

Healing the Dream of Sickness

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Part VI

"The Process of Illness" (cont.)

(3:1) The descent into hell [which really is what the world ends up in] follows step by step in an inevitable course, once the decision that guilt is real has been made.

This is what Jesus talks about in *A Course in Miracles* as the mad course into insanity (T-18.I.7). He also refers to it as the ladder that separation led us down (T-28.III.1:2). This is depicted on the chart with God shown at the top—the God we believe we left. Then there is the decision-making part of the mind that makes the wrong choice and seeks to obliterate the Holy Spirit. Now our self is no longer a Self or even a decision-making self; it is now an ego-self, little and tiny, pretending in its grandiosity to be something important. From that we descend finally into the level of the world. That is what Jesus is talking about in this passage.

This is inevitable once we make guilt real, because guilt demands punishment and we will then be afraid of the punishment. This demands that we leave the mind to flee from God's wrath, which we do by making up a world. This is not something that happened once in time. This happens over and over again, each and every instant. There is that wonderful section "The Little Hindrance" in the text that says: "Each day, and every minute in each day, and every instant that each minute holds, you but relive the single instant when the time of terror took the place of love" (T-26.V.13:1). We re-enact that moment when we told the Holy Spirit to get lost and listened to the ego instead. We do this over and over again outside time, but we experience its effects within time. The problem is outside time, which means that the healing has to be outside time. That is what the holy instant is. It is that instant outside time and space when we choose the Holy Spirit instead of the ego.

(3:2) Sickness and death and misery now stalk the earth in unrelenting waves, sometimes together and sometimes in grim succession.

This is Jesus' portrayal of the world. It is not the only place in the material where he talks about it this way. He is trying to help us realize that this is not a nice place, and therefore that we should not try to make it into a nice place. This is what the world is: a place of "sickness and death and misery." As he says in the workbook, it is a desert, "where starved and thirsty creatures come to die" (W-pII.13.5:1). And that is not the only time he uses the image of a desert, either. There is no life here. There is no life in the ego's desert. He tells us there is no life outside of Heaven (T-23.II.19:1). The point of all this is not to badger us and make us feel guilty, but to have us become motivated to want to leave this hell hole, this desert. Jesus is motivating us not to want to stay in a place, to repeat, "where starved and thirsty creatures come to die"—a place where "sickness and death and misery" stalk the earth. That is the bad news in terms of the world we think is so real and so wonderful.

The good news is that:

(3:3) All these things, however real they seem, are but illusions.

The problem with that statement, as with many other similar statements, is that if I accept what he is saying—that sickness, death, and misery are illusions—then I must also accept the fact that this body is an illusion, too. Once again, this is why no one really likes this course. Jesus is not just saying to give up all your grievances, unforgivenesses, petty hates, and specialness. In truth, he *is* saying to give all that up, but he is also saying that giving all that up is the stepping stone toward eventually giving up this entire self. His purpose is not to have us live more happily in the dream, in which all sickness and death are eradicated and people live on and on and on and everyone is happy. His purpose is to awaken us from dreaming, and the dream of bodies is just a shadow of the dream of guilt that is in the mind.

We have to be motivated. If Jesus is our teacher, then he shares the challenge that any teacher has, which is to motivate his or her pupils. They have to want to learn the courses that their teachers are teaching. Well, the only way Jesus will get us to really learn this course is for us to realize how unhappy we are where we are. If we believe everything is wonderful, we will study the Course for six months and think we get the idea and ride off happily into the sunset. We will not be motivated to really study and practice both the text and the workbook, day in and day out, for the rest of our lives. We have to be motivated, by realizing that our life does not work.

That is why all these passages are here. If you think this world works or can work, or that *A Course in Miracles* came into this world to make the world a better place—to bring peace, prosperity, and happiness into the world—you will never be motivated to learn it. The purpose of this course is to help us leave the world voluntarily, just as the ego had to convince us right at the beginning to leave the mind. It did this by telling us a lie we believed: that the mind was a dangerous place. By making up its tall tale of sin, guilt, and fear, it gave us the motivation to leave the mind, because we believed that if we stayed there, a raging, maniacal, insane God would wreak vengeance on us, causing us great unhappiness, and eventually destroying us.

The ego was a very good teacher—insane—but a very good teacher. It knew it had to motivate us to leave the mind and make up a world by teaching us that the mind would make us very unhappy. Jesus does the very same thing, except his lesson is sane. He now has to motivate us to *undo* the ego's motivation. He has to teach us that staying in the body and in the world will kill us and make us very unhappy, and that returning to the mind will bring us real joy. The problem is that we still believe the ego, and therefore we are still motivated to flee our minds and live in the world. The ego says, "Okay, now that we are here, let's make the world a better place." The purpose of this course is not to make the world a better place. Unlike the Bible, *A Course in Miracles* does not seek to make a "new Jerusalem" here on earth, or to blend Heaven and earth, or to bring Heaven to earth. You cannot integrate two mutually exclusive realms.

