

Healing the Dream of Sickness

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Part XIII

Let us now return to what I read earlier from the teacher's manual, section 5 "How Is Healing Accomplished?" The second subsection under that is "The Shift in Perception," and we begin with paragraph 3.

(M-5.II.3:1-2) What is the single requisite for this shift in perception? It is simply this; the recognition that sickness is of the mind, and has nothing to do with the body.

We are talking specifically about sickness, but obviously this goes for any form of unrest, dis-ease, or upset. As Lesson 5 says, "I am never upset for the reason I think." You could plug in any word to that: I am never discouraged, angry, happy, ecstatic, excited, disappointed, or sick for the reason I think. That particular lesson does not go into any detailed explanation of what we are upset about, but obviously so many other places in the workbook, the text, and the manual do. Again, we are speaking specifically about sickness, but this can easily be generalized to anything that upsets us.

(M-5.II.3:3-4) What does this recognition "cost"? It costs the whole world you see, for the world will never again appear to rule the mind.

It literally costs the whole world, because the whole world will disappear along with you at the very end, but we are not at the very end yet. So while we are still making our way up the ladder, what changes is the way we *see* the world. We have seen the world as ruling us: we are the victims, the effects, of causes beyond our control. Looking at the world through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, or taking Jesus' hand and walking through the clouds of guilt does not mean that we no longer see the world through our eyes; it means, rather, that our *interpretation* shifts. We no longer are the victims of something done to us. That is the change. Again, the cost is "the whole world you see, for the world will never again appear to rule the mind."

(M-5.II.3:5) For with this recognition is responsibility placed where it belongs; not with the world, but on him who looks on the world and sees it as it is not.

Seeing the world "as it is not" can be understood on two levels. The immediate level that is being talked about here is that I no longer see the world as ruling me, as being the cause of my distress and unhappiness. When I get near the top of the ladder, I suddenly realize that I see the world as it is not, meaning that I see a world that exists, when the world does not exist at all—it is only a dream. But until I get to the point when I am able to realize the whole thing is literally a dream, and the person I call myself is simply a figure in that dream, I have what *A Course in Miracles* refers to as happy dreams, where I still experience the world as real, but I no longer experience it as attacking me. When Helen made the shift and cut the cord between the woman's high heels and her head (see the preceding

excerpt), the woman's high heels were still stomping on the floor, and Helen was still lying in bed with her head on the pillow. The difference was that she no longer saw the connection the way she had previously seen it. That is the change. It is not that the world externally changes; what changes is your interpretation of the world: you no longer see it as having an effect on you.

(M-5.II.3:6-7) He looks on what he chooses to see. No more and no less.

This is basically the idea that *projection makes perception*. I look within and choose the ego or the Holy Spirit. Whichever teacher I choose will determine the way I perceive the world: either as a place of sin, guilt, fear, hate, and suffering; or as a classroom in which everyone, without exception, has to learn the same lesson. What unites us all is having the one interest and the one goal instead of separate ones.

(M-5.II.3:8-9) The world does nothing to him. He only thought it did.

On the level of the body, the world certainly does do things to us. Jesus is not suggesting that we lapse into denial, where we make believe the world has no effect on our bodies. It absolutely does. He tells us in Chapter 2 that to deny our physical experience in this world is a "particularly unworthy form of denial" (T-2.IV.3:11). He is not saying that we are to deny the world; he is simply saying that we should deny our *interpretation* of the world. "The world does nothing to him. He only thought it did."

(M-5.II.3:10-11) Nor does he do anything to the world, because he was mistaken about what it is. Herein is the release from guilt and sickness both, for they are one.

It is not only that the world does nothing to me, I have done nothing to the world, because my belief that people are attacking and victimizing me is a projection of my secret thought that I am the one who has victimized other people. I began with God, and then I made up a world so I could victimize it. But when I walk through these clouds with Jesus, I realize that what I perceive outside mirrors back to me what I made real inside, and what I made real inside has no effect either. That is the good news. Not only is my attack on you unjustified, regardless of what you have done; my attack on me is unjustified, regardless of what I have done. That is how guilt is undone. Guilt and sickness are one.

(M-5.II.3:12) Yet to accept this release, the insignificance of the body must be an acceptable idea.

Bingo! That is the problem. You just sail along on these wonderful words: Yes, I can do this, I can do that; and then suddenly, oops, I don't think I can do that. That is our fear of release. Do not deny your attachment to your body, yourself, your personality, or your history, because if you deny it, you will have no way of healing it and letting it go; but be aware of how very difficult this is. In the important section, "The Last Unanswered Question" (T-21.VII), there are four questions. The first three are relatively easy to answer. They are relevant here, because all three questions basically have to do with no longer seeing the world as victimizing us. The fourth question, the kicker, is: "*And do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth?*" (T-21.VII.5:14). That is the one we do not want to answer, because that is the one that changes our mind. The first three change our perception of the world. That is difficult enough, but we manage that after a while. The last one, which is the same as what Jesus is talking about here, is that I must look at what I chose to deny *because* it is the truth. If I look at it again because it is the truth, the illusion that is my self, which is why my body is insignificant, will disappear.

That is why Jesus says the problem with this question is that you do not understand. Yet to answer this question with a "yes" means to say "not no" (T-21.VII.12:4). By that he means that to answer "Yes, I

want to see what I denied because it is the truth," means that you want to go back into your right mind and stay there. In order to say that and mean it, you must look at the ego's thought system, which is the "no," and say you do not want that anymore. That is the problem. The ego thought system that we embraced—indeed, we made it—is the self. We want to be separated, individual identities, special and unique. That self is who each of us is. And that is what we have to look at and say we do not want anymore. That is why that last unanswered question remains unanswered, because it means looking at the ego and saying we do not want it.

What you want to do with yourself, which is the beginning of the process of healing, is to be honest and realize that you are not sure you want to do this. "Yes, I think it is good for me to practice letting go of grievances; and I really do not want to hold onto the past and to blame other people for things that I am doing." That is all well and good, and very important. It will get you through the first four stages in the development of trust that the early pages in the manual talk about (M-4.1.3-6); but it will not get you through the fifth and the sixth stages, because the fifth stage is letting go of your sense of self, and the sixth is the attainment of the real world.

There are many places in the Course where Jesus says the same thing—that all you need to do is just be aware so that you do not deny your fear or your identification with the ego and your body, and that you do not try to pretty it over. You are simply saying that "Yes, that is where I am and I am not ready yet. Until I am ready to take those final steps up the ladder I can take a lot of the middle steps—like really learning to let go of my grievances. I can learn to ask Jesus for help whenever I find myself getting angry, annoyed, fearful, or guilty and realize that these are things I am choosing. I can learn not to blame other people and just be patient, kind, and gentle with myself as I go through this."