# **Study Guide and Commentary**

# ACIM® Text, Chapter 18, Section VI Paragraphs 1 to 7

# **Beyond the Body**

### Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)

italic blue text = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext

bold sans serif text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext

light blue text = editorial comments

strikethrough blue text = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

### **Overview of the Section**

What a section this section is, short as it may be! It tells us the three main means that the Holy Spirit uses to save us. It makes incredible promises about the power of our relationships. It clarifies that a holy relationship is still a special relationship. And it gives us a powerful practice to use when it feels as if our relationship is falling apart.

## Paragraph 1

1. **There is nothing outside you**. <sup>2</sup>That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the **[in that]** realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you. <sup>3</sup>For God created only this [the Kingdom], and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself. <sup>4</sup>The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him. <sup>5</sup>Heaven is not a place nor a condition. <sup>6</sup>It is merely an awareness of perfect oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; **nothing outside** this oneness, and **nothing else** within.

## Study Question

- 1. In the context of this paragraph (see especially the last sentence), what does it mean that there is nothing outside of you?
  - A. Other people are not outside of you, but figments of your imagination.
  - B. Your body is a microcosm of the entire universe. In a sense, then, the whole universe is inside of it.
  - C. Nothing is outside of you because nothing is outside of Heaven, and you are in Heaven.
  - D. All of the above.

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The concept that there is, quite literally, "nothing outside you" (1:1) seems incomprehensible to us. We think: *Of course* there are things outside of me! In fact, *most things* are outside of me. Ebola in Africa, that isn't in me. People who shoot dozens of other people in malls or schools, they are not inside of me. The moon and the stars are outside of me. *You* are outside of me! Right? *R-i-g-h-t*? **What**? "Nothing is outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn..." (1:1–2). How can that be?

Jesus has been telling us in no uncertain terms that everything we think is outside of us is *not* outside of us; it is in our mind. It is our dream, and does not exist in reality. It is a form of the same world you see in dreams.

All your time is spent in dreaming. Your sleeping and your waking dreams have different forms, and that is all (T-18.II.5:12–13).

It gets complex. If everything that I think is outside of me is really in my mind, then you are just a dream image in my mind. But if this is true for you as well as for me, then I am a dream image in *your* mind! Who is the dreamer? Me? You? Several billion other people? As the Course ultimately insists, there is only one Mind of the Son of God, one Mind dreaming the whole fantasy of multiple identities. Talk about multiple personality disorder!

But Jesus says this—this weird idea—is what we "ultimately must learn." We must learn! How can I possibly learn that there is nothing outside of me? It seems to be a lesson beyond learning. Yet, when I think about it in light of the primary premise of the Course (that the only problem is a belief in separation, and that, "The full awareness of the Atonement, then, is the recognition that the separation never occurred." (T-6.II.10:7)—in that light, "nothing outside" makes perfect sense. If there is no separation then there is no "outside." There is no "other." There is only the One, and nothing outside of It.

Quantum physics has observed that particles that are clearly connected *remain* connected even if they are later separated by huge distances, so that when something occurs to one particle, it occurs to the other *instantaneously*, with no lapse of time whatsoever. Despite the appearance of spatial separation, the particles are still connected. Therefore, the physicists say, since *all* particles were originally connected prior to the Big Bang, *everything* is still connected to everything else, and space is merely the illusion of separate objects. Nothing is separate. Nothing is "outside" of anything else. To me, this aspect of the physical universe is a reflection of the spiritual reality we are talking about here. There is nothing outside us; we contain the universe or, in another manner of speaking, we *are* the universe and the universe is us. Quantum theory helps me understand, intellectually, how what the Course is saying can be so. But intellectual understanding isn't enough.

