**The Meaning of Judgment**

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

This workshop is basically a companion to the other workshop I have given on judgment called "To Judge or Not to Judge." We will end up in the same place, but we will approach it a little differently. I would like to structure this around four different kinds of judgment, three of which are directly articulated in *A Course in Miracles*, and the fourth, which is actually the second type of judgment in the sequence we will be discussing, is implied all the way through.

The first is the ego's dream of judgment, based on the idea that we could be separate from God. It is a way of judging God as inadequate, if not puny. The ego in all its great might has brought God to His knees, usurped His authority, and made up its own world. This judgment is based on differences, which are all different forms of attack.

I am going to skip the second type of judgment here and come back to it shortly. The Course refers to the third type as the judgment of the Holy Spirit, discussed most clearly in "The Judgment of the Holy Spirit" (T-12.I) and "The Equality of Miracles" (T-14.X), sections we will not be reviewing in this workshop. We are all asked to share this judgment, which sees everyone and everything in this world as either expressing the Love of God or calling for It. There is no attack in this kind of perception.

The fourth judgment the Course speaks about is called the Last Judgment, the Final Judgment, or God's Judgment (e.g., T-2.VIII; W-pII.10). This judgment occurs at the very end of the process of the Atonement. It states that "what is false is false, and what is true has never changed" (W-pII.10.1:1). This judgment ends the dream entirely. It is the pure expression of the Atonement principle: the separation never happened. Once we have accepted and identified with the judgment of the Holy Spirit, God's Final Judgment is just a wisp away. In the Course's metaphorical description, God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself—God's last step.

The crucial issue, however, is how to get from the first judgment—the ego's dream of judgment—to the third judgment, the Holy Spirit's perception of everything as either an expression of love or a call for love. We will spend a great deal of time talking about this second kind of judgment. It does not have a name in the Course, but it is reflected throughout. This is the judgment we make when we look at the ego's judgment and recognize that all of our thoughts and judgments have had no effect. I will elaborate on this later. Without this intermediate step it is impossible ever to know truly what the Holy Spirit's judgment is about. One of the mistakes students make when they begin working with the Course is to think it is easy to go from the first to the third type of judgment—from the ego's judgment of differences, specialness and attack, to the Holy Spirit's judgment that recognizes everyone as the same, where the only seeming difference is that people either express love or call for it.

Anyone who has worked seriously with *A Course in Miracles* for a period of time recognizes that it is not easy to shift from our ego judgments to the Holy Spirit's judgment. An interim step is needed. Again, that is the judgment we will be addressing. This kind of judgment is expressed very clearly in one of the important definitions the Course gives for the process of forgiveness: "Forgiveness . . . is still and quietly does nothing. It merely looks, and waits, and judges not" (W-pII.1.4:1,3). Jesus' repeatedly urging us to take his hand and to look with him on the ego's darkness is this second form of judgment. It does not deny the ego thoughts that we express in the world—all the thoughts of violence, viciousness, and murder.

This step recognizes that all of our thoughts ultimately can have no effect on our inner peace. That allows us then to look out on the world and truly see that everyone here is either expressing love or calling for it. Without this second judgment, the third and fourth steps are absolutely impossible. When I say, as I have said many times, don't skip over steps, this is the step I am speaking of. It means that we really look at the fact that we judge all the time.

My earlier workshop poses the question whether "to judge or not to judge"; and the obvious answer seems to be that we should not judge. But that is the *wrong* answer. The right answer is not only should we judge, but there is no way we can avoid judging, because that is what this world is. This whole world rests on the premise that our judgment of God and of God's Son is valid. So first we really want to be able to judge and not feel guilty about it; that is inherent in this second step. We look at all the judgments we make against other people, ourselves, Jesus, and God, but without judging ourselves for making those judgments—in other words, without feeling guilty.

We will use as our basic text for this workshop the section called "The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX), which will enable us to review these four steps. But before turning to that, I would like to discuss the steps in a little more detail: first, the ego's dream of judgment; then looking with Jesus at these judgments without feeling guilty, which allows us then to look at everyone in the world as our brother or sister in Christ; and, finally, the end of the process, the Atonement, the recognition that everything in this world is an illusion.

The entire ego thought system began with the initial judgment that came when the "tiny, mad idea" seemed to arise within the mind of God's Son. Before that, God and His Son dwelled in Heaven together in a unity so perfect that it would be impossible even to speak of God as a Creator or Source distinct from Christ, His Effect or His Son. In other words, no differentiation is possible in Heaven. Judgment, of course, is always based on differentiation. All of our judgments entail comparing one person to another, or one series of events to another, or one object to another, etc. Our entire world of perception rests upon this. That is why there is no perception and no judgment in Heaven.

When the Course speaks about God's Judgment, it is meant as the expression of this perfect Oneness. God's presence as perfect unity and perfect Love, and the presence of Christ as forever one with God's Oneness and God's Love is the judgment on everything that the ego thinks. And that judgment simply says "what is false [the thought of separation] is false and what is true [the reality of the oneness of Heaven] has never changed" (W-pII.10.1:1). But when the "tiny, mad idea" seemed to arise, all of a sudden duality appeared. And that was the birth of judgment.

The Son of God now began to experience himself in relation to—as separate from—his Creator and Source. And he did not experience that relationship in a very nice way. He saw himself as lacking, with God unfairly having what he did not have, but that he now had the power to steal from God what he believed was coming to him. And so the Son became the creator and source of life. He became the one who existed on his own. That was the birth of the ego. In that instant, God became the Son's effect, for the Son was now God's cause. The Course refers to this as usurping God's role. The Son sets himself up as his own creator, so that God, as He truly is, ceases to exist, at least within the Son's mind. God is no longer the Source of all Being. The Son now is.

The initial judgment is that there is an unfair or unjust difference between God and me, which leaves me in a state of scarcity or lack. My ego concludes that I am lacking the creatorship, of being on the throne, because God has deprived me of it. Therefore I am justified in taking back from God what is rightfully mine. That is the initial judgment. One of the most crucial things to understand about this initial judgment is that it is based upon differences. Before the "tiny, mad idea" seemed to arise there was no separated consciousness that could observe, perceive, or think about any differences.

Skipping ahead a few steps now: From this "tiny, mad idea" and its initial dream of judgment arose the whole physical universe. When Jesus says in *A Course in Miracles* that this world is an illusion, he means that the entire physical universe is an illusion. It is unreal. We know it is unreal because the world we see and experience is a place of differences. That is how we perceive. It is extremely important in working with *A Course in Miracles* that we recognize that everything in the world is completely unreal. As a result, any thought that God or the Holy Spirit does anything in this world must be false. If They did anything in this world for us, They would be insane, because They would be making the world of duality real, which would compromise Their own integrity as pure spirit that is perfectly one.

The entire world of time and space—a world of differences—arises from the thought that the Son could be different from God. We *are* the world that we believe we come into when we are born. But we do not "come into" this world; the world comes from the projection of the thought of separation and differences within our minds. That is why the principle, "Ideas leave not their source" (T-26.VII.4:7), is so crucial for understanding the Course's teaching. The world is nothing more than the projection of this thought of separation and guilt. And it has not left its source within our minds, where we also remain—which means there is no world out there.

The judgment we all make is that there is a world into which we come, a world within which we experience ourselves, outside our minds, which will exist after we die. We will explore this in more detail later. But this entire world is a dream of judgment. It is a dream because it is outside the reality of God's Mind; and it is a judgment because anything outside God's Mind must be perceived as different from It—and that is a judgment.

It is impossible for us to exist in this world without these kinds of judgments. Our world is indeed a world of perception. We all perceive ourselves in relationship to others and to things that are outside us, and Jesus is not saying we should deny that this is our experience. Near the beginning of the text he says that it is practically impossible to deny our physical experience in this world (T-2.IV.3:10). But he is asking us to look at it differently, as we will see. The point is that we cannot exist in this world as separated individuals—believing we each have a real body and a personality distinct from other people's bodies and personalities—and not judge. And we are all very good at denying how much we judge. A clear example of how students of the Course fall into this trap occurred when the Gulf War broke out. Some students would say to other students who expressed concern about what was happening in the Persian Gulf, "What war? There's no war out there. By saying there's a war out there, watching a news program and talking about it, you're giving it a reality it doesn't have." They were not aware that they were making an even worse judgment, because they were saying, "There is something terrible out there that I do not wish to see. And therefore I will spiritualize it and say that *A Course in Miracles* says that everything is unreal here, that no one is different, that war is impossible; therefore there is no war out there." From a metaphysical level, that of course is true; but no one here in the world, with very, very few exceptions, is on that level.

