

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 14, Section VI

The Light of Communication

Paragraph 1

1. ¹The journey that we undertake together is the exchange [change] of dark for light, of ignorance for understanding. ²**Nothing you understand is fearful.** ³It is only in darkness and in ignorance that you perceive the frightening, and shrink away from it to further darkness. ⁴And yet it is only the hidden that **can** terrify, **not** for what it **is**, but **for** its hiddenness. ⁵The obscure is frightening **because** you do not understand its meaning. ⁶If you did, **it** would be clear and you would be no longer in the dark. ⁷Nothing has **hidden** value, for what is hidden **cannot** be shared, and so its value is unknown. ⁸The hidden is **kept apart**, but value **always** lies in joint appreciation. ⁹What is concealed **cannot** be loved, and so it **must** be feared.

• Study Question •

1. *You fear only what is hidden in darkness. What you understand you do not fear. Why do you fear what you do not understand, according specifically to this paragraph?*
 - A. You fear it because, not knowing what it is, it might contain threat.
 - B. You fear it because you do not understand its meaning.
 - C. You fear it because, being hidden, it cannot be shared. And since value comes from shared appreciation, it cannot be valued, nor appreciated, nor loved. So it must be feared.
 - D. B and C
 - E. All of the above.

Who is the “we” in “the journey that *we* undertake together” (1:1)? I believe it refers to all of us *plus Jesus*. Elsewhere, Jesus says quite clearly that he is taking the journey with us: “I take the journey with you” (W-pI.rV.Int.6:1). He has already made the trip but, so to speak, he has remained to guide us along the way. For me, it is always a comfort to know that I have an experienced elder brother walking with me on the spiritual path. The journey is not physical, from place to place, but mental, exchanging dark for light, and ignorance for understanding (1:1).

When you understand something it is no longer fearful (1:2). Some people fear computers, for instance, but I believe that if they understood computers, the fear would dissipate. If I had to administer an IV to someone, I’d be fearful of doing so because I don’t understand it; I lack the know-how. But a trained nurse does it almost without thinking.

What scares us isn't the thing itself; it is the hiddenness of the thing (1:3–4). When something is obscure, we don't understand its meaning, and that frightens us (1:5). The Course states this as a kind of universal principle: Understand something and you will no longer fear it. Look at it directly, face it, come to grips with it, and the fear will disappear. The next section makes this very clear:

...by hiding truth in fear, you see no reason to believe that the more you look at fear the less you see it, and the clearer what it conceals becomes. (T-14.VII.2:8)

This insistence on looking at our fear runs all through the Course, but this section and the next are two that particularly focus on how much we need to do it, and why. In 1:6–9, the reasons for looking are explored. Here is the logic of it:

We cannot *know* something that is hidden.

What we don't know, we fear.

Therefore, it is impossible to love anything we don't know.

Therefore, if we are to respond with love to everything, nothing can be hidden.

Paragraph 2

¹The quiet light in which the Holy Spirit dwells within you is merely perfect openness, in which nothing is hidden and therefore nothing is fearful [nothing is feared]. ²Attack will **always** yield to love if it is brought **to** love, not hidden **from** it. ³There is no darkness that the light of love will not dispel, unless it is concealed from love's beneficence. ⁴What is **kept apart** from love **cannot** share its healing power, because it has been separated off and **kept in darkness**. ⁵The sentinels of darkness watch over it carefully, and you who made these guardians of illusion out of nothing are now **afraid** of them.

• Study Question •

2. *Any darkness or attack brought to the Holy Spirit's perfect love and openness will be dispelled. What do you think the sentinels of darkness (sentence 5) are?*
 - A. Fallen angels.
 - B. Evil spirits.
 - C. An L.A. street gang.
 - D. Forces of psychological denial.
 - E. The things of the world that, like illness and death, would attack your peace of mind.
 - F. Beliefs which say that hiding darkness keeps you safe.
 - G. D and F

What an interesting description of the light of the Holy Spirit, here in 2:1: *perfect openness, in which nothing is hidden!* Think about that a bit. We talk so often of coming into the light, seeing the light, and being enlightened. Have you ever considered that what is meant by that is coming into *perfect openness, in which nothing is hidden*? Have you ever realized that being enlightened means you have absolutely nothing to hide, and

desire that nothing be hidden from you? I've read other spiritual teachings that talk about being *spiritually transparent*; it's the same thing. In the Bible, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8, NRSV). To me, these phrases all describe the same state of mind, a mind that is so pure, so filled with light that it has nothing to hide. The Bible says of God, "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). And the Course speaks in turn of our mind being filled with light:

When a mind has only light, it knows only light. Its own radiance shines all around it, and extends out into the darkness of other minds, transforming them into majesty. (T-7.XI.5:1-2)

How much do you want to be enlightened? How willing are you to hide absolutely nothing? The answer to one question is the answer to the other, because to be filled with light *means* having no darkness in which to hide anything.

