***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 1**

**Nothing I see in this room [on this street, from this window, in this place] means anything.**

The idea is to look around — without judgment — at these very prosaic objects in our world: a table, chair, hand, foot, pen, door, body, lamp, sign, shadow. Notice how Jesus sneaks the body in; the point is to realize that you normally would think that your hand is more important than a pen, or your body is more important than a lamp. There isn't anyone who does not believe that. Therefore, you need realize how you are coming to *A Course in Miracles* with a set of premises that you are not even aware of, a hierarchy of values that you hold about the world. That is why Jesus instructs us in the text:

> To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning. No belief is neutral. Every one has the power to dictate each decision you make. For a decision is a conclusion based on everything that you believe. It is the outcome of belief, and follows it as surely as does suffering follow guilt and freedom sinlessness (T-24.in.2: 1 -6).

This very first lesson, which seems so simple, if not simple-minded if you do not really understand it, contains the complete thought system of *A Course in Miracles.* There is no difference among any of the things in this world. They are all equally the same because they are all part of the illusion, reflecting the same thought system of separation, which itself is unreal. As you know from your study of the text, the first law of chaos, the foundation of the thought system of the ego and the world, is that there is a hierarchy of illusions (T-23.II.2:3). If I believe that my body or hand is more important than a lamp, I am clearly saying there is a hierarchy of illusions. Again, it would be hard, if possible at all, to find someone in this world who does not share the belief in that hierarchy, or who even thinks about that as an issue. Thus, if you give some serious thought to this, it will become clear to you that your whole life is based upon a lie — the first law of chaos that says there is a hierarchy of illusions.

Skip to paragraph 3:

**(3:1-2) Notice that these statements are not arranged in any order, and make no allowance for differences in the kinds of things to which they are applied. That is the purpose of the exercise.**

This is not to say that you should give up your investment in your body or in your hand. Rather, the purpose of these reflections is to help you become aware of how, even on this very basic level, you are reflecting the ego's thought system. These lessons are humbling if you think deeply about them, because they help you realize how much your life goes against everything that *A Course in Miracles* is teaching. This means there is a part of you that does not want to learn this course, because there is a part of you that does not want to give up your life. You do not want to walk around actually believing your hand is as meaningless as a pen, because you believe that there is a body that is real, and that you are truly here in the world. If you believe this, as we all do, you cannot believe in the reality of God. In other words, the first part of the workbook has as its purpose, as we were just told, to undo the way that we perceive and we think. This sets the tone for what will follow.

**(3:2-4) That is the purpose of the exercise [to have us realize that there are no differences]. The statement should merely be applied to anything you see. As you practice the idea for the day, use it totally indiscriminately.**

That is what *generalizing* means. Obviously Jesus does not expect us to practice this exercise with total indiscriminateness; if we could, we would not need these lessons. The idea is to be aware of how we *do not* practice this in our lives, even when we are specifically trying to. When you do this lesson, therefore, you should actually think about whether you are truly ready to say that "this hand is as meaningless as a pen." And if you believe that you think they are the same, take a pen and break it, and then your hand and break that. You will suddenly realize that you believe there is a real difference. This is certainly not meant to make you feel guilty, but to help you realize your investment in identifying with the thought system of separation.

**(3:5-7) Do not attempt to apply it to everything you see, for these exercises should not become ritualistic. Only be sure that nothing you see is specifically excluded. One thing is like another as far as the application of the idea is concerned.**

It would be very easy to go around to everything in the room and look at different parts of your body and say: "This does not mean anything." But then you are just doing it as a ritual. Basically, a ritual leaves you mindless, which is why people like them. A friend once said that she liked to say the rosary because she did not have to think. You just do it. Jesus is telling you *not* to do that with this workbook. Do not make it into a ritual. Rituals are designed to keep you *mindless.* This is a course whose purpose is to make you mindful. We shall repeatedly return to this theme of the potential danger of rituals.

It is easy to miss here how Jesus is being "sneaky." He seems to be telling us that this idea is only for this lesson. What he is *not* telling us is that A *Course in Miracles* itself rests on this principle!

**(4) Each of the first three lessons should not be done more than twice a day each, preferably morning and evening. Nor should they be attempted for more than a minute or so, unless that entails a sense of hurry. A comfortable sense of leisure is essential.**

As you do these lessons you should sense Jesus telling you: "These should be done gently. Do not crucify yourself with them. Do not try to get them perfect. Do not feel guilty when you *believe* you fail. Do not make your practice into an obsessive ritual. You should feel comfortable with these exercises." His gentleness becomes one of the significant principles of the workbook, and integrating this gentle kindness into our own lives is one of the most important lessons we could ever wish to learn. Jesus supplies us with a wonderful model.

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**Lesson 2**

**I have given everything I see in this room [on this street, from this window, in this place] all the meaning that it has for me.**

The first lesson – that nothing means anything – is now extended. The reason nothing means anything is that you have given meaning to everything, obscuring, as we shall see presently, its *true* meaning of forgiveness. You know you have done so because you think your hand is more important than a pen. Since this clearly cannot be the way the Holy Spirit thinks, it can only have come from the way *you* think. God has not given everything you see around you its meaning, nor has Jesus. *You* have.

People will say they value something because their parents valued it, and because they were brought up in a certain culture, religion, socioeconomic stratum, etc. But that is not an honest statement. If they truly thought about it they would realize they have not adopted *all* of their parents' values, nor the values of their social system, and so on. They have adopted only those values that resonate with what they *want* their values to be.

Even though it is not mentioned here, Jesus is asking for complete honesty with him; to accept that nothing in this room or world means anything because I am the one who has given the world meaning, and I — my ego – could never understand *true* meaning: forgiveness.

**(1) The exercises with this idea are the same as those for the first one. Begin with the things that are near you, and apply the idea to whatever your glance rests on. Then increase the range outward. Turn your head so that you include whatever is on either side. If possible, turn around and apply the idea to what was behind you. Remain as indiscriminate as possible in selecting subjects for its application, do not concentrate on anything in particular, and do not attempt to include everything you see in a given area, or you will introduce strain.**

Jesus is telling us not to discriminate by saying that one thing is important and another is not, or that this thing does not mean anything, but that one does. He is telling us to be indiscriminate in our practicing. Attempting to include everything will lead to strain, he tells us, and then a ritual will soon develop as well. Rituals involve strain because there is always a sense of *having* to do something. I *have* to say the prayer a certain way. I *have* to do the lesson at the same time every day. I *have* to go to church or synagogue every day or every week, or whatever. If it is a ritual, then it is something that has to be done the same way all the time. And usually, if it is done in a religious context, it has to be done the same way all the time because that is what God wants, or the Bible says, or my religious teachers insist on.

Therefore, Jesus is saying not to do these exercises as you would a ritual, and not to do them with a sense of strain. If you begin to feel strain, he will say you should stop. This is also an indication you are doing them wrong; that you are doing them with your ego and not with him.

**(2:1) Merely glance easily and fairly quickly around you, trying to avoid selection by size, brightness, color, material, or relative importance to you.**

The very fact that Jesus says "Try to avoid doing this" is telling you that you are going to try to do this; i.e., to select according to what is important and not important to you. Even if you do not think you are doing it consciously, unconsciously this would

certainly have to be the case in light of the hierarchy of values we all share.

**(2:2-5) Take the subjects simply as you see them. Try to apply the exercise with equal ease to a body or a button, a fly or a floor, an arm or an apple. The sole criterion for applying the idea to anything is merely that your eyes have lighted on it. Make no attempt to include anything particular, but be sure that nothing is specifically excluded.**

We need to read these lessons thoughtfully, moving beyond the *form* of the words to their underlying *content* or meaning. In other words, we need to realize that Jesus is teaching us to generalize; that all things are equally meaningless because everything serves the same ego purpose of separation. We will find later that all things then become equally meaningful, because everything in our perceptual world can also serve the purpose of the Holy Spirit. It does not matter what it is; it could be something that we believe is meaningful, like a body, or something that we believe is meaningless, like an apple or button. As long as we see, hear, taste, or feel anything, we are saying that the material world is real; duality and perception are real. This ultimately is a way of saying *I* am real. In back of that, of course, is the statement that because the material world is real, God cannot be. This is the metaphysics underlying these early and wonderful lessons.

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**Lesson 3**

**I do not understand anything I see in this room [on this street, from this window, in this place].**

Nothing in this room means anything because I have given it all the meaning it has. Therefore, since I have given it its meaning, how could I, a self separated *from* meaning, possibly understand it? I can understand it from my ego's point of view because it serves the purpose of making the world and my experience of it real. But I cannot truly understand it, because the purpose of the world, as I discussed in the Prelude to these volumes, is to prevent me from understanding. *True* understanding would have me realize the purpose I have given to everything and everyone in my life. Again, these early lessons have as one of their important goals to humble us, so that we realize we do not understand anything. This is what underlies Jesus' important (if not outrageous!) statement in the text: "You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is" (T-18.IV.7:5).

The lesson begins with the emphasis on indiscriminateness we have already seen:

**(1:1) Apply this idea in the same way as the previous ones, without making distinctions of any kind.**

This means I do not understand anything. I think I understand what the pen or cup is for, yet do not understand that their *ultimate* purpose is to keep me rooted in the illusion and out of Heaven. My ego would tell me the pen is for writing, the cup for drinking, and clothes for covering the body, but I do not understand the ego's underlying purpose for these and all other aspects of the material world.

**(1:2-5) Whatever you see becomes a proper subject for applying the idea. Be sure that you do not question the suitability of anything for application of the idea. These are not exercises in judgment. Anything is suitable if you see it.**

Unconsciously, we certainly do question the suitability of some things. Again, no one believes that their arm is less important than an apple or a button. We believe there is an extremely important difference between them.

"Anything is suitable if you see it," because if I see it, it cannot be real. That is because we "see" with our eyes, and our eyes, as indeed all our sensory organs, were specifically made not to *see.* In other words, they were made by the ego to look *outside* the mind, while true vision is only *within* the mind. It is that fundamental unreality that unites everything in this world.

**(1:6-7) Some of the things you see may have emotionally charged meaning for you. Try to lay such feelings aside, and merely use these things exactly as you would anything else.**

What is helpful about these lessons — if you pay careful attention to them — is that they will bring to the surface all our unconscious and hidden values, similar to the projective tests used by psychologists to help understand the underlying dynamics of a person's psychological disorder. We shall see this theme reflected in the lessons to come.

**(2) The point of the exercises is to help you clear your mind of all past associations, to see things exactly as they appear to you now, and to realize how little you really understand about them. It is therefore essential that you keep a perfectly open mind, unhampered by judgment, in selecting the things to which the idea for the day is to be applied. For this purpose one thing is like another; equally suitable and therefore equally useful.**

This is the deepest statement made so far, and its meaning should be abundantly clear. Jesus is trying to help us let go of the past, for as long as it remains hidden from our awareness we cannot undo it. Left buried, therefore, the past continues to rear its guilt-ridden and judgment-laden head time and time again. The key to this undoing lies in the principle underlying these exercises: the inherent sameness of all illusions.

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**Lesson 4**

**These thoughts do not mean anything.**
**They are like the things I see in this room [on this street, from this window, in this place].**

Jesus is helping us realize it is not only what we see that has no meaning, but our *thoughts* about what we see have no meaning as well. In later lessons he explains that our thoughts are no different from what we perceive. The inner and outer are one and the same.

**(1) Unlike the preceding ones, these exercises do not begin with the idea for the day. In these practice periods, begin with noting the thoughts that are crossing your mind for about a minute. Then apply the idea to them. If you are already aware of unhappy thoughts, use them as subjects for the idea. Do not, however, select only the thoughts you think are "bad." You will find, if you train yourself to look at your thoughts, that they represent such a mixture that, in a sense, none of them can be called "good" or "bad." This is why they do not mean anything.**

Both our perception and thinking are variable. What is variable is not unchanging, by definition, and if it is not unchanging, it cannot be of God. This statement reflects one of the core premises on which the logic of *A Course in Miracles* rests. Anything of God must share in His attributes. If it does not, it cannot be of Him and so must be unreal or illusory. Thus, if there is something that changes it cannot be of the Changeless, and therefore does not exist and must be inherently meaningless, having separated from what alone has meaning. As we pay attention to our thoughts, therefore, we shall see their randomness, variableness, and fleeting nature, all of which attest to their meaninglessness. As variable, therefore, they must be of the ego, which is always about change, owing its origin to the original change from the Changeless One.

These early lessons, with their deceptively simple exercises, point us gradually and gently to the recognition of their truth as we apply them to our everyday lives.

**(2) In selecting the subjects for the application of today's idea, the usual specificity is required. Do not be afraid to use "good" thoughts as well as "bad." None of them represents your real thoughts, which are being covered up by them. The "good" ones are but shadows of what lies beyond, and shadows make sight difficult. The "bad" ones are blocks to sight, and make seeing impossible. You do not want either.**

Our real thoughts are of love or oneness, which must be non-specific, *A Course in Miracles'* definition of the term *abstract.* These abstract thoughts are covered by the ego's world of specifics. What we want is the truth, not a shadow or block. Like good Platonists, we want the Good that lies beyond the *concept* of good. *Good* and *bad* are concepts, and as we are taught near the end of the text:

> Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts. It does not concern itself with content of the mind, but with the simple statement that it thinks (T-31.V.14:3-4).

At best, our right-minded thoughts (the "good") are the corrections for our wrong-

minded ones (the "bad"), but in the end their specificity, too, must disappear into the abstract or non-specific Love of our Source.

**(3) This is a major exercise, and will be repeated from time to time in somewhat different form. The aim here is to train you in the first steps toward the goal of separating the meaningless from the meaningful. It is a first attempt in the long-range purpose of learning to see the meaningless as outside you, and the meaningful within. It is also the beginning of training your mind to recognize what is the same and what is different.**

This is a pregnant thought the meaningless is outside, because what is outside is unreal. The "meaningful within" are the Holy Spirit's thoughts in our minds. Anything that we perceive outside and believe is real serves the purpose of the ego, which is to keep us thinking that what is meaningless is true. All of this then becomes a cover for the truly meaningful. The Holy Spirit, however, teaches us to see that what is out in the world serves the purpose of teaching us that there is no world. Therein lies its meaning. The objects are not meaningful in themselves, but the Holy Spirit's purpose supplies their meaning. Everything seen without Him is meaningless.

The ego has us value what is in the world so that we will believe in the reality of the thought system of separation the world reflects. The Holy Spirit has us perceive what is in the world so that we will ultimately realize there is no world. Thus, "what is the same" is everything within the ego's thought system, and everything within the Holy Spirit's thought system: Guilt is guilt, regardless of its form; love is love, regardless of its form. But these two systems differ from each other, because the ego's thought system roots us further in hell, while the Holy Spirit's brings us home. Thus we learn the inherent *sameness* of all thoughts within the two thought systems, and the intrinsic *difference* between these two.

**(4) In using your thoughts for application of the idea for today, identify each thought by the central figure or event it contains; for example:**
***This thought about _____ does not mean anything. It is like the things I see in this room [on this street, and so on].***

Note this early emphasis — to be repeated throughout — on the need to be specific in our application of the day's idea. Without such application the exercises are meaningless to us.

**(5) You can also use the idea for a particular thought that you recognize as harmful. This practice is useful, but is not a substitute for the more random procedures to be followed for the exercises. Do not, however, examine your mind for more than a minute or so. You are too inexperienced as yet to avoid a tendency to become pointlessly preoccupied.**

This is part of Jesus' purpose in making us feel humble. We do not yet know the difference between what is harmful and what is harmless. This is similar to his instruction to us in the text that we do not know the difference between pain and joy (T-7.X), and imprisonment and freedom (T-8.II). And so we pointlessly preoccupy ourselves with pursuing what will hurt us, rather than learning what alone will bring us peace and joy.

**(6) Further, since these exercises are the first of their kind, you may find the suspension of judgment in connection with thoughts particularly difficult. Do not repeat these exercises more than three or four times during the day. We will return to them later.**

Jesus does not want you to feel guilty because you cannot do the exercises, but he does want you to be aware that you are having trouble doing them. Implied in that is the following statement: "I am having trouble doing them because I do not want to give up my belief, not only that the objects in my life are meaningful, as are my thoughts, but that *I* am meaningful. I, as an individual, special being am meaningful." That is why these lessons are "particularly difficult."

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**Lesson 5**

**I am never upset for the reason I think.**

This is one of the lessons I frequently quote, for it goes to the heart of our practice. We obviously think we are upset because of what is going on in the world and how it impinges on us. But the *only* reason we are upset, which is not explicitly taught here, although implied, is that we chose the ego as our teacher instead of Jesus.

**(1) This idea, like the preceding one, can be used with any person, situation or event you think is causing you pain. Apply it specifically to whatever you believe is the cause of your upset, using the description of the feeling in whatever term seems accurate to you. The upset may seem to be fear, worry, depression, anxiety, anger, hatred, jealousy or any number of forms, all of which will be perceived as different. This is not true. However, until you learn that form does not matter, each form becomes a proper subject for the exercises for the day. Applying the same idea to each of them separately is the first step in ultimately recognizing they are all the same.**

Expressed here, again, is the paradox that we are to keep practicing with specifics so that we learn that everything is the same and non-specific. Indeed, this is the central theme of the process given us in *A Course in Miracles* that will eventually awaken us from the dream. By practicing forgiveness *each and every* time we experience upset or dis-ease — the *form* of our discomfort — we shall become aware of the underlying *content* of guilt that *is* the source of discomfort. That is when we finally learn the inherent *sameness* of all illusions. At this point they will disappear, leaving only the *content* of love, our only comfort and the true source of peace. This lesson is extremely important because we all get upset, and are always sure about the cause. This helps us realize that we are not upset because of what is outside, but only because of the way we are *looking* at what is outside.

The lesson's *specific* assignment of identifying the *specific* form of upset, and the cause we ascribe to it follows:

**(2) When using the idea for today for a specific perceived cause of an upset in any form, use both the name of the form in which you see the upset, and the cause which you ascribe to it. For example:**

***I am not angry at _____ for the reason I think.***
***I am not afraid of _____ for the reason I think.***

Jesus now quickly moves us from the bodily world of feelings to the mind's world of our thoughts:

**(3) But again, this should not be substituted for practice periods in which you first search your mind for "sources" of upset in which you believe, and forms of upset which you think result.**

Jesus returns us to the *mind-searching* aspect of his training. We are to become accustomed to looking within, learning to pay attention to our heretofore repressed guilt, the ultimate source of what we think are our upsets.

**(4) In these exercises, more than in the preceding ones, you may find it hard**

**to be indiscriminate, and to avoid giving greater weight to some subjects than to others. It might help to precede the exercises with the statement:**

> ***There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.***

We would all tend to discriminate. When something minor upsets us we think we are only "mildly annoyed." Then later in the day something major happens and we become really angry. And we think there is a difference. This is the issue we have been addressing. The ego has us reaffirm the principle that there is a hierarchy of illusions, since this is one of its primary defenses against the Oneness of God: the specificity of the dualistic world belies the unified reality of Divine Abstraction, to use a team from the text (T-4.VII.5:4). This is the reality the ego never wants us to remember or reflect here, since that means the end of the ego.

Jesus continues his instructions to us in the same vein:

**(5-6) Then examine your mind for whatever is distressing you, regardless of how much or how little you think it is doing so.**

**You may also find yourself less willing to apply today's idea to some perceived sources of upset than to others. If this occurs, think first of this:**

> ***I cannot keep this form of upset and let the others go. For the purposes of these exercises, then, I will regard them all as the same.***

This is what we are to say when tempted to make a hierarchy of what upsets us. And then Jesus reiterates the point in the next sentence:

**(7:1) Then search your mind for no more than a minute or so, and try to identify a number of different forms of upset that are disturbing you, regardless of the relative importance you may give them.**

We can see how many times in these early lessons Jesus reminds us how we continually try to make a hierarchy of our experiences, believing some things are important and others are not. He is training us to realize they are all the same. Once again, an illusion is an illusion is an illusion.

A deeper study of what is taught in *A Course in Miracles* yields a rather disturbing revelation: when we are upset, we *want* to be upset, for that proves we are the innocent victims of what the victimizer is doing to us. We shall return to this very important teaching of the Course later, but for now I can mention two very specific discussions of this: "The Picture of Crucifixion" (T-27.I) and "Self-Concept versus Self" (T-3 1.V).

The remainder of the paragraph repeats the earlier instruction, emphasizing the need to be both specific and gentle in our practice.

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**Lesson 6**

**I am upset because I see something that is not there.**

This lesson is a bombshell. What is so intriguing about these first lessons is that Jesus does not become involved with weighty metaphysics. Yet that is exactly what grounds the idea that "I am upset because I see something that is not there." What is upsetting me is *within* me, not outside. *There is nothing outside me.* What I think I see is merely a projection of a thought in my mind, and this thought — of separation from God — is not there either! My perceptions are of illusions, the projections of thoughts that are themselves illusions. What else can an illusion breed but further illusions?

The first paragraph, as it itself states, is already familiar in its emphasis on specificity. Paragraph 2 should also be familiar:

**(2) Today's idea is useful for application to anything that seems to upset you, and can profitably be used throughout the day for that purpose. However, the three or four practice periods which are required should be preceded by a minute or so of mind searching, as before, and the application of the idea to each upsetting thought uncovered in the search.**

Mind searching is the focal point of Jesus' message and the means of applying his teachings to our daily experiences. He then returns to two ideas mentioned in Lesson 5:

**(3) Again, if you resist applying the idea to some upsetting thoughts more than to others, remind yourself of the two cautions stated in the previous lesson:**

> ***There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.***
>
> **And:**
>
> ***I cannot keep this form of upset and let the others go. For the purposes of these exercises, then, I will regard them all as the same.***

It would be difficult to over-emphasize the importance of this idea of the inherent *sameness* of all things — both large and small upsets (as well as large and small pleasures). It occupies a central place in Jesus' teaching, as it is the means of our learning to tell the difference between illusion and truth or, in Plato's words, appearance and reality.

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**Lesson 7**

**I see only the past.**

Lesson 7 is essentially a summary of the previous six lessons, as we see in the first paragraph where they are repeated almost verbatim.

In the second paragraph we find Jesus returning to an idea he mentioned briefly in the second paragraph of Lesson 3 – the importance of clearing our minds of past thoughts. Now, he elaborates: The reason that nothing means anything, that we have given everything the meaning it has, etc., is that we are seeing only the past. Keeping in mind the equation of sin, guilt, and fear with past, present, and future will help you understand the motivation for seeing only the past. Sin is equated with separation, which proves that I am an individual, autonomous from God. Once I believe this lie, it will automatically be projected out and take the form of the past. Thus, I see the past in everything, because I want to maintain my individual identity. Here is how Jesus says it:

**(2) Old ideas about time are very difficult to change, because everything you believe is rooted in time and depends on your not learning these new ideas about it. Yet that is precisely why you need new ideas about time. This first time idea is not really so strange as it may sound at first.**

Whenever we are upset it is because we are equating something that just happened with something that happened in the past. I see a particular person and I know what I am supposed to do: This is an authority, and so my hate justified; this is my rival, and so I have to hate this person; this one is of a certain skin color, which I must hate. Hate is always based on the past. Most of the time, though, it is more subtle than these examples, which is why we need practice to recognize and accept this "first time idea."

In sum, then, the purpose of seeing the past in everything is that it enables me to say that I exist. Thus, making the past real is the same as saying sin or separation is real, and therefore so am I. Incidentally, note the word play on the word "time" in 2:2-3.

We are now given a very specific, albeit a seemingly trivial example:

**(3) Look at a cup, for example. Do you see a cup, or are you merely reviewing your past experiences of picking up a cup, being thirsty, drinking from a cup, feeling the rim of a cup against your lips, having breakfast and so on? Are not your aesthetic reactions to the cup, too, based on past experiences? How else would you know whether or not this kind of cup will break if you drop it? What do you know about this cup except what you learned in the past? You would have no idea what this cup is, except for your past learning. Do you, then, really see it?**

But this is true of *everything.* We literally see *nothing,* because we are seeing the past, which is not there.

**(4) Look about you. This is equally true of whatever you look at. Acknowledge this by applying the idea for today indiscriminately to whatever catches your eye. For example:**

***I see only the past in this pencil.***
***I see only the past in this shoe.***
***I see only the past in this hand.***
***I see only the past in that body.***

***I see only the past in that face.***

It is interesting to note Jesus' choice of objects to be perceived; they include inanimate as well as animate ones. We shall continue to return to this point, but for now let me underscore again the important teaching that since the world is "the outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5) and this inward condition is an illusion, the outside picture must be an illusion, too. Moreover, as there is no "hierarchy of illusions," there can be no intrinsic difference among all the objects of our perceptual world, inanimate or animate. They are *all* equally illusory, and thus they are the same. While it goes without saying that this flies in the face of our experience, we are also being taught that our experiences are false. In these lessons we are seeing Jesus' preliminary and subtle attempts at teaching us this truth as he gently leads us to their acceptance, and beyond them to God — *the* truth.

Finally, still another caution against the temptation to exclude what we feel is not important, which very often is a veil concealing what we secretly believe to be quite important, what the text refers to as our "secret sins and hidden hates" (T-31.VIII.9:2):

**(5) Do not linger over any one thing in particular, but remember to omit nothing specifically. Glance briefly at each subject, and then move on to the next. Three or four practice periods, each to last a minute or so, will be enough.**

Indiscriminateness in responding to the illusory world of perception remains the central focus of this early part of the workbook. It contains the means of undoing the ego's thought system of separation, the essence of miracles: there is no order of difficulty among them (T-1.I.1:1).

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**Lesson 8**

**My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.**

There is a discernible sequence to the lessons as one continues to read and practice them. Jesus begins with simple ideas and statements about the way we perceive the world. He then quickly moves to the way we perceive our thoughts and, beginning with Lesson 8, he develops much more clearly the specific cause and effect connection between our thoughts and the world. Here, for the first time in the workbook, he speaks about the world's unreality. He also introduces the idea of projection, a principle that was implied in the first seven lessons, but will be clearly identified in the lessons to follow. Jesus has been telling us up to this point that what we see is meaningless because what we see is coming from what we think. And what we think (in our ego minds) is meaningless because it denies true Meaning. This has not been clearly stated in the lessons to date, although we have discussed it, but it certainly has been implied and will be more explicitly stated in the lessons to come.

**(1:1) This idea is, of course, the reason why you see only the past.**

Lesson 7, "I see only the past," introduced the idea that everything we perceive is meaningless because it is based on our thoughts of the past. In Lesson 8, Jesus continues and extends his discussion of time and the past: *My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.* It is not simply that we see only the past, which, again, was the theme of Lesson 7, but we see only the past because we *think* only the past. Jesus is here introducing the idea that what we see *outside* comes from what we think *inside,* a major theme of the text: "projection makes perception" (T-13.V.3:5; T-21.in.1:1). What we believe and have made real about ourselves within, whether as children of the ego or children of God, will be directly reflected in what we perceive outside, because the inner and outer are the same. This is a variation of the essential principle in *A Course in Miracles* that *ideas leave not their source.* We shall return later to this all-important theme. That *my mind is preoccupied with past thoughts* is, of course, why we see only the past (1:1). Although not clearly stated here, but clearly implied, is the principle that what we see comes from what we think. That is why:

**(1:2) No one really sees anything.**

This is another of those statements that, when you begin to read the text and do the lessons, your mind would tend to gloss over, because you really do not want to accept what Jesus is saying. He means this literally: "No one really sees anything."

**(1:3) He sees only his thoughts projected outward.**

In the text there are many passages — a couple in the workbook, too – where Jesus explains that the body's eyes do not see, just as the body does not think, feel, hear, or do anything. It simply does what the mind tells it to do (e.g., T-28.V.5:3-8; VI.2:1-9; M-8.3:3-4:3). The body can be thought of then as simply a puppet or robot that carries out the dictates of its master. That is why we do not see anything. All that we "see," and basically this *see* should be in quotes, is a projection of what we have been thinking. And, as we have seen, what we have been thinking in listening to the ego is quite simply nothing.

**(1:4) The mind's preoccupation with the past is the cause of the misconception about time from which your seeing suffers.**

In the Prelude, as well as in discussing the Introduction to the workbook, I mentioned that one way of understanding time as we know it, i.e., as linear — past, present, and future – is to see it as nothing more than a reflection or shadow of the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. When we choose our individuality over the Holy Spirit's oneness, and then seek to preserve this individual identity, the ego has us construct its thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. To restate this important dynamic: *sin* says we have sinned against God in the past; we experience *guilt* over what we have done in what the ego calls the present; and since guilt always demands punishment, we then become *afraid* of God's punishment, which we believe we deserve. That fear of punishment, of course, points to the future. If you keep in mind this "unholy trinity" of sin (past), guilt ("present"), and fear (future) as you read this first paragraph, it will make much more sense. When we look outside we see a world ruled by time. It is, of course, also a world of space. Space and time, as the text describes them, are opposite sides of the same mistake (T-26.VI11.1:3-5).

Thus, everything we see outside we see in terms of the past, because we see it through the lens of our individual identity. This identity is rooted in sin, the belief that we have separated from God and now exist as separate entities. Since we believe we are at war with God, a theme to be developed later, we must then also believe we are at war with everyone else. As a result, every perception in our world is geared toward dealing with the issue of specialness: who is the special person who will win, and who the special person who will lose. When this is expressed directly, it is special hate; when concealed, it is special love. Moreover, specialness is rooted in the ego's notion of time, which, once again, comes from the belief in sin, guilt, and fear. Thus specialness cannot *not* be rooted in the past.

The "misconception about time" is that it is real — there is a past, present, and future – and that the present and future are directly caused by the past. Thus what we are today is because of our past. The future, likewise, will be merely an extension of the ego's present.

**(1:5) Your mind cannot grasp the present, which is the only time there is.**

The ego's present is not this "present," what *A Course in Miracles* refers to as the "holy instant." As this experience is not rooted in time, it is also not rooted in sin, guilt, and fear. It is rooted in the right-minded presence of the Holy Spirit, in which vision – not based on the past, and certainly not on specialness – becomes the means for love to guide us from within.

**(1:6) It** [your mind] **therefore cannot understand time, and cannot, in fact, understand anything.**

This is because everything we think we understand is rooted in the seeming reality of the spatial and temporal world. As long as we identify ourselves as individuals, separate and autonomous, we must believe in the entirety of the ego system. Everything we perceive, therefore, will be a shadow of its illusory thought of separation, which means we will not understand anything.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 9**

**I see nothing as it is now.**

Lesson 9 logically follows from Lessons 7 and 8. If my thoughts are meaningless because they are preoccupied with a past that does not exist, and the past does not exist because it is rooted in sin and separation, which never happened, then it must logically follow that "I see nothing as it is now."

**(1:1-2) This idea obviously follows from the two preceding ones. But while you may be able to accept it intellectually, it is unlikely that it will mean anything to you as yet.**

This is a mild understatement. The idea will not mean anything to us because we are terrified of what it really means. In the holy instant, which is the meaning of "now," there is nothing to see. Chapter 18 in the text says: "At no single instant does the body exist at all" (T-18.VII.3:1), which means that in the holy instant there is no body. Why? Because there is no thought of separation; no sin, guilt, and fear, and therefore no body is needed to defend against those thoughts. These are the blocks to truth that Jesus referred to in the previous lesson. Thus, everything I "

It is extremely hard for us to believe that what we are seeing is not there. We think we see a room full of people and chairs, a clock, a frozen lake [this class was held during the winter in the New York Catskill Mountains], etc. In "reality," all we are seeing is an out-picturing of our thoughts of separation, the specific forms that are projections of our illusory thought system.

**(2:2-3) This idea can be quite disturbing, and may meet with active resistance in any number of forms. Yet that does not preclude applying it.**

Again, it is not necessary to understand or agree with the ideas in the workbook. Jesus is simply asking us to do them. The thought for today should be disturbing, and there is something wrong if it is not. As we have already discussed, if what you are seeing is not there, and you experience seeing yourself — your physical self and your thoughts — then *you* are not there. What could be more disturbing than that? It is not necessary to accept this idea as truth. Jesus is simply asking you to begin the process of training your mind to think the way he thinks.

**(2:4-5) No more than that is required for these or any other exercises. Each small step will clear a little of the darkness away, and understanding will finally come to lighten every corner of the mind that has been cleared of the debris that darkens it.**

This is an extremely important theme, and one we shall restate again and again: undoing the interferences to remembering love. When you get the mind's darkening debris out of the way — i.e., the meaningless thoughts rooted in the ego's thought system — what is left is the vision of Christ, and that is understanding. This has nothing to do with what happens in the world, but with realizing that there is nothing here in the world to understand. I am reminded of a statement Michelangelo made about his sculpture. He explained that he first saw the image in the stone, and then took away what did not belong. The image of Christ, which is the light of our true Identity, is already in our minds through the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is simply to bring to His truth the darkening debris of our illusions, which leads to an experience of the Love of God and the oneness of the Sonship.

The rest of the lesson provides instructions for the exercises. Note again that Jesus emphasizes indiscriminate application — excluding *nothing.* He is helping us to be specific without being ritualistic and obsessive, the ultimate purpose being to generalize from the specific to *all* aspects of the perceptual world — the trivial and important, both near and far. Jesus closes the lesson with still another reminder:

**(5) It is emphasized again that while complete inclusion should not be attempted, specific exclusion must be avoided. Be sure you are honest with yourself in making this distinction. You may be tempted to obscure it.**

As you progress through the workbook, you will see the significance of these instructions not to exclude, as well as to be honest in seeing the resistance to undoing the ego.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 10**
**My thoughts do not mean anything.**

Lesson 4 stated: "These thoughts do not mean anything." As Jesus explains in the second paragraph, he now says "My" instead of "These," thus making the teaching much more personal for us.

**(1) This idea applies to all the thoughts of which you are aware, or become aware in the practice periods. The reason the idea is applicable to all of them is that they are not your real thoughts. We have made this distinction before, and will do so again. You have no basis for comparison as yet. When you do, you will have no doubt that what you once believed were your thoughts did not mean anything.**

Our "real thoughts" would be anything in our right minds, anything that comes from the Holy Spirit. In this sense, an *unreal* thought would be, for example, that someone is attacking me. The *real* thought would be that this is a call for love, and it is a call for love that is shared by me. However, as Jesus is teaching us here, we are still far too identified with *our* thoughts to be able seriously to entertain what he is saying to us about the thoughts that our thoughts are covering. But, we are only on Lesson 10!

**(2) This is the second time we have used this kind of idea. The form is only slightly different. This time the idea is introduced with "My thoughts" instead of "These thoughts," and no link is made overtly with the things around you. The emphasis is now on the lack of reality of what you think you think.**

Jesus is not talking about what we perceive outside; he is now talking about what we *think.* You can see in these lessons how he goes back and forth in his gentle attempts at convincing us that we are not who we think we are. It is a process that gradually leads us through the labyrinth of our ego's thought system – the seeming terror of the circle of fear he describes in the text (T-18.IX.3:7-4:1) – to the Love of God that happily awaits us just beyond.

Paragraph 3 is a nice statement of projection, although the term itself is not used:

**(3) This aspect of the correction process began with the idea that the thoughts of which you are aware are meaningless, outside rather than within; and then stressed their past rather than their present status. Now we are emphasizing that the presence of these "thoughts" means that you are not thinking. This is merely another way of repeating our earlier statement that your mind is really a blank. To recognize this is to recognize nothingness when you think you see it. As such, it is the prerequisite for vision.**

Jesus wants us to understand that our thoughts are nothing. However, we take these thoughts of nothingness and project them because we think they are real. Thus are they seen as real images in the outside world. Jesus wants us to understand that the thoughts that are now the projected source of our perceptions are not really there. Our minds, to repeat this important idea, are filled with thoughtless thoughts, or thoughtless ideas, because they are based on the ego's illusory thought system of separation.

**(4) Close your eyes for these exercises, and introduce them by repeating**

**the idea for today quite slowly to yourself. Then add:**

***This idea will help to release me from all that I now believe.***

**The exercises consist, as before, in searching your mind for all the thoughts that are available to you, without selection or judgment. Try to avoid classification of any kind. In fact, if you find it helpful to do so, you might imagine that you are watching an oddly assorted procession going by, which has little if any personal meaning to you. As each one crosses your mind, say:**
***My thought about _____ does not mean anything.***
***My thought about _____ does not mean anything.***

This is an example of what it means to look with Jesus at your ego, the importance of which we continually emphasize. The *you* that looks, with no personal attachment to these thoughts, is the decision-making part of our minds, return to which is the Course's goal and the meaning of the miracle that gives *A Course in Miracles* its name. The process entails standing back with Jesus, watching your ego make a case against someone or yourself; seeing it take a fragment here and a piece form there, weaving together a seemingly complete picture in order to prove you are right about your perceptions of victimization in the world, and that everyone else is wrong, including the Holy Spirit. You simply watch your ego in action – "an oddly assorted procession going by" – its purpose being to confuse us about our identity, making us believe we are a *body* not a *mind*. While Jesus is not giving us his full teaching here, he is laying out its basic principles.

Finally:

**(5) Today's thought can obviously serve for any thought that distresses you at any time. In addition, five practice periods are recommended, each involving no more than a minute or so of mind searching. It is not recommended that this time period be extended, and it should be reduced to half a minute or less if you experience discomfort. Remember, however, to repeat the idea slowly before applying it specifically, and also to add:**

***This idea will help to release me from all that I now believe.***

You can see, once again, the importance generalization holds for Jesus. We are asked to practice — with the same gentle kindness he exhibits toward us — with our specific misperceptions, in order to generalize the principles learned in these applications to *all* our experiences. This theme continues to recur throughout these early lessons.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 11**

**My meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world.**

Jesus now explicitly draws the connection between our thoughts and what we perceive, so that the reason nothing we see around us has any meaning (Lesson 1) is that what we are supposedly seeing comes from a thought that has no meaning. This lesson clearly expresses that cause-effect relationship.

**(1:1-2) This is the first idea we have had that is related to a major phase of the correction process; the reversal of the thinking of the world. It seems as if the world determines what you perceive.**

We could add: "what you feel, what you think, your emotions, your problems," etc. For example, I perceive two people having a fight because they are fighting. Or my body feels cold because the temperature is below freezing. That is how the world thinks, and how everyone experiences the world. However, if all this comes from our thoughts, part of the ego's dream of separation, it must be these thoughts that dreamt the freezing temperature and the bodies that react to it. Our sensory apparatus, therefore, proves to us there is a world that is independent of us, and that we are the innocent victims of events beyond our control. This surely does not mean we are to feel guilty if we are discomforted by a bitterly cold day. It simply means we should realize we are cold because we identify with the body, which in turn means we identify with the ego's thought system of separation, all of which is meaningless. Again:

**(1:3-5) Today's idea introduces the concept that your thoughts determine the world you see.** [They also determine the world that you experience.] **Be glad indeed to practice the idea in its initial form, for in this idea is your release made sure. The key to forgiveness lies in it.**

This is an extremely important statement. Jesus is telling us simply to listen to him and practice this idea in its initial form. He is implying that he is going to build this up over the course of the year of workbook lessons and through our systematic study of the text. That is how we learn forgiveness. I cannot forgive a world that is real. I cannot forgive others for what they have actually done, regardless of the seeming effect it has had on me. I can forgive you only by realizing I am the one who put you in my dream, and it is *my* dream. That is the key to forgiveness, and to the important definition in *A Course in Miracles* that you forgive your brother for what he has *not* done to you (e.g., W-pII.1.1:1). It may very well be that the person has done a great deal to you or to others on the physical or psychological level. But on the level of your mind he has done nothing, because he is nothing but a thought in your mind. Just as you, the victim of the victimizer, are also a thought in your mind. Victim and victimizer are one and the same. It should be noted that the mind, which antedates the temporal and spatial world, is outside time and space. As I discussed earlier in this book, time and space are but the projection into form of the mind's content of separation, and sin, guilt, and fear.

All this is implied here, though not stated explicitly. Indeed, Jesus does not have to state it clearly here, because that is the purpose of the text. The workbook's purpose is to have us *begin* the process of applying these ideas, and to *begin* to understand that what we think we see is not what we are really seeing. We see but a projection of a thought within our minds; a purposive thought, as I mentioned briefly before, which ensures that our thought system wins out and Jesus' loses; we are right and he is

wrong. The separated world of pain and suffering witnesses to the fact we are right. That is why we made it the way we did.

Now to the gentle instructions for the day's exercise:

**(2) The practice periods for today's idea are to be undertaken somewhat differently from the previous ones. Begin with your eyes closed, and repeat the idea slowly to yourself. Then open your eyes and look about, near and far, up and down, — anywhere. During the minute or so to be spent in using the idea merely repeat it to yourself, being sure to do so without haste, and with no sense of urgency or effort.**

We begin the exercise with our eyes open as we look around, and then close them. Jesus again underscores that there is no difference between what we see and what we think. They are one, for the inner and outer are the same. Note again Jesus' instructions in ease and effortlessness; pressure merely strengthens the very ego we are trying to undo.

Jesus' words in the next paragraph underscore the *process* of mind training he is leading us through:

**(3) To do these exercises for maximum benefit, the eyes should move from one thing to another fairly rapidly, since they should not linger on anything in particular. The words, however, should be used in an unhurried, even leisurely fashion. The introduction to this idea, in particular, should be practiced as casually as possible. It contains the foundation for the peace, relaxation and freedom from worry that we are trying to achieve. On concluding the exercises, close your eyes and repeat the idea once more slowly to yourself.**

As the tortoise taught us: Slow and easy wins the race. Jesus is setting the tone for our learning, undoing the ego's need to fight, struggle, and overcome — even itself. He asks us to practice, using terms such as "unhurried," "leisurely," "casually," "peace," "relaxation," "freedom from worry," and "slowly." Our mind training should be as free from tension and conflict as possible.

The final paragraph recounts the familiar instructions that gently urge us on:

**(4) Three practice periods today will probably be sufficient. However, if there is little or no uneasiness and an inclination to do more, as many as five may be undertaken. More than this is not recommended.**

More is not better, at least not in the thought system Jesus is imparting to us. If we can do five practice periods, fine. If not, then three will do. But — let us not strive for more, Jesus says. I am not in Heaven keeping score. In other words, it is the *content* he is interested in, not the *form;* quality, not quantity.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 12**

**I am upset because I see a meaningless world.**

Lessons 5 and 6 stated that "I am never upset for the reason I think," and "I am upset because I see something that is not there." This lesson amplifies these ideas. Thus, "I am upset because I see a meaningless world." Jesus now explains why that statement is true:

**(1) The importance of this idea lies in the fact that it contains a correction for a major perceptual distortion. You think that what upsets you is a frightening world, or a sad world, or a violent world, or an insane world. All these attributes are given it by you. The world is meaningless in itself.**

We perceive violence, hostility, insanity, and a myriad of other conditions. Jesus is not denying that we perceive. He is simply saying that what we perceive is not real. He is not saying, however, that we should deny our experiences (see, e.g., T-2.IV.3:8-11). Rather, he is helping us realize where the experiences are coming from. If I am upset, it is not because of what someone or something in the world has done to me, as we are also taught later in Lesson 31: "I am not the victim of the world I see." This is a central theme throughout *A Course in Miracles:* the world itself is meaningless because it comes from a meaningless thought. The meaningless thought is that I can be separate from God; in fact, not only *can* I be separate, but I *am* separate. It is meaningless because the thought is a defense against what alone has meaning: God and His unified creation. Thus, when you believe you can separate from the only meaning, everything inevitably becomes meaningless.

**(2:1-2) These exercises are done with eyes open. Look around you, this time quite slowly.**

Jesus returns to having us focus on what we see, having already taught us there is no difference between what we see and what we think.

Note in the following the focus on all illusions being equal and thus equally illusory:

**(2:3-7) Try to pace yourself so that the slow shifting of your glance from one thing to another involves a fairly constant time interval. Do not allow the time of the shift to become markedly longer or shorter, but try, instead, to keep a measured, even tempo throughout. What you see does not matter. You teach yourself this as you give whatever your glance rests on equal attention and equal time. This is a beginning step in learning to give them all equal value.**

In introducing Lesson 1 I briefly discussed the ego's first law of chaos – there is a hierarchy of illusions, which means there are certain things and people that are more important than others. It will be difficult to break that strongly ingrained habit of making distinctions in practicing this idea that "I am upset because I see a meaningless world." Jesus wants us to understand that everything is equally meaningless, because it all comes from the same meaningless thought.

Everything we see in the universe of time and space, including ourselves, is nothing more or less than a fragment of the original thought we could be, and are, separate from God and on our own. Every fragment retains the characteristics of that

original thought, a "tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh" (T-27.VIII.6:2). Our need is to remember to laugh at it because of its meaninglessness, not because it is funny in the usual sense of the word. We laugh with a gentle smile that says it does not mean anything because it is an impossibility. To use a familiar image, it was as if a huge pane of glass fell, shattering into billions and billions of fragments. Each fragment retains the characteristics of the original pane; each has the chemical composition of glass, for example. Each of us, as well as everything in the world, is but one of those fragments — all meaningless because they come from a meaningless thought.

The reason I am upset, then, is that the world witnesses to the seeming fact that I am right about the world. Since I believe I exist in a world that is out there, this world reminds me of the original thought that gave rise to it, let alone to my individual existence: I destroyed Heaven and murdered God. This is extremely upsetting because I believe God will now return to punish me for what I did. This concept will be elaborated on in the next two lessons.

Again, Jesus does not ask you, as his student doing the workbook lessons, to understand the full implications of these statements. Such understanding comes from the study of the text. But he does want you to begin the practice of not taking your perceptions all that seriously.

In the next paragraph Jesus asks us to include terms in the exercise that are positive as well as negative:

**(3:1-6) As you look about you, say to yourself:**

***I think I see a fearful world, a dangerous world, a hostile world, a sad world, a wicked world, a crazy world,***

**and so on, using whatever descriptive terms happen to occur to you. If terms which seem positive rather than negative occur to you, include them. For example, you might think of "a good world," or "a satisfying world." If such terms occur to you, use them along with the rest. You may not yet understand why these "nice" adjectives belong in these exercises but remember that a "good world" implies a "bad" one, and a "satisfying world" implies an "unsatisfying" one.**

What is implied here without being specifically discussed is that contrasts and opposites root us solidly in the world of dualistic thinking. The text defines Heaven as "an awareness of perfect Oneness," in which there is no duality (T-18.VI.1:6). Thus, there is no good and evil in Heaven — only God. Learning to recognize this is an important part of our training.

**(3:7-8) All terms which cross your mind are suitable subjects for today's exercises. Their seeming quality does not matter.**

In other words, it does not matter whether or not the teams are important or holy; everything in the world comes from the one illusory thought; an illusion is an illusion is an illusion.

**(4) Be sure that you do not alter the time intervals between applying today's idea to what you think is pleasant and what you think is unpleasant. For the**

**purposes of these exercises, there is no difference between them. At the end of the practice period, add:**

***But I am upset because I see a meaningless world.***

This important point about there being no real distinction between pleasant and unpleasant echoes the discussion in "The Obstacles to Peace," where Jesus states twice that pleasure and pain are the same (T-19.IV-A.17:10-12; IV-B.12). This distinction holds only if there *were* a hierarchy of illusions. Slowly and inevitably we are being taught there is *not.*

**(5:1) What is meaningless is neither good nor bad.**

When you say something is good or bad you obviously are assigning it a value. At the beginning of Chapter 24 Jesus says that "to learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold" (T-24.in.2:1). The same idea is stated here, although more simply. Having assigned a value to something, I am thereby saying it has meaning. If it has meaning, I must believe it comes from a meaningful thought, because what I perceive outside can only come from a thought that is within.

What, then, is the "meaningful" thought? It is that distinctions are valid, duality is real, and there is a value in esteeming one thing over another. The core of that thought is that I value my individual identity over the oneness of Christ; my life and my world over Heaven. If this is so, distinctions become all important because they establish me as a dualistic being in a dualistic world. That, then, is the world I perceive and stubbornly insist is real.

**(5:2) Why, then, should a meaningless world upset you?**

If you are affected by anything in the world, you obviously believe this is not a meaningless place. You would believe that because you think *you* are meaningful. To the ego, what is meaningful is what feeds our specialness; what is meaningless is anything irrelevant to it. Therefore, the ego tells us, we need to focus on what serves our special needs. The next lesson will explain why a meaningless world is upsetting.

**(5:3) If you could accept the world as meaningless and let the truth be written upon it for you, it would make you indescribably happy.**

If we accepted the world as meaningless we would be saying: "My mind is a blank." That would allow the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle to shine through and have Jesus' love become our only reality. That is the truth, which would make us "indescribably happy." Since this is a self that is no longer identified with the thought system of separation and guilt, what makes us indescribably happy is finally realizing we were wrong and Jesus was right. However, as long as we identify with a separated and special self we will fear the truth that all this is a dream. Thus we are continually choosing *not* to be indescribably happy, because to cite the well-known line, we prefer to be right than happy (T-29.VII.1:9). To be sure, the thought of non-existence would not be very happy making, to say the very least. That is why Jesus continually urges us to take "little steps" (W-pI.193.13:7); otherwise our fear of being "abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality" (T-16.VI.8:1) would be too overwhelming. The happy and gentle dreams of

forgiveness are the transition from our nightmare ego world to awakening in God (T-27.VII.13:4-5).

**(5:4-6) But because it** [the world] **is meaningless, you are impelled to write upon it what you would have it be. It is this you see in it. It is this that is meaningless in truth.**

Because the world is meaningless in itself I have to give it a meaning. Similarly, because the world is nothing and *I* am nothing, I have to pretend I am something. Indeed, we all think we are something — wonderful or wretched. The ego does not care how the specialness game is played, whether we are God's gift or Satan's gift, as long as we are a special gift. The one thing we do not want is to be nothing. Near the end of "The Anti-Christ" Jesus speaks of the ego as always wanting more of something — it does not matter whether it is more pleasure or more pain, it just wants *more* (T-29.VIII.8:6-12).

We are terrified of the possibility that we do not exist. This needs frequent repeating since it is the underlying assumption to these lessons, not to mention *A Course in Miracles* itself. This thought is the source of the resistance to the Course in general, and to the workbook specifically. I have to pretend I exist, and so quickly make up a thought system that I then project, thereby making up a world — cosmically (as we are all part of the one Son) as well as individually. The point is that we always seek to impose meaning, because otherwise we will be confronted by the inherent meaninglessness of our thinking, not to mention our separate self. This takes place on the metaphysical level of the mind, where it is a question of *existence* or *being,* as discussed earlier. However, on the level of our personal experience, as bodies living in the world, we fear losing our problems and grievances — all of which establish the self we believe ourselves to be, what the end of the text refers to as our face of innocence (T-31.V.1-3).

The real fear, as we shall see in the next lesson, is that if I do not put *my* meaning on the world, Jesus will put *his.* And so I have to beat him to the punch. This helps explain why being really quiet tends to make us anxious, and why we experience difficulty in meditating or praying: If we quiet our minds, Jesus will get there first – "The memory of God comes to the quiet mind" (T-23.I.1:1) — and if he does, our ego is out of business, as is our thought system of separation and specialness. This is why we end up, as we shall see in the next lesson, believing we are in competition with God, and also with Jesus and his course. As a result, before these ideas can penetrate our minds, giving us an opportunity to choose them, we quickly have to substitute our own. Finally, this is also why practically everyone attempts to change *A Course in Miracles* in some way – to write a better or simpler one, for example. We are terrified of what this course really says. Thus, before we would ever let its words and thoughts affect us, we will change them to suit our own special needs.

**(5:7) Beneath your words is written the Word of God.**

The "Word of God" in *A Course in Miracles* is almost always used as a synonym for the principle of the Atonement, or the Holy Spirit. It can also be understood as forgiveness, the correction for the ego's word of separation, which we chose to keep God's Word hidden.

**(5:8-9) The truth upsets you now, but when your words have been erased, you will see His. That is the ultimate purpose of these exercises.**

Now you know why you do not want to do these exercises: if your words are erased, then the thought system — the source of your words — is erased as well. Jesus will expand on this in Lesson 14.

The lesson closes with the now familiar expression of Jesus' gentle understanding of our resistance to his teachings:

**(6) Three or four times is enough for practicing the idea for today. Nor should the practice periods exceed a minute. You may find even this too long. Terminate the exercises whenever you experience a sense of strain.**

No imposition, no bullying, no guilt-inducing demands to be disciplined, let alone spiritual. Who would not have wished for teachers like this when we were growing up?

*Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 13**

**A meaningless world engenders fear.**

**(1) Today's idea is really another form of the preceding one, except that it is more specific as to the emotion aroused.** [It is not just that it upsets you, it makes you fearful.] **Actually, a meaningless world is impossible. Nothing without meaning exists. However, it does not follow that you will not think you perceive something that has no meaning. On the contrary, you will be particularly likely to think you do perceive it.**

This is because you do not want to realize that what you perceive has no meaning. Once again, if what I see out there in the world has no meaning, the thought within me that gave rise to it has no meaning either. Since I *am* my thoughts, it follows that *I* do not have any meaning, which means *I* do not exist. Therefore, rather than realize everything is meaningless, within and without, I will substitute my own meaning. Obviously, if I perceive something I think is out there, which affects me, I have already pronounced it real. And I want to keep the underlying thought real so I can continue to be real.

**(2:1) Recognition of meaninglessness arouses intense anxiety in all the separated ones.**

The anxiety arises because at some level I realize that the meaningless extends to *my* existence. This idea will be returned to very shortly.

**(2:2) It represents a situation in which God and the ego "challenge" each other as to whose meaning is to be written in the empty space that meaninglessness provides.**

The ego challenges, but God does not; that is why the word is in quotes. To the ego, then, competition is the nature of its relationship with God. An "empty space" exists because the ego is nothing. Yet it believes it must get to the emptiness before God, to claim the Son's identity as its own; thus the perceived competition with the Creator. If my existence as an ego is predicated on the belief in *one or the other* — I exist at God's expense; I killed Him so I can live — I will project that thought and believe He is doing the same thing back to me. This deeply rooted belief is the source of our perception that people are out to get us, to hurt, abandon, and sabotage us, because we accused ourselves of the doing the same to others, and ultimately to God. As Jesus states near the end of the text:

> You never hate your brother for his sins, but only for your own. Whatever form his sins appear to take, it but obscures the fact that you believe them to be yours, and therefore meriting a "just" attack (T-3 LIII.1:5-6).

**(2:3-4) The ego rushes in frantically to establish its own ideas there, fearful that the void may otherwise be used to demonstrate its own impotence and unreality. And on this alone it is correct.**

Namely, that it is nothing. The ego knows, as I have explained before, that its power rests in the decision maker, because the ego in and of itself is impotent. To

ensure that we never recognize its inherent nothingness and meaninglessness, it seeks to make itself important and powerful through sin, guilt, and fear. If I have sinned against God and destroyed Him, I am certainly important and powerful. This also makes me fearful, but at least I have become something that God notices, which also makes me important.

The most frightening thing of all is to realize God does not even know about us, because then we are literally nothing — impotent and unreal. Thus we want God to pay attention to us, either because we are His most devoted follower or the most wretched sinner. It makes no difference to the ego, as long as God takes notice. Our real fear, of course, is that He knows nothing about us. Somewhere deep inside we know that to be true. But rather than accept its truth, we cover it over with the ego's lies; first with the thoughts of separation — sin, guilt, and fear — and next with a world that reflects those thoughts.

**(3:1) It is essential, therefore, that you learn to recognize the meaningless, and accept it without fear.**

This acceptance comes from developing a relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit that allows you to look at your ego without fear, helping you realize its meaninglessness. If you are fearful or guilty about your ego, or if you embrace it, you obviously believe it is real. Once again, however, if you step back and watch this "oddly assorted procession" go by, you realize it is nothing, understanding its meaning lies in trying to protect you from what *is* meaningful. Finally, since we want that meaningfulness more than anything else — it is our identity as God's Son – we would then realize everything else makes no sense and choose against it.

**(3:2) If you are fearful, it is certain that you will endow the world with attributes that it does not possess, and crowd it with images that do not exist.**

In this sense we talk about the world as powerful, hostile, threatening, wonderful, peaceful, blissful, holy, etc. These are its attributes; and the "images that do not exist" are everything we see in the world, which are of course the projections of thoughts that do not exist.

**(3:3) To the ego illusions are safety devices, as they must also be to you who equate yourself with the ego.**

Safety devices are defenses. Sin, guilt, fear, and the world that arises from them are illusions, the purpose of which is to preserve the fundamental illusion that I exist as a separate individual.

And now we go to the blockbuster line in the next paragraph:

**(4) The exercises for today, which should be done about three or four times for not more than a minute or so at most each time, are to be practiced in a somewhat different way from the preceding ones. With eyes closed, repeat today's idea to yourself. Then open your eyes, and look about you slowly, saying:**

***I am looking at a meaningless world.***

**Repeat this statement to yourself as you look about. Then close your eyes, and conclude with:**

> **A *meaningless world engenders fear because I think I am in competition with God.***

We thus go from our mind's thoughts to our bodies' perceptions, and then back within. To state it once again, the world is fundamentally meaningless. Yet we strive to give it meaning, since that ultimately gives meaning to our separated self. Listening to the ego we make up a thought system of *sin, guilt,* and *fear:* Our *sin* of separation leads to the experience of *guilt,* which culminates in the *fearful* belief that we deserve to be punished by a vengeful God, who now is in mortal competition with us for existence; either He survives, or we do, or, as the manual states: *kill or be killed* (M-17.7:11). But the inherent meaninglessness of this constellation of insanity does not preclude its having tremendous power, for we have invested our belief in it. Such investment means we must strive to give it meaning so we can defend against the ego's meaningless thought system, which is the basis for our meaningless identity.

To summarize this important point: When I realize the world is nothing, since it is simply a defense against my mind's thoughts, I am thrown back to these thoughts. If the world is meaningless and I am meaningless, I do not exist, which means God has won. But rather than lose the battle, I strive to give meaning to myself and to the world around me.

Jesus is helping us realize how we project everything onto the world. If we pay careful attention to our perceptions and what we value here, we would realize none of them comes from anything inherent in the world, because there is no world. They are but the result of a need within ourselves to justify and reinforce the spurious fact that we exist.

**(5:1-2) You may find it difficult to avoid resistance, in one form or another, to this concluding statement. Whatever form such resistance may take, remind yourself that you are really afraid of such a thought because of the "vengeance" of the "enemy."**

The fear is that this is a competition we cannot win — God will be victorious. The terror engendered by such insanity is beyond what we can tolerate. We defend against it by constructing a thought system and then a world, behind which we can hide. Having become identified with this defense that culminates in the body, we *resist* having it taken from us, which exposing its foundation to the truth of the Atonement would surely do. And so we do not think about the wrath of God. That thought, as horrifying as it is, nonetheless protects the individual identity, which in turn defends against our acceptance of the Atonement.

**(5:3-4) You are not expected to believe the statement at this point, and will probably dismiss it as preposterous. Note carefully, however, any signs of overt or covert fear which it may arouse.**

Obviously, if you are relatively new to *A Course in Miracles,* this statement will make no sense. But Jesus is asking for your vigilance, that you pay careful attention to any anxiety or fear that is within you.

**(6) This is our first attempt at stating an explicit cause and effect relationship of a kind which you are very inexperienced in recognizing. Do not dwell on the concluding statement, and try not even to think of it except during the practice periods. That will suffice at present.**

The cause and effect connection is between our thoughts — the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear — and the way we perceive the world. In other words, I am fearful *not* because of what is outside me, but because of my thought system, which tells me that survival is between God and me. Note, too, how Jesus does not confront or attack our resistance. He simply and gently reminds us of the truth. This allows us to accept it when *we* are ready, without any pressure or guilt inflicted on us. A wonderful example for all Course students!

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 14**
**God did not create a meaningless world.**

**(1) The idea for today is, of course, the reason why a meaningless world is impossible. What God did not create does not exist. And everything that does exist exists as He created it. The world you see has nothing to do with reality. It is of your own making, and it does not exist.**

Lines like these are frequently used by students of *A Course in Miracles* as a way to dilute the metaphysics and claim that the Course does *not* say that God did not create the world. Rather they claim that the Course teaches only that God did not create the world *we see.* It is true that the words of some statements say just that, but only because Jesus is teaching us to pay careful attention to what we perceive. He makes it abundantly clear both in the workbook, as well as many, many other places in the rest of the material that God could not have created the world because it is His opposite. (See, for example, T-4.I.11; T-29.VI.2:7-10; W-pI.132.4-6; W-pI.152.5-7; C-4.1.) Everything in the world of specifics and form changes and dies. Such a world is outside God, and therefore could not exist.

The very fact that we *perceive* the world means it is unreal, and also that we are unreal. Again, this does not mean just the world we see. Students sometimes mistakenly think this means, for example, that God did not create the cancer I am perceiving. The very fact that I see a world at all is saying there is a reality outside God; if I perceive a world, there must be a perceiver and a perceived, subject and object, observer and observed, which means we are rooted in duality. God can create only like Himself, which means a Being or Spirit of perfect Oneness and Love, changeless and eternal. In other words, what God did not create does not exist, and everything that does exist, exists as He created it — the state of Heaven.

**(2) The exercises for today are to be practiced with eyes closed throughout. The mind-searching period should be short, a minute at most. Do not have more than three practice periods with today's idea unless you find them comfortable. If you do, it will be because you really understand what they are for.**

Again, Jesus exerts no pressure on us. The fourth sentence is an interesting one, because our comfort can also be due to our *not* understanding, as we are so afraid of this very purpose of retraining our minds, which these periods of mind searching will bring about. In this instance our "comfort" would be a spurious one, which is not Jesus' point here.

**(3:1) The idea for today is another step in learning to let go the thoughts that you have written on the world, and see the Word of God in their place.**

Jesus is helping us understand there is a specific motivation involved in holding onto our thoughts. They do not come and go as if by magic, a phrase used later (W-pI.158.4:1); they do not just appear. For example, when I am trying to be quiet in order to meditate and pray, and all of a sudden extraneous, distracting thoughts arise, they do not come out of nowhere. They come because I am afraid of the love and peace that arise in my mind if I am quiet. I therefore quickly have to substitute *my* thoughts instead of Jesus' thoughts, my experience of specialness rather than the experience of his love.

What is important and clearly implied here is that there is a specific motivation for

the way I perceive the world and the thoughts that give rise to it. If I can release those thoughts, which occurs when I ask Jesus for help in looking at them, they will disappear. What is left is the Word of God, which, as defined earlier, is the principle of the Atonement that says that the separation never happened.

**(3:2-3) The early steps in this exchange, which can truly be called salvation, can be quite difficult and even quite painful. Some of them will lead you directly into fear.**

This is the first time Jesus makes such a statement in the lessons. More will follow, and they are found throughout the text and manual as well forgiveness is a difficult process, and cannot but arouse tremendous fear (e.g., T-27.VII.13:3-5; W-pI.196.10; M-4.I-A.3-5,7). There is almost certainly something wrong if you do not struggle with this issue; if you do not fight against forgiveness, become terrified or bored with it, or even want to throw the book away. If you never experience anything like this discomfort, it almost always means you are not paying careful attention to what is being said.

*A Course in Miracles* says frightened people can be vicious (T-3.I.4:2). These lessons have to arouse anxiety because they challenge not only the way you perceive something outside you, but challenge your basic identity. That is what is referred to in Lesson 13 when Jesus says: "Recognition of meaninglessness arouses intense anxiety in all the separated ones." Anyone who believes he is a separated and autonomous being will experience anxiety with these thoughts. Jesus is thus telling you it is all right if you find this difficult, fear-inducing, and are therefore resistant.

These statements are extremely important, because probably the biggest mistake people make with *A Course in Miracles* is to deny the ego and the difficulty inherent in looking at it, thereby letting it go. Everyone wants to smooth over the process and "make nice," because no one really wants to deal with the full implications of these thoughts. These are, again, that you literally do not exist. Recall the line I quoted earlier (T-28.I.1:6) — if the world were over long ago and you are part of the world, *you* were over long ago. Who, then, is the *you* that is thinking and feeling, and doing these exercises? The answer to this question leads "directly into fear."

