

Jesus:
The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
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Part VIII
Continuation of "True Prayer" (*The Song of Prayer*, S-1.1)

As a point of clarification, I would like to note that there is an assumption that I am making with the example of Helen's eyelash that may not be true of the parking-space example. (See Part 7 for an explanation of these examples.) I am assuming that the eyelash in Helen's eye came from a thought to separate from Jesus, which I think was true for her. It does not necessarily follow that not finding a parking space represents a decision to be separate from Jesus. If not having a parking space is accompanied by anxiety, then it must be coming from a decision to be separate from him. So joining with him will undo that block. But this need not be so. It may not be in my best interests to find a parking space. Maybe if I get the parking space I want, a truck will run a red light and hit my car. How do I know what is best or what is not best for me?

That's the whole point of this discussion. I want to be free—not from the eyelash in my eye or the need for a parking space—but from the thought of guilt in my mind that is the real cause of my pain, anxiety, and distress. Jesus makes the point in the workbook, as well as in the text, that the aim of any good teacher is to help the student to generalize across specific lessons. For example, I learn how to do the multiplication tables by first memorizing certain operations so that I can then generalize those basic operations and multiply any number in the world. The Course is teaching us to recognize that by asking Jesus for help in specific circumstances—whether it is help with shopping, removing an eyelash, getting a job, or whatever—I am learning that he is available all the time. But his availability is not so that he can help me in *form*—that is just the way that I have chosen to experience his love. I really want to feel his presence all the time, so that no matter what happens in my life—whether it is minor or major—it will have no effect on the love and peace inside me.

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As another point of clarification, I would like to address the misperception many people have that Jesus had some kind of special relationship with Helen, as if Jesus chose to join with Helen at this level but ignores others who pray for the same level of personal contact. The point is, Jesus did not join with Helen. He did absolutely nothing with Helen. Helen did everything. Helen experienced Jesus' taking out an eyelash because a part of her mind allowed herself to get very close to him.

But whether we are talking about removing an eyelash or knowing where to stand to get a taxicab in New York City, Jesus had nothing to do with the form of the help. It had nothing whatsoever to do with anything divine. God has nothing to do with this world. The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with this world. We are the ones who made up the world.

To understand more clearly what is really going on in these examples, we have to step back from this whole world of time and space and realize that everything has already happened. Everything within our minds is totally accessible, because we are all one mind. An analogy I often use when I talk about time is the idea of videotapes. There's a videotape of Helen with an eyelash in her eye and a videotape of Helen with an eyelash outside her eye. There's a videotape of standing on Madison Avenue and 40th Street and getting a taxicab, and there's a videotape of not getting a taxicab there. This has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit or with Jesus. We are speaking of an ego-based psychic ability and not divine intervention.

In the section in the teacher's manual on psychic powers and abilities (M-25), Jesus explains that what is important is who guides us with a psychic ability—the ego or the Holy Spirit. Psychic ability has nothing to do with God or the Holy Spirit. It simply enables people to let go of some barriers within their minds. We can do that either for an ego purpose or for the Holy Spirit's purpose. So when Jesus seemed to be telling Helen where to shop, it was not really Jesus telling her. Jesus' real value to us is as a presence in our minds that allows us to feel safe all the time because we feel his love.

The crucifixion demonstrates this principle as well—that it's not about the external form. In the eyes of the world, he was not safe. So the point is, once I identify with Jesus' safety in my mind, whatever happens externally is irrelevant. I could be hanging from a cross, I could be in Auschwitz, I could be caught in a traffic jam at Times Square, or I could be lying comfortably in my own bed. None of this would have an effect on me if were identified with Jesus in my mind. The world may judge the situation I am in to be unsafe, but I would feel safe.

So safety in the mind—which is where we are—has nothing to do with safety as defined in the world. If I am identifying with the safety of my mind with Jesus, then I know that I am not a body, because he is not a body. He is a thought of love within my mind and within everyone's mind. By identifying with that thought of love, I am that thought and I am perfectly safe. I am not a body. If, however, I expect my safety to be reflected in the world of bodies, then I am saying that my safety has to do with the situation my body is in. The point of the crucifixion was to demonstrate that Jesus knew he was not his body. His body may have been in trouble, but since he knew he was *not* his body, he had no fear.

Now an onlooker seeing Jesus on the cross might have said, "He isn't a holy man. Look at what's happening to him," just as New Age followers today might say, "How could this person be a holy person? Look, he just lost \$10,000 in the stock market. A truly advanced spiritual person would never do that." We are always judging according to form. Because something does not work out right on the level of form for someone, we conclude that something is not right in the mind of that person. If that principle holds, then Jesus was a New Age failure.

