

Chapter 11

God or the Ego

We're going to move a little deeper now into the basic metaphysics of the Course.

God and the Ego

The following two paragraphs are from

“Lesson 101: Perfect Happiness”

The word “God” appears 2,207 times in the Course.

The word “ego” appears 475 times.

Each word is three letters long. Each contains the word “go.” One word begins with “go,” and one ends with “go.” “Ego” gets this illusory world going. Ego ends in “o” (zero). Out of nothing there comes nothing. The ego never existed and can never exist as anything except a thought that has no eternity (reality) to it. It can only “seemingly,” temporarily possess the mind. It is, at best, a fleeting fantasy — like last night’s dream — soon gone.

We say “God is” and then we cease to speak.

W-pl.169.5:4

“O” is the central letter in the word “God.” God is nothingness and everything. God is the wholeness and oneness of which “O” is also the symbol. God is so far beyond words that words don’t work in describing God. Every one of the world’s religions describes God as Love, but we can’t really say what love is. I look at Dolores, and I say “I love you.” I want to say more, but “I love you very much,” or “I love you a lot,” doesn’t cut it. I write a poem but poems are not enough. Words don’t work in describing God and they don’t work in describing Love. “Words are symbols of symbols, twice removed from reality” (M-21.1:9). Words, at best, can only point the way. As limiting as words are, they are the primary “tools” we have to help us find our way through this amazing maze, and thus, back Home again.

Introduction

Either God or the ego is insane.

***If you will examine the evidence on both sides fairly,
you will realize this must be true.***

Neither God nor the ego proposes a partial thought system.

***Each is internally consistent, but they are diametrically
opposed in all respects so that partial allegiance is impossible.***

T-11.in.1:1-4

Illusion and Reality

The Course is very clear. The only way Home is to give 100% allegiance to God. There is an incredibly beautiful paradox here. To do God's Will is to do our own will. There is no other will. Sin is the idea that it is possible to think, to do and to be without God. It is impossible to hurt God or do anything against God. The only way to be perfectly happy is to follow God's guidance in all things. The good news is – it is “ultimately” only possible to do only God's Will.

Who Is Your Father, God or the Ego? Both cannot be true.

Who gives birth to any thought system which rules the mind? “You,” *the Decision Making part of your mind* must decide which guide to follow. One guide is destined to lead you into a ditch (i.e., into nothingness). The other is destined to help awaken from *the dream of death* and find our way Home. On six different occasions the Course talks about our experience in the ego's world as “a dream of death.” God is Life.

*If you imagine someone who is brave enough to
withdraw all his projections, then you get an individual
who is conscious of a pretty thick Shadow.
Such a man can no longer say they do this
or they must be fought against. . . .*

*Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world
is in him and if he only learns to deal with his own Shadow,
he is doing something real for the world.
He has succeeded in shouldering at least an infinitesimal part
of the gigantic, unsolved social problems of our day.
Swiss psychotherapist Carl Gustav Jung*

**The closer you come to the foundation of the ego's
thought system, the darker and more obscure becomes the way.**
Yet even the little spark in your mind is enough to lighten it.
Bring this light fearlessly with you, and bravely hold it up
to the foundation of the ego's thought system.
Be willing to judge it with perfect honesty.
Open the dark cornerstone of terror on which it rests,
and bring it out into the light.
There you will see that it rested on meaninglessness,
and that everything of which you have been afraid
was based on nothing.

T-11.in.3:5-10

The more we accept the Holy Spirit's interpretation, the more fearful we become. The closer we come to the light of truth, the greater the ego fears that we will disappear into that light. My 1976 death experience was terribly frightening as I thought that I was going to disappear, in fact, I did disappear as far as this world, body, ego, and personality are concerned. I didn't know "what" was having the experience, though obviously something remembers the experience otherwise "I" (whatever that is) could not talk about it.

The little spark is the Holy Spirit, the Voice for God, the memory of God's Love in our minds. The entire Course is about our willingness to look at our own darkness (the ego's story) with perfect honesty. If we do not, we continue the dream and we cannot awaken. If we saw purely, all would be light. What we see without, we project and what we project comes from within. Thus, Jesus could go so far as to experience persecution on a bodily level far beyond that of ordinary mortals without attacking back, knowing it is all and illusion – "*Forgive them, they know not what they do.*" He did not say that so that God would know how to handle the situation. He said it so "we" would know how to handle much less severe situations.

There is nothing outside you.
That is what you must ultimately learn,
for it is the realization
that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you.

T-18.VI.1:1-2

To say there is nothing outside you means there is nothing outside your mind. The Course asks us to look at the darkness inside not to

affirm its reality; rather, we look at it in order to understand its ultimate non-reality. Our task is always to be looking for the innocent face of Christ within.

Remember the wonderful story of *Les Miserables*. Bishop Myriel entertains Jean Valjean, an ex-convict in his home. When he leaves the Bishops home, Jean Valjean steals the Bishops silver candlestick holders. He is arrested and brought back to Bishop Myriel, who tells the authorities that they were not stolen; he gave the candlesticks to Jean Valjean.

Just as God does not see us as guilty sinners, so Bishop Myriel refuses to see Jean Valjean as guilty and deserving of punishment. He sees the goodness within, and thus, saves Jean Valjeans life. The ego is set to find problems – all the difficulties in the world and then to project onto the world, which makes the world real in our own eyes.

The ego sees the body as a weapon, as a mechanism capable of attack. This is frightening for the ego; it means the loss of individuality or specialness. The world we see “outside” is literally a projection and an *outside picture of an inner condition*.

Either we join with the Holy Spirit realizing that everything which comes from the ego is a lie; or, we join with the ego and we create our own artificial world. Everyone, thus, lives in a state of ambiguity. We try to give part of our minds to God and part of our minds to the ego, falling off very unsatisfactorily into a state of dreamy uncertainty. The Mind of God and the ego-mind are mutually exclusive – we cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot serve God and the ego.

*Remember, too, that their results are as different
as their foundations, and their fundamentally irreconcilable
natures cannot be reconciled by vacillations between them.*

Nothing alive is Fatherless, for life is creation.

Therefore, your decision is always an answer to the question,

Who is my father?"

And you will be faithful to the father you choose.

T-11.in.1:5-8

To keep us from being aware of our true identity the ego creates for us a world of problems. We thus go “mindless” and forget that we have a Real Mind which can make an honest decision. The ego is very

undisciplined, untrained, and often tyrannical. This is, therefore, a course in Mind Training.

***You want salvation. You want to be happy. You want peace.
You do not have them now, because your mind is totally
undisciplined, and you cannot distinguish between
joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, love and fear.***

W-20.2:3-6

The Authority Problem

Chapter 11 picks up on a theme which began in Chapter 3, namely the authority problem. The question is whose will, will rule? When Jesus says above that “nothing alive must be fatherless,” he means there must be a cause. Someone must have created us. If we see the ego as our father, then we think we are the ego. The ego has created our *personas*, – the mask we wear – the face we present to the world, or storyline, or our fantasy world.

***Yet what makes God's teachers is their recognition
of the proper purpose of the body.
As they advance in their profession, they become
more and more certain that the body's function
is but to let God's Voice speak through it to human ears.
And these ears will carry to the mind of the hearer messages
that are not of this world, and the mind will understand
because of their Source.***

M-12.4:1-3

Who is the author? Are we going to let God’s voice direct our lives or shall we fall into a kind of non-reality or fantasy in which the ego seems to rule blindly. Did God create us or are we the creators of ourselves.

*God created man in his own image
and then man returned the favor.
Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)*

The world and the body are hiding places from God.

The ego is self-created and self-centered. It is not created by the “One-mindedness” or the Christ Mind, Whose Will is One with God’s. The ego, being split off from God, is so terrified of God that it has left

the mind of God. Becoming Mindless or ego-possessed, we are not even aware that we have direct connection with The Mind of God.

Ontology – The Reality of God and the Mind

Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that studies the nature of existence or Being. The first ontological argument was proposed by Anselm of Cantergury, in 1078. He defined God as "...that than which nothing greater can be conceived." If the greatest possible Being exists in the Mind, it must also exist in Reality – Mind being Reality. Therefore, *our only true lasting existence is existence within the Mind of God.* The body has no permanence to it. The world is impermanent. The world is a dream and our bodies dream characters. Our only true reality lies within the Mind of God.