What is hard for us to believe is that love always overcomes attack if the attack is not fearfully hidden and kept from love (2:2). Our egos and their attack thoughts are maintained by our fear of exposing them to the light. We don't want to admit the unloving or selfish thoughts in our minds, and by hiding those thoughts, we grant them survival. If we willingly bring them to the Holy Spirit, His light and love will *always* dispel them (2:3-4).

We protect our egos by denying that we have one, or denying that we listen to it and take our direction from it. We set up mental warning flags that say, "Danger! Do not look here!" We tell ourselves that these "sentinals of darkness" (2:5), which keep us from becoming conscious of the things we've buried in our subconscious, are keeping us safe, but in fact they are keeping us in bondage to the ego.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹Would you continue to give imagined power to these strange ideas of safety? ²They are neither safe nor unsafe. ³They do not protect; **neither do they attack.** ⁴They **do** nothing at all, **being** nothing at all. ⁵As guardians of darkness and of ignorance look to them **only** for fear, for what they keep obscure *is* fearful. ⁶But let them go, and what **was** fearful will be so no longer. ⁷Without protection of obscurity **only** the light of love remains, for only this **has** meaning and **can** live in light. ⁸Everything else **must** disappear.

• Study Question •

3. *These guardians of darkness do nothing. Based on what has been said in the first two paragraphs, what really gives rise to your fear?*
- A. The darkness within you, which is fearful to look on.
 - B. The guardians which keep the darkness hidden.
 - C. A and B.

I am intrigued by the notion that we have developed habits of mental denial to avoid being conscious of our "sins," and that now we have become afraid of the mechanisms of denial themselves. It like a person who has hidden evidence of a crime in a closet, and

now he or she is afraid even to look at the closet door! Jesus is telling us that there is no reason to be afraid of the closet door, and if we will just open it, we'll see that it is empty.

The sentinels of denial seem to be very powerful. We've all read stories in which denial seems to have incredible powers, able to suppress childhood memories, block out awareness of abuse, and so on. Probably most of us have wondered, as we study a Course that teaches that we have chosen everything we experience, how it can be possible that we have made such choices but are completely unaware of having done so. The Course teaches that all such decisions are made *consciously*, but then are *deliberately* forgotten, hidden away in "the shrouded vaults of the mind."¹ If denial is the explanation it must be unbelievably powerful!

The power of denial is only *imagined* power, and we grant it all the power it seems to have! (3:1). The mental safeguards are not *safeguards* at all. They neither protect nor attack (3:3); they are powerless, and do nothing at all (3:4). The only thing that keeps the subconscious *unconscious* is our choice to have it that way. We've deluded our minds into thinking they are protecting themselves when really they are maintaining their own insanity. The only thing the sentinels provide is fear (3:5). The ego *is* terrifying when it is kept in darkness, but take away its dark covering and it is no longer fearful. The darkness simply disappears in the light (3:5–8). It's not what the sentinels are hiding, but the sentinels themselves, that make us afraid.

Therefore, when you become aware of your ego—when your temper flares, or your mind spews out judgmental thoughts—rejoice! The ego *seen* is the ego *undone*. It's what you *don't* see that is dangerous to your peace of mind. Take a deep breath, and decide no longer to be afraid of uncovering your ego. Uncovering it is how it is healed.

Do not be afraid of the ego. It depends on your mind, and as you made it by believing in it, so you can dispel it by withdrawing belief from it. Do not project the responsibility for your belief in it onto anyone else, or you will preserve the belief. When you are willing to accept sole responsibility for the ego's existence you will have laid aside all anger and all attack, because they come from an attempt to project responsibility for your own errors. But having accepted the errors as yours, do not keep them. Give them over quickly to the Holy Spirit to be undone completely, so that all their effects will vanish from your mind and from the Sonship as a whole. (T-7.VIII.5:1-6)

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Death yields to life simply because destruction **is not true**. ²The light of

¹ "Defenses are not unintentional, nor are they made without awareness. They are

Who but yourself evaluates a threat, decides escape is necessary, and sets up a series of defenses to reduce the threat that has been judged as real? All this cannot be done unconsciously. But afterwards, your plan requires that you must forget you made it, so it seems to be external to your own intent; a happening beyond your state of mind, an outcome with a real effect on you, instead of one effected by yourself" (W-pI.136.3:1-4:3).