The whole point is that the meaning of an event depends on its purpose. For him, his crucifixion served a purpose of love. For most of us, being crucified would *not* serve a purpose of love. But we cannot judge by the form. That is the point I keep making. The *form* of what happened to Jesus at the end of his life was not loving or safe—it was murderous. But because there was a thought of love in his mind—and only a thought of love—his crucifixion was an act of love from his point of view, although not from the point of view of someone who did not share his thought system.

Now joining with Jesus really reflects joining with our true Self, Christ. But we do not believe that we are Christ—we believe that we are this other self, that we have taken a thought of Christ which is perfect

love and have turned it into a thought of separation—a body. So we need a thought of Christ that represents this other part of us. That's what Jesus represents for all of us. As long as we have the illusion of being this separate self that we think we are, then we need the illusion of a Jesus. He is as much an illusion as we are. And when the time comes, as I said earlier, when we truly know that we are not the ego, and we truly know that we are part of Christ, at that point we disappear, and Jesus disappears. Until that point though, we need him.

As we have seen, we can think about Jesus on two levels: the level of reality and the level of symbol. On the level of reality, Jesus is outside time. But he is still within the split mind, because he is a thought within the mind of the Sonship. Each of us is a thought within the mind of the Sonship, and we are all joined. All minds are joined. All thoughts are joined. The difference between Jesus and us is that he knows the whole idea of separation is an illusion, and we do not.

Because we think of ourselves as separate selves, we do not identify ourselves each as a mind, or as a thought, but rather as a body. So that thought is symbolized in this body that we call ourselves by name. Similarly, because we think Jesus is separate from us, that thought is also symbolized by a body that we call Jesus. So on the level of symbol, we will experience him next to us. We will experience him as a presence who is guiding us and helping us and loving us. But that is a symbol. The point I am making, still once again, is that this will be our *experience* here. But our experience here is simply a symbol of a symbol.

There is another point I would like to clarify about Helen and the eyelash. My explanation was that Helen first dropped the hand of Jesus and then she experienced the eyelash in her eye—the cause of the eyelash in her eye, thus, was her separating from Jesus. If that was the cause, then joining with him would undo the separation and the eyelash would have to disappear. However, if the cause of the eyelash in her eye had been something else—say a decision to show me or someone else something, then the eyelash would have remained in her eye because it was teaching a different lesson.

We always have to be careful not to confuse the form with the content and the cause. As we discussed earlier, love was the cause of Jesus' hanging on the cross. For just about anyone else, the cause would be guilt. You don't necessarily know the cause just from observing the form, which is the effect. In other words, the cause leads to the effect and not the reverse—the effect does not lead to the cause. That's why it is always difficult to judge from the form. In the text, Jesus says that basically we cannot understand anything—some of what we have judged to be failures have really been our greatest advances. And what we have judged to be successes have really been our greatest setbacks (T-18.V.1:6). We don't really know.

So that is the problem when we try to evaluate our progress by the form, by the external—I think that I'm holy and spiritually advanced because I get parking spaces. But I really *know* that I'm holy and advanced when I am at peace regardless of what happens.

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Let me now apply what I've been talking about to the Course. Using the same basic idea that we have just discussed with respect to Helen, Jesus, and the eyelash, let me talk about Helen, Jesus, and the Course. This will follow logically from everything else that we have been talking about. It will also help a great deal in clarifying again the difference between form and content, between symbol and reality. The

symbol is *A Course in Miracles*—three books with a specific teaching, structure, and form. The reality is the love of Jesus.

I remember once many years ago a woman coming up to Helen and saying, "How could Jesus have dictated the Course? He didn't know English." When we step back and think about it, her question has a certain logic—but she was mixing up levels. She was confusing the form of the Jesus who lived in Palestine two thousand years ago, who did not know a word of English—with the Jesus who "dictated" the Course to Helen. From the point of view that Jesus' form two thousand years ago was his reality, her question made very good sense.

But it is very risky to try to say that Jesus who dictated the Course is the same Jesus who lived in Palestine. The thought of love that was *reflected* as Jesus in Palestine is the same thought of love that is the source of the Course. But the *person* is not the same person—that's confusing body with thought—symbol with reality. That's how we can really get caught. And that is why there is nothing in the Course about Jesus' life. He talks only about the crucifixion and resurrection, and simply in order to change our thought system. He does not talk about where he was born and where he lived, whether he liked chocolate or vanilla ice cream, or any other specifics of his life—it makes no sense to consider them.