In the first sentence of the last section, we saw that a crucial single letter had been mis-transcribed from the shorthand notes, so that "not" became "now"—"Prepare you *not* for the undoing of what never was" (T-18.V.1:1). A similar error was made in the second sentence of this paragraph, one that inverts the sense, although in a somewhat less

dramatic way than the earlier error. Here, a small word that occurs in the Urtext and also in the edition originally edited by Helen with Bill (the "Original Edition") was omitted for some reason, either by accident or on purpose, from the FIP edition, and the word "that" was altered to "the". Notice the words that are in sans serif bold face:

That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the in that realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you (T-18.VI.1:2)

If read in the FIP version, the *object* of our realization is the Kingdom of Heaven: When we finally learn that there is nothing outside of us, we will have realized the Kingdom. But with the words "in that" restored, the object of our realization is the fact that there is nothing outside of us. It is when we *realize* that reality, realize that we include all things, that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to us. It is not enough to simply *learn* that there is nothing outside of us—we may have already given mental assent to the idea—, we have to *realize* it, that is, make it real in our experience. When this truth is *realized*, Oneness has become as much a part of us as our belief in the rising of the sun. We don't have to think about it to remember it. We *know* all is One in the same way we know we exist. Its truth runs through us like a watermark through a banknote. It is the underlying assumption of everything we say and do.

## Paragraph 2

<sup>1</sup>What could God give but knowledge of Himself? <sup>2</sup>What else *is* there to give? <sup>3</sup>The belief that you could give *and get* something else, something *outside* yourself, has cost you the awareness of Heaven and [the loss of knowledge] of your Identity. <sup>4</sup>And you have done a stranger thing than you yet realize. <sup>5</sup>You have displaced your guilt to your body *from your* mind [minds]. <sup>6</sup>Yet a body *cannot* be guilty, for it can do nothing of itself. <sup>7</sup>You who think you hate your body deceive yourself. <sup>8</sup>You hate your mind [minds], for guilt has entered into it [them], and it [they] would remain separate from your brother's, which it [they] *cannot do*.

### • Study Question •

- 2. Paragraph 2 says that you have displaced your guilt onto your body--in essence, blaming it for your "sins." Why does your mind feel guilty (there may be more than one right answer)?
  - A. For trying to give something other than knowledge of God.
  - B. For trying to get something other than knowledge of God.
  - C. For trying to get something outside of you.
  - D. For trying to be separate from your brother.
  - E. For losing awareness of Heaven and your Identity.

When God created, God *gave* something. He gave "knowledge of Himself" (2:1). Up until the moment of creation nothing existed but God, so what else could God have given

but knowledge of Himself? (2:2) This is saying, in other words, that when God created, He created by extending Himself.

In the creation, God extended Himself to His creations and imbued them with the same loving Will to create (T-2.I.1:2).

God created His Sons by extending His Thought, and retaining the extensions of His Thought in His Mind (T-6.II.8:1).

...God created you by extending Himself as you (T-7.I.5:2).

If that is so, then God is all there is.

God is All in all in a very literal sense. All being is in Him Who is all Being (T-7.IV.7:4-5).

This is why there is nothing outside of you. You are an extension of God, still part of God, and God is All in All. There is nothing else! Our belief that there is something beyond everything, something "else" to get or to give, has driven the awareness of our Identity as Christ and our permanent abode in Heaven right out of our minds:

This is the anti-Christ; the strange idea there is a power past omnipotence, a place beyond the infinite, a time transcending the eternal (T-29.VIII.6:2).

Even stranger than this deliberate forgetting, however, is the way that we have shifted the blame for this from our minds to our bodies. If we are separate, we think, it is the fault of the body. *I* am not guilty; my body is the culprit (2:4–5). Of course this isn't even possible, because my body does not do anything my mind does not tell it to do (2:6). Our antagonism toward the body is just a form of self-deception (2:7).

You may be thinking, "What antagonism toward the body? What do you mean that I think I hate my body? I don't think that." If your body is strong, healthy, and attractive, you may think you *love* your body. Or, you may think you despise your body because it is sick, or imperfect or ugly in some way. Neither of those approach the level of what the Course is talking about here. It is referring to a level at which *everyone* hates their body because it seems to *separate* us from everything and everyone else. It is a barrier between us and the universe. We are experiencing the existential guilt of separateness. At a deep level, we know we have brought about this experience of separateness, and we hate it, we hate ourselves for having done it, but we cannot stand hating ourselves, our minds, so we *displace* the guilt and hatred onto the body. The evidence that this is so, as we will see shortly, is the body's frailty, sickness, and ultimately its death.

And yet we only *think* we hate our bodies (2:7). It isn't the body we hate; we hate our *minds* because of the guilt we feel for having chosen to be separate from our brothers' minds. Fortunately for us, our minds cannot actually *be* separate from other minds, so the guilt we feel is purely imaginary (2:8). Likewise, because the guilt is not real, there is no need to displace it onto the body.

## Paragraph 3

3. ¹Minds *are* joined; bodies are not. ²Only by assigning to the mind the properties *of the body* does separation *seem* to be possible. ³And it is *mind* that seems to be fragmented and private and *alone*. ⁴Its guilt, which *keeps* it separate, is projected to the body, which suffers and dies *because it is attacked* to hold the separation in the mind, and let it *not know* its <del>Identity</del> [unity]. ⁵Mind cannot attack, but it *can* make fantasies and direct the body to act them out. ⁶Yet it is never what the *body* does that seems to satisfy. <sup>7</sup>Unless the mind *believes* the body is *actually* acting out *its* fantasies, it will attack the body by *increasing the projection of its guilt upon it*.

### Study Question

- 3. In essence, what is being said is that the mind uses the body to do things the mind cannot inherently do, and then blames the body for this use. What two things does the mind use the body to do (in this paragraph)?
  - A. Separation and attack.
  - B. Privacy and guilt.
  - C. Pride and pleasure.
  - D. Specialness and attack.

Despite what our egos may wish, "minds *are* joined" (3:1), and we cannot change that. Bodies are *not* joined. The only way separation *seems* to be possible is by imagining that what is true of the body is true of the mind (3:2). This is why most people believe that the mind is in the body, and that, therefore, minds are separate. Thus, the mind seems to be "fragmented and private and *alone*" (3:3). Each of those adjectives is loaded with meaning:

- \* **fragmented**—the one Mind seems to be shattered into, literally, billions of tiny fragments, inside of billions of bodies.
- \* private—your mind seems to be yours alone, with nothing to do with any others of the billions of fragments; yet, like the quantum particles, all the fragments remain connected as they always have been, and anything that affects one fragment of mind affects them all.
- \* alone—your mind is all by itself in an immense world, with every other fragment seemingly in competition with it; it craves union, knowing that is its natural state, but seeks to find it in things it believes are outside of itself, such as other bodies.

This experience of fragmentation and loneliness is what drives the mind to attack the body, because the mind has projected its guilt onto the body and blames it for the devastation of separation. The body gets sick, grows old, and dies, because of this projected guilt. And yet, by displacing the guilt to where it is not, the mind perpetuates its

experience of separation and blinds itself to its *unity* with other minds and with God (3:4).

The mind wants the body to make its dreams of separation to come true. It makes fantasies and directs the body to act them out (3:5). Nothing the body does, however, satisfies the mind; the body *cannot* make separation real (3:6). So when the mind realizes that the body is *not* fulfilling its mad fantasies, it attacks the body, "increasing the projection of guilt upon it" (3:7). The mind both *blames* the body for the negatives of separation and guilt, and hates the body because it does not perfectly manifest the mind's separation fantasies.

Nobody ever said this was anything but insane! That is exactly the declaration that opens the next paragraph.

## Paragraph 4

4. ¹In this, the mind is *clearly* delusional. ²It cannot attack, but it maintains it *can*, and *uses* what it does to hurt the body to *prove* it can. ³The mind cannot attack, but it *can* deceive itself. ⁴And this is *all* it does when it believes it has attacked the body. ⁵It *can* project its guilt, but it will *not* lose it through projection. ⁶And though it clearly can *misperceive* the function of the body, it *cannot* change its function from what the Holy Spirit *establishes* it to be. ¹The body was *not* made by love. <sup>8</sup>Yet love does not condemn it and can use it lovingly, respecting what the Son of God has made and using it to *save* him from illusions.

## Study Question

- 4. This paragraph also talks about the mind using the body, not just to act out fantasies of attack, but to prove that it can attack. What is it talking about now?
  - A. The mind uses the body to attack the mind, thus proving that the mind can attack.
  - B. The mind attacks the body (with sickness, aging, death, etc.), thus proving that the mind can attack.
  - C. The mind uses the body to attack the Holy Spirit, thus proving that the mind can attack.