**(3:4-6) You will not be left there. You will go far beyond it. Our direction is toward perfect safety and perfect peace.**

Jesus wants you to understand that the anxiety, terror, resistance, and difficulty are part of a longer process, and there is Someone with you Who will lead you through it. As we have seen, he talks about the Holy Spirit being there to lead you through seeming terror. He will lead you through the circle of fear to the Love of God that is on the other side (T-18.IX.3). That is why it is essential to cultivate a relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit: Someone within you, some non-ego thought that can lead you through the process. If you try to look at your ego without Him, you will either be thrown into terror or denial, believing that everything is really wonderful. Jesus is telling you, "Yes, there will be difficulty and resistance and fear, but I will lead you through it."

Paragraphs 4 and 5 caution against being compulsive about the exercises, at the same time urging us *not* to exclude anything from our perceptual field. Needless to say, this is easier said than done, which is why Jesus makes non-exclusivity in our practice a central theme in this first part of his mind-training program for us:

**(4-5) With eyes closed, think of all the horrors in the world that cross your mind. Name each one as it occurs to you, and then deny its reality. God did not create it, and so it is not real. Say, for example:**

***God did not create that war, and so it is not real.***
***God did not create that airplane crash, and so it is not real.***
***God did not create that disaster [specify], and so it is not real.***

**Suitable subjects for the application of today's idea also include anything you are afraid might happen to you, or to anyone about whom you are concerned. In each case, name the "disaster" quite specifically. Do not use general terms. For example, do not say, "God did not create illness," but, "God did not create cancer," or heart attacks, or whatever may arouse fear in you.**

Jesus wants us to be sure to include both personal and collective horrors, reflecting the importance of recognizing there is no hierarchy of illusions.

Now to paragraph 6:

**(6:1) This is your personal repertory of horrors at which you are looking.**

Jesus is focusing on the negative. He could just as easily have focused on positive things, too. Thus, God not only did not create cancer, He did not create a healthy body either; He did not create an airplane crash; but he also did not create a rocket ship that lands safely on the moon.

**(6:2-8) These things are part of the world you see. Some of them are shared illusions, and others are part of your personal hell. It does not matter. What God did not create can only be in your own mind apart from His. Therefore, it has no meaning. In recognition of this fact, conclude the practice periods by repeating today's idea:**

***God did not create a meaningless world.***

Anything you think has to do with duality, separation, individuality, or specialness is not in God's Mind, because His is only perfect Oneness and Love, in which there is no separation at all. Therefore, if it is not in His Mind, it can have no meaning and certainly does not exist. Note the term "shared illusions." As part of the one Sonship – the one mind – we agree on certain things that are perceived in the physical world: size, shape, color, etc. Yet the fact they are shared does not make them real. These are *shared illusions:* "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" (T-22.III.6:7), the text states, an important statement to which we shall frequently return. Only God's knowledge is true, in contrast with the ego's illusory world of perception.

**(7) The idea for today can, of course, be applied to anything that disturbs you during the day, aside from the practice periods. Be very specific in applying it. Say:**

***God did not create a meaningless world. He did not create [specify the***

***situation which is disturbing you], and so it is not real.***

You can see how Jesus is repeatedly asking us in these lessons to apply his teachings *very specifically,* to our everyday lives. Not doing so ensures they will never truly be learned, which of course is always the temptation of our egos. Gently, he guides us in learning the process of bringing the illusions of our specific world of form to the *content* of his non-specific truth of forgiveness.

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In these last seven lessons, following upon the first group of seven, we can observe Jesus building one lesson or idea upon another. He leads us from understanding that the meaninglessness of the world we perceive is coming from the meaninglessness of the world we made real in our minds, to understanding that at the core of these meaningless thoughts is the most terrible thought of all: God is in competition with us and will most certainly destroy us. It is important to understand, even though it is not stated here, that that thought, too, is a defense. It says I exist, am important, and have the power to make God angry, making Him think as insanely as I, as the text explains in this telling passage from "The Laws of Chaos":

> Think what this seems to do to the relationship between the Father and the Son. Now it appears that They can never be One again. For One must always be condemned, and by the Other. Now are They different, and enemies. And Their relationship is one of opposition, just as the separate aspects of the Son meet only to conflict but not to join. One becomes weak, the other strong by his defeat. And fear of God and of each other now appears as sensible, made real by what the Son of God has done both to himself and his Creator.... Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. It is not seen as even necessary that He be asked about the truth of what has been established for His belief. His Son can tell Him this, and He has but the choice whether to take his word for it or be mistaken.... For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it (T-23.II.5; 6:2-4,6).

God now reacts as psychotically as I, mirroring my vicious and sinful vengeance in His Own:

> If this were so [the reality of sin], would Heaven be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it. Then would God's Will be split in two, and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His Love at last to vengeance's heels (T-26.VII.7:3-5).

Imagine the power this gives me! Moreover, if I am powerful enough to force God to react to me, I must exist. Recognizing the ultimate meaninglessness of that thought engenders my anxiety.

Thus, the anxiety over the anticipated vengeance from God is a defense against the real anxiety, which is that I do not exist at all. I can live very well with the thought that

**Lesson 14**

God wants to kill me. It may not make me happy, but I know how to deal with that — I can establish a religion: make bargains with God, perform rituals to appease His wrath, and project responsibility onto non-believers in justified judgment for their heresies. I do not, however, know how to deal with the thought I do not exist, except to deny it and quickly make up something to take its place.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 15**

**My thoughts are images that I have made.**

**(1:1) It is because the thoughts you think you think appear as images that you do not recognize them as nothing.**

The "images" are what we perceive in the world outside us. The ego takes our thoughts of separation — sin, guilt, and fear – and projects them so that we "see" them in the world, rather than accepting their presence within. Thus, we perceive these thoughts as images of a person, room, coat hanger, clock, and everything else. We can have an image of a vengeful or benevolent God, a happy or miserable world, but all images of specific forms are projections of our separation thoughts. Because we believe we see something outside, we believe that what we see is real.

This process, then, becomes the ego's ultimate line of defense. Since we believe that the world outside is real, we never think about the fact that the images we perceive outside are coming from our inner thoughts, and if we do not know they are coming from our thoughts, there is no way we can realize that the thoughts themselves are really nothing. The entire thought system of the ego, and all the specific thoughts associated with it, are *nothing* — a defense against the reality of Who we are, our true Identity as Christ.

The phrase "the thoughts you think you think" is extremely important. We actually think we are thinking, as we discussed in the earlier lessons. In fact, we could say that the fundamental ego problem is that we *think* – not *what* we think so much as the fact that we think we *can* think (cf., again, T-31.V.14:3-4). We believe our thoughts *are* our thoughts. In other words, we believe they belong to *us,* and we do not realize that the only true Thought is the Thought of our Identity as Christ, which is one with God's Thought.

Thus, the fact that we believe we can think presupposes that we have an autonomous mind or self that is outside and independent of God. Once again you can see how, even though the language of these early lessons is simple, it is a deceptive simplicity in that it covertly reveals the Course's metaphysical foundation.

**(1:2-6) You think you think them** [your thoughts], **and so you think you see them. This is how your "seeing" was made. This is the function you have given your body's eyes. It is not seeing. It is image making.**

Jesus puts "seeing" in quotes because this is really not seeing. Since we literally see nothing, how could we see anything? The ego has us substitute the magnitude of our Identity as Christ for the littleness of our autonomous individuality, which is what we cherish above all else. In order to have us keep this individuality intact, the ego then has us identify it with the sin of separating from God. This leads to guilt, which means we believe we deserve to be punished. This is the competition with God discussed in Lesson 13.

This constellation of separation and sin is so terrifying that we deny and project it out in order to forget it, which itself protects the thought of individuality We are then left with the images we have made, but with no recollection of how we made them. At that point there is absolutely no hope for correction. Again, by "image making" Jesus means that we literally make up an image of our own thoughts. Since our thoughts are nothing, the images that come them must also be nothing.

**(1:7) It takes the place of seeing, replacing vision with illusions.**

Rather than sharing Christ's or the Holy Spirit's vision, based on the Atonement thought that says the separation never happened, the ego replaces that vision or thought with its own. Thus we first make these ego thoughts real in our minds, and then project them out and "see" them as real things outside us. Jesus teaches us in this lesson that the images we perceive outside ourselves are but the reflections or shadows of the thoughts we have made real within.

He, of course, is not really talking about images of a clock, waste paper basket, or pencil. His ultimate purpose is to have us realize that the most frightening aspect of this process is the image we have made of ourselves – separated, autonomous beings, in control of our lives. This image of ourselves comes from a thought, too — wanting to be separate — and that is why, as I have been saying, if you really pay attention to these lessons they should strike terror in your heart, for they literally say you do not exist. You thus want to explore more and more how frightening these thoughts are, trying to identify how you defend against them. This is extremely important – watch how you defend against what these lessons are teaching you.

**(2:1) This introductory idea to the process of image making that you call seeing will not have much meaning for you.**

Jesus is once again making a mild understatement. The idea will not have much meaning for us because we do not want to accept what it is saying. One of the more important lines of defense that the ego uses is to prevent our understanding what Jesus is really saying here. That is why he says, again, this will probably not have much meaning for you. He does not even say "probably." He says it *will not* have much meaning for you, and that is because we are defending against that very meaning as a means of defending our individual identity.

**(2:2-4) You will begin to understand it when you have seen little edges of light around the same familiar objects which you see now. That is the beginning of real vision. You can be certain that real vision will come quickly when this has occurred.**

In my earlier tape set, "The Workbook of *A Course in Miracles:* Its Place in the Curriculum Theory and Practice," I went into this passage in depth. Rather than repeat that here, let me say briefly that Jesus is not talking about *literally* seeing edges of light around objects. This was originally meant for a friend of Helen and Bill's. You will do much better to understand this statement in terms of the *content.* When Jesus says you will see "little edges of light" around objects, he is really talking about the light of understanding or vision that is coming to you. In other words, you will understand that the objects are images you made as projections of the thoughts of separation you do not want to look at in your mind. If you try to take this literally you will guiltily feel yourself to be a failure when you do not see "little edges of light" around objects, not to mention glorifying those who claim they do.

**(3:1-4) As we go along, you may have many "light episodes." They may take many different forms, some of them quite unexpected. Do not be afraid of them. They are signs that you are opening your eyes at last.**

If you do have perceptions of light, all well and good, but Jesus is saying that what would really instill fear in you is your sudden recognition that this thing you are looking at is not there at all. When suddenly a "light" goes on in your mind and you realize: "My God! This is what Jesus is talking about," and you realize that if this waste paper basket is not really there, being a projection of a thought, what about those who believe they are perceiving the waste paper basket? Again, that recognition is the source of fear. No one really cares if a waste paper basket is there or not, but you *do* care whether *you* are there or not.

**(3:5-7) They will not persist, because they merely symbolize true perception, and they are not related to knowledge. These exercises will not reveal knowledge to you. But they will prepare the way to it.**

In many places, especially in the text, Jesus makes it clear that the goal of *A Course in Miracles* is not Heaven, knowledge, or love (T-in.1:6-7;T-8.in.1:1-2), but the correction of the ego's false perception, which would be true perception or vision, the peace that forgiveness or the miracle brings about.

Jesus also makes the same point in the text that he does here in 3:5: "...visions, however holy, do not last" (T-3.III.4:6). That is because all forms, however holy their content, are still part of the illusion of separation. Therefore they but *reflect* truth, and are not the truth itself.

The remaining two paragraphs reiterate the need to be non-selective yet not compulsive, as well as emphasizing the crucial idea of *specific* application whenever we find ourselves tempted to be upset. These emphases are the *content* behind the exercises' *form:*

**(4-5) In practicing the idea for today, repeat it first to yourself, and then apply it to whatever you see around you, using its name and letting your eyes rest on it as you say:**

***This _____ is an image that I have made.***
***That _____ is an image that I have made.***

**It is not necessary to include a large number of specific subjects for the application of today's idea. It is necessary, however, to continue to look at each subject while you repeat the idea to yourself. The idea should be repeated quite slowly each time.**

**Although you will obviously not be able to apply the idea to very many things during the minute or so of practice that is recommended, try to make the selection as random as possible. Less than a minute will do for the practice periods, if you begin to feel uneasy. Do not have more than three application periods for today's idea unless you feel completely comfortable with it, and do not exceed four. However, the idea can be applied as needed throughout the day.**

**Being faithful to the specifics of the daily exercises allows us to generalize the lesson of the inherent sameness of all things to each and every experience of our lives. Such generalization is the heart of forgiveness, and the key to achieving the peace that is Jesus' goal for us.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 16**

**I have no neutral thoughts.**

This idea is an attempt to correct the mistaken belief that our thoughts have no power. On one level it is true they have no power, because they cannot change Heaven nor can they destroy God. Within the dream, however, which is what Jesus is speaking about here, our thoughts have tremendous power. Just imagine what our thoughts are capable of doing: literally make up a physical universe, and a physical and psychological self that dwells within it; this self then actually believes it exists in the universe. That is Jesus' point in the first section of Chapter 31, "The Simplicity of Salvation," when he urges us not to underestimate the power of our learning skill. Although that was a message originally meant for Helen Schucman, in response to her constant complaints, Jesus is saying to each of us: "Do not tell me you cannot learn this course. Do not tell me your mind and its thoughts have no power. Look at what your learning *is* capable of doing." Here are *his* very clear words:

> What you have taught yourself is such a giant learning feat it is indeed incredible. But you accomplished it because you wanted to, and did not pause in diligence to judge it hard to learn or too complex to grasp.
>
> No one who understands what you have learned, how carefully you learned it, and the pains to which you went to practice and repeat the lessons endlessly, in every form you could conceive of them, could ever doubt the power of your learning skill. There is no greater power in the world. The world was made by it, and even now depends on nothing else. The lessons you have taught yourself have been so overlearned and fixed they rise like heavy curtains to obscure the simple and the obvious. Say not you cannot learn them. For your power to learn is strong enough to teach you that your will is not your own, your thoughts do not belong to you, and even you are someone else.
>
> Who could maintain that lessons such as these are easy? Yet you have learned more than this. You have continued, taking every step, however difficult, without complaint, until a world was built that suited you. And every lesson that makes up the world arises from the first accomplishment of learning; an enormity so great the Holy Spirit's Voice seems small and still before its magnitude. The world began with one strange lesson, powerful enough to render God forgotten, and His Son an alien to himself, in exile from the home where God Himself established him. You who have taught yourself the Son of God is guilty, say not that you cannot learn the simple things salvation teaches you! (T-31.1.2:7-4:6)

These are strong words, but upon their truth rests *A Course in Miracles.* Throughout the text, as well as at the heart of these lessons, is Jesus' overriding emphasis on the power of our minds to choose against God, which fact alone contains the promise of salvation. The mind that housed the separation thought is the *only* power in the universe that can save itself. And yet it has been this power that the ego has seemingly and successfully stifled and silenced by its plan to make a world and body, rendering the Son of God mindless. Jesus' purpose in *A Course in Miracles* is simple: restore to our awareness the power of our minds, that we may finally recognize our mistake, where it was made, and *choose again.*

Thus, this lesson reminds us that our thoughts are tremendously powerful. Indeed, that is the problem. We believe — within the dream — that these thoughts have destroyed God, Heaven, and the Holy Spirit as well. We gave this belief such power —

the power of guilt — that we had to deny the thoughts, project them out and make up a world, all as a defense against what the ego told us: the tremendous power of our minds destroyed Heaven. That is why guilt is such a central concept in *A Course in Miracles,* for it tells us we have committed the unmentionable sin: destroying God and His Love. Before we can understand these thoughts are literally nothing and have had no effects, we first must get in touch with the power these thoughts are having in our dreams. That is the purpose of this lesson.

**(1:1-2) The idea for today is a beginning step in dispelling the belief that your thoughts have no effect. Everything you see is the result of your thoughts.**

You should underline in multi-colors "Everything you see is the result of your thoughts"! This important sentence needs to be understood on two levels, as it means everything you see in terms of *form,* but also in terms of *interpretation.* Both are the "result of your thoughts." Hence, on one level, since we believe we separated from God, we see all kinds of separate things: people, chairs, pencils, clocks, walls, etc. We see them as separate objects because they are the direct result, or the shadow, of our thoughts of separation.

On another level and even more importantly, for the purposes of *A Course in Miracles* and the workbook lessons specifically, we understand that it is not only *what* we see, but *how* we see it. Jesus makes it very clear in the text and manual that perception is interpretation (e.g., T-3.III.2:3; T-11.VI.2:5-6; T-21.in.1-2; M-8.1-4; M-17.4:1-2). We cannot separate our perception of "objective reality" from our interpretation of it, because they are one and the same. Again, it is not only *what* we see, but *how* we see it.

As Jesus explains in many other places, especially in the text, if you begin with guilty thoughts and guilt is rooted in our belief we betrayed Heaven and sabotaged God's plan of creation, and thus demands punishment — those are the thoughts with which we will look out, the lens through which we look on everything. We will therefore see not only a separated world, but a separated world that will punish and betray us; a world in which there is no hope but only the despair of certain death. Thus we read, for example:

> The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find (T-31.I.7:4-8).

Further, as we monitor our perceptions and find ourselves becoming angry, anxious, or depressed, the cause will always be an interpretation of something we believe is external to us. The interpretation will directly follow from our secret thoughts, and if we accuse ourselves of betraying God, which is *everyone's* secret sin, we must and will see betrayal all around us.

**(1:3-7) There is no exception to this fact. Thoughts are not big or little; powerful or weak. They are merely true or false. Those that are true create their own likeness. Those that are false make theirs.**

The true thoughts that "create their own likeness" are the Thoughts of God – truth, love, spirit, etc. – which constitute Heaven. The ego's false thoughts are of separation –

guilt, betrayal, murder, death, suffering, etc. – and they will make their own likenesses as well. If these are our thoughts, we will then perceive a world in which all these things happen — to *us.*

As we proceed through these early lessons it will become increasingly clear that Jesus is trying to establish for us the causal connection between our thoughts and what we perceive: Our thoughts determine the world we see; ultimately, then, our minds are the *cause* and the world the *effect.*

**(2:1) There is no more self-contradictory concept than that of "idle thoughts."**

Our thoughts cannot be "idle," as in the popular expression, because they have the power either to create reality, our function in Heaven, or to make illusions, at least in our dreams. Inherent in the power to make illusions is the power to forget that we made them — the power of denial. When we forget we made them, we believe what we perceive outside is fact. That is why we shall never countenance anyone telling us that what we perceive is *not* what we perceive. We are so sure we are right about what we perceive in the world because we are so sure we exist. Since the world comes from that thought of separate existence, we have the equal certainty that the world exists the way we made it up and the way that we see it. Consequently, we would not at all be inclined to question our perceptions of ourselves and the world.

**(2:2-4) What gives rise to the perception of a whole world can hardly be called idle. Every thought you have contributes to truth or to illusion; either it extends the truth or it multiplies illusions. You can indeed multiply nothing, but you will not extend it by doing so.**

What is interesting here is that Jesus specifically says *perception* of a world. He is making the distinction that thoughts do not give rise to a world, but to a *perception* of a world. He does not always make such distinctions, but he does here. He is essentially saying there is no world out there.

We are free within our dream to see whatever it is we want to see, as many times over as we want to see it. But that does not make it real. *Extension* is a term in *A Course in Miracles* that is almost always associated with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit cannot extend nothing. In our insanity, however, we believe we can, and multiply illusions as well. Yet in truth they are all nothing. One times zero is the same as a thousand times zero.

**(3:1-2) Besides your recognizing that thoughts are never idle, salvation requires that you also recognize that every thought you have brings either peace or war; either love or fear. A neutral result is impossible because a neutral thought is impossible.**

In the next lesson Jesus will develop this even further by saying that what we see outside is not neutral because what we think inside is not neutral either. Jesus is thus telling us that what is important for salvation is recognizing the power of our thoughts — only within our dream, of course — and that there are only two thoughts in the split mind: the ego's, which leads to war or fear, and the Holy Spirit's, which leads to peace or love.

Therefore Jesus tells us first that our thoughts are not idle and are not neutral.

Then he says there are only two thoughts. That makes it very simple, because our perceptions and interpretations can become quite complicated. For instance, we believe, as we shall see presently, that there are gradations of anger, such as "a slight twinge of annoyance" or "intense fury" (W-pI.21.2:5). In truth they are the same, because they come from one thought of separation. This is what makes everything so simple; not easy, but simple because everything is recognized as the same.

**(3:3-4) There is such a temptation to dismiss fear thoughts as unimportant, trivial and not worth bothering about that it is essential you recognize them all as equally destructive, but equally unreal. We will practice this idea in many forms before you really understand it.**

This is aimed at the "blissninnies" who say that God and love are truth, and everything else trivial and unimportant, not worth bothering about because it is an illusion. From the point of view of Heaven this is indeed the case, but in this world it is *not* so, and that is why Jesus says it is "a temptation to dismiss fear thoughts as unimportant." We try to treat them as unimportant, telling ourselves that since *A Course in Miracles* teaches these thoughts are not real we do not have to pay attention to them. We then cover them with a blissninny smile and see only love and calls for love, wherein all will reach home as one happy chorus that sings a hymn of joy, and on and on and on, *ad nauseam.* However, we are not aware that we have dismissed the thought that we have destroyed Heaven. Within our deluded minds that is hardly trivial and unimportant, and so it cannot be denied if we are truly to let it go.

That is why Jesus says "it is essential that you recognize them all as equally destructive, but equally unreal." Before you can see them as equally unreal, you first have to realize their destructive nature. In the text Jesus says that "what is not love is murder" (T-23.IV.1:10), and that love without ambivalence is impossible in this world (T-4.III.4:6). If you add two and two, you get four: If love is not possible in this world, and what is not love is murder, then all thoughts in this world are murderous and equally destructive, whether a thought is a mild twinge of annoyance or a thought of outright fury that says: "I want to destroy you." We clearly are talking only about what goes on in the wrong mind, but within that wrong mind all our thoughts are "equally destructive" — there is no hierarchy of illusions, as we have already observed.

This one paragraph is extremely important. You should read it very carefully and see how, even though you may not think of yourself as a blissninny, it is tempting to fall into the trap of dismissing your ego thoughts. Jesus certainly is not telling us to obsess about the ego or make its thoughts into a big deal; after all, they *are* inherently unreal. But it cannot be said often enough that before you can dismiss these thoughts as unreal, you must first look at what they are. This point is strongly and often emphasized in the text where, for example, Jesus says:

> No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it.... We must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth (T-11.V.1:1-3,5-6).

The next paragraph is about mind searching, a central theme throughout *A*

*Course in Miracles.* This term occurs in Jesus' instructions to us in almost all these early lessons, where he accentuates the importance of looking within our minds at our thoughts. Again, if we are not aware of what is there, how can we bring them to him for help and for correction?

**(4) In applying the idea for today, search your mind for a minute or so with eyes closed, and actively seek not to overlook any "little" thought that may tend to elude the search. This is quite difficult until you get used to it. You will find that it is still hard for you not to make artificial distinctions. Every thought that occurs to you, regardless of the qualities that you assign to it, is a suitable subject for applying today's idea.**

This is yet another example of Jesus teaching us there is no order of difficulty in miracles. A miracle undoes problems regardless of their form, because they are all the same. We must realize that even our seemingly unimportant thoughts conceal the enormity of the ego thought system, as do the so-called major thoughts. "Artificial distinctions" would be deciding, for example, that one thing is important, another is not; or that this little annoyance is not important, but the grievance I hold against this person really is.

The last two paragraphs of this lesson repeat the same gentle instructions we have been seeing in the lessons so far, indicating once more the need for us to apply the idea for the day to each instance of discomfort we experience:

**(5-6) In the practice periods, first repeat the idea to yourself, and then as each one crosses your mind hold it in awareness while you tell yourself:**

***This thought about _____ is not a neutral thought.***
***That thought about _____ is not a neutral thought.***

**As usual, use today's idea whenever you are aware of a particular thought that arouses uneasiness. The following form is suggested for this purpose:**

***This thought about _____ is not a neutral thought, because I have no neutral thoughts.***

**Four or five practice periods are recommended, if you find them relatively effortless. If strain is experienced, three will be enough. The length of the exercise period should also be reduced if there is discomfort.**

We are thus gently and kindly trained in the healing process of looking at our thoughts, especially learning to become aware of those that produce uneasiness. We most likely had not allowed ourselves to feel discomfort, let alone recognize its source of guilt in our minds.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 17**
**I see no neutral things.**

This follows directly from "I have no neutral thoughts." We find here the same pattern seen in the earlier lessons, where Jesus goes back and forth between our thoughts and what we perceive, trying to help us understand they are the same. His purpose is to cultivate in us a vigilance in watching how we think, realizing that nothing we think, perceive, or interpret as the truth is correct. This takes great humility. The ego's arrogance seeks to cover the fear of realizing we are wrong about absolutely everything, which ultimately includes ourselves.

Any time you see an enemy "out there," or believe someone has the power to victimize, betray, or hurt you, you are saying you are right and Jesus is wrong; you are right because you can see and feel the attack, and have the evidence to prove it. However, you are not aware that *you* planted the evidence so you could find it. What you see is what you *want* to see, and so you put the evidence there and say: "See! My thoughts are *not* the problem. In fact, my thoughts are nothing. The problem is out there. That is the problem." And almost always there is some special person that is the focus of your problem.

These lessons attempt to train your mind to think this way all the time, so that you automatically translate what you perceive outside into an inner thought. It does not matter so much with coat hangers or waste paper baskets, but it does matter with the important relationships in your life. It also matters with the unimportant ones, but there are always special people that take center stage. Remember, you see outside what you put there because you *want* to see it in the *body,* not the *mind,* thereby saying: "My thoughts are unimportant because what I see is the fact." Thus you must first realize the *fact* is what you think. When you can look at that thought with Jesus, you will finally realize it is not a fact at all. As the text says, God is the only Fact (T-3.I.8:2).

**(1:1) This idea** ["I see no neutral things"] **is another step in the direction of identifying cause and effect as it really operates in the world.**

The thoughts in our minds are the *cause,* and our perceptions are the *effect.* This is another way of expressing the important principle we cited in the first paragraph of commentary in Lesson 8 above: "Projection makes perception." I first choose my teacher, the ego or Holy Spirit, and that choice determines the thought system with which I identify: separation or forgiveness. I have made it real, because that is what I perceive within me (the *cause)* and, once projected, I perceive its manifestations all around me (the *effects).*

**(1:2-3) You see no neutral things because you have no neutral thoughts. It is always the thought that comes first, despite the temptation to believe that it is the other way around.**

We can most likely attest to the fact, even though we have read these lines both here and in the text, and on some level believe they are true, that our daily lives do not reflect this understanding at all. We react to what is external, forgetting that what we are really reacting to is our having pushed Jesus away again, and then identifying with the ego's thought system of guilt. We quickly forget this "fact," project the guilt from our minds and see it in people, events, and things – all threatening to hurt us and take away our peace.

The purpose of these lessons and exercises is to practice seeing how we do *not* live this way; how we react to what is outside us. Remember, what is outside not only includes other people's bodies, but our own as well, for *outside* refers to what is outside our *minds,* not bodies. The point again is that we are not reacting to the world, but to our minds' decision. Moreover, it is important to remember that the decision for the ego is made up, for we react to the ego's illusory thought system that tells us how worthless, sinful, and wretched we are — "the home of evil, darkness and sin" as Lesson 93 states (1:1). This is the insanity we have made real and never challenge. Thus we are learning that not only is the world a defense, but so is our thought system of separation. The reality *beyond* both the world and the thoughts that made it is the Love of God — the only truth.

**(1:4) This is not the way the world thinks, but you must learn that it is the way you think.**

Jesus is making it unmistakably clear that this causal connection between mind and body is something we have to learn, as he also makes clear in the other lessons, and that it takes tremendous vigilance and practice because our way of life is set up in the opposite way. We have been programmed to think that it is the world that impinges on us, and that the bad guys are out there in the world. Yet Jesus is saying to us here: "This is something you are not going to understand right away, for it requires much practice. I am introducing it to you now for the first time, but we will go over it again and again." Jesus is therefore emphasizing that we are the student and he our teacher, and whenever we have difficulty with the text, workbook, or manual, it is simply because we have become afraid of what he is teaching us.

**(1:5) If it were not so, perception would have no cause, and would itself be the cause of reality.**

If it were correct that the world determines what we think, then perception would be a reality and a *cause;* namely, the objects of our perception would cause us to think and feel in certain ways. The truth, however, is that perception is the *effect,* caused by our thoughts. Always keep in mind that *projection makes perception.* If perception has no cause but is a reality independent of our thoughts, then it simply exists and there is nothing we can do about it. This, of course, describes the condition of practically everyone in the world. That is why there is no hope once we have bought into the ego thought system: we cannot change what is. If our perceptions are not effects caused by our thoughts, then they must be real. Thus do death, evil, war, and suffering become reality, and there is nothing we can do except get through our lives as best we can. Jesus, therefore, teaches that what is out there — the world and body, suffering and death is an *effect,* and the *cause* rests within our minds. Once we identify the cause we can do something about it. Otherwise, again, it is a hopeless situation.

And then this final comment about perception:

**(1:6) In view of its highly variable nature, this is hardly likely.**

Perception, obviously, is highly variable. We can see that even within ourselves. A perception we had of someone one day, when we could forgive, the next day becomes quite different. Depending on our inner state – choosing the ego or the Holy Spirit as our

teacher – we either perceive the world through the eyes of judgment and hate, or through forgiveness.

The exercise follows, continuing the training of our minds to understand the relationship between our thoughts and our perceptions:

**(2) In applying today's idea, say to yourself, with eyes open:**

***I see no neutral things because I have no neutral thoughts.***

**Then look about you, resting your glance on each thing you note long enough to say:**

***I do not see a neutral _____, because my thoughts about are not neutral.***

**For example, you might say:**

***I do not see a neutral wall, because my thoughts about walls are not neutral.***
***I do not see a neutral body, because my thoughts about bodies are not neutral.***

Jesus' instructions for the exercises now focus on his ongoing refutation of the ego's first law of chaos: the hierarchy of illusions:

**(3) As usual, it is essential to make no distinctions between what you believe to be animate or inanimate; pleasant or unpleasant. Regardless of what you may believe, you do not see anything that is really alive or really joyous. That is because you are unaware as yet of any thought that is really true, and therefore really happy.**

There is no animate or inanimate, because nothing here is alive. As we recall, one of the basic categories we are taught from grade school on up is that there are living things that can be categorized as animate, part of "the great chain of being," and non-living things that can be categorized as inanimate, like wood, metal, etc. Yet both categories are illusory, as we see in "The Laws of Chaos" section, which categorically states "there is no life outside of Heaven" (T-23.11.19:1). Jesus means that quite literally.

Real life and real joy are found only by taking Jesus' hand and identifying with his thought system of forgiveness. It is joyful because it returns us to our real life as part of God, the only joy. However, we yet must learn how to attain this life and joy, and these exercises, along with the gentle instruction we find in this next paragraph, are among the means Jesus employs to fulfill his pedagogical purpose:

**(4) Three or four specific practice periods are recommended, and no less than three are required for maximum benefit, even if you experience resistance. However, if you do, the length of the practice period may be reduced to less than the minute or so that is otherwise recommended.**

Mention of our resistance is Jesus' helpful way of reminding us not to feel guilty. He would not bring it up as frequently as he does if he were not expecting us to be fearful of his teaching, and thus seek to resist it. Learning to accept this resistance is an

essential step toward letting it go.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 18**

**I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing.**

I noted in my Prelude that in the workbook, as well as in the text, Jesus often develops a specific theme, sets it down, introduces a related theme, sets that one down and returns to the previous one. We see here the introduction of the idea that minds are joined, a theme central to *A Course in Miracles* — the oneness of God's Son and, specifically here, the oneness of God's Son in his separated state.

**(1) The idea for today is another step in learning that the thoughts which give rise to what you see are never neutral or unimportant. It also emphasizes the idea that minds are joined, which will be given increasing stress later on.**

Just as things in the world are different projections of the one thought of separation, so are the seemingly different people but part of the one separated Son. This means that all split minds are joined, because they come from one thought.

Before the fragmentation occurred, a topic discussed at the beginning of Chapter 18 in the text, there was only one error or thought, just as in Heaven there is only one Son. Minds are joined as one, because there is only the Mind of Christ, which is One, and at one with the Mind of God. Much more importantly for our purposes, however, is the principle that all *split minds* are joined, too. We are but fragmented perceptions and images that we — our decision-making minds, outside time and space — made so we would believe that separation is reality. In truth, all the seemingly separated fragments of God's Son, which we usually think of as homo sapiens, but actually include everything we perceive – animate and inanimate – are simply split-off parts of the one thought that says: "I have achieved the impossible. I am separate, autonomous, independent, free, and in control of my life." Here is that important passage from Chapter 18, which presents the concept of the *one* thought that made the world:

> You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution. It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation for wholeness. It has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was. That one error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. Your whole world rests upon it. Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is part of it.
>
> You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see. You do not realize the magnitude of that one error. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge. What else could come of it? Its fragmented aspects are fearful enough, as you begin to look at them. But nothing you have seen begins to show you the enormity of the original error, which seemed to cast you out of Heaven, to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions, and to force you to make further substitutions (T-18.1.4-5).

**(2) Today's idea does not refer to what you see as much as to how you see it. Therefore, the exercises for today emphasize this aspect of your perception. The three or four practice periods which are recommended should be done as follows:**

This is the point I mentioned earlier – perception is not only *what* we see, but *how* we see it. There is no distinction between the two. We make a distinction for teaching purposes, but it is arbitrary because the *interpretation* is what gives rise to what we see. The ego's interpretation is that I *want* to see a separated, hostile, vengeful world so I do not have to see these attributes in myself. In other words, the fact that my need to see a certain way determines what I see is why we can say that what we see and how we see it are one and the same.

The instructions in the remainder of the lesson are certainly familiar to us by now:

**(3) Look about you, selecting subjects for the application of the idea for today as randomly as possible, and keeping your eyes on each one long enough to say:**

***I am not alone in experiencing the effects*** *of* ***how I see***

**Conclude each practice period by repeating the more general statement:**

***I am not alone in experiencing the effects*** *of* ***my seeing.***

**A minute or so, or even less, will be sufficient for each practice period.**

We thus move from our specific perceptions to the generalization that teaches us that *all* our perceptions are the same, for they emanate from the same split mind that unites the Sonship as one.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 19**
**I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts.**

**(1) The idea for today is obviously the reason why your seeing does not affect you alone. You will notice that at times the ideas related to thinking precede those related to perceiving, while at other times the order is reversed. The reason is that the order does not matter. Thinking and its results are really simultaneous, for cause and effect are never separate.**

Jesus extends the idea of one split mind, saying that not only are our minds joined, but our minds and the world are joined as well; the world being nothing but the projection of the mind's thought of separation. This is another way of saying *ideas leave not their source,* a principle that is central to the teaching of *A Course in Miracles.* It is emphasized in the text (e.g., T-26.VII.4), and Jesus brings it up later in the workbook (e.g., W-pI.132.5; W-pI.156.1) — *ideas do not leave their source;* effects do not leave their cause; the world does not remain separated from the mind.

We are so sure, however, that we are right — the world exists *outside* us — because we actually see ourselves here as well as see a separated world outside. Even further, by minimizing, if not negating the power of our thoughts, we are proven right by our perceptions of ourselves as victims of what the world does to us. We think our thoughts have no effect, and therefore we split them off and hide them behind a physical shield, so that we are aware only of our bodies; how they and other bodies react. This has come about because we think the world is separate from our minds; that the *effect,* which is the world, is separate from the *cause,* which is the mind. But remember, again — *ideas leave not their source.*

As an analogy, whatever you see on a movie screen is nothing but a film in the projector that is projected out. Yet what is on the screen never left its source, the film running through the projector. To expand on that analogy, what is on the film is what the script writer, director, producer, actors, and actresses *wanted* to be on the film. Therefore, once it is there it will be projected and seen on the screen *as if it were* on the screen.

Shifting to our lives, we, as the decision maker, are the writer, director, producer, not to mention the people starring in it. The film is exactly what we have chosen, precisely so we *could* and *would* see it on the screen. People would not go through the trouble of making a movie if they did not want others to see it. And if we did not react to movies as though they were real we would not go to see them. Thus, we attend movies for excitement, enlightenment, and distraction because we like to believe there is something out there that can affect us, positively or negatively. That is the goal, and everything leading up to it is purposive.

This is exactly what we do with the world. There is a very specific purpose in making up our dream. We want people to react to it, including ourselves, *as if it were real.* Thus I see everything out there in the world, totally forgetting it is my movie. Not only did I make it up, but I made it up to see sin all around me; to see victimizers in everyone except in me.

Once we see that cause and effect are never separated, we understand what we are seeing outside, to repeat, is simply an image that came from a thought. The key point to keep in mind is that there is a specific motivation — which we will get to in the next lesson — to learn that the ego's lessons are true but we are not responsible for them. The ego teaches that we have separated from God, victimized and murdered Him, and thus acquired our individual existence. We believe this to be true, except we are not

responsible for it; *someone else is.*

Thus we have all gone to great trouble, with a very high budget indeed — it has cost us *Everything* — to make this grandiose movie of our lives. We invest tremendous energy in this movie in order to fulfill the ego's ultimate purpose: proving the separation is real, but *we are not responsible for it.* We forget we are actors with specific names and roles in the movie, as well as being script writers, directors, and producers.

If we were to realize we made the whole thing up, that we, as directors, *are* in control of our movie by virtue of excluding another Director, we would suddenly recognize that our greatest efforts were nothing because everything we had done was a defense against the truth. In a passage with which we will become increasingly familiar, we read:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it? (T-20.VIIL7:3-7)

In other words, the defensive purpose of the world is sustained by keeping cause and effect separate, not remembering that our minds are the cause of the world.

One other point about this lesson: the way I see does not affect me alone. The great illusion of the world is that I can have my private, hateful thoughts without affecting anyone. Yet if the Sonship is one, there must be an effect, because thoughts are unified and minds are joined. These effects are not usually observable, which is part of the reason for making the movie, yet they are there. That is why our guilt is so great — deep down we know the effect of our anger, for example. Whether or not we express it — whether it be physical, verbal, or in our conscious thoughts — anger's effect is continually telling God and Jesus They are wrong and we are right: the separation is alive and well, and we have the power to destroy Heaven. Again, this is the source of our guilt, and why Jesus is telling us to look at our expressions of anger, and even more importantly, at their underlying thoughts. If they do not change, nothing will change.

We return to the idea of oneness:

**(2:1-3) Today we are again emphasizing the fact that minds are joined. This is rarely a wholly welcome idea at first, since it seems to carry with it an enormous sense of responsibility, and may even be regarded as an "invasion of privacy." Yet it is a fact that there are no private thoughts.**

Within the dream there certainly are private thoughts. We all have the illusion we have them. We think, for example: "Thank God I didn't say that, so my friend doesn't know what I *really* think." On a conscious level that person may not know, but remember, we are all part of the one mind, and on that level another's fear and guilt are reinforced by our thoughts, just as we are. Therefore, the effects of our thoughts may not show up right away on an individual level within the dream, but in the larger mind, of which all of us are an effect, thoughts have tremendous power as they reinforce the ego's thought system. They are reminders to everyone that the ego is alive and well, and Jesus does not know what he is talking about.

**(2:4-5) Despite your initial resistance to this idea, you will yet understand**

**that it must be true if salvation is possible at all. And salvation must be possible because it is the Will of God.**

What is important here is that salvation is possible only if there is *one* problem. The key to salvation within *A Course in Miracles* is its first principle: *there is no order of difficulty among miracles.* This tells us that each problem is like every other problem, and so the solution — the miracle — is the same for all. The problem is unreal; but we will not know its unreality until we realize that every problem is the same. The seemingly external form of each problem is but a shadow of the inner problem: the single thought that says: "I am separated and am on my own." If we *could* be separate and have private thoughts, that would mean the separation is real. Salvation can occur only when we realize the separation is illusory, which means we can have no private thoughts.

The concluding three paragraphs present the daily exercise to be performed:

**(3) The minute or so of mind searching which today's exercises require is to be undertaken with eyes closed. The idea for today is to be repeated first, and then the mind should be carefully searched for the thoughts it contains at that time. As you consider each one, name it in terms of the central person or theme it contains, and holding it in your mind as you do so, say:**

***I am not alone in experiencing the effects*** *of* ***this thought about _____.***

Here Jesus is having us focus solely on our thoughts, as reflecting their unity with the Sonship.

**(4-5) The requirement of as much indiscriminateness as possible in selecting subjects for the practice periods should be quite familiar to you by now, and will no longer be repeated each day, although it will occasionally be included as a reminder. Do not forget, however, that random selection of subjects for all practice periods remains essential throughout. Lack of order in this connection will ultimately make the recognition of lack of order in miracles meaningful to you.**

**Apart from the "as needed" application of today's idea, at least three practice periods are required, shortening the length of time involved, if necessary. Do not attempt more than four.**

In a sense, Jesus is revealing his process with us, explaining the purpose of the first nineteen lessons. Over and over, he insists that we not discriminate in the choice of objects we perceive outside, or in our choice of thoughts as we search our minds. Jesus wants us to realize that *everything* we perceive and think is the same. By learning to practice this idea with specific objects in the room and specific thoughts within our minds, we will come to realize that everything is the same, and therefore our problems have one solution — the miracle.

Thus we find a clear statement of Jesus' underlying method, and why the workbook lessons appear to be as simple as they are. He wants us to practice on a level that is comfortable — coat hanger, waste basket, lamp, telephone, cup, etc. — until we get the idea they are all the same, serving the purpose of proving the reality of the separation and the absence of our responsibility for it. This helps us ultimately to realize there is no hierarchy of illusions; the correction for the first law of chaos, which seeks to establish this hierarchy.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 20**

**I am determined to see.**

There are relatively few lessons like this in the workbook; Lesson 95 is especially similar. Their importance lies not so much in the specific theme, as much as it lies in Jesus explaining what he is doing in these exercises: how to do them, and how not to do them. He begins by discussing the practice periods.

**(1:1-2) We have been quite casual about our practice periods thus far. There has been virtually no attempt to direct the time for undertaking them, minimal effort has been required, and not even active cooperation and interest have been asked.**

In other words, Jesus is being very gentle. He says: "Take a minute or two, and if that is too much, take less. Do it two or three times a day. If that is too much, do it less." He explains:

**(1:3-6) This approach has been intentional, and very carefully planned. We have not lost sight of the crucial importance of the reversal of your thinking. The salvation of the world depends on it. Yet you will not see if you regard yourself as being coerced, and if you give in to resentment and opposition.**

Thus Jesus tells us: "I am not trying to convince you that I am right and you are wrong, nor am I trying to compel you to believe these concepts. I am being as gentle as I can, asking only that you go along with me, whether you believe in this or not." This is not an argument. Since Jesus is not trying to prove that you are wrong and he is right, you should not be trying to prove yourself right and him wrong. Our *only* reason for reversing our thinking should *not* be because of *him,* but because of *us:* we would feel better if we did. Becoming happy is the motivation Jesus is trying to instill in us, as we shall see presently. It is important to proceed as you would with a new pair of shoes: Try them on and walk around for a while. If they feel comfortable, keep them; if not, discard them. And so, pardon the pun, we are ready for the next step as Jesus says: "I have not been giving you a lot of structure, *until now":*

**(2:1-5) This is our first attempt to introduce structure. Do not misconstrue it as an effort to exert force or pressure. You want salvation. You want to be happy. You want peace.**

Motivation now is the focus. The ego's motivation is the exact opposite of happiness. Everyone would *say* they want salvation, happiness and peace, but it is always acquired at someone else's expense, an inevitability of the ego thought system. If I am happy, I have to get something from someone else; if I have to get something, someone will have less of it. This is the essence of the special relationship, a term, incidentally, that does not appear at all in the workbook, although clearly its hateful dynamics are reflected throughout. Jesus is thus trying to tell us we really *want* salvation, which means we really *want* to be free of our guilt. We really *want* to be happy and peaceful.

**(2:6) You do not have them now, because your mind is totally undisciplined...**

If you have any questions about this, just think how difficult it is for you to go around realizing that everything you see or react to is literally not there. That provides some idea of the undisciplined nature of your mind. You can be attentive right now and understand everything that is being said. Yet, it is almost guaranteed that within minutes, if not seconds, you will return to your old way of being: holding grievances, becoming upset about something, and actually believing there is no connection between your thoughts and the images you perceive. That is what Jesus means by being "undisciplined." He is not rebuking us, but simply saying: "You must recognize that this is true. Otherwise you will not let me help you."

**(2:6-8) ... and you cannot distinguish between joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, love and fear. You are now learning how to tell them apart. And great indeed will be your reward.**

This is a major theme in *A Course in Miracles,* both here and in the text (e.g., T-7.X; T-8.II; T-19.IV-B.12-15). It has not been the first time we have made this observation, nor will it be the last. It goes to the heart of Jesus' attempt at motivating us to learn his course so that we would be truly happy and joyful. Normally, what brings us joy and pleasure is getting what we want. We think love is specialness – having our needs met – and we are not aware that this is part of the ego system, and thus will only bring us guilt and pain.

**(3:1) Your decision to see is all that vision requires.**

The problem is that we do not want to see, and so Jesus first has to help us realize how much we do not want to, a wish that comes from the recognition that if we see through his eyes we can no longer blame anyone. Seeing through his eyes means that reality is not what we perceive outside, but his love for us, the reflection of the reality of God's Love.

Thus we need to be aware of how much we do not want to give up the certainty that we are right about our perceptions, because we certainly do not want to give up our certainty about what we perceive inside our sinful and guilty self. As painful as that self-image may be, it is still *my* selfishness, which establishes *my* existence. I am reminded of one of Helen's favorite poetic lines – which she would misquote, by the way – from Yeats' poem, "Aedh wishes for the Cloths of Heaven": "Tread lightly on my dreams. They are dreams. Yet they are *my* dreams."*

**(3:2-8) What you want is yours. Do not mistake the little effort that is asked of you for an indication that our goal is of little worth. Can the salvation of the world be a trivial purpose? And can the world be saved if you are not? God has one Son, and he is the resurrection and the life. His will is done because all power is given him in Heaven and on earth. In your determination to see is vision given you.**

The language in these passages is clearly biblical: New Testament terms and descriptions of Jesus. He is God's Son, and "the resurrection and the life," and "all power is given him in Heaven and on earth." But Jesus is telling us here: "Yes, this is true of me, but it is also true of you. Moreover, the world cannot be saved if you are not." It is

obvious by now that this world is not external, for Jesus' focus is always on the internal — what we *think.* Again, we need to be motivated to *think* differently, and thus to *see* differently.

**(4) The exercises for today consist in reminding yourself throughout the day that you want to see. Today's idea also tacitly implies the recognition that you do not see now. Therefore, as you repeat the idea, you are stating that you are determined to change your present state for a better one, and one you really want.**

This is how Jesus begins the process of changing our motivation – from guilt to happiness. We do not want to see now because we believe vision will bring pain. Only when we learn that it brings happiness will we *want* to change from the ego's form of seeing.

**(5:1-2) Repeat today's idea slowly and positively at least twice an hour today, attempting to do so every half hour. Do not be distressed if you forget to do so, but make a real effort to remember.**

Jesus is slowly and gently introducing us to the all-important concept of sin vs. error. To forget today's idea is not a sin, but merely an error or mistake that we wish to correct *so that we shall feel better.* It is Jesus' gentle teaching that undoes the ego's harshness, and provides us with a model of kindness for *all* our interactions.

And finally:

**(5:3-6) The extra repetitions should be applied to any situation, person or event that upsets you. You can see them differently, and you will. What you desire you will see. Such is the real law of cause and effect as it operates in the world.**

If we see separation, vengeance, betrayal, or suffering, it is because we *want* to see them. This desire is the cause, and what we see is the effect. Jesus is trying to convince us that we really want to see differently. We obviously are not as yet convinced.

* The original reads: "But I, being poor, have only my dreams; / I have spread my dreams under your feet; / Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 21**
**I am determined to see things differently.**

This lesson directly follows from the preceding one. It is interesting to note that Jesus talks specifically about anger in this lesson, even though it is not reflected in the title at all. He illustrates the idea that there is no hierarchy of illusions by having us realize that anger consists of a wide range of thoughts. We begin with the specific instructions, which usually come at the end of the lesson:

**(1:1-2:2) The idea for today is obviously a continuation and extension of the preceding one. This time, however, specific mind-searching periods are necessary, in addition to applying the idea to particular situations as they may arise. Five practice periods are urged, allowing a full minute for each.**

**In the practice periods, begin by repeating the idea to yourself. Then close your eyes and search your mind carefully for situations past, present or anticipated that arouse anger in you.**

This is the mind searching we had discussed earlier, and now Jesus wants us to focus specifically on our anger. The problem is that we cannot be determined to see things differently at the same time we are angry, because our anger says: "I am determined to see things the way *I* have always seen them. My perception is right, Jesus' is wrong, and I will go to my death to prove it." Jesus is now helping us realize that before we can say "I am determined to see differently," we have to understand our thoughts, which is why he asks us to get in touch with them. In other words, vision can come *only* by undoing our thoughts of anger, or correcting our mistaken decision for the ego. Saying *no* to the ego is the way of learning to see.

**(2:3-5) The anger may take the form of any reaction ranging from mild irritation to rage. The degree of the emotion you experience does not matter. You will become increasingly aware that a slight twinge of annoyance is nothing but a veil drawn over intense fury.**

This last line is the one I mentioned earlier in Lesson 16, one of the more famous lines in *A Course in Miracles.* It is so important, in fact, that Jesus virtually repeats it in the manual for teachers (M-17.4:5). Everything is the same. Forms vary, but their content remains the same, as this lesson clearly explains. Statements such as these illustrate just how radical this course is. For all intents and purposes it invalidates *all* our experiences and beliefs.

**(3:1-2) Try, therefore, not to let the "little" thoughts of anger escape you in the practice periods. Remember that you do not really recognize what arouses anger in you, and nothing that you believe in this connection means anything.**

We think that what arouses anger in us is what people do or fail to do, but what truly arouses our anger is the need to project responsibility for the separation:

> Anger always involves projection of separation, which must ultimately be accepted as one's own responsibility, rather than being blamed on others (T-6.in.1:2).

That fact is what we do not want to acknowledge. We need to proclaim: "I am not guilty of the sin of murdering God and betraying His Love. Someone else is." When I see it out there – because I put it there – I believe I am justified in getting angry; a neat trick, at which we all are pretty expert. It matters not whether I am enraged or only mildly annoyed. Either way I am saying that my well being depends on something or someone external. In the absence of that special object I will be upset, and it will not be my fault.

**(3:3-5) You will probably be tempted to dwell more on some situations or persons than on others, on the fallacious grounds that they are more "obvious." This is not so. It is merely an example of the belief that some forms of attack are more justified than others.**

For the first time we see a specific example of the principle that there is no hierarchy of illusions. Jesus uses anger as the example because it is so central to the ego's thought system. Everyone walks around angry, because everyone walks around guilty over the separation and not wanting to accept responsibility for it. Thus again, before we can be determined to see things differently, we have to recognize and understand the *interference* to seeing things differently: there is something out there – whether in our own body or another's – that causes us pain that is not of our doing. In other words, our thoughts have no power, and thus cannot cause us distress. Someone else has brought this upset about, or some disease or circumstance. We are innocent, the helpless victim of forces beyond our control.

The rest of the lesson repeats instructions we have seen before.

**(4-5) As you search your mind for all the forms in which attack thoughts present themselves, hold each one in mind while you tell yourself:**
***I am determined to see ____ [name of person] differently.***
***I am determined to see ____ [specify the situation] differently.***

**Try to be as specific as possible. You may, for example, focus your anger on a particular attribute of a particular person, believing that the anger is limited to this aspect. If your perception is suffering from this form of distortion, say:**

***I am determined to see ____ [specify the attribute] in _____ [name of person] differently.***

"Try to be as specific as possible" is the key here. Our temptation will often be to gloss over the specific forms of upset of our life, unconsciously trying to deny them as the means of denying their source. Thus our ego would get us twice: first by teaching us to deny our guilt, and then to deny its specific defense of anger. This is the double shield of oblivion Jesus describes in Lesson 136.

Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles by Kenneth Wapnick

Lesson 22

What I see is a form of vengeance.

This continues Lesson 21, which discussed anger and attack; specifically that there are no differences among their many forms – from annoyance to rage – for they all conceal the thought of separation and victimization. This lesson takes those principles one step further.

It is extremely important as we proceed to keep in mind the impossibility of being in this world without attack thoughts. If the world is made as an attack on God, as Jesus says much later in the workbook (W-pII.3.2:1) – to prove we are right and He is wrong – and if we identify with this world and the body, we are an inherent part of that thought system of attack. Therefore, the very concept of individual existence entails attack, if not murder, because in order for there to be existence God had to be destroyed. Consequently, it is impossible to identify with the body – physically and psychologically – without sharing the entirety of the ego thought system. Of the many words that encapsulate the ego, attack is certainly high on the list.

(1:1-2) Today's idea accurately describes the way anyone who holds attack thoughts in his mind must see the world. Having projected his anger onto the world, he sees vengeance about to strike at him.

As long as there are attack thoughts in our minds, we must see the world about to take vengeance on us. The second sentence, which is a classic description of projection, provides us with the reason. We all harbor attack thoughts, because, again, our individual identity is based on it. Given its origin – if I am to exist, then God must be destroyed – it rests on the principle of one or the other or kill or be killed. We all believe we are sinful because we believe we attacked God. This sense of sinfulness, along with the guilt that inevitably follows from it, is so overwhelming it cannot be tolerated. The ego therefore tells us to push sin and guilt into our unconscious and then project them out. Furthermore, since the expectation of punishment is inherent in the very idea of guilt, the world arises as the ego's means to prove we deserve to be punished, unfairly treated, and victimized.

The beginning of our physical lives – conception and birth – is then seen as proof that we are the innocent victims of what other people have done to us. We are not here as a result of our own choices, but of a biological accident. This reflects the almost universal belief that we had nothing to do with our birth. Everything that happens to us from the time we are conceived is seen in the context of our being innocent victims of powers and forces beyond our control. The ego will always interpret these powers and forces as some form of attack on us, which the ego convinces us we deserve because of our original attack on God.

This is the central idea of the lesson. In fact, without understanding this unconscious dynamic one will not be able to understand A Course in Miracles – either the thought system of the ego, or its undoing through the Holy Spirit. As long as we believe we are separated, we believe we have attack thoughts, and these attack thoughts must be projected out. We will further believe, therefore, that others are doing, are about to do, or have already done to us what we believe we originally did to God and to His Son.

We can certainly assume that Jesus' ongoing assignment to us as his students is understanding these dynamics in the context of the lessons and exercises in the workbook. He then asks us to apply the principles of their undoing – forgiveness – to our

personal lives by recognizing how we manifest these ego thoughts in our everyday behavior.

(1:3) His own attack is thus perceived as self defense.

We forget we had the original attack thought, for we have projected it and now see everyone and every aspect of the world poised to attack us. We therefore feel justified in attacking in self-defense. This is the "face of innocence" I mentioned earlier, a concept described in greater detail in many places in the text (e.g., T-27.I; T-31.V). In Lesson 170 we shall see this concept of self-defense elaborated on in more depth as well.

(1:4-6) This becomes an increasingly vicious circle until he is willing to change how he sees. Otherwise, thoughts of attack and counterattack will preoccupy him and people his entire world. What peace of mind is possible to him then?

Jesus says this vicious circle of attack and defense – defense is always counterattack – cannot change until we change how we see. This means changing how we think, because perception and thinking are one: Ideas leave not their source.* What we perceive outside is simply a shadow of what we first perceived and made real in our minds. Whenever we feel at the mercy of forces beyond our control – forces within our own bodies, the bodies of others, the laws of the world or of nature – we affirm the truth of the ego's thought system, which means that the reality of God and the Love of God are untrue.

Again, once we begin with the premise that we exist as separate, individual selves, it is impossible not to be trapped in this vicious circle of attack and counterattack. There is no way out unless we change the premise of our thinking, a process which is explained in more depth in Lesson 23.

(2:1-2) It is from this savage fantasy that you want to escape. Is it not joyous news to hear that it is not real?

It is most definitely not joyous news if you still believe you exist and are important, not to mention special. As long as you cling to your individual identity, it is not joyous news to be told that you could escape from this. This explains everyone's resistance to these lessons, both in understanding them and certainly in applying them, not to mention resistance to what the text teaches. It would be extremely helpful as you go along to identify how much you cling to your self and the conviction you are right.

(2:3-5) Is it not a happy discovery to find that you can escape? You made what you would destroy; everything that you hate and would attack and kill. All that you fear does not exist.

What we would destroy is other people, as well as any other objects of our anger. We made the world that we seek to destroy, and that we believe seeks to destroy us. Everything we hate, would attack, and kill is part of our "savage fantasy," the purpose of which is to prove our existence, but that someone else is responsible for it. Once again, we perceive ourselves to be the innocent victims of what has been done to us.

As you do this lesson, try to identify the fear and anxiety that arise as you begin to think about what Jesus is saying. The next paragraph provides a good opportunity for practicing this:

(3:1-6) Look at the world about you at least five times today, for at least a minute each time. As your eyes move slowly from one object to another, from one body to another, say to yourself:
I see only the perishable.
I see nothing that will last.
What I see is not real.
What I see is a form of vengeance.

Do this exercise in front of a mirror and see how much you believe what you say. As you gaze at a reflection of your separated self, say: "I see only the perishable"; "I see nothing that will last." If you do this properly and thoughtfully, there is bound to be anxiety. If not, search your mind for your defenses against it. As long as you think you exist, and are special, unique, and important – whether positively or negatively – you will find these lessons difficult and anxiety-inducing, and will need to identify the resistance in yourself. Thus you will be better able to honestly address the final three sentences:

(3:7-9) At the end of each practice period, ask yourself:
Is this the world I really want to see?
The answer is surely obvious.

While the answer may be quite obvious to the right mind, to our egos this perishable self is nonetheless our self, and so the unfortunate, yet honest answer is: "Yes, I do want to see this." But again, we are still, to quote Psychotherapy: Purpose, Process and Practice: "at the very start of the beginning stage of the first journey" (P-3.II.8:5). There is much for us to learn.

* This central principle is stated in different ways in the Course. See, for example, T-26.VII.4:7; W-pI.132.5:3; W-pI.167.3:6. See also p. 1102 in the Concordance of A COURSE IS MIRACLES for a complete listing.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 23**

**I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts.**

This is among the most important lessons in the workbook, providing us with clear statements about the nature of world, and what salvation is *and* what it is not. Another valuable aspect of this lesson is its simple language, which makes it even more difficult to mistake its message. This certainly does not mean, of course, that people will not try valiantly to overlook it.

The title itself is a blockbuster. The world we see is a world of death: vengeance, violence, pain, and suffering. It might also be described as a world of pleasure and happiness, but no pleasure and happiness in this world lasts. As they begin to fade, our anxiety and anger grow, our specialness feels unfulfilled, and we inevitably experience pain. Jesus is teaching us now that the way to escape from this pain is not by doing anything to the world, but by changing how we *look* on the world.

**(1:1-3) The idea for today contains the only way out of fear that will ever succeed. Nothing else will work; everything else is meaningless. But this way cannot fail.**

You do not deal with fear by overcoming it directly, or by changing anything of the world or the body. You can escape from fear only by changing its *cause,* which is the decision to be separate. Many of the world's methods will work, but not all the time. In other words, the gains you may receive from following the world's guidelines will not last – no matter how noble and ideal they might seem – because the *cause* of the distress is overlooked. This was Jesus' pointed response to Helen, to which we shall return periodically, when early in the dictation she asked him to remove her fear:

> The correction of fear *is* your responsibility. When you ask for release from fear, you are implying that it is not. You should ask, instead, for help in the conditions that have brought the fear about. These conditions always entail a willingness to be separate.... You may still complain about fear, but you nevertheless persist in making yourself fearful.... If I intervened between your thoughts *[cause]* and their results *[effect],* I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect; the most fundamental law there is. I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course. It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough (T-2.VI.4:1-4; VII.1:1,4-7).

Jesus was thus appealing to the power of Helen's mind to *choose* to be afraid, directing her attention to the *cause* of her distress, away from its *effect.*

**(1:4-5) Every thought you have makes up some segment of the world you see. It is with your thoughts, then, that we must work, if your perception of the world is to be changed.**

This is another clear statement of cause and effect, and one that is meant literally. The *cause* of everything in the world is our thoughts, and the *effect* is everything we experience in the world. This principle, however, must be understood from the point of view of the mind, otherwise we would be tempted to believe that a particular thought of ours could have a harmful effect on something external. For instance, if you as an

individual have an angry thought about someone, and then something unfortunate occurs, you could mistakenly think this lesson means you are responsible for what happened to that person. The intention here is not to induce guilt because something happens to someone with whom you are angry. Jesus is talking about a thought in the mind, which means that if the person falls off a ladder, it is to be viewed as a choice that that person made, perhaps along with you if you react to it — but not the *you* that you think you are.

It is essential to remember that thoughts are of the mind, not the brain. What we usually identify as our thoughts belong to the brain, which, we are told time and time again, does not truly think. Jesus is speaking to us exclusively about the mind. Remember, the mind is outside time and space, and the world of time and space emanates from the one thought of separation. Once we believe we are here, everything appears to be real and governed by laws we have established. These will always be some expression of cause and effect. For instance, I drink poison and my body experiences the effect: I become ill and may even die. Both the seeming cause – my drinking poison – and the seeming effect – my body's illness or death – are effects of a larger cause, which is the thought that says: "I am going to prove I am right and God is wrong. I am going to prove separation is real, the body real, and that sin most definitely has an effect: my death."

This lesson, as is obvious, does not truly discuss these principles; that is the function of the text. But its underlying teachings are certainly *reflected* here. Jesus is not expecting students at this point to have a thorough understanding of the text's theoretical principles. He simply asks us to begin practicing the exercises. Consistent practice will eventually lead to an understanding of the deeper metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles'* thought system. Recall that the *world* was made as a defense against getting in touch with the thoughts in our *minds.*

"It is with your thoughts, then, that we must work" is an extremely important statement. This is a course in mind training, a course in changing your mind and how you perceive. In practice, changing how you think really means changing the teacher from whom you will learn. The bottom line of *A Course in Miracles* is always: Do I choose my ego to teach me how I should perceive the world, or do I let Jesus or the Holy Spirit be my Teacher? My thoughts – guilt, anger, and suffering; or thoughts of peace and forgiveness – automatically follow from the teacher I have chosen. That is why it is important to understand that an integral part of the Course's curriculum is developing a personal relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. From that relationship our right-minded thoughts, and therefore our right-minded perceptions and behavior will inevitably follow.

**(2) If the cause of the world you see is attack thoughts, you must learn that it is these thoughts which you do not want. There is no point in lamenting the world. There is no point in trying to change the world. It is incapable of change because it is merely an effect. But there is indeed a point in changing your thoughts about the world. Here you are changing the cause. The effect will change automatically.**

It is necessary first to accept the premise that the cause of the world is attack thoughts. This is true both on the larger level – that the cause of the entire physical universe is an attack thought – as well as on the personal level – that the individual world of our physical and psychological self is caused by an attack thought, which is the

belief that we are separate.

Jesus is telling us that – to express it in a specific example – if you do not like a shadow on a wall, you do not approach it and try to change the shadow, ignoring the object that is casting the shadow. If you do not like what you see on the wall, change the object! To try to peel off the shadow, or modify it in some way is silly. The physical universe can be likened to a shadow, reminiscent of Plato's Allegory of the Cave, which is why Jesus says in an oft-quoted line: "Trust not your good intentions. They are not enough" (T-18.IV.2:1-2). It is the well-intentioned people in the world who want to change, fix, or make it better. They may succeed up to a point, but they will ultimately fail if they ignore the world's underlying cause of separation.

Statements such as the ones expressed here – i.e., "There is no point in trying to change the world" – have frequently been taken out of context by students of *A Course in Miracles* and wrongly interpreted to mean that we literally are to do nothing: They erroneously think this means that we should let rapists go free, Hitlers invade countries, the environment go to hell, pay no attention to what we put into our stomachs, etc. – because the world and body are illusory and all we need do is change our minds. This, however, is exactly the opposite of what Jesus is teaching us. Ultimately it is true that the universe is illusory and nothing here matters; but as long as we believe we are here, our bodies are symbols, and before we can let them go, we first have to change what they symbolize – from separation to joining, attack to forgiveness.

We thus return to the central point – changing our teacher. If we have chosen Jesus, he will have us act in a loving way, in forms understood by the world. Lesson 184 makes that explicit point. These passages, therefore, should not be used as an excuse for doing nothing about the world, or our or other people's bodies. Rather, whatever we do about the world or ourselves should be done with Jesus' guidance instead of the ego's. As he says later on in the context of perceiving specifics to learn abstraction: "We need to see a little, that we learn a lot" (W-pI.161.4:8). Thus we practice on the "little" things of the body, so that we may come to learn about the magnitude of spirit.

It is highly unlikely Jesus would tell you: "Do not do anything because I will bring everything to you, and the world is an illusion." He will not teach you that because you are still too terrified of understanding and accepting it. As long as you identify with your body (and that includes everyone who studies this course), its *meaning* for you has to be changed. You do not give up the body; you do not go from the nightmare of the ego to the truth of eternity. Rather, you go from the nightmare dreams of the ego to the happy dreams of the Holy Spirit:

> Nothing more fearful than an idle dream has terrified God's Son, and made him think that he has lost his innocence, denied his Father, and made war upon himself. So fearful is the dream, so seeming real, he could not waken to reality without the sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear, unless a gentler dream preceded his awaking, and allowed his calmer mind to welcome, not to fear, the Voice that calls with love to waken him; a gentler dream, in which his suffering was healed and where his brother was his friend. God willed he waken gently and with joy, and gave him means to waken without fear (T-27.VII.13:3-5).

This means that the body comes to serve another purpose and has a different meaning: the means for undoing all guilt and hatred of others. With this new purpose in mind, you are free to use your body lovingly, treating yourself and others more kindly. The forms do not matter; the *teacher* you choose does. Everyone, however, is tempted

to skip steps, because the fear of looking at what it truly means to live in the ego's world is too painful. As a result, *A Course in Miracles* all too often becomes a way of *escaping* the pain of our everyday lives, rather than the means of *undoing* it.

When Jesus talks about changing your thoughts, understand him to mean changing the *teacher* of your thoughts. Again, if you choose him as your teacher, all your thoughts, perceptions, and behavior will be loving. But be wary of the ego ploy that would have you believe you are choosing Jesus, when you are really choosing the ego itself. You can tell you have chosen the ego when you are caught in a way of thinking that causes you to look different from others, separating yourself in some way – behavior that makes you special. Anything that causes you to deny your body or to live in a way that calls attention to yourself you can bet 99.99 percent of the time is of your ego and not Jesus. The real *cause* you want to change is your need to prove that you are right and Jesus is wrong, which you do by establishing your personal identity. Remember, this identity is one of specialness, which is a red flag signaling you have chosen the ego as your teacher.

Another expression of the ego's hidden agenda of specialness is the *special* focus students of *A Course in Miracles* place on the *effect* of the mind's change. Indeed, very often the physical world will change as our thoughts change, but this means nothing if the world is nothing. The *effect* that *always* changes is the inevitable result of our attack thoughts: guilt, anxiety, fear, depression, disease, etc. Peace will always result when these attack thoughts are given up. To place emphasis on the *form* of the effect is merely to allow the ego thoughts back into our minds. We must always *"be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom"* (T-6.V-C).

**(3:1) The world you see is a vengeful world, and everything in it is a symbol of vengeance.**

These are very strong statements, and as uncompromising as any you will come across in the text. *Everything* in this world is a symbol of vengeance. Why? Because if you believe there is a world, you are saying God no longer exists. If God no longer exists, it is because you killed Him and perforce believe He is justified in taking vengeance on you. You block out that horrendous thought and conflict, project it, and then believe it is the world that will seek its vengeance on you. There is of course another meaning we can give to the symbol of the world – the Holy Spirit's purpose of forgiveness – but here the focus is on the ego.

**(3:2) Each of your perceptions of "external reality" is a pictorial representation of your own attack thoughts.**

"External reality" is in quotes because there is no reality outside. This is similar to the idea Jesus presents early in the text: "All thinking produces form at some level" (T-2.VI.9:14), which appears in the first paragraph of this lesson: "Every thought you have makes up some segment of the world you see." By "pictorial representation" Jesus means *projection,* as we have already seen in this statement that cannot be quoted too often:

> It [the world] is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition (T-21.in.1:5).

Once again, Jesus refers to the thinking occurring within the ego system, which always reflects some aspect of attack.

**(3:3-4) One can well ask if this can be called seeing. Is not fantasy a better word for such a process, and hallucination a more appropriate term for the result?**

*Fantasy* is a psychological term for thoughts that are not real, usually pertaining to bringing you something you want. This means calling upon the ego's trusted ally: specialness. If you want to defend against your guilt, you invoke fantasies of killing someone or attaining vengeance on another; or if you feel you are in a state of lack, you indulge fantasies of pleasure, of getting what you want. Everything in this world – special hate or special love – comes from a fantasy thought. Thus the world gives me what I want: a haven in which I can hide from God. And since the world is the effect of a thought of fantasy, it exists in the realm of hallucination – the perceptual counterpart of the mind's delusional thought system of fantasy.

**(4:1) You see the world that you have made, but you do not see yourself as the image maker.**

This is denial, discussed in detail later in Lesson 136, "Sickness is a defense against the truth," which instructs us that we make up a sickness, and then forget we did so. It is another way of saying we are the dreamer of the dream, but have forgotten the dream's source and instead believe the dream is dreaming us. This is a major theme in the text, to which we shall return. For now, note these representative statements that can serve as prelude to the more extensive discussions to come:

> This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind. He cannot doubt his dreams' reality, because he does not see the part he plays in making them and making them seem real.... *You* are the dreamer of the world of dreams. No other cause it has, nor ever will (T-27.VII.7:6-9; 13:1-2).
>
> Let us return the dream he gave away unto the dreamer, who perceives the dream as separate from himself and done to him (T-27.VIII.6:1).
>
> The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is.... He [the dreamer] did not see that he was author of the dream, and not a figure in the dream (T-28.II.4:2; 7:4).

**(4:2-3) You cannot be saved from the world, but you can escape from its cause. This is what salvation means, for where is the world you see when its cause is gone?**

Ultimately you cannot be saved from the world because there is no world. You are saved from your belief system that tells you there is a world. This belief system, as I have been saying, rests on the self-accusation we have killed God so we could exist in His place.

In the real world you are literally outside the dream and totally identified with the Holy Spirit's Love. You no longer identify with the *cause* of the world, which is the belief

in separation from God. You may appear to be in the world, as Jesus did, but your reality remains outside it, and so for you the world has disappeared.

**(4:4-5) Vision already holds a replacement for everything you think you see now. Loveliness can light your images, and so transform them that you will love them, even though they were made of hate.**

*Vision* is the Course's term for right-minded or true perception, identifying with the Holy Spirit's thought system of Atonement.

This refers back to Lesson 15, "My thoughts are images I have made," which talked about the sparks of light that creep up around objects. I explained then that the references to light were originally meant for a friend of Helen's and Bill's, and not to be taken literally. They are best understood in terms of *content,* which means we learn to see things differently. This new way of seeing is represented by light: "Loveliness can light your images." Everything in the world now becomes lovely in our light-filled perception, because its purpose has been changed. We shall return to the important concept of purpose.

Even though our images were made of hate – a stronger word than "attack" – their purpose is now changed. We look at them in love, despite their origin. As the text says of specialness in an important statement we have already quoted: "Such is the Holy Spirit's kind perception of specialness; His use of what you made, to heal instead of harm" (T-25.VI.4:1). The purpose of our making the world was to protect our individuality and sinful thoughts through projection. With its purpose changed, the world becomes a classroom in which we learn there is no world by reversing the projection, bringing it back to the mind that was its source. This lovely thought frees us, as its loveliness lights up our vision and everything we see.

**(4:6) For you will not be making them alone.**

This is another expression of the principle that minds are joined. Jesus is not speaking of bodily joining of any kind. We "will not be making them alone" because when we choose to identify with Jesus we are making a distinct choice against separation and for unity. That is the meaning of being with Jesus. If he is the Christ because he is God's one Son, and I join with him in a holy instant, I am the Christ, too, along with everyone else.

When I choose the *un*holy instant, since everyone is one with me within the ego thought system as well, I am sending out the message that we are right and God is wrong. We are right in our belief that we are separated; you are right in feeling unfairly treated, and I am right in feeling angry at you. We are thus not alone in experiencing the effects of our wrong-minded or right-minded thoughts, the effects of what we see or Christ's vision: the mind of God's Son is one.

This principle has nothing to do with this world or with our experience here, but only with our minds' thoughts, of which there are two, both perfectly unified: the ego's thought of separation that we share as one Son, and the Atonement correction for that thought, which we also share.

In the text Jesus says that vision or judgment are our choice, but not both of them (T-20.V.4:7). Vision sees us all as one, reflected in this world through sharing a common purpose. Judgment sees guilt over the sin of murdering God so we could exist; and because of this guilt we try continually to kill another, fulfilling the ego's principle of *one*

*or the other.* We thus have the power to reinforce our decision for the ego, or to remind each other there is another choice to be made.

Paragraph 5 is the principal source for the three steps of forgiveness I have taught for so many years:

**(5:1-2) The idea for today introduces the thought that you are not trapped in the world you see, because its cause can be changed. This change requires, first, that the cause be identified and then let go, so that it can be replaced.**

Identifying the cause is to recognize the problem is not what is in the world; my upset is not caused by what my or someone else's body does or does not do to me. The cause rests in a decision made in my mind. That is *the first step* in forgiveness.

Letting go – *the second step* – means asking Jesus for help to look at my guilt and attack thoughts differently. I realize that as my attack on you was a made-up projection, so was my attack on myself made up, too – I remain as God created me; who I am as God's Son has not changed. Letting go thus entails looking at my guilt with the love of Jesus beside me. And then *the third step:*

In the instant in which I ask Jesus for help in looking at my guilt, his shining and forgiving light causes the guilt to disappear. My responsibility is only to bring the guilt to him, the meaning of accepting the Atonement for myself (T-2.V.5:1).

To briefly summarize these steps: 1) I bring back within my mind the guilt I have projected onto you; 2) By looking with Jesus, I bring my mind's guilt to him; in which instant, 3) the guilt is gone, for I have accepted the love and light that was already present but had been concealed beneath the darkness of my guilt, protected by my attack thoughts.

**(5:3-6) The first two steps in this process require your cooperation. The final one does not. Your images have already been replaced. By taking the first two steps, you will see that this is so.**

Our job, again, is simply – the reflection of the "little willingness" – to bring to Jesus our ego thoughts; those we projected out, wherein we made the world, and those we made up about ourselves.

Everything we believe in has already gone, as the passage I quoted earlier states: "This world was over long ago" (T-28.I.1:6). We just *believe* the world is here, which is why Jesus uses the term *hallucination* to describe it (T-20.VIII.7-8). We come to realize the truth of the Atonement principle by changing our minds about what we were so sure was right: there is an external world that victimizes us and others. Moreover, we unconsciously believe this hostile world is a defense against an inner world of guilt that is even more painful. We were wrong about the world outside and the world inside.

**(6:1-2) Besides using it throughout the day as the need arises, five practice periods are required in applying today's idea. As you look about you, repeat the idea slowly to yourself first, and then close your eyes and devote about a minute to searching your mind for as many attack thoughts as occur to you.**

As I have already discussed, "searching your mind" is a prominent theme in *A Course in Miracles* because our attack thoughts are hidden. Part of the training we undergo as students of the workbook and of the Course itself is to allow ourselves to see

the heretofore concealed attack thoughts in our minds.

**(6:3-5) As each one crosses your mind say:**
***I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts about _____.***
**Hold each attack thought in mind as you say this, and then dismiss that thought and go on to the next.**

These instructions highlight the important process of bringing the darkness of our illusions to the light of truth. These lessons are not meant to be affirmations that simply state this truth. Rather, they are meant to represent the truth, *to which* we bring our thoughts of attack. Bringing light to illusion merely strengthens the illusion. On the other hand, bringing illusions to the light is what shines them away.

**(7) In the practice periods, be sure to include both your thoughts of attacking and of being attacked. Their effects are exactly the same because they are exactly the same. You do not recognize this as yet, and you are asked at this time only to treat them as the same in today's practice periods. We are still at the stage of identifying the cause of the world you see. When you finally learn that thoughts of attack and of being attacked are not different, you will be ready to let the cause go.**

There is no difference between being a victim or a victimizer. Attack is attack is attack. Jesus reiterates that he does not expect us to understand this, let alone identify with, or even believe in it, but he *is* asking us to practice it, and he tells us precisely how to do so.

As we learn there is no difference between self-attack (guilt) and attack, we realize that being a victim is the most vicious form of attack possible. If we see ourselves as victims, it is clear that someone else will pay the price of punishment for *our* sin. It is this victimized suffering that points the accusing finger at another (see, e.g., T-27.I.1-4). Giving up our investment in seeing ourselves as victims is the hardest illusion of all to lose; our very existence is based on the idea that *we* are the victims: We did not choose to come into this world – it was our parents who brought us here; we did not choose to have our bodies, personalities, or problems – it was our genes or environment that were the determining factors. So we believe.

It is very difficult to accept that seeing yourself at the mercy of forces beyond your control is an attack. Yet this is the point of the lesson. Again, Jesus is not asking us to accept it just yet, but he is asking that we hear his words and try to understand them, and thus include thoughts of victimization in our practice periods. Needless to say, we are still in the early stages of our mind training.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 24**
**I do not perceive my own best interests.**

This lesson introduces the theme of humility. We are so sure we know what is best for us, let alone what is best for others. In one sense, as this lesson makes clear, it is understandable we would think that way. In one way or another we have been taught that if we do not take care of ourselves, who will? We learn we cannot trust the world; it is not set up to meet our needs instantaneously – physically or emotionally. We cannot completely trust our parents either, for even the best of them, as judged by the world, are never there for us *all* the time. A part of us thus learns we must take care of ourselves: we cannot fully trust anyone. The context of this lesson, therefore, is the correction of the conviction that we know our best interests.

**(1) In no situation that arises do you realize the outcome that would make you happy. Therefore, you have no guide to appropriate action, and no way of judging the result. What you do is determined by your perception of the situation, and that perception is wrong. It is inevitable, then, that you will not serve your own best interests. Yet they are your only goal in any situation which is correctly perceived. Otherwise, you will not recognize what they are.**

No ego is going to read these lines without being highly insulted! Jesus is saying we have no guide because we have chosen ourselves as the guide, reminiscent of the lines from the text I frequently quote: "Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught" (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1). This, then, is a subtle plug for choosing him as our guide.

The reasoning behind this teaching is obvious, once we think of it. To know what is in our best interests presupposes that we truly know our needs, problems, and desires. Only then, it goes without saying, could we know how to meet our needs, solve our problems, and fulfill our desires. And yet, as we have already seen and have been clearly taught in the text, the world and body were *literally* made to keep the real problem of separation – *in our minds* – hidden from us. Therefore, our experience of our needs and problems is but a smoke screen, the purpose of which is to root our attention to our *bodies* – physical and psychological – thus distracting us from the *mind,* wherein is found both the problem and the answer.

Moreover, an inevitable result of our initial arrogance compounds it still further by asking Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us with a problem that *we* have determined needs to be solved. Thus we expect Them to share our insane need to protect our separation from ever being undone. We shall return to this important theme below.

**(2) If you realized that you do not perceive your own best interests, you could be taught what they are. But in the presence of your conviction that you do know what they are, you cannot learn. The idea for today is a step toward opening your mind so that learning can begin.**

The humility required is the admission that you do not know what is best for you, and that there is Someone within you who does, and Whom you will ask for help. The next step is to realize how much you do not want His help, and when you do ask for it, how often it is for help on your own terms – in which case you are not giving up your investment in believing you know what the problem *and* the answer are.

Moreover, why are you going to learn something when you already believe you

have the answer? How can he help you, then, if you already believe you know the answer to your question, the solution to your problem. That is why in *A Course in Miracles* Jesus needs you to understand that *you do not know.* Thus he teaches you that real learning is unlearning: you cannot be taught the truth until you first understand you do not know it. That is why Jesus always impresses on his students the *undoing* aspects of his correction (see, e.g., T-1.I.26:2-3; T-28.I.1:1-4; W-pII.2.3:1-3; M-4.X.3:6-7).

Jesus is asking here that you trust him enough to suspend all your beliefs, and then say with sincerity: "I do not perceive my own best interests." His is a plea for total humility, and implied in that plea is that we choose him as our teacher instead of the ego. The beginning of the next paragraph echoes Jesus' plea:

**(3) The exercises for today require much more honesty than you are accustomed to using. A few subjects, honestly and carefully considered in each of the five practice periods which should be undertaken today, will be more helpful than a more cursory examination of a large number. Two minutes are suggested for each of the mind-searching periods which the exercises involve.**

In expressing himself this way, Jesus is telling us we have not been all that honest up to now. This is why there is repeated emphasis on searching our minds. Part of the problem inherent in our mind searching is that we think we are searching our brains. At this point we really do not understand the distinction in *A Course in Miracles* between the brain and the mind, an understandable mistake when we consider our almost complete identification with the body. Thus we forget our brain is a defense. If the world were made as an attack on God, then certainly the body was made as an attack on God as well, and the brain is the principal organ of the body: governing what it thinks, perceives, says, and does.

Jesus is asking us to be able to come to him and say: "I do not understand anything. Please teach me." We need to get in touch with how difficult that is. There is a part of us that truly believes we know what is best for ourselves.

**(4) The practice periods should begin with repeating today's idea, followed by searching the mind, with closed eyes, for unresolved situations about which you are currently concerned. The emphasis should be on uncovering the outcome you want. You will quickly realize that you have a number of goals in mind as part of the desired outcome, and also that these goals are on different levels and often conflict.**

Note the use of the word *uncovering* in sentence 2, echoing our discussion of the centrality of *undoing* to the practice of forgiveness. It is also clear from Jesus' instructions how we do not *really* know what is in our best interests. How could we? In case we had any doubts about this, the following exercise makes it crystal clear to us:

**(5) In applying the idea for today, name each situation that occurs to you, and then enumerate carefully as many goals as possible that you would like to be met in its resolution. The form of each application should be roughly as follows:**

***In the situation involving _____ , I would like _____ to happen, and ____ to happen,***

**and so on. Try to cover as many different kinds of outcomes as may honestly occur to you, even if some of them do not appear to be directly related to**

**the situation, or even to be inherent in it at all.**

This sets the stage for the next paragraph, which contains the lesson's central point:

**(6) If these exercises are done properly, you will quickly recognize that you are making a large number of demands of the situation which have nothing to do with it. You will also recognize that many of your goals are contradictory, that you have no unified outcome in mind, and that you must experience disappointment in connection with some of your goals, however the situation turns out.**

The message of this lesson, therefore, is that if we are truly honest we would recognize the contradictory nature of much of our desires and goals. This is inevitable when you consider the impossibility of having non-conflicted goals when we do not recognize our own best interest. To our egos, this interest is self-preservation, but since this conflicted self is filled with guilt and fear, how could satisfaction of our goals be anything but conflicted and fraught with the same guilt and fear that led to them?

The lesson's final paragraph emphasizes one more time the essential point to be learned if we are successfully to complete *A Course in Miracles'* curriculum:

**(7) After covering the list of as many hoped-for goals as possible, for each unresolved situation that crosses your mind say to yourself:**
***I do not perceive my own best interests in this situation,***
**and go on to the next one.**

Jesus wants us to generalize this lesson to all situations in our lives. To be certain we did not miss the point, nor forget it, he continues this teaching in Lesson 25.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 25**
**I do not know what anything is for.**

This lesson directly discusses the theme of *purpose,* so crucial in *A Course in Miracles.* Indeed, one could say that purpose alone helps us understand the ego's thought system, the world's role within it, and how through shifting the world's purpose the Holy Spirit uses the ego's plan to undo it.

**(1) Purpose is meaning. Today's idea explains why nothing you see means anything. You do not know what it is for. Therefore, it is meaningless to you. Everything is for your own best interests. That is what it is for; that is its purpose; that is what it means. It is in recognizing this that your goals become unified. It is in recognizing this that what you see is given meaning.**

Jesus is picking up from the early lessons, including the preceding one, by helping us realize why nothing here means anything. Something has meaning for us only because we do not understand what it is for, which comes from not knowing our own best interests. We think these have to do with satisfying our specialness needs, whether physical or emotional, while what is truly in our interest is learning to forgive. That is why everything in this world is for our own best interests, if we choose the right Teacher. Every situation or relationship can become a classroom in which we are helped to understand that the world we made comes from our attack thoughts, and everything we see, given to the Holy Spirit to reinterpret for us, can be a reminder that we can choose to look at the world differently. This process, as we have already seen, and shall see many times still, involves shifting our perception of the problem, and therefore our understanding of our best interests, from the *body* to the *mind.* To accomplish such a perceptual shift is the main goal of these lessons, not to mention *A Course in Miracles* itself.

The ego sees the meaning and purpose of everything in the world as an opportunity to satisfy its specialness needs. Jesus, on the other hand, sees opportunities, after our first making the ego mistake, to turn to him for help and be taught there is another way of looking at everything. This other way of looking, summarized in the three steps of forgiveness in Lesson 23, is realizing that what we see outside is a projection of what we have first seen within. Once again, Jesus is teaching us to shift our attention from the body to the mind.

We learn that our perceptions, and the way we organize our personal world and relate to others, are based on the premise that we have an ego that has to be treated a certain way; that we have definite needs based on our separated existence that dictate how we must see our world, especially the people in it. Now that we have a teacher who shows us what we perceive outside is a projection of an inner thought, we can change this thought by having changed teachers. The world now has great meaning for us, for its new purpose has become our classroom, in which we learn from our new teacher his lessons of forgiveness.

When Jesus says purpose is everything, he means there are two: the ego's purpose of rooting us in this world so that our individuality – located in the mind – is safe; and the Holy Spirit's purpose of our realizing there is no world, for there is nothing in us that needs defense. Thus it is the world's new purpose to help us learn that happy fact, which is our salvation from our belief in guilt. "Perception and Choice" in the text summarizes the dual purpose of our split mind:

> But this world has two who made it, and they do not see it as the same. To each it has a different purpose, and to each it is a perfect means to serve the goal for which it is perceived.... There is another purpose in the world that error made, because it has another Maker Who can reconcile its goal with His Creator's purpose. In His perception of the world, nothing is seen but justifies forgiveness and the sight of perfect sinlessness (T-25.III.3:3-4; 5:1-2).

Thus is the real world of forgiveness made by the Holy Spirit as correction and substitute for the ego's error-filled world of guilt and hate.

**(2:1) You perceive the world and everything in it as meaningful in terms of ego goals.**

This idea could not have been stated more clearly. The "ego goals," as we have seen, are some expression of the need to preserve your own identity, individuality, and specialness. Through the mind-searching exercises you need to realize how true that is. Watch the way you think about things throughout the day – not necessarily your whole life, just your day; how everything is organized around what will meet your needs, what will make you feel good physically and emotionally. Then see how those needs distort how you perceive the world. In fact, it is those very specialness needs that cause you to believe you are perceiving the world at all!

**(2:2-4) These goals have nothing to do with your own best interests, because the ego is not you. This false identification makes you incapable of understanding what anything is for. As a result, you are bound to misuse it.**

This is an extremely important statement. The *you* of which Jesus speaks is not the ego – the physical or psychological self; it is what we have referred to as the decision maker. Jesus makes the same point in the text, as we have already seen, when he asks rhetorically: "Who is the 'you' who are living in this world?" (T-4.II.11:8). This early lesson is the beginning stage in having us dis-identify or disassociate from this ego self and realize that the *you* Jesus is addressing is in the mind.

By virtue of our having chosen the wrong teacher we have made the wrong identification. Consequently, we shall misunderstand, misinterpret, and distort everything that goes on around us because our perceptions will be geared toward fulfilling the purpose of preserving that identification. The guilt associated with our special relationships is thus reinforced, because we are misusing everyone and everything. This guilt seems so enormous that we can never let ourselves look at what we are doing. That is why it is so important to change teachers and allow Jesus to look at our guilt with us. Let him look with us at our misperceptions, misuse, distortions, and attacks, and he will help us realize they come from one mistake. In our joining with him is that mistake of separating from love undone.

**(2:5) When you believe this, you will try to withdraw the goals you have assigned to the world, instead of attempting to reinforce them.**

When we realize what we are doing, we will inevitably change the goal. In the text Jesus reflects this change as the shift from the unholy to the holy relationship; a relationship whose purpose was guilt or illusion becoming one whose purpose is

forgiveness or truth – the letting go of guilt:

> And as the unholy relationship is a continuing hymn of hate in praise of its maker, so is the holy relationship a happy song of praise to the Redeemer of relationships.
>
> The holy relationship.... is the old, unholy relationship, transformed and seen anew (T-17.V.1:7-2:2).

**(3) Another way of describing the goals you now perceive is to say that they are all concerned with "personal" interests. Since you have no personal interests, your goals are really concerned with nothing. In cherishing them, therefore, you have no goals at all. And thus you do not know what anything is for.**

"Personal" is in quotes because there is no "personal." Within the dream, having personal interests means I have interests that are separate from yours. This can be true only if the separation were real. However, if minds are joined, there can be no personal interests; only the single interest we share as one Son to awaken from this dream and return home.

A careful and thoughtful reading of these lines is bound to engender tremendous anxiety – and that is certainly a mild understatement. Jesus is saying you have no personal interests, and where does that leave you but nowhere? In essence this means you do not even exist. Incidentally, *personal* in this context has the same meaning as *special.*

Again, Jesus is not asking you to accept his words and live as if they were true; he is asking you only to begin to understand the insanity of your thinking and distorted perceptions because you are literally believing and seeing what is not there. If you do not question these beliefs and perceptions, if only intellectually, you will never be open to receive the answer that is waiting for you. Thus, you need to observe your everyday thoughts, moment to moment, and realize how they come from everything Jesus is speaking about. They are all based on preserving an ego goal, which is your own identity. This means that you do not care about anyone or anything else, but only having your needs met and goals fulfilled.

**(4) Before you can make any sense out of the exercises for today, one more thought is necessary. At the most superficial levels, you do recognize purpose. Yet purpose cannot be understood at these levels. For example, you do understand that a telephone is for the purpose of talking to someone who is not physically in your immediate vicinity. What you do not understand is what you want to reach him for. And it is this that makes your contact with him meaningful or not.**

We all are aware of superficial purposes, but we are not aware of the true purposes underlying them. Using the example of the telephone, the *real* purpose of the call is to provide an opportunity for us to reconsider the ego's goal of separate interests in favor of the Holy Spirit's goal of shared or common interests. Therefore, what makes *A Course in Miracles* so simple is that it teaches us there are only two purposes we ever need consider, as we have already discussed: the ego's purpose, which is to retain individuality and separation, make the world real, and prove Jesus wrong; and Jesus' purpose, which is to unlearn everything we had learned before, and finally accept with

humility that he was right and we were wrong – the separation from God was a dream that never happened in reality.

**(5:1) It is crucial to your learning to be willing to give up the goals you have established for everything.**

Remember, because the goal you have established for everything is the preservation of your individuality, Jesus is asking that you abandon this purpose. That is why these lessons are so difficult, and must be perceived by our egos as extremely threatening.

The rest of the lesson underscores a point we have already seen: illusions remain illusions, regardless of the attributes we project onto them. From the ego's point of view, all illusions – *good* or *bad, important* or *unimportant, human* or *nonhuman* – serve the single purpose of convincing us that they *are* what they are *not.* That is why we do not know what they are for. These ostensibly simple sentences continue Jesus' training of our minds *not* to make distinctions among illusions, learning instead to make the *only* distinction that is valid – between the purposes of the ego and the Holy Spirit:

**(5:2-6:8) The recognition that they** [our goals] **are meaningless, rather than "good" or "bad," is the only way to accomplish this. The idea for today is a step in this direction.**

**Six practice periods, each of two-minutes duration, are required. Each practice period should begin with a slow repetition of the idea for today, followed by looking about you and letting your glance rest on whatever happens to catch your eye, near or far, "important" or "unimportant," "human" or "non-human." With your eyes resting on each subject you so select, say, for example:**

***I do not know what this chair is for.***
***I do not know what this pencil is for.***
***I do not know what this hand is for.***

**Say this quite slowly, without shifting your eyes from the subject until you have completed the statement about it. Then move on to the next subject, and apply today's idea as before.**

A more sophisticated statement of this teaching of the illusory nature of everything is found in the following passage from the text, which describes the shared insanity of our special relationships – our "little, senseless substitutions":

> Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, have no substance. They fuse and merge and separate, in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all. To judge them individually is pointless. Their tiny differences in form are no real differences at all. None of them matters. *That* they have in common and nothing else. Yet what else is necessary to make them all the same? (T-1817:6-12)

Recognizing the inherent meaninglessness of everything allows us to accept the Holy Spirit's purpose of making room for His truth as replacement for the ego's illusions.

We are ready now to move to the next segment of our training: understanding the relationship between our attack thoughts and our perceptions of attack.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 26**
**My attack thoughts are attacking my invulnerability.**

This is another crucial lesson and, as I just indicated, takes our learning (and practice) one step further. If I have attack thoughts, I must believe I am vulnerable. If I believe I am vulnerable, I cannot be Christ because He is invulnerable. If, as Jesus will repeatedly remind me, "I am as God created me,"* and if my reality is spirit, I must be one with everything and everyone. Therefore, there is literally nothing and no one "out there" who could hurt me. However, as long as I believe I can be hurt – whether in my own body or through someone else's – I am attesting to my vulnerability. Moreover, in saying I am vulnerable I am also saying that I am right in my self-evaluation and the Holy Spirit is wrong.

**(1:1-3) It is surely obvious that if you can be attacked you are not invulnerable. You see attack as a real threat. That is because you believe that you can really attack.**

The very fact that I am here is proving to me that I can really attack, because I could only have gotten here by attacking God first. And I "know" I have attacked first because I perceive attack all around me. The dynamic of *projection* helps me to understand how this phenomenon of perception of attack occurs: *projection makes perception* – what I perceive outside is the projection of what I have made real inside, a point we shall pick up again:

**(1:4-6) And what would have effects through you must also have effects on you. It is this law that will ultimately save you, but you are misusing it now. You must therefore learn how it can be used for your own best interests, rather than against them.**

As we have seen several times in these early lessons, the inner and outer are one and the same. The thought of attacking and the thought of being attacked come from the same thought system. We project out our ego thoughts, and then believe they are going to hurt us in return. As Jesus teaches in the text, in the context of our needing to project ("get rid of") conflict ("what we do not want"):

> ...the idea that you can get rid of something you do not want by giving it away. Giving it is how you *keep* it. The belief that by seeing it outside you have excluded it from within is a complete distortion of the power of extension. That is why those who project are vigilant for their own safety. They are afraid that their projections will return and hurt them. Believing they have blotted their projections from their own minds, they also believe their projections are trying to creep back in (T-7.VIII.3:6-11).

It is also true, as we have seen, that the Love of God we allow to come through us in forgiveness will come back to us as well it is that Love we shall perceive all around us; either expressions of it or calls for it.

The laws of projection and extension operate similarly, but with different contents. That is why, early in the text, Jesus speaks of *projection* as the "inappropriate use of extension" (T-2.I.1:7) – it was the same law of the mind, simply "misused," leading to miscreation instead of creation. This law will ultimately save us in another sense as well,

because it reflects that everything is an illusion. What seems to be outside is an illusion because what seems to be inside – the ego thought system – is an illusion. Recognizing this is the ego's undoing.

**(2:1-2) Because your attack thoughts will be projected, you will fear attack. And if you fear attack, you must believe that you are not invulnerable.**

This is what proves that you are right and Jesus is wrong. Jesus asks: "Why are you so upset? All of this is a dream." And we say to him: "What do you mean all of this is a dream? Look at how I have been attacked! Look at how I suffer and all the pain I am feeling! Look at what other people are feeling – *we are all vulnerable!* Please do not tell me this is a dream." That is how we prove our perceptions are correct. Our pain – whether in others or in ourselves – is final proof that God is dead and we exist in His stead.

**(2:3-5) Attack thoughts therefore make you vulnerable in your own mind, which is where the attack thoughts are. Attack thoughts and invulnerability cannot be accepted together. They contradict each other.**

If I perceive attack thoughts in you, it is only because I have first made them real for myself, which I have done out of the wish to make my separation from God – the original attack – real as well. It is only *after* that decision to establish attack as real that my ego's plan calls for me to project them out, thereby rendering me vulnerable to my perceived attack from others. It is clear that these attack thoughts – again, reflective of the separation from God and hence from everyone else – "cannot be accepted together" with our invulnerability as God created us. This is yet another way of saying that God and the ego are mutually exclusive. The dynamic of *dissociation* is what enables us to maintain these contradictory beliefs in our minds, as the text explains in these two passages:

> The ego and the spirit do not know each other. The separated mind cannot maintain the separation except by dissociating (T-4.VI.4:1-2).
>
> Dissociation is a distorted process of thinking, whereby two systems of belief which cannot coexist are both maintained. If they are brought together, their joint acceptance becomes impossible. But if one is kept in darkness from the other, their separation seems to keep them both alive and equal in their reality. Their joining thus becomes the source of fear, for if they meet, acceptance must be withdrawn from one of them. You cannot have them both, for each denies the other. Apart, this fact is lost from sight, for each in a separate place can be endowed with firm belief (T-14.VII.4:3-8).

**(3:1) The idea for today introduces the thought that you always attack yourself first.**

To repeat, if I perceive you attacking me and then react as if that were true, it is only because I attacked first. This has nothing to do with behavior, for the attack exists only in my mind. Today's idea is reflected well in an incisive passage in the text: "If he speaks not of Christ to you, you spoke not of Christ to him" (T-11.V.18:6). Projection is the ruling principle governing the activity of the mind, since it determines how we

*perceive* the world around us. Remember, perception is *interpretation: how* we see, not *what* we see.

It cannot be said too often that in order to properly understand passages such as these, the student must realize that Jesus is never talking about what people are doing behaviorally, but only about our *perception* of what others are doing. When you feel you have been attacked by another, you have *interpreted* their behavior. This does not mean you do not see attack thoughts in other people – Jesus sees attack thoughts in all his students. It is in our judgments that the attack thoughts are made real. Thus we read in the manual for teachers:

> Perhaps it will be helpful to remember that no one can be angry at a fact. It is always an interpretation that gives rise to negative emotions, regardless of their seeming justification by what *appears* as facts (M-17.4:1-2).

**(3:2-5) If attack thoughts must entail the belief that you are vulnerable, their effect is to weaken you in your own eyes. Thus they have attacked your perception of yourself. And because you believe in them, you can no longer believe in yourself. A false image of yourself has come to take the place of what you are.**

Having weakened ourselves in our own eyes (our vulnerability), we have once again proven we are right and the Holy Spirit is wrong; we are sons of the ego instead of Sons of God. We no longer believe we are the Christ, of which the Holy Spirit in our right minds is the reminder. We have replaced the truth of who we are with a false image – a special, unique, and individualized self. Again, it is our use of *dissociation* that allows us to maintain two contradictory images of ourselves: the truth of knowledge we have chosen to forget, and the illusion of attack we choose to remember. These passages cogently describe this dynamic and its undoing through the Holy Spirit:

> Unless you first know something you cannot dissociate it. Knowledge must precede dissociation, so that dissociation is nothing more than a decision to forget.... Offer the Holy Spirit only your willingness to remember, for He retains the knowledge of God and of yourself for you, waiting for your acceptance.... His Voice will tell you that you are part of Him when you are willing to remember Him and know your own reality again.... To remember is merely to restore to your mind *what is already there.* You do not make what you remember; you merely accept again what is already there, but was rejected....
>
> When you attack, you are denying yourself.... Your denial of reality precludes the acceptance of God's gift, because you have accepted something else in its place.... This is always an attack on truth, and truth is God.... All attack is Self attack.... [and] is thus the way in which your identification is lost, because when you attack, you must have forgotten what you are. And if your reality is God's, when you attack you are not remembering Him (T-10.II.1:1-2; 2:3,5; 3:1-2; 4:1,3-4; 5:1,4-5).

**(4) Practice with today's idea will help you to understand that vulnerability or invulnerability is the result of your own thoughts. Nothing except your thoughts can attack you. Nothing except your thoughts can make you think you are vulnerable. And nothing except your thoughts can prove to you this is not so.**

The focus of our exercises is solely on our thoughts, the source of the problem and its solution. Indeed, everything is thought, acceptance of which is the aim of the workbook's mind training. These thoughts are not of a physical organ, the brain, but of the mind, coming from identifying either with the ego or Jesus. From these two thoughts or thought systems – guilt or innocence – arise a world and our perception of the world. If you feel yourself attacked, you have chosen the ego as your teacher and therefore believe you are vulnerable and deserve attack. This has nothing to do with behavior; it has to do only with the way you perceive the behavior. On the other hand, if we remember our invulnerability as God's perfect creation, our perception of the world changes accordingly. A passage near the end of the text succinctly expresses the principle that *projection makes perception:*

> The lessons to be learned are only two. Each has its outcome in a different world. And each world follows surely from its source. The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it.... Yet this is not the only outcome which your learning can produce.... The outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guiltless is a world in which there is no fear, and everything is lit with hope and sparkles with a gentle friendliness. Nothing but calls to you in soft appeal to be your friend, and let it join with you (T-31.I.7:1-6,9; 8:1-2).

The rest of the lesson presents an exercise and instructions with which we are quite familiar by now. The focus, as always, is on our thoughts and feelings that seem to upset us, looking at them as dispassionately as possible, and with more than cursory attention. It is this thoughtful non-evaluation that allows us to understand that these upsets *all* share the same underlying purpose of keeping us from the Thought of Love, which our thoughts attempt to conceal. In other words, all forms of upset reflect the hidden *content* of attacking ourselves by denying Who we are as God's one Son.

**(5-7) Six practice periods are required in applying today's idea. A full two minutes should be attempted for each of them, although the time may be reduced to a minute if the discomfort is too great. Do not reduce it further.**

**The practice period should begin with repeating the idea for today, then closing your eyes and reviewing the unresolved questions whose outcomes are causing you concern. The concern may take the form of depression, worry, anger, a sense of imposition, fear, foreboding or preoccupation. Any problem as yet unsettled that tends to recur in your thoughts during the day is a suitable subject. You will not be able to use very many for any one practice period, because a longer time than usual should be spent with each one. Today's idea should be applied as follows:**

**First, name the situation:**

***I am concerned about ____.***

**Then go over every possible outcome that has occurred to you in that connection and which has caused you concern, referring to each one quite specifically, saying:**

***I am afraid _____ will happen.***

This exercise reflects the ego's axiomatic principle: guilt demands punishment, an

outcome we justifiably fear. Our concerns of what will happen – "the unresolved questions whose outcome are causing you concern" – inevitable lead to fear of what will happen. We thus have no choice but to erect defenses against these objects of our fear, predicted by our guilt. We shall return later on to this important theme of defense.

**(8-9) If you are doing the exercises properly, you should have some five or six distressing possibilities available for each situation you use, and quite possibly more. It is much more helpful to cover a few situations thoroughly than to touch on a larger number. As the list of anticipated outcomes for each situation continues, you will probably find some of them, especially those that occur to you toward the end, less acceptable to you. Try, however, to treat them all alike to whatever extent you can.**

**After you have named each outcome of which you are afraid, tell yourself:**
***That thought is an attack upon myself***

**Conclude each practice period by repeating today's idea to yourself once more.**

This, of course, is the point. We bring the darkness of our illusions to the light of Jesus' truth. The problem is *not* with the outcome we expect, but with the underlying decision to attack ourselves by denying God. After these first twenty-five lessons, you can see how – step by step, lesson by lesson – Jesus is slowly and gently guiding us to the *specific* experience of the more *abstract* teachings in the text.

* There are more than 140 occurrences of this concept throughout *A Course in Miracles.* They have been compiled in Appendix C of the *Concordance of A Course In Miracles,* pp. 1101-1102.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 27**
**Above all else I want to see.**

This lesson and the next form a pair – "Above all else I want to see" and "Above all else I want to see things differently" – and move us still further along in our learning, returning to the theme of motivation. Teachers recognize that the most important trait they wish to see in their students is the *desire* to learn. Without that motivation, *nothing* will go on in the classroom. Likewise, therapists cannot be of help to their patients unless they are motivated to change. Thus, we have to *want* to learn what *A Course in Miracles* is teaching us, otherwise even the world's greatest teacher will fail. We want to learn Jesus' course because it will make us happy. To do this, Jesus first has to convince us that we are not happy now. His need is nicely expressed in the opening to "The Happy Learner" in the text:

> The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery is happiness. This has so confused you that you have undertaken to learn to do what you can never do, believing that unless you learn it you will not be happy (T-14.II.1:1-4).

Now to the lesson itself:

**(1:1-4) Today's idea expresses something stronger than mere determination. It gives vision priority among your desires. You may feel hesitant about using the idea, on the grounds that you are not sure you really mean it. This does not matter.**

Jesus is not expecting anyone to really mean these words. If we give up judgment and choose vision, it is because we have chosen to let go of our investment in specialness, which to the ego means we are leaving ourselves wide open for attack. Without specialness to defend against our inner emptiness and lack, so the ego counsels us, we become vulnerable to the hostile world around us, hell-bent on our destruction.

**(1:5) The purpose of today's exercises is to bring the time when the idea will be wholly true a little nearer.**

Jesus is making it clear, as he does throughout *A Course in Miracles,* that this is a process. Thus he does not expect us suddenly to drop the ego's hand and take his. But he does want us to understand what the choices entail, so we know what we are growing into.

**(2:1) There may be a great temptation to believe that some sort of sacrifice is being asked of you when you say you want to see above all else.**

The theme of sacrifice will appear later in the lessons. To the ego, seeing through Christ's vision is to sacrifice our personal identity, which is based on separation and judgment, fear and hate. From the ego's point of view sacrifice is definitely involved if we are to survive: either we sacrifice our happiness and pleasure to atone for past sins, or

others need be sacrificed for us to be happy and peaceful. Either way, someone must lose so that another wins the ego's principle of *one or the other.* The next lines provide the Holy Spirit's answer to this principle of sacrifice:

> **(2:2-5) If you become uneasy about the lack of reservation involved, add:**
> ***Vision has no cost to anyone.***
> **If fear of loss still persists, add further:**
> ***It can only bless.***

Jesus is urging us to reflect our deeper motivation to learn by attempting to remember the lesson as often as possible throughout the day. It should be noted here, to be repeated again and again, that it is not sinful when we forget. Indeed, such forgetting provides us with very helpful information about ourselves. If we are truly to learn this course, we first have to understand how *resistant* we are to learning it. Unless we can undo this resistance – ultimately born of our fear of losing our self – we shall forever be failing in our learning progress. The first step in this process of undoing is becoming aware of the problem. Only then can it be truly addressed and gone beyond.

**(3) The idea for today needs many repetitions for maximum benefit. It should be used at least every half hour, and more if possible. You might try for every fifteen or twenty minutes. It is recommended that you set a definite time interval for using the idea when you wake or shortly afterwards, and attempt to adhere to it throughout the day. It will not be difficult to do this, even if you are engaged in conversation, or otherwise occupied at the time. You can still repeat one short sentence to yourself without disturbing anything.**

But Jesus knows his audience, and so he gently speaks to us. On the one hand he calls upon our motivation to learn, expressed in the recommended increase of practice; and on the other hand he reminds us *not* to feel guilty when we are resistant, as we now read:

**(4:1-5) The real question is, how often will you remember** [the lesson for the day]? **How much do you want today's idea to be true? Answer one of these questions, and you have answered the other. You will probably miss several applications, and perhaps quite a number. Do not be disturbed by this, but do try to keep on your schedule from then on.**

Thus, Jesus is telling us not to feel guilty when we forget. He expects us to forget. But he is telling us that when we remember that we forgot, at least we should try to understand *why* we did so: we are not so sure we really want to learn this course. Part of us does, obviously; otherwise we would not be doing it. However, there is another part that has serious reservations about continuing on this path. Our identification with the ego and its thought system of separation and judgment is still quite strong.

**(4:6) If only once during the day you feel that you were perfectly sincere while you were repeating today's idea, you can be sure that you have saved yourself many years of effort.**

In the text, Jesus refers to saving thousands of years (e.g., T-1.II.6:7). Even if you

can only be sincere once during the day, that has already accomplished a great deal. It is helpful to recall that linear time is an illusion, and since our very existence is predicated on the reality of time and space, it is impossible for us to understand the truth of this last statement. Fortunately, our understanding is not necessary, only our little willingness (T-18.IV.7:5-6).

In the next lesson Jesus expands on these ideas.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 28**

**Above all else I want to see things differently.**

**(1) Today we are really giving specific application to the idea for yesterday. In these practice periods, you will be making a series of definite commitments. The question of whether you will keep them in the future is not our concern here. If you are willing at least to make them now, you have started on the way to keeping them. And we are still at the beginning.**

The fundamental commitment is to prove that our whole identity rests on a lie – or to state it in a less threatening way, the commitment is to realize we are wrong and Jesus is right: there is another way of looking at the world. Once again Jesus is applying no time pressure on us; he is quite aware of our resistance to (or fear of) making this commitment. Incidentally, his last sentence is reminiscent of his comment to psychotherapists:

> Most professional therapists are still at the very start of the beginning stage of the first journey. Even those who have begun to understand what they must do may still oppose the setting-out (P-3.II.8:5-6).

Clearly, Jesus sees us *all* as beginners, resistant to change and growth.

**(2:1-5) You may wonder why it is important to say, for example, "Above all else I want to see this table differently." In itself it is not important at all. Yet what is by itself? And what does "in itself" mean? You see a lot of separate things about you, which really means you are not seeing at all.**

Lesson 183 focuses more directly on this idea of giving different names to the "separate things" in the world, a process that reflects the ego's need to make separation and individuality into reality. Jesus is asking us to understand the underlying premise of his course, which is that everything is the same because everything shares the same purpose. In terms *of form,* the things of the world are clearly different and have a different purpose from each other. On the level of *content,* however, we share the one purpose of having our minds healed. In that sense everything is the same, because all things can be utilized to accomplish that purpose. *A Course in Miracles,* we need to remember, is about *content,* not *form.*

**(2:6-8) You either see or not. When you have seen one thing differently, you will see all things differently. The light you will see in any one of them is the same light you will see in them all.**

What changes is not what is outside, but our choice of teacher. When our inner Teacher has been changed, we shall see everything through His eyes instead of the ego's.

Once again, Jesus is not talking about a physical light. The light we shall see is the light of Christ's vision, the light of understanding that recognizes a shared or common purpose in everyone and everything.

**(3) When you say, "Above all else I want to see this table differently," you are making a commitment to withdraw your preconceived ideas about the table,**

**and open your mind to what it is, and what it is for. You are not defining it in past terms. You are asking what it is, rather than telling it what it is. You are not binding its meaning to your tiny experience of tables, nor are you limiting its purpose to your little personal thoughts.**

This is the humility that says: "I do not know." A table is not important since we typically do not project onto it, but it serves here as an example to make the point. What is more important is our humbly admitting that we do not know the meaning and purpose of a relationship or situation. If we think we know, we shall never be open to receive the answer and learn the truth. Holding on to the past is what reflects this arrogant belief that we know, the defense against the vision that comes from choosing the holy instant.

**(4:1-2) You will not question what you have already defined. And the purpose of these exercises is to ask questions and receive the answers.**

Again, our humility is called upon. If you think you understand *A Course in Miracles* you will not be open to what it is teaching you. If you think you understand the purpose of any particular workbook lesson, you will not be open to receiving the answer that Jesus has for you. If you think you understand, a wall suddenly drops before your mind and you will not be taught anything. You will *think* you are being taught, but what you will be "learning" is simply what your ego wanted you to learn in the first place. We have already considered this subtle ego ploy, wherein we consciously believe we are asking for help, but all we are really doing is telling Jesus what we want him to tell us by defining our problem or framing our question. This inevitably dictates the answer we shall receive, thereby limiting him. He reminds us of this in the text as well:

> You have been as selective in your questioning as in your perception. An open mind is more honest than this (T-13.IV.3:7-8).

All this of course is reminiscent of our ontological limiting of God by defining the nature of our self. Jesus is thus helping us undo or unlearn everything we believe about everything – acquiring an *open mind* – including what we believe about this course. As he states in the text:

> To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning (T-24.in.2:1-2).

**(4:3-5) In saying, "Above all else I want to see this table differently," you are committing yourself to seeing. It is not an exclusive commitment. It is a commitment that applies to the table just as much as to anything else, neither more nor less.**

We again see Jesus' attempts to motivate us to learn what he is teaching us, and to generalize this vision to all things. Indeed, if it cannot be generalized, it is not true vision.

**(5) You could, in fact, gain vision from just that table, if you would withdraw all your own ideas from it, and look upon it with a completely open mind. It has**

**something to show you; something beautiful and clean and of infinite value, full of happiness and hope. Hidden under all your ideas about it is its real purpose, the purpose it shares with all the universe.**

The purpose shared with all the universe is forgiveness – "beautiful and clean and of infinite value" – the source of true happiness and genuine hope. None of these comes from the table itself, the experience, or a person. Rather, our happiness and hope come from the *purpose,* the beauty of which is found in the beauty of the Teacher you have chosen. That is why purpose is the bottom line. To say it again, purpose is not inherent in the object, but in the decision made by the mind to learn from the Holy Spirit how to see the world truly.

**(6) In using the table as a subject for applying the idea for today, you are therefore really asking to see the purpose of the universe. You will be making this same request of each subject that you use in the practice periods. And you are making a commitment to each of them to let its purpose be revealed to you, instead of placing your own judgment upon it.**

Your judgment comes from a thought that says you are right and Jesus is wrong. *You* are going to teach *him* what his course ought to be teaching you, rather than being open to having him be the teacher. However, when we are open, we can be taught the inherent *sameness* of all things in the universe. They are the *same* because they share the *same* purpose. Purpose, to make this point one more time, is everything.

Remember, too, that you need to work at thinking about the ideas in these exercises in light of the thoughts you are having at the moment you are doing them. It is the specific application, made as often as possible, that will facilitate your learning.

The final paragraphs reiterate the non-obsessional, yet thoughtful application of the day's exercises. We try to remember that we *want* to learn what Jesus is teaching us – to see the world differently:

**(7-8) We will have six two-minute practice periods today, in which the idea for the day is stated first, and then applied to whatever you see about you. Not only should the subjects be chosen randomly, but each one should be accorded equal sincerity as today's idea is applied to it, in an attempt to acknowledge the equal value of them all in their contribution to your seeing.**

**As usual, the applications should include the name of the subject your eyes happen to light on, and you should rest your eyes on it while saying:**

***Above all else I want to see this _____ differently.***

**Each application should be made quite slowly, and as thoughtfully as possible. There is no hurry.**

"Quite slowly," "as thoughtfully as possible," "no hurry." These should be the shibboleths of our days. As our new teacher, Jesus is asking us to adopt a new perspective one that avoids the tension and pressure of undoing our egos, but seeks instead the gentle and patient approach he is providing us in these exercises. Since we are being taught that our daily lessons are the same, their form is immaterial. Thus, important and unimportant, major and minor, become irrelevant designations of events and relationships. Uniting them all as one leaves us with the only choice to make: the ego or the Holy Spirit. Choosing God's Voice to guide us, our lives slow to the quiet pace

of those who know the outcome is sure. Thus we proceed in confidence that our Teacher will teach us all we need to know, and that, in time, we shall learn His lessons.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 29**
**God is in everything I see.**

When people seek to criticize *A Course in Miracles* on grounds of pantheism – a major heresy for Catholics that teaches that God is literally found in the materiality that is His manifestation – this lesson in particular, as well as the one following, are selected as prime examples. Many years ago I was speaking to a Jesuit priest, who was reminiscent of an old-time heresy hunter. A very conservative Catholic, his major function in life seemed to be to find every heretical teaching in contemporary Christianity. After he heard about me and *A Course in Miracles,* he took it upon himself to save the nuns and priests with whom I had been working from falling into the depths of perdition with this course. I spent an hour with him one evening, during which time he proceeded to enumerate the Course's heresies. He actually had examined only the workbook, and had spent considerable time on this particular lesson as proof of *A Course in Miracles'* pantheism. It is true, in fact, when this initial statement, "God is in everything I see," is taken at face value, it does seem to be pantheistic: God is in the table, God is in the chair, God is in the body, God is in the plants, etc. It becomes clear as you study this lesson carefully, however, that that is precisely *not* what Jesus is talking about. The theme of these two lessons – Lessons 29 and 30 – is that the *purpose* of God – i.e., the purpose of forgiveness – is in everything I see. This is so because purpose is in the mind, which will be explained as we proceed.

The reader may recall my discussion in this book's Preface of how the language in the workbook, not to mention in *A Course in Miracles* itself, can be misleading. For example, as I mentioned before, in the workbook especially, Jesus will say *God* when, technically speaking, he is referring to *the Holy Spirit.* An explicit example, to cite it again, is found in Lesson 193, "All things are lessons God would have me learn," where in the lesson itself Jesus clearly states that God does not teach, for that is the Holy Spirit's role. In this lesson, too, in saying the purpose of God is in everything I see, Jesus is really speaking of the Holy Spirit's teaching purpose.

**(1) The idea for today explains why you can see all purpose in everything. It explains why nothing is separate, by itself or in itself. And it explains why nothing you see means anything. In fact, it explains every idea we have used thus far, and all subsequent ones as well. Today's idea is the whole basis for vision.**

As we shall see in the next lesson as well, vision has absolutely nothing to do with the body's eyes, but with a state of mind or attitude. More specifically, vision refers to our having chosen Jesus as our teacher so his are now the "eyes" through which we see. We are taught that *the inner and outer are the same.* Therefore what we perceive outside is nothing more than a shadow of what we have first perceived within. When Jesus says "God is in everything I see," he means that God is in everything I *think,* because seeing and thinking are the same: perception comes from thoughts, and remains one with them. The basis for vision then is seeing the *purpose* of God. I see forgiveness in everything I see because I have fired the ego as my teacher, and hired Jesus. To again cite these two statements, taken together: "Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught" (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1). At that point, everything I perceive, think, and feel is the opposite of what it had been prior to taking Jesus as my new teacher.

**(2:1-3) You will probably find this idea very difficult to grasp at this point.**

**You may find it silly, irreverent, senseless, funny and even objectionable. Certainly God is not in a table, for example, as you see it.**

We find it difficult because we think there actually is a table that is separate from our bodies, and that our eyes actually perceive it – the world's illusory version of seeing. In that sense God cannot be in the table because there is no table. Again, the point to notice is that Jesus is shifting the emphasis from what we perceive *outside* to what we see *inside.* It is the *way* in which we see that is the focus of his teaching – our thoughts – which have to do only with the purpose or teacher we are choosing.

Incidentally, if it has not already occurred to a student doing these lessons for the first time how radically different Jesus' teaching is here, these two lessons should make that abundantly clear. *A Course in Miracles* is nothing like what is usually taught in other spiritual disciplines. This radicalness is based on the underlying metaphysics that teaches that the phenomenal world is an illusion. Therefore, what we perceive and think here is not real at all. It must be, then, that the true activity is not what happens in our bodies or the world, but in our minds. This is more clearly enunciated in these lessons than heretofore.

**(2:4) Yet we emphasized yesterday that a table shares the purpose of the universe.**

That purpose, to repeat, is to be an object that appears to be outside us, onto which we project our minds' ego thoughts. With Jesus as our teacher, we now look at what we perceived and see it differently. Forgiveness entails realizing that what we perceive outside mirrors what we have first made real inside. That is why – to state the Course's unique definition – we forgive our brothers for what they did *not* do; they have not done anything in the sense of having the power to take away our peace. What needs to be forgiven, therefore, are *our* thoughts of guilt, born of the belief that we have separated from peace; it is this guilt we have projected onto others.

**(2:5) And what shares the purpose of the universe shares the purpose of its Creator.**

Here Jesus uses the words *universe* and *Creator* loosely – another example of the "looseness" of the Course's language – because clearly he is talking about the physical universe. But God cannot be the creator of the physical, as is unmistakably clear throughout *A Course in Miracles.* If you take these lines literally, you will end up pulling your hair out because they will seem to say the exact opposite of what Jesus is teaching elsewhere. You want to grasp the *content* of what he is teaching, rather than analyzing it to death and arguing with the *form.* I shall return frequently to this important point.

**(3:1) Try then, today, to begin to learn how to look on all things with love, appreciation and open-mindedness.**

If you choose Jesus as your teacher you will identify with his love. Thus what you see outside will be an expression of love or the call for it. You will look with appreciation on the world, especially your special relationships, because these will have become the opportunities to learn you are forgiven and your ego can be undone. "Open-mindedness"

means your mind is no longer closed to the truth of the Holy Spirit. When we choose the ego as our teacher and dismiss the Holy Spirit, our minds become closed to His truth. "Open-mindedness" here, as in the tenth characteristic of the teacher of God discussed in the manual for students (M-4.X), means our minds are open to the love of Jesus. There is then no distortion in our thinking, which in turn means there is no distortion in our perception. What we hear and see will come from love, rather than from our having superimposed ego thoughts on these objects of our perception.

**(3:2-4) You do not see them now** [i.e., you do not see things as they really are]. **Would you know what is in them? Nothing is as it appears to you.**

This is another of those sentences which, if you stopped and meditated on it, should make you extremely anxious. If you see nothing as it is – "nothing is as it appears to you" – and everything you perceive is wrong, then the way you perceive *yourself* must be wrong as well. *All* your thoughts about everything are wrong.

**(3:5-6) Its holy purpose stands beyond your little range. When vision has shown you the holiness that lights up the world, you will understand today's idea perfectly.**

This is a reference back to Lesson 15, the idea of seeing edges of light around objects. Jesus makes it very clear here, as well as in the lessons we have already studied, that he is not talking about auras or any form of external light. He is referring to a different way of seeing; a vision based on the light of truth, the new understanding that comes when we choose him instead of the ego's narrow band of distortion ("your little range").

**(3:7) And you will not understand how you could ever have found it difficult.**

Everyone has had this experience at one time or another: When even for an instant our minds are clear – when guilt and judgmental thoughts are gone and we feel Jesus' love within us – everything in *A Course in Miracles* becomes crystal clear. When the fear arises from our having realized the implications of what it means to be wrong and have Jesus be right, our minds close again and vision and perception become distorted.

The last two paragraphs repeat the usual instructions:

**(4) Our six two-minute practice periods for today should follow a now familiar pattern: Begin with repeating the idea to yourself, and then apply it to randomly chosen subjects about you, naming each one specifically. Try to avoid the tendency toward self-directed selection, which may be particularly tempting in connection with today's idea because of its wholly alien nature. Remember that any order you impose is equally alien to reality.**

This simple directive reflects a much deeper point. Our fear of leaving the ego's dream of illusion for the truth is so great that we are all sorely tempted to bring the truth to the illusion. One form of this temptation is thinking we understand what we are being taught, and why these exercises take the form they do. Thus, we seek to impose our own familiar thought system on the "wholly alien nature" of Jesus', thereby

unconsciously, but with great ingenuity, negating the teachings and goal of *A Course in Miracles.* The last paragraph provides examples of our freedom from "self-directed selection":

**(5:1) Your list of subjects should therefore be as free of self-selection as possible.**

Suggested subjects include the "important" and "unimportant": finger, body, coat hanger, magazine, lamp, door, and waste basket (5:3-9). Jesus next gives us a hint of the wondrous effects of our learning, the peace that lies beyond our own fear:

**(5:10-11) In addition to the assigned practice periods, repeat the idea for today at least once an hour, looking slowly about you as you say the words unhurriedly to yourself. At least once or twice, you should experience a sense of restfulness as you do this.**

It is the desire for this "sense of restfulness" what in the text Jesus refers to as finding the "quiet center" within our minds (T-1 8.VII.8) – that supplies our motivation for practicing these exercises and learning *A Course in Miracles'* message.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 30**

**God is in everything I see because God is in my mind.**

This lesson also is extremely important, explaining *why* God is in everything I see: He is in my mind. The context, again, is not what we perceive outside, but what is in our minds. Therefore, "think" can be substituted for "see," because our eyes report to us nothing more than the reflection of what we have been thinking: *Projection makes perception.* Indeed, this lesson advances our understanding and experience of projection, the ego's defense *par excellence* for retaining our guilt under the guise of getting rid of it.

**(1) The idea for today is the springboard for vision. From this idea will the world open up before you, and you will look upon it and see in it what you have never seen before. Nor will what you saw before be even faintly visible to you.**

This is a theme that is repeated many times throughout *A Course in Miracles:* when our minds are awakened and we see with Jesus' love, everything we saw before will disappear. Our judgments against others and against ourselves, our strange ways of understanding events – all will disappear. As we reinforce this new way of thinking and seeing, those judgments, which are defenses against the truth of our and our brothers' reality, will gradually fade until they disappear entirely. This is what Jesus is saying to us here. It is easy to see why these ideas can frighten us. It is not just our judgments, distorted perceptions, and thinking that will disappear; *we,* as we have always known ourselves to be, will disappear as well. This is the real meaning of defenselessness: being *without* defenses. The ego would attempt to convince us that we need defenses to protect us from our pain, either inflicted from within or without. It never lets us in on its secret: its entire defensive structure is aimed at protecting us from *God.*

Psychology – the study of the ego – helps us understand how everyone's life – certainly by adulthood – is built up as a defense against the pain and hurt of childhood. We came into this world so that we would feel victimized as children; that is the point of being born into this world, as I discussed in the Prelude. Our entire lives, from the ego's point of view, are made up of defenses to protect us from what we have come to accept as undeniable truths about the world, and especially our personal worlds: I cannot trust my mother, I cannot trust my father, I cannot trust women, I cannot trust men, I cannot trust my body, I cannot trust authorities, and on and on and on. In everyone's life these conclusions are perfectly justified, because our scripts, as we have already seen, were specifically written to justify our feelings of unfair treatment. Once our victimization is accepted as truth, we build up wall upon wall of defenses to protect us against these imagined hurts, slights, and pains of our childhood and youth. They are *imagined* because they are not there anymore. In fact, they were never truly there, being but part of our dream. However, we never want to look at this truth through Jesus' vision, because we would then realize it was all made up.

There is actually no justification for us to build walls of defenses, since our problems are inherently non-existent. That is the truth we fear. The meaning our lives have taken on is surviving the onslaughts of this hard, cruel, unfeeling, insensitive, and vicious world – Hamlet's "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." There is no question the world *is* cruel, insensitive, and vicious. *That is why it was made,* and what is meant by the statement, "the world was made as an attack on God" (W-pII.3.2: 1).

Our existence is predicated on the truth of what we are so sure is reality. We do not want to be told there is another way of looking, because it is obvious Jesus is not

talking about another way of looking at a table. That is just an exercise to help us realize there is another way of looking at *ourselves.* Once again, as you practice these lessons, thinking about them and meditating, try to get in touch with the fear that comes from understanding what they are saying. It is helpful to look back and see how your life has been built as a defense against what you believe is the problem: how to survive as an innocent victim in a harsh world. Jesus teaches us there is another way of looking at absolutely everything, but this vision comes at a price: replacing our victimized self – buttressed by a lifetime's accumulation of defenses – with a self that can be truly defenseless, "protected" by the innocence that is the reflection of Heaven's sinlessness.

**(2:1-2) Today we are trying to use a new kind of "projection." We are not attempting to get rid of what we do not like by seeing it outside.**

While the word is not used here, Jesus is clearly speaking of *extension;* half of the dynamic of looking within, and having that affect what we see outside. With projection we see our sinfulness and guilt, judge against it, and project it onto others. We get rid of what we do not like within us. That literally is how the world was made. In a line which we shall read in Lesson 161, Jesus says: "Thus were specifics made" – we made a world of specifics so that we could have someone and something onto whom we project the guilt we do not want.

Jesus is teaching us now about "a new kind of 'projection'" (extension), in which we take the love we first looked at within – the Love of Christ we are, the love of Jesus to which we can relate -- and have it extend so we see it all around us. Importantly, we do not see love as separate from us as we do when we project our guilt, wherein we *must* see the guilt in someone other than ourselves – intrinsic to the purpose of projection. Christ's Love, which is first seen within, is now experienced in everyone else, regardless of the veils of fear and hate unconsciously used to conceal it. Again, we experience this love in everyone because we have first experienced it in ourselves. The shift Jesus is discussing is the shift to our right minds – from the ego's projection of guilt to the Holy Spirit's extension of forgiveness – and is key to the practice of *A Course in Miracles.*

**(2:3) Instead, we are trying to see in the world what is in our minds, and what we want to recognize is there.**

The key thought is "what we want to recognize is there." As the text states:

> Perception seems to teach you what you see. Yet it but witnesses to what you taught. It is the outward picture of a wish; an image that you wanted to be true (T-24.VII.8:8-10).

Our secret wish is to keep the separation, but to see the responsibility for it in another. The "image that you wanted to be true" is our brother's guilt. Thus the ego says guilt is real and we do *not* want to recognize it. By convincing us not to recognize the mind's guilt, the ego hopes we will never look at the love that is already in our minds. In the text, Jesus says we have but two emotions: love and fear – one we made and one was given us (T-13.V.10:1). The emotion of fear, which is really the same as guilt, is what we made to cover the love that God gave us. We need to recognize the guilt so we can look beyond it to identify with the love that is there. This, of course, is totally different from the ego's way of proceeding, which makes guilt real and then makes us promise

never to look at it. It tells us not to recognize it in ourselves, but rather to get rid of the guilt by seeing it in everyone else. However, the ego never tells us that its plan does not work, for the guilt remains within our minds, despite our fevered attempts to disown it. All this is described quite clearly in the text:

> The ultimate purpose of projection is always to get rid of guilt.... Yet consider how strange a solution the ego's arrangement is. You project guilt to get rid of it, but you are actually merely concealing it. You do experience the guilt, but you have no idea why (T-13.11.1:1; 2:1-3).
>
> In any union with a brother in which you seek to lay your guilt upon him, or share it with him or perceive his own, *you* will feel guilty.... You will see guilt in that relationship because you put it there. It is inevitable that those who suffer guilt will attempt to displace it, because they do believe in it. Yet though they suffer, they will not look within and let it go.... Their main concern is to perceive the source of guilt outside themselves, beyond their own control (T-13.X.3:1,3-5,7).

Following the ego's guidance, then, we draw upon our background of decades of experience and confidently declare that the guilt is in all these others. Moreover, we have all the proof needed to justify the way we feel about them. We expound on how they have abused and mistreated us, or have abused and mistreated others with whom we identify as victims. We are so absolutely certain we are right about our conclusions. That is why *A Course in Miracles* is so difficult and frightening. Over and over, Jesus tells us we are wrong, that "God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7). But we are positive that He is wrong and we are correct!

**(2:4-5) Thus, we are trying to join with what we see, rather than keeping it apart from us. That is the fundamental difference between vision and the way you see.**

The way we see, again, is to see problems or objects of pleasure outside us. We always want to keep separate from us what is outside. Even when we seem to want to join with others, we are really trying to have the illusion of joining so we can protect our specialness. In vision, however, we no longer see ourselves as separate from anyone. Early in the manual Jesus makes an important statement I have already cited: the qualifications of a teacher of God consist solely in his not seeing his interests as apart from anyone else's (M-1.1:2). That vision could begin only by not seeing our interests as separate from those of the Holy Spirit or Jesus. At the beginning, our interests are quite separate, because if we join with Them our ego's individuality and specialness are gone. Thus we *must* keep Them split off from us, just as we have done with God. Based upon this dynamic of splitting, we split off our guilt, projecting it onto others whom we now see as separate from us. Vision is exactly the opposite, seeing all people as the same, reflecting our inherent oneness as Christ.

The radicalness of *A Course in Miracles'* thought system is that Jesus is not talking about the brain or the body, but only the mind, which cannot be seen or touched because it is beyond our senses or anything physical or quantifiable.

**(3) Today's idea should be applied as often as possible throughout the day. Whenever you have a moment or so, repeat it to yourself slowly, looking about**

**you, and trying to realize that the idea applies to everything you do see now, or could see now if it were within the range of your sight.**

Jesus is once again reminding us about generalizing; not to exclude anything in our application of the lessons. Remember, once you believe there is a hierarchy of illusions and a range of what you perceive, you are saying that separation and differences are reality and truth. The only reality is the one thought of the Atonement, the only reality within our minds. Because that thought is one, it is seen as one. Everything in this world is the same as everything else, because all things share the one purpose of forgiveness.

**(4) Real vision is not limited to concepts such as "near" and "far." To help you begin to get used to this idea, try to think of things beyond your present range as well as those you can actually see, as you apply today's idea.**

Here we can see Jesus subtly getting across his point that this idea works not only for what our eyes physically see, but for what we think about, too – what we see in our minds as well as what we "actually" see. Again, real vision has nothing to do with anything physical. It does not apply to what we physically perceive (see, hear, feel, touch, or whatever), but to what we *think.* Recall that there is no difference between what we think and what we see. It is only in accepting this truth that one can begin to have the understanding that will hopefully lead to the experience of our inherent oneness, a unity that can exist only in the mind, since bodies separate. As Jesus reminds us in the text: "Minds are joined; bodies are not" (T-18.VI.3:1).

**(5:1-2) Real vision is not only unlimited by space and distance, but it does not depend on the body's eyes at all. The mind is its only source.**

We could not ask for a clearer statement than this. Jesus is not talking about anything that we perceive, because we are always seeing some form of separation, which means what we see comes from a thought of separation in our minds, a thought that is intrinsically mistaken. As Jesus states in a line we shall quote frequently: "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" (T-22.III.6:7).

Even though it is not yet specifically mentioned in these lessons, though I discussed it in the Prelude, the idea of going to Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help is central to our practice of *A Course in Miracles.* By separating ourselves from Them we are separating ourselves from God, which means we are regarding separation as reality. Everything we think, see, or believe from that point on will be wrong. That is why there is so much fear associated with doing this course. It slowly begins to dawn on us that we are mistaken about everything we think, perceive, and judge – about ourselves and everyone else.

**(5:3-4) To aid in helping you to become more accustomed to this idea as well, devote several practice periods to applying today's idea with your eyes closed, using whatever subjects come to mind, and looking within rather than without. Today's idea applies equally to both.**

The answer to why today's idea applies equally to what is within and without is that there is nothing out there. What appears outside is simply a projection of our

thoughts. Whether we are looking at our thoughts outside or our thoughts within our minds does not make any difference. They are still our thoughts. These two lessons are quite explicit that everything begins in our minds. This is directly related to the principle described in the text and that we have already seen in these lessons: *Ideas leave not their source* – the idea of a separated world, relationship, and body, has never left its source in the mind. Everything we perceive are our projected thoughts. The only thing that is important, then, is getting in touch with the source of these thoughts – the ego or the Holy Spirit. This is the ultimate purpose of these exercises and of *A Course in Miracles* itself.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 31**

**I am not the victim of the world I see.**

This is many people's favorite lesson, or else their most *un*favorite one. As I said in the preceding lesson, everyone's life has developed as a defense against the pain of childhood victimization, which our society holds sacrosanct. Therefore, to take this lesson seriously undermines everyone's physical and psychological existence. If you are not the victim of the world you see, then you do not need any defenses. Imagine your life without defenses! In traditional psychology, if you are without defenses you are thought to be psychotic, which is true from the world's point of view. To be identified with the Love of God is indeed a form of psychosis as the world sees it, because it goes against everything judged to be reality, beginning with the otherworldly selflessness that *is* our Self. Thus, if the statement "I am not the victim of the world I see" is true, your life is a lie – meaningless and purposeless, which has been the major theme of these early lessons. You can therefore understand why *A Course in Miracles* must engender anxiety, and why you would always have to attack it in one way or another, or attack those who represent it to you. These teachings undermine everything you believe about yourself, beliefs which have given your life its meaning.

**(1:1-3) Today's idea is the introduction to your declaration of release. Again, the idea should be applied to both the world you see without and the world you see within. In applying the idea, we will use a form of practice which will be used more and more, with changes as indicated.**

Obviously, this is not release as the world sees it. This is a declaration of release from your ego, from the prison of your life of guilt and projection.

The next few lines describe a new form of exercise, encompassing both a more sustained meditation on the day's idea as well as the frequent applications throughout the day that will come to characterize our daily experience with the workbook. Without these "frequent applications," one's work could easily lapse into mere intellectual practice. Jesus is asking us to cultivate the discipline of becoming increasingly vigilant for our ego's temptation of illusory thoughts of attack, so we may bring them to the truth-filled presence of the Holy Spirit in our minds, the process we are coming to recognize as forgiveness:

**(1:4) Generally speaking, the form includes two aspects, one in which you apply the idea on a more sustained basis, and the other consisting of frequent applications of the idea throughout the day.**

When we read Lesson 95 we shall see a discussion of the need to forgive ourselves for forgetting the exercises throughout the day. It is important to recognize our resistance; otherwise it is impossible to let it go and move beyond the defense to the truth of God's Love.

**(2) Two longer periods of practice with the idea for today are needed, one in the morning and one at night. Three to five minutes for each of these are recommended. During that time, look about you slowly while repeating the idea two or three times. Then close your eyes, and apply the same idea to your inner world. You will escape from both together, for the inner is the cause of the outer.**

aware of feeling distressed, upset, angry, frightened, or guilty, we would quickly go to him and say: “Help!” Even if we can say nothing else, we can at least acknowledge there is another thought in our minds, another teacher we could choose. Even if we do not choose that teacher at the moment, we at least know he is there.

The point is that you become more accustomed to recognizing that if you feel separated from someone or something, you would know that feeling is coming from your ego. You do not have to go any further. The ego loves to indulge thoughts of victimization: justifying and reinforcing them, finding allies who will agree with its misperceptions. As soon as a feeling of victimization comes, try to think of the lesson, whatever the lesson is for you that day; it really does not matter which one, as their content is the same. If you happen to be working with today’s lesson, as quickly as possible after catching yourself feeling separate or victimized, say: “I can look at this differently.” If you can do nothing else, you are at least keeping the door open, reminding yourself there is another thought system or teacher you could choose, but because you are so fearful, you would much rather be right and miserable than wrong and happy (T-29.VII.1:9). However, you are being honest about what is going on; an immensely helpful part of learning to forgive. The next lesson continues this line of thinking.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 34**
**I could see peace instead of this.**

**(1:1-3) The idea for today begins to describe the conditions that prevail in the other way of seeing. Peace of mind is clearly an internal matter. It must begin with your own thoughts, and then extend outward.**

Peace of mind is an "internal matter." The problem is that most of the time we think it results from the outer world meeting our needs. However, Jesus teaches that peace has nothing to do with the external. The implications of this fact, once again, *must* evoke anxiety, because he is informing us that nothing outside can either hurt us or give us peace – the outer world does not threaten, victimize, or please us – *there is nothing outside us!* The challenge lies in allowing ourselves to become increasingly aware of this *without* lapsing into denial. What helps *not* to fall into this ego trap is recognizing that the practical implications of this thought are that even though we may experience anxiety we attribute to external causes, we can still go within to the Teacher of truth, Who gently reminds us that peace is a choice *we* can make (and therefore experience), independent of outer circumstances. I remember when I first did this lesson I substituted *Jesus* for *peace.* In other words, when tempted to make some aspect of the error real, I could always choose Jesus as my teacher and remember to smile at the silliness of believing there could ever be anything in my mind but his love.

**(1:4) It is from your peace of mind that a peaceful perception of the world arises.**

This is all that is important, and all *A Course in Miracles* addresses: that we perceive the world peacefully. Jesus is not pleading for peace in the world, because there is no objective world outside our minds. To ask for external peace is to have first made conflict real – out *there.* Again, there is no world apart from the way we perceive it. What matters to me as a student of this course is correcting how I perceive, which I do by correcting how I think. This is accomplished by correcting my mistaken choice of teachers – always the bottom line. In this lesson, therefore, instead of saying "I could see peace instead of this," you could say, as I said above, "I could see Jesus instead of this." That would highlight even more the personal nature of his teaching.

**(2) Three longer practice periods are required for today's exercises. One in the morning and one in the evening are advised, with an additional one to be undertaken at any time in between that seems most conducive to readiness. All applications should be done with your eyes closed. It is your inner world to which the applications of today's idea should be made.**

We are thus urged to practice with our eyes closed, as Jesus focuses attention on our thoughts the *internal matter* of being at peace. This is the prerequisite for what follows: emphasizing the process of searching your mind, a theme, as we have said, that is central to *A Course in Miracles.* As you process this material, the fear level can get so high you would be tempted to cover your ego thoughts and think you do not have to deal with them because – misappropriately citing some of the Course's metaphysical ideas such as you are holy and loved by God; moreover, nothing has happened and you are not even here – you believe that to do so would be making the illusion real. Just as in many other places, Jesus urges us here to search our minds for ego thoughts. If you

think you do not have any, *A Course in Miracles* is perfect for you as it teaches that you *do* have these thoughts. Indeed, you could not be here if you did not have them. The idea is to get in touch with your attack thoughts, either those directed against yourself or others, as we now see:

**(3:1-2) Some five minutes of mind searching are required for each of the longer practice periods. Search your mind for fear thoughts, anxiety-provoking situations, "offending" personalities or events, or anything else about which you are harboring unloving thoughts.**

You do not have to scratch too far beneath the surface before confronting one of these thoughts. It is essential to search them out when you do these lessons. If you are not aware of them, the idea of "seeing peace instead of this" has no meaning. I could see peace instead of *what?* If my mind is filled only with loving thoughts, I certainly do not need this lesson. Therefore, the lesson has particular meaning when you allow yourself to get in touch with the *unloving* thoughts, which come from your *unloving* teacher. At this point it does make sense to say "I could see peace [or Jesus] instead of this." We see reflected here Jesus' overriding emphasis in his course of looking at the darkness and bringing it to the light. To cite just one representative passage, the first of many such citations in this series:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself than you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it is necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6:1-2).

**(3:3) Note them all casually, repeating the idea for today slowly as you watch them arise in your mind, and let each one go, to be replaced by the next.**

To restate this point, you cannot let a thought go if you are not aware that you have it. Moreover, you cannot let it go unless you have actually chosen Jesus or the Holy Spirit as your Teacher. If you have not, you are not letting the thoughts go. Choosing *against* Them means choosing *for* the ego, which means choosing separation, not to mention the guilt, fear, and anxiety that is inevitable once you have chosen wrongly. To "note them all casually" means not to make a big deal about them, which is the meaning of looking at your ego with Jesus. *Not* looking reflects already having made them into a big deal, since if we had not taken them so seriously we would not have invested these thoughts with the guilt that prevents us from looking.

Jesus' kind gentleness is apparent in this next paragraph, even as he urges us to continue our practice in the face of anxiety and resistance:

**(4) If you begin to experience difficulty in thinking of specific subjects, continue to repeat the idea to yourself in an unhurried manner, without applying it to anything in particular. Be sure, however, not to make any specific exclusions.**

Slow, steady, and gentle wins this race.

In paragraphs 5 and 6, Jesus again makes the point of applying the lesson whenever we are distressed, emphasizing the need to allow ourselves to be in touch with these thoughts:

**(5-6) The shorter applications are to be frequent, and made whenever you feel your peace of mind is threatened in any way. The purpose is to protect yourself from temptation throughout the day. If a specific form of temptation arises in your awareness, the exercise should take this form:**

***I could see peace in this situation instead of what I now see in it.***

**If the inroads on your peace of mind take the form of more generalized adverse emotions, such as depression, anxiety or worry, use the idea in its original form. If you find you need more than one application of today's idea to help you change your mind in any specific context, try to take several minutes and devote them to repeating the idea until you feel some sense of relief. It will help you if you tell yourself specifically:**

***I can replace my feelings of depression, anxiety or worry [or my thoughts about this situation, personality or event] with peace.***

Therefore, to make this essential point again, this lesson – indeed, all lessons – will have no meaning to you, and will be of no help unless you first admit to yourself these thoughts and feelings of depression, anxiety, worry, attack, etc. It is not that they are bad to have; you are here because you *do* have them. Thus, Jesus says to us in the text, in the context of our willingness to choose the holy instant:

> Concentrate only on this [your willingness], and be not disturbed that shadows surround it. That is why you came, if you could come without them you would not need the holy instant (T-18.IV.2:4-6).

What is "bad," therefore, is pretending that you do not have them, because then Jesus will be of no help to you and *can* be of no help to you. You must bring the thoughts to him. That is *our* function, as he reminds us in the text:

> You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself (T-13.III.1:1-2).

Because of this need to raise our awareness of these hate-filled thoughts, we require the "frequent applications" Jesus recommends. Discipline and vigilance are necessary if we are to catch these dark thoughts and bring them to his healing and forgiving light.

These next lessons begin to show us the wondrous things that lie *beyond* our ego thoughts: the *other* side when we ask for help in choosing "another way of looking at the world." You may recall my stating that one of the purposes of the workbook was to help us recognize we have a split mind: the *wrong-minded* state of the ego and the *right-minded* home of the Holy Spirit. Only through such recognition can we meaningfully use the *decision-making* part of our minds to make the right choice.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 35**
**My mind is part of God's. I am very holy.**

As noted at the end of the last lesson, Jesus continues his shift to a right-minded emphasis. He begins instructing us on what is found in the *other* part of our minds. Everyone should have trouble believing this, as Jesus himself says in the lesson. If you really knew you were a part of God, and therefore your mind was holy, you would have no thoughts of separation and specialness. In fact, you would know you were not here at all. Thus, that you are here – or better: that you *believe* you are here – says your mind is not part of God's, and therefore you could not be holy.

In this lesson, and increasingly so for the next fifteen, Jesus helps us realize there is another part of us – what is known in the early part of the text as the *right mind.* This part, through the Holy Spirit, is still connected with the holiness of God that has never changed, despite our unholy dreams of guilt and judgment.

**(1:1-3) Today's idea does not describe the way you see yourself now. It does, however, describe what vision will show you. It is difficult for anyone who thinks he is in this world to believe this of himself.**

Jesus is letting us know that he knows this is not how we see ourselves, and he does not expect us to believe what he says about us. His purpose is to *begin* the process of teaching us there is a true alternative in our minds. He does not want this used as a mantra that we repeat over and over throughout the day to shout down our unloving thoughts. Rather, in keeping with our training, he wants us to bring our unloving thoughts to this loving thought. These unloving thoughts involve some expression of our belief that we are unholy or sinful. Thus would we rise to our new way of understanding, which is that there is another way of not only *looking* at ourselves, but another way of *thinking* about ourselves. When we bring the darkness of our unholy, illusory thoughts to the light of the holy and true thought, the light dispels the darkness.

**(1:4) Yet the reason he thinks he is in this world is because he does not believe it.**

This is the point I was just making. Because we do not believe we are a part of God, we must believe we are in this world. Living here as a separated being – physically and psychologically – among other separated beings is the shadow of the thought that says: I am on my own, separate from God. Again, the very fact that we believe we are here as bodies attests to the underlying belief that we are separated, and therefore do not believe our minds are part of God's and are holy. This lesson, then, reflects the principle of the Atonement – the belief that although we *think* we have left God, in truth the separation never happened. Therefore, I truly am a part of God, and thus very holy.

**(2:1-2) You will believe that you are part of where you think you are. That is because you surround yourself with the environment you want.**

We believe we are in this world, and part of it as a separate body, living among other separate bodies. On the ontological level, as one separated Son we made an environment that maintains separation, and then forgot we had done so, following the ego's plan for *its* salvation. As a result, we now believe the world is real, and we are real as part of it. On an individual level, if, as discussed previously, we want to feel unfairly

treated, what better way to accomplish that than always to be around those who treat us unfairly? Whether they do or do not, we shall perceive them that way. As Jesus reminds us in this paraphrased statement from the text, a wonderful line we have already quoted: If we experience our brother as not speaking of Christ to us, it is *only* because we have first accused ourselves of having not spoken of Christ to him (T-11.V.18:6). We thus wind up thoroughly convinced our perceptions of victimization are valid.

**(2:3) And you want it** [the environment of a separated world] **to protect the image of yourself that you have made.**

Again, this is an unmistakable causal statement. We have made up a physical world of separation to protect the image of ourselves as separate beings. This is why it should be clear that Jesus is never talking about changing or saving the world – *there is no world.* He speaks only of saving ourselves from the self-image we made: the sinful, guilty, fragmented, image of fear we harbor within. It is our *wish* to be separate that is the cause of the separated world. Therefore, it is that wish we must change if true peace is to come to us.

**(2:4-7) The image is part of this environment. What you see while you believe you are in it is seen through the eyes of the image. This is not vision. Images cannot see.**

What is the image? I am limited, fragmented, separated, independent, and autonomous. The world's nature, and *all* that it is, is the projection of that image. Everyone in this world is alone, which is why specialness is such a powerful defense. One of our needs is to have people be with us so we do not experience the pain and loneliness that inevitably comes with being part of this world, living in a place outside Heaven, our true Home.

This paragraph is quite significant and should be carefully studied. The thought system of *A Course in Miracles* – its metaphysics, the thought system of the ego and its undoing through forgiveness – all can be recognized in these passages.

**(3:1-2) The idea for today presents a very different view of yourself. By establishing your Source it establishes your Identity, and it describes you as you must really be in truth.**

In other words, I am a part of God and am very holy. That is why *Source* and *Identity* are capitalized: Jesus is talking about God and the Christ that is our true Self.

Jesus turns now to the perceiver, rather than to what he perceives. Indeed, at this point Jesus is not interested in what we perceive outside, but only in what we *think:*

**(3:3) We will use a somewhat different kind of application for today's idea because the emphasis for today is on the perceiver, rather than on what he perceives.**

We can better understand the overriding emphasis in these early lessons on searching our minds, since it is our minds – the true *perceiver* – that need correction. Thus we read:

**(4) For each of the three five-minute practice periods today, begin by repeating today's idea to yourself, and then close your eyes and search your mind for the various kinds of descriptive terms in which you see yourself. Include all the ego-based attributes which you ascribe to yourself, positive or negative, desirable or undesirable, grandiose or debased. All of them are equally unreal, because you do not look upon yourself through the eyes of holiness.**

What we find within our minds are the multitudinous forms of the *one* error, the *one* illusory thought of separation. In other words, as I said earlier, once you identify with the ego's separated self, everything you think, believe, feel, perceive, and experience will be wrong. Whether it is noble, beautiful, holy, and good, or simply terrible, it will be wrong because it will have been based on specialness and separation.

**(5) In the earlier part of the mind-searching period, you will probably emphasize what you consider to be the more negative aspects of your perception of yourself. Toward the latter part of the exercise period, however, more self-inflating descriptive terms may well cross your mind. Try to recognize that the direction of your fantasies about yourself does not matter. Illusions have no direction in reality. They are merely not true.**

Jesus is cautioning us not to take too seriously the fact that we shall most likely only be recognizing the negative thoughts within, even though *both* positive and negative thoughts are illusory. He obviously cannot emphasize enough that it does not matter whether these thoughts are one or the other. As long as you believe you have a self that is positive or negative, that can relate positively or negatively to other people, you will be wrong about yourself and whatever you think is going on. Separate selves are not holy. The one Self united with God is holy, and beyond all our self-concepts (T-31.V). In subsequent lessons Jesus talks more and more about our true Self. Remember again, we cannot get to the true Self without first looking at the false one. That is why the early workbook lessons focused on our misthoughts and misperceptions. The correction for these mistakes is realizing there is another way of looking at the world; another way of looking at ourselves.

The next paragraph provides a suggested list for us to follow. Of the nine traits listed, three are positive – *victorious, charitable,* and *virtuous* – while six are negative – *imposed on, depressed, failing, endangered, helpless,* and *losing out.* Again, for the purposes of this exercise the category makes no difference.

Paragraph 7 urges us to be *specific* as the steppingstone to achieving the mind state of the *nonspecific* – *the* trait of our real Self:

**(7) You should not think of these terms in an abstract way. They will occur to you as various situations, personalities and events in which you figure cross your mind. Pick up any specific situation that occurs to you, identify the descriptive term or terms you feel are applicable to your reactions to that situation, and use them in applying today's idea. After you have named each one, add:**

***But my mind is part of God's. I am very holy.***

Focusing on the specific, once again, is the prerequisite for achieving the non-specific. It is also an essential part of our training in not denying our thoughts, feelings,

and perceptions. The darkness of guilt cannot be brought to light and undone unless we first look at its specific manifestations, the doorway through which we return to our thoughts.

The next paragraph sees Jesus returning to his gentle urgings that we be gentle with ourselves in these exercises. It is a useful guideline to remember that whenever we experience a sense of urgency or intimation of force coming from "the other side," we should recognize immediately that this is the ego guiding us. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are *only* gentle and patient, knowing that time is illusory. Only an impatient ego, uncertain of the outcome, would apply pressure. We experience Jesus' gentle teaching about gentleness in this passage from the text:

> The Voice of the Holy Spirit does not command, because It is incapable of arrogance. It does not demand, because It does not seek control. It does not overcome, because It does not attack. It merely reminds. It is compelling only because of what It reminds you *of.* It brings to your mind the other way, remaining quiet even in the midst of the turmoil you may make. The Voice for God is always quiet, because It speaks of peace. Peace is stronger than war because it heals (T-5.II.7:1-8).

Here, then, is the gentle eighth paragraph:

**(8) During the longer exercise periods, there will probably be intervals in which nothing specific occurs to you. Do not strain to think up specific things to fill the interval, but merely relax and repeat today's idea slowly until something occurs to you. Although nothing that does occur should be omitted from the exercises, nothing should be "dug out" with effort. Neither force nor discrimination should be used.**

Gentleness always wins against force, since it reflects the inner strength of Christ. Force, on the other hand, is the shadowy expression of the ego's inherent weakness. Thus we read about this fourth characteristic of God's advanced teachers:

> ... God's teachers are wholly gentle. They need the strength of gentleness, for it is in this that the function of salvation becomes easy.... Who would choose the weakness that must come from harm in place of the unfailing, all-encompassing and limitless strength of gentleness? The might of God's teachers lies in their gentleness... (M-4 .IV.2:1-2,7-8).

In the lesson's close, we once again see Jesus asking us to be quite specific throughout the day – "as often as possible" – about applying the day's lesson. Only in that way, to repeat this important idea, can the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* become our experience:

**(9) As often as possible during the day, pick up a specific attribute or attributes you are ascribing to yourself at the time and apply the idea for today to them, adding the idea in the form stated above to each of them. If nothing particular occurs to you, merely repeat the idea to yourself, with closed eyes.**

To repeat an earlier point, make every effort to be vigilant throughout the day for

ego thoughts, but also be mindful of the need to forgive yourself when you remember you have forgotten.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 36**
**My holiness envelops everything I see.**

This lesson along with the next few are extremely important, as they explore the theme of our holiness. In so doing, they provide the obvious correction of the ego's wrong-minded thinking, which we have been discussing a great deal. They also clarify what Jesus means and does not mean by *holiness.* Another significant but unfortunate aspect of these lessons is that many students of *A Course in Miracles* have taken their inspiring message and run the wrong way with them, totally misunderstanding Jesus' teaching. I shall therefore explore that idea, among other important themes as we go along.

**(1:1) Today's idea extends the idea for yesterday from the perceiver to the perceived.**

In the preceding lesson – "My mind is part of God's. I am very holy" – we had discussed the relationship between our inner world and what we perceive to be outside. The lesson now shifts the focus from the perceiver, namely our thoughts, to what we perceive outside. This is not really a shift, because the inner and outer are one and the same. What we see within, which really means what we *think* about ourselves, is exactly what we believe we are seeing outside. As we have discussed already, our *perception* does not mean simply *what* we see (or hear, etc.), but our *interpretation* of what we perceive. As always, the focus is on the *content* – what is in the mind – and never the *form* – part of the physical world.

**(1:2-3) You are holy because your mind is part of God's. And because you are holy, your sight must be holy as well.**

The implication of this statement is that if we are holy within, what we perceive must be holy as well. If what we perceive is not holy – i.e., if we perceive anything other than an expression of love or a call for love – we did not first perceive ourselves as holy. We can thus tell whether we have chosen to identify with the ego or the Holy Spirit by paying attention to our perceptions; what we perceive will always be a direct mirror of what we have made real inside ourselves. An important passage in the text explains this:

> Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God. If you behold disaster and catastrophe, you tried to crucify him. If you see holiness and hope, you joined the Will of God to set him free. There is no choice that lies between these two decisions. And you will see the witness to the choice you made, and learn from this to recognize which one you chose (T-21.in.2: 1-6).

That is why it is so important we be vigilant about our thoughts. If we are aware of our thoughts about people *outside* us, they will reveal to us the thoughts with which we have identified *within;* our special relationships are thus at the core of healing our minds through forgiveness. If you want to know what is in the camera after you have used it, develop the film and look at the photos. That will tell you whether or not you took a good picture. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles* can therefore be seen, in this context, as having us recognize that our perceptions directly mirror what we have chosen within. Only then, can we choose again.

**(1:4-6) "Sinless" means without sin. You cannot be without sin a little. You are sinless or not.**

This is another example of what we have referred to as a Level One statement, meaning that something either is wholly true or wholly false; there is absolutely no compromise between non-duality and duality. Statements such as these form the bedrock for the thought system of *A Course in Miracles:* its uncompromising metaphysics. We either sinned against God by separating from Him; or we did not, thus remaining as God created us – at one with Him Who is our Source.

**(1:7) If your mind is part of God's you must be sinless, or a part of His Mind would be sinful.**

The logic here is compelling, and if you accept the basic premise that God is perfect holiness, and anything that comes from Him – i.e., is a part of Him – must share in that holiness, it must follow that anything appearing to be sinful or unholy cannot be part of God, and therefore cannot exist. That is why, from the point of view of *A Course in Miracles,* there can be no evil. There can be perceptions, beliefs, and dreams about evil; but no objective evil. If there were, it would mean a part of God must be evil as well. This is another example of the Course's radical metaphysical stance.

**(1:8) Your sight is related to His Holiness, not to your ego, and therefore not to your body.**

We have briefly explored this theme of our having a split mind, and it will come up again and again. There is the ego part of our minds, but there is the other part that is holy. The implication to be drawn from the last part of this statement is that our body comes from the wrong mind, not the right mind. I have often said that no one in his or her right mind would be born into this world. It is only someone in the wrong mind, fleeing from the perceived wrath of God, who would come here. This does not mean the body cannot be used to serve a different purpose, as we have already seen and shall discuss again; but ontologically, the body is an expression of separation, sin, and attack. Its purpose of protecting the separation defines it. Likewise, the dynamic of *protection* can serve a different purpose, as we see in the next paragraph where the phrase "protect your protection" is noteworthy:

**(2:1-2) Four three-to-five minute practice periods are required for today. Try to distribute them fairly evenly, and make the shorter applications frequently, to protect your protection throughout the day.**

The "protection" is the thought for the day: "My holiness envelops everything I see." In a larger sense, of course, our protection is the Presence of the Holy Spirit or Jesus. We have seen the parallel between this and what Jesus refers to in the text as the third lesson of the Holy Spirit: *"Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom"* (T-6.V-C). This means to be vigilant *against* our decision to choose the ego thought system. To "protect the protection" requires that we be vigilant to what we are thinking, which we do by being vigilant to what we are perceiving. If I want to know what I think about myself and God, all I need do is devote one moment to what I think about *you.* This is because

my thoughts about you – whoever the object of my specialness is at any given moment – will directly reflect how I think about God and myself. That is the meaning of "protecting the protection," carried out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The last two paragraphs deal with specific instructions for the practice periods, and emphasize the sequence of first going within – *closing one's eyes* – and then looking – *quite slowly, as effortlessly and unhurriedly as possible* – at the specifics in the world around us. The idea, of course, is to have us first identity the holiness within – the Holy Spirit's Presence in our right minds – and then have it extend through us to embrace our perceptions of what appear to be external to us. The full metaphysical implications of this lesson are perhaps still far from our experience, but these early exercises are the steppingstones – the aforementioned "little steps" described in Lesson 193 (13:7) – that will bring us there. The instructions begin with the last sentence of the second paragraph:

**(2:3-3:2) The longer practice periods should take this form:**
**First, close your eyes and repeat the idea for today several times, slowly. Then open your eyes and look quite slowly about you, applying the idea specifically to whatever you note in your casual survey.**

Suggestions for objects we envelop in our holiness include, once again, the important and unimportant; to wit: *fingers, body, rug, wall, chair,* and *pen.*

**(3:10-4:2) Several times during these practice periods, close your eyes and repeat the idea to yourself. Then open your eyes, and continue as before.**
**For the shorter exercise periods, close your eyes and repeat the idea; look about you as you repeat it again; and conclude with one more repetition with your eyes closed. All applications should, of course, be made quite slowly, as effortlessly and unhurriedly as possible.**

Slowly and gently – "effortless and unhurriedly" – we are being led along salvation's path that takes us from the world without to the world within, there to rediscover our holiness, which our need for specialness sought to deny.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 37**

**My holiness blesses the world.**

This is another lesson that is extremely important in terms of what Jesus is teaching us, as well as correcting common mistakes made by students of *A Course in Miracles.* Jesus obviously is not telling us that we should bless the world that is outside us. This would directly contradict everything he has been teaching us so far. Remember, Jesus is teaching us the world is nothing more than a mirror of our thoughts. Therefore, the lesson's *content* is not that we should bless a chair, stick, clock, or another person. Rather, he is saying that if we choose his blessing – within our minds – and see ourselves as holy because we have joined with him, that blessing will automatically extend through us and envelop everything we see. The principle *projection makes perception* must never be too far away from our thinking. This will become increasingly manifest as we look at this lesson.

**(1:1-2) This idea contains the first glimmerings of your true function in the world, or why you are here. Your purpose is to see the world through your own holiness.**

This is another way of saying our purpose or function is forgiveness. *Forgiveness* has not really made an appearance yet in these lessons, but the process of seeing the world through our own holiness is a wonderfully succinct description of it. The problem is that we see the world through our own unholiness, as separated egos and bodies whose mission in life is to protect and preserve our specialness. Thus, a lesson such as this presents the right-minded thought that undoes the ego's dictum that "my unholiness envelops and condemns the world I see." The focus of this lesson, therefore, is not really on the world at all; it is on our *thoughts.* If our thoughts are rooted in the holiness of Christ that we are, everything we perceive must automatically be its extension. The importance of this idea cannot be overemphasized.

**(1:3) Thus are you and the world blessed together.**

The world is only a reflection of my thought, which is one of holiness and blessing because I am a child of blessing. The world "out there" must share in that holiness, because it comes from that holiness. In other words, the world I perceive is rooted in who I am. Another principle that should never be far from our thoughts is *ideas leave not their source.* In this instance, if my holiness is the source, the idea of the world must be perceived as holy as well. Indeed, these two principles – *projection makes perception* and *ideas leave not their source* – are essentially the same: Projection (or its right-minded foul of extension) is the reason ideas leave not their source. The *ideas* that comprise our *perceptual* world are merely the *projected* self-image that has its *source* in our minds, and what is projected out always remains within. Thus *source* and *idea* remain one.

**(1:4-6) No one loses; nothing is taken away from anyone; everyone gains through your holy vision. It signifies the end of sacrifice because it offers everyone his full due. And he is entitled to everything because it is his birthright as a Son of God.**

This is the first time in the lessons that Jesus discusses sacrifice, another of the

key themes in the text, for it is at the heart of the ego's thought system. The root of sacrifice lies in the principle of *one or the other,* more graphically stated in the manual, as we have already seen, as *kill or be killed* (M-17.7:11). The ego – the thought of individuality begins with the idea that it is God or my self. If God is to exist, I cannot exist as a separate being because there is no separation, individuality, or differentiation in Heaven. Therefore, if I am to exist as an individual – the foundation of everyone's thought system – God can no longer exist, at least as He truly is. He would have to be changed, and if God ceases to be perfect Oneness He ceases to be. Perfect oneness and individuality cannot coexist. That is the origin of the thought of sacrifice: someone must lose if another is to win.

Since the sacrifice of God is the foundation of the split mind, when that mind further splits into billions and billions of fragments, the thought of sacrifice remains, in accord with the principle *ideas leave not their source.* The *idea* of a separated, individual world filled with bodies has never left its *source,* which is the mind's thought that I exist on my own – at God's expense.

A direct corollary of the thought that I have killed God so I could exist is the ego's teaching that God is somehow going to rise from the dead and come after me. Therefore, in order to appease His wrath I have to call again upon the principle that gave me my existence: *one or the other,* the idea of sacrifice. This is the same principle, by the way, that has led most world religions to entertain the strange notion that God demands sacrifice: If I am to exist, I have to pay God back for what I stole from Him. That concept becomes the foundation stone of special relationships: If I am to get what I want from you, I must pay you for it. Thus does the principle of *one or the other,* beginning with the ontological premise if I am to exist God must die, filters through the fragmentation process and ends up being the foundation of *everyone's* thought system.

What we find in this early workbook lesson, then, is the first attempt to counteract that fundamental line of thinking. If I see the world as nothing more than a part of me, everything that happens to me happens to the world. If I am blessed, the world and everyone in it must be blessed, too. In "The Rock of Salvation," Jesus states that the rock on which salvation rests is that no one loses and everyone wins (T-25.VII.12), which is the same idea he is presenting here. Hence I no longer presume that my happiness depends on beating you up, putting you down, cannibalizing, or stealing from you. I can learn to generalize this lesson, recognizing that you are part of me; not my individual physical or psychological self, but the part of me who is the Son of God. If I seek to exclude you by seeing you as separate from me – an enemy or object of my special love – I am saying the Son of God is fragmented. In truth he cannot be, so by attacking you I am really attacking my own Identity. However, if I begin with the premise that my mind is part of God's and I am holy (Lesson 35), I shall see that *you* must share in that holiness, if indeed holiness is true. This step marks the end of sacrifice – the principle of *one or the other.*

There is a series of statements in the text that reflect this correction:

> Salvation is a collaborative venture (T-4.VI.8:2).
>
> Together or not at all (T-19.IV-D.12:8).
>
> The ark of peace is entered two by two (T-20.IV.6:5).
>
> No one can enter Heaven by himself (W-pI.134.17:7).

None of this means that you literally have to be in a relationship with someone on a physical level. It does mean, however, that in your *mind* you do not see that your peace, salvation, or happiness comes at someone else's expense.

The key point of this lesson, therefore, is that "my holiness blesses the world" because the world is an extension of me. As long as I believe there is someone "out there," I must believe there is someone "in here" who perceives someone "out there," which means I am into separation, specialness, and individuality. I then automatically believe in sacrifice; some expression of *one or the other.*

***(2:1)*** **There is no other way in which the idea of sacrifice can be removed from the world's thinking.**

In other words, the only way sacrifice can be removed from the world's thinking is to shift from the ego's thought system of separation, judgment, and hate to the Holy Spirit's thought system of unity, forgiveness, and healing. This does *not* mean denying our bodies or other people's bodies, but rather denying the seeming truth of the *one or the other* principle. That is what this lesson is all about, reflecting the central teaching of *A Course in Miracles.*

Again, we do not deny there are bodies, or that there is a body we identify with. Rather, we look at the *one or the other* principle operating in our minds and choose to deny its seeming validity. That is the only way the idea of sacrifice can be undone. I realize you and I are making the same journey home. It began as a path of insanity away from home, and in my mind I realize that the way back – the way of sanity – is to take your hand. It does not matter whether you even know who I am or whether you died thirty years ago. We are not talking about something that happens externally in the world, because all relationships exist *only* in the mind. We are talking about a relationship I am still holding onto in my thoughts. If my ego is in charge, the relationship will reflect *one or the other,* and that is sacrifice. If I put Jesus in charge as my teacher, however, I shall see my special relationship as an opportunity to look at my *one or the other* thinking, and then ask his help to change it.

**(2:2-3) Any other way of seeing will inevitably demand payment of someone or something. As a result, the perceiver will lose.**

I must believe I will lose, because in my mind my existence comes from having stolen from God, not to mention murdering Him. I will therefore believe, through the dynamic of projection, that He, along with everyone in my dream are going to do to me what I believe I did to them, and am still doing. In the end, my guilt tells me you are going to steal back from me what I stole from you. The "reasoning" in the ego thought system is once again as follows: Individual existence is identified with sin, which means I reached where I am by stealing from you and killing you off, the horrifying final *solution* brought about by the *one or the other* principle. Thus, if everything I see outside mirrors what is inside, I must believe everyone out there, whom literally I put there, would do exactly what I believe I have done; i.e., steal and kill. Remember that we are speaking of the *content* of killing, not its *form,* as reflected in the statement from Lesson 21 that "a slight twinge of annoyance is nothing but a veil drawn over intense fury" (2:5). The *thought* of murder is the same as the *thought* of mild annoyance. That is also what is behind the seemingly outrageous statement in the text, which I cited earlier: "What is not

love is murder" (T-23.IV.1:10). Guilt ultimately rests on our belief that we separated from God, and so any thought of separation – be it "a slight twinge of annoyance" or murder – recalls to mind this sin of betraying the love that is *only* perfect oneness.

In light of this, we can understand why death is the central phenomenon in the physical universe. Death to the ego is God's punishment. That is why, on one level, the entire Bible rests on the third chapter of Genesis, which tells the story of Adam and Eve's sin and the punishment from God, Who created death, and later, the plan of atonement through suffering and sacrifice. Death, then, is the final proof that in the end my sin will be punished. Thus it is that every seemingly separated fragment of the Sonship *must* die, as justified punishment for *being* separate, which life in the body clearly embodies. This is the foundation of the statement: "As a result, the perceiver will lose."

**(2:4) Nor will he have any idea why he is losing.**

I will think I am losing because of what you did to me, or are planning to do to me. I will not realize that the real reason I am losing is that I am the dreamer of my own dream; a dream of loss, *one or the other,* and winners and a losers. We see again the efficacy of the ego's strategy of keeping us in a state of mindlessness. As long we perceive ourselves to be in a body (and therefore not in our minds), we *must* believe other bodies are doing to us what is, in fact, the shadow of what our mind's guilt is bringing about. Thus the following passage from the text, which cogently describes this dynamic of projection:

> Of one thing you were sure: Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them. Nor did you in any way request them for yourself. This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind. He cannot doubt his dreams' reality, because he does not see the part he plays in making them and making them seem real (T-27.VII.7:4-9).

**(2:5) Yet is his wholeness restored to his awareness through your vision.**

I not only heal my own mind when I ask Jesus for help and identify with his holiness, but I serve as a reminder to you. Thus, if we are in a relationship and I can change my mind, no longer holding *one or the other* as my reigning principle but rather seeing the relationship as a classroom in which I can learn the exact opposite, I give you the same message. In other words, verbally or non-verbally, I tell you that the lesson I have learned, the teacher I have chosen, is also available inside you. That is what is meant at the end of the text when Jesus says that Christ is within us, saying "my brother choose again" (T-31.VIII.3:2). When we are able to choose again, we become that same expression of Christ's vision of forgiveness, reflecting His words to our brother. The manual for teachers offers a wonderful description of how our brother's "wholeness is restored to [the] awareness" of those who are sick:

> To them God's teachers come, to represent another choice which they had forgotten. The simple presence of a teacher of God is a reminder. His thoughts

> ask for the right to question what the patient has accepted as true. As God's messengers, His teachers are the symbols of salvation. They ask the patient for forgiveness for God's Son in his own Name. They stand for the Alternative. With God's Word in their minds they come in benediction, not to heal the sick but to remind them of the remedy God has already given them. It is not their hands that heal. It is not their voice that speaks the Word of God. They merely give what has been given them. Very gently they call to their brothers to turn away from death: "Behold, you Son of God, what life can offer you. Would you choose sickness in place of this?" (M-5.111.2).

**(2:6-7) Your holiness blesses him by asking nothing of him. Those who see themselves as whole make no demands.**

If you look honestly at your relationships, even as you go through this very day, you will realize how you are demanding something from everyone. Sometimes it is quite obvious, other times it is subtle. This dynamic must be there, though, as long as you believe you are an individual, which we all clearly do. If you believe you are an individual, you also believe in the concept of lack, which can be traced to our very origin: I had to steal from God at the beginning because something was missing in me. And therefore I have to steal from everyone all the time because something is still missing in me. How could it not? As long as the underlying belief in scarcity (another word for *lack)* remains uncorrected, this inner perception will generate the continual need to fill up what is missing – to "supply a lack" – in the words of the early miracle principle (T-1.I.8:1). Consequently, a major aspect of specialness is that I always have to take from someone else to fill the lack that I perceive in myself.

That is what Jesus is talking about in these passages. When you identify with holiness, you ask nothing of anyone because you *are* everything and *have* everything. You are everything, because *having* and *being* are the same (e.g., T-6.V-B.3:4; V-C.5).

Vigilance is essential to the process of your learning so that you become aware that you are making a demand of someone. If you are making demands and believe in the reality of the attack, that tells you that you do not believe you are whole. You are unhappy, therefore, not because you did not receive what you believe you should have gotten from someone, but *solely* because you have chosen the wrong teacher.

**(3:1) Your holiness is the salvation of the world.**

Here again, Jesus is not talking about the external world. As discussed earlier, Jesus uses the language of Christianity throughout *A Course in Miracles.* In Christianity, especially in the Easter season, there is great emphasis on the thought of Jesus saving the world. Yet he would have us realize in the Course that there is no world out there to be saved. Saving the world really means saving ourselves from the *belief* there is a world. Since all minds are joined in the holiness of Christ, if my mind is healed in any given instant, the Sonship's mind is healed as well.

None of this is understandable from the world's perspective, as I have said. None of this will make sense within our experience here, and can be understood only when we lift ourselves above the battleground and be with Jesus in what he refers to as the holy instant. From there we look back on the world and see it differently, realizing what has to be saved are our *thoughts* about the world. These thoughts, again, result from our thoughts about ourselves. The outer and the inner are one and the same: *Ideas leave*

*not their source.*

**(3:2) It lets you teach the world that it is one with you, not by preaching to it, not by telling it anything, but merely by your quiet recognition that in your holiness are all things blessed along with you.**

These lines are significant. We change and save the world not by preaching *A Course in Miracles,* not by teaching *A Course in Miracles (i.e.,* in form), not by doing anything with *A Course in Miracles* except learning it ourselves. In order for my world to be saved, there is nothing that I have to do or say but to accept what the lessons are teaching me, which is the meaning of accepting the Atonement for oneself. These are hardly insignificant lines, for they go to the heart of the Course's metaphysics, which is the foundation for understanding Jesus' teachings and their application. If there is no world, how can it be saved? Again, what needs saving, or correcting, is our *minds* that believe there is a world. Once our minds are healed, we remember that the separation never happened, and thus a world that arose from that thought of separation could not have happened either. Moreover, if there were no separation, God's Son remains perfectly united as *one* Son. Our minds reflect the blessing of our Creator, and following the oft-repeated principle *ideas leave not their source,* it must be the case that "all things [are] blessed along with [us]." It is from this inner blessing that our holiness inevitably extends through us, as we see in these three parallel passages from the text. All of them highlight the process of our doing nothing except undo the belief in the ego, reflecting the little willingness that does indeed save the world – from *our belief in it:*

> Concern yourself not with the extension of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do not understand. Nor do you do them. It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you do not do them. Why should you worry how the miracle extends to all the Sonship when you do not understand the miracle itself? (T-16.II.1:3-6)
>
> Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's function. Leave this to Him. Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can be extended. Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever. He will take each one and make of it a potent force for peace (T-22.VI.9:2-6).
>
> The miracle extends without your help, but you are needed that it can begin. Accept the miracle of healing, and it will go forth because of what it is. It is its nature to extend itself the instant it is born. And it is born the instant it is offered and received.... Leave, then, the transfer of your learning to the One Who really understands its laws.... Your part is merely to apply what He has taught you to yourself, and He will do the rest (T-27.V.1:2-5; 10:1-2).

What makes all this possible of course is our having chosen the right teacher. Thus, the crucial point to which we constantly return: "Do I have a relationship with Jesus or do I not?" If not, it is because I have excluded him by excluding *myself,* and do not want to acknowledge my "sin." That is always the bottom line.

The next two paragraphs emphasize the lack of difference between our perceptions and our thoughts, being one and the same:

**(4) Today's four longer exercise periods, each to involve three to five**

**minutes of practice, begin with the repetition of the idea for today, followed by a minute or so of looking about you as you apply the idea to whatever you see:**

***My holiness blesses this chair.***
***My holiness blesses that window.***
***My holiness blesses this body.***

**Then close your eyes and apply the idea to any person who occurs to you, using his name and saying:**

***My holiness blesses you, [name].***

Note how Jesus has us begin with the "unimportant" – a chair, window, and the relatively neutral body – and then asks us to apply our blessing to a specific person. Thus he gently eases us into *A Course in Miracles'* central focus: forgiveness of our special relationships – those from whom we would seek to withhold our blessing.

Jesus' instructions continue, inviting us to practice with eyes open and eyes closed, as we see fit:

**(5) You may continue the practice period with your eyes closed; you may open your eyes again and apply the idea for today to your outer world if you so desire; you may alternate between applying the idea to what you see around you and to those who are in your thoughts; or you may use any combination of these two phases of application that you prefer. The practice period should conclude with a repetition of the idea with your eyes closed, and another, following immediately, with your eyes open.**

Even though this practice of eyes open and closed has been an important emphasis in Jesus' training, he always remains gentle in his approach, as seen in his use of words such as "you may," "if you so desire," and "that you prefer." Good teachers never coerce their students, and Jesus wants us to *want* to learn his lessons; otherwise our learning will be weak.

**(6:1-2) The shorter exercises consist of repeating the idea as often as you can. It is particularly helpful to apply it silently to anyone you meet, using his name as you do so.**

In other words, Jesus is asking us to be vigilant in watching our egos in action, especially in relationship to others. He fully expects us to make the wrong choices, as we shall see in the lessons that follow. A lesson like this, therefore, is the correction for the mistakes we shall inevitably make. Again, Jesus is *expecting* us to misperceive and have attack thoughts, and once aware we have done so, to ask him for help as we try to remember the lesson for the day.

**(6:3-4) It is essential to use the idea if anyone seems to cause an adverse reaction in you. Offer him the blessing of your holiness immediately, that you may learn to keep it in your own awareness.**

I think 99.9 percent of students who do lessons like this do so almost by rote. They think all they need do is say to someone with whom they are angry, "I bless you," and all is healed. That is *not* what Jesus is talking about; he is talking about recognizing that our perception of another is coming from our misperception of ourselves. Simply

saying words like “My holiness blesses you” is going to accomplish nothing. Actually, that is not entirely true; saying those words will accomplish a great deal: *It will push your ego thoughts down even further!* The idea is to bring the ego thought to the truth, the darkness to the light. When you do a lesson like this, therefore, you should do exactly what Jesus says, but realize also *what he is saying.* Pay attention to your need to keep this other person separate from you. Above all, be aware of the need to keep guilt secure in your mind. Only then can Jesus and these exercises help you to let it go.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 38**
**There is nothing my holiness cannot do.**

Jesus does not mean that your holiness will enable you to walk on water or heal people's physical symptoms. His focus, as we have already observed many times, is not on behavior, even though the language may sometimes suggest it is. The concern of *A Course in Miracles* is always on the thinking in your mind. The reason there is nothing your holiness cannot do is that everything you do, think, say, or feel will come directly from your right-minded decision to identify with the holiness of Christ. That means there will be no interference or distortion: with guilt and judgment gone, all that remains is the love that transcends all problems and concerns.

**(1:1-2) Your holiness reverses all the laws of the world. It is beyond every restriction of time, space, distance and limits of any kind.**

This is because your holiness resides in your right mind, accessed by choosing the holy instant in which you are joined with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. This means there is no separation, and so there can be no sin, guilt, or fear. If there is no *sin,* there is no *past;* if there is no *guilt,* there is no *present;* and if there is no *fear,* there is no *future.* In other words, there is no time in the holy instant. Moreover, if there is no thought of separation from God, there is no body. To cite a previously cited statement from the text: "At no single instant [i.e., the holy instant] does the body exist at all" (T-18.VII.3:1). Thus holiness is completely outside time and space. When you identify with your holiness you know the world of time and space is a dream, and you can literally watch your dream figure – the dream figure with the name you think you are – come and go, realizing at last that is *not* who you are. There is nothing your holiness cannot do because there is nothing you have to do: "I need do nothing," as the text says (T-18.VII).

**(1:3) Your holiness is totally unlimited in its power because it establishes you as a Son of God, at one with the Mind of his Creator.**

That is what joining with the Holy Spirit or Jesus effects. In that instant, once again, everything changes, and all your problems are solved. Lessons 79 and 80 tell us our problems are solved because there is only one problem: the belief we are separated. Therefore there is only one solution: accepting the Atonement, which denies the reality of guilt because it denies the reality of the separation. At that point the memory of our Identity as God's one Son dawns on our unclouded minds.

**(2:1-3) Through your holiness the power of God is made manifest. Through your holiness the power of God is made available. And there is nothing the power of God cannot do.**

Jesus is not talking about anything external, as I have already said a number of times. For two thousand years the miracle stories in the gospels have been regarded as testimony of the power of God: Jesus can heal the sick, raise the dead, turn water into wine, and resurrect in the flesh. This represents a total misunderstanding of what Jesus taught. It is interesting to observe students of *A Course in Miracles* who are trying to get away from their Christian upbringing making the same mistake of confusing *form* and *content, body* and *mind:* the confusion of levels that early in the text Jesus discusses as the cause of all sickness (T-2.IV.2).

Jesus is therefore not talking about what your body will do, because when you identify with the power of God and your holiness, you realize that the body is simply a figment in your imagination, a figure in your dream. We are all figures in a dream in which the body literally does nothing, and we can liken it to a puppet that is nothing more than a lifeless piece of wood. Thus do we live as puppets, in a make-believe world that has no more reality than that enjoyed by little children in a theater. This, too, is an idea to which we shall return again and again.

**(2:4-6) Your holiness, then, can remove all pain, can end all sorrow, and can solve all problems. It can do so in connection with yourself and with anyone else. It is equal in its power to help anyone because it is equal in its power to save anyone.**

The source of all our pain, sorrow, and problems is our decision to push Jesus away. If we invite him back there can be no distress. Remember that we are speaking only on the level of the mind, since that is the source of all pain. It is possible that perceived negative external circumstances, totally beyond our human control, will continue, as might physical symptoms. However, without guilt, they will no longer be experienced as problems or sources of pain or distress. In the manual for teachers, Jesus explains how a healed mind perceives:

> The body's eyes will continue to see differences. But the mind that has let itself be healed will no longer acknowledge them. There will be those who seem to be "sicker" than others, and the body's eyes will report their changed appearances as before. But the healed mind will put them all in one category; they are unreal. This is the gift of its Teacher; the understanding that only two categories are meaningful in sorting out the messages the mind receives from what appears to be the outside world. And of these two, but one is real. Just as reality is wholly real, apart from size and shape and time and place for differences cannot exist within it – so too are illusions without distinctions. The one answer to sickness of any kind is healing. The one answer to all illusions is truth (M-8.6).

It cannot be emphasized too often that *A Course in Miracles* is concerned only with the *cause* of the world the *mind* – and not the *effect* – the *world.* That is why Jesus makes this important statement in the text: "This is a course in cause and not effect" (T-21.VII.7: 8). Thus when we ask Jesus to help end our physical or emotional pain, or to solve an external problem, we are bringing his truth into our illusion. Sometimes the problem is resolved and sometimes it is not, but involving Jesus in our external problems only glorifies specialness, the exact opposite of what he is teaching us to correct.

This certainly does not mean that one should *not* ask him for this kind of help. However, to remain at that level of relationship with him is to ensure that we never grow beyond it. Indeed, the pamphlet *The Song of Prayer* was written specifically to help students of *A Course in Miracles* move beyond what is described there as the bottom rung of the ladder of prayer – asking for specifics – to the higher rungs that reflect our shift in focus from the world to the mind, a shift that helps us to see that there is, again, only *one* problem and therefore only *one* solution. Such insight of course is what the very first principle of miracles teaches us:

**Lesson 38**

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same (T-1.I.1:1-3).

To make this important point one more time: Our holiness is "equal in its power to help anyone" because there is one problem. There is also only one Son. If my mind is healed because I have chosen the holiness of Christ as my identity instead of the ego's sinfulness, in that instant I realize I am that one Son, and everyone is part of that Sonship with me. Therefore, in my experience all pain is gone. This has nothing to do with other people's choices still to remain asleep, for in the holy instant I am beyond their dream, as was Jesus.

**(3:1-3) If you are holy, so is everything God created. You are holy because all things He created are holy. And all things He created are holy because you are.**

If I am holy, so is everything God created, because what God created is One. When you read lovely and inspiring sentences like these, you have to penetrate beyond the words to the meaning, beyond the *form* to the *content.* If you truly believe what Jesus is saying, then throughout your day you must attempt to generalize his meaning to everything, *without exception.* In doing so you need realize how you do *not* believe the Son of God is holy because you do not believe the Son of God is one. You need realize that you choose to believe some people are holy and some are not. Remember, your judgment of anyone directly reflects your judgment of yourself. Vigilance, once again, means paying careful attention to what you perceive outside you, realizing this is a mirror of what you have made real inside.

**(3:4-5) In today's exercises, we will apply the power of your holiness to all problems, difficulties or suffering in any form that you happen to think of, in yourself or in someone else. We will make no distinctions because there are no distinctions.**

We can see once again why Jesus begins *A Course in Miracles* with "There is no order of difficulty in miracles" (T-1.I.1:1). That is his alpha and omega. The ego's version is that there *is* a hierarchy of illusions (T-23.II.2:3), which is why in these lessons Jesus repeatedly instructs us not to make any distinctions in what we perceive or think. Either everything is of the ego or the Holy Spirit, and there is no in between. As Jesus said a moment ago, either you are sinless or sinful. It is one or the other, the right-minded use of that ego principle.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 instruct us in the day's exercise, focusing on the role of choosing our right-minded thought of holiness in solving *all* our problems. It is important to note that Jesus asks us to make no distinction between perceived problems in ourselves or in others:

**(4) In the four longer practice periods, each preferably to last a full five minutes, repeat the idea for today, close your eyes, and then search your mind for any sense of loss or unhappiness of any kind as you see it. Try to make as little distinction as possible between a situation that is difficult for you, and one that is difficult for someone else. Identify the situation specifically, and also the name of the person concerned. Use this form in applying the idea for today:**

***In the situation involving ____ in which I see myself there is nothing that my***

***holiness cannot do.***

***In the situation involving ____ in which _____ sees himself, there is nothing my holiness cannot do.***

Since their source remains the same – the unholiness (guilt) in our minds – it matters not where the projection is perceived. There *is* no hierarchy of illusions – the illusory *idea* of separation has never left its illusory *source* in the mind. That is why distinctions among illusions – e.g., separate bodies – are ultimately irrelevant. This is the *content* behind the *form* of Jesus' instruction to us "to make as little distinction as possible between a situation that is difficult for you, and one that is difficult for someone else."

**(5) From time to time you may want to vary this procedure, and add some relevant thoughts of your own. You might like, for example, to include thoughts such as:**

***There is nothing my holiness cannot do because the power of God lies in it.***

**Introduce whatever variations appeal to you, but keep the exercises focused on the theme, "There is nothing my holiness cannot do." The purpose of today's exercises is to begin to instill in you a sense that you have dominion over all things because of what you are.**

Jesus is asking us to continue our practice of generalizing his lesson to as many thoughts and situations as possible. The final sentence is a reference to the Adam and Eve story in Genesis, where God gives Adam dominion over all things (Genesis, 1:28), symbolized in the myth by Adam giving everything a name. Naming something is a symbol of having power over it, a thought we shall return to in Lesson 184. Jesus uses the same idea here, although obviously he is not speaking of power as the world regards it, but as the power of God's Love – His total Oneness. I thus have dominion over all things because all things are me. Remember, everything I perceive outside is not out there at all, but is a projection or extension of what I have first made real in my mind. I have dominion over all things because of what I am – the holiness of Christ. Therefore, everything I perceive as separate from me must also be holy; not because its form is inherently holy, but because it is a projection of the mind that contains holiness. This important concept is expressed in the following prayer of Jesus from the text, said on our behalf:

> I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son. Your Holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them. And they are joined because what is in one is in them all. How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part (T-28.IV.9).

If I am tempted not to see you as holy, but as an entity separate from me – having something I want, or having power over me – this misperception represents a *prior* choice to keep my holiness separate from *me.* I would have made this choice out of fear that in my holiness all individuality and specialness disappear. In other words, power is in our minds because there is nothing outside them. That power rests in our decision

maker's ability to choose the Love of God or attack it. There *is* no other power in the world.

The lesson concludes with Jesus again asking us to apply the day's thought to any *specific* form of upset:

**(6) In the frequent shorter applications, apply the idea in its original form unless a specific problem concerning you or someone else arises, or comes to mind. In that event, use the more specific form in applying the idea to it.**

As we have remarked, and will continue to remark, these exercises have no value if we do not learn to generalize their principles to *all* situations in which we find ourselves – minor or major, pleasurable or painful. We must learn that all problems are the same since they share the common source of separation or unholiness. When brought to the Atonement—the thought of holiness in our minds —they cannot but disappear.

*Miracles* is to forgive yourself for *not* believing everything that is here. Remember, the idea is to bring your unloving thoughts to his love so he may reinterpret them for us. That is why our recognition and acceptance of their presence – in our minds – is so essential to our healing and salvation.

**(8) Slowly, without conscious selection and without undue emphasis on any one in particular, search your mind for every thought that stands between you and your salvation. Apply the idea for today to each of them in this way:**
***My unloving thoughts about ___ are keeping me in hell. My holiness is my salvation.***

That is what Jesus means in the text when he says, to quote this important statement again:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it (T-16.IV.6:1).

This aspect of our forgiveness process is so essential it could almost be repeated for each lesson. We need to be continually vigilant for our unloving thoughts, in order to bring them to the Presence of Love in our minds, which gently shines them away. Our task, again, is merely to seek and find; removal belongs to the Holy Spirit.

The remainder of the lesson contains further guidance and instructions for the day's practice. Note especially these gentle reminders that we are, after all, just beginners on the journey:

**(9) You may find these practice periods easier if you intersperse them with several short periods during which you merely repeat today's idea to yourself slowly a few times. You may also find it helpful to include a few short intervals in which you just relax and do not seem to be thinking of anything. Sustained concentration is very difficult at first. It will become much easier as your mind becomes more disciplined and less distractible.**

"Sustained concentration

circumstances. By instructing us *not* to change the idea, he is also gently introducing us to the important theme of form and *content;* we may vary the form in which we express forgiveness or love, as long as the *content* remains the same.

The final paragraph encourages us to become increasingly mindful throughout the day, as well as to apply the day's idea to temptations to listen to the ego's doctrine of guilt:

**(11) In the shorter applications, which should be made some three or four times an hour and more if possible, you may ask yourself this question** [If guilt is hell, what is its opposite?], **repeat today's idea, and preferably both. If temptations arise, a particularly helpful form of the idea is:**

***My holiness is my salvation from this.***

To the extent we can respond quickly to our ego's temptations to feel guilt and anger, to that extent we shall progress to the goal of knowing that our holiness is our salvation, and that we *are* holy.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 40**
**I am blessed as a Son of God.**

**(1:1) Today we will begin to assert some of the happy things to which you are entitled, being what you are.**

In these early lessons, as we have previously discussed, Jesus makes it clear that our minds are split, part of which worships guilt and attack thoughts, while the other contains the memory of Who we truly are. Beginning with this lesson and continuing for the next ten, Jesus gives our egos a respite as he speaks almost exclusively about the other side – "the happy things to which you are entitled" – our right minds.

**(1:2-6) No long practice periods are required today, but very frequent short ones are necessary. Once every ten minutes would be highly desirable, and you are urged to attempt this schedule and to adhere to it whenever possible. If you forget, try again. If there are long interruptions, try again. Whenever you remember, try again.**

The exercises for today thus represent a departure from the previous ones because of the absence of a long exercise period. In addition, Jesus continues his strong yet gentle urgings that we keep trying to remember – as often as possible each hour – without making our forgetting into a sin. Quite obviously he knows we will.

The next paragraph is extremely important because it helps us recognize that these exercise must be applied *all* the time, whether we are meditating in a quiet room, or being about our busyness. *We do not have to close our eyes in order to remember God and His Son:*

**(2) You need not close your eyes for the exercise periods, although you will probably find it more helpful if you do. However, you may be in a number of situations during the day when closing your eyes would not be feasible. Do not miss a practice period because of this. You can practice quite well under any circumstances, if you really want to.**

Thus, no matter where you are during the day – driving your car, eating with a friend, quietly alone, busy at work – you can remember today's lesson.

**(3) Today's exercises take little time and no effort. Repeat the idea for today, and then add several of the attributes you associate with being a Son of God, applying them to yourself. One practice period might, for example, consist of the following:**
***I am blessed as a Son of God.***
***I am happy, peaceful, loving and contented.***
**Another might take this form:**
***I am blessed as a Son of God.***
***I am calm, quiet, assured and confident.***
**If only a brief period is available, merely telling yourself that you are blessed as a Son of God will do.**

Jesus is asking us to take the general statement of our Identity and make it more specific, thereby making it more personal to us. The lesson's final line reiterates how we

do not need a quiet place or set time to remember.

Underlying Jesus' teaching here is that we need time and place – i.e., rituals – as long as we identify with our bodies. But since Jesus' ultimate teaching is that we are minds, weaning us of our dependency on externals is an important step toward our eventual identification with the mind: the source of our blessedness, as well as the birthplace of our resistance to accepting Who we truly are.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 41**

**God goes with me wherever I go.**

This is obviously a happy thought, and just as obviously Jesus is not talking about a literal physical God Who walks with us, reminiscent of the song in the movie version of The Student Prince, "I walk with God." Jesus is telling us here that the memory of God is in our minds – the home of the Holy Spirit – and thus is always with us. In that sense, God is indeed with us wherever we go. This will become more evident as we go through the lesson.

**(1) Today's idea will eventually overcome completely the sense of loneliness and abandonment all the separated ones experience. Depression is an inevitable consequence of separation. So are anxiety, worry, a deep sense of helplessness, misery, suffering and intense fear of loss.**

What reappears here is the important theme of cause and effect. Although the words are not specifically used, Jesus' teaching can nonetheless be seen as a reflection of that theme. Our problems are all the same and come from one cause: believing we are separated from God. The effects of this mistake are worry, depression, misery, suffering, and fear of loss. We have discussed before how the world exists to provide causes of our distress, which merely disguise the true cause. Our egos are incredibly skillful in concealing the truth, leading us to be certain we know the sources of our unhappiness – everything but the mind's decision for guilt.

Thus, if I know that "God goes with me wherever I go" because He is in my mind, that means I have not abandoned Him and He has not abandoned me. Further, it means I have not killed Him, nor am separated from Him. If I accept this truth of the Atonement, I cannot be depressed, lonely, anxious, or fearful, as these come from guilt, which, without the belief in separation, cannot exist. The way I will know about my belief in separation is to become aware of my feelings of anxiety, worry, and unhappiness. That is why it is essential not to cover over negative experiences. If we do, there is literally no hope, which lies in first recognizing our discomfort and despair, and then realizing these are simply the effects of the thought that God does not go wherever we go because we killed him off. That sinful thought represents a decision that can now happily be changed.

You need to learn you were wrong, and that you now want to be a happy learner who is happy to be wrong, not happy because you have proven yourself to be right (T-29.VII.1:9). This is an idea that cannot be cited often enough. If you have an investment in being right, you will never be happy. Perhaps you are right today, but the "rightness" (or innocence) that you stole from someone else will be stolen back by the one from whom you took it in anger. The only way you can be truly right is to know that God is with you wherever you go, which means that everything the ego has taught you is a lie. You did not separate from God because you could not.

**(2:1-2) The separated ones have invented many "cures" for what they believe to be the "ills of the world." But the one thing they do not do is to question the reality of the problem.**

"Ills of the world" is in quotes because there are no "ills of the world." Since there is no world, how could it have ills? There is only an ill thought. "Cures" is in quotes as well because you cannot cure a problem that does not exist. The true problem is

**appearances and approach reality.**

Jesus wants us first to look carefully at what appears to us as real: the world, replete with people hearing and seeing our bodies, and whose bodies we hear and see. The next step, then, following Jesus' gentle guidance, is recognizing the illusory nature of these appearances and moving beyond them to the thoughts of the ego; and then, finally, beyond the ego to the Holy Spirit's thought of the Atonement.

**(8:1-4) It is quite possible to reach God. In fact it is very easy, because it is the most natural thing in the world. You might even say it is the only natural thing in the world. The way will open, if you believe that it is possible.**

Jesus is not saying you have to believe this totally, you just have to believe that perhaps, just maybe, it is possible he is right and you are wrong. If the only natural thing in this world is to reach God, and everything in this world is a movement against Him, then nothing in this world is natural, including yourself, your body, personality, and individual existence. It is your belief that will lead you Home, once you place its power under the Atonement principle of the Holy Spirit, correcting the mistaken belief in the separation.

Jesus next underscores for us the importance of this lesson, trying to buttress our confidence in the workbook's process of retraining our minds. This is one among the many "pep talks" he gives us along the way:

**(8:5-9:3) This exercise can bring very startling results even the first time it is attempted, and sooner or later it is always successful. We will go into more detail about this kind of practice as we go along. But it will never fail completely, and instant success is possible.**

**Throughout the day use today's idea often, repeating it very slowly, preferably with eyes closed. Think of what you are saying; what the words mean. Concentrate on the holiness that they imply about you; on the unfailing companionship that is yours; on the complete protection that surrounds you.**

These last lines point to the truth that lies just be

of God away from you.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 42**
**God is my strength. Vision is His gift.**

**(1:1-2) The idea for today combines two very powerful thoughts, both of major importance. It also sets forth a cause and effect relationship that explains why you cannot fail in your efforts to achieve the goal of the course.**

The "cause and effect relationship" is that if I know God "walks with me" and He is my strength, I shall automatically perceive through the eyes of His Love and Holiness. Christ's vision comes from the thought I am holy and part of God. When I look out, which, as we have learned, has nothing to do with our physical eyes, all I shall see are figures in a dream either expressing love and trying to return home, or still too afraid of love and attempting to attack it. In other words, the *cause* is my remembering Who I am, and the *effect* is the vision that sees all people as part of the one Sonship, regardless of their disparate forms.

**(1:3-5) You will see because it is the Will of God. It is His strength, not your own, that gives you power. And it is His gift, rather than your own, that offers vision to you.**

Jesus is urging us to trust him that we cannot fail. Illusions of ego strength can have no power over the real Source of strength within us. Jesus now sets out the wonderful consequences of this happy fact:

**(2:1-2) God is indeed your strength, and what He gives is truly given. This means that you can receive it any time and anywhere, wherever you are, and in whatever circumstances you find yourself.**

Since the mind, the home of God's strength, is beyond time (and space), it is *always* available to us. It simply awaits our acceptance. That is why Jesus tells us in the text, already cited, that we need do nothing (T-18.VII). We need do nothing *except* to accept what is already there. Thus our need is to learn to undo what the ego has taught us, releasing God's strength to once again be our own. Since this is a process occurring in our *minds,* which are totally under our control, this joyful acceptance can occur anywhere, any time, regardless of external circumstances.

The discussion next moves more specifically to the topic of time, which we shall examine much more carefully later on. For now I shall just make some brief comments:

**(2:3-6) Your passage through time and space is not at random. You cannot but be in the right place at the right time. Such is the strength of God. Such are His gifts.**

Jesus is saying that nothing is at random because it is all our dream. The ego chooses our scripts as a way to keep us further and further away from the truth. When we look at these scripts with Jesus, they then become classrooms. But nothing is at random. I – the mind that my current physical identity is but a fragment of – have chosen my life and what happens in it as a way of reinforcing my individuality and specialness. If I look at any aspect of this life with Jesus and ask his help, I see it as the means of learning forgiveness so I may return to an awareness of my true Identity. Thus I am "in the right place at the right time," for lessons of forgiveness can *always* be learned,

regardless of the outer circumstance.

For the two longer practice periods today, Jesus encourages us to focus on having *quiet* time. Looking at the instructions for these lessons as a whole, we can see how Jesus has emphasized different aspects of our practice at different times; sometimes focusing on the *form* (the external), other times on the *content* (the internal). The point here, of course, is to help us at our own level of learning, so that we may come to understand that *cause* and *effect, content* and *form, inner* and *outer,* are never separated:

**(3) We will have two three-to-five-minute practice periods today, one as soon as possible after you wake, and another as close as possible to the time you go to sleep. It is better, however, to wait until you can sit quietly by yourself, at a time when you feel ready, than it is to be concerned with the time as such.**

Jesus' weaning us from reliance on the *form* of our practicing is part of his training us not to be slaves to ritual. We previously cited the discussion in the manual for teachers in this regard, and here is the relevant passage:

> There are some general rules which do apply, although each one must use them as best he can in his own way. Routines as such are dangerous, because they easily become gods in their own right, threatening the very goals for which they were set up.... This course is always practical.... Duration is not the major concern. One can easily sit still an hour with closed eyes and accomplish nothing. One can as easily give God only an instant, and in that instant join with Him completely (M-16.2:4-5; 4:1,4-6).

We shall return to this important theme of the *quality* of our time spent with the Holy Spirit, rather than its *quantity.*

The fourth paragraph discusses our personal thoughts "in relation to the idea for the day."

**(4) Begin these practice periods by repeating the idea for today slowly, with your eyes open, looking about you. Then close your eyes and repeat the idea again, even slower than before. After this, try to think of nothing except thoughts that occur to you in relation to the idea for the day. You might think, for example:**

***Vision must be possible. God gives truly,***
**or:**
***God's gifts to me must be mine, because He gave them to me.***

Once again we can observe the emphasis Jesus places on bringing *our* thoughts to *his,* and thereby practice bringing them into harmony with his vision of forgiveness and peace.

In the next paragraph Jesus plays down the active mind-searching exercises of before, asking us to be quiet, letting his thoughts come to us, rather than our coming to them:

**(5) Any thought that is clearly related to the idea for today is suitable. You may, in fact, be astonished at the amount of course-related understanding some of your thoughts contain. Let them come without censoring unless you find your**

**mind is merely wandering, and you have let obviously irrelevant thoughts intrude. You may also reach a point where no thoughts at all seem to come to mind. If such interferences occur, open your eyes and repeat the thought once more while looking slowly about; close your eyes, repeat the idea once more, and then continue to look for related thoughts in your mind.**

However, if nothing "comes," our gentle teacher instructs us in the next paragraph to become more active again and look for the thoughts. Yet, this looking is *not* the focus here, but rather the letting go of control, allowing his guidance to take over, reminiscent of this statement from the text:

> My control can take over everything that does not matter, while my guidance can direct everything that does, if you so choose.... This [your behavior] is controlled by me automatically as soon as you place what you think under my guidance (T-2.VI.1:3; 2:9).

**(6:1) Remember, however, that active searching for relevant thoughts is not appropriate for today's exercises.**

Jesus is thus saying you do not have to search for God. Once you have removed your negative thoughts, the work of earlier lessons, the resultant blank slate allows the thoughts of love to appear to you. Therefore:

**(6:2-3) Try merely to step back and let the thoughts come. If you find this difficult, it is better to spend the practice period alternating between slow repetitions of the idea with eyes open, then with eyes closed, than it is to strain to find suitable thoughts.**

I might add that in reality the thoughts do not come to us; *we come to them.* It was our mind's decision maker that chose to leave the thought of the Atonement for the thought of separation, and so it is this decision maker that now must make the choice to return to that thought, although our experience may well be that the Atonement and its reflected thoughts come to us. That experience is reflected in this lesson, as is Jesus' emphasis on the gentle and non-coercive nature of this learning.

**(7) There is no limit on the number of short practice periods that would be beneficial today. The idea for the day is a beginning step in bringing thoughts together, and teaching you that you are studying a unified thought system in which nothing is lacking that is needed, and nothing is included that is contradictory or irrelevant.**

This is a point that Jesus makes in many other places as well. Everything you ever need is in this course; there is no need to seek elsewhere. Once you decide *A Course in Miracles* is your spiritual path, to do anything else will simply confuse you. As Jesus told Helen specifically, in words meant for *all* his students:

> You are not making use of the course if you insist on using means which have served others well, neglecting what was made for *you* (T-18.VII.6:5).

*A Course in Miracles* contains everything that will help you undo your ego, and therefore everything that will help remind you of who you are. Insisting on "using means which have served others well" will simply defend against accepting the Course's message of forgiveness as your own.

**(8) The more often you repeat the idea during the day, the more often you will be reminding yourself that the goal of the course is important to you, and that you have not forgotten it.**

You need to realize there is a part of you, despite your fear, that does want to learn what this course is teaching, and that its goal is truly important to you. Despite all attempts to cover it with clouds of guilt, there remains the right-minded self that remembers your goal: above all you want to return home. *A Course in Miracles,* with Jesus as your teacher, will be the means to help you ultimately reach that goal.

**Lesson 43**

**(1) Perception is not an attribute of God. His is the realm of knowledge. Yet He has created the Holy Spirit as the Mediator between perception and knowledge. Without this link with God, perception would have replaced knowledge forever in your mind. With this link with God, perception will become so changed and purified that it will lead to knowledge. That is its function as the Holy Spirit sees it. Therefore, that is its function in truth.**

Having been made as an attack on God (W-pII.3.2:1-5), perception cements our belief that separation and individuality are real. However, once arising in apparent opposition to knowledge, it can then be used to serve a different purpose. The section called "The Special Function" provides a clear description of this shift in function or purpose: What we made to harm, the Holy Spirit uses to heal (T-25.VI.4). Specialness is an aspect of perception, and although it was made to harm and keep us separated from each other, when brought to the Holy Spirit and looked at differently, it becomes an expression of forgiveness. Everything the ego has thought, done, and used to separate itself from God, and each of us from each other, can be turned around to become a vehicle for our forgiveness – if we ask Jesus' help. This shift in purpose is the cornerstone of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit's redirected purpose for our being in this world.

In this first paragraph we find a clear example of what I sometimes refer to as the two levels on which *A Course in Miracles* is written. Level One reflects the Course's metaphysical principle that *only God is true and real, and everything else is unreal, an illusion.* Or as the very opening of the text states:

> Nothing real can threatened.
> Nothing unreal exists (T-in.2:2-3; bold italics omitted).

It is that distinction between what is true and untrue that comprises this highly important aspect of *A Course in Miracles.* The first two sentences of this paragraph express Level One: the world of perception – which is not just the world we see with our eyes, but the very fact that we *think* we see a world at all – is an illusion. The split mind, which includes our thoughts of separation, the world which expresses those thoughts, as well as the Holy Spirit's correction, is totally unreal. Since this separated mind cannot be part of totality, wholeness, and perfect Oneness – the very nature of God – it cannot be true in any way. Stated differently, if the contents of the split mind are not part of God, they must b

from which they are "twice removed" (M-21.1:9-10). The Holy Spirit, representing our right-minded thinking, is the expression of the Atonement principle that is the mediator or bridge between the *unreal* world we made and the *real* world of Heaven. The Holy Spirit's thoughts are reflected in any expression of forgiveness, and these are reflections of the real thought of love that is in our minds.

One final comment, it is the integration of these two levels – the uncompromising non-dualistic view of reality, along with the specific guidelines for living within the illusory world under the principle of forgiveness – that makes *A Course in Miracles* so unique as a spirituality, and so perfect for our age.

**(2:1-2) In God you cannot see. Perception has no function in God, and does not exist.**

Many times students will try to bend or twist statements in *A Course in Miracles* so that it seems to be saying that God *did* create the world and it is holy, but did not create the world that we *misperceive.* That is *not* what Jesus is teaching, and sentences like this make it very clear. "In God you cannot see" because seeing presupposes duality: a perceiver and a perceived. The realm of perception, therefore, is outside God. This is reflected in statements like this: "Your life is not a part of anything you see" (W-pI.151.12:1). Again, the very fact we think we can *see* – i.e., something outside us – is proof the *seeing* self cannot be real. Duality and non-duality, perception and knowledge, are mutually exclusive states. True life is only of the spirit, which is beyond the subject-object or perceiver-perceived duality. That is why Jesus makes this Level One statement in the text:

> There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion (T-23.II.19:1-3).

**(2:3) Yet in salvation, which is the undoing of what never was, perception has a mighty purpose.**

We have in this one sentence expressions of both Level One and Level Two: The "undoing of what never was" is a Level One statement: the separation never occurred. Yet as long as we believe we are here in this dream world, the Holy Spirit, the expression of God's Love within the dream, has a purpose and function. This function, which we know to be forgiveness, constitutes the Level Two aspect of *A Course in Miracles.*

**(2:4-6) Made by the Son of God for an unholy purpose, it must become the means for the restoration of his holiness to his awareness. Perception has no meaning. Yet does the Holy Spirit give it a meaning very close to God's.**

This echoes the early lessons in which Jesus teaches that nothing in the world has meaning because we have given everything all the meaning it has; the meaning of proving we are right and Jesus is wrong: the separation is real. Once we ask Jesus for help, however, perception does have a meaning; not in reality, but a meaning based upon reality. In other words, the right-minded meaning of perception is that it is a reflection of the truth; not the truth, but a reflection of the truth that we are one in God, and the separation a meaningless dream. Truth's reflection within the dream is that *we*

*are one in sharing a common purpose and need.* This is because we share the same ego.

It is helpful to remember that the Sonship is one: in Heaven as Christ (the One Mind), and on earth as an ego (the split mind). Therefore, each seemingly separated fragment of the Sonship carries within it the totality of the ego's wrong-minded thought system of separation and judgment, *and* the totality of the Holy Spirit's right-minded thought system of unity and forgiveness. Thus we all share the insanity of the guilt-laden shadowy fragment of separation as well as the sanity of forgiveness, the light-filled reflection of Heaven's Oneness. Clearly, therefore, it could not be the ego that provides the meaning of our true perception. That is why it is essential to distinguish between these two voices within our split minds, one of the principal goals of the workbook.

**(2:7) Healed perception becomes the means by which the Son of God forgives his brother, and thus forgives himself.**

This is an extremely important teaching  not elaborated on here – a key theme in *A Course in Miracles.* We read, for example:

> To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember (T-12.11.2:9-10).

Future lessons will express this theme as well.

Forgiving our brother, thus forgiving ourselves, is the reflection of the Atonement principle that says the separation never happened. The oneness of God's Son has never been compromised, thus my forgiveness of you recognizes we share the same purpose. What we thought happened never happened at all, and we remain as God created us: one Son, united within himself and with his Source.

**(3:1-2) You cannot see apart from God because you cannot be apart from God. Whatever you do you do in Him, because whatever you think, you think with His Mind.**

Jesus is speaking only of right-minded seeing, doing, and thinking, because the ego's seeing, doing, and thinking are an attack on God, designed to keep us separate from Him. Therefore, in our right minds we cannot see apart from God. If we are going to see our brothers as sinless, it can be done only when we call upon Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help, a call that says: "I want to be proven wrong. If I am wrong, God is right." In truth He does not see, for there is no seeing in Heaven, but God's reality becomes the basis for vision – truth's reflection in the dream.

**(3:3) If vision is real, and it is real to the extent to which it shares the Holy Spirit's purpose, then you cannot see apart from God.**

Once again, Jesus clearly implies that vision is not real, except in the sense that it reflects the oneness of reality. This reflection is the Holy Spirit's purpose, which is to forgive. Once that purpose is fulfilled vision is unnecessary, and its inherently illusory nature causes it to disappear. This use of *real* in terms of *vision* is similar to Jesus' explanation of the *real world:*

> This is the journey's end. We have referred to it as the real world. And yet there is a contradiction here, in that the words imply a limited reality, a partial truth, a segment of the universe made true. This is because knowledge makes no attack upon perception (T-26.111.3:1-4).

The real world is *real* insofar as its state of mind *reflects* the reality of Heaven: the unity of the Son. However, still being a correction of an illusion – albeit the *final* one – it remains illusory as well.

The instructions that follow in paragraphs 4-6 reflect the earlier emphasis on the implicit *sameness* of what we see and our thoughts.

**(4) Three five-minute practice periods are required today, one as early and one as late as possible in the day. The third may be undertaken at the most convenient and suitable time that circumstances and readiness permit. At the beginning of these practice periods, repeat the idea for today to yourself with eyes open. Then glance around you for a short time, applying the idea specifically to what you see. Four or five subjects for this phase of the practice period are sufficient. You might say, for example:**

***God is my Source. I cannot see this desk apart from Him.***
***God is my Source. I cannot see that picture apart from Him.***

We again see Jesus asking us to apply the idea for the day to the specifics of our lives, even the mundane ones. That is how we learn there is no hierarchy of illusions – all problems are the same – and therefore no order of difficulty in miracles – all solutions are the same. As a later lesson teaches: "One problem, one solution" (W-pI.80.1:5).

**(5) Although this part of the exercise period should be relatively short, be sure that you select the subjects for this phase of practice indiscriminately, without self-directed inclusion or exclusion. For the second and longer phase, close your eyes, repeat today's idea again, and then let whatever relevant thoughts occur to you add to the idea in your own personal way. Thoughts such as:**

***I see through the eyes of forgiveness.***
***I see the world as blessed.***
***The world can show me myself***
***I see my own thoughts, which are like God's.***

**Any thought related more or less directly to today's idea is suitable. The thoughts need not bear any obvious relationship to the idea, but they should not be in opposition to it.**

Exercises like these remind us that we do indeed have a right mind, and therefore a right-minded way of looking. It is important that we recognize this in ourselves, for it affords us the necessary means of comparison when our thoughts turn to the ego's judgment. Comparing the two – bringing judgment to vision – allows us to make the correct choice and know we are truly blessed as God's Son.

**(6) If you find your mind wandering; if you begin to be aware of thoughts which are clearly out of accord with today's idea, or if you seem to be unable to**

**think of anything, open your eyes, repeat the first phase of the exercise period, and then attempt the second phase again. Do not allow any protracted period to occur in which you become preoccupied with irrelevant thoughts. Return to the first phase of the exercises as often as necessary to prevent this.**

In a sentence we shall revisit often, Jesus says:

> You are much too tolerant of mind wandering, and are passively condoning your mind's miscreations [i.e., your projections] (T-2.VI.4:6).

As in the text, Jesus is asking us in this lesson to become increasingly vigilant for our ego thoughts. They do not come unbidden, but are defenses we choose to prevent our achieving the goal of these exercises. The last thing our egos want is that we learn to question its thought system of separation, specialness, and judgment.

**(7) In applying today's idea in the shorter practice periods, the form may vary according to the circumstances and situations in which you find yourself during the day. When you are with someone else, for example, try to remember to tell him silently:**

***God is my Source. I cannot see you apart from Him.***

**This form is equally applicable to strangers as it is to those you think are closer to you. In fact, try not to make distinctions of this kind at all.**

This goes back to a point I made earlier about these lessons: Jesus is trying to help us generalize his teachings to *all* situations. It is not helpful if we practice this *here,* but not *there.* To do so would be to nullify everything we are learning. The emphasis on not making distinctions between strangers and those perceived to be closer to us goes to the heart of the ego's defense of *special relationships.* As he does throughout the text, Jesus is calling for the end of our specialness. *All* people are part of the Sonship of God, *without exception,* as this statement from the text explains:

> God is not partial. All His children have His total Love, and all His gifts are freely given to everyone alike. The specialness of God's Sons does not stem from exclusion but from inclusion. All my brothers are special (T-1.V.3:2-3,5-6).

On the level of *form* we obviously cannot enjoy the same interaction with everyone, but we nonetheless need not *exclude* anyone from the love we are learning to choose as our reality. Thus we reverse the ego's emphasis on *form* rather than *content.*

**(8) Today's idea should also be applied throughout the day to various situations and events that may occur, particularly to those which seem to distress you in any way. For this purpose, apply the idea in this form:**

***God is my Source. I cannot see this apart from Him.***

Jesus is reminding us again of the importance of being vigilant whenever a distressing thought crosses our minds, whether severe or mild, regardless of what we believe to be its source. When it does, we should immediately go to the Holy Spirit for help and say: "Please help me look at this differently because I am not at peace." At the end of Chapter 5 in the text, Jesus asks us to make the following series of statements

when we are not at peace. They make clear that if we are not peaceful, it is our responsibility and no one else's:

> I must have decided wrongly, because I am not at peace
> I made the decision myself, but I can also decide otherwise.
> I want to decide otherwise, because I want to be at peace.
> I do not feel guilty, because the Holy Spirit will undo all the consequences of my wrong decision if I will let Him.
> I choose to let Him, by allowing Him to decide for God for me (T-5.VII.6:7-11; italics omitted).

Thus is the defense of projection undone, and responsibility returned to the decision-making part of our minds.

Jesus concludes the lesson by saying:

**(9) If no particular subject presents itself to your awareness at the time, merely repeat the idea in its original form. Try today not to allow any long periods of time to slip by without remembering today's idea, and thus remembering your function.**

Jesus' purpose is obviously not to make us feel guilty, but rather to remind us we are doing the workbook because we want to learn what *A Course in Miracles* is teaching. Thus we have to be vigilant for our egos in practicing these lessons. We have already seen, and shall see again, that Jesus wants us to become aware of our *resistance* to practicing such vigilance. Only then can we choose against our fear.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 44**

**God is the light in which I see.**

Jesus continues here his series of Level One statements: only God is true; only God is light. Everything else is an expression of the ego's darkness.

**(1) Today we are continuing the idea for yesterday, adding another dimension to it. You cannot see in darkness, and you cannot make light. You can make darkness and then think you see in it, but light reflects life, and is therefore an aspect of creation. Creation and darkness cannot coexist, but light and life must go together, being but different aspects of creation.**

We are so sure we are correct in what we perceive, think, and feel, which is what Jesus means by saying: "You can make darkness and then think you see in it." We are so sure we are right, but that is only because we made up the world of opposites – light and darkness – and then forgot where it came from: the nothingness of our illusory thoughts. But because we see the world, we believe it is real, and then try to get as many people as we can to confirm our perceptions and experiences, not realizing we are merely asking the blind to teach the blind.

The "light" of which Jesus speaks is not perceptual, to be clarified in the next paragraph, but is another symbol to express a characteristic of Heaven. Darkness represents the ego and its thought system of guilt, hate, and specialness; while light represents the Holy Spirit's thought system, which affirms that darkness has no effect upon reality.

**(2:1) In order to see, you must recognize that light is within, not without.**

When Jesus says "God is the light in which I see" he is not talking about what we see with the naked eye. Vision comes from right-minded thought, and thus we do not see light outside us. Recall Lesson 15, which I have referred to several times, where Jesus is not talking about literally seeing edges of light around objects. If you do have such an experience, realize it is nothing but a reflection of a thought of forgiveness in your mind. These lessons make it very clear that light is not external. Remember, there *is* nothing external. As we shall read in a later lesson: "There is no world! This is the central thought the course attempts to teach" (W-pI.132.6:2-3).

**(2:2) You do not see outside yourself, nor is the equipment for seeing outside you.**

The "you" represents our decision maker, which is shown on the left-hand side of the chart (see p. 135). When Jesus says "nor is the equipment for seeing outside you," he is talking about the body and our sensory organs. The real seeing – vision – has nothing to do with the body and is not outside us. Vision is the result of our decision maker joining with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. In other words, Jesus is speaking about the *mind,* not the *body.*

**(2:3-4) An essential part of this equipment is the light that makes seeing possible. It is with you always, making vision possible in every circumstance.**

We have already discussed how in the workbook Jesus sometimes uses *God*

when he means the *Holy Spirit,* and uses them virtually interchangeably, as we saw he also does with *real thoughts* and *Thoughts in the Christ Mind.* Strictly speaking it is the Holy Spirit, not God, Who makes vision possible, for the Holy Spirit is a Thought of God's light we brought with us into the dream.

**(3) Today we are going to attempt to reach that light. For this purpose, we will use a form of exercise which has been suggested before, and which we will utilize increasingly. It is a particularly difficult form for the undisciplined mind, and represents a major goal of mind training. It requires precisely what the untrained mind lacks. Yet this training must be accomplished if you are to see.**

Here, as well as other places in the workbook, Jesus departs from the main theme of the lesson and talks instead about our practice. It is certainly difficult to be thinking about the lesson or God throughout the day. By clear implication, Jesus is saying that we, his students, are not disciplined, and he is letting us know ahead of time that he fully expects us *not* to do the lessons as he has given them. Thus we should not feel guilty when we forget, nor does Jesus want us to deny that we forget, or deny our motivation for forgetting (which we will discuss in a moment). In fact, he frequently reminds us of the power of our minds. For example, he gently chides Helen, and indeed all of us, near the end of the text for complaining this course is too difficult to learn. After all, he says, *look what you have learned:*

> What you have taught yourself is such a giant learning feat it is indeed incredible. But you accomplished it because you wanted to, and did not pause in diligence to judge it hard to learn or too complex to grasp.
>
> No one who understands what you have learned, how carefully you learned it, and the pains to which you went to practice and repeat the lessons endlessly, in every form you could conceive of them, could ever doubt the power of your learning skill. There is no greater power in the world. The world was made by it, and even now depends on nothing else. The lessons you have taught yourself have been so overlearned and fixed they rise like heavy curtains to obscure the simple and the obvious. Say not you cannot learn them. For your power to learn is strong enough to teach you that your will is not your own, your thoughts do not belong to you, and even you are someone else (T-31.I.2:7-3:6).

Therefore, Jesus is helping us recognize not only our learning skill, but the great need to unlearn what we have so skillfully taught ourselves: our "ancient overlearning" (T-3115:4). To accomplish this undoing, great discipline of learning is required. Thus, the need for this workbook.

**(4) Have at least three practice periods today, each lasting three to five minutes. A longer time is highly recommended, but only if you find the time slipping by with little or no sense of strain. The form of practice we will use today is the most natural and easy one in the world for the trained mind, just as it seems to be the most unnatural and difficult for the untrained mind.**

Jesus is again telling us that we will have trouble unlearning what we have taught ourselves, and he explains why in the next paragraph:

**(5:1-4) Your mind is no longer wholly untrained. You are quite ready to learn the form of exercise we will use today, but you may find that you will encounter strong resistance. The reason is very simple. While you practice in this way, you leave behind everything that you now believe, and all the thoughts that you have made up.**

Jesus informs us that the problem we will encounter is our own resistance, born of the fear of losing the thoughts we made up, which, by the way, include our very selves! We have already discussed how fearfully resistant we become when in the presence of truth. The reader may recall Jesus' words in the text as to why *he* was perceived as a threat:

> Many thought I was attacking them, even though it was apparent I was not. An insane learner learns strange lessons. What you must recognize is that when you do not share a thought system, you are weakening it. Those who believe in it therefore perceive this as an attack on them. This is because everyone identifies himself with his thought system, and every thought system centers on what you believe you are (T-6.V-B.1:5-9).

Thus these lessons constitute a direct attack on our egos, seen from the perspective of the individual self desperately trying to protect its separation by defending its bodily defense against truth's incursions into the mind.

Note that Jesus is not qualifying his words. To repeat:

**(5:4) While you practice in this way, you leave behind everything that you now believe, and all the thoughts that you have made up.**

He means *"everything* that you now believe, and *all* the thoughts," not just *some* of them. That is the basis of our fear, and why everyone tries to compromise what *A Course in Miracles* is teaching, having Jesus say something he is not saying at all. He is telling you quite explicitly that if you practice as he instructs, your ego will disappear. It is therefore important to understand why you do *not* practice the specific lessons, let alone the ongoing lessons we have with each other.

Very often people ask where in *A Course in Miracles* does it say what I just said. This is one of the places, and Jesus says it in very simple English, too; no complicated sentence structure. One more time, here is the statement of the problem: "While you practice in this way, you leave behind everything that you now believe, and all the thoughts that you have made up."

We continue with yet another statement of the same theme:

**(5:5-6) Properly speaking, this is the release from hell. Yet perceived through the ego's eyes, it is loss of identity and a descent into hell.**

This is the idea I repeat over and over and over again: the major fear that *everyone* in this world shares is the loss of individuality or personal identity. Since we cherish this self, to expect that we would not have resistance to the workbook lessons is rather naïve.

**(6:1) If you can stand aside from the ego by ever so little, you will have no**

**difficulty in recognizing that its opposition and its fears are meaningless.**

Jesus is speaking here of the decision maker, because he talks about a *you* that is not the ego, a *you* that stands aside from the ego (to the left in our chart, see p 135). As we have seen, if you stand aside from the ego you automatically stand aside with Jesus or the Holy Spirit in your right mind. It is one or the other. The *you* that has chosen the Holy Spirit, again, is the decision maker.

One other point: Jesus is talking about the ego as if it were a separate entity. But the ego is simply a thought we have made real, with which we have identified. In other words, the ego is the part of our split minds that enjoys being separated. It thus represents our opposition to the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle. In the following passage Jesus explains why he speaks of the ego *as if* it were separate from us:

> Only your [i.e., the *decision maker]* allegiance to it gives the ego any power over you. I have spoken of the ego as if it were a separate thing, acting on its own. This was necessary to persuade you that you cannot dismiss it lightly, and must realize how much of your thinking is ego-directed.... The ego is nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself (T-4.VI.1:2-4,6).

**(6:2-4) You might find it helpful to remind yourself, from time to time, that to reach light is to escape from darkness, whatever you may believe to the contrary. God is the light in which you see. You are attempting to reach Him.**

This also is extremely important. If we are sincere about wanting to find God and take Jesus' hand and experience his love, we must let go of our identification with the darkness. The way we reinforce and express our love for Jesus is by looking at our hatred. That again is very clear here: the way to reach the light is to escape from the darkness. But what does this mean? Since we are the ones who made darkness real by choosing it, then escaping from it means we have to change our minds. That is the role of Jesus: not to help us do what is right, but to help us *undo* what is wrong. This ensures that we automatically do, think, say, and feel what is right. It is the escape from the darkness, the undoing of the negative, the denying of the denial of truth that constitutes the journey into the light. Therefore we can say that this is not a course in the positive, but in undoing the negative. Two among a large number of passages can be cited here as evidence of this overriding emphasis in Jesus' teaching material:

> The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to deny the denial of truth* (T-12.11.1:5).

> Why do you think you are unsure the others [the first three questions] have been answered? Could it be necessary they be asked so often, if they had? Until the last decision has been made, the answer is both "yes" and "no." For you have answered "yes" without perceiving that "yes" must mean "not no." No one decides against his happiness, but he may do so if he does not see he does it. And if he sees his happiness as ever changing, now this, now that, and now an elusive shadow attached to nothing, he does decide against it (T-21.VII.12).

The ego thought system is the denial of truth. Recognizing it for what it is allows us to say no to its negation, thus removing the ego's power as its darkness dissolves

into the light.

**(7) Begin the practice period by repeating today's idea with your eyes open, and close them slowly, repeating the idea several times more. Then try to sink into your mind, letting go every kind of interference and intrusion by quietly sinking past them. Your mind cannot be stopped in this unless you choose to stop it. It is merely taking its natural course. Try to observe your passing thoughts without involvement, and slip quietly by them.**

To repeat, the *you* Jesus is addressing is the decision maker, the part of your mind that chooses. *Watch your mind.* When you feel guilty, when you judge your thoughts or your actions, you are making them real and opposing them. But you must look at them, which does not mean to look and then continue your unloving thoughts and actions. It means looking without judgment, realizing exactly what you are doing. That would motivate you to let them go, because you would see the pain choosing the ego is causing you. The process of looking at the ego with Jesus thus inevitably entails understanding the *cost* to us when we choose the ego instead him, separation instead of unity, hate instead of forgiveness. When we see clearly that the choice for judgment leads to suffering and pain the unnatural – while the choice for vision leads to peace and joy – the natural – the motivation to choose healing is strong enough to bring it about. As Jesus concludes Chapter 23: "Who with the Love of God upholding him could find the choice of miracles or murder hard to make?" (T-23.IV.9:8)

Referring to the chart (Lesson 43), that is why God is on the bottom instead of the top: The thrust of the lesson and our meditation is to begin where we are on top, and then *sink down* into our minds where God is.

**(8) While no particular approach is advocated for this form of exercise, what is needful is a sense of the importance of what you are doing; its inestimable value to you, and an awareness that you are attempting something very holy. Salvation is your happiest accomplishment. It is also the only one that has any meaning, because it is the only one that has any real use to you at all.**

The reason "what you are doing" is so important to you is that this is the way out of hell, the way out of all pain and suffering. You need to keep reminding yourself: "I am a student of *A Course in Miracles,* and have chosen Jesus as my teacher. Moreover, I am doing the workbook because I want to escape from the hell of my life of judgment of others and myself. That is why I am the Course's student: those judgments are the source of my pain and distress, which I no longer want." Thus Jesus asks you to read these lessons conscientiously, and *think* about what they mean in terms of your goal of peace. *And then practice them.*

Jesus again turns to resistance:

**(9) If resistance rises in any form, pause long enough to repeat today's idea, keeping your eyes closed unless you are aware of fear. In that case, you will probably find it more reassuring to open your eyes briefly. Try, however, to return to the exercises with eyes closed as soon as possible.**

Note especially his *gentle* insistence that we become aware of our resistance, our fear of these lessons.

**(10:1-2) If you are doing the exercises correctly, you should experience some sense of relaxation, and even a feeling that you are approaching, if not actually entering into light. Try to think of light, formless and without limit, as you pass by the thoughts of this world.**

Jesus speaks of light as a thought in the Christ Mind, because it has no form. The reflection of light in our right minds is forgiveness, which has form because I think *I* am a person who has to forgive *you.* Again, Jesus uses the words *light* and *real thoughts* interchangeably with *right mind* and *Christ Mind.*

**(10:3) And do not forget that they** [the thoughts of the world] **cannot hold you to the world unless you give them the power to do so.**

This is why we are not victims of the world we see (Lesson 31), a central theme in *A Course in Miracles.* Nothing in this world can hold us, nothing can upset us unless we give it that power. A powerful passage in the text expresses this important truth:

> The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself. No matter what the form of the attack, this still is true. Whoever takes the role of enemy and of attacker, still is this the truth. Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true. For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream (T-27.VIII.10).

Why do we give that power away? Because that proves we are right and Jesus is wrong and, moreover, that his course is wrong. He teaches us here that we are responsible for our feelings of victimization. The world on the other hand, programmed by the ego, teaches us that *it* is the cause of our pain and suffering. Stated another way, the miracle teaches we are the *dreamer* of the dream, while the world witnesses to our being but dream *figures.* We shall return to this idea again and again.

Jesus closes the lesson by saying:

**(11) Throughout the day repeat the idea often, with eyes open or closed as seems better to you at the time. But do not forget. Above all, be determined not to forget today.**

We find in these lessons Jesus' urging us to take these lessons very seriously, to take the practice of *A Course in Miracles* very seriously. If we do not practice it day in and day out, we are not going to learn it. This has nothing to do with an intellectual mastery of the text. We cannot do these lessons properly in the end if we do not understand the text, but simple understanding is not enough. We must practice bringing the darkness of our ego's illusions to the light of the Holy Spirit's truth, and understand *why* we are doing it.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 45**
**God is the Mind with which I think.**

**(1:1) Today's idea holds the key to what your real thoughts are.**

That is because our real thoughts are with God. Note in the following discussion that Jesus identifies our real thoughts with the Christ Mind.

**(1:2) They are nothing that you think you think, just as nothing that you think you see is related to vision in any way.**

Jesus is always giving us a little jibe, telling us that we but think we think, we but think we see. In fact, we are not thinking or seeing at all.

**(1:3) There is no relationship between what is real and what you think is real.**

Other words could be substituted for these. We could say, for example, there is no relationship between what God is and what the world thinks God is – so much for the theologies of the world! Returning to the workbook lesson, we see a Level One statement – there is absolutely nothing, no middle ground, between truth and illusion. Any time we think we understand something, such understanding cannot be real because we are involved only with our own thoughts, and *our* thoughts are never real. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is not to lead us to an *understanding* of God, but to an *experience* of His Love, for which we must escape the darkness of our guilt and hatred. The following statement from the Introduction to the clarification of terms expresses this goal of experience rather than understanding:

> A universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary. It is this experience toward which the course is directed. Here alone consistency becomes possible because here alone uncertainty ends (C-in.2:5-7).

We can also recall this wonderful line from the text:

> You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing (T-18.IV.7:5-6).

**(1:4-2:5) Nothing that you think are your real thoughts resemble your real thoughts in any respect. Nothing that you think you see bears any resemblance to what vision will show you.**
**You think with the Mind of God. Therefore you share your thoughts with Him, as He shares His with you. They are the same thoughts, because they are thought by the same Mind. To share is to make alike, or to make one. Nor do the thoughts you think with the Mind of God leave your mind, because thoughts do not leave their source.**

The extremely important principle *ideas leave not their source* makes its first appearance here in the workbook, although we have already discussed it many times.

Jesus mentions it again later in the lessons, and it is at the center of his teaching throughout the three books. To state it differently: This principle is the Atonement, which reflects the unchanging truth we are an idea or thought in the Mind of God, and have never left our Source. This means the separation never happened. We are thus saying that all thoughts, if they are real, have never left their Source. Even though we believe we have left God and are asleep in the dream, we can still have reflections of these thoughts. Once again, in these passages Jesus is not making a distinction between real thoughts and the reflection of real thoughts.

**(2:6-8) Therefore, your thoughts are in the Mind of God, as you are. They are in your mind as well, where He is. As you are part of His Mind, so are your thoughts part of His Mind.**

All is one, since *ideas leave not their source.* The mind we think we are is unreal, in contrast to the Mind of Christ, Jesus' referent here.

This is yet another example of how the language of the workbook is not, strictly speaking, theologically correct. Since forgiveness is impossible in God, as we shall see in just a moment, our forgiveness thoughts, in reality, have nothing to do with God either. More properly, forgiveness is the *reflection* of God's Thought. Read this material, therefore, as you would a wonderful poem, not a technical treatise to be analytically dissected.

**(3) Where, then, are your real thoughts? Today we will attempt to reach them. We will have to look for them in your mind, because that is where they are. They must still be there, because they cannot have left their source. What is thought by the Mind of God is eternal, being part of creation.**

The function of the Holy Spirit is to hold those thoughts in our minds, which, despite our mind wandering, remain in their source. Projection is a powerful and persuasive defense, yet it cannot defy the basic principle: *ideas leave not their source.* It is our learning this salvific fact that the ego continually tries to prevent.

**(4:1-2) Our three five-minute practice periods for today will take the same general form that we used in applying yesterday's idea. We will attempt to leave the unreal and seek for the real.**

Sentence 2 seems to say the exact opposite of the passage in Chapter 16 that I quoted earlier – "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers that you have built against it" (T-16.IV.6:1) – for here the words say you should seek for truth. This is yet another indication of his inconsistent use of words. However, it is equally true that the principles he teaches never vary and are consistent, as the remainder of the paragraph makes clear. In other words, we find the truth *(the real)* by first finding the illusion *(the unreal),* and then leaving it by deciding against it. Incidentally, 4:2 is taken from the famous Hindu statement about leaving the unreal for the real. Here now is the rest of the paragraph:

**(4:3-6) We will deny the world in favor of truth. We will not let the thoughts of the world hold us back. We will not let the beliefs of the world tell us that what God would have us do is impossible. Instead, we will try to recognize that only**

**what God would have us do is possible.**

The way we seek for truth and what is real is by denying the unreal, which we deny by looking at our unreal thoughts with Jesus. Again, when we look with him at our judgments, hatred, and guilt they will disappear, leaving only the truth. Indeed, the very process of *looking* is what heals. As I discussed in the Prelude, it is *not* looking at our guilt that preserves its illusory existence. That is the function of the world and body: to keep us from looking within. Therefore, looking without guilt or judgment at our decision to be guilty undoes it, transferring its substance from a solid wall of granite – *heavy, opaque, and impenetrable* – to a *fragile veil* that has no power to keep away the light (T-18.IX.5:2-4). We shall return to this important theme repeatedly before our journey through the workbook is completed.

**(5) We will also try to understand that only what God would have us do is what we want to do. And we will also try to remember that we cannot fail in doing what He would have us do. There is every reason to feel confident that we will succeed today. It is the Will of God.**

Jesus is reminding us here of our purpose in doing the workbook and studying his course: what we really want to do is be an expression of God's Will, even though strictly speaking God does not have us do anything. Once again, and hardly for the last time, we see Jesus appealing to our right-minded motivation: We want to learn his lessons because they will make us feel better.

**(6) Begin the exercises for today by repeating the idea to yourself, closing your eyes as you do so. Then spend a fairly short period in thinking a few relevant thoughts of your own, keeping the idea in mind. After you have added some four or five thoughts of your own to the idea, repeat it again and tell yourself gently:**

***My real thoughts are in my mind. I would like to find them.***

**Then try to go past all the unreal thoughts that cover the truth in your mind, and reach to the eternal.**

The way you go to the eternal is through your unreal thoughts, which you bring to the real ones of the Holy Spirit. Our chart (see Lesson 43) illustrates this. You find God by going through the ego system, which begins with your experience of yourself as a body. You next realize your body is a projection of the mind's unreal thoughts of separation, specialness, and guilt, which you bring to the real thoughts of the Holy Spirit. And then they are gone, leaving only the truth. This process of going through the *unreal* to the *real* – the essence of forgiveness – is powerfully described in the following passage from the text that tells of our journey through the "circle of fear" to God, with the Holy Spirit as our companion and guide:

> Yet God can bring you there [beyond all fear], if you are willing to follow the Holy Spirit through seeming terror, trusting Him not to abandon you and leave you there. For it is not His purpose to frighten you, but only yours. You are severely tempted to abandon Him at the outside ring of fear, but He would lead you safely through and far beyond (T-18.IX.3:7-9).

**(7:1) Under all the senseless thoughts and mad ideas with which you have**

**cluttered up your mind are the thoughts that you thought with God in the beginning.**

These are not thoughts we normally think of as thoughts, for Jesus speaks of an expression of God's Will – Oneness, truth, and love. Even though we are unaware of them, these thoughts remain nonetheless, "held in safekeeping" in our right minds against the time we choose them, *and only them.* Jesus makes the same point in this moving passage early in the text. I quote it in its entirety.

> How can you who are so holy suffer? All your past except its beauty is gone, and nothing is left but a blessing. I have saved all your kindnesses and every loving thought you ever had. I have purified them of the errors that hid their light, and kept them for you in their own perfect radiance. They are beyond destruction and beyond guilt. They came from the Holy Spirit within you, and we know what God creates is eternal. You can indeed depart in peace because I have loved you as I loved myself. You go with my blessing and for my blessing. Hold it and share it, that it may always be ours. I place the peace of God in your heart and in your hands, to hold and share. The heart is pure to hold it, and the hands are strong to give it. We cannot lose. My judgment is as strong as the wisdom of God, in Whose Heart and Hands we have our being. His quiet children are His blessed Sons. The Thoughts of God are with you (T-5.IV.8).

**(7:2-4) They are there in your mind now, completely unchanged. They will always be in your mind, exactly as they always were. Everything you have thought since then will change, but the Foundation on which it rests is wholly changeless.**

These thoughts, reflecting the Love of God, are always with us – totally unchanged. We have covered them over with senseless and cluttered thoughts, and Jesus is helping us uncover the truth that is in us. In the end we shall come to recognize that these insane thoughts are made up. Their seeming power had no effect on the truth, and of such truth is the Kingdom of Heaven remembered on earth.

**(8:1-4) It is this Foundation toward which the exercises for today are directed. Here is your mind joined with the Mind of God. Here are your thoughts one with His. For this kind of practice only one thing is necessary; approach it as you would an altar dedicated in Heaven to God the Father and to God the Son.**

Jesus again is urging us to take these lessons seriously and remember why we are doing them. However, we are not taking them seriously if we do not apply them, which is why our vigilance becomes so important. In the text, Jesus explains that altars are devotions:

> Both Heaven and earth are in you, because the call of both is in your mind. The Voice for God comes from your own altars to Him. These altars are not things; they are devotions. Yet you have other devotions now. Your divided devotion has given you the two voices, and you must choose at which altar you want to serve. The call you answer now is an evaluation because it is a decision. The decision is very simple. It is made on the basis of which call is worth more to you (T-5.II.8:5-12).

And so we are instructed to recognize *which call is worth more to us.* It is our practice and vigilance that will reinforce what we *truly* want.

**(8:5-7) For such is the place you are trying to reach. You will probably be unable as yet to realize how high you are trying to go. Yet even with the little understanding you have already gained, you should be able to remind yourself that this is no idle game, but an exercise in holiness and an attempt to reach the Kingdom of Heaven.**

We are once more asked to remember the importance of these lessons to us, being the practical and specific application of the principles of the text. The sincerity in our desire to return home will be reflected in our commitment to this ongoing practice. Thus Jesus says in the first sentence in paragraph 9:

**(9:1) In the shorter exercise periods for today, try to remember how important it is to you to understand the holiness of the mind that thinks with God.**

It should be apparent by now, through his continual emphasis, how important Jesus believes these lessons to be, and how important they should be to us. We shall discuss presently how this importance will be measured by our willingness to relinquish our investment in specialness.

The lesson closes with this final plea from Jesus to choose *against* ("stand aside") our ego's thoughts, and for his reminders of the Thoughts we share with God:

**(9:2-4) Take a minute or two, as you repeat the idea throughout the day, to appreciate your mind's holiness. Stand aside, however briefly, from all thoughts that are unworthy of Him Whose host you are. And thank Him for the Thoughts He is thinking with you.**

Gratitude is an important theme in *A Course in Miracles,* and one to which we shall often return. The core of this gratitude is that God has never ceased to be Who He is, despite all our insane attempts to make Him be otherwise.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 46**
**God is the Love in which I forgive.**

This lesson is the first time we find a serious discussion of forgiveness.

**(1:1-3) God does not forgive because He has never condemned. And there must be condemnation before forgiveness is necessary. Forgiveness is the great need of this world, but that is because it is a world of illusions.**

As we shall see later, Jesus "likes" this first sentence so much that he repeats it verbatim in the review lesson. Forgiveness has no place in Heaven, but only in the dream that began with the condemnatory thought of sin and will end with sin's undoing through forgiveness, love's reflection. "There must be condemnation before forgiveness is necessary," which makes forgiveness an illusion since it corrects what never happened. Since God does not (because He *cannot)* recognize the illusion, He cannot correct it. There is thus no need for it in Heaven.

**(1:4-5) Those who forgive are thus releasing themselves from illusions, while those who withhold forgiveness are binding themselves to them. As you condemn only yourself, so do you forgive only yourself.**

Jesus is making it very clear that forgiveness has nothing to do with anyone we think is outside us. It occurs in the context of a relationship we have made real, but must recognize that what we are forgiving is a projection of the guilt we do not want, not to mention the responsibility for our distressing situation. Lessons 196-198, which we shall discuss much later in this series, elaborate on this essential point, as their titles suggest:

It can be but myself I crucify.

It can be but my gratitude I earn.

Only my condemnation injures me.

**(2:1) Yet although God does not forgive, His Love is nevertheless the basis of forgiveness.**

We are reminded here that forgiveness is a real and right-minded thought that reflects the real thought of love in our Christ Mind.

**(2:2-3) Fear condemns and love forgives. Forgiveness thus undoes what fear has produced, returning the mind to the awareness of God.**

The right mind, or forgiveness, undoes the wrong mind of fear and hate. When the right mind undoes the wrong mind, both disappear and all that remains is the awareness of God. Once again, we need to recall that *A Course in Miracles* does not teach the truth, but the *undoing* of the illusory barriers to truth; a process that allows the memory of God to dawn upon our sleeping minds, awakening us at last from the ego's nightmare world of guilt and fear.

**(2:4-5) For this reason, forgiveness can truly be called salvation. It is the**

**means by which illusions disappear.**

Salvation thus has a different meaning in *A Course in Miracles.* Rather than being the plan of God to save us from our very real sinfulness, it now becomes the Holy Spirit's correction of forgiveness for our *belief* in sinfulness. It is the simple change of mind from the illusion of separation to the truth of Atonement.

**(3) Today's exercises require at least three full five-minute practice periods, and as many shorter ones as possible. Begin the longer practice periods by repeating today's idea to yourself, as usual. Close your eyes as you do so, and spend a minute or two in searching your mind for those whom you have not forgiven. It does not matter "how much" you have not forgiven them. You have forgiven them entirely or not at all.**

This is an expression within the dream of the *all or none* idea, what we earlier described as Level One. In our experience we do not forgive totally; we forgive a little bit here and a little bit there; we forgive this person but not another. This passage is telling us, however, that if that is our practice of forgiveness, we are not finished yet. Forgiveness has to be total, otherwise it is not real. This *all or none* idea finds similar expression in the following statement about *A Course in Miracles* itself: "This course will be believed entirely or not at all" (T-22.II.7:4).

**(4) If you are doing the exercises well you should have no difficulty in finding a number of people you have not forgiven. It is a safe rule that anyone you do not like is a suitable subject. Mention each one by name, and say:**
***God is the Love in which I forgive you, [name].***

This is the first of several exercises in which Jesus asks us to identify those people we have chosen not to forgive. He assures us we shall have no trouble in identifying these special hate objects. Later on we shall be gently instructed to expand this category to include those we believe we love. An important teaching in the text is that special love and special hate are the same, being but different *forms* of the same basic *content* of separation. Thus we need to forgive *everyone,* since everyone – friend or foe – is perceived to be separate from us.

**(5:1) The purpose of the first phase of today's practice periods is to put you in a position to forgive yourself.**

"Forgiving yourself' is what this course is all about. I think I am forgiving someone outside me, but I am really forgiving myself. Again, needless to say, this thought is the central theme of *A Course in Miracles.* It reflects the dynamic of projection, wherein we seek to place in others the guilt we cannot accept within ourselves. Once having projected the guilt, we have no further awareness of its ongoing presence in our minds, which for all intents and purposes has been forgotten beneath the *double shield of oblivion* (W-pI.136.6:2) – the belief in guilt in ourselves *(mind)* and in others *(body).* Only by recognizing our unforgiveness of another can we be led to the unforgiveness of ourselves, and beyond that to the Atonement that links us back to the Love we never truly left.

The next few lines present various statements as suggestive of our practice for

the day. These, incidentally, should not be taken as *affirmations* as is the practice of many New Age students. By this I mean that statements such as these should *not* be used to cover the ego's thought system of negativity and hate, but rather understood as symbols of the right-minded presence of correction, *to which* we bring the ego's thoughts:

**(5:2-6:7) After you have applied the idea to all those who have come to mind, tell yourself:**

***God is the Love in which I forgive myself***

**Then devote the remainder of the practice period to adding related ideas such as:**

***God is the Love with which I love myself.***

***God is the Love in which I am blessed.***

**The form of the application may vary considerably, but the central idea should not be lost sight of. You might say, for example:**

*I* ***cannot be guilty because I am a Son*** *of* ***God.***

***I have already been forgiven.***

***No fear is possible in a mind beloved of God.***

***There is no need to attack because love has forgiven me.***

**The practice period should end, however, with a repetition of today's idea as originally stated.**

If we do these exercises properly, we will become increasingly able to note our ego thoughts of separation and specialness and bring them quickly to the love that embraces the Sonship as one, at the same time it undoes our thoughts of guilt, fear, and attack. This is reiterated in the lesson's final paragraph, where Jesus returns to his central emphasis of using the idea for the day, as well as its variations, whenever we are tempted to choose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit:

**(7) The shorter practice periods may consist either of a repetition of the idea for today in the original or in a related form, as you prefer. Be sure, however, to make more specific applications if they are needed. They will be needed at any time during the day when you become aware of any kind of negative reaction to anyone. present or not. In any event, tell him silently:**

***God is the Love in which I forgive you.***

Jesus is asking us, once again, to be aware of any kind of negative reaction, major or minor, and then to bring these reactions *to* the suggested thoughts of the day. In this way his light can shine away the darkness in which we had sought to hide. This process requires great vigilance and diligence as we seek continually to *practice* the holy instant (T-15.IV). I am reminded of the famous joke: A lost New Yorker asks someone how to get to Carnegie Hall, the legendary concert auditorium. The response is: *Practice, practice, practice!*

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 47**
**God is the strength in which I trust.**

This introduces another important teaching that is central in the text: the contrast between our weakness and the strength of Christ in us, or between the ego's illusory power and the Holy Spirit's true power. As we read near the text's end:

> You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. And what you choose is what you think is real. Simply by never using weakness to direct your actions, you have given it no power. And the light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you do. For you have brought your weakness unto Him, and He has given you His strength instead (T-31.VIII.2:3-7).

This lesson subtly introduces the theme of special relationships, which entail placing trust in someone or something outside us to alleviate our anxiety, or simply to make us feel good. That means we are substituting some object, substance, or relationship for the Love of God, giving power (or strength) to these special objects to bring us pleasure or alleviate pain. This choice for specialness is the substitution of weakness for strength.

**(1:1) If you are trusting in your own strength, you have every reason to be apprehensive, anxious and fearful.**

Trusting in our own strength means that we have made the ego thought system real. Having done so, we will feel guilty. Guilt will be projected and we will inevitably fear the punishment we believe is coming from outside us. We thus will have forgotten that the punishment we believe is forthcoming is a natural expression (really an unnatural expression) of the guilt we feel in our minds. You can see, incidentally, how often in these lessons the dynamic of projection is discussed.

**(1:2) What can you predict or control?**

Everyone in this world has control issues. We always try to predict what might happen so we can be in control, thinking ahead: If I do such and such, what will the outcome be? This is mandatory if we are to survive as an ego. We have to be in control. If not, Jesus is, which means our special identity is gone. Our need to exclude him finds its expression in the need to control what is going on around us, like the little Dutch boy who kept his finger in the dike to prevent a catastrophic flood that would destroy his village. That is our fear: if our finger slips, the waters of God's Love would rush through our defensive structure and flood our egos into nonexistence. Thus we keep our fingers of specialness and hate firmly planted in the walls of our minds, ensuring that no right-minded water of forgiveness ever gets through and washes away our self.

**(1:3) What is there in you that can be counted on?**

We figure a hell of a lot! We are sure that if we do not save ourselves, we are doomed. I mentioned earlier that we have constructed our lives in such a way that we were convinced from the outset that no one could be trusted; no one is dependable, and therefore the only one who could save us is ourselves. Again, we are absolutely certain we are right. However, we are not aware of the underlying thought that supports this

defense: I have written my life's script so that it will prove I am all alone in the universe, and therefore I had better take care of me because no one else will! Recall that all-important line from the text:

> The secret of salvation is but this: That you are doing this unto yourself (T-27.VIII.10:1).

We *want* to be all alone, since that justifies our living all alone – trusting no one – and thus we reinforce our origin of being all alone, totally apart from our Creator and Source.

**(1:4) What would give you the ability to be aware of all the facets of any problem, and to resolve them in such a way that only good can come of it?**

This idea is expressed more fully in the text and manual: The Holy Spirit, not ourselves, is the only One Who can judge correctly. We read, for example:

> It is necessary for the teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge, but that he cannot.... The aim of our curriculum, unlike the goal of the world's learning, is the recognition that judgment in the usual sense is impossible.... In order to judge anything rightly, one would have to be fully aware of an inconceivably wide range of things; past, present and to come. One would have to recognize in advance all the effects of his judgments on everyone and everything involved in them in any way. And one would have to be certain there is no distortion in his perception, so that his judgment would be wholly fair to everyone on whom it rests now and in the future. Who is in a position to do this? Who except in grandiose fantasies would claim this for himself? ... Make then but one more judgment. It is this: There is Someone with you Whose judgment is perfect. He does know all the facts; past, present and to come. He does know all the effects of His judgment on everyone and everything involved in any way. And He is wholly fair to everyone, for there is no distortion in His perception (M-10.2:1; 3:1, 3-7; 4:6-10).

It is simply our arrogance as egos that leads us to believe we could possibly understand the true nature of any problem, not to mention its solution. This arrogance has ensured throughout the millennia that no problem – individual or collective – has ever truly been resolved. Thus we go from day to day, year to year, century to century, reliving the same painful experiences over and over again, with no respite from the terror of being wrong and being separated:

> 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).

**(1:5) What is there in you that gives you the recognition of the right solution, and the guarantee that it will be accomplished?**

It certainly is not us, our wrong-minded self, but our right-minded self when we choose to identify with Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

**(2) Of yourself you can do none of these things. To believe that you can is to put your trust where trust is unwarranted, and to justify fear, anxiety, depression, anger and sorrow. Who can put his faith in weakness and feel safe? Yet who can put his faith in strength and feel weak?**

This is what everyone's life is all about. We are frightened, anxious, depressed, angry, and sad. If not, we are not paying attention to our life's situation, which proves we are right in believing the world is a hostile, threatening, and lonely place, replete with those we cannot trust. We feel justified in thinking this is why we feel as terrible as we do, unaware that the source of these thoughts and feelings is our decision to trust the teacher of weakness, rather than the One of strength.

**(3) God is your safety in every circumstance. His Voice speaks for Him in all situations and in every aspect of all situations, telling you exactly what to do to call upon His strength and His protection. There are no exceptions because God has no exceptions. And the Voice which speaks for Him thinks as He does.**

Passages like these, and there are many of them in the workbook, make it sound as if the Holy Spirit is with you to tell you exactly what to do. In one sense this is true, but the focus is never really on what you do, because that is unimportant. Rather, Jesus is emphasizing how you *think* about what you do. This is where the Holy Spirit enters the picture. If you would join with His Love – meaning you have let go of the barriers that would keep you separate from Him – everything you do and say will come from love. That is what it means to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Not that He tells you specifically what to do or not to do. When your mind is aligned with His, everything coming from that mind must be His since our bodies are nothing more than a projection or extension of what is in our minds. When these are joined with the Holy Spirit, again, everything we do will be an expression of love. Our experience might be that Jesus told us this or the Holy Spirit told us that. In reality, we have simply joined with abstract love in our minds, and that love becomes the source of our specific thoughts and behavior.

*The Song of Prayer* specifically addresses the issue of moving beyond our need for specifics, our going so far as to ask God or the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of our special requests. Indeed, one of the major emphases of this all-important writing is to have students of *A Course in Miracles* ask *only* for help in removing the obstacles to hearing the non-specific Voice of love. Once our egos are out of the way, we automatically *know* what to do or say.

Thus Jesus teaches in the pamphlet's opening pages:

> The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need. To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it. Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands. There they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no Love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him? Can this be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration? God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this (S- 1.I.4).

This important teaching was underscored in a personal message to Helen,

correcting her tendency to ask for *specific* words to say to a person in trouble. Here is what Jesus told his scribe:

> Remember you need nothing, but you have an endless store of loving gifts to give. But teach this lesson only to yourself. Your brother will not learn it from your words or from the judgments you have laid on him. You need not even speak a word to him. You cannot ask, "What shall I say to him?" and hear God's answer. Rather ask instead, "Help me to see this brother through the eyes of truth and not of judgment," and the help of God and all His angels will respond *(Absence from Felicity: The Story of Helen Schucman and Her Scribing of A Course in Miracles,* p. 381).

We shall return again and again to this vital point, for it points the way beyond the ego's *spiritual specialness,* one of its greatest defenses against the spiritual truths found in *A Course in Miracles* and many other spiritualities.

**(4:1) Today we will try to reach past your own weakness to the Source of real strength.**

This is reminiscent of Lesson 44, where Jesus helped us sink down into our minds, passing by the ego's illusions to reach the Holy Spirit's truth.

**(4:2-5) Four five-minute practice periods are necessary today, and longer and more frequent ones are urged. Close your eyes and begin, as usual, by repeating the idea for the day. Then spend a minute or two in searching for situations in your life which you have invested with fear, dismissing each one by telling yourself:**
***God is the strength in which I trust.***

Again, this is the process. The way to reach your real strength is to move past your weakness by becoming aware of your ego's thoughts. That is why there is such heavy emphasis on mind searching in these lessons. You cannot move past the darkness until you first realize that there *is* darkness. You must look at your investment in having your ego be alive and well, and then bring that investment in weakness to the strength of God within.

**(5) Now try to slip past all concerns related to your own sense of inadequacy. It is obvious that any situation that causes you concern is associated with feelings of inadequacy, for otherwise you would believe that you could deal with the situation successfully. It is not by trusting yourself that you will gain confidence. But the strength of God in you is successful in all things.**

Still again, we are asked by Jesus to turn away from the weakness and inadequacy of the ego's thought system to the strength of God he holds out for us. That is why he exhorts us in the text:

> Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1).

**(6) The recognition of your own frailty is a necessary step in the correction of your errors, but it is hardly a sufficient one in giving you the confidence which you need, and to which you are entitled. You must also gain an awareness that confidence in your real strength is fully justified in every respect and in all circumstances.**

The structure here is typical of most of the sections in the text: first you get the ego's side; then the Holy Spirit's answer. Throughout *A Course in Miracles* Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms how important it is that we look at our ego. Here he is saying we must look at our weakness, which comes from identifying with the ego. However, Jesus also teaches there is a presence of love, strength, and truth inside us, which is the basis of our looking. We become aware that the way we identify with truth and find real happiness and peace is by looking at our darkness with the expression of that truth – Jesus or the Holy Spirit – beside us. Recall that wonderful passage from the text, quoted here more fully than previously:

> No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready. Let us be very calm in doing this, for we are merely looking honestly for truth. The "dynamics" of the ego will be our lesson for a while, for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth.
>
> What is healing but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge? And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them directly, without protecting them? Be not afraid, therefore, for what you will be looking at is the source of fear, and you are beginning to learn that fear is not real.... Do not be afraid.... to look upon fear, for it cannot be seen. Clarity undoes confusion by definition, and to look upon darkness through light must dispel it (T-11.V.1:1-2:3, 8-9).

Thus we are given both sides of the split mind: the truth within, as well as instruction for the journey to that truth, which entails looking at the ego's weakness.

One more point: Looking at the ego is not enough if you do not also move beyond it to the strength of Christ. Half the lesson is not the whole. This thought is similar to the passage in the text on healing being of the *mind,* not the *body;* the removal of physical symptoms is not the issue:

> Yet half the lesson will not teach the whole. The miracle is useless if you learn but that the body can be healed, for this is not the lesson it was sent to teach. The lesson is the *mind* was sick that thought the body could be sick; projecting out its guilt caused nothing, and had no effects (T-28.11.11:5-7).

Thus, "letting go of the ego" means nothing. Moreover, it is not *really* letting go if one does not identify at the same time with the gentle, defenseless, and loving strength of Christ, inherent in which is the remembrance of the Oneness of God's Son.

**(7) In the latter phase of the practice period, try to reach down into your mind to a place of real safety. You will recognize that you have reached it if you feel a sense of deep peace, however briefly. Let go all the trivial things that churn and bubble on the surface of your mind, and reach down and below them to the Kingdom of Heaven. There is a place in you where there is perfect peace. There is a place in you where nothing is impossible. There is a place in you where the strength of God abides.**

Again, we let go of "all the trivial things that churn and bubble" in our minds – our thoughts of specialness – by bringing them to Jesus or the Holy Spirit; no longer holding on to them for safety and defense. In other words, we no longer want the purpose they serve: preserving and protecting our separated self.

**(8) During the day, repeat the idea often. Use it as your answer to any disturbance. Remember that peace is your right, because you are giving your trust to the strength of God.**

And so we return to this central theme of the early lessons: the need to practice continually by bringing our disturbances to Jesus' specific answer, trusting in its strength rather than the weakness of the ego's shabby substitute for God.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 48**

**There is nothing to fear.**

Lesson 48 is nice, short, and sweet: "There is nothing to fear." If God is the strength in which we trust, nothing in this world could ever make us afraid. The basis of fear is the principle that guilt demands punishment. If I am afraid, it is because I first see myself as guilty and weak. If I choose Jesus as the source of my strength, I am not weak or separated, and therefore not guilty. If I am not guilty, there can be no projected belief that I will be punished. Without such belief, there can be no fear. Again, it is the same process, all the time. If I want to live without fear, I must live without guilt. If I want to live without guilt, I need Jesus to help me look at it.

**(1) The idea for today simply states a fact. It is not a fact to those who believe in illusions, but illusions are not facts. In truth there is nothing to fear. It is very easy to recognize this. But it is very difficult to recognize it for those who want illusions to be true.**

As the text says, the only fact is God: "God is not symbolic; He is Fact" (T-318:2). The "fact" "There is nothing to fear" – is really a reflection of God's reality. The state of fear's absence corrects the ego's fundamental thought that fear is punishment for our sin. It is this illusory fear you have to look at. You want illusions to be true because *you* are an illusion, and you want *you* your individual identity – to be true. What makes it difficult to have an anxiety-free day is your not wanting today's lesson to be true. If it were, *you* are not true.

**(2) Today's practice periods will be very short, very simple and very frequent. Merely repeat the idea as often as possible. You can use it with your eyes open at any time and in any situation. It is strongly recommended, however, that you take a minute or so whenever possible to close your eyes and repeat the idea slowly to yourself several times. It is particularly important that you use the idea immediately, should anything disturb your peace of mind.**

We can see over and over again, in just about every lesson, that Jesus is telling us to practice this thought in our everyday lives, and to bring him our concerns. In this day's exercise he is asking us to apply the thought throughout the day, *as often as possible.* Moreover, he once again urges us – "It is particularly important" – to think of the idea whenever we are disturbed; in other words, to bring the darkness of our upset to the light of his thought of love, a thought that by its very presence dispels the darkness of fear.

**(3) The presence of fear is a sure sign that you are trusting in your own strength. The awareness that there is nothing to fear shows that somewhere in your mind, though not necessarily in a place you recognize as yet, you have remembered God, and let His strength take the place of your weakness. The instant you are willing to do this there is indeed nothing to fear.**

When we find ourselves becoming fearful in any of the forms that fear takes – and sometimes it may not even be fear; it could be anger, depression, or sadness – it is because we chose the ego once again; in effect, telling Jesus or the Holy Spirit to get lost. That wrong-minded decision is the problem, and accepting the Correction is the

solution. This simplicity of *A Course in Miracles* – one problem, one solution (W-pI.79-80) – is what makes it such a powerful and effective spiritual tool.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 49**
**God's Voice speaks to me all through the day.**

This is a lesson from which many students of *A Course in Miracles* have derived a great deal of mileage, unfortunately going the wrong way: to hell rather than Heaven. They often take this lesson to mean that they hear the Holy Spirit tell them wonderful things – *all the time.* If we follow the thinking in these lessons, however, it is obvious that we cannot *hear* God's Voice all through the day because of our minds' constant clutter. Jesus already has explained the clutter's presence: our resistance to losing our individual and special identity. This resistance is reflected in cherishing the ego's voice of specialness in order to prevent our hearing the Voice of the Holy Spirit, as we see in this pointed passage from the text:

> You are not special. If you think you are, and would defend your specialness against the truth of what you really are, how can you know the truth? What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you.
>
> You can defend your specialness, but never will you hear the Voice for God beside it (T-24.II.4:1-5:1)

While it is therefore true that God's Voice speaks to us all through the day – because the Holy Spirit is in our minds – this does not mean that we *hear* it. Pay careful attention to the lesson's words: Jesus does not say we *hear* God's Voice all through the day, but that God's Voice *speaks* to us all through the day. We are not going to listen because, again, of our resistance to losing our identity, expressed through the investment in perpetuating our specialness. That is why it is so important to read this (and all passages in *A Course in Miracles)* very carefully.

Another important point that speaks to the heart of Course students becoming confused is that we are *always* listening to an inner voice. We cannot listen to anything else! Our bodies are the vehicles (or: channels) through which either the voices of the ego or the Holy Spirit "speak." Students often think that just because they hear an inner voice it must be the Holy Spirit. They unfortunately have totally forgotten about the *other* voice, which was specifically and intentionally made to drown out the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit, as we saw in the above passage. This is why Jesus emphasizes helping us remove our investment in the ego, so that we could inevitably and naturally "hear" the Voice that speaks for truth. My wife Gloria has made a similar point when she would remind students that hearing an inner voice they believe belongs to an entity "on the other side" does not necessarily mean that entity is more advanced or ego-free than they. In the end, discernment is a prime prerequisite for any spiritual seeker, no less so for students of *A Course in Miracles* who need to discern the difference between the two voices.

**(1) It is quite possible to listen to God's Voice all through the day without interrupting your regular activities in any way. The part of your mind** [the right mind] **in which truth abides is in constant communication with God, whether you are aware of it or not. It is the other part of your mind** [the wrong mind] **that**

**functions in the world and obeys the world's laws. It is this part that is constantly distracted, disorganized and highly uncertain.**

This does not mean that if you are in your right mind you are not to obey the world's laws, as some students would unfortunately misconstrue this. Jesus is talking about obeying the world's laws because you *believe* they are real laws. To repeat, he is not saying, for example, that you should become an anarchist or libertarian. We read, for example, this instruction to teachers of God, his students who wish to grow beyond their ego selves:

> There is a way of living in the world that is not here, although it seems to be. You do not change appearance, though you smile more frequently. Your forehead is serene; your eyes are quiet (W-pI.155.1:1-3).

In other words, we are not asked to look different or behave differently from anyone else. What *changes* is our attitude, or which inner teacher we have chosen to follow. When we listen to the Holy Spirit, the world becomes a classroom in which its symbols become the language through which we express His teachings. Lesson 184 discusses this in greater detail, so we will defer further discussion until then.

The issue is to obey the world's laws of illusion, not because we believe them to be true, but, again, because they are the *form* through which we express the mind's *content* of truth in a way that people can respond to without fear. An early passage in the text makes this essential point of meeting people where they are – the illusion of *form* – yet expressing the truth of the *content* of the correction, known as the miracle:

> The value of the Atonement does not lie in the manner in which it is expressed. In fact, if it is used truly, it will inevitably be expressed in whatever way is most helpful to the receiver. This means that a miracle, to attain its full efficacy, must be expressed in a language that the recipient can understand without fear. This does not necessarily mean that this is the highest level of communication of which he is capable. It does mean, however, that it is the highest level of communication of which he is capable *now.* The whole aim of the miracle is to raise the level of communication, not to lower it by increasing fear (T-2.IV.5).

It is the *content* of love that should be our inspiration and guidance, not any preconceived notions about the *form* in which that love is to be expressed. This ensures our response will be kind and nonjudgmental, accepting people where they are, not where we want them to be.

**(2:1-3) The part that is listening to the Voice for God is calm, always at rest and wholly certain. It is really the only part there is. The other part is a wild illusion, frantic and distraught, but without reality of any kind.**

This brings to mind Plato's famous analogy from the *Phaedrus* of the charioteer and his two horses, and offers a poetic description of the wrong minds:

> Let it [the soul] be likened to the union of powers in a team of winged steeds and their winged charioteer.... With us men... it is a pair of steeds that the charioteer controls; moreover one of them is noble and good, and of good stock,

> while the other has the opposite character, and his stock is opposite. Hence the task of our charioteer is difficult and troublesome. ... He that is on the more honorable side is upright and clean-limbed, carrying his neck high, with something of a hooked nose; in color he is white, with black eyes; a lover of glory, but with temperance and modesty; one that consorts with genuine renown, and needs no whip, being driven by the word of command alone. The other is crooked of frame, a massive jumble of a creature, with thick short neck, snub nose, black skin, and gray eyes; hot-blooded, consorting with wantonness and vainglory; shaggy of ear, deaf, and hard to control with whip and goad *(Phaedrus* 246a; 253d-e).

This was an analogy that influenced Freud's view of the psyche, whereby Plato's depiction formed the basis for Freud's understanding of the *Id,* or the unconscious. That, of course, is the nature of the ego thought system: a reservoir of hatred, murder, and viciousness.

**(2:4-6) Try today not to listen to it. Try to identify with the part of your mind where stillness and peace reign forever. Try to hear God's Voice call to you lovingly, reminding you that your Creator has not forgotten His Son.**

Again, we can observe the implication of Jesus' urging: He asks us to recognize our call to the ego, and then choose against it in favor of our right minds, wherein dwell stillness and peace. We are encouraged to choose again, despite Jesus' awareness that our resistance is great. Yet it is early in our training, and there is still much to learn and practice.

**(3) We will need at least four five-minute practice periods today, and more if possible. We will try actually to hear God's Voice reminding you of Him and of your Self. We will approach this happiest and holiest of thoughts with confidence, knowing that in doing so we are joining our will with the Will of God. He wants you to hear His Voice. He gave It to you to be heard.**

Another pep talk: God's Voice *is* within us, and patiently awaits our choice.

**(4) Listen in deep silence. Be very still and open your mind. Go past all the raucous shrieks and sick imaginings that cover your real thoughts and obscure your eternal link with God. Sink deep into the peace that waits for you beyond the frantic, riotous thoughts and sights and sounds of this insane world. You do not live here. We are trying to reach your real home. We are trying to reach the place where you are truly welcome. We are trying to reach God.**

Jesus wants us to be *really* clear about our purpose. However, we cannot reach God without going past the "raucous shrieks and sick imaginings" of the ego; and we cannot go past those shrieks and fantasies without looking at them. Thus, opening our minds means that our decision maker chooses the Holy Spirit's forgiveness instead of the ego's attack. We have already seen that in order to reach God we have to set aside our identification with the ego's voice of specialness, and it is the workbook's aim to help us reach God through this process.

**(5) Do not forget to repeat today's idea very frequently. Do so with your**

**eyes open when necessary, but closed when possible. And be sure to sit quietly and repeat the idea for today whenever you can, closing your eyes on the world, and realizing that you are inviting God's Voice to speak to you.**

Jesus returns to his emphasis on doing the lessons with eyes either open or closed, although his current preference in our training is our eyes shut, maximizing the experience that it is our *thoughts* that need correction. As we have repeatedly seen in the recent lessons, we are urged to apply the idea for the day as often as we can remember: "very frequently," "whenever you can." In this way, we reinforce our learning that it is the Holy Spirit's wisdom and love we truly want – found in our *minds,* not the world.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 50**
**I am sustained by the Love of God.**

Lesson 50 differs from the preceding ones, and we shall be reintroduced to themes that will return later. Specifically, this lesson makes another statement, much clearer than the previous one, about the nature of the special relationship. The terms *special relationships* and *specialness* do not appear in the workbook at all; however, it is clear in passages like these that this is Jesus' referent.

**(1) Here is the answer to every problem that will confront you, today and tomorrow and throughout time. In this world, you believe you are sustained by everything but God. Your faith is placed in the most trivial and insane symbols; pills, money, "protective" clothing, influence, prestige, being liked, knowing the "right" people, and an endless list of forms of nothingness that you endow with magical powers.**

If these statements are read in the context of *A Course in Miracles* as a whole, it is obvious that Jesus is not saying we should feel guilty because we take a pill, wear warm clothing in winter, or have friends with whom we like to spend time. This passage is similar to Lesson 76 "I am under no laws but God's," which we shall discuss in due course and where we shall issue the same caveat. Moreover, Jesus is not saying we should let go of our bodily concerns. That would be confusing levels – mind and body – which he warns us about in the text (see, e.g., T-2.IV.3:8-11). We *can* overlook our bodies physical and psychological – if we are in the real world, because at that point we *know* they are not our identity. But Jesus knows his students, and knows us well, and he wants us to be aware of the thought system on which dependencies (or special relationships) are based, and to understand the source of our trust in the things of the world. Only then can we make the meaningful choice against them. He continues with the source of these special attachments:

**(2) All these things are your replacements for the Love of God. All these things are cherished to ensure a body identification. They are songs of praise to the ego. Do not put your faith in the worthless. It will not sustain you.**

Again, Jesus is not saying we must give up anything that makes us feel better physically or mentally. However, he is saying we should be aware of our *dependence* on it, what in the text he refers to as *idols.* Such dependency is a statement that says God's Love is not enough; we want *more:*

> The world believes in idols. No one comes unless he worshipped them, and still attempts to seek for one that yet might offer him a gift reality does not contain. Each worshipper of idols harbors hope his special deities will give him more than other men possess. It must be more. It does not really matter more of what; more beauty, more intelligence, more wealth, or even more affliction and more pain. But more of something is an idol for. And when one fails another takes its place, with hope of finding more of something else. Be not deceived by forms the "something" takes. An idol is a means for getting more. And it is this that is against God's Will (T-29.VIII.8:4-13).

But we knew all this anyway, otherwise we would not be in the world, for no one

comes here, as we have just read, unless he seeks more than the love God has offered. Be careful not to use Jesus' teaching as a reason to club yourself or others over the head. However, *do* use it as a way of reminding yourself that the journey takes you through your specialness; a journey you cannot make until you first recognize your heavy involvement in it. Lessons like this, as well as much of the text, make that abundantly clear. We shall return to this theme over and over again, for the same reason Jesus does: The journey to Heaven through hell *is* the path Jesus leads us on, and understanding the journey's contours will enable us to be led gently home.

**(3) Only the Love of God will protect you in all circumstances. It will lift you out of every trial, and raise you high above all the perceived dangers of this world into a climate of perfect peace and safety. It will transport you into a state of mind that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God.**

Jesus is reminding us our goal is to walk through this dream without fear. When we can do so, we shall realize we are not in the dream at all: the dream figure we call ourselves but reflects a thought of love with which we are now identified. Remember this is a process, and in this lesson we are presented with the journey in its entirety: where we begin, the nature of the journey – going through our specialness – and then at last the journey's end.

**(4:1-4) Put not your faith in illusions. They will fail you. Put all your faith in the Love of God within you; eternal, changeless and forever unfailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today.**

There are many lovely sections and passages in the text about not putting our faith in illusions. We read, for example, this one on faithlessness, putting our faith in nothing:

> It is impossible that the Son of God lack faith, but he can choose where he would have it be. Faithlessness is not a lack of faith, but faith in nothing. Faith given to illusions does not lack power, for by it does the Son of God believe that he is powerless. Thus is he faithless to himself, but strong in faith in his illusions about himself (T-21.111.5:1-4).

The opening to "Seek Not Outside Yourself" summarizes the entire section:

> Seek not outside yourself. For it will fail, and you will weep each time an idol falls. Heaven cannot be found where it is not, and there can be no peace excepting there. Each idol that you worship when God calls will never answer in His place. There is no other answer you can substitute, and find the happiness His answer brings. Seek not outside yourself. For all your pain comes simply from a futile search for what you want, insisting where it must be found. (T-29.VII.1:1-7).

Whenever we are troubled, it is because we do not believe we are sustained by the Love of God. Still closer to the truth, we do not want to be sustained by the Love of God, choosing instead to be sustained by everything else, as long as it is outside our

minds. Looking at that horrid thought without judgment or guilt is the way to move beyond it to the state of true sinlessness, the innocence that is our natural Identity as God's Son.

**(4:5-8) Through the Love of God within you, you can resolve all seeming difficulties without effort and in sure confidence. Tell yourself this often today. It is a declaration of release from the belief in idols. It is your acknowledgment of the truth about yourself.**

The Love of God is the *content* that automatically heals all "seeming difficulties," which deal only with *form.* The ego, as we have already seen, literally made up the world of form – both collectively and individually – to keep us from choosing the *content* of the Atonement that ends the ego's reign in our minds. When the external problem is kept from the internal answer, the problem will never be solved, for it can but shift from one form to another. However, when brought to the truth within, it cannot help disappearing. As a later lesson on forgiveness puts it: "I will forgive, and this will disappear" (W-pI.193.13:3; italics omitted).

The reference to the idols, from which we are released, is special relationships. We invoke these substitutes for God's Love as replacements for what threatens our ego's existence, and which provide the illusion that our needs are met:

> Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind. They have the power to supply your lacks, and add the value that you do not have (T-29.VI11.2:1-4).

We can therefore see that Jesus' purpose for us in these lessons is to help us recognize the idol of specialness for what it is, so we can choose against it.

Jesus asks us now to sink into consciousness, which means going deeply into our minds, an instruction we have already seen, and which our chart (see Lesson 43) helps us envision:

**(5:1-3) For ten minutes, twice today, morning and evening, let the idea for today sink deep into your consciousness. Repeat it, think about it, let related thoughts come to help you recognize its truth, and allow peace to flow over you like a blanket of protection and surety. Let no idle and foolish thoughts enter to disturb the holy mind of the Son of God.**

The way to prevent these thoughts from disturbing your holy mind is through your recognition of them. Without such acknowledgment, they simply remain. The idea, again, is to see the "idle and foolish thoughts" of specialness in all its forms asking Jesus for help in understanding what they are, and even more importantly, what they are *for.*

**(5:4-5) Such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Such is the resting place where your Father has placed you forever.**

A lovely way to end this first major section of the workbook: the reminder of our ultimate goal.

## Lesson 50

This concludes the first 50 lessons, leading to the first review. We have seen how Jesus has given us an understanding of the journey, emphasizing the importance of taking seriously our study and practice of his course. This means, as we have discussed repeatedly, looking at our ego thoughts and asking Jesus' help. This process clearly implies the existence of our separated minds, split between the wrong-minded thought system of separation, guilt, and hate (the ego), and the right-minded correction of Atonement, forgiveness, and peace (the Holy Spirit). Thus are we trained by Jesus to recognize these two thought systems, asking for help to exercise our mind's power to choose the Teacher Who alone will bring us peace.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 51**
**REVIEW I Introduction**

I have often spoken of the symphonic structure of *A Course in Miracles,* and usually refer to the text when I do so, but the same holds true for the workbook as well. One of the characteristics of a symphonic work, especially those written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is that the opening movement has an *exposition* that presents the different themes, a *development* section that elaborates on them, and a *recapitulation* where the composer brings back the themes, but in a new way. This is what we find in the workbook.

Lessons 1 through 60, especially, demonstrate the masterfully symphonic way Jesus has organized his material. The first fifty lessons consist of the exposition and development of the various themes, and here in the first review they return, but presented differently. He explains this at the end of the Introduction, as we shall see presently. My discussion will focus on the major themes of these early workbook lessons – the heart of *A Course in Miracles* – and the ways in which Jesus integrates them in this review.

In general, we can summarize this movement of our symphony thusly: Just as the text begins with its central theme – the first principle of miracles: "There is no order of difficulty in miracles" (T-1.I.1:1) – so do we find the workbook's central theme in these early lessons "There is no order of difficulty in *perception*."

In the first three paragraphs Jesus instructs us how to proceed with the lessons, asking us to think about the ideas in the review "as often as possible" throughout the day:

**(1:1-3:2) Beginning with today we will have a series of review periods. Each of them will cover five of the ideas already presented, starting with the first and ending with the fiftieth. There will be a few short comments after each of the ideas, which you should consider in your review. In the practice periods, the exercises should be done as follows:**

**Begin the day by reading the five ideas, with the comments included. Thereafter, it is not necessary to follow any particular order in considering them, though each one should be practiced at least once. Devote two minutes or more to each practice period, thinking about the idea and the related comments after reading them over. Do this as often as possible during the day. If any one of the five ideas appeals to you more than the others, concentrate on that one. At the end of the day, however, be sure to review all of them once more.**

**It is not necessary to cover the comments that follow each idea either literally or thoroughly in the practice periods. Try, rather, to emphasize the central point, and think about it as part of your review of the idea to which it relates.**

We thus see Jesus' ongoing emphasis on thinking about, and applying these ideas throughout the day. Moreover, we note his insistence on the lesson's *content* – its "central point" – rather than its *form.* He is not seeking our literalness (i.e., compulsivity) in practicing, but our learning to generalize the lesson's message to whatever specific aspect of our day is meaningful.

**(3:3-4:1) After you have read the idea and the related comments, the exercises should be done with your eyes closed and when you are alone in a quiet place, if possible.**

**This is emphasized for practice periods at your stage of learning.**

These are two important sentences, wherein we see Jesus providing us with structured periods of meditation. In "I Need Do Nothing," on the other hand, he tells us this is not a course in contemplation or meditation (T-18.VII.4). He is certainly not against meditation, but that is not integral to the process of forgiveness. In this Introduction, Jesus indirectly cautions us about something he is more direct about in the teacher's manual ("How Should the Teacher of God Spend His Day?" [M-16]), which we have already discussed. The point, once again, is that when you have structured periods of learning or meditation, they easily become rituals and gods in their own right. In that sense they counteract Jesus' teachings on specialness. I emphasized in my lectures on the first fifty lessons that one of the principal goals of *A Course in Miracles,* well articulated in the workbook, is to have us learn to generalize. Therefore, if you can be with God, think of Jesus, or remember the lesson *only* during the structured practice periods, you are defeating their purpose. That is why Jesus specifically says "at your stage of learning." He is assuming that everyone is starting at the bottom of the ladder, and so he is essentially re-training our minds from the beginning. He is asking us to set aside everything we think we know about meditation, contemplation, prayer, and spirituality and let him teach us anew. Our teacher starts us off with structured and oftentimes simple exercises, but he does not want them to become special objects of attachment. Even though this is early in the workbook, Jesus is already issuing a word of caution about the potential misuse of these exercises.

**(4:2-3) It will be necessary, however, that you learn to require no special settings in which to apply what you have learned. You will need your learning most in situations that appear to be upsetting, rather than in those that already seem to be calm and quiet.**

Jesus is not saying there is anything wrong with arranging things externally in order to be comfortable when you meditate, but he does not want you to form a special relationship with your posture or breathing, the scent of your candle, the music, *A Course in Miracles,* or anything else. The emphasis should not be on modifying the external situation so you are happy, but on trying to change your thoughts so you would be *truly* happy, regardless of where you are or its conditions. Again, he is not against your doing anything that will help you relax, as long as you are vigilant for the ritualistic specialness which would act *against* your learning.

**(4:4-5) The purpose of your learning is to enable you to bring the quiet with you, and to heal distress and turmoil. This is not done by avoiding them and seeking a haven of isolation for yourself.**

To make this important point still again, Jesus is not saying we should not meditate and have structured periods of practice. In fact, that is precisely what this first part of the workbook has been all about. He is simply letting us know we are in the early stages of learning, and that he is going to take us far, far beyond where we are now. We get a glimpse of this "far, far beyond" in this lovely passage from the manual for teachers, given in the context of learning to practice the justice of the Holy Spirit:

> There is no inherent conflict between justice and truth; one is but the first

> small step in the direction of the other. The path becomes quite different as one goes along. Nor could all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene and the enormous opening vistas that rise to meet one as the journey continues, be foretold from the outset. Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds, fall short indeed of all that wait when the pathway ceases and time ends with it. But somewhere one must start. Justice is the beginning (M-19.2:4-9).

Structured periods of practice and meditation are thus the beginning.

**(5:1) You will yet learn that peace is part of you, and requires only that you be there to embrace any situation in which you are.**

The idea is that we would feel peaceful not only when all is quiet around us, but also, *and especially,* when everything seems to be falling apart: when we or our families are ravaged by sickness; when anger and accusations are rampant; and when we are in the midst of guilt, anxiety, terror, and any of the feelings that are an inherent part of our lives. These are the times when we especially need to think of Jesus and what he is teaching. It would obviously make no sense from a learning point of view if we could only turn to him and find peace when we were physically quiet. Our quiet times are simply part of the training program of learning to go *inside,* so that once comfortable with this process, we can call upon peace *whenever* we find ourselves turning to the ego for help, immediately recognizing the need to change our teacher.

**(5:2) And finally you will learn that there is no limit to where you are, so that your peace is everywhere, as you are.**

This is the ultimate goal of learning: to *generalize* the specific lessons and situations in which we are being taught so they apply to all relationships, all situations, at all times, and in all circumstances – without exception. If there is no world out there, which is the key metaphysical premise of *A Course in Miracles,* then the world is *inside* you. That is where peace is found. Further, if there is no world outside you, how can it affect you? That is what we need to learn, which we do through careful study and practice.

**(6:1-3) You will note that, for review purposes, some of the ideas are not given in quite their original form. Use them as they are given here. It is not necessary to return to the original statements, nor to apply the ideas as was suggested then.**

Note Jesus' flexibility, a model for us *not* to obsess about the *form* of these lessons, focusing instead on their underlying *content.*

The final sentence of the Introduction helps introduce what we shall be talking about as we proceed through this review:

**(6:4) We are now emphasizing the relationships among the first fifty of the ideas we have covered, and the cohesiveness of the thought system to which they are leading you.**

Restated, Jesus is saying that in these ten review lessons he will bring together these themes and show us how they are integrated: "the cohesiveness of the thought system." Understanding any one theme or concept in *A Course in Miracles* will automatically lead you to the others, reflecting its internal consistency. As I just mentioned, the predominant theme of these first fifty lessons is the correction of our misperceptions. We have seen again and again how much emphasis Jesus places on our learning that our thoughts determine the world we see, elaborating on the principle he gives us twice in the text: *projection makes perception* (T-13.V.3:5; T-21.in.1:1). We first look within and recognize with horror our thoughts of sin, guilt, and fear – specifically in this context, thoughts of attack and judgment – which we then project. These projections become the *cause* of the world we perceive outside us, which in our distorted experience appears as the *effect.* Thus Jesus teaches us this is a course in cause and not effect, as we have already seen (T-21.VII.7:8). In other words, this is not a course in changing the world or our behavior, but in changing our thoughts, laden with judgment and attack.

When Jesus tells us that what we call thinking is not thinking at all, it is because we are thinking in opposition to him and God. What opposes God and His loving Oneness does not exist. Therefore, our thoughts of attack, anxiety, and judgment do not exist. Within our delusional minds, however, we most certainly think they do. We project these illusory thoughts of separation and hate, and see a world that does not exist because it comes from thoughts that are not really there. It is therefore our thinking that is the problem, from which we have to be saved. Salvation thus teaches us to correct our misthoughts, choosing the consequence of peace instead of conflict. This familiar statement near the end of the text is worth another look, to which we add an additional sentence:

> Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts. It does not concern itself with content of the mind, but with the simple statement that it thinks. And what can think has choice, and can be shown that different thoughts have different consequence (T-31.V.14:3-5).

Another major theme is decision, or changing our minds, and so a major thrust of these lessons is helping us realize what we are doing so that we can change our minds from thoughts of anger and judgment to forgiveness and peace. When we choose those thoughts they automatically extend, and we make the transition to what Jesus refers to as "vision." The external world does not necessarily change; indeed, many times it does not change at all. What changes is the way we perceive the world, which means the way we interpret it. Continuing with the process of forgiveness is what ultimately leads to Christ's vision, or the perception of the Holy Spirit that sees and knows the inherent sameness of God's one Son.

To summarize: The central themes – there are several subsidiary ones which we shall look at as well – are realizing the connection between our attack thoughts and the world we see; and recognizing Jesus' appeal that we change our minds and allow him to be the source of what we see, thus attaining true vision. Of the many themes of these ten review lessons, vision is by far the most important, as we shall now see.

## LESSON 51

The review for today covers the following ideas:

Before beginning, let me mention something that probably has eluded almost all students of *A Course in Miracles,* certainly the non-obsessive ones. Helen had *insisted* to Jesus that each of the one-sentence introductions to the day's review be different. And you will surely be impressed to discover how many different ways Jesus can say that "the review for today covers the following ideas."

**(1)** (1) **Nothing I see means anything.**

In these early lessons Jesus emphasizes that what we see does not mean anything because what we see comes from misthoughts of judgment and attack.

**(1:2-5) The reason this is so is that I see nothing, and nothing has no meaning. It is necessary that I recognize this, that I may learn to see. What I think I see now is taking the place of vision. I must let it go by realizing it has no meaning, so that vision may take its place.**

While Jesus does not use the term here, he points out to us that we have a split mind. We have the capacity of seeing through the vision of the Holy Spirit, but to ensure that that does not happen we cover those loving thoughts with thoughts of attack and separation. Indeed, we cannot achieve the goal of vision if we do not first recognize and understand the inherent illusory and meaningless nature of our perceptions. It is these misperceptions that we have deliberately chosen to take the place of vision, fulfilling the ego's purpose of protecting itself – really, our separated self protecting its separate identity that prevents us from discovering the only meaning for being in this world: forgiveness.

**(2)** (2) **I have given what I see all the meaning it has for me.**

**(2:2-4) I have judged everything I look upon, and it is this and only this I see. This is not vision. It is merely an illusion of reality, because my judgments have been made quite apart from reality.**

This restates the teaching that the world we see is not there simply because it comes from our judgmental thoughts, which also are not there. Remember, every thought in the ego system is a defense against the truth of the Atonement principle, which is that we never left God. Everything we perceive is a shadowy fragment of the original judgment that we separated from our Source and reality, the fundamental illusion from which all others come.

**(2:5-6) I am willing to recognize the lack of validity in my judgments, because I want to see. My judgments have hurt me, and I do not want to see according to them.**

Jesus is appealing to our sane, rational minds to understand that what we are doing with our thoughts, and therefore with the perceived world, hurts us: "My judgments have hurt me." The ego has set up its defensive system as a huge gap between our

attack thoughts and the pain that is their effect. This gap is represented by the world of time and space, its purpose being to enable us to feel justified in attributing our pain to "things beyond [us], forces [we] cannot control" (T-19.IV-D.7 :4). That, of course, is the wonder of projection from the ego's point of view. We wind up feeling assured that we are not responsible for the pain that results from our choosing against God and His Love: others, our bodies, or the world are the cause of our distress – anyone or anything *but* ourselves.

Thus the idea of these lessons is to bring the *effect* to the *cause,* so we can realize it is our judgments alone that have hurt us. In so doing we restore to awareness the power of our minds to decide our own destiny: happiness or misery, peace or conflict.

**(3)** (3) **I do not understand anything I see.**

**(3:2-4) How could I understand what I see when I have judged it amiss? What I see is the projection of my own errors of thought. I do not understand what I see because it is not understandable.**

This is the beginning of humility. We are always so sure we are right: what I see is what I see, what I hear is what I hear, and my understanding of a situation is what I say it is because I say it is. If we are skillful enough, we get a multitude of people to agree with us. That is not sanity, but collective *insanity!* In French this is known as *folie a deux:* a delusion shared by two people. But it could just as easily be ten, hundreds, thousands, millions, if not billions, for we all share the same insanity. We therefore cannot truly understand anything, nor go to anyone else for true understanding. If at any point we feel specialness, judgment, or separation, we should not trust anything we conclude based on those feelings; we will inevitably be wrong.

**(3:5-8) There is no sense in trying to understand it. But there is every reason to let it go, and make room for what can be seen and understood and loved. I can exchange what I see now for this merely by being willing to do so. Is not this a better choice than the one I made before?**

The way in which we attain vision is by the simple willingness to do so. Over and over we see Jesus appealing to the power of our minds to *choose:* vision or judgment, happiness or misery, peace or pain. What makes it possible for us to choose differently is becoming aware that we do indeed have the power to make this choice, and this power resides in our minds, not in the world or body.

**(4)** (4) **These thoughts do not mean anything.**

**(4:2) The thoughts of which I am aware do not mean anything because I am trying to think without God.**

This is the bottom line. Representing God is the Holy Spirit, Jesus, or the thoughts of these lessons. If we are not thinking in harmony with these thoughts – i.e., if we are holding on to grievances, attack thoughts, or specialness needs in any way, shape, or form – we are *not* thinking, and anything that results from not thinking must also be nonexistent. Remember, cause and effect are never separate. Illusions can

merely breed further illusions.

**(4:3) What I call "my" thoughts are not my real thoughts.**

The reason is that they are "my" thoughts. Jesus wants us to learn that whenever we say "this is mine" or "this is me," and whenever we speak of "my" thoughts, perceptions, or body, everything that follows will be wrong because it would be based upon separation and specialness. At the ontological beginning, the ego said to God: "This is mine. This is *my* self, not yours. I am no longer part of you and I am right!" This attitude is always wrong because the Sonship of God is one, and there can be no true distinction among the seemingly different Sons. The belief in personal possession or special identity is the cover for the impersonal and non-special Self that we share with all, *as* All.

**(4:4-5) My real thoughts are the thoughts I think with God. I am not aware of them because I have made my thoughts to take their place.**

Jesus repeatedly tells us we have made our own thoughts to replace the thoughts we think with God, and we have done so because we want to be an "I." We cherish the first person *singular* and the first person possessive *singular.* It is not "our," the ego tells us, but "mine."

**(4:6-8) I am willing to recognize that my thoughts do not mean anything, and to let them go. I choose to have them be replaced by what they were intended to replace. My thoughts are meaningless, but all creation lies in the thoughts I think with God.**

Again, Jesus is reminding us that we have a choice, and he encourages us to make that choice to have *our* thoughts be replaced by *God's* thoughts – His Son as He created Him.

**(5)** (5) **I am never upset for the reason I think.**

**(5:2) I am never upset for the reason I think because I am constantly trying to justify my thoughts.**

Once we make the decision to be an individual and a first person possessive singular, we constantly try to justify that existence. This is the role of the face of innocence: It is not my fault, and I gather together as many people as possible to justify the perception of myself as a victim. This is never difficult to do, by the way, because the vastness of the world supplies an almost endless number of potential objects for our projections. Moreover, what makes it interesting is that we *all* seek to justify our face of innocence, thereby ensuring that we continue to exist as separated individuals *but that others will be responsible for the sin.* Therefore, it is they who will be punished for the sin that is no longer found in us.

**(5:3-7) I am constantly trying to make them true. I make all things my enemies, so that my anger is justified and my attacks are warranted. I have not realized how much I have misused everything I see by assigning this role to it. I**

**have done this to defend a thought system that has hurt me, and that I no longer want. I am willing to let it go.**

Students doing the workbook for the first time usually do not pay careful attention to what they are reading. However, if they continue studying *A Course in Miracles* over many years and read the workbook much more carefully, which I strongly recommend, they will be astounded at what Jesus is actually saying; statements such as we have just read being prime examples.

Jesus here is putting words in our mouths, hoping we shall keep them there: We are now deciding we are glad we were wrong, and even happier to realize there is someone else within us who is right. This involves letting go of our anger, judgments, and arrogance; our devotion to specialness; and ultimately our individuality. We need to withdraw our investment in using others as reinforcement for our defense of projection, putting them either in the category of special love or special hate – objects with whom we seem to join, or from whom we seem to separate. Either way, our ego's need to demonstrate its innocence is fulfilled through attack and judgment, making others guilty of the sins we have projected onto them, magically hoping we can escape punishment through this insane and magical dynamic. Now we can happily say we choose otherwise.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 52**

Today's review covers these ideas:

As discussed above, we find here the continual weaving of themes from the early lessons. In this set Jesus introduces forgiveness.

**(1:1)** (6) **I am upset because I see what is not there.**

**(1:2-8) Reality is never frightening. It is impossible that it could upset me. Reality brings only perfect peace. When I am upset, it is always because I have replaced reality with illusions I made up. The illusions are upsetting because I have given them reality, and thus regard reality as an illusion. Nothing in God's creation is affected in any way by this confusion of mine. I am always upset by nothing.**

This is an example of why we cannot study this course, let alone practice it, without understanding its underlying metaphysics. That is not necessarily a requirement for those just starting out with *A Course in Miracles,* but as we go along we see how its underlying metaphysics is present all the way through. Thus, if the world out there comes from our thoughts, which do not exist, the world must not exist either. It therefore makes no sense to be upset by it.

The truth is that we fear reality because it represents the end of our delusional thought system of separation, which includes the insane idea we can and do exist apart from God. It is thus our egos that fear the decision for reality. That is why Jesus teaches in the text that we "are not really afraid of crucifixion. [Our] real terror is of redemption" (T-13.III.1:10-11). However, the ego teaches that reality is to be feared because of what we did to it; namely, separated from its love, thereby destroying it. Thus we deserve to be punished for our sin. However, the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle is that we *never* separated from God, and therefore there is nothing to fear. Nothing happened – "Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4) – and without the belief in sin, there can be no fear of punishment. The ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear is made up. Nothing, therefore, can only lead to nothing, to paraphrase King Lear's outburst.

**(2:1)** (7) **I see only the past.**

**(2:2-4) As I look about, I condemn the world I look upon. I call this seeing. I hold the past against everyone and everything, making them my enemies.**

Once again we see that if we understood the Course's metaphysics, we would quickly realize why these lines are true. We began our existence as individuals by making God our enemy, and then, as one Son, projected that thought, making up a world of billions and billions of fragments. But the ontological thought came with us, and exists in each individual fragment. Thus the prevalence of *one or the other* in our thinking and experience: If I am to exist, everyone else must be killed. We people our world with many special love partners, however, so that our ultimate goal is not apparent. Nevertheless, we hold the past against everyone and everything, making them our enemies. And what is the past? Sin. We sinned in the past, projected it out, and now see it in everyone else. What we think we see, therefore – a world of separation and sin – is not really there at all, and thus is not *seeing.* Our arrogance in all this lies in that we

really believe we think, see, hear, and especially that we understand.

**(2:5-7) When I have forgiven myself and remembered Who I am, I will bless everyone and everything I see. There will be no past, and therefore no enemies. And I will look with love on all that I failed to see before.**

It is not only that I *will* bless everyone, I *must* bless everyone, because if there is only God's blessing within my mind, that is all I can ever see. Again, if I realize I am a child of God, I am not separate from Him. Thus, there is no sin, and without sin there is no past. Obviously, then, there is nothing to project. What remains is the blessing of love on all things, for we have blessed ourselves with the thought of forgiveness.

**(3:1)** (8) My **mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.**

**(3:2-3) I see only my own thoughts, and my mind is preoccupied with the past. What, then, can I see as it is?**

Vision is impossible as long as I believe I am separated and special, as long as I think that I count, am important, am wonderful, and on and on and on – the *me, myself and I* syndrome. These are but ways of asserting that I exist and, moreover, that I demand to be treated with the dignity I deserve. Needless to say, hidden in back of this is that I want you *not* to treat me this way, because then my ego is home free: I have become the eternal victim, and you the eternal victimizer. I get to keep my ego's cake of separation, eat, and enjoy every guilty morsel, too.

**(3:4) Let me remember that I look on the past to prevent the present from dawning on my mind.**

If we read this carefully we can recognize a clear statement of purpose: "Let me remember that I look on the past to prevent the present from dawning on my mind." There is a purpose for our holding on to the past and our attack thoughts. That is what keeps the present, the holy instant, and Jesus' love from "dawning on my mind." In the presence of his love we can no longer exist as special and hate-filled individuals. That is the fear: losing our special identity.

**(3:5-6) Let me understand that I am trying to use time against God. Let me learn to give the past away, realizing that in so doing I am giving up nothing.**

Again, we see the purpose behind our world of time and space. The ego uses its linear time – *past, present,* and *future* – as the way of reinforcing its underlying thought system of *sin, guilt,* and *fear*. In this way, the Everything of God is prevented by the nothingness of the ego from being remembered.

**(4:1)** (9) **I see nothing as it is now.**

**(4:2-4) If I see nothing as it is now, it can truly be said that I see nothing. I can see only what is now. The choice is not whether to see the past or the present; the choice is merely whether to see or not.**

We cannot see the past, because there is no past, no sin, no separation. Thus what we think we see – which includes what I remember happening in the past and whatever I am seeing now – is a projection of our sinful past on to others. Consequently, what we are seeing is not there at all, and that characterizes our insanity.

**(4:5) What I have chosen to see has cost me vision.**

That is precisely why I have chosen to see it! The vision of Christ sees the Sonship as one, in which there are no special, important people. We are all the same. This *sameness* of purpose reflects the *Sameness* of God's one Son. Perception originated in the need to defend against knowledge, which is remembered through Christ's vision.

**(4:6) Now I would choose again, that I may see.**

Note the recurring emphasis on the power of our minds to choose. Even if we are not yet ready to make this choice – vision still being too frightening – we can at least recognize the possibility of choice, and forgive ourselves for not yet being able to make it.

**(5:1))** (10) My **thoughts do not mean anything.**

**(5:2-5) I have no private thoughts. Yet it is only private thoughts of which I am aware. What can these thoughts mean? They do not exist, and so they mean nothing.**

My thoughts mean nothing because they are "my" thoughts. They are based on separation and exclusivity, and so are based on the exact opposite of Heaven's Oneness, our *non-specific,* and thus *non private* reality.

**(5:6-7) Yet my mind is part of creation and part of its Creator. Would I not rather join the thinking of the universe than to obscure all that is really mine with my pitiful and meaningless "private" thoughts?**

Importantly, Jesus says "all that is really mine," not what I *think* is mine, which are but a few scraps of specialness. What is *really* mine are the gifts of Heaven: love, eternal life, real freedom, and perfect oneness.

Obviously Jesus does not think very much of our individuality, and he implores us not to think very much of it, either. The problem is that we value it much more than we ever thought we did. As we work seriously with *A Course in Miracles,* it becomes clearer and clearer how much we do value our individuality, how much we do have serious authority problems, and how we do not want anyone to tell us anything other than what we believe is true. We need to be aware of this arrogance without judging ourselves; to realize that, yes, this is where my thoughts are coming from, and they are just a silly mistake.

It is apparent as one reads through *A Course in Miracles,* not just these lessons, that Jesus is persistently consistent in presenting the truth to us, and does not judge us for our illusions. He makes fun of us occasionally, but his attitude is certainly not punitive. He simply says: "Will you please recognize that you are wrong and I am right.

As long as you continue to think otherwise, you will not be happy. I am not the one who will punish you; *you* will punish you. I wait patiently for you, but why delay your happiness?" As he asks us twice later in the workbook: "Why wait for Heaven?" (W-pI.13 1.6:1; W-pI.188.1:1)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 53**

Today we will review the following:

We see here a direct connection pointed out to us between our thoughts and the world, even though Jesus has made this connection before.

**(1:1)** (11) My **meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world.**

**(1:2-4) Since the thoughts of which I am aware do not mean anything, the world that pictures them can have no meaning. What is producing this world is insane, and so is what it produces. Reality is not insane, and I have real thoughts as well as insane ones.**

Our thoughts of individuality, sinfulness, specialness, etc., have produced this world. Therefore, since the cause of the world is my insane thoughts, then the world, as the effect, must be equally insane. *Cause* and *effect* are never separated, for they are one. Reality, however, is not insane, despite the ego's protestations to the contrary. It tells us God is insane, vengeful, and angry, yet "[He] thinks otherwise" (T-2312:7). As he did in the first fifty lessons, Jesus explains that we have a split mind, containing unreal thoughts of hate, and real thoughts of love. It remains for us to choose which ones we shall make real for ourselves. He tries to help us realize how miserable and unhappy we become when we choose the unreal thoughts of attack, judgment, and specialness. It is that misery that will ultimately impel us to choose again:

> Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point (T-2.III.3:5-7).

**(1:5) I can therefore see a real world, if I look to my real thoughts as my guide for seeing.**

This is the world of vision, the *inner* world in which there are no thoughts of separation or judgment; the world of thought that is beyond the dream of hate, wherein we are able at last to see the dream for what it is. From there it is only an instant longer until God reaches down and lifts us to himself, the *last step* in our journey, as we see depicted in this lovely statement:

> And then your Father will lean down to you and take the last step for you, by raising you unto Himself (T-11.VIII.15:5).

We shall return to a discussion of the real world later.

**(2:1)** (12) **I am upset because I see a meaningless world.**

**(2:2-7) Insane thoughts are upsetting. They produce a world in which there is no order anywhere. Only chaos rules a world that represents chaotic thinking, and chaos has no laws. I cannot live in peace in such a world. I am grateful that this world is not real, and that I need not see it at all unless I choose to value it. And I do not choose to value what is totally insane and has no meaning.**

In "The Laws of Chaos" Jesus puts the word "laws" in quotation marks, signifying they are not really laws because they make no sense; the only *true* laws are the laws of God. Jesus does not do so here, but the meaning is the same: "chaos has no laws."

Before we can elect *not* to value what is "totally insane," we first have to accept that the world is totally insane. What helps us realize this is that the world makes us totally unhappy. Our specialness desires – even when they are fulfilled and gratified – do not make us happy and do not bring us the peace of God. They bring us the peace of the ego, but not Heaven's peace. The ultimate reason our insane thoughts are so upsetting is that they remind us of our original insane thought, which we believe will lead to our punishment. In the ominous words of the ego, depicted in this powerful passage from the manual, we read (and tremble!) about the effect of our insane thought of separation, placed in the context of magic thoughts, recognized in another and/or in ourselves:

> They [magic thoughts] can but reawaken sleeping guilt, which you have hidden but have not let go. Each one says clearly to your frightened mind, "You have usurped the place of God. Think not He has forgotten." Here we have the fear of God most starkly represented. For in that thought has guilt already raised madness to the throne of God Himself. And now there is no hope. Except to kill. Here is salvation now. An angry father pursues his guilty son. Kill or be killed, for here alone is choice. Beyond this there is none, for what was done cannot be done without. The stain of blood can never be removed, and anyone who bears this stain on him must meet with death (M-17.7:2-13).

Forgiveness allows us to examine the destructive insanity of such a thought system, helping us accept it for what it is; a recognition for which we can only be deeply grateful, as its miracle leads beyond insane magic to the pure sanity of eternal life.

**(3:1)** (13) **A meaningless world engenders fear.**

**(3:2-5) The totally insane engenders fear because it is completely undependable, and offers no grounds for trust. Nothing in madness is dependable. It holds out no safety and no hope. But such a world is not real.**

The only reality is Heaven, which is totally dependable because it is certain: There is only God. This world, as we all have experienced it, is not dependable. It was made to be so. That is what lets us know that the world and our experience of it are not real. Once again, it is our guilt, born of the belief in sin, that leads us to expect certain punishment and to trust no one. The best we can do is protect ourselves from certain attack by utilizing various defenses, which serve only to maintain the separation that established the need for defenses in the first place. Thus the vicious cycles of guilt and attack, and attack and defense, continue and continue and continue. They will always continue, until their fundamental premises are exposed to the truth.

**(3:6-8) I have given it the illusion of reality, and have suffered from my belief in it. Now I choose to withdraw this belief, and place my trust in reality. In choosing this, I will escape all the effects of the world of fear, because I am acknowledging that it does not exist.**

Again, it is essential that we make the connection between our suffering (the *effect)* and our thoughts of judgment, attack, and specialness (the *cause).* We do not escape the world of fear by use of our armaments – attempts to control, manipulate, and seduce. We control the world only by realizing there is no world to control. What does need to be controlled, however, are our thoughts, as Jesus gently admonished Helen, to repeat an earlier quote: "You are much too tolerant of mind wandering" (T-2.VI.4:6). Most of the time there is nothing we can do about the uncertain world, but we certainly can do something about our uncertain thoughts. And we must, for they serve a vitally important purpose. They keep us here, holding intact our individuality, self-concepts, and very existence. Recognizing the purpose of our thoughts enables us to exert the power of decision to change the ego's goal of separation to the Holy Spirit's goal of Atonement. By changing the ego's underlying purpose we are able to escape its effects of pain, anxiety, and fear.

**(4:1)** (14) **God did not create a meaningless world.**

**(4:2-6) How can a meaningless world exist if God did not create it? He is the Source of all meaning, and everything that is real is in His Mind. It is in my mind too, because He created it with me. Why should I continue to suffer from the effects of my own insane thoughts, when the perfection of creation is my home? Let me remember the power of my decision, and recognize where I really abide.**

You can see how Jesus returns over and over to the core symphonic themes of these lessons: reality, illusion, and the power of our minds to choose between them. The point here is extremely important, because the problem is that we have forgotten that we have such power to choose. The ego set up its series of defenses so we would never remember that we have a mind, let alone a mind that can choose. Thus were the body and brain made to keep our minds hidden from us, replaced by the mindless state of living in a body that is governed by a brain that thinks it thinks, but in reality only carries out the thoughts of the unconscious mind. These thoughts are but two: the ego belief that the meaningless has triumphed over the meaningful; and the Holy Spirit's Atonement that the ego thought is unreal because it is outside the Mind of God. Thus it has no effects. Despite my feverish dreams to the contrary, I remain at home in God, held in memory in my right mind by the Holy Spirit. Now I can remember and choose again.

**(5:1)** (15) My **thoughts are images that I have made.**

**(5:2-4) Whatever I see reflects my thoughts. It is my thoughts that tell me where I am and what I am. The fact that I see a world in which there is suffering and loss and death shows me that I am seeing only the representation of my insane thoughts, and am not allowing my real thoughts to cast their beneficent light on what I see.**

This points out a crucial dimension of anyone's work with *A Course in Miracles.* Many of its students tend to deny they see a world of suffering, loss, and death. Instead they proclaim the world is really wonderful – part of God's or Jesus' plan; moreover, the new millennium will bring healing everywhere it is needed, bathing us all in light. The

The witnesses we look upon are the witnesses we send out. This is an implied reference to “The Attraction of Guilt” in the “Obstacles to Peace” (T-19.IV-A.i). We send out messengers of love or fear, and what we send out we see outside us, which become the witnesses that show what we have chosen. If we are angry or upset, stubborn or having a temper tantrum, that tells us we have sent out messengers of guilt, fear, hatred, and certainly separation. It is these external witnesses we make real in our perception, seeing them outside rather than in our selves. Another passage in the text illustrates the important role our perceptions play in healing. By observing the witnesses in the world I perceive, I am taught to see them as reflecting a decision I made in my mind. Only then can I exercise the mind’s power to change this decision:

> Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God. If you behold disaster and catastrophe, you tried to crucify him. If you see holiness and hope, you joined the Will of God to set him free. There is no choice that lies between these two decisions. And you will see the witness to the choice you made, and learn from this to recognize which one you chose (T-2 1.in.2: 1 -6).

(5:4-5) I would behold the proof that what has been done through me has enabled love to re place fear, laughter to replace tears, and abun dance to replace loss. I would look upon the real world, and let it teach me that my will and the Will of God ar e one.

Thus will we know which choice we made by paying careful attention to what we perceive around us. We cannot be reminded too often that perception is not an objective fact, but always an interpretation. When A Course in Miracles teaches us to look at what we perceive, Jesus is not speaking of looking out and seeing a desk or a book, a tree or a person. Rather, we are being instructed to look at the way we perceive objects, people, and situations. In other words, do we perceive proof of the Atonement principle, or proof of separation? Again, what we perceive will reveal to us what our minds have chosen. Perceptions of love or calls for love reflect the decision to accept the Atonement, and this unequivocal choice ushers in the real world and the happy

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 55**

Today's review includes the following:

**(1:1)** (21) **I am determined to see things differently.**

Jesus is now appealing directly to the power of our minds to choose.

**(1:2) What I see now are but signs of disease, disaster and death.**

In deference to Helen, I like to point out alliteration when it appears. Note the three d's: *disease, disaster, and death.* Again, it is important we perceive disease, disaster, and death all around us, *not* love, hope, and joy, for there is none. Indeed, the world was made *not* to be a place of love, hope, or joy. If we do not recognize this, we will have no motivation for changing our mind. We will believe in our arrogance that we have already changed it by virtue of our having perceived light instead of darkness, love instead of hate, life instead of death. We believe what our egos have programmed us to believe, which is why we need to question the value of having chosen the ego as our teacher.

**(1:3-5) This cannot be what God created for His beloved Son. The very fact that I see such things is proof that I do not understand God. Therefore I also do not understand His Son.**

This at least is a good initial step, because if we think we are looking on a world of light, peace, and joy, we will believe we understand God, Jesus, and, unfortunately, his course. Acknowledging that what we see "are the signs of disease, disaster and death" is the beginning of the humility that reaches to Wisdom. We begin by denying the ego's thought system of denial, and gradually, step by step, we are led by Jesus to understand that spirit and ego are mutually exclusive states, and so are love and hate, life and death, joy and pain. To make one real is to deny the other.

**(1:6-7) What I see tells me that I do not know who I am. I am determined to see the witnesses to the truth in me, rather than those which show me an illusion of myself.**

Once having learned to tell the difference between *form* and *content,* we call upon our new Teacher to help us see truly, the vision of Christ that reminds us who we are – along with our brothers – as God's one Son.

**(2:1)** (22) **What I see is a form of vengeance.**

**(2:2-3) The world I see is hardly the representation of loving thoughts. It is a picture of attack on everything by everything.**

This is the same point Jesus was making earlier, saying the world we see represents an attack on "everything by everyone." There are no exceptions. If we think we see a loving world, we will believe there are only loving thoughts within and so we will not look at the unloving ones. By not looking, the unloving thoughts remain buried in our minds, and whatever is buried has the terrible habit of finding its way out – the dynamic of projection – and attacking everyone else. Because we are not aware that the source

of our attack is our minds' unloving thoughts, we will not be aware that we are the ones who did this. We will actually think that because we think we have only loving thoughts, our attacks and judgments of others are loving, too. That is why it is important to see the world for what it is and recognize its source. Only when we look with Jesus at the unloving thoughts in our minds and forgive them, will we realize that underneath the unloving thoughts and concealed by them are the loving ones we have always had.

**(2:4-6) It is anything but a reflection of the Love of God and the love of His Son. It is my own attack thoughts that give rise to this picture. My loving thoughts will save me from this perception of the world, and give me the peace God intended me to have.**

The unloving nature of the world is again unmistakably depicted in Jesus' words: "It is anything but a reflection of the Love of God and the love of His Son." The last sentence is carefully phrased: "My loving thoughts will save me from this perception of the world." The problem is the *perception.* It is not the world. Disease, disaster, and death do not exist out there, because *there is no out there.* They exist in a mind that is filled with guilt, hatred, and terror. Therefore it is the *perception* that has to be changed, not the world: "Seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.in.1:7). Our perception is changed by first bringing it back from its projected form to its source, the *mind.* Only then, as we have already seen, can we exercise the mind's power of decision and choose the loving thought of the Atonement instead of the unloving thought of separation.

**(3:1)** (23) **I can escape from this world by giving up attack thoughts.**

**(3:2-5) Herein lies salvation, and nowhere else. Without attack thoughts I could not see a world of attack. As forgiveness allows love to return to my awareness, I will see a world of peace and safety and joy. And it is this I choose to see, in place of what I look on now.**

One could not ask for a more explicit statement of salvation. We are not saved from the world or from some abstract sense of sin, but from our own thoughts. To escape the horrors of the world – Hamlet's "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" – one need only look with Jesus at our horrifying thoughts. Joined with his gentle laughter at the silliness of the ego's thought system of attack, we watch its thoughts slowly dissolve into their own nothingness. Looking out, we perceive only "peace and safety and joy," the world of forgiveness given form.

**(4:1)** (24) **I do not perceive my own best interests.**

**(4:2-3) How could I recognize my own best interests when I do not know who I am? What I think are my best interests would merely bind me closer to the world of illusions.**

I do not know who I am because *I* think *"I* am," with the emphasis on the I. I actually think there is an "I" here, therefore I do not know who I am. How, then, could I possibly know what is best for me? What we think is best is always some glorification, gratification, or anything that will preserve our illusory identity as an individual "I."

**(4:4) I am willing to follow the Guide God has given me to find out what my own best interests are, recognizing that I cannot perceive them by myself.**

That we cannot do this without help is an extremely important theme throughout *A Course in Miracles.* There is no way we can do this without the Holy Spirit's or Jesus' help. Humility says: "I do not know, I do not understand, but thank God there is Someone in me who does, and thank God He is right and I am wrong." That is why Jesus says that he needs us as much we need him (T-8.V.6:10): he cannot help us *unless* we ask him to. We see this "collaborative venture" (T-4.VI.8:2) expressed in the statement we have already seen in its full context: "Together we have the lamp that will dispel it [the ego's thought system]" (T-11.V.1:3). Jesus cannot accomplish this without us, and we certainly cannot accomplish it without him!

The next set emphasizes the important theme of purpose, which, to state it again, is not emphasized as much here as it is in many other places in *A Course in Miracles.*

**(5:1)** (25) **I do not know what anything is for.**

**(5:2-3) To me, the purpose of everything is to prove that my illusions about myself are real. It is for this purpose that I attempt to use everyone and everything.**

Everything we think, and everything we see in the world has the purpose of proving we are right. That is the very reason for having made the world in the first place: What God did we can do even better. There are no exceptions in this *either-or* thought system. Just as holiness and love do not make exceptions on the side of love, specialness does not make any exceptions, either. We either love or hate, forgive or attack; but there is no in between: If my self is real, then my Self is not; and, to the ego's dismay, *vice versa.* As a much later lesson puts it: "Let me not forget myself is nothing, but my Self is all" (W-pII.358.1:7).

**(5:4-6) It is for this that I believe the world is for. Therefore I do not recognize its real purpose. The purpose I have given the world has led to a frightening picture of it.**

I have used the world to fulfill my purpose of proving I am right; i.e., that the illusion about my individuality is the truth. This means I killed God so I could exist. However, in my right mind I understand how I have used the world to fulfill the purpose of making attack real and justified. If I am to exist, everyone has to be sacrificed to my selfish desire. If I am trying to do it to you – since everyone out there is part of the dream I made up – I know you are trying to do the same thing to me. This inevitably produces a world of fear, not safety, for our guilt can only cause a world of perceived punishment and death. But now I gladly choose otherwise.

**(5:7) Let me open my mind to the world's real purpose by withdrawing the one I have given it, and learning the truth about it.**

Here, too, it is clear that Jesus and *A Course in Miracles* cannot do it for us, but can only remind us we have to withdraw our beliefs about the world. We need to open

our minds by withdrawing the purpose we gave to the world. In other words, again, we have to say (and mean!) that we were wrong. Only then can we recognize the world's true purpose of forgiveness, the pathway that leads us home through the power of our mind to decide for God instead of *against* Him.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 56**

Our review for today covers the following:

**(1:1)** (26) **My attack thoughts are attacking my invulnerability.**

**(1:2) How can I know who I am when I see myself as under constant attack?**

I have to see myself as under constant attack because I am attacking everyone else. That is why the lesson is entitled: "My attack thoughts are attacking my invulnerability." I am truly invulnerable as God's Son, but in identifying with the ego I see myself as vulnerable, because guilt demands punishment and I feel victimized by God's counterattack. If I believe everyone else is going to attack me, I cannot be as God created me – innocent and invulnerable. Thus, the ego reasons to me, if it can prove that God's Son *is* truly vulnerable – the purpose of the body – then how could I be God's Son? This reasoning is clearly presented in the following passage from "What is the Body?" to which we shall return much, much later in this series:

> For the Son of God's impermanence is "proof' his fences [bodies] work, and do the task his mind assigns to them. For if his oneness still remained untouched, who could attack and who could be attacked? Who could be victor? Who could be his prey? Who could be victim? Who the murderer? And if he did not die, what "proof' is there that God's eternal Son can be destroyed? (W-pII.5.2:3-9)

**(1:3) Pain, illness, loss, age and death seem to threaten me.**

Again, it is essential to realize we are living in a world of pain, illness, loss, age, and death; a world deliberately chosen by our egos to prove that its thought system of separation is right and the Holy Spirit's Atonement is wrong.

