no perceived light, in the presence of that incredibly joyous song in which there are no notes and no ears to hear it, the impossible seems to happen. What the Course refers to as this tiny, mad idea seems to arise within the mind of the Sonship. Probably the clearest statement of this comes near the end of Chapter 27 where Jesus says, “Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea...” (T-27.VIII.6:2). That is the tiny, mad idea that in effect says I want to be on my own. I want something more than everything; that looks at the reality of Heaven and says, is this all there is? Heaven is boring. I want to be free of the tyranny of being part of the All. I want something beyond the infinite, I want something beyond the everywhere. I want something because there is nothing in Heaven, literally nothing in Heaven—no thing.

These are all just terms or symbols to try to explain, in very human terms, what this impossible thought was, what this tiny, mad idea was. This is the birth of duality. Again, it is the idea that suddenly—and realize we are talking about something that never happened—it appeared as if a part of God’s Mind, a part of Christ’s Mind split off, so now there were two minds. There is the capital “M” Mind of God, which is totally unified with the Mind of Christ, and now there is the little “m” mind (the split mind or the separated mind) that appears to be co-existing. Still, once again, this never happened.

Everything that we are going to talk about is all part of a dream. It is not real. It never happened. It appears to be very real, and what the Course does—and what we will be doing for a while—is to describe the process of how what never happened seemed to have happened and the course that it took. This is the birth of duality. Non-duality is the condition of Heaven where the Mind of God and the Mind of Christ are totally unified. There is no place where one ends and the other begins. In the dualistic state, which is the beginning of the dream, there is very much a sense of where one ends and the other begins. There is a clear demarcation between the Mind of God (or the Mind of Christ) and the little “m” mind. This is the beginning of duality. Everything else from here on is totally unreal. That, again, is extremely important. What I will do now in developing this is talk about the process of the separation in terms of four stages, the four splits. The Course never uses the term four splits—it certainly talks a great deal about splitting—but it describes what these stages are.

The first split, then, is what we have already discussed. That is where the mind of the ego, the mind of the Son, seems to split off from the Mind of Christ. So where there was one, there now appear to be two: the Mind of Christ and the little “m” mind. What becomes extremely important to understand is that when the Course talks about love in Heaven, Jesus is talking about love that is continually extending itself, a concept that has no referent or meaning in this world, which means there is no way anyone in this world can understand the extension of love or the extension of spirit. Because when we think of extension, it is always within a temporal and spatial dimension: I extend love to you. My self extends love to you over space and over a period of time. That is the only way that we understand what extension means.

In reality, extension does not occur in a temporal or spatial dimension because there is no time or space in Heaven. But love is continually extending itself. God extends His Self, which is Love, which creates Love, which is Christ. Christ, being a part of God and sharing in all the attributes of God also extends His Self, which is Love, and that is what A Course in Miracles refers to as the creations of Christ. There is no way any of this can be understood in this world, and the Course does not even try to explain it. Jesus introduces the idea of the creations of Christ every once in a while, but then he drops it, basically saying, as we have seen, there is no way you could understand this.

The point here is that love is always extending itself. Love becomes love becomes love becomes love, not in a quantitative sense (see W-pI.105.4). You are not adding up love as you would bushels of potatoes, where you have a quantity and you just add to it and add to it. Or you have two parents who have sexual intercourse and now there is an offspring. Then that offspring grows up, meets a mate, etc. And then you have all the “begats” that you find in the Bible. So love is always making more. Physical life seems to be making more. That is what the Course would refer to as a “cruel parody” or a “travesty” of the process of true extension that occurs in Heaven. There is no way of comprehending that except to understand the concept that love always extends itself and becomes love. Perfect Oneness and unity continually extends perfect Oneness and unity.

Likewise, however, the thought of separation, the thought of splitting off from God will also continually split and split and split. Just as love loves and extends, separation separates and separates, splits off and splits off. That is what the Course refers to as the fundamental law of the mind: love or spirit extends, the ego projects (see T-7.VIII.1:2). They are different words for the exact same dynamic. The only difference is that they start in different places. Extension begins with love and is only love; separation begins with separation and is only separation. But separation is continually separating and continually splitting. It is very important that you understand that, because that is what we are going to be developing.

So we have the mind of the Son—now within the dream—separates from the Mind of Himself, which is Christ, and now there is a little “m” mind and a capital “M” Mind. The next thing that happens is that the split mind splits into what we will call the ego or the wrong mind, and the other part is the Holy Spirit, which is the right mind. Let me say again, all of this is unreal. We are not talking about reality. We are not talking about the ego as a real substance, entity, or person. We are not talking about the Holy Spirit as a real substance, entity, or person. This is all within the dream. This is simply another expression of the split. The ego is the part of the split mind that says the separation is real. The Holy Spirit is the part of the split mind that says the separation is not real. So the Holy Spirit is basically that memory or that thought that says nothing ever happened. It is the memory of who we are as God’s Son. It is the memory of God’s Love that is within the split mind. That is the second split. The first split is mind splitting off from Mind. The second split is mind splitting into two, because that is what splitting must always do. It just begets more splitting. It cannot help doing that. That is the nature of the mind. What is in the mind continually, in a sense, invents itself or projects itself or extends itself. Love continually extends itself. Separation continually projects itself. So now there are two parts to the split mind.

