

**Special Relationships:
The Home of Guilt**

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
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**Part II
Introduction (cont.)**

One of the clearest statements in the Course about how guilt keeps love as well as itself from our awareness appears in the section "The Two Worlds" near the end of Chapter 18. This is a difficult passage to understand because of the use of pronouns, so where the word *it* appears, I will supply the noun referred to, which almost always is *guilt*.

(T-18.IX.4:1) The circle of fear lies just below the level the body sees ...

The circle of fear is in the mind. It is ultimately the fear of what God will do to us out of vengeance for what we believe we did to Him. Of course it is very important to keep in mind that guilt is totally made up. There is no guilt—it is totally made up as part of the ego's strategy. It is a defensive ploy to have us become afraid of the mind so that we will eventually leave the mind through projection. The decision-making part of our mind is thoroughly unknown to us. If we are not aware that we have a mind, there is no way we can exercise the dynamic of choosing, because it is only the mind that can choose. Any choice that we seem to make here is simply the shadow of a decision that the mind makes. These next paragraphs will discuss that.

The whole purpose of the ego's strategy, once again, is to have us exist in a state of mindlessness. That is what it means to be in the world and in the body. We seem to be governed by our brains, our genetic inheritance, the influence of other bodies upon us, etc. All of that is simply a subterfuge, a defense against the real fact, the real truth, that everything we do comes from a decision made in our mind. But we are not aware that we have a mind, and therefore we have no way of exercising a meaningful choice or changing anything. It is only by going back to the mind—which is what the miracle does, and why this is called *A Course in Miracles*—that there is any hope of effecting meaningful change. What helps us choose a miracle, ultimately, is understanding why it is even necessary. That is why Jesus spends so much time in the Course talking about the dynamics of the ego. He has to lay out for us the dynamics of the thought system of the ego—specifically that of guilt, projection, and the special relationship—as a way of helping us understand why our personal world is such a mess, let alone the world at large. This helps us understand why people do the unconscionably cruel and vicious things they do, both in the international as well as personal arena.

(T-18.IX.4:1) The circle of fear [the mind] lies just below the level the body sees, and seems to be the whole foundation on which the world is based.

Jesus uses the word "seems" here because the world is an illusion. Thus, the world does not really exist, because "the circle of fear" is the foundation for the world.

(T-18.IX.4:2) Here [in the circle of fear, which is the mind's sin, guilt, and fear cycle, the "unholy trinity"] are all the illusions, all the twisted thoughts, all the insane attacks, the fury, the vengeance and betrayal that were made to keep the guilt in place, so that the world could rise from it [guilt] and keep it [guilt] hidden.

The sin-guilt-fear constellation is all made up by the ego. It is the ego's first level of defense. That is where all the illusions, all the "twisted thoughts" of separation, sin, and all the ideas of God seeking vengeance on us because of our betrayal of Him are found. From that the world arises. The world arises from the guilt to keep the guilt hidden. On the chart there is a solid black line just above the box of the world; that line is labeled "the veil of forgetfulness or denial." Once the projection occurs—and projection occurs unconsciously—we have no awareness that we have done it. All that we are aware of is what we have projected *to*: namely, the world and the body, with no memory of what we have projected *from*. That is how the split mind works.

Just as the law of gravity works—you hold something, drop it, and it will fall—these same laws are as immutable within the world of illusion, the world we have made. That guilt is unconscious and repressed, because it is such an abominable, unacceptable, intolerable thought. We therefore project it out, with no awareness that we have done so; and in a sense, we open our eyes and find ourselves in this "brave new world" with absolutely no memory of how we got here (the "veil of forgetfulness" on the chart). Then one can understand the idea that the purpose of the world is to keep the guilt hidden.

(T-18.IX.4:3) Its [guilt's] shadow rises to the surface, enough to hold its [guilt's] most external manifestations, in darkness ...

For the purposes of this workshop, we can think of those "external manifestations" as the special relationship. That concept can be broadened to include anything and everything in this world that we relate to, whether it is an object, a substance, or another person. It is all some aspect of specialness, some aspect of seeing salvation outside us, either through what we think of as love, in the sense that this person will give us what we need, or as a substance, thing, possession, or object that will give us what we need. We can also see it as salvation in the sense that I finally found who the enemy is: you! And when I can prove that you are guilty, I must be guiltless. Since it is *one or the other*, if you are guilty, then I am guiltless, because within the ego's system we cannot be the same. If I am guilty then it means you are guiltless. Therefore, if I can prove that you are guilty, I am off the hook.

The real germ of all special love relationships—and *germ* is the right word to use—is the secret wish, the secret plot that this special love object, this person that we revere, worship, love, and cherish will step over the "line in the sand" that we have drawn. George Bush, Sr., was not the first president or the first person to draw a line in the sand. We all do this. Right from the beginning we have drawn lines in the sand, not daring the other person to cross over, but pleading with the other person to cross over. We are just waiting, because once that person crosses over, the love quickly turns to what it always was, which is hate.

Thus, all special love is simply a carefully laid trap. And the ego is very, very patient. I do not care if I have to wait ten minutes, ten hours, ten days, ten years, or ten decades, I will wait because I know at some point you will betray me. You will forget my birthday or you will not give me that warm loving "Good morning" that I always like. Or you will burn my toast or something else. It does not matter

whether it is trivial or something of magnitude; you will cross over the line and now I've got you. That is really what the "external manifestations" refer to.

(T-18.IX.4:3) Its [guilt's] shadow rises to the surface, enough to hold its [guilt's] most external manifestations in darkness, and to bring despair and loneliness to it [which is our experience in the world] and keep it [the world] joyless. [And even more to the point, keep our special relationships joyless]

This is the reason nothing in this world gives us permanent joy. Certainly, things give us temporary joy—that is when specialness works. In an earlier section, that is what Jesus refers to as "the triumph" (T-16.V.5:5; 10:1) I get what I want. I get what I needed from you. I have seduced you, manipulated you, contrived to get you to give me the love, affection, attention, praise, money, possessions—whatever I wanted from you. When I get it, there is that momentary thrill of exultation, exhilaration, of triumph. But obviously it is short-lived, because on some level I know within my own mind that what I have gotten from you I have stolen. Therefore you are going to do back to me exactly what I believe I did to you. I might have what I need from you today, but who knows if I will get it from you tomorrow? So I have to keep doing this same thing over and over again.