And so we are not asked to deny the judgments we make, which is why it is so important to speak about this intervening step between the ego's dream of judgment and the Holy Spirit's judgment: being willing to learn to be comfortable with all the judgments we make. And initially that means understanding that simply being in this world, waking up in the morning and believing that we have awakened here, is a judgment and an attack. We are saying, "I believe that I am at home here in my bed." The truth is that we are really at home in God, and we would not be dreaming that we are awakening at home in our bedroom if we did not want to leave God. If everything occurs within our minds and everything is a choice, as *A Course in Miracles* tells us over and over again, then simply believing that we are here in the world is an attack thought. It is an attack thought that says I prefer to be here rather than with God, my Creator and Source. And worse than that, I am saying I not only believe that I want to be here and that I can be here, but I believe that I actually *am* here, which means I am here at God's expense. I have usurped His place. I have killed Him off and placed myself on His throne.

Simply taking a breath conceals this vicious attack thought, this judgment that says I am separate from God; I am better than He is; and my individuality and my existence have been bought at His expense. Now this does not mean we should feel guilty because we take a breath every 15 or 20 seconds, or that we awaken in the morning and feel good. It does mean that we should not delude ourselves into thinking that all these experiences are holy or spiritual, that they are real and that, above all, they are free from judgment. We cannot do anything in this world without judgment, because that is what being in this world is about. So the answer is not that we should not judge. The answer is that we should learn how to be comfortable with all the judgments we do make, because only then can we move beyond them.

Let me add another ingredient, which has to do with the mechanism of denial. Once we believe we are really here, as I have been saying, we assume that we, and not God, are the creator and source of our own being. The guilt involved is enormous, because the ego tells us we cannot kill God and expect to get off scot-free. This is the birthplace of our guilt, followed by the terrifying fear that when God catches up with us, He will destroy us. So to protect ourselves from the horror of our guilt that comes from the awesomeness of the sin of seizing God's throne, we all make believe we have not done it. That is the mechanism of *denial* or *repression*. And an inexorable law of the ego mind is that once we deny something we must project it out.

So we first judge ourselves for attacking God, but then we say, "No, I am not the one who has done this terrible thing. Someone else has done it." We take our own guilt over believing that we have attacked God by separating ourselves from Him, and we project it out. We find someone else to blame for it; and then we are no longer aware of the origin of this dream of judgment in our own minds. We believe the dream is reality and that it exists on the outside, external to us. But the truth is that the dream of judgment has never left its source within our minds. We do not remember it, but we are still the ones who are dreaming this dream of judgment, sin, and attack—of murdering God. And on His slain corpse we erect our own self.

The basic problem is that we first judge ourselves as sinful, and then we say this is so terrible we will never look at it again. Then we protect the thought by hiding it from ourselves. The thought is so horrible and so anxiety-inducing that we make a vow never to look at it again: the first level of protecting it. Then we take the thought, project it out and put it on someone else: the second level of protecting it. And so we never accept responsibility for the thought, because we no longer know about it anymore. We have pushed it into our unconscious. We tell ourselves, "I am not the one who has done this; someone else has done it. I am not the one who is sinful; someone else has sinned against me. I am not the one who made the mistake; I am not the one who made the wrong turn, or did this, that, or the other thing. Someone else did it." In other words, we protect the judgment. And as long as we protect the judgment it will never be healed. That is why this second form of judgment is so important. We have to learn to be aware—not that we are in truth miserable sinners, wretched creatures of specialness who want to destroy everyone—but we *believe* we are. There is a big difference. This is not the way God sees us. In fact, God does not see us at all. This is the way we see ourselves. But once having seen ourselves this way, we then deny the thought and put it onto someone else, which means that we are protecting it. This is what we mean psychologically when we describe someone as being *defensive*. A defensive person puts up a wall when something said to him causes him to feel threatened. The person is really saying, "Don't come near me. This thought of sin and this judgment that I am making against myself is so raw that I cannot look at it, and I don't want you looking at it either." This is really what it means to be defensive. It is an attitude of protecting the thought that I am a terrible person. This is not how God or Jesus sees us; it is how we see ourselves. But if we refuse to recognize what we believe about ourselves, we can never change our minds about that belief.

That is why we cannot simply go from the ego's dream of judgment to the Holy Spirit's judgment that everyone is calling for love or expressing love. It is essential that we first train ourselves—and *A Course in Miracles* is that training program—to look at the thought system of the ego. This is not a course in denial or in making believe that terrible things do not happen in the world, which express the terrible thoughts that go on in the mind of the Son. Over and over again Jesus uses very strong words such as *murder* and *vicious* to describe the ego thought system. He is not saying this is a wonderful world. How can it be a wonderful world if it was made to escape from God? How can it be a wonderful world if it serves to protect us so that we never actually look at the underlying dream of judgment, which is unreal but which we *believe* is real? How can this be a wonderful world if it stands in the way of healing?

In working with the Course, we want to develop an attitude of being able to look with open eyes at what the world is—whether on an international level, an interpersonal level, or a personal level within our own minds. The goal of *A Course in Miracles* is to have us be able to look at these ego thoughts without judgment. When that judgment is gone, when we can really look at all the hate and specialness in us—the need to be so important, all the demands we make to be treated as if we were important—without judging ourselves or feeling guilty about these thoughts, without being afraid of any kind of punishment, then they will disappear because the basic ego thought is unreal. The basic thought that underlies the entirety of the ego thought system—and that constitutes the basic premise underlying the entire physical universe—is an unreal thought. It is a thought that says that we can really push God around and bring Him to His knees, establishing ourselves as God. And if we can look at that for what it is, without judgment, we will realize, as the text says at one point, "It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time" (T-27.VIII.6:5). In other words, the "tiny, mad idea" that gave rise to this world is just that: *tiny* because it is insignificant, with no power and no effect, and *mad* because it is insane. The ego cannot pull off the impossible. It can lead us to believe that the impossible has happened, but it cannot make it happen. But if we do not look at it, then we do not know what it really is.

So the purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is to have us reach the point where we can truly look at the ego. And when we do, it will disappear as the Course says, back "into the nothingness from which it came . . ." (M-13.1:2). At that point, the Holy Spirit's judgment becomes a reality for us. Since we then have only the Love of Christ within us and experience only Jesus' love for us within our minds, when we look out on the world we see the way he sees. And we understand, as the text explains, that every attack is really an expression of fear (T-2.VI.7:1). And underneath the fear is the call for love that has been denied, which means that we now look out on the world and see everyone as either asking for love or expressing love. And so our response is always the same.

Whether you are asking me for love or expressing love to me, as your brother in Christ, I will extend love to you. I will no longer see any differences. The superficial differences will not matter to me. All that will matter is that you are either calling for love or expressing love. Then the love in me greets you—my response is always the same. That is the judgment of the Holy Spirit. From there, the Course explains, God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself as the whole dream disappears. Again, what allows these third and fourth steps—the Holy Spirit's judgment and God's Final Judgment—to occur is this second step of looking without judgment at our ego thought system, with all its ugliness, viciousness, and unkindness. But we look at it with a smile that says these thoughts have no effect on Who I am, no effect on my relationship with Jesus, and therefore no effect on my relationship with God.

**Part II
"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX)**

Let us turn now to "The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX).

**(1:1) The slave of idols is a willing slave.**

This part of the text speaks a great deal about idols. In A Course in Miracles, an idol is simply another term for the ego and its objects of specialness. In other words, it is something that is not true to which we grant value and reality.

**(1:2) For willing he must be to let himself bow down in worship to what has no life, and seek for power in the powerless.**

Clearly this is speaking about the thought system of the ego. The thought system of the ego has no life because it stands outside the Life of God, and it has no power because it stands outside the power of God. Of course, the ego within its dream believes that it has stolen life from God, so that now the ego (the separated Son of God) has life and God has none. The ego also believes it has stolen the power of God to create, and so now it has that power and God does not. This is what Jesus is referring to here as the idol.