Now we are going to find the third split. There is a part of the mind that chooses. We call it the decision maker because it decides between the ego and the Holy Spirit. Once more, remember, we are talking mythologically, symbolically. We are not talking about reality or fact. The ego is a construct that we have invented to understand a process in our mind. The Holy Spirit is a construct we have invented to describe a process in our mind. The decision maker is a construct we have invented to describe a process in our mind. And all of them are different. They all are basically illusory because they are all part of the one whole. Ideas do not leave their source, but they appear to be separate.

The third split is when the decision maker, confronted with the choice between the ego and the Holy Spirit, chooses the ego and splits off from the Holy Spirit. The decision maker now joins with the ego. This is the third split. The first split, again, is the little “m” mind separating from the capital “M” Mind. And then once you have the little “m” mind, it cannot but continually split because that is in the nature of the mind. Love extends, separation separates or splits off. Then it splits into two, which is the wrong mind and the right mind, what we call the ego and the Holy Spirit. Then the decision maker chooses the ego thereby splitting off and separating from the Holy Spirit.

Again, we are simply describing what goes on in the mind, and we obviously describe it in human, anthropomorphic terms because that is what we believe we are. That is how we experience ourselves. In reality, it is not like this, but there is no way of knowing what it is like. This mind is not the mind of Homo sapiens. This is not a human brain doing all this. So we are simply, as Homo sapiens, trying to describe a process in our language, in our terms and in our concepts, but it is an experience that transcends what we are talking about.

One of the characteristics of this process is when the mind splits off, it forgets what it split off from. This will become extremely important later on, so try to get the concept now, and then it will make what we do more meaningful. When the split mind splits off from the Mind of Christ, it forgets where it came from. It believes now it is the only thing that there is—it is on its own. And what happens, of course, is that it likes what it sees, what it finds. It does not remember its source because what you split off from gets denied, repressed, or forgotten. Then, when the split mind splits into two and the decision maker chooses the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, the decision maker forgets about the Holy Spirit. It splits off part of itself, which now becomes virtually non-existent, and from a practical point of view, isnon-existent. There is no memory of that. We have forgotten we were a part of God. The Holy Spirit gets buried, and all that seems to be the reality is the ego thought system.

What precedes the next step is that the ego likes what it has found. The ego likes being on its own. It likes its freedom. It luxuriates in the idea, “I am free; I am on my own; I am an individual.” It has no memory of the Love of God. For all intents and purposes, it has destroyed the Love of God. It has become a deeply buried memory, if you will. It split off from it and it has forgotten what it split off. All it is aware of is what it has become. It has now become a split-off mind, a separated mind that is on its own and it likes it. It likes being free. It likes its individuality.

Everything that we seem to experience here as human beings is a reflection of that thought. We do not want to give up our autonomy. We do not want to give up our identity. We do not want to give up our specialness, because then we would cease to exist. We like being on our own. That is what the separation thought is. It never occurs to us what we gave up because if we ever remembered what we gave up—as the Course says at one point—we would leap into our Father’s Arms (T-9.VI.7:1-2). That is because deep down no one likes being on his own. It is awful because you are cut off from the very source of your life. No one would like being cut off from what one believes is the source of one’s life: oxygen. It is not a very pleasant experience to be suffocating. That is just a physical expression of what we would feel like—in much, much, much worse terms—if we would allow ourselves to realize that we have choked ourselves off from the Source of our real life. But we are not aware of it because that is part of the dynamic of the ego mind. It forgets what it split off from. It forgets what it left.

Thus, first we forget God, our Source. Now we think we are our source. We think we are our creator. We think we are on our own. We think we are autonomous and independent, and we have fallen madly in love—head over heels in love—with our own specialness and our own individuality and uniqueness. This becomes extremely important later on, when we see that how we live here reflects that original ontological thought that is always with us because we are that thought. Then, when we turn to the ego and we split off from the Holy Spirit, that memory of Who we are is also split off. So it is not only that we split off from God, our Source, we have also split off from the memory that would link us back to that Source. And so now we are left with the ego that we have chosen, that we have identified with and have split off from, and we have forgotten the Holy Spirit, the other part of our split mind. That part of our split mind is the link back to the Christ Mind and to the Mind of God. At this point, of course, there is no hope. But then it gets worse and worse because once we have begun this process of splitting, it is like opening up Pandora’s box. There is no way we will ever close it because now the splitting off becomes rampant.