

A Course of Love



COMBINED VOLUME

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CHAPTER 31

The Nature of the Mind

- 31.1 There is only one Mind, just as there is only one Will. This you are afraid of, as you believe this statement threatens your independence, something you consider a state of being to be highly prized. This statement, however, more rightly confirms your interdependence and your wholeness.
- 31.2 The idea of sharing one heart, one heartbeat, one love, is not so unacceptable to you as the idea of sharing one mind. Your thoughts, you feel, are your own, private and sacrosanct. These highly guarded and regarded thoughts are what *A Course in Miracles* calls body thoughts. Distinctions are made in many religions and philosophies that separate thought—as dictated by the body—from thought of a higher order, or spiritual thought. Thoughts related to your personal self and the “laws” of the body, such as those of survival, are not the thoughts of the true Self. This is the clarification that needs to be made for some of you to fully let go of your fear of the shared thought system of unity.
- 31.3 How silly is it to be afraid of the truth? Fear of the truth is like a fear of the impossible being possible. Like the fear of death, it is the product of upside-down thinking.
- 31.4 You do not understand that something can be inseparable and still not be the same. The miracle of turning water into wine illustrates, as all miracles do, the fallacy of this concept. You must understand this and all miracles correctly if you are to be a miracle worker. What is inseparable cannot be different, but this does not mean it must be the same. Inseparable does not mean replaceable. Water does not replace wine nor wine water, yet each are from the same source, and so they are not different even while they are not the same.
- 31.5 Your fear of sameness is your fear of oneness, and it is an unfounded fear, though understandable given your concept of what is the same and what is different. Yet, as your forms so readily illustrate, while all bodies are the same, they are also different. Form but imitates content.

- 31.6 This is the difficulty with studying the mind. The mind is your being and so you can study it not, no more than you can ever see the entirety of your body unaided, or remove your own brain to view it beneath a microscope. Yet you call your body your own and identify it as your self. Your body moves and breathes, your heart beats and your blood pumps, quite unaided by your conscious self. You know that if you had to consciously cause these functions to take place, you would surely die, for managing the workings of the body would be more than your conscious mind could handle. You could not possibly give all the commands necessary if such commands were needed. Thankfully, you have a brain that fulfills this function, yet this brain is also you. Does it work independently from you? Is it separate? Is it the same?
- 31.7 So too is it with mind. Mind *is* your being. It is no accident that it has become synonymous to many of you with brain, an interchangeable word that conveys the same idea. Mind is the control center, that which remembers and stores away knowledge, that which is both you and beyond your understanding of you. Form mimics content. Form mimics the truth, but does not replace it.
- 31.8 The rest of your world imitates truth as well. You live on one world, one planet, one Earth. You may live on different continents, different countries, various cities, but all of you rely on the one Earth as part of a sameness and interdependence you accept. You are aware that this Earth rests in a cosmos beyond your comprehension, and that the cosmos too is something that the Earth and all on the Earth are part of. You believe fully that you are inseparable from the Earth, the cosmos, gravity, the laws that rule the universe, just as you believe your brain and, erroneously, your mind, is inseparable from your body.
- 31.9 Thus your confusion is also your key to understanding. You need but look at creation's projection to understand the nature of perfection and your own Self as Creator and Created. Being part of the whole that is your known universe has made you and no other being less consequential. All over the world people of good faith fight to save even one life. Each life is irreplaceable and no one argues this point, yet you allow yourself to resist the whole idea of God because you believe that what is one cannot also be many.
- 31.10 Give up this notion of losing your Self to God, and you will be done for all time with resisting God. Only in God can you find your Self. This

is known to you, and is the reason for man's quest for God throughout all time. Man may think he looks to God for answers, for release from pain, for reward, or for an after-life. But man has always looked to God for his own Self. Not looking to God to find your Self would be akin to searching everywhere but the Earth for humankind. If you do not seek where what you wish to find can be found, you seek in vain.