Jesus has to motivate us to look again at this world and the body. That is his purpose in all the material, the text, workbook, manual, the two pamphlets, and Helen's poems. But we are so tempted to say that Jesus does not really mean the world is wrong, and that he means instead that the way we *perceive* the world is wrong. But he does *not* mean that. *Jesus means the world is wrong because it was made to be a defense against what is right, which is the Atonement principle in our minds.* You must understand that; otherwise your work with this course will be severely limited. You could put a very tight band around it

so that it says only what you want it to say, which is how you can live better in this world and feel better in this body. Jesus is saying you cannot feel better in a body because there is no body, but let me help you feel better in the mind by teaching you that the ego lied to you. The mind is not a dangerous place. There is no wrathful, venomous God, hell-bent on destroying you. There is no sinful, guilty, vicious, evil person named *you* in your mind. The whole thing is made up. The mind is the only thing that can save you, because the mind is the only thing that could damn you.

But Jesus has to motivate us; he has to get us to want to learn his course. That is why passages like this are here—so that we will not be tempted to drag him into the world and make the world a better place.

(3:4-5) Who could have faith in them once this is realized? And who could not have faith in them until he realizes this?

Jesus is trying to have us realize that sickness, death, and misery are illusions. He talks about this in many places, such as the Introduction to Chapter 13 in the text, where he says this world is "the delusional system of those made mad by guilt" (T-13.in.2:2). He then goes on to describe what this world is really like: it is not a nice place and that "if this were the real world, God *would* be cruel" (T-13.in.3:1). He wants us to understand what the body is. Only then will we recognize that the body is neutral, and only then can we realize that the body could serve a different purpose: as a classroom to lead us beyond the body, rather than as a prison that causes us to rot and blame everyone else for it.

(3:6-7) Healing is therapy or correction, and we have said already and will say again, all therapy is psychotherapy. To heal the sick is but to bring this realization to them.

The reason the phrase "all therapy is psychotherapy" is so important is that it refers to the idea that all healing is of the mind and it cannot be anything else. Jesus is simply helping us understand the difference between magic and a miracle. Breathing and eating are magical things, meaning we believe we will die if we do not eat, drink, or breathe. Jesus is not saying you should stop eating or breathing, or that you should not use magic because it is evil or bad. He is simply trying to help us understand what purpose our eating and breathing serve.

(4:1) The word "cure" has come into disrepute among the more "respectable" therapists of the world, and justly so.

The *Psychotherapy* pamphlet was taken down in the 1970s, and this is a reference to the debate that was going on at that time among psychotherapists—spawned by the post-war work of Carl Rogers—over whether or not there is a cure in psychotherapy. Jesus is saying something totally different from what psychotherapists would say about their work. He is saying there is no cure here because *cure* has nothing to do with the body or interaction among bodies. Cure, or healing, can only occur in the mind.

(4:2) For not one of them can cure, and not one of them understands healing.

So much for all the therapists of the world! That is why there is a pamphlet for psychotherapists, because they do not understand what psychotherapy and healing are. By the way, this does not mean that if you are in therapy, or thinking of beginning therapy, that you should stop or not go. Again, there is nothing wrong with magic; and please, if you are in therapy or do go into therapy, do not bring this pamphlet with you. That is not going to help, and could also be an expression of attack masquerading as resistance.

(4:3-7) At worst, they but make the body real in their own minds, and having done so, seek for magic by which to heal the ills with which their minds endow it. How could such a process cure? It is ridiculous from start to finish. Yet having started, it must finish thus. [It starts in a ridiculous way because it sees the problem where it isn't, and therefore it must end in a ridiculous way.] **It is as if God were the devil and must be found in evil.**

Healing is of God and is in the mind, which has nothing to do with the body. It is not that the body is evil, but that the body does not work. By "body" Jesus also means psyche. Earlier I said that when Freud talked about the psyche he meant the body; this is true of Jung as well. They did not mean *mind* in the way the Course means it. They saw the mind as an adjunct to, or some expression of, brain-related activity. They were not talking about mind.

(4:8-10) How could love be there? And how could sickness cure? Are not these both one question?

How could there be love in the body? How could there be love when you are looking in the wrong place for it? Love is found in the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle in the right mind, where the memory of God's Love is. Our choosing the right mind is the greatest threat to the ego. As *A Course in Miracles* explains, the ego has no concept at all of love, God, the Holy Spirit, or the Atonement. The only concept it understands is a perceived threat to its own existence. The ego knows, as I explained earlier, that if we withdraw our belief in it, it will disappear. Since the split mind is governed by the principle of *one or the other*, withdrawing our belief in the ego means putting our faith and belief in the Holy Spirit. That means part of us wants to remember God's Love instead of trying to continually attack it. Denying that Love and erecting guilt and special love in its place is the sickness. That is what will give rise to an experience of disease in this world, regardless of the form of the symptoms.

Choosing the Holy Spirit is born of the idea that "there must be another way." My way of living in this world is not working for me. My way of doing this course is not working for me because I am always trying to bring Jesus or the Holy Spirit into the world rather than using them as the means to leave the world. Leaving the world does not mean physically dying, however; it means to gradually withdraw my perception from the world as being real and outside me to the true perception, or vision, of the Holy Spirit that sees the world as the "outside picture of an inward condition." It is the inward condition I want to get back to, because that is the problem. And I want to correct the problem at its source: the decision-making part of my mind that chose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit.