

The Attraction of Guilt

~ and ~

The Attraction of God

by Jon Mundy

*You, then, have two conflicting evaluations of yourself
in your mind, and they cannot both be true.*

T-9.VII.4:1

*This you must remember;
the attraction of guilt opposes the attraction of God.*

T-15.IX.6:2-3

It Is and It Isn't

Everything is divided into two parts, and it isn't. That sounds contradictory — it is and it isn't. Lest this become confusing, let me explain. For example, in the world of computers, information is represented by *ones* and *zeros*, *off* or *on*, *true* or *false*. Another way to say this is that everything *seems to be* divided into contraries: *light* or *dark*, *body* or *spirit*, *time* or *eternity*, *helpful* or *hurtful*, *loving* or *fearful*, *material* or *immaterial*, *love* or *fear*, *God* or *self*.

Additionally, there are two basic electromagnetic forces — *positive* and *negative*, or if you will, *attractive* and *repellant*. Think of the energy of these two forces like two magnetic pulls. We might think of the ego-mind as the mind that is pulling us into the material body and, thus, also into despair and depression. On the other hand, the attraction of God pulls us ever-upward into the spiritual. Like falling in love over and over again, the attraction of God is drawing us into ever-increasing happiness and joy.

Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum.

It means only that you can elect what you want to take

at a given time.

T-in.1:4-6

The Course is all about our awakening slowly, moving ever-upward from the mundane to the mystical — from seeming division to eternal Oneness.

*Your divided devotion has given you the two voices,
and you must choose at which altar you want to serve.*

T-5.II.8:9

Would You Be Hostage to the Ego or Host to God?

T-11.II.7:1

Everyone has Free Will.

We have free will because it is one of the characteristics of God, and since we are part of God, we must have free will. This means (as in the story of Adam and Eve, Jonah and the Whale, or the Parable of the Prodigal Son) that, if we want to, we have the option of running away from God. Thus, we are free to be hostage to the ego or host to God. Although God cannot stop our waywardness, through GPS (God's Plan for Salvation), He continually offers us clear direction on what we need to do to find our way back Home — if we choose to listen and follow His lead.

How simple is the choice between two things so clearly unlike.

T-26.III.7:4

God knows we are dreaming and that we will not be able to make it back Home on our own with only an illusory dream character (the ego) as our guide. In fact, the Course tells us that, *the ego's qualifications as a guide are singularly unfortunate, and that it is a remarkably poor choice as a teacher of salvation.* (T-9.IV.8:3). Yet, no matter how far we wander, the day is coming when *we will* return Home and our Father will say, "Nothing happened. You were only dreaming. Welcome Home." The good news is that we can awaken right now — and we don't have to lose the body in order for that to happen. We simply have to set our attraction to guilt aside in order to overcome our seeming sense of being separated from God.

*The attraction of guilt produces fear of love,
for love would never look on guilt at all.*

T-19.IV.A.10:1

**There are two kinds of guilt to which we are attracted:
the guilt we feel inside and the guilt we project onto others.**

One of the reasons *A Course in Miracles* is such an important work and a primary reason it came to us through Drs. Helen Schucman and William Thetford (Professors of Medical Psychology at Columbia University's) is, that the Course is psychologically sophisticated. Jesus is a perfect psychologist, and he's got the ego's number. He, thus, explains to us in the Course how we got caught up in the dreaming of the world and how we might awaken and be free.

The Psychology of the Ego

In all mystical literature, we find that there is something that stands, so to speak, in opposition to God, something that is not of God — a little piece of insanity that *seems to* have broken itself off from the wholeness of God. This little piece of insanity is something we call an ego, that is, *the belief in the reality of a separated self*. All the ego is, therefore, is a belief — and as such, it can be undone. In reality, the ego has no reality because it is impossible to be broken off, or separated, from God. The ego is, therefore, only *a thought of separation*. Since the ego is only a thought, all we have to do to be free of it is to change our thoughts.

The French Philosopher, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), often dubbed the father of Western philosophy, is best remembered for his famous dictum "*Cogito Ergo Sum.*" ("I think, therefore I am"). Guilt says not only that I have sinned, it says, *I am sin*. In terms of the psychology of the ego, it would, thus, be better expressed as,

Ergo sum reus. Ergo, sum.
(I am guilty. Therefore, I am).

The attraction of guilt is found in sin, not error.
Sin will be repeated because of this attraction.
While the guilt remains attractive the mind will suffer,
and not let go of the idea of sin.
T-19.III.1:1,2&4

Sin, Guilt and the Ego

The belief in the reality of the ego gives rise to the belief in sin, guilt, fear, and a thought system based on separation and specialness. The Course explains the interweaving of the ideas of sin, guilt, and fear, that underlie the workings of the ego.

1. The belief in sin and separation is a preface to guilt.
2. Guilt is *the central concept* in the ego thought system.
3. Not wanting to look at our guilt, we bury it.
4. We then look around to find guilt in others.
5. Guilt leads to our fear of punishment as we still believe that “we have sinned!”

The ego uses the body for attack, for pleasure and for pride.
T-6.V.A.5:3

The Attraction of the Body

The body is the ego’s chosen home, and the ego is very much identified with the body. At the same time, the Course is very clear that in and of itself, the body is nothing — ashes — dust. Interestingly, the ego’s three primary uses of the body (attack, pleasure, and pride) can be remembered by a now frequently used acronym APP.

Yet consider how strange a solution the ego's arrangement is.
You project guilt to get rid of it,
but you are actually merely concealing it.
You do experience the guilt, but you have no idea why.
T-13.II.1-3

The ego uses the body for attack. We are very good at attack with the tongue, the written word, with fists, and guns. The thought that we can get what we want by attacking never works. Physical attack is the lowest form of thinking. Do we really want to hurt? That is what we do whenever we attack in any form.

No one attacks without intent to hurt. This can have no exception.
W-170.1:1-2

Projecting Guilt is the Way We Hold On to It

We try to escape guilt by projecting it. The attraction of guilt within automatically leads to *the attraction of seeing guilt in others*. From this perspective “we love” to find problems in the world. Following the insane dictates of the ego, we believe that by finding guilt in others, we will be able to demonstrate our innocence to God.

The egos methodology, needing desperately to find guilt in others, is to attack and destroy sinners. But now we run into a paradox and a problem. Having made up a world and a body to get rid of guilt, we create more guilt in our own mind by blaming others. The source of our guilt is now even more deeply buried, which is all the more reason we need to look honestly at our guilt.

Seesaw

The ego’s game is one of seesaw. When we put someone else down, we rise up, or so thinks the ego. However, to put someone else down is to put ourselves down because, in truth, there is no separation. Thus, Hitler killed not only 6+ million Jews, he also killed himself and 60+ million Germans.

*The ego made the body with eyes
so it could seek out the semblance of sin.*

Dr. Ken Wapnick

*You who think you hate your body deceive yourself.
You hate your mind, for guilt has entered into it,
and it would remain separate from your brother's,
which it cannot do.*

T-18.VI.2:7-8

Feeling guilty, we “want,” indeed, we have a desperate need, to catch others doing things wrong. I once went to see Ken Wapnick, concerned about the behavior of a brother. I always trusted Ken and knew he could help me see things differently, so I was ready to listen to what he had to say. After we talked for a few minutes I said, “To think that (the problem in question) is inside me.” It wasn’t easy to look at this as an internal problem, but I knew that was what I had to do. Looking at guilt within is always unpleasant, and yet, the resulting freedom is well worth the effort.

The ego uses the body for pleasure. There is nothing wrong with pleasure. The problem with pleasure is that, being temporal, it must be repeated over and over again, in order to experience the enjoyment, thus, opening up the possibility of compulsive and addictive behavior.

*Appetites are "getting" mechanisms,
representing the ego's need to confirm itself.
This is as true of body appetites
as it is of the so-called "higher ego needs."
Body appetites are not physical in origin.
The ego regards the body as its home,
and tries to satisfy itself through the body.*

*But the idea that this is possible is a decision of the mind,
which has become completely confused about what is really possible.*

T-4.II.7:5-9

Joy is an ongoing process, not in time but in eternity.

T-6.V.1:6

The Course juxtaposes *pleasure*, which is of the body and temporal, with *joy*, which is of the mind and is an ongoing (eternal) state of mind. As pleasure must be repeated over and over again in order to be experienced, it can lead to addiction. We, thus, feel guilty when we get caught in a bodily-based addiction like overeating, drinking too much, or getting caught with a drug addiction.

Topping the list of bodily-based addictions is something everyone on the planet must deal with daily; namely, the need to eat. The temptation to “over eat” is great and easily seen in many of the world’s wealthiest nations. I recently read an article which said that it was now official — Americans are the fattest people in the world. The more we eat (especially unhealthy foods), the more we want to eat. The less we eat, the less we need to eat. It’s a choice.

*You do not ask too much of life, but far too little.
When you let your mind be drawn to bodily concerns,
to things you buy, to eminence as valued by the world,
you ask for sorrow, not for happiness.*

W-133.2:1-2

The ego uses the body as an object of pride. Pick up a magazine. Flip through and take a look at the ads. They are, most of them, about something that will make the body look better (clothes, jewels), smell better, or feel better. Along with pride, we can, of course, also say the ego wants another “p” word — power.

The ego-mind’s sick attraction of guilt must be recognized for what it is.

....

*Yet the attraction of guilt has value to you only because you have not looked at what it is, and have
judged it completely in the dark.*

*As we bring it to light, your only question will be
why it was you ever wanted it.*

T-15.VII.3:4-5

Once, a fellow who was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous told me that after he had been free of alcohol for some years, he could not now understand why it had been so important to him. In like manner, anyone who can achieve freedom from any addiction, such as smoking or drug use (or even sugar), might say that once they were clearly beyond the addiction, they could no longer understand why that hurtful habit seemed so important.

The Importance of Looking

We have *chosen* to be guilty. When we realize that we have chosen guilt, we can change our minds and choose for the Atonement — our true Self. Dr. Ken Wapnick repeatedly referred to “looking” as a central theme in the “melody” of the Course. The purpose of guilt is to keep us from looking at our “Self” (our true Self). Instead, the attraction of guilt makes guilt seem so terrible that we cannot look at it and then beyond it to our true Self. Being unwilling and, therefore, unable to look at our own guilt, we, thus, bury our guilt ever-deeper through denial, through projection, through drug or alcohol abuse, through over-eating, through a host of acts that make us feel even guiltier. This makes us very unhappy.

*The darkest of your hidden cornerstones
holds your belief in guilt from your awareness.*

T-13.II.3:1

A Preface to the Belief in Guilt Is the Belief in Sin

Sin is the most sacrosanct belief of the ego’s thought system. The heart of the ego’s thought system is that “I” exist outside of God’s Love. If I am sinful, if I am guilty, if I am a separate body, then I exist outside of the Mind of God. The Truth is that we cannot exist outside of God’s Love, which is why both the body and the world are illusions. Remember, you are not a body, and all bodies disappear. Being unreal, the body is not eternal.

*On this issue, then, the deepest split of all occurs,
for if you are to retain guilt, as the ego insists,
“you cannot be you.”*

*Only by persuading you that it is you could the ego possibly induce
you to project guilt, and thereby keep it in your mind.*

T-13.II.1:3-4

According to the psychology of the ego, if guilt is real, there is no God. Likewise, if God is real, there is no guilt. A separate, individual self cannot exist independently of God. One or the other is real. True happiness (joy) comes in doing God’s Will — having no life from God. As Lesson 223 from the Course says, “God is my Life. I have no life but His.” When we really “know” that and live with God, everything works out fine — even if the external circumstances of bodily life are not always perfect i.e. a body may be deformed but the mind perfected.

The body can never bring us peace. Peace can be achieved only through the mind. Regardless of the condition or location of the body, the mind can still be at peace. It’s the condition, or state, of the mind that matters. You may be sitting in your Mercedes or in a lovely home with your mind in hell, or you may be sitting in a prison cell with your mind in Heaven. It is a matter of choice:

Seeking pleasure through the body, the ego’s chosen home, makes the body seem real — which also means making the ego thought system real. However, the only real and lasting pleasure comes in doing God’s Will. Choosing the Peace and Love of God is not just our greatest pleasure; it is *our only true pleasure*.

Seeking pleasures in the world means we are denying that real pleasure comes in doing God's Will, or living from our true Self. This does not mean that we should stop eating good food or give up sex. Eating and sexuality are not sinful. The Course is not saying that we should not enjoy things of the world. It is just asking us to realize that these things are temporal and of much less importance than more closely following GPS (God's Plan for Salvation). Aligning our mind with the Love and Peace of the Mind of God is our greatest pleasure.

To review: Two different kinds of attractions pull at us. The attraction of guilt pulls us down into the body, and the ego thereby makes the body a prison. Fortunately, there is another even deeper attraction that pulls us Home to God and to a reunion with the "Mind of All."

*In the holy instant there are no bodies,
and you experience only the attraction of God.*

T-15.IX.7:3

The Attraction of God

We can choose to feed the ravenous ego or nourish the disciplined, unaddicted spirit. Having *in-sight*, we begin to *re-cognize* the gentle pull of God within. Raising our awareness with regularity and consistency, spirit develops a natural thirst for God, so much so, that many lesser needs are less demanding. Many Jewish, Christian, and Sufi mystics speak of the love for God as something to which they offer their deepest devotion. Such is the case for the Persian Poet, Rumi (1207-1273). Students of the Course, as they move deeper into the Course become more and more aware that there is only one God, there is only one Universe and, thus, only one fundamental force which, for the sake of our own happiness, deserves our attention.

If mystical experiences happen with regularity and consistency or even if they just happen occasionally but with profundity, then the search deepens. Mystical experiences and the search for Truth will continue until we've gone beyond all imaging and we find ourselves — at Home again.

***Let not the little interferers pull you to littleness.
There can be no attraction of guilt in innocence.
Think what a happy world you walk, with truth beside you!
Do not give up this world of freedom for a little sigh
of seeming sin, nor for a tiny stirring of guilt's attraction.
Would you, for all these meaningless distractions,
lay Heaven aside?***

T-23.in.4:1-5

When we study the lives of the mystics, when we look at the early Church Fathers and Mothers, we find individuals so pulled by the attraction of God that they sought to move away from "the world," seeking only God as much as possible.

*Become in all things a God Seeker
and in all things a God finder at all times and in all places.*
German Christian Mystic Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)

For love contains the end of guilt, as surely as fear depends on it.

Love is attracted only to love.

Overlooking guilt completely, it sees no fear.

Being wholly without attack, it could not be afraid.

T-19.IV.A.10:1-4

The Irresistible Attraction of Love for Love

There is in the universe an irresistible attraction of love for love. When I first fell in love with Judy Femmer, my high school sweetheart, I fell hard, all the way, head-over-heels. Fortunately, the same thing happened many years later when I met my wife, Dolores. True Love is incredible. When we're fully in love, we will happily do anything for the beloved. By sharing love, we come to know more about Love. God knows only abundance. He has an infinite supply of Love, and as we give out our own abundance, so do we know more of God. It's so simple. According to the mystics, all of our problems, **"all of them,"** come from choosing for the ego, instead of God. If we choose for the ego, it means that we are unaware of the presence of our wise, inner guidance. Whatever the ego says is what we do, because we believe that we are the ego.

Seeing guilt makes guilt real.

Seeing innocence makes innocence real.

As we act responsibly, refusing to project sin and guilt onto others, we disavow our belief in guilt. The most terrifying thought, which we keep buried, is the thought that *"we have sinned."* For this reason, we often find people sharing bedside confessions, where they seek to free themselves from self-condemnation, or their belief that they have sinned.

Guiltlessness

We believe that we have betrayed God's Son by condemning him. If we understood guilt was a matter of "belief" and therefore a choice, we could choose against this insanity. The ego is afraid that if we recognize our innocence and choose our true Self, it will be lost. This is true — the ego would be lost. In that is our greatest victory. The guilty self we make up does not exist. *You*, as a separated, guilty, "sleeping" self does not exist. Dream characters have no reality.

We protect the ego by not learning this Course, which means we still think we are an ego, a guilty body separate from God. **Just as only "defenselessness" can set us free from guilt, so also only "guiltlessness" can protect us.** Ultimately, acceptance of the Atonement is the only thing that can really "protect" us by bringing us back to the reality of our true identity as a Child of God. The Atonement affirms that "God's Child is Guiltless." Spirit is always invulnerable. The ego has a built in implode and one day it will disappear.

Lovingly, Jon