When Jesus says, "Take me as your model for learning" (T-6.in.2:1), he does not mean we should comb our hair the way he combed his hair. He does not mean we should answer a question in the same form in which he answered the question. He means we should take his *thought system* as our model. His thought system was one of being defenseless in the face of attack, of being the expression of perfect love that is not affected in any way by any of the thoughts around him. He is not talking about *behaving* like him. In fact at one point he says, "You are not asked to be crucified" (T-6.I.6:6). He does not want us to emulate him in terms of form, because there is no form. This is clearly implied in a number of passages in the Course (e.g., T-19.IV-A.17:5-7) that are aimed specifically at the Roman Catholic Church, which made the mistake of making Jesus' body into a big deal.

In effect he is saying, "Why would I tell you to take my body and eat it? I don't want to share my body with you. That's silly. I want to share my mind with you. And I want to share the love in my mind—not my personality, not whether or not I had a good sense of humor." None of that is real. It might have been real when he lived in Palestine, but that body does not live anymore. The thought of love that was reflected in that body is what is real. That thought is the source of the Course. And that thought is inside all of us—we want to join with that thought. Again, don't confuse the symbol for the reality.

So the answer to the woman's question—"How could Jesus have dictated the Course—he didn't know English?"—is that he did not dictate the Course in English. He is a thought of perfect love. The content of the Course came from him—that is the content of love. The form of the Course came through Helen's mind. Helen's mind then, using my earlier analogy, is the glass. Her mind became the vessel through which the water poured, or the love flowed. If we look at the form of the Course and look at Helen's mind, or actually at the specific forms reflected in her brain, we see exact parallels:

Helen was English-speaking—the Course is written in English. Helen was American—the Course has many references to Americana (e.g., a reference to the Declaration of Independence) and there are figures of speech that are particularly American. Helen was a lover of Shakespeare—the Course's language and meter are Shakespearean. Helen was an educator—the Course comes in curricular terms. Helen was a psychologist—the Course comes in psychological terms. Helen was a keen student of the

Bible, not that she believed in the Bible as such, but she loved the biblical language—the Course has over 800 biblical references and allusions. Helen was a lover of Plato and understood Plato very well—there are many allusions to Plato in the Course. Helen was a keen student of logic, and her mind was incredibly logical—the Course develops its arguments in a very logical manner.

This was the form of the Course, reflecting the structure of Helen's brain, through which the love of Jesus poured. The Course is what it is, not because it is in English, not because it is psychological or educational, and not because it is beautifully written. It is the love that comes through the words that makes the Course what it is. The love is the content. That is the meaning, that is the song. The echoes and the overtones and the harmonics came from Helen's mind. But the *song* did not come from Helen's mind, unless we identify Helen's mind with the Christ Mind, which is the mind that Jesus represents, that we are all a part of. It is for that reason that when people would come up to Helen and say, "Could you please ask Jesus for me what I should do?" she would respond, "You ask Jesus. I will pray with you now [which she would sometimes do] to reinforce the power of your mind to do what I do. It's no big deal."

So, just as it was Helen who took the eyelash out of her eye, in that context it was Helen who wrote *A Course in Miracles*—not its content, not its message, not the love that is in the Course, but the form in which it came. What makes the Course what it is is the love in those pages that people recognize as not coming from this world. Within the western world, Jesus is the symbol we use to denote a love that is not of this world, although it is experienced here.

This distinction is important to understand so that, as I said earlier, we do not make an idol out of the Course as a book. And so we do not feel that Helen did something special that no one else is capable of doing. We are all channels, we are all scribes, because none of us is in the body anyway. The Course makes it clear that the mind is not in the body, but the mind projects itself into a body. That is what a channel is. People these days make a big deal about those who channel. We are all channels. At any given moment, we are either speaking for the Holy Spirit or speaking for the ego—it's no big deal. If we start to make a big deal about the voice, we know we're trapped in the ego, because we are making the form real, we are making the form into a big deal.

Remember again, it is not the echoes or the harmonics that we want. We want the song, we want the source. We do not want the forms in which it comes. Everybody channels all the time. Simply being in a body is channeling—the body is a channeling of the ego thought, it is the ego thought taken form. Whenever I open my mouth and say something or write down something, I am channeling—it's no big deal. No one does it any better or any worse than any one else. All that matters is whom I am asking to be the source of my "channeling."