**(1:4-5) All my hopes and wishes and plans appear to be at the mercy of a world I cannot control. Yet perfect security and complete fulfillment are my inheritance.**

Jesus once again is showing us we have a split mind, and that we can choose whether we will see ourselves as living in a state of constant terror, fear, and vulnerability, or in a state of constant safety. It is not true that we are, again, "at the mercy of things beyond [us], forces [we] cannot control" (T-19.IV-D.7:4), for the truth is that our "Self is ruler of the universe" (W-p11.253).

**(1:6-8) I have tried to give my inheritance away in exchange for the world I see. But God has kept my inheritance safe for me. My own real thoughts will teach me what it is.**

It cannot be said often enough that in order for us to access our real thoughts, we first have to let go of our unreal ones, which we cannot do without knowing they are there. We learn this happy fact by understanding that the world we perceive is the one we made, and is therefore unreal: a projection of our unreal thoughts of separation and guilt. Our true inheritance is as a beloved and treasured Child of God, not the ego's child of guilt and fear. As Jesus concludes "The Treasure of God":

> What God has willed for you *is* yours. He has given His Will to His treasure, whose treasure it is. Your heart lies where your treasure is, as His does. You who are beloved of God are wholly blessed (T-8.VI.10:1-4).

**(2:1)** (27) **Above all else I want to see.**

**(2:2-6) Recognizing that what I see reflects what I think I am, I realize that vision is my greatest need. The world I see attests to the fearful nature of the self-image I have made. If I would remember who I am, it is essential that I let this image of myself go. As it is replaced by truth, vision will surely be given me. And with this vision, I will look upon the world and on myself with charity and love.**

Jesus always comes back to the same central ideas: Our perceptions reflect our self-image – child of God or child of the ego – and vision corrects the vicious and fearful misperceptions of the ego, reflecting our Identity as spirit. Vision thus *undoes* the ego's thought system. As we are taught in the text: The ego always speaks first (T-5.VI.3:5), and the Holy Spirit is the Answer.

> The ego speaks in judgment, and the Holy Spirit reverses its decision, much as a higher court has the power to reverse a lower court's decision in this world. The ego's decisions are always wrong, because they are based on the error they were made to uphold (T-5.VI.4:1-2).

With vision replacing judgment, we look out on a unified world of peace and love, regardless of what our physical eyes behold.

**(3:1)** (28) **Above all else I want to see differently.**

**(3:2-3) The world I see holds my fearful self-image in place, and guarantees its continuance. While I see the world as I see it now, truth cannot enter my awareness.**

The projected world's purpose is to keep my fearful self-image in place. This foreshadows an important statement in Part II of the workbook, speaking of our unforgiving thoughts:

> An unforgiving thought is one which makes a judgment that it will not raise to doubt, although it is not true. The mind is closed, and will not be released. The thought protects projection, tightening its chains, so that distortions are more veiled and more obscure; less easily accessible to doubt, and further kept from reason. What can come between a fixed projection and the aim that it has chosen as its wanted goal? (W-pII.1.2)

Thus do our projections enable the ego to protect its self-concept of separation and hate, since that concept is now perceived to be external to the mind that is its source. This is the self-concept that says I am an individual, which individuality I purchased at the cost of sin. This sin must be punished, and therefore I deserve to be afraid. Nothing really has changed except that now I believe I am not the source of the

fear, which has its source in something outside me. Certain of what I see, I never question my perception. Without my perception being questioned, my condition of fear and pain cannot be answered by the Holy Spirit.

**(3:4) I would let the door behind this world be opened for me, that I may look past it to the world that reflects the Love of God.**

The one who opens the door for us is Jesus, but we must *let* him do it, by asking his help to bring our illusions of attack to his truth of forgiveness. This real world of complete forgiveness reflects God's Love, which waits just beyond the door held open by Jesus:

> Christ is at God's altar, waiting to welcome His Son.... The door is not barred, and it is impossible that you cannot enter the place where God would have you be.... You can refuse to enter, but you cannot bar the door that Christ holds open. Come unto me who hold it open for you, for while I live it cannot be shut, and I live forever (T-11.IV.6:1,3,5-6).

**(4:1)** (29) **God is in everything I see.**

**(4:2-4) Behind every image I have made, the truth remains unchanged. Behind every veil I have drawn across the face of love, its light remains undimmed. Beyond all my insane wishes is my will, united with the Will of my Father.**

As in lessons one through fifty, Jesus emphasizes the nature of our right minds. The wrong mind is filled with thoughts of attack: disease, suffering, death, murder, and judgment. He helps us realize that these thoughts are covering something else. However, the fact that he tells us this does not mean we need not go through the work of choosing the *something else,* but at least now we are aware of what it is we choose between. It is not that I choose *kill or be killed* – do I kill you or do you kill me? I choose miracles *or* murder (T-23.IV.9:8). This passage tells us there is another thought system in our minds, awaiting our choice. It also implies there is a *purpose* inherent in our having chosen attack over love: the wish to preserve our identity – chosen in separation and forged in hate – by proving we are right and God is wrong. Thus we chose to live in darkness, and believed it to be real *because we believed it.*

**(4:5-6) God is still everywhere and in everything forever. And we who are part of Him will yet look past all appearances, and recognize the truth beyond them all.**

Jesus reassures us that the "outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10), for we shall surely make the right choice – as any good Platonist would – between appearance and reality. Our fervent attempts to the contrary, we remain as God created us, powerless to change the resplendent truth about ourselves. Thus do we see a world reflecting back to us the radiant reality of God's Love.

**(5:1)** (30) **God is in everything I see because God is in my mind.**

**Lesson 56**

**(5:2-5) In my own mind, behind all my insane thoughts of separation and attack, is the knowledge that all is one forever. I have not lost the knowledge of Who I am because I have forgotten it. It has been kept for me in the Mind of God, Who has not left His Thoughts. And I, who am among them, am one with them and one with Him.**

Held for us by the Holy Spirit is the memory of the knowledge that we never truly separated ourselves from God. Early in the text Jesus says that "to lose something does not mean it has gone. It merely means that you do not remember where it is" (T-3.VI.9:3-4). The same is true here: Even though we have lost the knowledge of who we are and have forgotten our Source, it does not mean His Love is not fully present in our minds. Such reassurances are replete in *A Course in Miracles.* Here are two of them:

> The Father keeps what He created safe. You cannot touch it with the false ideas you made, because it was created not by you. Let not your foolish fancies frighten you. What is immortal cannot be attacked; what is but temporal has no effect (T-24.VII.5:1-4).

> You can lose sight of oneness, but can not make sacrifice of its reality. Nor can you lose what you would sacrifice, nor keep the Holy Spirit from His task of showing you that it has not been lost (T-2616:1-2).

What remains is the acceptance of Jesus' certainty, which points to our mind and the memory of the Oneness that created us one with Him.

Lesson 57

Today let us review these ideas:

(1:1) (31) I am not the victim of the world I see.

(1:2-9) How can I be the victim of a world that can be completely undone if I so choose? My chains are loosened. I can drop them off merely by desiring to do so. The pris on door is open. I can leave simply by walking out. Nothing holds me in this world. Only my wish to stay keeps me a prisoner. I would give up my insane wishes and walk into the sunlight at last.

We find this compelling because we feel we are victims. If this is a world we made, which is what Jesus has been teaching us from the beginning, the world is not the problem. *The fact that we made it is the problem* – "How can [we] be the victim of a world that can be completely undone if [we] so choose?"

We have to be willing to admit we have been wrong about everything. What makes us believe we are right is our experience of being victimized by everything else. Remember, the "everything else" is not only others' bodies, but our own as well. The body is exclusively outside the mind, the source of our true identity.

The analogy to a prisoner walking into the sunlight refers to Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave in *The Republic.* It is worth summarizing – albeit briefly – as Jesus makes more specific reference to it in the text.* The allegory is set in a cave, where prisoners are chained in such a fashion that they can see only the interior wall of the cave, unknowing of the opening behind them, through which streams the sun's rays, casting shadows onto the wall, of the passers-by along the road that runs past the mouth of the cave. Thus the prisoners believe that the shadows are the reality, since they know of nothing else. One of the prisoners (representing Plato's esteemed teacher Socrates) is freed and, turning around and making his way to the light, begins to understand the difference between appearance and reality. Returning to teach his companions the truth, he frees them, only to meet with murder at the hands of those still fearful of truth's light. Here, then, are the two specific references in the text:

> Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free. It takes a while for them to understand what freedom is. (1-20.111.9: 1-2).

> Eyes become used to darkness, and the light of brilliant day seems painful to the eyes grown long accustomed to the dim effects perceived at twilight. And they turn away from sunlight and the clarity it brings to what they look upon. Dimness seems better; easier to see, and better recognized. Somehow the vague and more obscure seems easier to look upon; less painful to the eyes than what is wholly clear and unambiguous. Yet this is not what eyes are for, and who can say that he prefers the darkness and maintain he wants to see? (T-25.VI.2)

Thus we recognize we have been our own jailors, and now can make the only sensible decision available to us: leave the darkness for the light. Our chains of guilt and attack were simply the unwillingness to open our eyes and *see,* and now we choose vision. The next paragraph repeats the lesson:

Lesson 57

(2:1) (32) I have invented the world I see.

(2:2-3) I made up the prison in which I see my self. All I need do is recognize this and I am free.

That is why Jesus keeps saying this is a simple course. All we need do is realize we made this up; that the world is an hallucination (T-20.VIII.7) everything we think is hurting us is not true. The key to unlocking this illusory prison of darkness has always been in our minds. Now at last we have the teacher and path that help us realize this joyous fact is indeed so.

(2:4-8) I have deluded myself into believing it is possible to imprison the Son of God. I was bitterly mistaken in this belief, which I no longer want. The Son of God must be forever free. He is as God created him, and not what I would make of him. He is where God would have him be, and not where I thought to hold him prisoner.

This is a theme that becomes prominent later in the workbook: Lessons 94, 110, 162, and Review VI. If we are as God created us, everything the ego and its world have taught us is false. Their "light" deceived us, and once we recognize it was *self*-deceiving we can do something about it by choosing differently, leaving the world of darkness forever and returning the world of light – "where God would have us be" – to our awareness.

(3:1) (33) There is another way of looking at the world.

(3:2-3) Since the purpose of the world is not the one I ascribed to it, there must be another way of looking at it. I see everything upside down, and my thoughts are the opposite of truth.

In order to be able to look at the world "another way," a key statement in *A Course in Miracles,* we need the humility to admit we are wrong. It is always helpful to be vigilant, to realize how stubbornly we insist we are right, not only in the blatant ways of believing the separation is real, but in the subtle and everyday ways of being so certain our perceptions of others are correct.

(3:4-6) I see the world as a prison for God's Son. It must be, then, that the world is really a place where he can be set free. I would look upon the world as it is, and see it as a place where the Son of God finds his freedom.

Clearly the reference here is not to the world itself, but to our *perceptions* of the world; and even more to the point, the *purpose* we have given it. If we have given the world the purpose of imprisoning us, it will do so. If, on the other hand, we have given it the purpose of forgiveness and release, we are free. We shall return to this important theme presently. For now we can remember that the shift in purpose entails a shift in teachers, therein shifting our perception of the world from a prison of guilt to a classroom of forgiveness.

(4:1) (34) I could see peace instead of this.

**(3:1)** (38) **There is nothing my holiness cannot do.**

**(3:2-3) My holiness is unlimited in its power to heal, because it is unlimited in its power to save. What is there to be saved from except illusions?**

We are not saved from the world, nor from some terrible fate, and we do not save the world for other people. We are saved from our misthoughts, the mistakes coming from having chosen the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That has nothing to do with the world, but everything to do with our illusory thoughts. Again, it is a salvation that heals as one, because there is only one illusion in one Son.

**(3:4-6) And what are all illusions except false ideas about myself? My holiness undoes them all by asserting the truth about me. In the presence of my holiness, which I share with God Himself, all idols vanish.**

Again and again we see Jesus returning to this central point: Our misperceptions are caused by the one misperception of ourselves – we are not as God created us. When this one misthought is healed, all the ego's mistaken images – the idols of specialness – are undone as well: one problem, one misperception of unholiness; one solution, one vision of holiness.

**(4:1)** (39) **My holiness is my salvation.**

**(4:2-3) Since my holiness saves me from all guilt, recognizing my holiness is recognizing my salvation. It is also recognizing the salvation of the world.**

Jesus' symphonic theme continues, in an almost endless series of wonderful variations. The one

**and is with me forever. I am eternally blessed as His Son.**

All loss, deprivation, and pain arise because we have forgotten who we are. That is the problem, without exception, which is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles (T-1.I.1:1). When we drop Jesus' hand and take the ego's instead, we are automatically in pain. Following the ego's strategy to protect our wrong decision, we put a gap between the cause of the pain and our experience of it, and think we understand its source – the world, our special partner, our bodies, our food, or whatever – and thus are never able to recognize the real cause in our minds. When we at last come to our senses and realize our mistake, we return to the thought of Atonement that reflects our true Self, an Identity that is perfectly safe because It is beyond all thoughts of pain and loss. Awakening from the ego's dream of suffering, we are home with the God we never truly left.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 59**

The following ideas are for review today:

In Lesson 59 we again find the theme of who we are as God's Son, and the wonderful and wondrous effects of coming to understand and accept its truth.

**(1:1)** (41) **God goes with me wherever I go.**

**(1:2-7)) How can I be alone when God always goes with me? How can I be doubtful and unsure of myself when perfect certainty abides in Him? How can I be disturbed by anything when He rests in me in absolute peace? How can I suffer when love and joy surround me through Him? Let me not cherish illusions about my self. I am perfect because God goes with me wherever I go.**

It is not that God literally walks with us. Rather, Jesus teaches that God is with us because His Love is in our minds, which is where we are. It is this Love – our Self – that is the basis for undoing the thought of separation: the home of all illusions of suffering and pain.

All that is needed for this Love to return to awareness is calling upon the power of our minds to choose, one of *A Course in Miracles'* most important themes, to which we now turn:

**(2:1-2)** (42) **God is my strength. Vision is His gift.**

**(2:3-6) Let me not look to my own eyes to see today. Let me be willing to exchange my pitiful illusion of seeing for the vision that is given by God. Christ's vision is His gift, and He has given it to me. Let me call upon this gift today, so that this day may help me to understand eternity.**

We always have a choice about the thought system with which we identify, made possible once we remember that our feelings of dis-ease and disturbance emanate from the mind's mistaken choice, and from nowhere else. Thus do we exchange the ego's misperceptions for the vision of Christ, exclusion for unity, separation for forgiveness, and time for eternity.

**(3:1-2)** (43) **God is my Source. I cannot see apart from Him.**

**(3:3-7) I can see what God wants me to see. I cannot see anything else. Beyond His Will lie only illusions. It is these I choose when I think I can see apart from Him. It is these I choose when I try to see through the body's eyes.**

Again, all misperceptions stem from the illusory belief we can be apart from God; the Idea of God's Son, which we are, can leave its Source. Thus does our thought of separation give rise to a world of separation, which we believe is there because we believe we see it. The body's eyes have now replaced vision, a substitution that remains in place until we change our minds.

**(3:8-9) Yet the vision of Christ has been given me to replace them. It is through this vision that I choose to see.**

**Lesson 59**

*A Course in Miracles* has as its purpose the change in mind that allows *vision* to replace the ego's *seeing.* This vision cannot come unless we make a choice that says: I have been thinking and perceiving wrongly. I know there is another way, because there has to be another way of feeling. I am not happy, and want to be at peace. I therefore let go of my investment in being right. Thus does our desire for true peace and happiness become the motivation for choosing vision to replace illusions.

**(4:1)** (44) **God is the light in which I see.**

**(4:2-4) I cannot see in darkness. God is the only light. Therefore, if I am to see, it must be through Him.**

As the text reminds us: "Vision [or light] or judgment [darkness] is your choice, but never both of these" (T-20.V.4:7). We choose one or the other, and in our right-minded choice is all the world made free.

**(4:5-7) I have tried to define what seeing is. and I have been wrong. Now it is given me to understand that God is the light in which I see. Let me welcome vision and the happy world it will show me.**

I have to realize I have been wrong about everything I see, and everything I think I understand. How often does Jesus remind us of this happy fact; happy indeed when we are not identified with the ego's stubborn insistence that it is right and God is wrong. This happy acceptance of the truth is the birthplace of our humility, leading to Christ's vision that blesses the world along with me.

The lesson closes with a return to the thought of Oneness, which undoes the world because it undoes the separated mind:

**(5:1)** (45) **God is the Mind with which I think.**

**(5:2-4) I have no thoughts I do not share with God. I have no thoughts apart from Him, because I have no mind apart from His. As part of His Mind, my thoughts are His and His Thoughts are mine.**

Remember, the ego system is born of the idea that our thoughts are our own, God's thoughts are His, and never the twain shall meet. Not only that, we tell God what His thoughts are. This insane arrogance forms the basis of the second law of chaos (T-23.II.4-6), wherein God becomes as insane as we:

> The arrogance on which the laws of chaos stand could not be more apparent than emerges here. Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. It is not seen as even necessary that He be asked about the truth of what has been established for His belief His Son can tell Him this, and He has but the choice whether to take his word for it or be mistaken (T-23.II.6:1-4).

The insanity of such a belief is easily corrected once we recognize its sheer madness. The clouds of separation quickly disperse in this return to sanity, and we

rejoice in the Oneness of Love that has never been changed, and which remains as the Thought of our Self, at one with the Sonship and the Mind of God.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 60**

These ideas are for today's review:

This final lesson returns to forgiveness, the central theme in Jesus' symphony of love and truth.

**(1:1)** (46) **God is the Love in which I forgive.**

**(1:2-3) God does not forgive because He has never condemned. The blameless cannot blame, and those who have accepted their innocence see nothing to forgive.**

The fact that God does not forgive becomes the basis for our forgiveness in the dream. Forgiveness is necessary only as the correction for condemnation. When judgment of ourselves is withdrawn, our judgment of others is withdrawn as well: the *idea* of judgment can never leave its *source.* We are thus asked by Jesus to accept our past mistakes, thereby accepting the light-filled innocence that rests in peace just beyond the darkness of our belief in sin. With condemnation gone, nothing remains to forgive.

**(1:4-6) Yet forgiveness is the means by which I will recognize my innocence. It is the reflection of God's Love on earth. It will bring me near enough to Heaven that the Love of God can reach down to me and raise me up to Him.**

That is the problem: We do not want to be lifted up to Heaven, for then our individuality disappears. Recognizing our innocence allows us to realize how sinful and guilty we believed we were, because we wanted to be apart from God. Seeing the pain that has resulted from such a belief, we can make the choice for sanity. No longer afraid of God's *last step,* which ends the process that our decision to forgive our brother began, we allow His Love to lift us back from earth to Heaven.

Another important theme in these five lessons, not to mention throughout *A Course in Miracles,* is that we do not forgive on our own, as we now see:

**(2:1)** (47) **God is the strength in which I trust.**

**(2:2-3) It is not my own strength through which I forgive. It is through the strength of God in me, which I am remembering as I forgive.**

I am not the one who forgives you. I can only ask the Holy Spirit for help in looking at you differently, because the way I am looking at you now is not making me happy. The bottom line is recognizing there are painful effects of my choosing to be right, selfish, and special. I thus lay aside the weakness of my petty strength, choosing instead the strength of Christ that is restored to my awareness through forgiveness.

**(2:4-6) As I begin to see, I recognize His reflection on earth. I forgive all things because I feel the stirring of His strength in me. And I begin to remember the Love I chose to forget, but which has not forgotten me.**

The problem again is simply that we have forgotten. Yet forgetting is active. We have chosen to forget because we wanted to remember the weakness of our

individuality instead of Christ's strength. However, forgetting our Identity did not destroy it. Our Self merely waited for us to change our minds, effected by our change of perception: from judgment to vision, weakness to strength.

Paragraph 3 returns us to the real world:

**(3:1)** (48) **There is nothing to fear.**

**(3:2-4) How safe the world will look to me when I can see it! It will not look anything like what I imagine I see now. Everyone and everything I see will lean toward me to bless me.**

Once we choose the place of perfect safety in our minds, represented by Jesus, the world we experience outside will be its mirror. It cannot *not* be that way, since *ideas leave not their source.* The beauty of this forgiven world is reflected in this lovely passage from the text:

> Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? In no fantasy have you ever seen anything so lovely. Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near to such loveliness. And nothing will you value like unto this, nor hold so dear. Nothing that you remember that made your heart sing with joy has ever brought you even a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you. For you will see the Son of God. You will behold the beauty the Holy Spirit loves to look upon, and which He thanks the Father for. He was created to see this for you, until you learned to see it for yourself. And all His teaching leads to seeing it and giving thanks with Him.
>
> This loveliness is not a fantasy. It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. Nothing is hidden here, for everything has been forgiven and there are no fantasies to hide the truth (T-17.II.1:1-2:3).

Recalling this beauty will help us choose again when we are tempted to make real the ego's ugly world of specialness.

Note the usage of "everyone" and "everything" in 3:4 to describe our vision. If anyone or anything is excluded from the light of safety, all the world is plunged in darkness, the shadow of our mind's darkened thoughts of guilt.

**(3:5-6) I will recognize in everyone my dearest Friend. What could there be to fear in a world that I have forgiven, and that has forgiven me?**

This is the vision of Christ, in which the entire Sonship is perceived through the eyes of holiness. Not one aspect of the Son is excluded, and with separation gone, so is all fear, which had been the inevitable result of our belief in sin and guilt. This vision is nicely captured in the opening lines in Helen's very first poem, "The Gifts of Christmas":

> Christ passes no one by. By this you know
> He is God's Son. You recognize His touch
> In universal gentleness. His Love
> Extends to everyone. His eyes behold
> The Love of God in everything He sees.

With such love beside and within us, fear is impossible; its place taken by the love forgiveness brings.

**(4:1)** (49) **God's Voice speaks to me all through the day.**

**(4:2-3) There is not a moment in which God's Voice ceases to call on my forgiveness to save me. There is not a moment in which His Voice fails to direct my thoughts, guide my actions and lead my feet.**

As I had mentioned when we did Lesson 49, this does not mean we *hear* His Voice all through the day; it simply means He is *calling* to us throughout the day. This is the Call we fervently and ferociously try to conceal – the purpose of the world we have made; the purpose of our specialness thoughts of attack, judgment, and desire. These are easily set aside when we decide we no longer wish to hear the ego's raucous shrieking. The stunning yet gentle silence of God's Voice returns in the instant we wish to hear its sound, and *only* its sound. Thus does God's sweet song of love extend all through the dream, guiding our thoughts, words, and deeds.

**(4:4-5) I am walking steadily on toward truth. There is nowhere else I can go, because God's Voice is the only Voice and the only Guide that has been given to His Son.**

There is nothing else. Any other pathway we choose is nothing and leads nowhere, because it comes from a voice that does not exist. The loveliness of this recognition is described in these beautiful closing paragraphs in "The Real Alternative," which reminds us that as a Thought of God we have never left our Source; the road back to Him undoes the road that never existed in reality:

> He has not left His Thoughts! But you forgot His Presence and remembered not His Love. No pathway in the world can lead to Him, nor any worldly goal be one with His. What road in all the world will lead within, when every road was made to separate the journey from the purpose it must have unless it be but futile wandering? All roads that lead away from what you are will lead you to confusion and despair. Yet has He never left His Thoughts to die, without their Source forever in themselves.
>
> He has not left His Thoughts! He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in Their Oneness Both are kept complete. There is no road that leads away from Him. A journey from yourself does not exist. How foolish and insane it is to think that there could be a road with such an aim! Where could it go? And how could you be made to travel on it, walking there without your own reality at one with you?
>
> Forgive yourself your madness, and forget all senseless journeys and all goal-less aims. They have no meaning. You can not escape from what you are. For God is merciful, and did not let His Son abandon Him. For what He is be thankful, for in that is your escape from madness and from death. Nowhere but where He is can you be found. There is no path that does not lead to Him (T-3 LIV.9-11).

And finally, the symphonic movement that is this review ends with a return to its central theme; the cycle of love concluding with the love and wisdom with which it began:

**(5:1)** (50) **I am sustained by the Love of God.**

**(5:2-4) As I listen to God's Voice, I am sustained by His Love. As I open my eyes, His Love lights up the world for me to see. As I forgive, His Love reminds me that His Son is sinless.**

And who is His Son? I am. Since we are all one, when I realize my sinlessness I realize everyone is sinless, too. It cannot *not* be, if God's Love is His Love.

**(5:5) And as I look upon the world with the vision He has given me, I remember that I am His Son.**

Jesus ends this movement of his symphony with the attainment of our ultimate goal. The way we reach the vision of the real world is by paying careful attention to the external world, so it can teach us that the *outside* minors the *inside.* The pain of our experience as bodies, interacting with other bodies, becomes the motivation to cry out for the other way, the other Teacher. Thus we come to change our minds, choose the Holy Spirit's Thought as the source of our seeing, and look out upon a world through Christ's vision. The real world greets our sight, and we finally remember Who we are as God's one Son, gladly exclaiming these words from Part II of the workbook:

> Be glad today! Be glad! There is no room for anything but joy and thanks today. Our Father has redeemed His Son this day. Not one of us but will be saved today. Not one who will remain in fear, and none the Father will not gather to Himself, awake in Heaven in the Heart of Love (W-pII.340.2).

Thus we end this heavenly movement with a happy thought of Oneness, the thought that ends the nightmare dream of illusion and joyfully awakens us to the remembrance of our Father's Love.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 61**

**I am the light of the world.**

The lesson's title is taken from the gospels, specifically where Jesus tells his disciples: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Here, as in many other places in *A Course in Miracles,* we see how Jesus takes an idea from traditional Christianity and gives it a totally different interpretation. The gospel understanding was that the disciples' function was to bring that light to the world – literally, to the physical world.

It is easy for students of *A Course in Miracles* who are unaware of its underlying teaching to mistake this gospel exhortation for what Jesus means in this lesson. He is *not* saying we should bring the light into the world, because *there is no world.* By saying we are the light of the world he refers to the light of Christ shining in our minds. Because the mind of God's Son is one (a subsidiary theme in these lessons, yet a continually recurring one), that light is shared by the Sonship as a whole. We are not asked to be spiritually special persons who bear the light because Jesus gave it to us, and then charged us with the function of spreading it to the multitudes. Rather, he is reminding us – God's one Son who has the illusion of fragmentation – we *all* are the light of the world. This, then, corrects the ego's self-concept bequeathed to each of us: we are the *darkness* of the world. In fact, Lesson 93 begins: "You think you are the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1). That is the illusion we bring to the light-filled truth about ourselves.

Our arrogance and pride is expressed in holding the thought: "I am the light of the world, but you are not. There is something special about me, and in my beneficent holiness I will bring you that light, giving you what you do not have." Such arrogance reflects the spiritual specialness that I have something you lack. In *The Song of Prayer* Jesus discusses this dynamic – "healing-to-separate" – in the context of healers who believe *they* are the healers, giving healing to one who is sick, and therefore separate from them. The following passage applies as well to what we can call "light bearing-to-separate":

> Someone knows better, has been better trained, or is perhaps more talented and wise. Therefore, he can give healing to the one who stands beneath him in his patronage.... How can that be? True healing cannot come from inequality assumed and then accepted as the truth, and used to help restore the wounded and to calm the mind that suffers from the agony of doubt.... You do not make yourself the bearer of the special gift that brings the healing. You but recognize your oneness with the one who calls for help. For in this oneness is his separate sense dispelled, and it is this that made him sick. There is no point in giving remedy apart from where the source of sickness is, for never thus can it be truly healed (S-3.111.2:4-5; 3:3-4; 4:5-8).

The darkness that needs healing, regardless of its form, resides in the mind that believes in separation. The light that heals also resides in the mind, and each of us carries both – the darkness of guilt and the light of Atonement. Choosing the light is healing for ourselves *and* the world, for the light of Christ shines in God's Son as one, there being only *one* light. To believe anything else is the ego's specialness at work. Its deception lies not only in the separation, but also in what specialness covers: the belief I am really the darkness of the world.

Therefore, in the workbook, as well as in the rest of *A Course in Miracles,* we are taught that our function is to remind ourselves we are the light of the world, having made

the choice against the ego's darkness. Our acceptance of that fact of the Atonement serves as a reminder for everyone else to make the same choice we have. Jesus thus begins the lesson by contrasting the light of our true Identity with the ego's darkened self of arrogance and delusion:

**(1) Who is the light of the world except God's Son? This, then, is merely a statement of the truth about yourself. It is the opposite of a statement of pride, of arrogance, or of self-deception. It does not describe the self-concept you have made. It does not refer to any of the characteristics with which you have endowed your idols. It refers to you as you were created by God. It simply states the truth.**

Later in the workbook, the theme that we are as God created us becomes central, as I mentioned earlier. However, here once again Jesus shows us the other side. He wants us to understand what we believe about ourselves – "the [sinful and guilty] self-concept you have made" – at the same time he wants us also to remember that these self-concepts are a defense against our true Self: the light of Christ.

**(2:1-2) To the ego, today's idea is the epitome of self-glorification. But the ego does not understand humility, mistaking it for self-debasement.**

To the ego, "I am the light of the world" means, again: "I have something you lack." Likewise, to the ego, humility means self-debasement, a meaning held by many, many people. This traditional Christian version of humility commonly finds expression in assertions such as: "I am a miserable sinner. But only because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ am I saved." Perhaps the most famous of all prayers of the Orthodox Church is the "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Appearances to the contrary, this is really the height of arrogance, because it says there can be a sinful self that is independent of, and separate from the glorious Self that God created. An important passage from the text reflects the ego's false humility:

> A major tenet in the ego's insane religion is that sin is not error but truth, and it is innocence that would deceive. Purity is seen as arrogance, and the acceptance of the self as sinful is perceived as holiness. And it is this doctrine that replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever. Is this humility? Or is it, rather, an attempt to wrest creation away from truth, and keep it separate? (T-19.11.4)

**(2:3-5) Humility consists of accepting your role in salvation and in taking no other. It is not humility to insist you cannot be the light of the world if that is the function God assigned to you. It is only arrogance that would assert this function cannot be for you, and arrogance is always of the ego.**

Another important theme appearing here is *function. A Course in Miracles* teaches that our function is to accept the Atonement for ourselves, to accept the fact that our seeming sins are forgiven. It is not our function to do anything with anyone else, the reason being, ultimately, *there is no one else.* We are but to ask Jesus' help in healing our minds, for thus we realize that the mind of God's Son is one. Once healed, we become a symbol of healing and right-minded choice – light instead of darkness – for everyone else.

Again, if we take words in *A Course in Miracles* at face value, without understanding their content, we could wind up with ideas that are the exact opposite of what Jesus is teaching, making the same kinds of mistakes Christianity and so many religions and spiritualities have made throughout history. The statements we have just considered are prime examples of this mistake, as they seem to endorse spiritual specialness, one of the ego's most effective defenses against the truth of our reality as God's *one* Son.

**(3) True humility requires that you accept today's idea because it is God's Voice which tells you it is true. This is a beginning step in accepting your real function on earth. It is a giant stride toward taking your rightful place in salvation. It is a positive assertion of your right to be saved, and an acknowledgment of the power that is given you to save others.**

In the text Jesus explains in several places that our function on earth is to forgive or heal, and our function in Heaven is to create. For example:

> Do the Holy Spirit's work, for you share in His function. As your function in Heaven is creation, so your function on earth is healing. God shares His function with you in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit shares His with you on earth (T-12.VII.4:6-8).

This lesson thus refers to our function of accepting our own salvation, that the Holy Spirit may extend it through us. It is also evident that Jesus is talking about a process: *"a beginning step* in accepting your real function on earth ... *a giant stride* toward taking your rightful place in salvation." This is not something we do overnight, and he is not expecting his students to do Lesson 61 in the morning, be healed in the afternoon, and made whole by evening as they enter the real world. We are *beginning* to change our minds about what we believe we are. We shall return again and again to this important theme of process.

**(4) You will want to think about this idea as often as possible today. It is the perfect answer to all illusions, and therefore to all temptation. It brings all the images you have made about yourself to the truth, and helps you depart in peace, unburdened and certain of your purpose.**

This is an unmistakable reference to the theme of bringing the darkness to the light, or the illusion to the truth. As we have discussed previously, Jesus is not saying we should use these workbook thoughts as affirmations to cover or shout down our misperceptions about ourselves. He is asking us rather to look at our misperceptions, realizing our terrible self-concepts and images. Looking at these with Jesus constitutes bringing them to his truth, which we cannot do if we do not know they are there.

Again, nothing in the workbook should ever be taken as analogous to affirmations that ask us to drown out the ego thought system. This corrects the predominant New Age emphasis on affirmations, which is an example of using truth as a cover for illusion. As he does throughout the workbook, Jesus gives us the other side. In addition to emphasizing our wrong-minded beliefs about ourselves, he also emphasizes the truth about ourselves; not that we would cover the illusion with the truth, but that we would be aware we have a choice. I have pointed out many times the importance *A Course in*

*Miracles* places on the power of our minds to choose. However, we cannot make a meaningful choice if we do not know what we are choosing *between.* That is why Jesus sets forth for us in no uncertain terms that we have a wrong mind – the ego's voice that lies – and a right mind – the Holy Spirit's Voice that speaks the truth.

**(5) As many practice periods as possible should be undertaken today, although each one need not exceed a minute or two. They should begin with telling yourself:**

*I* ***am the light*** *of* ***the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here.***

**Then think about these statements for a short while, preferably with your eyes closed if the situation permits. Let a few related thoughts come to you, and repeat the idea to yourself if your mind wanders away from the central thought.**

Note Jesus again urging us to recall the thought for the day as often as possible, reminding us of the truth of our Identity, *to which we bring* the ego's shabby substitute of guilt and judgment. Note, too, how Jesus is expecting us to mind wander, and gently encourages us to overcome our fear and return to the truth of his teaching.

**(6) Be sure both to begin and end the day with a practice period. Thus you will awaken with an acknowledgment of the truth about yourself, reinforce it throughout the day, and turn to sleep as you reaffirm your function and your only purpose here. These two practice periods may be longer than the rest, if you find them helpful and want to extend them.**

Jesus' methodology should be recognizable by now. He wants us continually to remember the truth about ourselves, so that we have an ongoing standard against which we can evaluate the ego's delusions. He also allows us the freedom to do more than he asks, if we are comfortable.

**(7:1-4) Today's idea goes far beyond the ego's petty views of what you are and what your purpose is. As a bringer of salvation, this is obviously necessary. This is the first of a number of giant steps we will take in the next few weeks. Try today to begin to build a firm foundation for these advances.**

Jesus lets us know that he knows about our choice for the ego – "the ego's petty views of what you are" – and so there is no need to deny it. Moreover, it is because of this choice against our Self that time is required to feel less and less confidence in the ego's petty thought system of guilt and fear. Once again, Jesus' words reflect the process of choosing against our resistance and for the truth. These lessons thus become the building blocks on which we will construct a totally new concept of ourselves – one gentle step at a time.

**(7:4-6) Try today to begin to build a firm foundation for these advances. You are the light of the world. God has built His plan for the salvation of His Son on you.**

Finally, Jesus encourages us to have faith in his process of forgiveness as he

reminds us of our purpose, and how important these early lessons are in achieving our goal: remembering the light that is our Identity, brought about by forgetting the darkness of the ego's shabby substitute of the separated and guilt-ridden self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 62**

**Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.**

The theme of replacing the ego's image of ourselves for Jesus' vision continues in this and the next lesson. He begins to clarify what it means to say that our function is to be the light of the world, telling us our function is to forgive. As we know from our study of the text, and from what we have already seen in our discussions of the workbook, forgiveness is a process that does not occur between two people, but in our *minds,* within the context of a relationship between ourselves and someone else. It is not really that I forgive you; but rather that I forgive the projection of my self-concept of guilt I placed onto you. That is indeed all I can forgive, for everything else in my perceptual world is a projection of this guilt.

**(1) It is your forgiveness that will bring the world of darkness to the light. It is your forgiveness that lets you recognize the light in which you see. Forgiveness is the demonstration that you are the light of the world. Through your forgiveness does the truth about yourself return to your memory. Therefore, in your forgiveness lies your salvation.**

Here again, Jesus articulates for us the crucial theme of bringing darkness to light. We "recognize the light in which we see" because forgiveness removes the veils of darkness that prevent our vision. It does nothing about the light, but simply removes the interference to seeing the light. Once done, the light is what remains in our awareness.

As we have seen many, many times, *A Course in Miracles* is not about the light or the truth. Its ongoing and consistent focus is on recognizing the darkness, with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit – the essence of forgiveness. We are thus not saved *for* the light, but saved *from* the darkness.

**(2:1-2) Illusions about yourself and the world are one. That is why all forgiveness is a gift to yourself.**

This rests on the principle we have seen before: *ideas leave not their source.* The world is nothing more than an idea we made up, and which we projected from its source in our minds. Therefore Jesus is telling us that whatever illusions we hold against others are the illusions we hold about ourselves. This is the fact because, again, *ideas leave not their source.* Even though the principle is not stated here, it is reflected. Thus forgiveness is not a gift we give to another person. It is a gift we give to ourselves.

**(2:3) Your goal is to find out who you are, having denied your Identity by attacking creation and its Creator.**

That is what we did as one Son in the original instant. We chose to forget Who we are as Christ, at one with our Source, and chose instead to see ourselves as individuals, separated from perfect Oneness. That is what gave rise to the ego's wrong-minded thought system, and therefore it is in the mind that we need correction. Before we can remember our Identity, we first have to undo the terrible things we taught ourselves about ourselves. To recall an important statement about our focus, which we shall use as a recurring motif throughout this book:

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the

barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it is necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6:1-2).

Thus we find out who we are by first finding out who we are *not.*

**(2:4-5) Now you are learning how to remember the truth. For this attack must be replaced by forgiveness, so that thoughts of life may replace thoughts of death.**

It cannot be said too often that before we can undo our attack thoughts, we first have to recognize and accept that we have them. Forgiveness makes no sense if we are not first aware of what needs to be forgiven and undone. That is why it is highly important – I cannot emphasize this enough, either – that as a student of *A Course in Miracles* you do not use its teachings, and especially the workbook exercises, as a defense against uncovering what you believe is the truth about yourself.

**(3:1) Remember that in every attack you call upon your own weakness, while each time you forgive you call upon the strength of Christ in you.**

This theme, mentioned earlier, is central to *A Course in Miracles:* we always choose between our weakness and the strength of Christ (T-31.VIII.2:3). Attack therefore weakens us, while forgiveness truly empowers us and sets us free.

**(3:2-4) Do you not then begin to understand what forgiveness will do for you? It will remove all sense of weakness, strain and fatigue from your mind. It will take away all fear and guilt and pain.**

In other words, forgiveness is the end of all suffering. It should be obvious as you read this carefully that Jesus is not talking about anything external. The source of all weakness, strain, fatigue, fear, guilt, and pain is in our minds. Therefore, it is in our minds that it must be undone. The world seeks always to remove these negative experiences by changing what is outside, referred to in the Course as magic. It will never truly work; temporarily perhaps, but it cannot undo the real source of pain in the mind: our decision to separate, which we alone can reverse.

This idea of forgiveness' gifts makes its first appearance here, but will return later. It represents Jesus' appeal to our selfish interests of feeling better, and being without pain and sorrow. Again, the world may offer temporary relief, but only forgiveness brings about true healing.

**(3:5) It will restore the invulnerability and power God gave His Son to your awareness.**

Everything in *A Course in Miracles* has to do with awareness, a mental state. The awareness of the invulnerability and power (or strength) of Christ that God gave when He created us is in our minds. The problem is that we have ceased to be aware of it, covering this strength with the ego's two-tiered layers of guilt and attack. Thus it is these coverings of weakness that have to be removed, allowing the true power of God's Son to shine forth.

**(4) Let us be glad to begin and end this day by practicing today's idea, and to use it as frequently as possible throughout the day. It will help to make the day as happy for you as God wants you to be. And it will help those around you, as well as those who seem to be far away in space and time, to share this happiness with you.**

The text teaches us how to be a happy learner (T-14.11), which entails our willingness to learn the day's lessons of forgiveness, regardless of the pain of resisting such learning. Since this is a process occurring in our minds, the dimension beyond time and space wherein all our brothers are found, our learning reinforces the learning of everyone. Thus we read in the text how bringing our darkness to the Holy Spirit's light allows it to shine in us, *for all the Sonship:*

> He [the Holy Spirit] brings the light of truth into the darkness, and lets it shine on you. And as it shines your brothers see it, and realizing that this light is not what you have made, they see in you more than you see. They will be happy learners of the lesson this light brings to them, because it teaches them release from nothing and from all the works of nothing. The heavy chains that seem to bind them to despair they do not see as nothing, until you bring the light to them.... And you will see it with them. Because you taught them gladness and release, they will become your teachers in release and gladness (T-14.11.4:3-6,8-9).

**(5) As often as you can, closing your eyes if possible, say to yourself today:**

***Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. I would fulfill my function that I may be happy.***

**Then devote a minute or two to considering your function and the happiness and release it will bring you. Let related thoughts come freely, for your heart will recognize these words, and in your mind is the awareness they are true. Should your attention wander, repeat the idea and add:**

***I would remember this because I want to be happy.***

The connection between our function of forgiveness and our happiness is clearly articulated here, and will be returned to presently. The motivation for learning is therefore our own happiness. We are slowly and gently being taught that the *only* way we can be happy is by removing our guilt through forgiveness of others. I have commented before on the symphonic nature of the workbook. We can see here the continual introduction of new themes, building up our symphony of learning as we progress day by day.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 63**

**The light of the world brings peace to every mind through my forgiveness.**

Lesson 63 returns to the theme of oneness. As we have seen in earlier lessons, Jesus takes a central theme and keeps developing it. Here he is teaching us that when we forgive, peace must extend throughout the Sonship, as we all are one mind. It does not mean, however, that every seeming fragment of the Sonship will accept it immediately. It simply means I now become another symbol or thought in the mind of God's Son, serving as a reminder to make the right choice that alone will bring peace.

**(1:1) How holy are you who have the power to bring peace to every mind!**

Please note that Jesus does not say to every *body.* Forgiveness is not something we physically do with words, for it is a thought we hold as true in our minds. Recall our previously quoted passage from the manual (M-5.III.2) that healing is shared simply by our having chosen it, that choice calling to others to make the same one. In this regard we emulate the Holy Spirit, Who merely reminds us of the right choice:

> The Holy Spirit calls you both to remember and to forget. You have chosen to be in a state of opposition in which opposites are possible. As a result, there are choices you must make.... Choosing depends on a split mind. The Holy Spirit is one way of choosing.... [His Voice] merely reminds. It is compelling only because of what It reminds you *of.* It brings to your mind the other way, remaining quiet even in the midst of the turmoil you may make (T-5.II.6:1-3,6-7; 7:4-6).

We thus remind our brothers, as we remind ourselves, that peace is a decision, and one which unites us all as one Son. I might also point out the similarity inform and *content* between this lesson's first sentence and the opening of "For They Have Come" in the text:

> Think but how holy you must be from whom the Voice for God calls lovingly unto your brother, that you may awake in him the Voice that answers to your call! (T-26.IX.1:1)

The symphonic hand of our composer is everywhere present in his masterwork.

**(1:2-3) How blessed are you who can learn to recognize the means for letting this be done through you! What purpose could you have that would bring you greater happiness?**

Again, Jesus is reminding us that forgiveness is the means whereby we shall attain happiness. This is inevitable once we choose to let go of our judgments, which keep us separate: the source of all our misery. Once this obstacle is gone, happiness flows through our minds, unimpeded, and embraces the Sonship as one.

**(2:1-2) You are indeed the light of the world with such a function. The Son of God looks to you for his redemption.**

As we shall see a little later, the Son of God looking to us for redemption is ourselves; the little Child – whom Jesus speaks of in Lesson 182 – Who has wandered

away: the Child Who represents the Christ in us that we have concealed and forgotten; the Child Who patiently awaits our forgiveness of others and ourselves; the Child Who makes it possible to forgive, at the same time He Himself is forgiven. His is the light that shines in each of us and all of us; His the light that *is* the Son, who is ourselves.

**(2:3-4) It is yours to give him, for it belongs to you. Accept no trivial purpose or meaningless desire in its place, or you will forget your function and leave the Son of God in hell.**

Implied here is that we make an active choice to choose a "trivial purpose or meaningless desire" to replace the glorious truth about ourselves. This purpose and desire expresses some aspect of specialness. We have noted before that specialness has nothing to do with behavior but with an attitude, whereby we use others – people and things – as substitutes for the Love of God or the peace of Jesus. Thus, Jesus speaks about the decision for Heaven or hell.

**(2:5-6) This is no idle request that is being asked of you. You are being asked to accept salvation that it may be yours to give.**

The way we give salvation is to accept it in our minds. This acceptance denies the ego thought system and automatically means we give salvation to the world, which is one with us. Thus "the simplicity of salvation" (T-31.1), in contrast with the complexity of the ego's plan to "save" us from guilt through specialness, thereby reinforcing the very problem from which we were told we would be saved. In other words, the ego reinforces our separation from each other, while the Holy Spirit undoes it by teaching our inherent unity. This is no trivial matter; again, the choice is between Heaven or hell.

**(3) Recognizing the importance of this function, we will be happy to remember it very often today. We will begin the day by acknowledging it, and close the day with the thought of it in our awareness. And throughout the day we will repeat this as often as we can:**

***The light of the world brings peace to every mind through my forgiveness. I am the means God has appointed for the salvation** of **the world.***

Once again, we see Jesus helping us appreciate the importance *to us* of frequent remembrances of the lesson's central idea. It is what he reminds us of at the text's close: how we keep the gift of Christ's vision that alone ends all suffering. These wonderful lines will be a frequent reminder to us of the all-inclusive nature of Jesus' vision:

> Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VI11.8:5-7).

Jesus urges us to forgive *all* people, for this is the only way we shall know we are forgiven. In this vision of forgiveness of every mind we find our salvation and the salvation of the world.

**(4:1-3) If you close your eyes, you will probably find it easier to let the**

**related thoughts come to you in the minute or two that you should devote to considering this. Do not, however, wait for such an opportunity. No chance should be lost for reinforcing today's idea.**

Still one more time, Jesus asks us to waste no opportunity for remembering that our happiness and function are one.

**(4:4-5) Remember that God's Son looks to you for his salvation. And Who but your Self must be His Son?**

This Self is the Christ in us, the little Child who has seemingly lost His way. Of course the Child is not lost; *we* are the ones who have lost awareness of His Presence. Acceptance of our happy function of forgiveness is what restores this happy awareness to us.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 64**
**Let me not forget my function.**

Lesson 64 is even more specific about awareness of our function.

**(1:1-2) Today's idea is merely another way of saying "Let me not wander into temptation." The purpose of the world you see is to obscure your function of forgiveness, and provide you with a justification for forgetting it.**

In this explicit statement Jesus tells us again that the purpose of the world is to obscure our function. The ego made the world to ensure we retain our individuality and never remember who we truly are, while accepting no responsibility for the separation from God. That is why the world of specifics was made: to keep the separation real, but to project responsibility onto others by seeing the sin in them and not ourselves. Lesson 161 addresses this point quite specifically, as we shall see later.

Our function of forgiveness is to become aware that our individuality is an illusion we made up, *in our minds.* The unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear is also an illusion we made up – *in our minds* – as a defense against not choosing our individuality, and that is what we want to have undone. The purpose of the world is to protect this unholy trinity, which, in turn, protects our individual existence. The world thus was made as a giant smoke screen that would conceal from us the Holy Spirit's correction. As we have already seen (W-pII.1.2:3), our unforgiving thoughts, firmly placed in the world, protect the projection of our mind's guilt so that we never recognize its source and choose against it. The ego is continually tempting us to see our guilt in another's *body,* rather than in our *minds.* Near the end of the text Jesus defines temptation as the wish to see ourselves as a body:

> Be vigilant against temptation, then, remembering that it is but a wish, insane and meaningless, to make yourself a thing [i.e., a body] that you are not. And think as well upon the thing that you would be instead. It is a thing of madness, pain and death; a thing of treachery and black despair, of failing dreams and no remaining hope except to die, and end the dream of fear. *This* is temptation; nothing more than this (T-31.VII.14:1-4).

When we see ourselves as bodies, it is inevitable that we shall see others as bodies as well, attacking them for the body's origin: the separation thought in our minds, now judged in another.

**(1:3-4) It** [the world] **is the temptation to abandon God and his Son by taking on a physical appearance. It is this the body's eyes look upon.**

We made up the world as one Son, which then fragmented into billions of fragments. Our personal worlds, then, become rooted in our bodies – physical as well as psychological. Moreover, the sensory apparatus, here represented by the eyes, reports back to the brain that the world (and therefore *not* the mind) is real. In this way the body ensures the thought system of the ego remains untouched and unhealed.

**(2:1) Nothing the body's eyes seem to see can be anything but a form of temptation, since this was the purpose of the body itself.**

The temptation, to repeat, is to have us believe the ego thought system is real. This has nothing to do with temptations localized in the body, as traditional religious systems have defined them. Temptation, rather, represents a thought that says: "I believe the ego is right and the Holy Spirit is wrong." He would tell us the body is an illusion, the underlying thought system of individuality is an illusion, and the dream's only truth is the Atonement principle that we never left God. The body's purpose, therefore, is nothing less than to obscure the truth. As Jesus states in the text: "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" (T-22.III.6:7).

Note that Jesus says in the first sentence: "Nothing the body's eyes *seem* to see." This is because they do not truly see, "seeing" only what the mind told them is there: sin – in everyone else! And even if we do see it in ourselves, we are convinced it was not our fault because it was not our choice to come into the world. That is the message our body's eyes, and indeed all our sensory organs, were made to perceive: sin is all around us, but not within. This thought is quite important, as is evidenced by its frequent mention throughout *A Course in Miracles.*

**(2:2-4) Yet we have learned that the Holy Spirit has another use for all the illusions you have made, and therefore He sees another purpose in them. To the Holy Spirit, the world is a place where you learn to forgive yourself what you think of as your sins. In this perception, the physical appearance of temptation becomes the spiritual recognition of salvation.**

This is what, in the text, Jesus refers to as our special function (T-25.VI). The ego made special relationships to attack, hurt, and keep us separate; the Holy Spirit uses those same relationships as a means of undoing the ego's purpose, so they now become symbols of healing rather than attack. Consequently, rather than the world being a prison from which we will never escape, it becomes a classroom in which we learn how to escape, realizing what we see outside us is nothing other than the projection of our mind's decision. By teaching us that happy fact about our happy function, the Holy Spirit enables us to return to our minds, understanding at last that we can make another choice.

It is evident, by the way, that Jesus is not asking us to deny the world or our bodies. He is simply saying: "Bring your experiences to me so I can teach you to look at them differently. Let me and not your ego be your guide as you go through life, for I will help you undo the barriers that kept you from my love." These barriers are never anything external, having to do only with which teacher we choose to instruct us, and with which attitude we pursue our lives.

**(3:1) To review our last few lessons, your function here is to be the light of the world, a function given you by God.**

By creating us as an extension of His Love and light, God has ensured we are that same love and light. Our function is simply to *be* what God created. I might add that Jesus does not mean that God *specifically* gave us a *specific* function, a belief that nicely serves the ego's purpose of spiritual specialness; namely, God (or Jesus or the Holy Spirit) wants me to write this book, teach and/or preach *A Course in Miracles,* travel (physically or mentally) to a troubled spot in the world to bring healing, help this specific person with this specific problem, etc., etc., etc. Our function in this world, rather, is to learn to forgive. This restores to our awareness our function in Heaven to create. To be

the light of the world thus reflects both functions: forgiveness undoes the darkness, which prevents the light of our Identity to shine forth from our minds in blessing the *one* world of the *one* Son.

**(3:2-4) It is only the arrogance of the ego that leads you to question this, and only the fear of the ego that induces you to regard yourself as unworthy of the task assigned to you by God Himself. The world's salvation awaits your forgiveness, because through it does the Son of God escape from all illusions, and thus from all temptation. The Son of God is you.**

Throughout *A Course in Miracles* – text, workbook, manual for teachers – when Jesus talks about our need to forgive the Son of God, or that the Son of God needs our help, he is not talking about a person outside us. He is talking about us, in the context of a relationship perceived to be outside. Once again, it should be understood that Jesus is not speaking about a *specific* behavioral function, but the non-specific function of forgiveness, common to all. Ours is a unity not only of darkness, but of light; not only hate, but forgiveness.

**(4) Only by fulfilling the function given you by God will you be happy. That is because your function is to be happy by using the means by which happiness becomes inevitable. There is no other way. Therefore, every time you choose whether or not to fulfill your function, you are really choosing whether or not to be happy.**

This echoes the line in Chapter 1 of the text: "All real pleasure comes from doing God's Will" (T-1. VII.1:4). Jesus is not against our having pleasure in the world, but is simply saying that whatever pleasure we have here does not hold a candle to the pleasure of joining with him in undoing our thoughts of separation and specialness. Therein lies our happiness. True happiness and joy are not found in getting what we want here. Nor does true peace. They come when we let go of the barriers to them – thoughts of sin, guilt, fear, attack, pain, sacrifice, and death. Thus, fulfilling our function – joining with the Holy Spirit to look at the ego thought system differently – is what makes us happy.

Our natural state is happiness, but this, again, has nothing to do with the body or satisfaction of its physical or psychological needs. In this context, happiness is identical with remembering Who we are as Christ. Once happiness is so defined, whenever we are separate from our Identity we will be unhappy. We will then inevitably seek happiness in the special areas of our lives, and will never really find it. Whatever happiness we do receive will be a few measly crumbs that disappear almost as quickly as we enjoy them. However, the happiness that Jesus describes lasts, because it has to do only with the thought of love that transcends time and space entirely.

An added point, already implied above: This lesson explains that if forgiveness is the *means* whereby we attain the *end* of happiness, if we choose not to forgive, we are really choosing not to be happy. Understanding the causal connection between the practice of forgiveness and our happiness is what Jesus hopes will provide the motivation for learning and living his course.

**(5:1-6) Let us remember this today. Let us remind ourselves of it in the morning and again at night, and all through the day as well. Prepare yourself in**

**advance for all the decisions you will make today by remembering they are all really very simple. Each one will lead to happiness or unhappiness. Can such a simple decision really be difficult to make? Let not the form of the decision deceive you.**

In other words, try not to take too seriously the *specific* things in your day that you think will make you happy or unhappy. It is their *content* that is important; i.e., will they serve as *means* to achieve the mind's *end* of happiness or unhappiness? The simplicity of this decision echoes what we mentioned just before about the simplicity of salvation. It is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles (T-1.I.1:1); no hierarchy of illusions (T-23.II.2:3); and why we believe all of this course, or none of it (T-22.II.7:4). Indeed, we can say that our entire day should be dedicated to learning the simplicity of the Holy Spirit's *content;* a simplicity that belies the complexity of the *forms* of our lives. This theme is continued in what follows:

**(5:7-10) Complexity of form does not imply complexity of content. It is impossible that any decision on earth can have a content different from just this one simple choice. That is the only choice the Holy Spirit sees. Therefore it is the only choice there is.**

These lines are extremely important as a way of counteracting the mistakes that most students inevitably fall into, and are reminiscent of these previously quoted statements from the text:

> Complexity is of the ego, and is nothing more that the ego's attempt to obscure the obvious (I-15.IV.6:2).

> Complexity is not of God. How could it be, when all He knows is one? He knows of one creation, one reality, one truth and but one Son. Nothing conflicts with oneness. How, then, could there be complexity in Him? (T-26.111.1:1-5)

The issue is thus *not* to ask the Holy Spirit what you should do: Should I go to place A or B, be with person A or B, eat food A or B; should I do this, that, or the other thing? He sees only one simple choice -- God or the ego – encouraging us to ask but one question: Do I believe the Atonement principle is true or the separation? Since this is the only choice the Holy Spirit sees, it should be the only choice for which we ask His help.

On the other hand, because we believe we are *specific* creatures, with *specific* needs, living in a *specific* world, our experience is that the Holy Spirit gives us *specific* advice about what we should *specifically* do. Later lessons actually even say that, as we shall see presently. Yet Jesus tells us this is just our experience. The reality is that the Holy Spirit sees only one possible choice: truth or illusion; which, of course, is no real choice.

As we go through our day, confronted by the many kinds of decisions we all have to make seemingly important and unimportant – the only issue we need to attend is which teacher we will choose. If our choice is the Holy Spirit, we will automatically know the most loving thing to do in any circumstance. However, when we fixate on asking Holy Spirit for specific advice, we are going to "hear" specific advice. This means we will have forgotten our lesson, and will thus have to ask His help each and every time we are

faced with a problem, or a plan that needs to be made. As Jesus tells us at the end of the manual, living like this is not practical, "and it is the practical with which this course is most concerned" (M-29.5:4-7).

Jesus asks us to be mindful of his presence as often as possible, not only asking him specifically what to do, but simply *to think of him.* We should do this especially when we are tempted to have ego thoughts – anxiety, concerns, and, even more to the point, when we think there is a meaningful choice to be made here. If we have this illusion, we have already chosen on our own, *and will be wrong.* The world offers no meaningful choice, for meaning can only be found in our minds – in the decision between the ego and the Holy Spirit.

Thus are we slowly, gradually, and gently led to be thinking of Jesus as often as we can throughout the day. This means being vigilant in our thoughts about how often we are *not* thinking of him, how often we do not *want* to think of him, and how often we want to do things on our own without asking for help. Our desire to preserve our specialness impels us to avoid the help that would undo it, but in our right minds we forgive ourselves for forgetting what we truly want. This gentle and forgiving reminder of the one choice we need to make is the current running through this discussion, and is why Jesus repeatedly tells us his course is simple. Incidentally, this simplicity is the theme of "Rules for Decision," that important first section of Chapter 30 in the text (T-30.I).

Jesus now proceeds with specific instructions for the day, designed to encourage us in our practicing to remember:

**(6) Today, then, let us practice with these thoughts:**

***Let me not forget my function.***
***Let me not try to substitute mine for God's.***
***Let me forgive and be happy.***

**At least once devote ten or fifteen minutes today to reflecting on this with closed eyes. Related thoughts will come to help you, if you remember the crucial importance of your function to you and to the world.**

This concluding sentence is of course the key. We will remember our function of forgiveness when we recognize its importance for ourselves, and therefore for the Sonship.

Next, Jesus lets us know that *he* knows all about our resistance:

**(7) In the frequent applications of today's idea throughout the day, devote several minutes to reviewing these thoughts, and then thinking about them and about nothing else. This will be difficult, at first particularly, since you are not proficient in the mind discipline that it requires. You may need to repeat "Let me not forget my function" quite often to help you concentrate.**

Students need to be careful not to overestimate their advancement in the curriculum, being tempted to believe that these lessons are simple-minded, and beneath their "high" spiritual state. It is far better to err on the side of underestimating one's spiritual status, if one can use such a horrid phrase. These still-early lessons are helpful in instilling such humility in us, the companion on the journey that ensures achievement

of our goal.

The concluding paragraph and set of instructions returns to the *eyes closed-eyes open* exercise, reminding us of the lack of true differentiation between the external world of bodies we perceive and the inner world of our thoughts:

**(8) Two forms of shorter practice periods are required. At times, do the exercises with your eyes closed, trying to concentrate on the thoughts you are using. At other times, keep your eyes open after reviewing the thoughts, and then look slowly and unselectively around you, telling yourself:**

***This is the world it is my function to save.***

Recognizing no difference between exercising with eyes open or closed reflects our recognition that the world it is our function to save is in the mind.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 65**

**My only function is the one God gave me.**

Whenever we are tempted to think we have a function other than forgiveness, we should recognize we are involved with a defense. Many of the functions we think we have seem to be very important: to save the world, family, friends, or job, be a teacher of *A Course in Miracles,* etc. Whatever its form, it is not our function, and God did not give it to us. As we have already discussed, God does not know about specifics, and the function He "gave" me is simply to remember who I am as His Son. Forgiveness makes that possible, and that is this lesson's theme.

**(1:1-2) The idea for today reaffirms your commitment to salvation. It also reminds you that you have no function other than that.**

Remember, salvation means being saved from our wrong minds, from believing we are right and Jesus is wrong. It means undoing the belief we are individuals acting on our own, necessitating having everyone else be responsible for the misery we chose for ourselves.

**(1:3) Both these thoughts are obviously necessary for a total commitment.**

"Both these thoughts" means having the function of salvation, and having no function but that. It means looking at the positive – our function to forgive – and the negative – the belief we have another function. In the following sentences Jesus states even more explicitly our need to be aware of both the right-minded *and* wrong-minded perceptions of our function.

**(1:4-5) Salvation cannot be the only purpose you hold while you still cherish others. The full acceptance of salvation as your only function necessarily entails two phases; the recognition of salvation as your function, and the relinquishment of all the other goals you have invented for yourself.**

Before we can relinquish these other goals, we first have to be aware of them. That underscores the importance of being honest with ourselves and with Jesus concerning our pursuit of the ego's hidden goals of specialness. One can apply here his plea to us from the text that comes within the context of asking for his help. It is a plea we shall hear again:

> Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other (T-4.111.8:1-2).
>
> Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God's (T-4.IV.2:4-5).

To state this another way: To say "yes" to our true function is to say "no" to the false ones. In "The Last Unanswered Question" in the text, Jesus says that to answer "yes" (to the last of the four questions he poses) is to say "not no" (T-21.VII.12). We must first look at the ego's denial of the truth – *"no"* – and then say we do not want this

anymore – *"not* no." As he says earlier in the text, in words that will become increasingly familiar to us:

> The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to dear the denial of truth* (T-12.II.1:5).

This entails becoming aware of both the manifest and subtle ways in which we have established what we believe to be our function in life: the purpose for which we came. We think, in our grandiosity, we were born for some noble purpose. Not true! We are here to undo the *ignoble* purpose for which the ego brought us: to blame others for our sin, leaving us free of all responsibility for how we feel. The undoing of that purpose – the meaning of forgiveness – is our function, and *nothing else.*

(2:1) **This is the only way in which you can take your rightful place among the saviors of the world.**

At the beginning of the last section of the text, "Choose Once Again," Jesus asks us to choose whether we would take our place among the saviors of the world or remain in hell, holding our brothers there (T-31.VIII.1:5). He recalls for us this significant statement, much as a composer quotes significant themes from earlier portions of a symphony.

**(2:2-3) This is the only way in which you can say and mean, "My only function is the one God gave me." This is the only way in which you can find peace of mind.**

It is worth noting that *only* is a strong qualifier. Jesus uses it quite frequently throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and here he uses it in successive statements. We have no function other than forgiveness, and the *only* way we can find peace of mind is to fulfill this function, which is to undo our ego's false functions. These always involve our bodies doing something in the world, thereby making the state of mindlessness real in our experience and belief. A passage in the manual for teachers, in the context of anger, describes this process of attaining peace through forgiveness—anger being directed from one body to another, reinforcing mindlessness; while forgiveness returns us to our minds and the peace of God:

> God's peace can never come where anger is, for anger must deny that peace exists. Who sees anger as justified in any way or any circumstance proclaims that peace is meaningless, and must believe that it cannot exist. In this condition, peace cannot be found. Therefore, forgiveness is the necessary condition for finding the peace of God. More than this, given forgiveness there *must* be peace (M-20.3:3-7).

Choosing against our anger, or any other expression of the ego's thought system, is the *only* way we become aware of the Holy Spirit's truth that lies beyond the ego's defensive cover.

**(3:1-3) Today, and for a number of days to follow, set aside ten to fifteen minutes for a more sustained practice period, in which you try to understand and**

**accept what the idea for the day really means. Today's idea offers you escape from all your perceived difficulties. It places the key to the door of peace, which you have closed upon yourself, in your own hands.**

We cannot escape our difficulties until we perceive them. The phrase "perceived difficulties" means that we believe we have them, even though they are not real. Thus, we cannot let them go until we first become aware of the ego's thought system that we have perceived, as a way of denying it in ourselves. This is thus a re-statement of the first principle of miracles. Looking at our perceived difficulties with Jesus enables us to recognize them all as smoke screens for the *only* problem we truly have: our belief in the reality of the separation. In this way, our perceived difficulties disappear into the one problem, which the miracle gently corrects.