***In whatever part of the mind of God's Son
you restore this reality, you restore it to yourself.
You dwell in the Mind of God with your brother,
for God Himself did not will to be alone.***

T-11.I.1:5-6

If you made the ego, how can the ego have made you?
*The authority problem is still the only source of conflict,
because the ego was made out of the wish of God's Son to father Him.
The ego, then, is nothing more than a delusional system
in which you made your own father.*

T-11.in.2:2-4

What is most difficult about the Course is “living it” – “doing it.” The first step, of course, is knowing the Course or understanding the Course; beyond that, what ultimately matters most is putting it into practice.

*Ultimately, the goal of the Course
is understanding that you are not here.*

Dr. Ken Wapnick

No one is here because we never left Heaven. This idea makes the Course unique in spiritual disciplines. Every time we forgive; every time we realize that there really is a different way of looking at things, we move further and further away from this illusory world and closer and closer to the truth of who we “already are.”

*The Holy Spirit cannot speak to an unwelcoming host,
because He will not be heard.
The Eternal Guest remains,
but His Voice grows faint in alien company.
He needs your protection,
only because your care is a sign that you want Him.
Think like Him ever so slightly,
and the little spark becomes a blazing light
that fills your mind so that He becomes your only Guest.
Whenever you ask the ego to enter, you lessen His welcome.*
T-11.II.5:1-5

*Would you be hostage to the ego or host to God?
You will accept only whom you invite.
You are free to determine who shall be your guest,
and how long he shall remain with you.
Yet this is not real freedom, for it still depends on how you see it.
The Holy Spirit is there,
although He cannot help you without your invitation.
And the ego is nothing, whether you invite it in or not.
Real freedom depends on welcoming reality,
and of your guests only the Holy Spirit is real.
Know, then, Who abides with you merely by recognizing what
is there already, and do not be satisfied with imaginary comforters,
for the Comforter of God is in you.*
T-11.II.7:1-8

Host to God or Hostage to the Ego

If the ego is running the show, we truly are hostage – to a drug perhaps, a bad habit, an addiction to money, fortune and fame, an addiction to power – to everything external to the pure life within. Being Host to God, we can sit back and relax, do what God asks us to do – let God run the show ensuring that all the while we do not fall into projecting some kind of insanity. When God runs the show, it's like being on vacation all the time. We don't need to plan anything. All we have to do is sit back and enjoy the ride.

III. From Darkness to Light

*O my child, if you knew what God wills for you,
your joy would be complete!
And what He wills has happened, for it was always true.
When the light comes and you have said, "God's Will is mine,"
you will see such beauty that you will know it is not of you.
Out of your joy you will create beauty in His Name,
for your joy could no more be contained than His.
The bleak little world will vanish into nothingness,
and your heart will be so filled with joy that it will leap into Heaven,
and into the Presence of God.
I cannot tell you what this will be like, for your heart is not ready.
Yet I can tell you, and remind you often, that what God wills for
Himself He wills for you, and what He wills for you is yours.*

T-11.III.3:1-7

*The way is not hard, but it "is" very different.
Yours is the way of pain, of which God knows nothing.
That way is hard indeed, and very lonely.
Fear and grief are your guests, and they go with you
and abide with you on the way.
But the dark journey is not the way of God's Son.
Walk in light and do not see the dark companions,
for they are not fit companions for the Son of God,
who was created "of" light and "in" light.
The Great Light always surrounds you and shines out from you.
How can you see the dark companions in a light such as this?
If you see them, it is only because you are denying the light.
But deny them instead, for the light is here and the way is clear.*

T-11.III.4:1-10

The opening line above, *The way is not hard, but it "is" very different.* reminds me of another line from the Course from Chapter 16, when it begins its description of Heaven by saying, "*Across the Bridge it is so different.*" The ways of God are not the ways of the ego. *On this side* everything we see is completely distorted and completely out of perspective.

The way we learn in this world (and it is not fun) is by trial and error. We learn only when we get to the point of saying as Bill did to Helen – “There must be another way.” All students of the Course come to the Course because they recognize that there must be another way of seeing and, therefore, of being. As you begin to read the Course, you begin to realize that the other way is described in the Course.

The dark journey is the way of learning through misery, pain, and suffering; through trial and error; and, the dark companions are our fearful thoughts, our thoughts of sin, guilt, and fear, our projective hateful thoughts, our fault finding, and contrary thoughts. Jesus is asking us not to entertain our dark companions – our projections, our fault finding, and fear.

IV. The Inheritance of God’s Son

Reversing Thinking

*If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense.
Nothing would be what it is because everything would be what it isn’t.
And contrary-wise; what it is it wouldn’t be,
and what it wouldn’t be, it would. You see?
Alice from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll*

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**“Only you can deprive yourself of anything.”**  
***Do not oppose this realization,  
for it is truly the beginning of the dawn of light.  
Remember also that  
the denial of this simple fact takes many forms,  
and these you must learn to recognize  
and to oppose steadfastly, without exception.  
This is a crucial step in the reawakening.  
The beginning phases of this “reversal” are often quite painful,  
for as blame is withdrawn from without,  
there is a strong tendency to harbor it within.  
It is difficult at first to realize that this is exactly the same thing,  
for there is no distinction between within and without.***

T-11.IV.4:1-6

The reversal in thinking, called for in the Course, asks that we drop entirely all of our projections. Then it is that we can truly see.

*If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your  
deprivation, you are blaming yourself.  
And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them.  
That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere.  
Lay it to yourself and you cannot know yourself,  
for only the ego blames at all.  
Self-blame is therefore ego identification,  
and as much an ego defense as blaming others.  
“You cannot enter God's Presence if you attack His Son.”*  
T-11.IV.5:1-6

## V. The “Dynamics” of the Ego

### Looking

*No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them,  
for not looking is the way they are protected.  
There is no need to shrink from illusions,  
for they cannot be dangerous.*  
*We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because  
together we have the lamp that will dispel it,  
and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready.  
Let us be very calm in doing this,  
for we are merely looking honestly for truth.  
The dynamics of the ego will be our lesson for a while,  
for we must look first at this to see beyond it,  
since you have made it real.  
We will undo this error quietly together,  
and then look beyond it to truth.*  
T-11.V.1:1-6

All of our defenses are kept safely hidden by believing that there is a world outside. We have made the ego so real and so terrifying that we don't want to look at it. We all know that “there must be another way,” but we're not willing to look for that other way.

Only when we can honestly look at the ego, do we begin to realize that it is, in fact, an illusion and there is a much greater reality beyond the illusion. In fact, the ego has no dynamics because there is no ego. We must, however, look at the “seeming dynamics,” in order to see beyond the dynamics – to see the nothingness which is the dream. We look at the ego in order to understand its non-reality. We look at the

darkness within as we become fully disgusted with looking at the darkness without.

*What is healing  
but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge?  
And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them  
directly, without protecting them?  
Be not afraid, therefore, for what you will be looking at is the source  
of fear, and you are beginning to learn that fear is not real.*

T-11.V.2:1-2

Fear is not real because there is nothing to be afraid of other than the dissolution of the ego and the dissolution of the ego is the dissolution of nothing. In defenselessness my safety always lies.

### **We are as Children**

We don't really understand anything, because we think our dreaming of the world and the ego is real. We, therefore, need someone to help us see the true nature of reality. The Course "only" refers to us as children. It never refers to us as adults. Children are those who do not yet understand.

*The Bible tells you to become as little children.  
Little children recognize that they do not understand  
what they perceive, and so they ask what it means.  
Do not make the mistake of believing that you understand  
what you perceive, for its meaning is lost to you.*

T-11.VII.2:1-3

We are like children in that we do not really understand what we perceive. The only problem is that we think that we do understand. We think that our opinions are right. Thus, it is, for example, that we perceive "attack" as something which deserves punishment rather than as a call for Love.

Let's remember that in any situation in which there is conflict – everyone who is involved is insane. My ONLY job is to be aware of my own level of insanity.

***Except ye become as little children 'means that  
unless you fully recognize your complete dependence on God,  
you cannot know the real power of the Son  
in his true relationship with the Father.***

*The specialness of God's Sons does not stem from exclusion  
but from inclusion. **All my brothers are special.***

*If they believe they are deprived of anything,  
their perception becomes distorted.*

*When this occurs the whole family of God,  
or the Sonship, is impaired in its relationships.*

T-1.V.3:4-8

*The Course is trying to help us understand  
how much we don't understand.*

Dr. Ken Wapnick

Our real job is to continually go back to the choice point, realize how often our decision making is made in line with the ego and then make another choice – this time in alignment with the Holy Spirit. Then it will not matter what happens in the world.

*Children perceive frightening ghosts and monsters  
and dragons, and they are terrified.*

*Yet if they ask someone they trust for the meaning of what they  
perceive, and are willing to let their own interpretations go  
in favor of reality, their fear goes with them.*

*When a child is helped to translate his 'ghost' into a curtain,  
his 'monster' into a shadow, and his 'dragon' into a dream  
he is no longer afraid, and laughs happily at his own fear.*

T-11.VIII.13:1-2

We are like little children until we learn to perceive correctly. We walk around seeing monsters, dragons, and ghosts all over the place. When we can look at the darkness within, we realize that there are no monsters hiding within – there is actually nothing there.

### **Making The Error Real**

*The ego's interpretations of the laws of perception are,  
and would have to be, the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit's.*

**The ego focuses on error and overlooks truth.**  
**It makes real every mistake it perceives,**  
***and with characteristically circular reasoning concludes that***  
***because of the mistake consistent truth must be meaningless.***  
*The next step, then, is obvious.*  
***If consistent truth is meaningless, inconsistency must be true.***  
*Holding error clearly in mind, and protecting what it has made real,*  
*the ego proceeds to the next step in its thought system:*  
*Error is real and truth is error.*  
T-11.V.14:1-6

The following story is from “Lesson 101: Perfect Happiness”

A woman who is a guest in a hotel calls up the front desk and says, “There is a naked man walking around in the apartment directly across the street from my room. You must do something!” The manager goes up to her room to investigate. He looks out her window across the street and says, “Ma’am you can only see down to his waist. You don’t know, he may only be missing his shirt.” “No, no,” she says, “He is completely naked.” “How do you know that?” asks the manager. “Just stand on the bed,” she says, “you’ll see.” Remember: *It’s not what we look at that matters, it’s what we see!*

We manifest what we make judgments about and we will continue to.

## **VI. Waking to Redemption**

***This course is perfectly clear.***  
***If you do not see it clearly,***  
***it is because you are interpreting against it,***  
***and therefore do not believe it.***  
***And since belief determines perception,***  
***you do not perceive what it means***  
***and therefore do not accept it***  
T-VI.3:1-2

The above passage, as well as the rest of the paragraph, was directed specifically to Helen, as Helen was resisting what Jesus was asking her to do. Helen understood the Course very well. The problem was that like any good ego, she did not like what she was hearing.

*There has been much confusion about what perception means, because  
the word is used both for awareness  
and for the interpretation of awareness.  
**Yet you cannot be aware without interpretation,  
for what you perceive “is” your interpretation.**  
T-11.VI.2:5-6*

It is not what we see that matters. It is how we respond to what we see. We can respond from the point of view of the ego or the Holy Spirit. This is a “training” course in which we are learning how to progressively pay less and less attention to the ego and more and more attention to the Holy Spirit – up to the point where we hear only the Voice for God.

***I am sorry when my brothers do not share my decision to hear only  
one Voice, because it weakens them as teachers and as learners.***  
T-6.I.8:1

### **VIII. The Problem and the Answer**

***This is a very simple course.  
Perhaps you do not feel you need a course which,  
in the end, teaches that only reality is true.  
But do you believe it?***  
T-11.VIII.1:1-2

If only reality is true and this world is a made up fantasy dream, then we need to awaken to the truth of who we really are. This is all the Course is about. It is just about waking up.

***You may complain that this course is not  
sufficiently specific for you to understand and use.  
Yet perhaps you have not done what it specifically advocates.  
This is not a course in the play of ideas,  
but in their practical application.***  
T-11.VIII.5:1-3

Likewise in the Clarification of Terms from the Course we read:

***This is not a course in philosophical speculation,  
nor is it concerned with precise terminology.  
It is concerned only with Atonement,  
or the correction of perception.***  
C-in.1:1

It is not our task to understand all of the metaphysics of the Course, the idea that there is no time and no space is literally mind boggling. As Ken used to say, “metaphysics schemetaphysics.” We don’t understand the metaphysics until we engage in the reversal of thinking the Course asks of us.

We need to understand the metaphysics in order to apply its principles in our everyday life but understanding the metaphysics doesn’t mean anything if I can’t do what the Course is asking me to do. I demonstrate that I understand the metaphysics when I honestly live by these principles. I live these principles by forgiving, trusting, being patient and kind, not being arrogant and rude – very simple principles which help me understand that we really are One.

***Nothing could be more specific  
than to be told that if you ask you will receive.  
The Holy Spirit will answer every specific problem  
as long as you believe that problems are specific.  
His answer is both many and one,  
as long as you believe that the one is many.***

T-11.VIII.4-6

There are not many problems – there is just one – our belief that we are separate from God. There is only one solution; namely, the atonement. What is required is that we ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand that we are One. This passage has been misinterpreted as our asking for all kinds of particulars. The only thing, however, that we really need to ask for is help in seeing things differently, that is, help in undoing the ego thought system, which runs our lives. It does not mean asking for all kinds of specifics.

***You do not know the meaning of anything you perceive.  
Not one thought you hold is wholly true.  
The recognition of this is your firm beginning.  
You are not misguided; you have accepted no guide at all.  
Instruction in perception is your great need,  
for you understand nothing.  
Recognize this but do not accept it,  
for understanding is your inheritance.  
Perceptions are learned, and you are not without a Teacher.  
Yet your willingness to learn of Him depends on your willingness to  
question everything you learned of yourself,  
for you who learned amiss should not be your own teacher.***

T-11.VI.3:1-8

Think of this, “*not one thought we hold is wholly true.*” The ego is involved in everything we see. We need to step way back and take a good look at the ego and then proceed slowly. It is for this reason that the Course is calling for a complete reversal in thinking.

A shift in awareness cannot occur unless we “allow” for it –unless we want it to occur. Sometimes this only comes when we are so thoroughly aware of the insanity of the ego –that we simply no longer want to play the ego’s silly game.

This is so important in terms of understanding the Course. The complete reversal means there is nothing outside of me that is not contaminated by my “interpretation” of it.

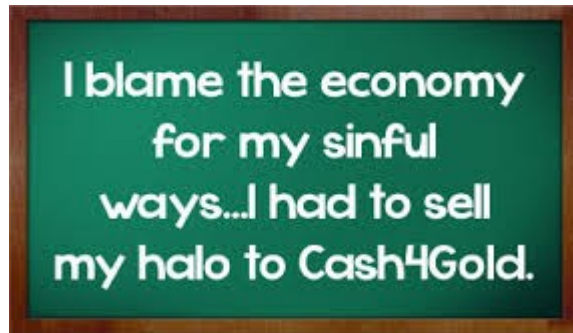
The guidance of the ego is always based on finding someone else to blame for how uncomfortable we feel. The easiest of all hunting expeditions is the search for a scapegoat. The problem is that we think we know what the problem is and the problem is outside of us – it’s in you & me.

Always, always, always the main problem we all have is the mind’s decision for the ego. We are simply asked to become aware of how much we choose the ego and then realize that we can make another choice. We can listen to Holy Spirit’s guidance with greater ease just as easily as listening to the ego. Then,

*When you have learned how to decide with God,  
all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing.  
There is no effort, and you will be led as gently  
as if you were being carried down a quiet path in summer.  
Only your own volition seems to make deciding hard.  
The Holy Spirit will not delay in answering your every question what  
to do. He knows. And He will tell you, and then do it for you.  
You who are tired will find this is more restful than sleep.  
For you can bring your guilt into sleeping, but not into this.*

T-14.IV.6:1-8





Note: *A Present Love*

There is going to be a major International Conference on:  
*A Course in Miracles* at the Pennsylvania Hotel here in NYC  
Thursday, April 16 – Noon on Sunday, April 19, 2015.

Some 27 different speakers will be present including from New York:  
Yasuko Kasaki, Rev. Larry Glenz, David Fishman and me.

Tickets are \$449. Through the generosity of a friend, I have several  
tickets which may be purchased for \$399. Let me know if you are  
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