

The Happy Dream

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

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Part VII

The Ending of the Dream (cont.)

No one would hesitate to leave a dream of shock and terror, merciless decay and sickening contortions, with despair always in sight and death not far behind, if he believed that it were but a dream.

Jesus says of this world that we think is so wonderful, that it is "a dream of shock and terror." And the body, he says, experiences "merciless decay and sickening contortions." That is what happens to our body, which Jesus tells us elsewhere is a "parody" and a "travesty" of the glorious Christ that God created (T-24.VII.1:11; 10:9). The body, even when it works well, is a distortion, a deformity, let alone when it begins to decay and deteriorate, die, and decompose. The problem is we believe it is reality. If we really knew it is part of a dream, it would be gone.

Our ego, which is the part of us that wants to be here, does not care how it is here, whether it is happy or sad, in pain or in good health, as long as we think our body is here. That is why in the second and third obstacles to peace, Jesus says the very same thing: If you believe the body can give you pleasure, you also believe it can give you pain, because pleasure and pain are heads and tails of the same coin of making the separation real (e.g., T-19.IV-A.17:11). If my body feels pleasure, the body is real; if my body feels pain, the body is real. What difference does it make? To the ego, it makes no difference. We think it makes a difference to us here, so we try to maximize our pleasure and minimize our pain. It does not make any difference. Whether you are rich or poor does not matter. Money is the be-all and end-all of our life. Either you want more and more, or you never have enough. The ego does not care as long as you make the dream real, because if you make the dream real, you can never leave it.

Yet if he thinks that he must first go through a greater terror still, he must see hope in what will now appear the "better" dream [what the world calls the happy dream].

No matter how terrible things are here, the ego says it would be even worse if you were to go within your mind, because God will certainly destroy you there. So "if he thinks that he must first go through a greater terror still," even though the world is so awful and terrible, and is a source of despair, death, terror, and merciless decay, he will still choose it, because he does not want to go through that greater terror. Therefore, "he must see hope in what will now appear the 'better' dream."

Unfortunately, as I have been saying, that is what many Course students do with this course. They want to make the world a better place. They want to make the dream better. They want to find hope in the world. Thus they would say how wonderful it finally is that *A Course in Miracles* came into the world.

Now there is hope! If this is what you are thinking, you are not talking about *A Course in Miracles*. There is no hope in this world! There is no hope of making this a better dream. Why do you want to make a dream better when Jesus is asking us to let him help us awaken from the dream?

The beginning of our healing is realizing there is no hope here. *A Course in Miracles* was not meant for the world. It was not meant for hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people. It was meant for only one person, and that person is *you*. You must never forget that. It is meant only for you. And when the "you" you think you are has its mind healed, everyone is healed because the split mind is one mind—one mind is every mind. There isn't anyone who has to be converted, taught, or convinced. All that people need is a demonstration that they are glad and grateful they were wrong, because what will make them truly happy is to be wrong and to know that in the end God was right—the separation never happened. And we learn that by practicing day in and day out the happy dreams of realizing all of our needs and interests are one. Our egos, the Holy Spirit, our forgiveness lessons, and our minds are all one. We are not separate; we are not different. But here is what happens when we fall prey to what the ego tells us:

And now he seeks within his dream [the world's dream] to find what gifts it may contain. What can you get within its shadows? Who can save you now by giving you the love you threw away? What can you learn to do to make yourself a master over others? What is there that is your special gift within the dream? Find these and do not waken from the dream, for it can give you what you think you lack.

That is what we are always trying to do. We think this course will give us what we lack. We think this course will give us hope, peace, and love. It cannot give us that. What it does is show us the way to remember that the love, hope, and peace is within our minds. It just shows us the way. It does not give us the hope or the love. Indeed, it takes away all of the illusory hopes of this world. The only hope lies in the decision-making part of our minds. The hope in the world is learning that there is no hope, which then helps us realize that the world was made to keep us from getting in touch with the hope that is in the mind: the power of the mind to choose.

But if you waken, all its gifts will go, your armor and your sword will disappear, and vultures, always circling overhead, will claim you as their lawful prey at last.

If we waken, all the gifts of the world—the gifts of specialness—will go; our armor and swords will disappear, meaning all of our defensiveness against other people's attacks on us, and our defensiveness that leads us to attack others will disappear. That is what the ego tells us—that if we awaken, all of our specialness and all of our defenses will go. That is what keeps us in this dream. The vultures circling overhead are the symbolic projections of the ego's God. He is always waiting. As the manual says, "Think not He has forgotten" (M-17.7:4). He has never forgotten what you did to Him. He has never forgotten what you did to His Son. He has never forgotten that you destroyed His Home. This is the ego talking. He has never forgotten *you*. So He is just waiting. What keeps God away are all the illusions of specialness. That is why we do not want to give them up. This course is all about letting go of our investment in special relationships, but the ego is so crafty, so subtle, and sneaky that it causes us to develop a special relationship with the Course. It is brilliant on the ego's part.