**(1:3) What happened to the holy Son of God that this could be his wish; to let himself fall lower than the stones upon the ground, and look to idols that they raise him up?**

Jesus basically is asking how all of this started: how could we possibly end up in the situation we are in where we deny our reality as Christ, deny our power, and deny the Love of God? In our sinfulness and guilt, we have fallen "lower than the low" because of this terrible belief about ourselves. And then we look to something outside ourselves to help us, to make us feel better. That is the purpose of the idols of specialness: I believe God cannot help me but this special person, this special trait, this special event, or this special object in the world can make me feel good by lifting me above the lowly state I have fallen into.

**(1:4) Hear, then, your story in the dream you made, and ask yourself if it be not the truth that you believe that it is not a dream.**

Jesus is speaking to us as individuals, but he is also speaking to us as one collective ego mind that made up this story. He is saying (once you sort through all the negatives) that we should ask ourselves in an honest way if this is what we really believe. We really believe this world is reality. There is a strong part of us, no matter how much we have studied this Course and claim we believe it, that does not believe this world is a dream. And we can recognize this to the extent that we watch our minds fill with judgments; all the little things of the world that we are attracted to; all the petty hates and grievances that we hold on to; all the petty things we hold up as symbols of injustice; all the specialness things that we want for ourselves and others, etc. All of these thoughts make it very clear how much we do identify with this dream and make it reality. He says this over and over again in many different places. It is extremely important to pay attention to it, because he is telling us that, yes, we do believe that this world is reality, and, yes, we do believe we killed off God and that specialness will give us what we want. "The Laws of Chaos" (T-23.II) constitutes probably the strongest statement in A Course in Miracles on the ego thought system in all its insanity. And in that section, after describing the five laws of chaos, Jesus says that we may insist that we do not believe them, but "Brother, you do believe them," he states (T-23.II.18:3). We do believe that these laws actually hold. And we believe that the world that rests on these five laws of chaos is actually there. So it is extremely important not to fall into the trap of insisting that we are free from all judgments just because we have done the workbook, or we have studied the Course for five, ten, or fifteen years. The ego's thought system is not an easy one simply to overturn, because it not only contains all the thoughts of judgment, it is the thought of judgment. And as long as we identify ourselves as a separated being with our own personality and body that is separate from other bodies, then we are believing the entirety of the ego thought system. Again, it is not only that we believein a dream of judgment, we believe we are this dream of judgment. And we know we are a dream of judgment because we identify ourselves as one of the figures in that dream of judgment.

Now Jesus is going to tell us a story, like an older brother telling his little brother and sister a story of the world.

**(2:1-2) A dream of judgment came into the mind that God created perfect as Himself.** [This is when the "tiny, mad idea" seemed to arise.] **And in that dream was Heaven changed to hell, and God made enemy unto His Son.**

In that dream, we really believed we were different from God, that we had a consciousness that could experience itself in relationship to God and in opposition to Him. At that point Heaven and God disappeared. If Heaven and God are the state of perfect Unity and perfect Oneness, and I now begin to experience myself as different and that difference is real, then Heaven must disappear because I have denied the basic reality of Heaven. That is what "Heaven now has turned into hell" means, and why God is made into the enemy. Before that thought of differences, God and Christ were perfectly unified. Once the thought of separation arises, we believe we have separated from God. We have stolen our identity from Him, and now God is on the warpath and wants to steal it back from us. Now the God of Love is turned into a God of vengeance. This is the beginning of the dream of judgment.

**(2:3-5) How can God's Son awaken from the dream? It is a dream of judgment. So must he judge not, and he will waken.**

This sounds very nice and easy. But as you know from your work with the Course, it is hardly that easy. If this is a dream of judgment based upon differences, then to awaken from this dream and return to the home that we never left, we obviously must give up judgment. The problem is that we are not aware that we are judging. We are not aware because of the power of our defenses. That is the key to understanding forgiveness. It is very easy to say that we will give up judgment; but we do not know what we are really saying because we do not know how much we judge. We do not know how much we really are the children of specialness, and how much our specialness keeps us going, day in and day out. Specialness is the air we breathe, the principle that nourishes all of our relationships. Specialness governs every single thing we do in this world. The problem is that we are not aware of it because we do not see it in ourselves; we see it outside ourselves.

Whenever we find ourselves getting defensive about anything or experiencing a resistance to doing or saying anything or being with anyone, there is some hidden specialness, some hidden judgment we do not want to see. All defensiveness—any time we feel our physical or psychological body tighten—says we feel endangered by an external threat to our specialness. There is a thought of judgment in our minds we do not want to look at. The problem is not the thought of judgment; the truth is there is no thought of judgment. The whole thing is made up. The problem is we believe there is a thought of judgment. And once we believe there is a thought of judgment, we will feel guilty because of it. And once we feel guilty because of it, we must deny it and project it out so we can see it outside. This is extremely important. The problem is not the ego thought system. The problem is not all the specialness. The problem is not all the judgments that we make. There isno ego thought system. Thereisno thought of specialness. There is no judgment. The problem is we believed there is. And once we believed it, we never looked within our minds again. Instead we made up the body and the world so that we could focus all our attention outside the mind on the body, on the other bodies that seem to exist outside us, and on the world in which all of the bodies seem to exist.

The truth is there is no world out there; the world is a made-up thought to conceal another made-up thought. But if we do not look at the original made-up thought, then we will never know it is not there. This does not mean that we have to look at the original thought to attack God. All we have to do is look at the thought within our minds that says, "I exist as a separated person; I am important, and everyone else is my enemy." But no one wants to look at that. That is why we try to convince ourselves that this is a lovely, loving world, with all these lovely people around, and the most lovely people of all are A Course in Miracles students. Attend one meeting of A Course in Miracles group and you will know the illusion in that statement. The problem is denial. We believe that because we study a book about love then we are creatures of love, and because we join with other people who are studying this book about love then we are all children of love. All that we are doing is pushing down all the thoughts of hatred, specialness, competition, jealousy, and murder that we do not want to look at. But if we do not look at them, we will continue to believe they are real. Again, the problem is not the specialness thoughts. There are no specialness thoughts, but there is the belief that there are. And once we accept the belief, we have to protect it. That is when the defensive system begins. And the world was literally made as a way to defend against looking within, at our own minds.

The most difficult thing to do is to look within. Jesus makes that clear in many passages in the Course. Two specific sections—"Looking Within" (T-12.VII) and "The Fear to Look Within" (T-21.IV)—enunciate that clearly, but the point is made all the way through the Course. For if we looked within we would realize nothing is there—except the Love of God. There is nothing of the ego because there is no ego. The problem is not the ego thought system. The problem is the part of the split mind that I usually refer to as the decision maker, which believes there is an ego thought system and therefore believes it has to be defended against.

So the judgments I make against you, making differences important and real, are really a projection of the judgment I have made against myself for making the difference between myself and God real. And I persist in holding judgments against you because that protects me from really looking at the judgment I have made against myself. All that has happened is that I have fallen asleep, dreamt a dream in which I am different from God, and judged that dream of judgment as sinful. And then I said I need another dream—the world—to defend myself against the first dream. Once I have made the dream of the world, I believe I need more dreams to protect myself from all of the preceding dreams of judgment. And so I never get back to the original dream of judgment against God.

Therefore the most difficult thing in the world to do is to stop judging: "So must he judge not, and he will awaken." The problem, again, is that we are not aware that we are judging. You are misunderstanding this course if you think it is a course on anything other than looking at your ego and smiling at it: looking at the ego with the love of Jesus or the Holy Spirit beside you and realizing there is nothing there. But you must look, which means you must get in touch with the part of your mind that is so resistant and terrified to look at all the specialness. This is not a course on love. Those of you who are relatively new to the Course may be able to avoid making that mistake and falling into the trap of thinking this is a course on love—it is not. It is a course on looking at specialness with this Person of love—Jesus or the Holy Spirit—next to us. Once we can do that, the specialness disappears, the defense goes, the need to defend against specialness goes, and all that is left is love, which automatically extends through us. All we have to do is look at the specialness without judgment. But that is very difficult, because our entire existence as individuals is based upon the notion that there is a thought of judgment in our minds that is so terrifying that if we ever look at it we will be destroyed. And so we will do anything except look at it.