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The ego mind is delusional, *clearly* delusional (4:1). But the nature of the mind's delusion may not be what you expect. In fact, you may not recognize it *as* a delusion when you hear it. The mind "cannot attack, but it maintains it *can*" (4:2). This isn't obvious; it certainly seems that the mind can attack, and does. In fact, the Course itself speaks of "attack thoughts," which certainly sounds as though the mind is attacking. The Course explains that thoughts of attack—belief that the mind *can* attack—assume (falsely) that minds are vulnerable, while the Course insists that we, as minds, are

*invulnerable* (T-1.IV.2:11; T-13.I.11:8). Mind cannot attack because minds are invulnerable; no attack is possible (T-8.VII.16:6). When our mind maintains that it *can* attack, it can only do so by presupposing an illusion and a falsehood. The mind is deceiving itself (4:3)!

In order to "prove" that it can truly attack, the mind "uses what it does to hurt the body" (4:2). Yet even in this, when the effects on the body, which we experience as sickness or exhaustion, seem very real, the mind is deceiving itself (4:4; see also W-pI.pII.5.2:3-4). It has altered an illusion and a dream (our body, which is no more than a projection of the mind¹), and in doing so, the mind thinks it has off-loaded its guilt onto the body; yet that, too, is a delusion (4:5). The body's function has been established by the Holy Spirit, and the mind cannot change that function, although it can misperceive it (4;6).

The next statement is fundamental to the understanding that, in the Course's view of things, God did not create the body: "The body was *not* made by love" (4:7). Elsewhere, the Course says that our ego made the body "to imprison" our mind (W-pI.199.3:3; W-pI.72.2:3); that the body was made by the mind in an effort to deceive itself (W-pI.pII.4.2:1); that it was made to be fearful (W-pI.pII.5.3:4). "The body is the ego's idol; the belief in sin made flesh and then projected outward" (T-20.VI.11:1). Clearly, in the view of the Course, God did not create nor make the body if it is "the belief in sin made flesh"!

And yet.... "Love does not condemn it and can use it lovingly" (4:8). Let that sink in. All those *very* negative statements about the body, and yet "love does not condemn it." The Course makes it clear that bodies are not bad, nor are they good. They are *neutral*. (I urge you to turn to Lesson 294 in the Workbook and read it, speaking it aloud if possible. It is a powerful affirmation and application of this teaching about the body.) Love, that is, God, respects what you have made (your body) and can *use* your body lovingly to *save* you from your own illusions (4:8). He will use the body to take you *beyond* the body.

## Paragraph 5

5. ¹Would you not have the instruments of separation [bodies] *reinterpreted* as means for salvation, and *used* for purposes of love? ²Would you not welcome *and support* the shift from fantasies of vengeance to *release* from them? ³Your *perception* of the body can clearly be sick, but project not this upon the body. ⁴For your wish to make destructive what *cannot* destroy can have no *real* effect at all. ⁵[And] What God created is only what He would have it be, being His Will. ⁴You cannot make His Will destructive. <sup>7</sup>You can make *fantasies* in which your will *conflicts* with His, but that is all.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;The body is a dream" (W-pI.pII.5.3:1)

### • Study Question •

- 5. The first sentence talks about having "the instruments of separation reinterpreted as means of salvation." What does that mean?
  - A. Having the ego reinterpreted from a hateful thing to something you love.
  - B. Having special relationships transformed into holy relationships.
  - C. Having the body reinterpreted from a means of attack to an instrument for extending love.

