

Our Gratitude to God

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Part VIII

"Love is the way I walk in gratitude" (cont.)

The next paragraph is going to describe exactly why we do not feel justified in being grateful.

(W-pl.195.3:1) Your brother is your "enemy" because you see in him the rival for your peace; a plunderer who takes his joy from you, and leaves you nothing but a black despair so bitter and relentless that there is no hope remaining.

This thought, unfortunately, is embedded in the minds of everyone. This powerfully and succinctly summarizes the laws of chaos (T-23.II). Let me talk a little about this because, again, this explains why none of us feels we have to be grateful. Before I comment further on that, though, I will explain the concept itself and then read another passage, from the text that makes the same point.

The original ontological instant when we believed we could separate from God and actually perceive Him as other than us was the beginning of the dream. The reality, of course, is that Christ does not experience Himself as separate from God. While it is true that God created Christ and Christ did not create God and that is a difference, there is no consciousness in Christ (the Son of God) that can step back and perceive a difference. It is only when the separation thought appears to arise within the mind of the Sonship that the Son can step back and believe there is a Creator God out there and the Son, the created—and that is not fair. That is the beginning.

Then the ego says, "I understand why God is the Creator and I am not: because I was the creator first and God stole that from me. There is a difference—God is the superior, and I the inferior." That is the judgment of the difference. Remember, though, Christ does not even recognize a difference. Christ in His true Identity is totally one with God, so there is no duality, no perception of a subject and an object. But when the separation appears to occur, there is a difference. The ego's first interpretation is that this is not fair—God has something I do not have, something I am lacking. Inevitably, within the ego dynamic, the next step goes from the perception of lack to the belief in deprivation: the reason I am lacking something is that someone else has deprived me of it. There is no one else around at this point, however. It is a two-character drama at first: God and the Son. If the Son is lacking, which is the beginning of a feeling of guilt—there is something wrong with me—the reason is that God took it from him. Thus, God stole from me, which now justifies my stealing back from Him. But now I am terrified that God is going to come raging after me and steal from me. The insanity of this is explained and described in very graphic detail in "The Laws of Chaos" section. Though thoroughly insane, this is the basic thought everyone has. The world has its origin in the Sons' need to hide from this thought, which means that every one of us has this thought system embedded in our own consciousness, our own mind - the idea that someone is going to steal from me.

Now, since this is a world of differences, there is always someone that I am going to judge as being better than I. Someone is prettier, younger, richer, or has more power. The whole world is based on that. You always find someone who is different. My initial thought, of which I may not be conscious, is that there is something wrong with *me*. That is the basic ego thought: there is something wrong with me; I am a second-class citizen. But now I understand *why* there is something wrong and lacking: you took it from me, and that is not fair! So I am now justified in taking it back from you. This is what *A Course in Miracles* calls the face of innocence. Consequently, there is no way that I can feel grateful to you or anyone else, because I believe you have stolen from me.

Even if I believe I am well off, there is a part of my mind that has to be extremely vigilant. Just as the Course says we should be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom (T-7.I.2:8), the ego says the very same thing: we should be vigilant only for the ego and its kingdom. If I have something you do not have, then I must be very vigilant that you do not sneak in in the middle of the night and steal it back from me. Whether you are going to do this physically by actually trying to rob, kill, rape, or do something else violent to me, or you are going to do it psychologically, I must believe that you are going to do this. Therefore, I conclude that no one in this world can be trusted. I further believe that those special love partners that I believe are my friends and allies are in it only for what they can get from me. And when the day comes that they no longer get what they want from me, they are not going to want *me* either, so I always have to be vigilant against them. Thus, from the egos point of view, there is no one in this world whom we can love or trust.

Gratitude therefore has absolutely no place in the ego system unless it is the egos warped sense of gratitude, like its warped sense of love: I am grateful to you because you played the special relationship game with me. But that obviously is not a gratitude based on love or unity, for it is always based on differences. I am grateful to you today because you have given me what I want; but you may not do the same thing tomorrow. Besides, the only way I got you to do it is by stealing from you and making a bargain. Therefore, I know at some point you are going to want to do the same thing back.

To recap, this is how the whole thing began. I as a separated Son of God believe I stole from God. Despite the fact that I try to rationalize that He stole from me, there is a part of my mind that knows that is not true. I accuse myself of attacking and stealing from God. Therefore I must believe, since I have made attack real in my mind, that God is going to do the same thing back. I believe I stole the Kingdom of Heaven and Gods Love and took it as my own, and therefore I believe God is going to do it back. Because that is such a terrifying thought, what I do is split the whole thing off and forget about it. But that same thought is repeated over and over, and now I believe that everyone in my world is going to steal from me because I believe I stole. That is what these next passages in the text are going to talk about.

(T-7.VII.8:1-2) Attack could never promote attack unless you perceived it as a means of depriving you of something you want. [I want something and you are not going to let me have it—that is your attack.] **Yet you cannot lose anything unless you do not value it, and therefore do not want it.**

The only source of anger that we all feel, really, is that someone has done something to hurt us. The bottom line in all of my attacks, anger, and judgments is the belief that you have stolen the peace of God from me. Everything in the world of symbols that I identify with—my money, my body, my loved ones, my house, my car, etc.—are simply symbols of Gods peace or Gods home.

Therefore, when I get angry or upset with you what I am really angry about is that you stole the peace of God from me, because that is what I am always accusing myself of. Thus, the only cause for any anger in the world, regardless of its seeming justification, is the belief that you have stolen the peace and the Love of God from me. Basically, what I say whenever I get angry is that I was perfectly loving, happy, and peaceful until *you* came along and did this terrible thing, or you failed to do this wonderful thing that you should have done. That is why I am so unhappy, depressed, or so sick. I am accusing you of taking the peace of God away from me.

The essence of the message of *A Course in Miracles* is that no one in the world has the power to take anything away from me, because the peace of God is a decision I make in my mind, and no one can come into my mind. You can do something to my body, but you can do nothing to my mind. If I no longer feel the peace of God, it is because I am the one who has *given* it to you; I am the one who has thrown it away. But rather than accept responsibility for what I have done, I say *you* are the one who has done it. So, obviously, I am not going to feel grateful to you—after all, look what you have done! That is what this passage in the text is talking about. I cannot lose anything unless I do not value it and have given it away and do not want it. This is not referring to anything material—it is about a thought. If I get upset, it is not because of what gets done to my body—the outside world and my body are nothing more than symbols. Thus, if I get upset because my house was destroyed in a hurricane, an earthquake, or a fire, it is because I have identified myself with my house. I have said that my physical house is my home and I have lost it. What I am really saying—over and over in everything in my life—is that I have lost my real house, my real home, but I am the one who threw it away. Then I claim that the reason I am now homeless is that there was a fire or a hurricane, or that I did not have enough money to pay my mortgage, or whatever. The real reason I am upset, though, is not that I lost a physical house—it is that I made that house a symbol of my identity and my real home, which means I made that house a substitute for my home in Heaven. One way the Course describes special relationships is that they are substitutes for God or for reality. So that is what happens with our physical home, whether it is the body, a loved ones body that I identify with, or my clothing, etc. That is why we get so upset when things happen to our home, our clothing, our bodies, etc. It reminds us of what we originally believe we destroyed, and because we destroyed it we then believe we will never get it back. We deny any responsibility for it and blame it on outer circumstances like a hurricane or an earthquake. And even better, we blame it on certain people. *You* have stolen from *me*. So:

(T-7.VII.8:3) This makes you feel deprived of it, and by projecting your own rejection you then believe that others are taking it from you.

The fact is that I lack of Gods peace because I have thrown it away. But I project responsibility for that lack and then I believe that the reason I do not have it is that someone has deprived me of it. Jesus is saying that what has happened is that you projected your own rejection—I am the one who has rejected my Self; I am the one who has rejected the Christ in me; I am the one who has rejected Gods Love and peace. But I claim that I am not the one who has done it. This is really what the whole world is about. I am the one who has chosen to be upset, but I forget that I made that choice, and then I say I am not the one who has done it, *you* have done it to me. I project the responsibility onto you; I believe you are taking it from me.

(T-7.VII.8:4-5) You must be fearful if you believe that your brother is attacking you to tear the Kingdom of Heaven from you. This is the ultimate basis for all the egos projection.

I must believe that, because I believe deep down that I am the one who tore the Kingdom of Heaven away from God. That is the original separation thought. And everything in the whole thought system of the ego that the Course talks about is predicated on that basic belief. We all accuse ourselves of having stolen from God; of tearing the Kingdom of Heaven from Him, and establishing ourselves on the throne, declaring that this is the kingdom of heaven right here. But the guilt and terror over that is so enormous that we cannot but believe that God is going to come crashing through this defense and tear this world apart, and then He is going to drag us back home and destroy us. That is the terrifying fear that we all experience but cannot deal with at all.

Consequently, we not only deny what we have done, we also deny what we believe God is going to do. But when you deny something, it does not disappear—it stays there and then surfaces again in different forms. In our everyday lives it commonly surfaces as something like, I feel guilty and miserable because I do not love anyone; I feel terribly fearful, as well as angry, at how other people are going to do the same thing back. You are going to do to me what I believe I have done to you, because what I believe I have done to you is what I know I have done to God. And just as God is going to come crashing through and steal back from me, I believe you are going to steal back from me as well. Everyone in this world then becomes suspect. We cannot trust anyone (from the egos point of view), because either you are a direct enemy—all the special hate objects—or a closet enemy - all the special love partners. I can trust you today because I have won what I wanted from you; I have seduced you and triumphed over you. But at some point you are going to try to steal it back from me.

(T-7.VII.9:1) Being the part of your mind that does not believe it is responsible for itself, and being without allegiance to God, the ego is incapable of trust.

This tells us why we do not trust anyone. And by the way, when *A Course in Miracles* tells us to trust our brothers who are one with us (W-pl.181.1:1), it does not mean that we are to trust the other persons ego. That is not helpful, besides being silly. What it does mean is that despite the others ego, you know the light of Christ still shines in him or her, which also means that despite *my* ego and *my* awful thoughts about myself, I know the light of Christ is still shining within me.

There is no basis for trust at all within the ego system. Within that system a lack of trust is perfectly justified because you know everyone is going to steal from you, just as you stole from everyone else.

(T-7.VII.9:2-5) Projecting its insane belief that you have been treacherous to your Creator, [the fundamental ego thought] it [the ego] believes that your brothers, who are as incapable of this as you are, are out to take God from you. Whenever a brother attacks another, that is what he believes. Projection always sees your wishes in others. If you choose to separate yourself from God, that is what you will think others are doing to you.

You are out to take the peace and the Love of God from me. You are out to take from me the happiness that comes from God. And I must believe you are going to do that because I secretly believe that is what I have done to you. And I have done it to you, because I have originally done it to God.