**(2:6) For the dream will seem to last while he is part of it.**

As long as we believe that we are creatures of judgment, as long as we believe that we are a part of this thought of being separate from God, then the dream will seem to exist, because the dream is nothing more than a projection of that thought.

**(2:7) Judge not, for he who judges will have need of idols, which will hold the judgment off from resting on himself.**

This basically is what I have been speaking about. In summary, Jesus is telling us not to judge. When we judge, we are first judging ourselves. Our guilt over that is so enormous that we have to project it out and make up an idol, so we can see the sin and the guilt rest on the idol rather than on ourselves. But it is nothing more than a projection of our own ego. In popular speech, an idol is usually an image of God. Well, the ego makes itself God, as a thought, then projects it out, gives it a body, a form, and worships it. Basically, that is the idol of specialness or judgment.

Each of us has a need of idols "which will hold the judgment off from resting on himself." So rather than look at our own guilt, which is our judgment of ourselves, our guilt now rests on another. That is why we had to make up a world in the first place. As the workbook says at one point, hatred must be specific (W-pI.161.7:1) and "thus were specifics made" (W-pI.161.3:1). We had to have something outside us that we believed was reality that we could project our guilt onto. That is why we made up a wrathful, vengeful God, a God of specialness. That is why we made up a world filled with people, so that we could find someone to blame. But the judgment is not really on the world outside us, because in the end there is no world outside us. The judgment I make on you is really the projection of the judgment I make on myself. But I have to look at my need to have this judgment.

**(2:8) Nor can he know the Self he has condemned.**

So not only do I not know who you are, but I certainly do not know the Christ that I am, because I have said that the Son of God as I truly am no longer exists. When I separated from God and I made duality into truth, I made the unity of God and Christ into an illusion, which means God and Christ both disappeared. So I believe I attacked God and Christ, and condemned Them. But I will never remember that I made this all up, because I believe that this reality is so threatening that I must never look at it again. So I keep protecting myself repeatedly by never looking at the guilt in my mind. And the answer to all this is to really look at the fact that I am making it all up. But I will not know that I am making it all up until I look at it.

**(2:9) Judge not, because you make yourself a part of evil dreams, where idols are your "true" identity** [true is in quotation marks, because obviously it is not who we are]**, and your salvation from the judgment laid in terror and in guilt upon yourself.**

Again, we begin with that basic thought of judgment: I have betrayed and abandoned the Love of God. I have turned my back on it, usurped it, stolen it. And the guilt is so overwhelming over what I've done that it automatically leads to the terror that God or Love is going to attack me back. So to escape, I take all the guilt and terror and project it outside me, and make up an idol. I say something outside me has attacked. I am not the one who did it; someone else did; someone else is the murderer.

And all we have to do is look at this whole scenario for what it is.

**Part III
"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX) (cont.)**

**(3:1) All figures in the dream are idols, made to save you from the dream.**

Everything we perceive and believe is outside us is part of the dream. These are the idols, and their purpose is to make the outside dream real to protect us from the dream within our minds, which we do not want to look at. Course students compromise this over and over again by trying in whatever way they can to make some aspect of the external dream reality. That is why many students place such great emphasis on seeing Jesus or the Holy Spirit as doing things for them in the world. That is a subtle way of making Them part of the illusion, whereas in the Course Jesus asks us to take the illusion to the truth, not to bring the truth to the illusion. We have a strong investment in making the outside dream real, because if it is real outside, we do not have to look at the dream within our minds. What better way to make it seem real than to have God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit operate in it?

That is why it is a mistake to confuse A Course in Miracles with New Age thought systems. The Course in no way compromises the truth that the entire physical universe is an illusion. But we want to make the figures in the dream reality, including the Holy Spirit and Jesus so we are protected from the underlying dream inside our minds.

**(3:2) Yet they** [all of these idols] **are part of what they have been made to save you from.**

These idols were made to save us from the idol we made within our own minds (the ego thought system) that says, "I have stolen from God and I now exist. I have what I have stolen. I no longer have to give it back, and I exist on my own. And now God exists outside me." The ego begins with that initial thought of judgment, which is the beginning of the dream. It then becomes a full-blown dream within our minds that we are different from God, that we have stolen from God and sinned against Him. And our guilt over this now tells us God will punish us. This is the terrifying dream within our own minds. It is so terrifying that we do not look at it, but project it so that it now seems to be outside us. And anything that roots us further in the dream outside will nicely serve the ego's purpose, even if it goes under the name of God, which is what religions have done for centuries. It is extremely tempting for people to do the same thing with A Course in Miracles—to bring part of the truth into the illusion, making the illusion real. If you do that, you will never get out of the dream, because you will not know it is only a dream.

**(3:3) Thus does an idol keep the dream alive and terrible, for who could wish for one unless he were in terror and despair?**

The "you" Jesus is referring to in these passages is the mind, the part of the mind that chooses—what I refer to as the decision maker. It is the part of our minds that has first identified with the ego thought system. It is a thought system of terror and despair that tells us we need to protect ourselves from the terror and despair by denying it, which means we would never look at it again. And then we project it and see it outside ourselves. That is why we need a world of specific people and specific objects. We project all of these thoughts of sin, guilt, and judgment so they are no longer seen within, but outside. As long as we believe in the reality of the idol, we will never know that the idol really rests within our own minds.

**(3:4) And this the idol** [anything in the world outside of us] **represents, and so its worship is the worship of despair and terror, and the dream from which they come.**

This is true for the idols of specialness we think are wonderful and make us happy as well as the idols of specialness we hate. Earlier in the text, in "The Obstacles to Peace" (T-19.IV), Jesus speaks about this in another form: "While you believe that it [the body] can give you pleasure, you will also believe that it can bring you pain" (T-19.IV-A.17:11). Pleasure and pain are opposite sides of the same illusion. Both of them make the body real because both say there is something outside us that can make us either happy or unhappy and bring us pain. The truth is that the only thing that can bring us happiness is choosing the Love of the Holy Spirit. The only thing that can bring us pain is choosing the ego. That is all. There is nothing else.

The lines here represent the same idea. That is why we become so invested in the world. It is easy to fall into this trap, even as a student of a course that teaches that there is no world, for we still believe that external behaviors somehow mean something. They mean nothing in and of themselves. Their meaning lies only in what meaning we give them. What is important is never anything external—not what bodies do or do not do—but our internal decision to choose either the ego and separation, or Jesus and joining. Once we focus our attention outside and believe what we do is important, helpful, healing, or loving, we are getting caught in specialness, worshipping the idol of specialness. We will think that we are serving a function of healing or love, but it really is an idol of despair and terror.

In worshipping the idols of specialness outside, we are worshipping not only terror, despair, and guilt, but the whole dream, of which terror, despair, and guilt are only components. We are worshipping the dream that we have what we have stolen from God and will never give it back, for now we exist as individuals on our own. We love terror, despair, and guilt, or we would not feel them all the time. We love them because they make real the thought of separation—the thought of the original judgment against God—which makes real our separate existence from God. That is why we have such a tremendous investment in our self-importance, in being a unique individual—it establishes that the dream is real. The state of terror or despair in our minds says the dream is real; the guilt and the sin are both real.

**(3:5) Judgment is an injustice to God's Son, and it is justice that who judges him will not escape the penalty he laid upon himself within the dream he made.**

It is important to realize that the entire thought system of the ego is real within itself. It is not reality, but within the dream itself it is all very real. When we sleep at night and dream, we will experience the dream as very real. This entire world is a dream. As Jesus explains elsewhere (e.g., T-18.II.5:13-14), there is no difference between what we call our sleeping dreams and what he refers to as our waking dreams, such as we are experiencing right now. They are all the same—just different expressions of the thoughts within our minds. Within the ego dream, the fear of punishment is very real. Within that dream, our fear of experiencing harm—physical or emotional—is very real. We are not asked, as students of A Course in Miracles, to deny what our experiences are. We are asked, however, not to make these experiences reality. There is a crucial difference between those two approaches.