What made Helen different within the dream was her ability to join her mind fully with the Love of Christ in her mind, which for her, as for most us, was symbolized by the person of Jesus. But it is not Jesus whom we want—we want the love that he symbolized for us in the world. When Helen was scribing the Course, she was able to bring her glass to him and not keep it small. In contrast, when she was living her usual life, she held up only a thimble, which then became an eyelash, or questions such as "Where do I go to buy pantyhose?" or "What street corner should I stand on to get a taxi?" But when she was taking down the Course, Helen opened up her whole mind to him, so that her mind became his mind. And then the love that he symbolized flowed through her, through the structure of her brain—which again was American, psychological, educational, English-speaking, etc.—and came out in the form

of these three books. Her brain structured the *form* of the books, but that is not their content, that is not the *content* of their message. The form is not why these books have had such a powerful effect—whether it has been positive or negative—on most people who have seen them. It is because we experience a presence through the pages that transcends the words.

And it is a presence of love. Helen joined her mind with Jesus, or really with her Self—Jesus is the symbol of that Self for all of us. From that joining with him the Course had its birth, which for her began with her experience of joining with Bill. And her joining with Bill, with each of them setting aside any separate interests, became the reflection of what the Course refers to as the "greater joining"—the joining with the Holy Spirit or Jesus in our mind. It is from that joining that the Course came. The mistake again is in confusing the form for the content.

Now Helen's experience, as many of you have heard in the stories that I tell, was very much of herself as a separated being talking to this other separate being in her mind. She had dialogues with Jesus that were conversational, and she experienced her relationship with him as very real and very personal. He was someone whom she both loved—more than any other person—and hated—she would often yell and argue with him. But all of this was simply part of the symbol, part of the form. In reality, it was like one part of her mind talking to another part. That experience was extremely helpful to Helen, just as it would be for any of us.

A major part of the Course's process is to develop a personal relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Because we are so split off from our true Self, we need someone within our split-off dream, a symbol who can reflect to us a different thought system from our thought system of separation, guilt, and anger. Whatever Helen might have thought of Jesus at those times when she was angry at him, she basically trusted everything he said. She knew to whom she was talking and that whatever he told her was loving. She was also aware that at any given moment she might decide not to pay any attention to him. She was also aware, in some part of her mind, of the consequences of that decision—she would feel terrible. But this relationship was all a symbol, as another part of her mind knew. Occasionally—very, very occasionally—Helen would have an experience after which she would say to me, "This was different from the usual voice." What she really meant was that the experience went beyond Helen talking with Jesus or Jesus talking with Helen—she had reached a part of her mind in which there was only one voice. And that was relatively rare.

A somewhat parallel experience occurred when Helen was helping others. She would not usually ask Jesus what to say—she would just speak. Basically, if we have the experience of having to ask Jesus what to say or do, we are still coming from a dissociated mind. When we are living in the real world, we do not ask—the Voice of the Holy Spirit, the Love of God, simply comes through us, and we are aware that we are that voice. Most of the time we are not in that state. We may go in and out of it. But most of the time we are within a split-mind framework, and so we need the illusion of a separate mind within our minds who tells us what to say and do. In much of the Course, Jesus addresses us at this level because this is where we are.

But when we are in the real world, we do not ask anymore because we *are* that voice and that wisdom. When Helen was helping others, she often spoke and acted from that level. Basically, therapists do that when they are in their right minds. If, as a therapist, I were to stop every minute and say to Jesus, "What should I say now?" the patient would experience the therapy as very disjointed. After each time lag of five or ten seconds while I am asking, the patient would be thinking, "Come on, guy, get on with it." And

I would be thinking, "Hold on, I'm not ready, I still have to check." That is not what happens when a therapist is right-minded—then the wisdom and the love and the help just come through. And basically, that would be our experience in the real world, except in the real world it happens all the time.

So to ask Jesus what street corner to stand on for a taxi is still on the lower level of the ladder. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that—that is where we all are. The workbook begins with us on that level. The purpose of the workbook, which is a one-year training program, is to train us, first of all, to hear the Voice of the Holy Spirit rather than the voice of the ego. When we really learn how to do that and let go of all of our fear of the Holy Spirit or of Jesus, then we become that Voice as well. But that happens much, much later, when we become what in the teacher's manual is referred to as an advanced teacher of God. The teacher's manual distinguishes between teachers of God and advanced teachers of God.

As an advanced teacher of God, we ask less and less of the time, because we become the answer. But it is the arrogance of the ego to think that we are already farther along than we really are. The Course comes to us at the bottom level of the ladder, on the level of form and symbol—that is why Jesus refers to himself so often and emphasizes our joining with him. We are all like little children. None of us is grown up in a spiritual sense. The Course is written for little children—not chronologically young children, but little adult children.