- 31.11 The purpose of the mind is extension. Thus, the upside-down perception that causes you to protect your private thoughts and see them as the seat of yourself calls for the exact opposite of extension. This is the only true source of conflict. And, yet again, your perception of your thoughts as yourself is the closest answer to the truth that you were able, in your limited view of yourself, to come up with. There is a part of you that *knows* that you have higher thoughts, and knows that these higher thoughts are your Self. Rather than discriminating between higher and lower thoughts, you have aggrandized all your thoughts and given them an identity we have called the ego. Without dislodging your belief in your ego as yourself you will never realize your true identity.
- 31.12 For some this dislodging occurs by coming to a better understanding of the mind, for others by coming to a better understanding of the heart, or love. How the ego becomes dislodged matters not. What matters is where you place your devotion.
- 31.13 Devotion cannot be split and must be total to be at all. Thus while you believe you are devoted to the thoughts of a split mind you are devoted to nothing. This is why so many attempts at understanding fail. Trying to come to understanding with a split mind is impossible. Impossible learning goals lead to depression. This is why we must learn anew with a mind and heart joined in wholeheartedness.
- 31.14 The ego is that part of yourself that clings to the idea of separation, and thus cannot grasp the basic truth of your existence: that giving and receiving are one in truth. Put another way, all this says is that in order to *be* your Self, you have to *share* your Self. What you keep you lose. This is the principle of giving and receiving that, being finally and totally understood, will free you to be wholehearted.
- 31.15 All that you would keep private and unshared is, in essence, who you think you are. I say who you think you are because it is important to distin-

guish who you *think* you are from who you truly are. On the one hand, you think that you are your past, your shame, your guilt; on the other that you are your future, your glory, your potential. You neither want to share your most negative nor your most positive thoughts about yourself. These are your great secrets, the secrets that fill your mind day-to-day with thoughts that *keep* you from your Self.

31.16 And so there is just a small portion of yourself you share, the portion that your ego has deemed safe, acceptable, presentable. The portion that your ego has deemed will cause you no risk. It is the ego that asks: Are you certain that if you share that feeling, you will still be loved? Are you certain that if you reveal that secret, you will still be safe? Are you certain that if you try something new, you will still be accepted? It is the ego that deems honesty a game; the ego that you let decide upon your truth. For what you live is what you believe is the truth about yourself. While you continue to live dishonestly, your notion of what your identity truly is cannot improve.

31.17 My dear brothers and sisters, what you truly are cannot be improved upon. But because you are in a state of unremembering, you must relearn who you are. You can only relearn who you are by being who you are. You can only be who you are by sharing who you are.

31.18 The truth is your identity. Honesty is being free of deception. You, who are already worrying about honesty and sharing being about some need to confess, think a moment about why you are worried. The idea of confessing is an idea of sharing. Rather than thinking of who you are being all tied up with sin and a need for forgiveness, think of this simply as a need to share. This would seem antithetical with what I have already said—that what you keep you lose, and what you share you gain. You think of confessing as a way of letting go and getting rid of that which you do not want. Some of you believe this can be done and others don't. Those who believe in it believe in sin, and that it can be replaced by forgiveness. Those who do not believe in it do not believe that sin can be forgiven and do not seek forgiveness, believing forgiveness is something that they do not deserve. Few truly believe in atonement or undoing. Few truly believe there is no sin. Few truly believe that they are not the sum of their behaviors. How, then, is confession good for the soul?

31.19 You cannot be honest while you do not know the truth about yourself. If you remembered your Self, notions such as confession being good for the

soul would be no more. But in order to remember your Self, you need a means of learning who you are. Everything that has ever happened in your life has happened as a learning device to help you remember who you are. Those things about which you feel guilt and shame are simply the remnants of lessons unlearned. While you hang on to them by keeping them hidden, no learning occurs.

- 31.20 Who you are is love, and all things brought to love are seen in a new light, a light that keeps what you would learn to help you remember who you are, and in that remembrance transforms the rest, leaving with you nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to keep hidden, leaving you with nothing but the truth of who you are. Thus, what you give through sharing you gain *in truth*. No other type of gain is possible.
- 31.21 The same is true of your potentials, which brought to love are accomplished and simply become the truth that has always existed about who you are.
- 31.22 Sharing is thus not about who you think you are, but about who you truly are, and yet it is the way to learn the difference while learning is still necessary.
- 31.23 Sharing is the means through which the holy relationship you have with everything is revealed *in truth*. This truth lies within everything that exists, as it lies within you. As you learn that who you are is love, no deception is possible, and you can only be who you are *in truth*.
- 31.24 What you gain *in truth* is never lost or forgotten again, because it returns remembrance to your mind. What your mind remembers cannot *not* be shared.
- 31.25 Your ego thoughts can never share the truth with you nor with anyone else. The ego invented the idea of “telling” the truth and using it as an opposite to telling an untruth or lie. Thus were born ideas of being able to keep truth a secret, one of the most ridiculous ideas of the ego thought system.
- 31.26 Your past has nothing to do with the truth about who you are, except in the degree to which it has or has not helped you to remember who you are. What you have learned *in truth* resides in your mind as a part of you. What you have not yet learned from awaits your learning — or in other words, awaits the transfer of your feelings and experience to truth, and thus to your mind. Only the truth abides within your mind, for only it can enter the holy altar you share with me.

