

## The Happy Dream

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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### Part III

#### Dreamer vs. Dream Figure

A later paragraph begins by saying, "*You* are the dreamer of the world of dreams" (T-27.VII.13:1). The *you* is not the one who is reading this book. If the book is an illusion and your body is an illusion, then what is reading what? Jesus is talking about the dreamer of the dream. If you are a therapist, and a patient comes to you with a dream, you try to help the person who dreamed the dream to understand it. You do not talk to one of the characters in the dream and ask what he or she means. You talk to the dreamer of the dream. You might then ask that patient, "What are your associations to the dream? What are your associations to this character, to this object, to this color, to this animal?" You do not ask the figure in the dream to tell you its meaning. You go to the dreamer of the dream.

That is what Jesus is doing in this course. He is going to the dreamer of the dream, the decision maker in our mind, and asking us to look at what we have been dreaming so we can understand why we have been dreaming it. He is not interested in analyzing the forms of the dream. What he wants us to understand is *why* we chose the dream, what purpose the dream serves. It is not the forms of the dreams or the forms of our lives that are important, but the *purpose* for which we use these forms.

Think of your sleeping dreams and what happens between therapists and patients in terms of what Jesus does: He is our therapist, we are the patient, and we come to him with these awful dreams. We are so emotionally disturbed that we cannot tell the difference between our secret dreams and the world's dreams, so he has to educate us and begin to heal our minds by having us recognize first that we have a mind, and then that the problem is not the externals of our lives—the problem is not why our relationships are never working, why our bodies are never working, why we cannot hold down a job, why no one likes us, why we have all these problems, limitations, and issues in our lives. Jesus is not interested in any of that. He is interested in the *meaning* that all of these hold for us, just as a therapist is interested in the meaning that the symbols in the dream hold for the dreamer, rather than in what actually goes on in the dream.

Jesus is interested in what everything in our life symbolizes, and he makes it very simple for us. Everything in our life symbolizes one of two possibilities: the ego's separation and specialness, or the Holy Spirit's Atonement. That's it. That simplifies everything. It cuts therapy from years and years and years down to just a few minutes—in fact, to one holy instant. You do not have to do an endless analysis of what goes on in your life because it is all the same.

One of the ways Jesus helps us as our therapist is by having us look over the course of our lives and realize everything is the same. Therefore, why do we have to bother analyzing each and every segment of our lives, each and every relationship? It is all the same. It is all an attempt to prove God wrong and

the ego right. That is what everything boils down to. Separation is reality, victimization is reality, and Oneness is the lie. Very simple. To say it another way, everything in our lives expresses either the ego's belief in separate interests where you and I are always at odds, or shared interests where we are all alike.

It is not so simple when we stay on the level of the world's dreams, though, because these dreams, as we all know, become incredibly complicated incredibly quickly. Relationships are extraordinarily complicated. Dealing with the body is extraordinarily complicated, not to mention dealing with other people's bodies in relationships. But when you get back to the mind, it is very simple. It is either the ego's thought system or the Holy Spirit's thought system; it is either the ego's separate interests or Jesus' shared interests. But that will not work as long as your focus remains on the world's dream. You have to get back to the secret dream and then use all the forms, all the parts of the dream, to get you back to the simplicity of what is really involved.

This should in no way be interpreted to mean that you should not see a therapist if you are experiencing a lot of difficulties. This has nothing to do with what you do here. Seeing a therapist is an example of what the Course calls *magic*, and the Course is not against magic. Magic is anything we do to solve a problem that is not on the level of the mind. The miracle brings the problem back to the mind, which is why it is contrasted in the Course with magic. Magic brings the problem into the world and then has us solve the problem here. However, as Jesus explains in Chapter 2, the use of magic is not evil or sinful because we would not have chosen the body as our haven and we would not have chosen the world's dream as our identification if we were not terrified of the mind. And so it would not be helpful to go right back to the mind when we are so afraid of it. We need what Jesus refers to sometimes as a compromise approach. In fact, that is what he talks about in that section—a compromise approach (see T-2.IV.4, 5).

