

**Special Relationships:  
The Home of Guilt**

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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**Part X  
"The Cloud of Guilt" (T-13.IX)**

"We will go now to The Cloud of Guilt."

**(T-13.IX.1:1) Guilt remains the only thing that hides the Father, for guilt is the attack upon His Son.**

We have already seen this idea, and to say that guilt remains the only thing is to say that everything here is simply an expression of our guilt.

**(T-13.IX.1:2) The guilty always condemn, and having done so they will still condemn, linking the future to the past as is the ego's law.**

This is the same as saying that guilt will always have to be projected out. That is just a psychological truism. Being judged to be totally unacceptable, guilt gets repressed into the unconscious, and whatever is repressed automatically will be projected. That is just the way it is—that is the name of the ego's game. When we project guilt we obviously are attacking: *I* am not guilty, *you* are. That is what this sentence means, that the guilty condemn and they will always condemn. They link the past, which is where their guilt has its inception, to the present. Thus, my sin in the past leads me to experience guilt automatically, leading me to project it out. Another way of understanding this would be through the guilt-attack cycle that I described earlier: when we deny our guilt through projection and attack other people, a part of us will feel guilty, because it is reminiscent of the original attack for which we feel guilty, and so we just keep going around and around and around.

**(T-13.IX.1:3) Fidelity to this law lets no light in, for it demands fidelity to darkness and forbids awakening.**

That of course is exactly what we want. The decision to be special, individual, and separated, and to continue in that way is the decision to live a life in darkness. To live a life in darkness, a common symbol in the context of the Course and actually many other spiritual paths, means to remain asleep. At the beginning of the text, Jesus cites the verse in the Bible that says a deep sleep fell upon Adam, but it never says that Adam awoke (T-1.I.3:6). Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, used that as a metaphor to teach that everything that happened since the time of Adam and Eve's sin is a dream.

In *A Course in Miracles*, Jesus would basically say the same thing. Ever since we began the belief and invested our belief in separation, we have been asleep, and everything that follows from that is a dream. Later in the text in Chapter 27, Jesus talks about two kinds of dreams (T-27.VII). There is the secret dream (on the chart, the dream in the ego's box of sin, guilt, and fear). Then there is the world's dream, which is nothing more than the projection of the secret dream. That is the dream of sin, guilt, and fear in

the world. They are both the same dream. But we forget the secret dream, so all we are aware of is what is "out here," and since we do not know we are asleep, we think all this is reality. We have conveniently forgotten that the world's dream is simply the effect of the sleeping dream, the secret dream of sin, guilt, and fear.

**(T-13.IX.1:4) The ego's laws are strict, and breaches are severely punished.**

Earlier in the text, Jesus says that when we begin to take the Holy Spirit's evaluation of us as holy Sons of God as true, the ego becomes vicious (T-9.VII.4). Now, strictly speaking, the ego does not become vicious. The ego is not a thing; it is not a person. The ego is a thought, but it is *our* thought. This is saying that as soon as we begin to take steps toward the right mind, toward the Holy Spirit, and we begin to forgive—to give up judgment and to look at the ego—that little voice begins whispering again and says that if we keep this up we will be destroyed, but what will save us is guilt and attack. At that point we start feeling guilty and start attacking, whether we do it in an overt way, which is what special hate is, or we do it in a covert way, which is what special love is. That is really what this statement is saying—that the ego punishes breaches of its law. The punishment is simply what we do: we continually project and project and project.

**(T-13.IX.1:5-6) Therefore give no obedience to its laws, for they are laws of punishment. And those who follow them believe that they are guilty, and so they must condemn.**

What we are seeing is really the same principle articulated over and over again, starting from the beginning of the chapter and here again at the end. As I mentioned other times, the Course is written as a symphony and its themes are continually recurring, each recurrence slightly different from the previous statement of it. The same material is presented over and over again because of our resistance and our fear. Once we understand how sin, guilt, and fear work, everything here will make perfect sense; everything in our lives will make perfect sense, or as much sense as total insanity could ever make. Simply being here makes us guilty, and once we are guilty we must project and seek to punish other people. Then we will believe we will be punished in return.