In other words, we all experience fear, and we believe our fear is due to something external to us that can impinge upon us. The ego interprets this as the wrath of God visited upon us—that is our experience. We may not consciously experience it as God's wrath, but we certainly do experience fear as caused by something external to us. Remember, our own bodies are just as external to our minds as everyone else's body is. But that does not make it reality. That is where the Christian Churches were mistaken; they took their experience of fear and wrote a theology about it. They said this is the reality of God: God sees our sin as real and has a plan to help us atone for it, basically a plan of murder. The plan then becomes one of suffering and sacrifice. If we believe we are sacrificing so God won't be angry at us, then we will feel good about sacrificing. But that does not make it reality. Our experience is that the sun rises and sets, but that does not make it reality. In reality, it is the earth rotating on its own axis that makes it appear as if the sun moves around the earth. And in fact, it is the earth that moves around the sun. Similarly, people may experience the Holy Spirit or Jesus doing things for them in the world, but that does not mean that They really are. Don't confuse your experience with reality. The ego always interprets our experiences in order to construct a theology that serves its purposes, which of course is why we have the experience in the first place. Within our dream, whenever we make a judgment we are asserting that we are different from God; we have separated from Him, sinned against Him, and have stolen from Him. Our guilt over that will then demand that we not escape the penalty of God's anger. This whole world, which is a world of change and death, then stands as the witness to the fact that what the ego has taught us is true. If our existence, which we call life, was ultimately stolen from God, then when God steals back the life we stole from Him we will be without life, which means we will be dead. That is the ego's interpretation of our death.

**(3:6) God knows of justice, not of penalty.**

God's justice of course has nothing to do with justice as we think of it. God's justice states that nothing happened. If nothing happened, there is no guilt and no punishment.

**(3:7) But in the dream of judgment you attack and are condemned; and wish to be the slave of idols, which are interposed between your judgment and the penalty it brings.**

But we are not condemned by God. We are condemned by the projection of our own guilt, which makes up a God Who is angry. We then deny the whole dynamic and make up a world in which we are continually condemning and judging others, while believing they condemned and judged us first. But our judgment is within our minds; that is our guilt. We project it out and make up a world of idols that will punish us; and we actually think there is a world out there that affects us. This is all part of the dream, which seems very real from within the dream.

**Part IV
"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX) (cont.)**

**(4:1) There can be no salvation in the dream as you are dreaming it.**

This is the story of the world. It explains why every attempt to bring peace has been futile and has failed. We are always trying to achieve peace within the framework of the world. We are always trying to make everything better here, when nothing can be better here. That is because, first, this is a world of hate; and, second, there is no world here anyway. What has to be made better is our decision. We chose the ego, which was a mistake; the undoing of that mistake is to choose Jesus or the Holy Spirit. But there is nothing here that can be made better. Once we try to make the world better, we are falling into the ego's trap. Why would we want to make the world better unless we first believed there was something wrong with the world? And if we believe there is something wrong with the world, then quite obviously we believe there is a world here, which is exactly what the ego wants us to believe. We need to believe there is a world here, because that is our defense against the world we have made real within ourselves, of which we are terrified.

**(4:2) For idols must be part of it, to save you from what you believe you have accomplished, and have done to make you sinful and put out the light within you.**

What we believe we have accomplished is the murder of God, and now God is going to murder us in return. We all believe we have stolen the light of Heaven, which means we have destroyed that light. The light that we then believe is reality—the sun and the stars—is really artificial. We think there is a difference between the light from the sun and the light from a bulb—one is called natural and the other artificial or unnatural. It is allunnatural. Some people think there is a difference between natural foods and processed, unnatural foods with chemical and other artificial additives. Allfoods are unnatural because everything in this world is unnatural. There is no distinction among levels of illusion. As the first law of chaos states, there is a hierarchy of illusions (T-23.II.1). We all believe that we have extinguished the light.

At this point the section begins to shift its focus. Jesus is going to tell us how to deal with this dream. It is obvious that this dream of judgment is so enormous that it seems impossible ever to get past it. And we are not asked to get past it by our own doing—and certainly not by our ego's doing. All that we are asked to do, which is inherent in the second step of judgment, is to look at the dream and see it as it is. We are not asked to deny what we experience in this world, whether physical, emotional, or psychological. We are only asked to begin the process of denying that what we experience has any power over the Love and the peace of God within us. That we can begin to do something about.

We do not have to experience peace, but we at least have to realize why we are not experiencing peace. If I am not peaceful, it is not because of something you said or failed to say to me, or what you have done or have not done. If I am feeling weak and not well, it is not because something is wrong with my body. It is always because something is wrong with my mind: I have chosen the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That is why, over and over again, Jesus says how very simple his course is. It is simple because everything is either true or false, and there is never any in between. There is no cause for anything in this world except my decision to have it be real. If I am happy, it is because I have chosen to be happy. If I am sad, it is because I have chosen to be sad. How I feel has nothing to do with externals.

The beginning of the undoing of the ego's thought system of judgment is our recognizing what it is: a thought system of judgment that is making us either upset or happy. It has nothing to do with anything outside; it is a thought system we have chosen. In other words, nothing has happened. The problem is not the dream of judgment. The problem is that we believe in the dream of judgment. There is no dream of judgment. There is no sin against God. God does not even know anything has happened, because nothing has happened. If there is no sin against God, there is no guilt. Guilt comes only from sin. And there can be no fear, because fear comes from guilt. There will be no sin in my mind that I have to deny or defend against. And if I do not have to deny it or defend against it, I do not need a world, because the only value the world serves is as a hiding place in which my guilt is protected.

Jesus then says:
**(4:3-5) Little child, the light is there. You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. Who has need of toys but children?**

This is only one place among many (e.g., T-11.VIII.7:1; T-12.II.4:6) where Jesus addresses us as little children. He does not think very much of our maturity; and he describes the entire world of hatred, viciousness, murder, and specialness as a game that little children play (e.g., W-pI.153.7-8). That certainly puts everything in a totally different context. We think our problems and the problems of our loved ones and the problems of the world at large are all very serious. And indeed they are very serious within the dream.

But when we place the dream against the reality, we realize how trivial everything is. It is not trivial within the dream—just as in a nightmare at night what is going on in our minds does not seem trivial. Only when we awaken do we realize that we made it all up. It is trivial only when we look at it from the perspective of the Love of God. So my anxiety and disquiet, my fear, terror, and guilt come from not looking at the dream in the context of the Love of God, and not from anything I think is going on in my life.

The entire purpose of the Course is to help us understand this. If I am upset, it is not because of what you are doing to me. I feel guilty because, once again, I have dropped the hand of Jesus or the Holy Spirit and I feel alone. And in my solitude I feel terrified that the wrath of God will descend upon me and punish me because of what I have done. That is why I am upset. It has nothing to do with anything you or anyone else in the world says or anything else that goes on. It is a mistake to confuse the Course with other spiritual systems that teach that the Holy Spirit intervenes in the world. If He did, He would be falling for the same ego trick we fell for. The Holy Spirit or Jesus remain within our minds as a beacon of light that simply shines out its love, reminding us that we could choose that love instead of the ego's darkness.

All the peace, comfort, and joy that we want is found in that love. Everything else we are doing is like a game little children play. When children play games—"make believe” as we sometimes refer to it—what they are doing is not real. It may seem real to them at the moment, but the adult looking in on them realizes it is not real. Jesus is the adult looking in on our little playpen and all the little soldiers we are playing with. One group is killing off another group, literally or symbolically. We think it is serious, but Jesus is telling us it is not. That is why he calls us little children. Like little children, we do not understand the difference between appearance and reality. We all fall into the trap of thinking that what we do and say, where we live, what goes on in the world, and so on, are all very important. We are little children who see the world only through the myopic lens of our own very limited perception.

So, again:
**(4:5-7) Who has need of toys but children? They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them.**

One type of psychotherapy with children is play therapy, where the child is given dolls and other figures to act out what is within his mind that he cannot verbalize. The child gives reality to the figures, projecting onto them unresolved issues with parents, siblings, and himself. And what the child is doing has nothing to do with the figures themselves. He is having the figures act out the thoughts within his own mind. Well, that is exactly what this whole world is. And we take seriously what seems to happen in the world we believe is out there, so that we do not have to get in touch with the world of judgment inside us.

So an essential part of the process of A Course in Miracles is to develop a relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. If neither of those names works for you, substitute any other symbol that reflects for you a loving, ego-free presence that is not of you but yet is within you. A personal relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit allows you to begin to separate yourself out from the self and the world that seems to be outside that self. That process enables us to look at what is going on and realize this is only a game that children play. It seems very real and very powerful within the game, but that does not mean it stops being simply a game that children play.

And again:
**(4:7-8) Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.**

Children get very involved and identified with their make-believe games, forgetting that it is all made up. But that is exactly what we all do. We act just like little children. It is laughable that we think we are adults. Physically, we may be, but we are certainly not adults from a spiritual standpoint. We make up all of this, and then forget that we made it up. If we find ourselves getting upset because of a news story, or something in our personal worlds, as students of this course we certainly do not want to fight or deny what we are feeling. We should just step back and look with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, and observe ourselves getting upset by something that we believe is outside ourselves.

Now again, we are not speaking simply about observing what our eyes behold. We are talking about observing our reaction to it—our interpretation of what our eyes behold—and realizing that what we are seeing outside and believe is real and having an effect on us is nothing more than a projection of a thought we do not want to look at in ourselves. That is all we have to do. We do not have to fight against the thought or try to change it. We simply have to look at it. But we have to look at it with honesty. And the honesty says that if I am feeling something—if I am angry, upset, fearful, guilty or in pain—it is not because of something outside my mind. It is because of a decision my mind has made to see myself, once again, as separate from the Love of God. And what I am feeling is the effect of that decision: the guilt, the fear, the suffering and the pain, which automatically come from believing that I have sinned. That is all I have to do. I must only realize that this is not what I thought it was.

**Part V
"The Vision of Sinlessness" (T-20.VIII)**

We will turn now to paragraph 7 of "The Vision of Sinlessness" (T-20.VIII).

**(7:1) Judgment is but a toy, a whim, the senseless means to play the idle game of death in your imagination.**

This entire world is part of our imagination. It has no basis in reality. Keep in mind that when we made the original judgment, we thought it was anything but a toy. We thought it was very, very serious. This was a judgment that said we turned against God and stole from Him, that we destroyed God, Christ, and the unity of Heaven. That hardly seems like a toy! We are saying that our mind is extremely powerful. Look what it accomplished: the impossible. That is the original judgment, and it is expressed over and over again in everything that goes on in the world, without exception. Everything seems so heavy, so important, so real, so valuable, so vicious and destructive, and wonderful, etc. And all of it comes from the original judgment that I did a terrible thing to God. The other side is: "But isn't it wonderful? I now have my own individuality; I'm unique and self-important." And, of course, I stole all that from God, which means the underside of that sense of wonderment and joy is the terror. But the truth is that it is all a toy. Nothing happened. I only thought I stole from God. I only thought I destroyed Him. I only thought I destroyed Jesus on the cross. Nothing happened. The whole thing was made up.

**(7:2) But vision sets all things right, bringing them gently within the kindly sway of Heaven's laws.**

Vision takes place when we look with Jesus at all our terrible judgments—the terrible judgments I make about you and the terrible judgments I make about myself, for of course they are one and the same. I look with Jesus at them and say, "This is just a toy. It has no effect on the Love of Christ in either you or me. It has no effect on Jesus' love for me." In other words, nothing happened. That is what vision tells us.

**(7:3-4) What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up?**

Jesus means these words very literally. An hallucination from a clinical point of view refers to seeing, hearing, or smelling something that is not there. Jesus is telling us the whole world is an hallucination—we are literally seeing something that is not there. The world is simply a projection of a thought in our mind that itself is not there. The world that we perceive and experience is a world of separation, differences, and judgment. Because ideas leave not their source in our mind, the world simply reflects the thought of judgment, the perception of differences in our mind. But that thought does not exist either, because we in truth never left our Father's house.

**(7:5-7) What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it** [the world]**, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it?**

The answer of course is that we are afraid of realizing that this world is an hallucination, that it is all made up, and therefore we do not see it that way. We are afraid of seeing it is all made up because then the seemingly external world has no more value as a defense. If I believe the world is real, I do not have to look at my mind. If I realize the world is made up, then I understand that what I am perceiving outside is a projection of what is inside my mind. And that means I must look inside at this terrible thought of judgment. And I do not want to do that.

**(8:1-2) Hallucinations disappear when they are recognized for what they are. This is the healing and the remedy.**

This is really the crux of the second step of judgment, and I would like to spend a few minutes discussing it. If I recognize that what I am perceiving is made up, it loses its value as a defense, which means it disappears, for I have no further need of it. The world continues to exist for us only because we have a need for it to protect us from the guilt of the original judgment. That is the purpose of the world. If I now realize there is no world out there, and everything I am seeing is made up, then I have exploded the myth of the defense, which means the defense disappears.

So "hallucinations disappear when they are recognized for what they are." In other words, I have to look at them. We always come back to this. I look at the fact that I am getting angry, that I am getting anxious, that I am in a rage, that I am in excruciating pain, that I am in ecstasy, that I can't wait for some wonderful event to happen. It does not matter whether it is positive or negative; I look forward to something I believe will bring me pleasure, or I dread something I believe will bring me pain. I have only to realize that I am making it up. I do not have to stop believing in it, dreading it, or getting excited about it. I simply have to know what I have done. That is all the "little willingness" is asking of us. It is not asking us to let the whole thing go—we are too terrified.

That is why in the Course, with very few exceptions (e.g., T-5.II.3:10; M-17.8:4), Jesus asks us to have a little willingness. The little willingness is simply the willingness to begin the process of stepping back and looking, which automatically means stepping back with Jesus—the ego would never let us look at itself without judgment. If I am looking at my ego without judgment, I must be looking with Jesus, which means looking at my ego and saying, "This is what I am doing. I am being stubborn and resistant. I am holding on to this because I'm afraid of the Love of God. I would much rather murder you than have God murder me. I would much rather indulge myself with all of my specialness than have the peace of God." At least I know that is what I am doing. I don't have to change it, because if I feel I have to change it, then I've made it real. If you ever believe that Jesus (or the Holy Spirit) is forcing you to do something, then it is not Jesus. It is your ego's Jesus. Jesus would never force you to do anything, because he knows there is nothing that has to be done. All he does, by his very presence in our minds, is gently remind us that we could look at what is going on differently. We do not have to look at it differently, just recognize that there is another way of looking. We may not choose to do it right away; but recognizing that there is a different way is the healing and the remedy.

**(8:3) Believe them not** [don't believe the hallucinations] **and they are gone.**

This is a process. I may intellectually believe that these are hallucinations, but a part of me still holds onto them. So I look at that and realize, yes, I understand that all of this is made up. Yes, I understand that I am never upset for the reason I think. And yet I still want to hold onto this specialness, this grievance, this depression and pain—because I am more afraid of what these conceal: the Love and the peace of God. That is what I am afraid of, but at least now I know it.

Here is the next very important line:

**(8:4) And all you need to do is recognize that you did this.**

Jesus does not say all you have to do is give it up, or change it, or fight against it, or struggle against it. He says, "all you need to do is recognize that you did this."

**(8:5-6) Once you accept this simple fact and take unto yourself the power you gave them, you are released from them. One thing is sure; hallucinations serve a purpose, and when that purpose is no longer held they disappear.**

The purpose hallucinations serve is to protect me from the Love of God. But if I can begin to know that the love of Jesus is fully present within me, even though I'm still afraid of him, and that my only problem is that I keep pushing him away, then I no longer need a defense against this. I no longer have to believe that the problem is external to me because now I know the problem is internal. Maybe I am still afraid of the solution. Maybe I am still afraid of the love, but now at least I understand what I am afraid of. I am not afraid of you. I am not afraid of growing old and dying. I am not afraid of not having enough money. I am not afraid of getting AIDS. I am not afraid of another war breaking out. I am not afraid of a recession. I am afraid of the Love of God, and I do not call my fear by any other name. I now know this is what it is. I may still choose to keep Jesus away, but at least now I know what I am doing.

**(8:7) Therefore, the question never is whether you want them, but always, do you want the purpose that they serve?**

This is extremely important. The issue is never all the idols, all the forms the hallucination takes. The problem is that I want the purpose they serve. I want to keep the Love of God away from me. That is what I am afraid of, because in the presence of the Love of God, I will disappear as a separated individual. Again, we do not disappear all at once: "Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality" (T-16.VI.8:1). Before I totally disappear, what disappears is my anxiety, guilt, depression, pain, etc.—all the negative things that I am feeling. And what takes their place is the Love and the peace of God, which I experience within the separated self I believe I am. But now at least I know the difference between reality and illusion. That means I am starting to grow up. I am no longer in diapers.

That is what this step in the process is: I simply understand the real problem and call it by its proper name. The problem is not anything external. Its proper name is my fear of God's Love. I am now aware of how I have used the world and everyone in my personal world and all of my specialness to resist and defend against this Love. If I can begin to look at what I have been doing, with the love of Jesus next to me, then I am beginning to understand that love does not condemn or punish me. If I can begin to experience looking at how hateful I have been toward Jesus, and therefore how hateful I have been with everyone else, and if I can look at that with his love next to me—a love that is not judging me for the hatred—I may begin to understand that "judgment is but a toy, a whim." It is not reality. That is why it is important to look with Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

**(8:8-10) This world seems to hold out many purposes, each different and with different values. Yet they are all the same. Again there is no order; only a seeming hierarchy of values.**

The only purpose everything in the world serves is to keep the Love of God away—there is no order within that.

**Part VI
"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX)(cont.)**

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

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

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

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

The toys would be anything in the world to which we give importance. We are coming back again here to the purpose of all idols: specialness. It seems as if I am afraid of something outside. In reality, I love what is frightening outside me, because I would much rather deal with the fear of something outside me than with the fear of God within me. It seems there is always something I can do with the fear outside me, but there is nothing I can do to escape from the wrathful, vengeful, maniacal presence of God within me. And so we deny the fear within and put it outside us. And again, that is the purpose of the toys outside: they seem to save us from the thought within. I would much rather hate you and believe you are plotting against me than to get in touch with the underlying horror that God is plotting against me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So Jesus is telling us, "I am that model for you. Take my hand let me teach you, and grow with me. I will help you grow up. I will help you look at everything in your world as simply being a part of a child's game, even though it seems to be so real and terrible. If you think it is real and terrible, you have dropped my hand and you are not learning from me. You are believing that you know by yourself." That is the arrogance of the ego. We think we understand what is going on. The truth is we do not understand anything.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Part VII
"The Forgiving Dream" (T-29.IX) (conclusion)**

We are ready for the third step of judgment, but let me summarize briefly before moving on. The first kind of judgment is the ego's dream of judgment, which is always based upon differences and attack. The second judgment is being able to look at that first judgment without judging it, being able to look at all the ugliness of our egos—all the viciousness, unkindness, hatred, murder, and cannibalism—and then say this is simply a toy. Looking at it implies understanding the purpose these dreams of judgment serve. We have unkind, judgmental, and hateful thoughts because we are terrified of the Love of God. It is the presence of Jesus in our minds that is driving us insane, and to defend against that loving presence we make up idols of specialness, and then we feel even guiltier. Thus, in this second form of judgment, which is really looking at the ego's judgment, we realize that judgment is a toy that a child's mind plays with. We judge because we are afraid of the real thought of love inside us. We substitute for that real thought of love the thought of guilt and the thought of judgment, and then we project that out and see it in others.

We need only look at that process, not with the goal of changing it, but simply with the goal of looking at it through Christ's vision. In looking at it through the eyes of Jesus, we realize that this is simply a silly child's game that we made up because we are afraid of the thought of hatred in our minds. But that thought of hatred is a defense against the thought of love, which means we are not despicable sinners; we are simply fearful. We are afraid of the love of Jesus. Yet, that is all we have to do. Once we do that completely and without any reservation, we will then find ourselves in the real world, which is what we will now discuss, as we continue with "The Forgiving Dream."

In the real world, I look at all my guilt without guilt and all my hate without hate, which means the guilt and hate will all disappear. If I look at the guilt and hate with Jesus next to me, and I no longer judge myself for having pushed him away, betrayed, and abandoned him, then my only reality will be his presence joined with mine, my presence joined with his. And in that joint love I will look upon a different world—not one that has physically changed, but one that I will see differently because I have changed. I will now look out on what the Course refers to as the real world, which has nothing to do with what seems to be external. It is simply the judgment I make on myself that says I have done nothing wrong. As Jesus says earlier in the Course, "Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken" (T-10.V.6:1). And so I realize I have done nothing sinful. I have simply made a mistake, and the mistake is believing I could be separate from God. Now I realize I am not separate. And by joining with Jesus, the truth of that realization becomes reality for me. From that presence of love within me, I now look out on the world and all that I see are expressions of love or calls for love. There is only love within me, and so that is all that I can see outside me.

**(T-29.IX.6:8-9) Yet is the real world unaffected by the world he thinks is real. Nor have its laws been changed because he does not understand.**

My failure to understand what love is does not change love. My attacks on love do not change love. Love simply waits patiently within my mind until I return to it.

**(7:1) The real world still is but a dream.**

That is why this third step of judgment is not the last one. The fourth and final step is the total ending of the dream. In the real world we are still within the dream, but are fully aware that it is a dream. And so how could we be angry at another person's dream? We do not get angry at something we know is not real. We only get angry at something we believe has power over us. That is why Jesus did not get angry at the end of his life, and why he had no fear or guilt, and above all, no pain. He knew nothing was happening to him. He knew he was not his body.

**(7:1-3) The real world still is but a dream. Except the figures have been changed. They are not seen as idols which betray.**

This does not mean that the figures change physically. They change in terms of what they represent. Thus, I see you as an enemy only because I have first seen myself as an enemy: I believe I am the one who has betrayed and destroyed the Love of God. But if I now feel the love of Jesus within me, I will no longer see myself as an enemy. If I feel his love within me, then I know I have not killed love. And if I have not killed it, there is no sin, no guilt, and no need to protect myself by projecting the guilt outside my mind. So now I look out at the same person who is driving a nail into my body, but I no longer see him as betraying me. I see him as a brother in Christ who is fearful. And in the insanity of his fear he believes he becomes safe by destroying me. That is how Jesus perceived.

**(7:4) It** [the real world] **is a dream in which no one is used to substitute for something else, nor interposed between the thoughts the mind conceives and what it sees.**

I no longer need you to be a defense against these thoughts of judgment in my mind, or to stand between me and the vengeance of God. By projecting my guilt and judging you, my ego hopes that when God comes after the sinner who stole from Him, He will not see the sinner in me, He will see it in you. So I am safe, for now God is going to get you instead of me. But once my guilt is gone, I no longer need that defense.

**(7:5) No one is used for something he is not, for childish things have all been put away.**

I am using you as a part of my dream, thereby denying Who you are as Christ. I am denying your reality because I am seeing you as what I want you to be. By first denying my reality as Christ and seeing myself as a sinful, guilty ego, I must then deny your reality as Christ and see you as a sinful, guilty ego. The way I see myself automatically becomes the way I see you—it cannot be any other way. The world's only value is that it shows me that what I am seeing outside is a projection of what is inside. If I want to know whose hand I have taken—Jesus' or the ego's—I only have to monitor how I am experiencing the world. And if anything in the world either disturbs my peace or brings me peace, I know I have dropped Jesus' hand and taken the ego's.

**(7:6) And what was once a dream of judgment now has changed into a dream where all is joy, because that is the purpose that it has.**

This does not necessarily mean the world changes. We are not talking about an external shift. Jesus' external world certainly did not change for the better at the end. We are talking about the purpose we give to the world, changing from judgment and guilt to joy and peace. Our perception of the world will then change accordingly—it must.

**(7:7) Only forgiving dreams can enter here, for time is almost over.**

Time is not completely over because we are not at the end of the illusion; but we are at the end of the ego's use of the illusion. And so we are also at the end of all anxiety, fear, and pain.