This course is all about seeing the oneness of God's Son, so what do Course students do? They make divisions and separations, they attack and they judge, all in the name of *A Course in Miracles*. No different from what two thousand years of Christianity has done. This is what keeps us in the dream. It is

very important to understand the dynamics of this so we can begin to see in our everyday lives the resistance we have to learning and practicing what this course is teaching us. It will always help to keep uppermost in our minds that the purpose of this course is for Jesus to lead us on a journey from mindlessness to mindfulness. Mindlessness is anything to do with the body and the world, anything to do with separation or separate interests. This book is separate. It is the *content* of this book that we want, not the *form*. It is the *content* of Jesus that we want, not the *form* of his person, not his individual identity. The content of Jesus is the love that we all are, of which he is just a symbol. We need to always move from the symbol to the source, from the form to the content, from the world's dream to the secret dream to the happy dream.

Another way of understanding the happy dream is that it is looking at the nightmare dreams of the ego and smiling. That is all it is—looking at the nightmare dreams of the ego, all the ugliness of specialness in all of its forms, and all of its forms of expression in the world, ours and everyone else's, with the happy smile of the Holy Spirit. That is what makes it a happy dream, just as one definition of the right mind is to be in your wrong mind, but not judge it.

The Course tells us that the miracle "looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false" (W-p11.13.1:3). We look on the devastation of the world's dreams, understand that they are the projections of the devastating thoughts of the secret dream in the mind, and remind ourselves that what we are looking at is made up. It is made up "out there," and it is made up within the mind. That is the happy dream, that is the miracle; and that is forgiveness. It is quiet and still and does nothing. It just looks and waits and judges not (W-p11.1.4:1,3).

Again, the happy dream is looking at the world, recognizing it is the shadow of the mind's decision, and that what you are looking at in the mind has had no effect on the peace and the Love of God within you. What that translates to, on a very practical level as you live this day in and day out, is that whenever you see any shadowy fragment of the ego in yourself or anyone else, someone in your personal life or someone in public life, you look at it without judgment, you look at it through the eyes of the happy dream, meaning you do not give anything you see power to take away the peace and the Love of God within you. Nothing that the world has done, nothing that the ego thought system has done can ever take away from you the Love and the peace of God that you have and that you are. Knowing that and learning that is the happy dream. You do not change anything. You do not change the world. You do not change your ego. If you change your ego, if you desperately want to get beyond your ego, you are making it real. How could you let it go and realize it is an illusion if you have already made it real, if you are fighting against it, if you are holding a sword against it, if you are putting on a suit of armor against it? You can get past the ego only when you look at it and recognize it has no power to do anything. Remembering to laugh at the *tiny, mad idea* means not taking it seriously, which means not giving it power to take away who you are.

What makes all of these principles very practical and very helpful is practicing them each and every time you are tempted to give someone or something power to disrupt your peace. If you are not feeling peaceful, if you are angry, anxious, depressed, fearful, or annoyed, you are always tempted to say something or someone did this to you. Whether it is your own body that is acting against you or someone else's body, or the weather, or people in Washington, or God, that is what the world would have you believe. That is when you ask Jesus for help, and he will say that the reason you are not at peace is not any of these things—it is not the world's dream; it is your secret dream. But guess what?

The secret dream is your dream, and because it is your dream, you can change your mind about it. That is the happy dream.

One final point. We do not have to remember the first dream in order to undo the second dream we are in. We just have to know that what is happening here is not what it appears to be. The point that I was just making is that all we have to do is recognize that we are not upset because of what someone else or others have done. We are upset because of the decision we made. That is all we have to know. "I am never upset for the reason I think" (W-pl.5).

This recognition undoes the first dream because it is all the same. All the world's dreams emanate from and have never left that first dream. So by healing any part of the dream that I experience, I am healing everything, because the whole is found in every part. The whole of the dreaming Sonship is found in any part. That is why the Course says that if you forgive one person totally, you have forgiven everyone. There is only one thing to forgive: your own decision for guilt. In the end, that is all you are forgiving—your self. There is no one else.

You want to get back to the unity; and what gets us back to the one self, which is our self, is seeing all the seeming fragments as the same. We begin with the idea of seeing them as the same—not necessarily all literally one, but seeing everyone as having the same ego, the same Holy Spirit, and the same power to choose between them. We see that in everyone whether people are good or bad, whether they have done something terrible and they are awful oppressors and victimizers, or they are victims. We see everyone as the same. Those are the important stepping-stones. Those are the happy dreams that lead us to begin to understand it is not only that we all have the same split mind, we have the same mind. We are all the same. We are just split-off parts of one gigantic thought system of the ego, one gigantic thought system of the Holy Spirit, and one gigantic decision maker. We are all one. Therefore, when I totally forgive and my mind is healed, everyone's mind is healed, because it is one mind: "When I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pl.137). Then we all go skipping merrily on home. Violins play and sing, and the harps. Oh, it is lovely!

To repeat what I had talked about earlier, it is really important to learn to take ourselves less seriously. We take ourselves very seriously, incredibly seriously. We think we are everything, or we think we are nothing. It does not matter. But we certainly think we are either especially wonderful or especially terrible. And we think our problems are so gigantic. That is what the ego wants us to do. But the "we" that we are thinking this about is the body, our personal, psychological, physical self, which is all a part of the world's dream. And it all comes from a little, infinitesimal, tiny idea that is nothing. The little frightened mouse roaring at the universe; that is what the ego is.