"And in these shrouded vaults are all his sins and yours preserved and kept in darkness, where they cannot be perceived as errors, which the light would surely show" (T-31.V.6:6).

guiltlessness shines guilt away because, when they are **brought together**, the truth of one **must** make the falsity of its **opposite** perfectly clear. ³Keep not guilt and guiltlessness **apart**, for your belief that you can **have them both**² is meaningless. ⁴All you have done by keeping them apart is **lose their meaning** by confusing them with each other. ⁵And so you do not realize that only one means **anything**. ⁶The other is wholly without sense of **any** kind.

• **Study Question** •

4. *You have kept guilt and guiltlessness apart, whereas the goal is to bring them together. What are the effects of having kept them apart?*
 - A. By keeping them apart you have been able to hold onto both of them, because you do not see their total incompatibility.
 - B. By keeping them apart you have confused them with each other, seeing guilt as proof of guiltlessness and guiltlessness as guilty arrogance.
 - C. By keeping them apart you have been able to keep guilt, which would be shined away in the presence of guiltlessness.
 - D. All of the above.

If only “truth is true” (T-14.II.3:3), then if something is not true, it does not exist. It is false; it is illusion. Here, in 4:1, we are told that “destruction is not true”. God would not create destruction, so it is not real, a lesson we are taught early in the Workbook (Lesson 14). We encountered a similar teaching just a few pages ago in the Text: “The joy of learning that darkness has no power over the Son of God is the happy lesson the Holy Spirit teaches” (T-14.III.6:6). The truth that Myrtle Fillmore realized, which launched the Unity School of Christianity and the Unity Church, was along the same lines: “I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherit sickness.” If God is my Source, how can I be anything but a holy being, and a whole being?

What does this door of darkness, guarded by sentinels, conceal? Based on the section this far, behind the door we conceal attack (2:2), death (4:1), destruction (4:1), and guilt (4:2). All these seem formidable foes, and yet this section is telling us that, in fact, they are nothing; they only *seem* formidable because they are obscured in darkness. The light would reveal their emptiness, if (and when) we allow it to shine on them (4:2).

We can't hold on to both guilt and guiltlessness (as was discussed in T-14.III.2). The only way to do so is by compartmentalizing our minds (a mental process called *dissociation*), keeping “good” stuff in one area and “bad” stuff in the other (usually, in the subconscious, hidden from our awareness). As a result we confuse the two (4:4); we are guilty about thinking we are guiltless, and only feel honest (guiltless) if we “admit” our guilt! The Course is asking us to bring them together (4:3). Only one (guiltlessness) means anything (4:5). “The other is wholly without sense of any kind” (4:6). Guiltlessness is true. Brought together with our subconscious guilt, it shines the guilt away just as sunlight dispels darkness.

As we read this, most of us are probably wondering, “How do I bring them together? How do I uncover subconscious attack thoughts and guilt when I am totally

² See T-14.III.2:1–3.

unaware of them?” For me, there are two answers. First, meditation: simply watching our thoughts while sitting in stillness. If I sit quietly and just observe what thoughts cross my mind, inevitably I will trap some ego thought I wasn't aware of having. Meditation—at least one sort of meditation—is a lot like sitting in a duck blind waiting for the birds to fly by. You are setting a trap for your ego when you get quiet. Just sit quietly and watch, and before long, the ego will expose itself. Then, you can “capture” that thought and take it to the Holy Spirit for cleansing.

Second, all day long, *watch* for your ego and when you spot it, snag it, and bring its thoughts to the Holy Spirit. You don't have to go digging for your ego. It can't help exposing itself, and that is your chance to act, to take responsibility for those thoughts and offer them up for healing. The Text puts its instruction like this:

You are much too tolerant of mind wandering, and are passively condoning your mind's miscreations. (T-2.VI.4:6)

Watch your mind for the temptations of the ego, and do not be deceived by it. It offers you nothing. When you have given up this voluntary dis-spiriting, you will see how your mind can focus and rise above fatigue and heal. Yet you are not sufficiently vigilant against the demands of the ego to disengage yourself. *This need not be.* (T-4.IV.6:1-5)

I have already told you that you can be as vigilant against the ego as for it. This lesson teaches not only that you can be, but that you *must* be. It does not concern itself with order of difficulty, but with clear-cut priority for vigilance. (T-6.V.4:2-4)

Your vigilance is the sign that you *want* Him to guide you. Vigilance does require effort, but only until you learn that effort itself is unnecessary. You have exerted great effort to preserve what you made because it was not true. Therefore, you must now turn your effort against it. Only this can cancel out the need for effort, and call upon the being which you both *have* and *are*. (T-6.V.10:3-7)

Paragraph 5

5. ¹You have regarded [interpreted] the separation as a means [which you have made] for **breaking** your communication with your Father. ²The Holy Spirit reinterprets it as a means of re-establishing what was not [has not been] broken, but *has* been made obscure. ³All things you made have use to Him, for His most holy purpose. ⁴He **knows** you are not separate from God, but He perceives much in your mind that lets you **think** you are. ⁵All this and nothing else would He separate **from** you. ⁶The power of decision, which you made **in place** of the power of creation, He would teach you how to use **on your behalf**. ⁷You who made it to crucify yourself must learn of Him how to apply it to the holy cause of restoration.