**(7:8) And the forms that enter in the dream are now perceived as brothers, not in judgment, but in love.**

Again, nothing external changes. Only what is internal changes. And because my mind changes, now identifying with the love of Jesus instead of the hatred of the ego, I will automatically see everyone bathed in that love. But because I am still part of the dream world and the split mind, I will realize that everything within the mind is either a thought of love or a thought of fear. And so I will recognize that anything you do that may seem to be an attack and unloving is coming from fear, and is not really an attack. In other words, within the split mind there are only thoughts of fear and thoughts of love. The ego interprets thoughts of fear as thoughts of specialness, attack, murder, and cannibalism. But in my right mind I perceive them all as simply expressions of fear. And fear is really fear of the Love of God that has been denied by the ego's thought system of separation and guilt. That is all then that I am seeing. The images may be exactly the same, the forms of the dream may be exactly the same, but the meaning is entirely different.

**(8:1-2) Forgiving dreams have little need to last. They are not made to separate the mind from what it thinks.**

This is the correction for the ego's assertion that ideas leave their source (T-26.VII.12; W-pI.167.4)—that I can have a thought separate from my mind, which I could then project outside my mind. In the real world, through forgiveness, I realize everything is one. And I finally understand that not even Jesus is separate from me. Jesus and I are both thoughts that are part of the same love. Nothing is separate in my mind.

**(8:3) They** [forgiving dreams] **do not seek to prove the dream is being dreamed by someone else.**

That is what the ego is always attempting to prove: it is not my dream of judgment or my dream of betrayal. It is yourdream of judgment and betrayal!

**(8:4-6) And in these dreams a melody is heard that everyone remembers, though he has not heard it since before all time began. Forgiveness, once complete, brings timelessness so close the song of Heaven can be heard, not with the ears, but with the holiness that never left the altar that abides forever deep within the Son of God. And when he hears this song again, he knows he never heard it not.**

This is what is called the song of prayer in the pamphlet of the same name (S-3.IV.1:10), and what, in the beautiful section at the beginning of Chapter 21 is referred to as the forgotten song (T-21.I), the song always present in our minds. It is not a song heard with one's ears. Jesus is speaking metaphorically about the experience of the unity of God's Love with Christ.

**(8:7) And where is time, when dreams of judgment have been put away?**

This statement makes very clear the reason we live in the world as we do: we do not want to remember the song. To remember that song, we must be willing to forget the ego's song. And what is the ego's song? That I exist as a separate person, that I have what I stole from God (the fourth law of chaos [T-23.II.9]), but someone else is responsible for it. We do not want to give up our specialness, our uniqueness, our individuality. People praise the wonderful world of differences that God has created. Everyone is uniquely different; no two objects are the same: we all have different fingerprints; each snowflake is unique. And we point to this as proof that this is God's world! But this is the ego's world. God's world is perfect Oneness. This is a world of perfect differences! That is the ego's song, and we do not want to give it up. We realize that to hear the song of Heaven—which is always singing in our minds because that is what the Holy Spirit reflects—means giving up the ego's song of specialness and individuality. We all want to have our cake and eat it too. We want both songs, which must compromise truth.

**(9:1) Whenever you feel fear in any form—and you are fearful if you do not feel a deep content, a certainty of help, a calm assurance Heaven goes with you—be sure you made an idol, and believe it will betray you.**

Any time we are not feeling a deep sense of contentment and certainty of help, and a calm assurance that God is always with us, we have made an idol of specialness. That idol is what we believe we have made of ourselves. We then project the idol out and believe it will come back and betray us.

**(9:2) For beneath your hope that it** [this idol] **will save you lie the guilt and pain of self-betrayal and uncertainty, so deep and bitter that the dream cannot conceal completely all your sense of doom.**

The sense of doom, despair, dread, and hopelessness that we all feel—and everyone in this world feels it because we all will die—is really coming from that thought within each of us that says, "I killed God and that's irrevocable. I can never get back to where I left." Of course I can never get back because I don't want to give up what keeps me from going back: my individuality. The ego's secret wish, again, is to keep what it stole but to blame someone else for it.

**(9:3) Your self-betrayal must result in fear, for fear is judgment, leading surely to the frantic search for idols and for death.**

The self-betrayal is our belief that we have betrayed Who we really are as Christ. That is the guilt we feel, which automatically leads to fear, which comes from the judgment that what we have done is sinful and wrong. We must then project the sin outside our minds and believe there is something out there, from which we now must hide. And so the problem is no longer in our minds, it is outside us.

**(10:1) Forgiving dreams remind you that you live in safety and have not attacked yourself.**

That is what Jesus demonstrated to us, and still teaches us. The separation thought is unreal—it never happened. I never attacked God. I never attacked Christ. No one was attacked. It was all a dream. And so there is no guilt and no fear that I will be attacked in return. When we feel ourselves to be in the presence of God's Love, absolutely nothing can hurt or affect us. That does not mean we do not respond to what goes on in the world, but the response will come from love. It does not come from fear or from separate interests or self-interest.

**(10:2) So do your childish terrors melt away, and dreams become a sign that you have made a new beginning, not another try to worship idols and to keep attack.**

“The New Beginning" is the title of the next chapter, so this looks ahead to that. When we begin to forgive, we suddenly realize there is hope—that we finally have made a new beginning. The purpose of A Course in Miracles is to help us with this new beginning. The new beginning means I no longer fight against my ego. I simply step back, with Jesus next to me, and look at my ego thoughts in action without justifying them, rationalizing them, spiritualizing them, or denying or projecting them. I simply look at them and realize, "Yes, this is what I am doing. And I am doing it because I am afraid of love." And if I can look at my fear of love with love next to me, I am beginning to learn that love is no longer my enemy.

**(10:3-4) Forgiving dreams are kind to everyone who figures in the dream. And so they bring the dreamer full release from dreams of fear.**

Forgiveness is not something we do externally. Let me requote the line I mentioned earlier: "Forgiveness . . . is still and quietly does nothing. It merely looks and waits and judges not" (W-pII.1.4:1,3). Forgiveness does not do anything. We forgive our brother for what he has not done (T-30.IV.7:3). Forgiveness is not active. I do not do something to you, with you, or for you. Forgiveness is not something my body does. It is something my mind does by going back within itself and looking at my unforgiving, judgmental thoughts. Forgiveness simply looks at those thoughts without judging them. "It merely looks, and waits, and judges not"—that is the key idea. Then my body may do something—I may say something. But forgiveness is not an action. It is an undoing of a thought, and even more to the point, it is looking with a gentle smile at the ugliness of the ego's thought system.

**(10:5) He** [the dreamer] **does not fear his judgment for he has judged no one, nor has sought to be released through judgment from what judgment must impose.**

I no longer have to be afraid of what I have called my judgment, and the projection of my judgment onto you, because I have not done anything. Judgment must impose punishment and pain, and I have tried to avoid my own punishment by judging you: "You are the one who is sinful, not me; so I am not the one who ought to be punished." I thus have tried to escape from what my judgment tells me I must receive, by insisting that I am not the one who has judged; it is you who have judged and attacked.

**(10:6) And all the while he is remembering what he forgot, when judgment seemed to be the way to save him from its penalty.**

We are remembering the Love of God, which is what we forgot. Judgment of others seemed to be the way I would save myself from the penalty of my self-hatred. But while I was judging, the Love of God rested safely within me, waiting patiently for my return. I simply have to call upon Jesus—not in a magical way, but by simply looking with him at my ego thoughts, at what my ego has done and made in the world, and say, "I've done this only because I was afraid of you." And if I can learn to say that to him more and more, without being afraid of his judgment, I will learn that there is no judgment. Ultimately, nothing has happened.

To close the workshop, I thought we would read a short lesson from the workbook, Lesson 352. It makes a nice end because it reflects the final step of judgment, God's judgment, which says nothing has happened. The title can almost stand alone as a lesson. The lesson itself is a prayer from us to God the Father.

**Judgment and love are opposites. From one
Come all the sorrows of the world. But from
The other comes the peace of God Himself.**

Forgiveness looks on sinlessness alone, and judges not. Through this I come to You. Judgment will bind my eyes and make me blind. Yet love, reflected in forgiveness here, reminds me You have given me a way to find Your peace again. I am redeemed when I elect to follow in this way. You have not left me comfortless. I have within me both the memory of You, and One Who leads me to it. Father, I would hear Your Voice and find Your peace today. For I would love my own Identity, and find in It the memory of You.