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This is good news, folks! Even though we made the body to imprison our minds, to delude ourselves, and to become the instrument of separation, they can be reinterpreted and used for purposes of love (5:1). Jesus is offering us release from our fantasies of vengeance; are we not willing to *support* that process (5:2)? Our egos are attempting to "prove" that the mind can attack, that it is evil, twisted, and therefore no longer belongs to God. They do so by using the body for attack, both attacking the body with sickness and using it to attack other bodies. This is based upon a false, "sick" perception of the body. None of this has any "real effect at all" (5:3–4). We have not made the mind into a sinful thing. The mind, created by God, remains as He created it and as He willed it to be; in fact, the mind is His Will (5:5). Making God's Will into something destructive is simply impossible (5:6). Any apparent conflict of your will with God's will is nothing more than a fantasy (5:7). You are His will. Lesson 74 says, "There is no will but God's." It continues:

God's is the only Will. When you have recognized this, you have recognized that your will is His. The belief that conflict is possible has gone (W-pI.74.1:2-4).

## Paragraph 6

6. ¹It is insane to use the body as the scapegoat for guilt, *directing* its attack and *blaming* it for what you wished it to do. ²*It is impossible to act out fantasies*. ³For it is still the *fantasies* you want, and they have nothing to do with what the body does. ⁴*It* does not dream of them, and they but make *it* a liability where it *could* be an asset. ⁵For fantasies have made your body your "enemy"; weak, vulnerable and treacherous, worthy of the hate that you invest in it. ⁶How has this served you? <sup>7</sup>You have *identified* with this thing you hate, the instrument of vengeance and the perceived source of your guilt. <sup>8</sup>*You* have done this to a thing that has no meaning, proclaiming it to be the dwelling place of God's Son, and turning it *against* him.

### Study Question

- 6. You blame the body for the attack fantasies you told the body to act out. Why is this insane (there may be more than one right answer)?
  - A. You were the one that directed the body to attack.
  - B. Fantasies cannot be acted out. They exist only in the mind.
  - C. The body does not share your fantasies.
  - D. The body is an instrument that can only bless.
  - E. The body has no meaning.

•

We must realize that, in the Course's view of things, the body is something we made up to play out the fantasy of being a separate being, rather than an extension of God's Spirit. It is *not* who we are. It is *not* an essential part of us. In our normal understanding, however, we are unaware that the body is nothing more than a puppet, and we are the puppet master. At times we identify with the body and think it is us. At other times, we view the body as an enemy. We do so particularly when the body seems to limit us in some way (sickness, tiredness, death), or when its "cravings" somehow lead us astray (sexual affairs, for instance). There is even some part of our mind that *punishes* the body for our sins, using it "as the scapegoat for guilt" (6:1)². Clearly this is not a conscious thing, but the Course is quite insistent on this point: "...sickness is of the mind, and has nothing to do with the body" (M-5.II.3:2). "Sickness is anger taken out upon the body, so that it will suffer pain" (T-28.VI.5:1).

"If sickness is but a faulty problem-solving approach, it is a decision. And if it is a decision, it is the mind and not the body that makes it. The resistance to recognizing this is enormous, because the existence of the world as you perceive it depends on the body being the decision maker. Terms like "instincts," "reflexes" and the like represent attempts to endow the body with non-mental motivators" (M-5.II.1:5-8).

"Sickness is not an accident. Like all defenses, it is an insane device for self-deception" (W-pI.136.2:1-2).

"Sickness is a decision. It is not a thing that happens to you, quite unsought, which makes you weak and brings you suffering. It is a choice you make, a plan you lay, when for an instant truth arises in your own deluded mind, and all your world appears to totter and prepare to fall. Now are you sick, that truth may go away and threaten your establishments no more" (W-pI.136.7:1-4).

<sup>2</sup> The term "scapegoat" has an interesting biblical origin. According to Leviticus 16, it was a goat that was driven out of the Hebrew camp into the wilderness after the high priest had symbolically laid the sins of the people upon it. It symbolically suffer the punishment for the people's sins. That is how we, unconsciously, use our own bodies.

The double-minded way our egos use the body, "directing its attack and blaming it for what [we] wished it to do" 6:1), is simply insane. If the body is to blame, our mind is not; if the mind directed its puppet body, then the body is innocent. The ego wants—and usually has—it both ways! The truth is, neither is guilty. "It is impossible to act out fantasies" (6:2), but we certainly try. We cannot be separate from God any more than a wave can be separate from the ocean. What the ego wants is that impossible dream, and no matter what the body does (at the ego mind's direction), it cannot fulfill that fantasy (6:3).