• Study Question •

5. *The Holy Spirit uses everything we have made—the separation, our power of decision—for His holy purpose of re-establishing our communication with God. What does the Holy Spirit separate you from?*
A. Other teachings that teach that God's Son is guilty.

- B. The thoughts in your mind that believe in separation from God.
- C. Other people who are too enmeshed in ego to be healthy influences for you.
- D. All of the above.



I find it remarkable that the Course, which paints *separation* in such a negative light—for instance, calling it the only lack we need to correct, the “detour into fear,” and even referring to the belief in separation as “the devil” (T-3.VII.5:1)—here tells us that the Holy Spirit “reinterprets it as a means of re-establishing” our communion with the Father (5:2). He wants to teach us to use our power of decision (something *we* made to further the separation) to separate ourselves from thoughts of separation! (5:3–7) This refers to our active vigilance against the ego. We need to use our power of decision to decide *not to decide for ourselves*, but to ask the Holy Spirit to decide for us. When ego thoughts arise, we turn to Him and say, “Decide for me.” We offer the thought to Him and ask Him to take it from us; to help us sort our thoughts, keeping only what is loving, what is of God. The concept of “separating” originates in the ego, but the Holy Spirit can use it to separate us *from* the ego.

Paragraphs 6 & 7

6. ¹You who speak in dark and devious symbols do not understand the language you have made. ²It **has** no meaning, for its purpose is **not** communication, but rather the **disruption** of communication. ³If the purpose of language is communication, how can this tongue mean **anything**? ⁴Yet even this strange and twisted effort to communicate through **not** communicating holds enough of love to **make it meaningful if its Interpreter is not its maker**. ⁵You who made it are but expressing **conflict**, from which the Holy Spirit would **release** you. ⁶Leave what you would communicate to Him. ⁷He will interpret it to you with perfect clarity, for He knows with Whom you **are** in perfect communication.

7. ¹You know not what you say, and so you know not what is said to you. ²Yet your Interpreter perceives the meaning in your alien language. ³He will not attempt to communicate the meaningless. ⁴But He **will** separate out all that **has** meaning, dropping off the rest and offering your true communication to those who would communicate as truly **with** you. ⁵**You speak two languages at once**, and this **must** lead to unintelligibility. ⁶Yet if one means nothing and the other **everything**, only that one is possible for purposes of communication. ⁷The other but **interferes** with it.

• Study Question •

6. *Paragraph 6 gives us an interesting discussion of the nature of human language. Based on what this paragraph says, why did we invent the English language?*
- A. In order to disrupt communication.
 - B. In order to express the meaningless.
 - C. In small part, to express love.

D. In order to make it really hard to spell properly.

E. A, B and C.

7. *Paragraph 7 continues the discussion of our language. This says we speak two languages at once. What are these two languages and what does the Holy Spirit do with them?*

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Language is another example of something we made to break communication with God that the Holy Spirit takes and uses to re-establish that communication. Language is necessary only because of the *apparent* need to communicate with separate minds. I am here; you are there. I have a thought and need to communicate it to you. Because our minds are separate (so our premise goes, although they are not separate) I need something to convey my thought from my mind to yours. In reality that is not so:

...communication...is an eternal property of mind. But the communication is internal. Mind reaches to itself. It is *not* made up of different parts, which reach each other. (T-18.VI.8:3-6)

"Only minds communicate" (T-7.V.2:1).

"For minds need not the body to communicate" (T-20.V.5:3).

Yet the very existence of language *presupposes separation*, and so supports the idea of separation and non-communication even while it apparently has the purpose of communication. The true purpose of language, from the ego's perspective, is to *disrupt* communication (6:2).

If we consider the constant difficulties we have with communication via language, the ego's plan is clearly working well!