- 31.27 This altar is not a thing, but a devotion to the one truth, the whole truth. Being of one mind is being of one truth, and how can you be of anything less? Only the ego sprang from a lie, the lie of separation that created the illusion of separate minds and varying degrees of truth.
- 31.28 Just as you look to God for your Self, knowing not what it is you seek, so too do you look to your brothers and sisters and all else that lives along with you. But when you look, knowing not what you seek, what you find varies. Since there is only one truth, finding a variety of answers means nothing. If you but change what you look for, what you see and what you learn will also change.
- 31.29 If you can look for your Self within your brothers and sisters, however, they must also be able to look for their Selves in you. If you are constantly reflecting back what you think your brothers and sisters want to see, they can learn nothing from you. If your truth about who you think you are changes day-to-day, you are reflecting the very variety of answers they expect to find and have been finding elsewhere.
- 31.30 You do not think you are looking for yourself in others, but think instead that you are looking for something or someone other than yourself. At certain times of your life you state this seeking you are doing quite clearly, and it is always specific. You are looking for a friend, a spouse, a mentor. You believe you are seeking something other than you to complete yourself, because you are seeking to complete yourself. You are seeking wholeness. And you are even correct in seeking it from your brothers and sisters—just not in the way you perceive of it.
- 31.31 When you find the truth of any brother or sister, you find the truth about your Self, for the truth does not change. And if who you truly are *is* the truth, how can you be different? Thus it can be said that the truth and the mind are one in truth. The truth is what is. What is not the truth is illusion. Does this not make perfect sense?
- 31.32 It is in this perfect sense of the perfect sanity of truth that salvation lies. Salvation is simply your return to your Self.
- 31.33 If your sister and brother seek the truth, or salvation, from you, and you seek the truth, or salvation from them, what is truly occurring? How can this work? This is but another aspect of giving and receiving being one in truth. Giving and receiving are both taking place, both at the same time, as

are seeking and finding, once you are aware of what it is you seek.

- 31.34 This aspect of giving and receiving as one is called relationship. It allows you to experience who you are and thus to know, or remember, who you are. It is in your recognition of the truth about your brother and sister that you recognize the truth about your Self. It is only in relationship that this occurs, because only in relationship are you experiencing anything.
- 31.35 You do not exist outside of relationship, just as your mind does not exist outside of oneness. Your experience here is but an extension of mind into a realm in which experience can occur. Your ego has made of this something different than it is. Rather than extension of mind, your experience has become a projection of ego. This can change.
- 31.36 As you interact with your brothers and sisters, you seek to get to know them. You do this so that you find what you have in common, and go on from there to shared experiences. You also seek to know your brothers and sisters so that you will come to know what to expect from them. Once you have determined a brother's or sister's usual mode of behavior, deviations from that usual mode concern you. You may determine someone is in a "mood," and see that the effects of that mood are either good or bad, for either you or them or both. Since you live in a world of such extreme uncertainty, one of your highest requirements of those you have relationships with is a mode of behavior that allows you to know what to expect. Thus, as you move from acquaintances to relationships of a deeper nature, you quickly determine the nature of those relationships and have an investment in them staying the same. Since this is most often true for them as well, you too become locked into the expected sameness.
- 31.37 One relationship in which this is not the case is the relationship of teacher and student. Another relationship that expects change and growth is that of parent to child. These two relationships have comprised your ideas of our Father and me as you have realized that you are here to learn. Now, with a clear learning goal in mind, these idealized relationships must be broadened so that they are seen in all rather than in a few, and so that they are seen clearly as what they really are.