The ways we try to "prove" we are separate, such as sickness (see the two quotes from Lesson 136 above), turn the body into a "liability where it *could* be an asset" (6:4). It drags us down. It distracts us from spirit. But, as the passage here states quite clearly, it need not be that way! The body *can* be an asset! It can help us on our spiritual journey, if we choose to use it that way, as a means of communication.

If the body becomes a means you give to the Holy Spirit to use on behalf of union of the Sonship, you will not see anything physical except as what it is. Use it for truth and you will see it truly (T-8.VII.4:5-6).

But our ego-use of the body has made it seemingly into our "enemy; weak, vulnerable and treacherous, worthy of the hate that you invest in it" (6:5). Jesus asks, "How has this served you?" (6:6), which reminds me of Dr. Phil's famous question on TV: "How's that working for you?" The answer is obvious. It has diminished us, because, as pitiful as our bodies may be, both as instruments of vengeance that act out our attacks on one another and as the supposed cause of our guilt, we have identified with them (6:7). The body is a meaningless thing:

The body is separate, and therefore cannot be part of you. To be of one mind is meaningful, but to be one body is meaningless. By the laws of mind, then, the body is meaningless (T-6.V.3:3-5).

Meaningless, but we have fantasized that we, who are the holy offspring of God Himself, dwell in these flimsy shells of flesh that have, somehow beyond our control, turned against God and against our own divinity (6:8)

## Paragraph 7

7. This is the host of God that *you* have made. <sup>2</sup>And neither God nor His most holy Son can enter an abode that harbors hate, and where you have sown the seeds of vengeance, violence and death. <sup>3</sup>This thing you made to serve your guilt stands between you and other minds. <sup>4</sup>The minds *are* joined, but you do not *identify* with them. <sup>5</sup>You *see* yourself locked in a separate prison, removed and unreachable, incapable of reaching out as being reached. <sup>6</sup>You *hate* this prison you have made, and would destroy it. <sup>7</sup>But you would *not* escape from it, leaving it unharmed, *without* your guilt upon it.

### • Study Question •

- 7. This paragraph gives (at least) two reasons why the body, which we view as a separating prison, is not really a prison. Find these two reasons in the answers below.
  - A. Your mind is joined with other minds.
  - B. The body will eventually die and you will be free of it.
  - C. You do not live inside the body--it thus cannot be a prison.
  - D. The body is not a prison, but a beautiful garden.

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You see the body as a prison that separates you from others, making you lonely and isolated, unable to reach the other minds around you. You hate it and attack it with sickness and death. This is "the host of God that *you* have made" (7:1), *you*, not God. You feel trapped in your body, where, full of hate, "vengeance, violence and death" (7:2), neither God nor His Son (the Christ you really are) can enter. Jesus calls the body "this thing you made to serve your guilt," proclaiming that it has became a barrier between you and other minds (7:3). You seem to be "locked in a separate prison, removed and unreachable, incapable of reaching out as being reached" (7:5). You can't get to them (all those minds that *seem* to be "other"), and they cannot get to you. So, perhaps consciously, perhaps subconsciously, but surely in one way or the other, "you *hate* this prison you have made, and would destroy it" (7:6). Yet despite that hatred, and that feeling of being trapped, you don't want to escape from it and let it off the hook! You want to lay your guilt on it and see it punished as your scapegoat (7:7).

But you have a choice. You don't need to continue to see your body in this way. It is not a bad thing, nor is it a good thing: it is "wholly neutral" (see Lesson 294; worth reading). You experience yourself as cut off from other minds by your body, but in fact, "the minds *are* joined" (7:4), but by identifying with your *body* you have abandoned your awareness of your identity with all minds. If you are willing to stop blaming your body, forgiving yourself in the process, you *can* escape from it and reclaim your true Identity.

The remainder of this section will present a different way of perceiving the body, a way which makes it an asset rather than a liability. The next commentary will cover the remaining paragraphs of this section.

# **Answer Key**

- **1.** C
- **2.** A,B,C,D,E
- **3.** A
- **4.** B
- **5.** C
- **6.** A,B,C,E
- **7.** A,C