The use of magic is a compromise approach. Thus, if I have a headache, I take an aspirin; if I have unresolved emotional or relationship issues, I go to a therapist. All of this helps me on the level where I believe I am. At some point, however, I would recognize that magic will help alleviate my anxiety sufficiently so that I can begin to look not at the world's dream, but at the secret dream, and then realize that the cause of all my distress on any level is my mind's decision for the ego. But almost never can we do that right away. In fact, another very important passage talks about how we do not go from nightmares to awakening (T-27.VII.13). We do not go from the external dream right back to the secret dream, and then from the secret dream to Heaven, because we are so terrified. In that passage Jesus says that what we need are gentler dreams, i.e., the happy dreams of the Holy Spirit that lead us slowly, step by step, so we can grow more confident that we will not be destroyed by returning to our mind, and that there is a loving, comforting presence who will walk with us on this journey.

We all need magic. As I always like to point out, breathing is magic. We all have very special relationships with oxygen because we believe that without oxygen we will die. Well, what would die? What would die is an illusion, but nowhere in this course is Jesus suggesting that we should not breathe or eat. In fact, he tells us more than once that the Holy Spirit does not take our special relationships away from us; He transforms them, which means He changes their purpose (see for example, T-15.V.5; T-17.IV.2:3). So now the reason you go to a magician, whether it is a physician or a psychotherapist, is that it will help you. This use of magic will help you reach the point where you can choose the miracle instead of magic. But you are not ready yet, so you use a compromise approach, being fully aware that

that is what you are doing. Again, this does not mean you should not do what normal people do when they have problems—psychological, physical, economic, social, or any other kind of problem.

Even coming here for classes is a form of magic, but that does not mean you shouldn't come. The purpose of your coming here ought to be that it will help you better understand what the Course is saying so that you can work with it more effectively. But realize *A Course in Miracles* is magic. It's a book, right? That is magic. It is an illusion, a symbol of becoming right-minded, a symbol of going to the Holy Spirit in your mind and asking for help. But since we think we are bodies and not minds, we need something called *A Course in Miracles*. We need someone called Jesus whom we can identify as our teacher, because we are still too afraid of the non-specific abstract presence of love in our mind. We need specific forms of that love. The danger lies in becoming so enamored with the form that we think salvation is *A Course in Miracles*, or salvation is Jesus, or any earthly body. As Jesus says at one point in the text, the "true goal" of any teacher is to make himself dispensable, no longer needed (T-4.I.5). So you learn as much as you can. In the context of this course that means learning the difference between mindlessness and mindfulness so that you return more and more to the mind when you end up recognizing that you are your own teacher, but not you as an ego! The Holy Spirit is simply a symbol of you in your right mind, and that happens right at the end of the journey. Until that point, you need magic.

Focusing on the *purpose* of using magic will help avoid needless conflict. Thus, if I am using magic as a way to avoid returning home and awakening from the dream, then I will pay the price of guilt and punishment, etc. If I am using magic as a way of helping me on my journey so that I will ultimately learn that I do not need the magic, the forms, then there is no guilt, because the magic I am using thus becomes a symbol of the goal, which is the Love of God. If I am using things in this world as a way of reinforcing my being in this world, then they become symbols of guilt and separation.

We cannot escape the use of magic. Everything is a two-edged sword. One could say studying this course is "good" magic because its purpose is to awaken you from the dream, unless you form a special relationship with it. Then it makes you special because you are a student of the Course and somebody else is not, or you are a student of the right teacher of the Course and somebody else is not. A special relationship with the Course is evident when you realize you cannot get through your day unless you do a workbook lesson and read a section from the text; you cannot sit down at a restaurant and order from a menu without first asking the Holy Spirit what you should order; you cannot take a fortune cookie without first putting your hands over the fortune cookies on the table and letting the Holy Spirit guide your hand over the right fortune cookie that has the right message for you. When you get into that kind of specialness, then this course, which could lead you home, will end up leading you to the other place. The Course has not changed; your purpose has.

Similarly, let us say you are an addict, whether it is alcohol, drugs, gambling, or whatever, which clearly at first is a way of keeping you in this world. At some point when you say there must be another way, the very addiction now becomes a means of helping you awaken from the dream, because you have now invited the Holy Spirit in, which means you let Him look at the addiction with you. He does not take it away from you. He helps you recognize what its purpose has been, which is guilt. Now the purpose has changed and it becomes forgiveness. Now it becomes a symbol of your returning home rather than a means of bringing you to hell. Again, you cannot avoid that in this world. Everything here is magic. It just depends on what its purpose is for you.