And yet even this twisted tool can convey love. It's as if, whenever we speak, we are speaking on two levels (7:5). There is the ego level that attempts to confuse and disrupt communication, expressing conflict, and there is the spirit level that is expressing love and seeking communion. Again, the key is turning it all over to the Holy Spirit. Let Him interpret what you hear; let Him tell you what to say (6:4-7). He can sort it all out, separating out "all that has meaning" (that is, love), and dropping off the rest (7:1-4). He can even filter your words offered to others so that what they hear is only the love, your "true communication" (7:4). Only that means anything; the rest just interferes with communication (7:6-7).

What you truly want to offer to others is love, yet your ego keeps getting in the way. Let yourself become aware of that, and be vigilant. Ask the Holy Spirit to separate out what you truly want to say, and to drop off the rest.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹The Holy Spirit's function is **entirely** communication. ²He therefore **must** remove whatever **interferes** with communication in order to **restore** it. ³Therefore, keep no source of interference from His sight, for He will **not** attack your sentinels. ⁴But bring them **to** Him and let His gentleness teach you that, in the light, they are not fearful, and **cannot** serve to guard the dark doors behind which nothing at all is carefully concealed. ⁵We must open all doors and let the light come streaming through. ⁶There are no hidden chambers in God's temple. ⁷Its gates are open wide to greet His Son. ⁸No one can fail to come where God

has called him, if he close not the door himself upon his Father's welcome.

• **Study Question** •

8. *This paragraph ties in the discussion about communication interference with the earlier discussion of the sentinels of darkness. What is the connection between our sentinels and the interference to communication?*
- A. The sentinels keep us from communicating because they have orders to not talk or smile.
 - B. The sentinels guard the doors to God's temple, so that we cannot enter and experience true communication.
 - C. The sentinels are the interference to communication, because they keep the Holy Spirit from opening the dark doors and cleansing our minds of the dark thoughts of non-communication that lie behind the doors.
 - D. The sentinels help guard our minds so that we do not entertain thoughts that interfere with communication.
 - E. B and D

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Earlier in the Text, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as “the communication link between God the Father and His separated Sons” (T-6.I.19:1). His entire purpose is communication (8:1), so naturally, He removes anything that blocks communication (8:2). And that includes removing our separating thoughts from our minds, something He cannot do without our cooperation. We have to open the door to our subconscious, trap those attack thoughts, and bring them to Him for healing. This is why we have to stop trying to hide our egos from Him (8:3). He won't attack our sentinels; that is, He does not batter down our denial by brute force. We must *choose* to let Him in.

The Holy Spirit cannot ask more than you are willing to do. The strength to do comes from your undivided decision. (T-2.VI.6:2-3)

Bring your fears to Him, the fears that keep you from allowing yourself to be aware of your ego. He'll show you that there is really nothing to fear, and that the fear hides nothing at all. The ego, which you are afraid is hiding there like a snake coiled in the basement of your mind, simply does not exist! (8:4)

“Open all doors and let the light come streaming through” (8:5). Remember how the section opened, with the statement that light is perfect openness (2:1)? We've come full circle, back to the realization that we must hide nothing, that in God's Temple “there are no hidden chambers” (8:6). The heaven we are seeking is a heaven of open doors, and the way to get there is through opening every closed door and letting in the light of God.

• **Study Question** •

You suspect that you feel buried hatred toward someone that you really want to believe that you love. You further notice that you have a natural impulse to look away from this buried hatred, as well as a strong aversion to really looking into it. (If this example does not apply, try to think of another dark feeling you harbor, but are afraid to look at.)

This impulse to look away and aversion to looking at—this impulse to guard your

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hatred from awareness—is what this section calls a sentinel of darkness. Please describe what this section would say about this sentinel of yours, the effects it has and what to do about it (for help, see the following passages: 1:4–6, 2:3–5, 3:1–8, 4:1–3, 5:5–6, 8:2–5).



Answers

1. D

2. G

3. B

4. D

5. B

6. E

7. The two languages are the love and meaning we want to communicate and the separation we want to communicate. The Holy Spirit will drop off the separation and retain the love and meaning, communicating that to those who would communicate with us.

8. C

9.

1--Your sentinel makes the hatred it hides seem fearful, even though it is not.

2--The hatred would be dispelled by the light of love, if it were not guarded by your sentinel.

3--Your sentinel has no real power to keep you safe or unsafe. It just makes you afraid because it makes your hatred seem fearful when it is not.

4--If you withdrew the sentinel your hatred would come into contact with love and would thus be dispelled.

5--The Holy Spirit would separate you from your hateful thoughts of separation, if you would let Him by removing the sentinel.

8--Bring your sentinel to Him so that He can show they are not fearful and cannot hide the doors behind which your hatred—which is nothing—lies concealed. Let these doors be opened, for all of God's temple doors are open for you.