Another cycle that is talked about in *A Course in Miracles*, specifically in the workbook, is the attack-defense cycle, which of course nations love to play out all the time. We attack and then we believe we will be attacked back, so we have to defend ourselves. We conveniently forget that we are the first attackers, because in our mind we are always the first attackers. All we are aware of, however, is that other people are going to attack us, and we forget the cause. In fact the whole Course can be seen as an attempt to help us remember the cause. The cause of every attack, the cause of every pain, every suffering, every discomfort is a decision to be guilty.

**(T-13.IX.1:7) Between the future and the past the laws of God must intervene, if you would free yourself.**

These laws free us through the holy instant, which does not really get spoken about until the fifteenth chapter, but is implied here—that letting go of the future and the past means that we live only in the present.

**(T-13.IX.1:8) Atonement stands between them, like a lamp shining so brightly that the chain of darkness in which you bound yourself will disappear.**

The instant we choose Jesus as our teacher we do not see other people's interests as separate from our own. It is not one or the other; it is both; it is all. In that instant, we are free from the belief in separation, and we are the ones who have freed ourselves. If there is no separation there is no sin, no guilt, no fear, and there is nothing to be defended. We do not have to defend against the Atonement because in this holy instant we have chosen it, and everything else just falls away.

**(T-13.IX.2:1-2) Release from guilt is the ego's whole undoing. *Make no one fearful*, for his guilt is yours, and by obeying the ego's harsh commandments you bring its condemnation on yourself, and you will not escape the punishment it offers those who obey it.**

Now we are beginning to see the practical applications of this in terms of how we are to be in our relationships. The way we are released from guilt is by not projecting it onto other people; in other words, to forgive. Specifically what this means is *not* that we do not project—we cannot help it. We first project, then we become aware there is something wrong, and then we reverse the projection. That is what forgiveness does; that is what the miracle does. (Imagine telling a head of state "*make no one fearful*.") The way we make other people fearful, of course, is to attack them. And why do we attack them? We attack them because we do not want to look at our own guilt, so we deny our guilt, project it out, and attack. That reinforces the same insane thought system of sin, guilt, and fear in the other person as it reinforces in ourselves. We all share the same insanity, and we all want the other person to reinforce our thought system.

We love to engage people in this dance of death, attack, defense, and specialness. We just love it, and we always tacitly invite people to join us. We know how to get them going. We know how to say the very thing that will ensure a response. It is as if we are on a dance floor all by ourselves, and so we invite all these people as our partners. Of course they, too, believe they are on the dance floor all by themselves, so they like to be invited. We do the same thing with each other all the time. That is what most relationships are all about. They are invitations to the dance. Some of you may know the Von Weber piece, "Invitation to the Dance," which is delightful and lovely. This is not—it is an invitation to the dance that is lethal, but a dance we all engage in.

We see it with nation states—they do it all the time, not just what we see happening right now. They do it all the time because their citizens do it all the time. We love to get people entrapped in this web of specialness, this dance of death, trading off guilt, and making each other fearful. The interesting thing about special relationships is that both partners in the relationship are doing exactly the same thing to each other, desperately trying to prove that they are not. And yet we are all doing this same thing. Sometimes one person will be the victim; other times the other person will be the victim. It does not matter; it is always the same.

The point Jesus is making is that when you make other people fearful through attack, you are reinforcing your own guilt, because if you were not guilty, you would not have to attack other people. The very fact that you are attacking others is telling you there is something in you that needs protection, something that needs to be defended against. That is what is in back of the very important line coming later in the text, "defenses *do* what they would defend" (T-17.IV.7:1). It is in the same section I have been quoting from in this class, "The Two Pictures." The purpose of a defense is to protect us from our fear, but the

very fact that we are defending means there is something in us that has to be protected. So we are reinforcing the fact that we are afraid every time we seek to protect it and defend against it. Defenses are designed to protect us from our fear, but all they do is reinforce it. "Defenses *do* what they would defend." The purpose is to defend from fear, but defenses only make us more fearful.

This is an example of that dynamic. My attacking you, my judging you, my criticizing you, my condemning you, is an attempt to defend against the fear of looking at my own guilt. Yet all that I do by attacking you is, first, to make myself even guiltier because I am attacking you; second, the very fact that I am attacking you is witnessing to the fact that there is something in me I should be afraid of; otherwise I wouldn't be invested in the defense. This is a very insidious cycle, and the problem is that we are not aware of how we got into it. We are not aware of its beginning. It is like coming in all the time at the end of the movie. We forget all the steps that led up to it, and we simply re-enact the end of the movie, which is always attack, suffering, and death, without realizing how it began.