Further on in Lesson 121 Jesus says that "forgiveness is the key to happiness." The key to the door of happiness is in our hands. It is not in Jesus' or God's hands, nor in the hands of *A Course in Miracles,* let alone anyone else's. *It is in our hands,* for we alone have the power to open the door or keep it closed – the power to keep our minds closed to the truth or to the ego's lies. We are the ones who closed the door on the Holy Spirit; therefore, we are the only ones who can open it. The Holy Spirit is on the other side of the door, but He cannot make the choice for us.

Finally, the longer practice period that Jesus continues to suggest reflects his wish we reflect more and more seriously on the thoughts he is presenting to us. This is similar to his injunction to Helen and Bill in the early period of the Course's scribing that they "study these notes."*

**(3:4) It gives you the answer to all the searching you have done since time began.**

When Jesus says *"you* have done since time began," he is not referring to the individual self you think you are, but the collective Son of God. The searching we have done – encompassing all levels of existence – is for happiness, peace, and the absence of pain. Needless to say, we have failed miserably. Indeed, it seems these days as if there is even more suffering than at any other time in history. This perception is an illusion, since there is no hierarchy in the illusory world of time and space; yet it certainly seems as if this were the case. It appears we are denying our egos less and our defenses have become less effective, and so we search, search, and search for solutions to our pain. We seek but do not find because we are looking in the wrong place. That is why it is imperative to remember that forgiveness occurs in the mind, not anywhere else. It manifests our choice to release our grip on the ego, taking Jesus as our teacher instead.

Once we have chosen sanely, our new teacher helps us realize our searching has been in vain, since we persistently sought truth and happiness where they could not be found. As Jesus tells us near the end of the text:

> Real choice is no illusion. But the world has none to offer. All its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death. There is no choice in its alternatives. Seek not escape from problems here. The world was made that problems could not *be* escaped. Be not deceived by all the different names its roads are given. They have but one end.... All of them will lead to death.... Think not that happiness is ever found by following a road away from it. This makes no

> sense, and cannot be the way.... to achieve a goal you must proceed in its direction, not away from it. And every road that leads the other way will not advance the purpose to be found.... There *is* a choice that you have power to make when you have seen the real alternatives (T-31.IV.2: 1-8,11; 7:1-4; 8:1).

**(4:1-2) Try, if possible, to undertake the daily extended practice periods at approximately the same time each day. Try, also, to determine this time in advance, and then adhere to it as closely as possible.**

As I have mentioned, Jesus provides specific instructions for doing these exercises, and he tells us here to establish some structure for ourselves, although he will say presently that this will not be a permanent arrangement. His words imply the undisciplined nature of our minds, stemming from the fear of regaining our mind's power to choose. This fear is so great, that without structured time periods we would easily allow our practicing to be diverted by fear-induced mind wandering, thus diluting the efficacy of the workbook to help us choose again. We need external discipline before we can internalize Jesus' teachings, so that we may learn to think of him and his message as often as possible.

This structure we are seeking to impose on ourselves also offers the wonderful opportunity of learning the depth of our resistance as we forget our extended practice periods, and then seek to rationalize or deny our fear. We shall discuss this resistance more extensively later on.

**(4:3) The purpose of this** [this kind of structure] **is to arrange your day so that you have set apart the time for God, as well as for all the trivial purposes and goals you will pursue.**

Jesus is not telling us to give up our "trivial purposes and goals," but says instead: "You can have them, but give me a little time, too, and I will help you structure your day. You are going to spend ten minutes at this time; ten minutes another time; twenty minutes still another time. Set up the structure so you do not have to give up what you want, but also allow some space during the day when you think of me, and let me spend it with you." After all, he is not asking for a lot. Jesus is thus providing an example of how we should be with each other and with ourselves: clear and firm, yet gentle and patient. Truth does not hit us over the head with itself, but merely reminds us – within the context of our illusory lives and values – what alone is important to us. Recall again that all-important idea from the text: The Holy Spirit does not deprive us of our special relationships, He transforms them (T-17.IV.2:3).

**(4:4) This is part of the long-range disciplinary training your mind needs, so that the Holy Spirit can use it consistently for the purpose He shares with you.**

Over and over, Jesus tells us this is a process; a long-range program, which will become less structured later on. For now, however, such structure is extremely important. To think you do not need it reflects the ego's arrogance.

**(5) For the longer practice period, begin by reviewing the idea for the day. Then close your eyes, repeat the idea to yourself once again, and watch your mind carefully to catch whatever thoughts cross it. At first, make no attempt to**

**concentrate only on thoughts related to the idea for the day. Rather, try to uncover each thought that arises to interfere with it. Note each one as it comes to you, with as little involvement or concern as possible, dismissing each one by telling yourself:**

***This thought reflects a goal that is preventing me from accepting my only function.***

Jesus is telling us our assignment is to pay careful attention to ego thoughts, for it is these that interfere with our remembering the idea for today. This careful watching is the focus, for these thoughts are the problem. The mind-searching emphasis here is reminiscent of the earlier lessons and. in fact, is a practice that should remain with us for a long, long time. Only by being vigilant for these thoughts can we truly bring them for undoing to Jesus' love – *our only function* – thus removing the obstacles to accepting our true Identity. Note also that our looking is to be done as much as possible without anxiety, guilt, or judgment. This helps us not give these thoughts the power the ego would like us to believe they have.

**(6:1-2) After a while, interfering thoughts will become harder to find. Try, however, to continue a minute or so longer, attempting to catch a few of the idle thoughts that escaped your attention before, but do not strain or make undo effort in doing this.**

Jesus wants us to pay close attention to these idle thoughts, even if they are elusive. It is our *wanting* to find them that is important here, for it reflects the little willingness he tells us in the text is all the Holy Spirit requires for our healing (e.g. T-18.IV,V).

Now comes something of great importance:

**(6:3-4) Then tell yourself:**

***On this clean slate let my true function be written for me.***

Our job is to clean the mind's slate, the overriding emphasis throughout A *Course in Miracles.* Our minds are cluttered with thoughts of separation, sin, attack, suffering, pleasure, specialness, arrogance, and death. This clutter obscures the lucid expression of the Atonement in our minds. We clean the slate by paying careful, non-judgmental attention to idle thoughts, realizing we have chosen them as a way of keeping Jesus' love away. Our function is choosing to remove the clutter; the love just beyond will shine in and of itself.

**(6:5) You need not use these exact words, but try to get the sense of being willing to have your illusions of purpose be replaced by truth.**

Again, we are not the ones who replace them; that is Jesus' job. Ours is simply to bring the ego's illusions to him. Jesus thus appeals to our willingness to have "illusions of purpose" be replaced by our true function of forgiveness. It is this little willingness – the motivation to have the darkness of our mistakes corrected by the light – to which Jesus is always appealing.

**(7) Finally, repeat the idea for today once more, and devote the rest of the practice period to trying to focus on its importance to you, the relief its acceptance will bring you by resolving your conflicts once and for all, and the extent to which you really want salvation in spite of your own foolish ideas to the contrary.**

We continually try to resolve our conflicts by doing external things that require sacrifice of others, seeing our world as one of conflicting interests: ours versus everyone else's. The only real conflict within the dream, however, is the conflict in our minds between the ego and the Holy Spirit. In truth, of course, that is an illusion, too. But that conflict is our only problem: "Do I want the ego or Jesus as my teacher?"

Jesus is appealing to our desire for salvation in spite of our foolish beliefs of what it is. Thus, as we do these exercises, he urges us to focus on the insane and foolish ways we believe salvation will come to us; what we believe will make us happy, as opposed to what will truly make us happy.

Another point, which was made earlier and comes up again in the next lesson, is that our function is to be happy. The problem – the arrogance of the ego – is that we think we know what happiness is. Humility, on the other hand, says that we do not understand what will make us happy, but there is One within us Who does. Thus we see parallel sections in the text "The Confusion of Pain and Joy" (T-7.X) and "The Difference between Imprisonment and Freedom" (T-8.II) – and the following representative passages:

> The Holy Spirit will direct you only so as to avoid pain. Surely no one would object to this goal if he recognized it. The problem is not whether what the Holy Spirit says is true, but whether you want to listen to what He says. You no more recognize what is painful than you know what is joyful, and are, in fact, very apt to confuse the two. The Holy Spirit's main function is to teach you to tell them apart. What is joyful to you is painful to the ego, and as long as you are in doubt about what you are, you will be confused about joy and pain (T-7.X.3:1-6).

> We have said that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy. That is the same as saying He teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom. You cannot make this distinction without Him because you have taught yourself that imprisonment is freedom. Believing them to be the same, how can you tell them apart? Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they are the same, to teach you how they are different? (T-8.II.5)

**(8) In the shorter practice periods, which should be undertaken at least once an hour, use this form in applying today's idea:**

***My only function is the one God gave me. I want no other and I have no other.***

**Sometimes close your eyes as you practice this, and sometimes keep them open and look about you. It is what you see now that will be totally changed when you accept today's idea completely.**

Again, we see the emphasis on the *closed eyes-open eyes* exercise, reflecting that *ideas leave not their source:* our thoughts *(closed eyes)* remain within, despite the attempts of the ego's projection to perceive them outside *(open eyes).* That is why our perceptions will be totally changed when we change our thinking.

* See *Absence from Felicity: The Story of Helen Schucman and Her Scribing of A Course in Miracles,* pp. 251-252.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 66**
**My happiness and my function are one.**

This lesson continues the theme of our happiness and function, elaborating on their unity. The only way we can be happy is to let Jesus be our teacher. That decision reflects our function of forgiveness. Anything else will not bring us happiness because it will not last.

**(1) You have surely noticed an emphasis throughout our recent lessons on the connection between fulfilling your function and achieving happiness. This is because you do not really see the connection. Yet there is more than just a connection between them; they are the same. Their forms are different, but their content is completely one.**

Another way to say this is that fulfilling our function is the cause, and the effect is our happiness. When we forgive our thoughts of guilt, hate, and pain, what remains is happiness, for cause and effect are one. This theme of oneness is expressed throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and is the characteristic of Heaven as well as the split mind. Thus cause and effect, ideas and source, inner and outer – all are one. Cause and effect are not separated; *ideas leave not their source;* effects leave not their cause. Again, the acceptance of our function is the cause, and its effect is our happiness. In truth they are one and unseparated.

**(2:1) The ego does constant battle with the Holy Spirit on the fundamental question of what your function is.**

To the ego, our function is to survive. This is accomplished by projecting responsibility for the separation onto everyone else, thereby ensuring that we never return to its source: the mind's decision for the ego. Needless to say, this is a one-way battle, since the Holy Spirit knows nothing of the ego's illusions, except that we have chosen to identify with them. Because it takes two to wage a war, the very fact that the Holy Spirit, not to mention God Himself, does not engage the ego in any way ensures that there is no war. This non-combativeness, otherwise known as defenselessness, is the essence of the Atonement. The separation, the source of the ego's war against God, never occurred because God knows nothing of it. An illusion unrecognized remains an illusion. However, when confronted, the illusion becomes real in our *belief,* and thus is our dream of separation made real for us. Choosing the Atonement undoes this madness, restoring to our awareness the truth of our Identity as Christ.

**(2:2) So does it do constant battle with the Holy Spirit about what your happiness is.**

Happiness to the ego is when we kill. Indeed, its motto is *kill or be killed.* Happiness is when we get what we want, which occurs at someone's expense: I win, you lose. That's happiness! Ask the members of a sports team that wins a big game. The players are happy because the other team lost, and they would not be happy if the other team had won. Sports are set up so that there cannot be two winners. What we act out on an athletic field as a participant (or in the stadium as a fan) in a seemingly benign way reflects the underlying malevolence of the ego thought system of *one or the other.* Yet to all this the Holy Spirit gently replies:

> You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong. But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes. God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world. His Love remains the only thing there is. Fear is illusion, for you are like Him (M-18.3:7-12; italics omitted).

In the acceptance of that Love is found our true happiness.

**(2:3-6) It is not a two-way battle. The ego attacks and the Holy Spirit does not respond. He knows what your function is. He knows that it is your happiness.**

The Holy Spirit does not respond because there is nothing for Him to respond to. How could He, the reflection of truth in our minds, respond to an illusion? If He did, the illusion would be real. As Jesus explains in the text (T-5.II.7:1-5), a passage to which we shall return frequently, all the Holy Spirit does is remind. He does not overcome, command, or demand. He does not do anything but simply remind us of the truth. The passage continues:

> The Voice for God is always quiet, because It speaks of peace. Peace is stronger than war because it heals. War is division, not increase. No one gains from strife. What profiteth it a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? If you listen to the wrong voice you *have* lost sight of your soul (T-5.II.7:7-12).

The Holy Spirit's peace is the end of conflict, while the "wrong voice" guides us into war, wherein we lose our soul. Yet without opposition, the seeming enemy ceases to be, and what appeared to be a battleground fades "into the nothingness from which it came" (M-13.1:2). The illusion of the ego's attacks are brought to the Holy Spirit's truth, "and truth saw them not" (M-14.1:10). Thus are they undone, for their seeming reality is not even recognized. How could they then be responded to?

Nonetheless, the ego continually attempts to make conflict real. In any conflict there are two opposing forces, of which one will be a winner and the other a loser. To the Holy Spirit, again, there is no opposing force. There is only God, and nothing else. For the Holy Spirit, therefore, the way out of conflict is to remind us there is no conflict; no problem to be solved; no enemy to be confronted and overcome. That fact alone makes us happy.

**(3) Today we will try to go past this wholly meaningless battle and arrive at the truth about your function. We will not engage in senseless arguments about what it is. We will not become hopelessly involved in defining happiness and determining the means for achieving it. We will not indulge the ego by listening to its attacks on truth. We will merely be glad that we can find out what truth is.**

*A Course in Miracles'* way of undoing the ego is having us look at it. Nothing else is required. When we look, we realize there is nothing to see, and thus no point in defining the ego or arguing with its thought system. Thus we go beyond its illusory nature to the truth. To quote again these important lines:

> No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it.... for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth.
>
> What is healing but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge? And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them directly, without protecting them? Be not afraid, therefore, for what you will be looking at is the source of fear, and you are beginning to learn that fear is not real (T-11.V.1:1-3,5-2:3).

The process of forgiveness thus entails realizing that the ego we thought was there had no effect. If it had no effect, it could not be a cause; if not a cause, it does not exist.

Jesus is training us to look at the false functions of specialness we have made as substitutes for our true function, which is to forgive, and then remember Who we are. He asks us only to look at the false, for thus is the illusion brought to the truth, and in the presence of its light, the ego's darkness disappears.

**(4) Our longer practice period today has as its purpose your acceptance of the fact that not only is there a very real connection between the function God gave you and your happiness, but that they are actually identical. God gives you only happiness. Therefore, the function He gave you must be happiness, even if it appears to be different. Today's exercises are an attempt to go beyond these differences in appearance, and recognize a common content where it exists in truth.**

Here Jesus addresses the crucial difference between appearance and reality, not in terms of what we perceive externally, but within our own experience. So often, reinforced by religious or spiritual traditions, spiritual aspirants hold to the insane belief that God demands sacrifice, and pursuing our function means to suffer. Jesus addresses this insanity in the beginning of Chapter 3 in the text, where he discusses "the terrible misperception that God Himself persecuted His Own Son on behalf of salvation" (1-3.1.2:4). He elaborates on this crucial point, using the misperceptions of the crucifixion as his referent:

> God does not believe in retribution. His Mind does not create that way. He does not hold your "evil" deeds against you. Is it likely that He would hold them against me? Be very sure that you recognize how utterly impossible this assumption is, and how entirely it arises from projection. This kind of error is responsible for a host of related errors, including the belief that God rejected Adam and forced him out of the Garden of Eden. It is also why you may believe from time to time that I am misdirecting, you.... Sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God. It arises solely from fear, and frightened people can be vicious (1-3.1.3:4-10; 4:1-2).

This viciousness is not only directed towards others, but ourselves as well. It is this painful misperception of God demanding sacrifice that Jesus attempts to correct

here in this lesson: *Our happiness and function are one.*

Continuing his discussion in paragraph 5, Jesus presents us with a syllogism, a traditional foam of logic in which you logically prove an argument to be true:

**(5:1-4) Begin the ten-to-fifteen-minute practice period by reviewing these thoughts:**

***God gives me only happiness.***
***He has given my function to me.***
***Therefore my function must be happiness.***

If sentences 2 and 3 are true, sentence 4 must be true as well. Therefore, because the first premise is true ("God gives me only happiness"), as is the second ("He has given my function to me"), the concluding statement must logically follow ("My function must be happiness").

Jesus' purpose in using this syllogism is to have us realize how none of what we do in this world will bring us happiness. It is only in recognizing that our attempts fail, and fail miserably, that we will be motivated to say there must be something else. We will then understand we have been looking for happiness in the wrong place, and therefore will never find it. It can be found only if we go within and ask it of our true Teacher. Thus Jesus says:

**(5:5-6:6) Try to see the logic in this sequence, even if you do not yet accept the conclusion. It is only if the first two thoughts are wrong that the conclusion could be false. Let us, then, think about the premises for a while, as we are practicing.**

**The first premise is that God gives you only happiness. This could be false, of course, but in order to be false it is necessary to define God as something He is not. Love cannot give evil, and what is not happiness is evil. God cannot give what He does not have, and He cannot have what He is not. Unless God gives you only happiness, He must be evil. And it is this definition of Him you are believing if you do not accept the first premise.**

Jesus is saying that if you do not believe God gives only happiness, you are making Him into a dualistic being Who will give you happiness *along with something else.* For example, the biblical God gives us happiness, but also pain; life, but also death; good, but also evil. The God Jesus depicts in *A Course in Miracles* thus corrects the dualistically divine figure of the Bible. He tells us God can give us *only* happiness, for He knows only of perfect Oneness: He thus gives only what is Himself, and cannot give anything else. This is because *there is nothing else.*

To continue this argument: If God gives you happiness *and* evil, then evil must be a part of Him, too. Remember, *ideas leave not their source.* Thus, if evil exists and God is the source of everything, evil must have its source in God. This means the biblical divinity not only has God within Himself, but also the devil. Thus Jesus encourages us to look at this, asking ourselves if this could possibly be true.

And now, the second premise:

**(7:1-4) The second premise is that God has given you your function. We have seen that there are only two parts of your mind. One is ruled by the ego, and**

**is made up of illusions. The other is the home of the Holy Spirit, where truth abides.**

This of course is the description of the right- and wrong-minded parts of the split mind.

The next sentence gives us a very clear statement, by implication, of the third part of the mind, what we call the decision maker.

**(7:5) There are no other guides but these to choose between ...**

Accordingly, there must be some part of our minds that chooses between the ego and the Holy Spirit.

**(7:5)... and no other outcomes possible as a result of your choice but the fear that the ego always engenders, and the love that the Holy Spirit always offers to replace it.**

There are only two outcomes, effects, or contents that are possible in this world: love or fear. Everything else is simply an expression of either one of those two thoughts. That is why in Lesson 64 Jesus said: "Complexity of form does not imply complexity of content." The world was made to confuse us and complicate what is, in essence, a very simple choice: I choose the ego, and fear and pain are the unhappy result; I choose the Holy Spirit, and happiness and peace are the happy result. Simple.

**(8) Thus, it must be that your function is established by God through His Voice, or is made by the ego which you have made to replace Him. Which is true? Unless God gave your function to you, it must be the gift of the ego. Does the ego really have gifts to give, being itself an illusion and offering only the illusion of gifts?**

Jesus tells us the ego cannot give us any real gifts; and therefore it cannot give us anything that is true. Hence, God alone gives us our function. The problem, as always, is that there still remains our insanity that prefers the ego's "gifts" of separation and individuality to the loving gift of God's Oneness. Since the ego's "gifts" to us must entail pain and suffering, we gladly bear its burden if it means our continual *existence.* Jesus' challenge as our teacher is to convince us that happiness comes from choosing to return to *being,* our true Self.

**(9) Think about this during the longer practice period today. Think also about the many forms the illusion of your function has taken in your mind, and the many ways in which you tried to find salvation under the ego's guidance. Did you find it? Were you happy? Did they bring you peace? We need great honesty today. Remember the outcomes fairly, and consider also whether it was ever reasonable to expect happiness from anything the ego ever proposed. Yet the ego is the only alternative to the Holy Spirit's Voice.**

Once again, Jesus is emphasizing the necessity of paying careful attention to our egos. Before we can remember the function God has given us, we first have to look at the functions we have given ourselves as replacements for God's gifts. He is asking us

to be completely honest about whether any of these functions, indeed anything of this world has truly made us happy. Needless to say, Jesus is not talking about the transient happiness we all experience from time to time, which again, is when we get what we want. He refers to a happiness that is so deep it cannot be undone by anything else. It is this honesty that Jesus requires of us throughout our study and practice of *A Course in Miracles,* without which the ego will successfully slip away unnoticed into our unconscious, only to wreak havoc on our lives and on the world.

Paragraph 10 is another statement of the important theme, *one or the other,* God or the ego. In this case it refers not to one or the other in the ego system but one or the other in the sense that there can only be God *or* the ego, but not both:

**(10:1-4) You will listen to madness or hear the truth. Try to make this choice as you think about the premises on which our conclusion rests. We can share in this conclusion, but in no other. For God Himself shares it with us.**

Because God Himself shares it with us, it must be true. Anything else, then, would be a lie. The simplicity of this underlies the simplicity of our decision making: To choose God is to reject the ego's madness; to choose the ego is to reject God's truth. One leads to happiness; the other to misery. What could be simpler than that?

**(10:5-8) Today's idea is another giant stride in the perception of the same as the same, and the different as different. On one side stand all illusions. All truth stands on the other. Let us try today to realize that only the truth is true.**

This theme is found all through *A Course in Miracles.* Near the end of the workbook Jesus says, for example: "Christ's Second Coming gives the Son of God this gift: to hear the Voice for God proclaim that what is false is false, and what is true has never changed" (W-pII.10.1:1) – *one or the other.* In the New Year's Prayer that ends Chapter 15, we read: "Make this year different by making it all the same" (T-15.XI.10:11). In other words, in our right-minded experience, everything is the same because everything serves the same purpose of forgiveness, which alone will bring us happiness.

To the ego there are many different ways of achieving happiness. What establishes me as different from you is that if I am happy, you are not. Therefore, if I want to be happy, you have to lose. That makes us different. I do not realize that if I am unhappy, you will be unhappy, and vice versa. It cannot be that I attack you and not be attacked myself, nor can I forgive you without forgiving myself, since we are not different but the same one Son with one wrong-minded function to attack, and one right-minded function to forgive. This point is emphasized at the end of Chapter 22, concluding a discussion of the holy relationship:

> Only the different can attack. So you conclude *because* you can attack, you and your brother must be different. Yet does the Holy Spirit explain this differently. *Because* you and your brother are not different, you cannot attack. Either position is a logical conclusion. Either could be maintained, but never both. The only question to be answered in order to decide which must be true is whether you and your brother are different. From the position of what you understand you seem to be, and therefore can attack. Of the alternatives, this seems more natural and more in line with your experience. And therefore it is necessary that you have other experiences, more in line with truth, to teach you

what *is* natural and true (T-22.VI.13).

**(11) In the shorter practice periods, which would be most helpful today if undertaken twice an hour, this form of the application is suggested:**

***My happiness and function are one, because God has given me both.***

**It will not take more than a minute, and probably less, to repeat these words slowly and think about them a little while as you say them.**

It should be striking to us to see how easily we forget. Twice an hour to remember how happy forgiveness makes us is not really very much time, except to the ego, which jealously covets each and every unholy instant. Therefore, when we are not able to think about the words of the exercise twice an hour, we should at some point think about our resistance to doing so. Such non-judgmental thinking – the meaning of looking with the Holy Spirit – will yield abundant rewards each and every time we remember to forgive ourselves for forgetting.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 67**
**Love created me like itself.**

**(1:1-5) Today's idea is a complete and accurate statement of what you are. This is why you are the light of the world. This is why God appointed you as the world's savior. This is why the Son of God looks to you for his salvation. He is saved by what you are.**

The Son of God is saved by *what* I am because the Son of God *is* what I am. If I am a creation of love, the entire Sonship must be a creation of love because love is one. Thus when we remember Who we truly are, we are remembering for all. You may recall the motto of Dumas' three musketeers: *One for all and all for one.*

**(1:6) We will make every effort today to reach this truth about you, and to realize fully, if only for a moment, that it is the truth.**

The long-range goal of *A Course in Miracles* is that we become aware of this truth all the time, not just for a moment. Jesus therefore says to us: am willing to accept as our goal for today that we have at least *one* moment of remembering that you are love." We would then understand he is reflecting back to us that this is a process of *gradually* accepting the truth, as we *gradually* reject the illusion by correcting the ego's substitution of a self-concept of guilt and fear for the memory that we are created by love like itself.

**(2:1-7) In the longer practice period, we will think about your reality and its wholly unchanged and unchangeable nature. We will begin by repeating this truth about you, and then spend a few minutes adding some relevant thoughts, such as:**

***Holiness created me holy.***
***Kindness created me kind.***
***Helpfulness created me helpful.***
***Perfection created me perfect.***

**Any attribute which is in accord with God as He defines Himself is appropriate for use.**

Jesus is emphasizing what is true about us, a truth to which we are always asked to bring the illusion. Clearly, Jesus knows that we do not believe this about ourselves. If we did, we would not be needing the workbook, and certainly not *A Course in Miracles* itself. Thus he seeks to reinforce the memory he holds for us in our right minds. However, lest we forget we have another side, which *is* the problem, he reminds us of the journey on which he is leading us, as we now read:

**(2:8) We are trying today to undo your definition of God and replace it with His Own.**

Jesus explains that truth is in us, and continually reminds us of its nature; but he also reminds us that the means of remembering truth is to undo what we made as its replacement. Thus, our ego's God is a dualistic deity, which means that His creation – us – must be dualistic, too: good perhaps, but also evil; sometimes innocent, but guilty

as well. When brought to Jesus' definition, the ego's deity is replaced by the non-dualistic God of innocence and Love.

**(2:9) We are also trying to emphasize that you are part of His definition of Himself.**

Jesus goes back and forth between these two self-concepts, because we do. Our fear impels us to hide in the ego's thought system of separation; while the pain of such a choice motivates us to return home. We vacillate between fear and love until we finally accept the Atonement for ourselves, at which point all teaching ends as we disappear into the love that created us like itself.

**(3:1-2) After you have gone over several such related thoughts, try to let all thoughts drop away for a brief preparatory interval, and then try to reach past all your images and preconceptions about yourself to the truth in you. If love created you like itself, this Self must be in you.**

We have seen this idea often. Before we can remember who we truly are, we must first allow ourselves to get in touch with who the ego tells us we are. The path thus takes us through the illusions of darkness to the light of truth. As we shall see presently, Jesus describes himself as our guide on this journey through the ego's clouds of illusion.

**(3:3) And somewhere in your mind It is there for you to find.**

That truth, namely the Love of God, "is there for [us] to find." Once again, the way we reach the truth is first to reach past our "images and preconceptions," which we cannot do until we know what they are. That is why in our daily practice of the lessons, let alone our practice of the Course's principles – in all situations and relationships – we must continually be vigilant for what our egos are up to. We need not worry about what Jesus is up to; we need be concerned only for our egos. If we can look at them with Jesus, our investment in being right will decrease, allowing truth to become increasingly important to us. In other words, we shall finally have *sought* for what we truly want to *find.* And seeking for it, we shall be successful, since "it is there for [us] to find."

**(4) You may find it necessary to repeat the idea for today from time to time to replace distracting thoughts. You may also find that this is not sufficient, and that you need to continue adding other thoughts related to the truth about yourself. Yet perhaps you will succeed in going past that, and through the interval of thoughtlessness to the awareness of a blazing light in which you recognize yourself as love created you. Be confident that you will do much today to bring that awareness nearer, whether you feel you have succeeded or not.**

It is important to note, once again, that instructions such as these should not be compared to what is referred to in some New Age circles as "affirmations" – positive statements we are asked to recite that end up as covers for our ego's negative thoughts, thereby making it impossible for them to be undone. *Undoing,* as described in *A Course in Miracles,* means *looking* at the ego first, as the prerequisite for the process of moving beyond the darkness to the light. Thus, from time to time, as he does here, Jesus reminds us of the light to which we bring the darkness of our "thoughtlessness," which

consists of the ego's attempts to distract us with thoughts that are not real. Yet, to repeat, one cannot regain awareness of the blazing light of our real thoughts without first recognizing our identification with the unreal (or thought-less) ones.

Jesus concludes this paragraph by expressing his confidence in our willingness to undergo this process with him, even though our resistance to such progress will most likely still be present:

**(5:1-2) It will be particularly helpful today to practice the idea for the day as often as you can. You need to hear the truth about yourself as frequently as possible, because your mind is so preoccupied with false self-images.**

In this one sentence we find a wonderful juxtaposition of both halves of our split minds, and the basic theme of *A Course in Miracles:* We must realize how preoccupied we are with our false self-images or self-concepts. These might include: I am right; I am holy because I am right; I am an individual; I am special; I know what is in my best interests. We must become aware of our preoccupation with these self-images, otherwise we will never know there is something we can choose between. Jesus therefore tells us, in the workbook especially: "I will remind you frequently of who you really are, so you can see you have a choice between the glorious Self of Christ and the shabby one you made as a replacement." It is our awareness of the ability to choose between two mutually exclusive self-concepts that allows us in the end to make the choice that *is* the end. Bringing us to this awareness is the function of the miracle.

**(5:3-4) Four or five times an hour, and perhaps even more, it would be most beneficial to remind yourself that love created you like itself. Hear the truth about yourself in this.**

Jesus is upping the ante here. He wants us to think about the day's lesson as often as possible, up to four or five times an hour; i.e., every twelve or fifteen minutes. Jesus does not truly expect us to be so focused on the truth. After all, we ran away from it into the illusory world of time and space just so we would be distracted from the timeless truth of Heaven. Nonetheless, he does want us to make the effort, which, if we attempt it faithfully, will make us aware of how much we do not want to remember. Such insight into our resistance, as we have seen and will see repeatedly, is extraordinarily useful on our journey. We cannot correct a problem we do not know we have, and are so resistant to letting go.

**(6) Try to realize in the shorter practice periods that this is not your tiny, solitary voice that tells you this. This is the Voice for God, reminding you of your Father and your Self. This is the Voice of truth, replacing everything that the ego tells you about yourself with the simple truth about the Son of God. You were created by love like itself.**

The Holy Spirit cannot replace my ego with His truth unless I bring the ego thought system to Him. That is why, to say it again – *and again and again* – be ever-vigilant for your ego as you go through these lessons. Ask Jesus to join you there, so that with his light you can shine away the darkness, and thereby remember who you are: created by love like itself.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 68**
**Love holds no grievances.**

As I have mentioned before, there are places in the workbook where lessons cluster around a specific theme. These next few lessons focus on the role that attack – holding grievances or judgments – plays in the ego's plan to preserve our individuality and keep the Love of God away. While the term is never found in the workbook, Jesus' discussion of attack and holding grievances is based on the dynamics of special hate relationships.

**(1:1-2) You who were created by love like itself can hold no grievances and know your Self. To hold a grievance is to forget who you are.**

These two sentences unmistakably point out why we hold on to grievances. The purpose of the ego thought system is to ensure that we would not know our true Self, thus forgetting Who we are. The Holy Spirit is the principle of the Atonement, and if we chose His counsel instead of the ego's He would remind us of our Identity as Christ, God's one Son, perfectly united with His Father. Thus, if we turned to the Holy Spirit we would automatically remember. If God's Son is perfect Oneness, and our Identity as God's Son is Love, all we need do to keep this Identity from awareness is accentuate differences within the Sonship. Attack, grievances, or judgments accomplish this goal by conveying to others that they are different and separate from us. At that point, of course, love is out the window. Special love is certainly welcomed, but the Love of God no longer has a home in our minds.

Banishing love from our minds is the ego's bottom line, and explains why practically everyone has trouble with true intimacy, friendship, and love. In these holy relationships there are no barriers: no special interests, special needs, or special expectations – only an experience of the oneness of shared purpose. Therefore, if it is this oneness we fear because it reflects Who we are in reality, we will do everything possible to keep it away. These lessons highlight how attack and grievances accomplish just that.

**(1:3) To hold a grievance is to see yourself as a body.**

This makes perfect sense when you realize that the body is the thought of separation given form. If the body is real, then the source of the body – the thought of being separate from God – must also be real. In Lesson 161, Jesus talks about the need for us to have specifics: if we are to hate, we must hate a body. Needless to say, if I hate a body, I must be a body, too. This bodily identification is the underlying motivation for all attack thoughts and grievances.

**(1:4) To hold a grievance is to let the ego rule your mind and to condemn the body to death.**

In my conscious mind I may think it is your body I am condemning to death through my attack; but in reality, since *ideas leave not their source,* it is my own self I am condemning. Once the ego thought system of separation is accorded reality, the entirety of that thought system is accorded reality as well. Death, being the culmination of the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, is thus inevitable.

**(1:5) Perhaps you do not yet fully realize just what holding grievances does to your mind.**

Whenever we are angry or entertain thoughts of annoyance or judgment, we are not aware of the consequences. In one sense we could say that the purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is to have us see the disastrous effects – to us – of holding grievances. Remember that this is a course in helping us remember the relationship between cause and effect. In this context the *cause* is holding grievances, and its *effects* are misery and suffering. However, if we are not aware of the causal connection between our attack thoughts and pain, there will be no motivation to let the grievances go. One of Jesus' principal "burdens" as our teacher is to have us realize the consequence of holding on to these grievances. And here it is:

**(1:6) It seems to split you off from your Source and make you unlike Him.**

Note that Jesus says *"seems* to split you off." Holding on to grievances *seems* to split us off because, in reality, the separation never occurred. Within our nightmare illusions of anger, we are not only split off from the person at whom we are angry, but also from God. Since all is one within our split minds, what we believe we do to one, we do to the other. As this passage succinctly states, in the context of the need to forgive our brother:

> He represents his Father, Whom you see as offering both life and death to you.
>
> Brother, He gives but life. Yet what you see as gifts your brother offers represent the gifts you dream your Father gives to you (T-27.VII.15:7-16:2).

This now is why God stands behind our brothers in forgiveness and unforgiveness alike:

**(1:7) It makes you believe that He is like what you think you have become, for no one can conceive of his Creator as unlike himself.**

This is an important concept. In fact we are going to see it repeated very shortly in Lesson 72. The meaning is this: If I believe I have attacked, and the original attack thought is against God, I will automatically project the thought and believe God will attack me. When I split off a part of myself I do not want – a self always associated with guilt – I inevitably make another self that is perceived outside me. This self is literally made in my image and likeness; a carbon copy of a thought that I believe I can deny and be rid of. But since *ideas leave not their source,* the ideas of my attack and guilt remain with me. I am unaware this is so because I believe I have gotten rid of them through projection, and thus see the guilt in another. The following passage from the text nicely expresses this dynamic, which inevitably ends up separating us from our selves, at the same time separating us from each other – a perfect result for the ego:

> What you project you disown, and therefore do not believe is yours. You are excluding yourself by the very judgment that you are different from the one on whom you project. Since you have also judged against what you project, you continue to attack it because you continue to keep it separated. By doing this

> unconsciously, you try to keep the fact that you attacked yourself out of awareness, and thus imagine that you have made yourself safe.
>
> Yet projection will always hurt you. It reinforces your belief in your own split mind, and its only purpose is to keep the separation going.... Projection and attack are inevitably related, because projection is always a means of justifying attack. Anger without projection is impossible. The ego uses projection only to destroy your perception of both yourself and your brothers. The process begins by excluding something that exists in you but which you do not want, and leads directly to excluding you from your brothers (1-6.11.2; 3:1-2,5-8).

This highlights the importance of never forgetting the Course's underlying metaphysics. If there is no one out there, and the world is nothing but a projection of what I believe is in me, everything I see outside comes from me. When we dream at night, the characters, events, places, and symbols in the dream are split-off parts of our self; different aspects of a personality we now perceive outside us in the dream. It works the same way with our waking dreams.

Thus it is impossible I see anyone as unlike me, because everyone is made like me, whether it is God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or people in my everyday life. Therefore, if I see myself as separate from you, I have made separation real, which makes real my separation from God. This is the source of my self-accusation that I am a sinner. Projecting this out, I automatically see God as a sinner, too. This is the figure of God we know and "love" in the Bible; the God Who is literally made up in our image and likeness. He is thus as insane as we, filled with our beloved specialness. The law of projection ensures that it cannot be otherwise.

**(2:1) Shut off from your Self, which remains aware of Its likeness to Its Creator, your Self seems to sleep, while the part of your mind that weaves illusions in its sleep appears to be awake.**

Jesus here juxtaposes the image of Christ truly awake, yet *appearing* to be asleep, with our ego self *really* asleep, yet dreaming its life. This split self appears to be awake because we actually think we live. Our Self (Christ), in truth, can never fall asleep. It but seems to sleep, a "sleep" that is buried in our minds, protected by the ego's thought system of guilt and attack.

**(2:2-5) Can all this arise from holding grievances? Oh, yes! For he who holds grievances denies he was created by love, and his Creator has become fearful to him in his dream of hate. Who can dream of hatred and not fear God?**

This is an expression of the ego's "unholy trinity" of sin, guilt, and fear: I believe I have separated from God *(sin);* I am overwhelmed by the horror of what I have done *(guilt);* I project out my guilt and see God (as well as everyone who comes to symbolize this vengeful God) out to steal from me what I believe I stole from Him *(fear).* It is impossible for us to hold a grievance against anyone and not believe, in the end, that God is going to punish us for it. This is the dynamic Jesus wants us to recognize. He does not want us to feel guilty because we have attack thoughts; he simply wants us to be aware of why we are choosing them, and the consequences of our decision. He wants us to understand as well that as long as we think our function is to get rid of guilt through attack, we will never know real happiness. This is why he tells us that our

function and happiness are one. Our function is to let go of our grievances and forgive, allowing to surface the Holy Spirit's thoughts of love, which alone can make us happy. The connection between our unforgiveness and the fear of God is highlighted in this statement from the last obstacle to peace:

> Before complete forgiveness you still stand unforgiving. You are afraid of God *because* you fear your brother. Those you do not forgive you fear. And no one reaches love with fear beside him (T-19.IV-D.11:4-7).

The importance of our understanding this dynamic of cause and effect, unforgiveness and fear, is reflected by how often Jesus returns to it, as we shall continue to see in the workbook.

**(3:1) It is as sure that those who hold grievances will redefine God in their own image, as it is certain that God created them like Himself, and defined them as part of Him.**

The truth is that God and His Son are alike, but in Love and perfect Oneness. The ego says God and His Son are alike, but in guilt and perfect separation. Voltaire's famous *bons mots* are always relevant:

> God created man in his own image. And then man returned the compliment.

**(3:2) It is as sure that those who hold grievances will suffer guilt, as it is certain that those who forgive will find peace.**

As we learn from many other passages in *A Course in Miracles,* the cause of our suffering and pain, without exception, is guilt. The following passage from the text, from which we have already quoted, is representative:

> Once you were unaware of what the cause of everything the world appeared to thrust upon you, uninvited and unasked, must really be. Of one thing you were sure: Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them. Nor did you in any way request them for yourself. This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind. He cannot doubt his dreams' reality, because he does not see the part he plays in making them and making them seem real (T-27.VII.7:3-9).

What holds our guilt in place is attack thoughts, and so we can conclude that these thoughts, born of our guilt, are the cause of our unhappiness and misery. Recognition of this is essential if we are to be motivated to give up attack through forgiveness. Only then can we find the peace we so desperately seek.

**(3:3) It is as sure that those who hold grievances will forget who they are, as it is certain that those who forgive will remember.**

We want to remember our underlying motivation, which is to forget Who we are. We want to forget, because in the memory of our Identity there is no specialness, uniqueness, or individuality that we know of as ourselves. What keeps that memory away is guilt, the pain of which is defended against by holding projected grievances against everyone else.

**(4:1-2) Would you not be willing to relinquish your grievances if you believed all this were so? Perhaps you do not think you can let your grievances go.**

It is the ego's voice that tells us *A Course in Miracles* is too difficult, our hate-filled judgments too overwhelming, our fear too great, and finally that there is no hope of meaningful change. Yet the reader may recall the passage we have already presented from the beginning of Chapter 31 (T-31.I.5), where Jesus gently chides us for believing our minds are not powerful enough to learn his course and practice its principles of forgiveness.

**(4:3) That, however, is simply a matter of motivation.**

Another way of characterizing *A Course in Miracles* is to say it is about *motivation.* Therefore, we must realize that we all have a secret motivation, a hidden agenda that says: "I do not want to awaken from the dream and return home; I do not want to let go of my grievances." That is the hidden motivation. Until we are aware of these secret thoughts, we cannot change them. That is why it is so important to be honest with ourselves about this secret motivation of not wanting to awaken from the dream. If we are truly honest, we would realize that what we really want is to live in this world, but more happily, and to bend this course to suit our ego's purpose. Thus Jesus implores us in the text, as we have seen, to be honest with him, which naturally means with ourselves. His words are worth another read:

> Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other (T-4.III.8:1-2).

> Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God's. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it (T-4.IV.2:4-6).

Jesus is helping us realize that what we are doing will not make us happy. Special relationships may work temporarily, but will not bring the peace of God, as forgiveness most certainly will. Our honesty, allowing us to join with him, is what brings about this happy effect.

**(4:4-5) Today we will try to find out how you would feel without them** [grievances]. **If you succeed even by ever so little, there will never be a problem in motivation ever again.**

Once we allow Jesus to come into our minds, which means allowing ourselves to

come into *his,* we would know the peace of God. Even though we may be tempted to shut him out again, there will always be a part of us that knows the experience of being truly happy when we were with him. When we let go of our attack thoughts, judgments, and specialness, we are truly happy. If we listen, we can hear him say the following words to us, which would ultimately motivate us to make them our own. Thus we shall repeat them from time to time:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

**(5:1) Begin today's extended practice period by searching your mind for those against whom you hold what you regard as major grievances.**

This is an exercise that Jesus repeats many times in the workbook It is another example of the honesty he asks us to practice: to look truly at those against whom we hold grievances. The purpose of this looking, it goes without saying, is to learn to let the grievances go. By remembering the pain to us of holding on to them, we would be motivated at last to release our brothers, thereby releasing ourselves.

**(5:2-3) Some of these will be quite easy to find. Then think of the seemingly minor grievances you hold against those you like and even think you love.**

Jesus is talking about both special hate and special love. It is not just a matter of locating the rage we might feel toward a specific person; these feelings are relatively easy to locate in our minds. What is even more important is to identify the feelings that are more subtle, especially those that hide beneath the face of special love. Jesus also underscores his earlier point in Lesson 21 about no degrees of anger, which he also makes in the manual for teachers:

> It [Anger] may be merely slight irritation, perhaps too mild to be even clearly recognized. Or it may also take the foam of intense rage, accompanied by thoughts of violence, fantasied or apparently acted out. It does not matter. All of these reactions are the same. They obscure the truth, and this can never be a matter of degree. Either truth is apparent, or it is not. It cannot be partially recognized. Who is unaware of truth must look upon illusions (M-17.4:4-11).

*Anything* not of God is illusory, regardless of its seeming magnitude.

**(5:4-5) It will quickly become apparent that there is no one against whom you do not cherish grievances of some sort. This has left you alone in all the universe in your perception of yourself.**

These are lines no one likes! Yet what Jesus says must be so if the Sonship of God is one. If I literally make up the world in my image of self-hatred, no matter how many billions of fragments exist in the universe I projected, there will be a part of me that hates everyone. If you think you do not harbor this hatred within you, think a moment on the people you think you love. Imagine what happens when they do not do or say what you want. Feeling disappointed or even mildly annoyed is, once again, but a veil drawn over the face of intense fury.

As long as you cherish attack thoughts toward yourself, and believe your individuality is what you want, it is impossible to perceive *anyone* with love. It is thus important to become aware of these subtle grievances. Remember, since the Sonship of God is one, if you claim that you hold grievances against many people, but not this one particular person, remember how angry, annoyed, hurt, and disappointed you felt when this wonderful person did not do or say what you wanted. The unfortunate effect of this dynamic is that it has "left you alone in all the universe in your perception of yourself." This is where the ego begins: the belief we have murdered God and destroyed Christ, leaving us isolated in our universe of separation. Since we do not want to accept responsibility for this condition, we project the thought and make a universe of billions and billions of people – those we love and those we hate. We no longer feel alone or separate, though we indeed are, for our original thought has never left its source: "I am all alone, and I have done this terrible thing."

Specialness, then, is an attempt to cover the searing anxiety of the separation so we could end up thinking: "I am not alone in my hatred of these people, because these others agree with me"; or, "I am not alone because this loved one is with me." From the point of view of purpose – the only meaningful perspective for understanding the dream – special love and special hate are the same. Their *forms* differ, but the *content* of separation and guilt remains the same.

**(6:1-3) Determine now to see all these people as friends. Say to them all, thinking of each one in turn as you do so:**

***I would see you as my friend, that I may remember you are part of me and come to know myself.***

The important theme of oneness returns. Jesus does not pretend, though, that we are going to be successful in doing this exercise. It is an exercise he wants us to *practice* doing, by understanding our insane thinking that there really are some people we could like and some we could hate. In terms of foam, this does not mean we need to spend our lives with everyone. Rather, when we spend our lives with specific people – the classrooms we all have – we would not, *in our minds,* exclude anyone else. It is very easy, when we find people whom we love because they meet our special needs, to use the relationship as a standard by which we judge the people who have failed us in the past: e.g., "I never met anyone like you before." "No one has ever been so kind." "No one has ever really understood me until now." Thoughts like these signal that the all-inclusive love of Jesus is not being expressed.

**(6:4-9) Spend the remainder of the practice period trying to think of yourself as completely at peace with everyone and everything, safe in a world that protects you and loves you, and that you love in return. Try to feel safety surrounding you, hovering over you and holding you up. Try to believe, however briefly, that nothing can harm you in any way. At the end of the practice period tell yourself:**

***Love holds no grievances. When I let all my grievances go I will know I am perfectly safe.***

Jesus wants us to think about our safety when in the midst of feeling unsafe. He knows our ability to do this at this point is limited; that is why he uses the phrase

"however briefly." However, he wants us to become accustomed to our split minds: the ego's thought system of danger and the Holy Spirit's correction of safety. Only then can we exercise the mind's power to bring the unsafe to the safe, the darkness to the light, the grievance to the love.

**(7) The short practice periods should include a quick application of today's idea in this form, whenever any thought of grievance arises against anyone, physically present or not:**

***Love holds no grievances. Let me not betray my Self.***

**In addition, repeat the idea several times an hour in this form:**

***Love holds no grievances. I would wake to my Self by laying all my grievances aside and wakening in Him.***

Still once again, Jesus reminds us to maintain vigilance for our ego's antics, so we may look at them with his gentle love beside us, enabling them to disappear. To paraphrase the rhetorical question (T-23.IV.9:8) we cited earlier: Who, with the Love of God beside him, would find the choice between grievances or forgiveness hard to make?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 69**

**My grievances hide the light of the world in me.**

**(1:1) No one can look upon what your grievances conceal.**

That is the main idea. The "light of the world" is the Holy Spirit in our minds, the memory of God's Love we have sought so strenuously to forget. In Lesson 136, Jesus talks about the double shield of oblivion. The subject there is sickness, but we could also speak of attack since it shares the same dynamic. We are shielding the light of the world—the memory of our Identity as Christ – which awaits our choosing to remember it. The first shield is guilt, our self-hatred. The second shield arises when we project our mind's guilt and attack bodies. Attacking ourselves constitutes sickness; attacking others is anger. Thus the purpose of holding grievances is to allow us to say: "The guilt is not in me, but in you." This second shield protects us from guilt, which in turn protects us from love.

**(1:2) Because your grievances are hiding the light of the world in you, everyone stands in darkness, and you beside him.**

The Sonship is one. If I take Jesus' hand and stand in his light, the whole Sonship stands with me. If I drop his hand, my mind again fills with the darkness of my sin and guilt. The Sonship is there with me as well, at least in my deluded mind.

**(1:3-5) But as the veil of your grievances is lifted, you are released with him. Share your salvation now with him who stood beside you when you were in hell. He is your brother in the light of the world that saves you both.**

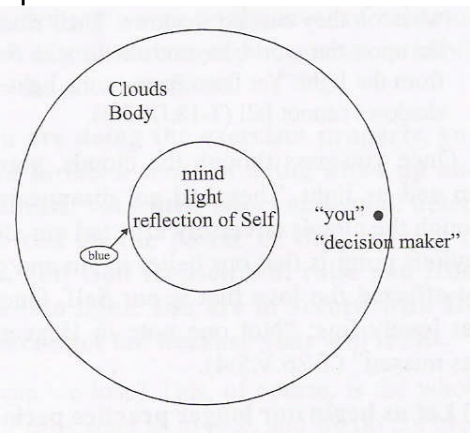
This lifting of the veil – the essence of forgiveness or the miracle – has nothing to do with what the other person does or does not accept, believe, or perceive. It has to do only with what is in our minds, the dream's sphere of action. There is nothing within us but the thoughts of Heaven or hell, the *us* that is God's one Son.

**(2) Today let us make another real attempt to reach the light in you. Before we undertake this in our more extended practice periods, let us devote several minutes to thinking about what we are trying to do. We are literally attempting to get in touch with the salvation of the world. We are trying to see past the veil of darkness that keeps it concealed. We are trying to let the veil be lifted, and to see the tears of God's Son disappear in the sunlight.**

First and foremost, we need keep in mind how much we do *not* want to do this. In the presence of the light of Christ, our individuality is gone. It is this we fear, the birthplace of our resistance to *A Course in Miracles* and, more specifically, to this type of lesson.

The chart below parallels Jesus' discussion in this and the following lesson. The circle in the center represents the circle of light to which he will refer presently. For the purposes of these lessons, this will be the locus of the right mind. As Jesus will explain, this contains the reflection of our real Self. The true Self, of course, is not in the illusion. We cover truth's reflection with a circle of clouds, which relates to our physical experience. We believe – the *you* to whom Jesus speaks – we are a body in the clouds. The *you* is placed in quotation marks because it is not the real you – for the same

reason *decision maker* is in quotation marks – which is in the mind.




We believe we are in the clouds, and therefore do not see anything else. If you are in the midst of a cloud bank you do not see the sun. If flying on a cloudy day, you do not see sunlight until the plane goes through the clouds. We have already seen portions of a passage in which Jesus uses the image of clouds hiding our guilt. Here is more of that passage, beginning with the perceptual illusions found in observing a bank of clouds:

> Yet in this cloud bank it is easy to see a whole world rising. A solid mountain range, a lake, a city, all rise in your imagination, and from the clouds the messengers of your perception return to you, assuring you that it is there. Figures stand out and move about, actions seem real, and forms appear and shift from loveliness to the grotesque. And back and forth they go, as long as you would play the game of children's make-believe. Yet however long you play it, and regardless of how much imagination you bring to it, you do not confuse it with the world below, nor seek to make it real.
>
> So should it be with the dark clouds of guilt, no more impenetrable and no more substantial. You will not bruise yourself against them in traveling through. Let your Guide teach you their unsubstantial nature as He leads you past them, for beneath them is a world of light whereon they cast no shadows. Their shadows lie upon the world beyond them, still further from the light. Yet from them to the light their shadows cannot fall (T-18.IX.7-8).

Once you pass though the clouds, you see the sun and its light. They had not disappeared, even though the clouds adversely affected our sight. The obvious point is that our belief in sin and guilt has not affected the love that is our Self Once again, that lovely line: "Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4).

**(3) Let us begin our longer practice period today with the full realization that this is so, and with real determination to reach what is dearer to us than all else. Salvation is our only need. There is no other purpose here, and no other function to fulfill. Learning salvation is our only goal. Let us end the ancient search today by finding the light in us, and holding it up for everyone who searches with us to look upon and rejoice.**

More words of encouragement from Jesus, urging us to remember *why* we are here, as we set aside our "ancient [and futile] search" that led nowhere. Now, having

chosen the light instead of darkness, we become reminders for others to make the choice we have made.

**(4) Very quietly now, with your eyes closed, try to let go of all the content that generally occupies your consciousness. Think of your mind as a vast circle, surrounded by a layer of heavy, dark clouds. You can see only the clouds because you seem to be standing outside the circle and quite apart from it.**

The *you,* once again, is the *you* I have put in quotation marks on the chart. The content Jesus asks us to let go of involves grievances of the past, thoughts of present specialness, and fears of the future – all having to do with bodies. We see only the clouds because we are in the clouds. We stand outside the circle of light, and therefore believe we are "quite apart from it." Guilt is the great blinder of the universe. Once having identified with it, we cannot but "see" through its eyes. But such eyes were made not to see, as we have already discussed. Thus we cannot see the circle of light, even though it is all around us; indeed, even though it *is* us.

**(5:1) From where you stand, you can see no reason to believe there is a brilliant light hidden by the clouds.**

In other words, to continue the point just made above, all we know is our individuality and specialness – what we believe is real. Because we perceive a world of bodies, an insanity shared by billions of others, we believe this to be reality, and we are not aware of the truth underneath. Again, guilt's darkness blinds us to the light. Recall that important statement:

> Nothing so blinding as perception of form (T-22.111.6:7).

**(5:2-5) The clouds seem to be the only reality. They seem to be all there is to see. Therefore, you do not attempt to go through them and past them, which is the only way in which you would be really convinced of their lack of substance. We will make this attempt today.**

We do not attempt to go through and past the clouds because we do not see any reason to do so. Like Plato's chained prisoners who saw only the back of the cave, oblivious to the source of the shadows cast upon the wall, we know of nothing else. We thus have no recourse but to rearrange the clouds in order to feel better. For example, we make artificial light so we may see: literally the artificial light of electricity, the metaphysically artificial light of the sun, and, perhaps most importantly, the artificial light of our specialness. Not knowing the true light, we do the best we can. We think our problems are in the cloud banks of the world, just as we believe our solutions are found there as well. The ego's strategy of establishing mindlessness as reality has been remarkably successful.

**(6:1) After you have thought about the importance of what you are trying to do for yourself and the world...**

Realize again that Jesus is not talking about saving an external world – *There is no external world!* He is talking about the world we believe in, projected from our minds.

We believe in a world of separation from God, the home of sin, guilt, fear, attack, and death. We project this thought system, and now believe a world exists outside us and needs to be saved. Again, when Jesus speaks of our being the saving light of the world, he is clearly not talking about anything external, which would be the exact opposite of his message. We save the world because we save ourselves; we save ourselves because we save the world – our self and the world are one and the same: *ideas leave not their source.* The following succinctly summarizes Jesus' teachings on the mind-world relationship, and the nature of salvation:

> For it [the world] is made out of what you do not want, projected from your mind because you are afraid of it. Yet this world is only in the mind of its maker, along with his real salvation. Do not believe it is outside of yourself, for only by recognizing where it is will you gain control over it. For you do have control over your mind, since the mind is the mechanism of decision (T-12.III.9:7- 1 0).

**(6:1-3) ...try to settle down in perfect stillness, remembering only how much you want to reach the light in you today, – now! Determine to go past the clouds. Reach out and touch them in your mind.**

By saying "touch them in your mind," Jesus emphasizes that the clouds are not external. They are the mind's attack thoughts, projected as bodily experience. This emphasis, needless to say, reflects the undoing of the ego's strategy of mindlessness by having us recall that we have a mind. It also reflects Jesus' encouraging us to choose happiness, which can only be attained through choosing to be led through the clouds of guilt to the light of truth.

**(6:4-5) Brush them aside with your hand; feel them resting on your cheeks and forehead and eyelids as you go through them. Go on; clouds cannot stop you.**

This is another way of saying illusions have no power unless we choose to give it to them. What motivates us to learn this lesson is recognizing that our specialness does not work for us. The cessation of our pain thus becomes our motivation:

> Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way (T-2.III.3:5-6).

Our pain causes us to admit we were wrong. Holding judgments, grievances, specialness in any form does not work. Nothing works, *except letting them all go.* At some point we will come to accept this truth for ourselves. Until then, the lesson is merely something we do on the level of behavior. The clouds of guilt cannot stop us unless our minds give them the power to do so.

**(7) If you are doing the exercises properly, you will begin to feel a sense of being lifted up and carried ahead. Your little effort and small determination call on the power of the universe to help you, and God Himself will raise you from darkness into light. You are in accord with His Will. You cannot fail because your will is His.**

How can we lose? This, of course, is the whole point. Our egos want us to lose, and we do not even know it! We cannot lose because "the outcome is as certain as God" (T-4.II.5:8). We learn this is true when we accept the Atonement for ourselves, meaning we accept the happy fact that the separation from God never happened. All that is required for this acceptance is our "little effort and small determination" – our little willingness – to allow this truth to be restored to our awareness by the Holy Spirit, as Jesus assures us in the following passages in the context of the holy instant:

> The holy instant is the result of your determination to be holy.... You prepare your mind for it only to the extent of recognizing that you want it above all else. It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more.... The holy instant does not come from your little willingness alone. It is always the result of your small willingness combined with the unlimited power of God's Will (T-18.IV.1:1,4-5; 4:1-2).

> Your part is only to offer Him [the Holy Spirit] a little willingness to let Him remove all fear and hatred, and to be forgiven. On your little faith, joined with His understanding, He will build your part in the Atonement and make sure that you fulfill it easily. And with Him, you will build a ladder planted in the solid rock of faith, and rising even to Heaven (T-18.V.2:5-7).

**(8:1-2) Have confidence in your Father today, and be certain that He has heard you and answered you. You may not recognize His answer yet, but you can indeed be sure that it is given you and you will yet receive it.**

This passage is important because it reflects to us that Jesus knows this is a process: "You may not recognize His answer yet." He is not expecting us instantaneously to go through the clouds of illusion to his light. As in many, many other places, Jesus reminds us of the goal, the strength of our desire to achieve it, and how much practice we have ahead of us. Yet again, "the outcome is as certain as God," and merely awaits the diminution of our fear that we may accept God's answer.

**(8:3-5) Try, as you attempt to go through the clouds to the light, to hold this confidence in your mind. Try to remember that you are at last joining your will to God's. Try to keep the thought clearly in mind that what you undertake with God must succeed.**

This, then, becomes the prototype for living in the world. As we experience the ego's clouds of guilt and fear, anxiety and depression, we try to remember Who goes with us. It is only through this experience of trust in a power that is not us – the Love of God and not the ego – that we are finally able to go through the clouds to the light. As Jesus explains, speaking of the circle of fear in words we have already quoted:

> Yet God can bring you there, if you are willing to follow the Holy Spirit through seeming terror, trusting Him not to abandon you and leave you there. For it is not His purpose to frighten you, but only yours. You are severely tempted to abandon Him at the outside ring of fear [the circle of fear], but He would lead you safely through and far beyond (T-18.IX.3:7-9).

**Lesson 69**

Because of our Companion we must succeed, for truth will always succeed over illusion, since truth is all there is.

**(8:6) Then let the power of God work in you and through you, that His Will and yours be done.**

As we have just seen, we are not the ones who bring about this union, but the power of God. This really means the Holy Spirit, Who restores to our awareness the unity of wills that is our only reality.

**(9:1-2) In the shorter practice periods, which you will want to do as often as possible in view of the importance of today's idea to you and your happiness, remind yourself that your grievances are hiding the light of the world from your awareness. Remind yourself also that you are not searching for it alone, and that you do know where to look for it.**

Jesus is not referring to himself or the Holy Spirit here. *They* do not search. He means we are not searching for the light alone, because our brothers are one with us in the Sonship of God. That understanding comes when we ask for help of the Holy Spirit instead of the insane ego, whenever we are tempted to hold on to a grievance.

Motivation for such a shift comes with the recognition that our happiness depends on it:

**(9:3-6) Say, then:**

***My grievances hide the light of the world in me. I cannot see what I have hidden. Yet I want to let it be revealed to me, for my salvation and the salvation of the world.***

Not only *our* happiness depends on it, but our salvation from the hell of guilt; not only *our* salvation, but that of all the Sonship since, once again, our minds are one.

**(9:7-8) Also, be sure to tell yourself:**

***If I hold this grievance the light of the world will be hidden from me,***

**if you are tempted to hold anything against anyone today.**

In other words, Jesus tells us we should monitor our minds for all attack thoughts – "large" or "small," "justified" or "unjustified" – and realize that they are hiding the light of the world form us. Set aside the fact that our grievances are hiding the light from this other person; they are keeping *us* in darkness. Our release is the motivation – the only motivation that will truly work – for letting them go.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 70**

**My salvation comes from me.**

This is an important lesson, from which we quote a great deal. The reason for its importance lies in its explicit statement that the problem of guilt is in our minds. In other words, the cause of our distress is within, as is its undoing. They are not, and *cannot* be found in anything external.

**(1:1) All temptation is nothing more than some form of the basic temptation not to believe the idea for today.**

This is the purpose of all special relationships, which proclaim: My salvation comes from you whoever or whatever that special person, substance, or activity appears to be. What makes me happy comes not from my mind's choice, but from what is external to it. The truth, of course, is that *salvation* can come only from the mind, since *slavation* (to indulge in some word play) comes only from the mind as well.

**(1:2-3) Salvation seems to come from anywhere except from you. So, too, does the source of guilt.**

What is appealing about the workbook is that most of the time you do not have the complicated discussions found in the text. The statements are so clear it will astound you how your eyes pass right over them. If you have done the workbook in the past and are reading it again, you will be surprised at how much you did not remember or even notice the first time around. The above is an example of such simplicity.

**(1:4-6) You see neither guilt nor salvation as in your own mind and nowhere else. When you realize that all guilt is solely an invention of your mind, you also realize that guilt and salvation must be in the same place. In understanding this you are saved.**

The purpose of the ego's thought system is to keep the problem away from the answer. The ego makes guilt up as the defense against salvation – the acceptance of the Atonement that is in our right minds. It tells us to take the problem of guilt and project it onto someone else. Our problem now has become someone else's guilt, not our own. Thus we spend the rest of our lives – as individuals and as a society – trying to solve the mind's problem of guilt that is perceived to be outside us. We attempt to alleviate pain by external behavior, yet all the time the real problem – our choice to be a special and guilty individual – is safely buried by the ego's defensive strategy. This is the *double shield of oblivion* – guilt and body – we have already discussed.

**(2:1) The seeming cost of accepting today's idea is this: It means that nothing outside yourself can save you; nothing outside yourself can give you peace.**

This includes *A Course in Miracles,* its author, and God. There is no one and nothing outside that can save us. From the perspective of the Course, this means the end of all gurus, in the popularized expression of this Eastern practice. Only our mind's power to choose – and this cannot be said often enough – can bring us salvation and peace.

**(2:2) But it also means that nothing outside yourself can hurt you, or disturb your peace or upset you in any way.**

If one is true the other must be true, too, because *there is nothing outside our minds.* No one outside can help us because there is no one outside; nothing outside can harm us because there is nothing outside. This is another way of understanding "the simplicity of salvation" (T-31.I).

**(2:3-5) Today's idea places you in charge of the universe, where you belong because of what you are. This is not a role that can be partially accepted. And you must surely begin to see that accepting it is salvation.**

This is not referring to the universe of Heaven, but to the universe of our minds and the world. We are in charge because we are the ones who chose it. The *you* in charge of this universe, again, is the *decision maker.* It has chosen to be in the dream, but can just as easily choose to be outside it.

To say that this role cannot be partially accepted means that we cannot legitimately claim: "Yes, I can help myself here, but someone else has to help me there"; or "I can ask Jesus for help with this particular problem, but not for the others." Forgiveness works all the time, or else it does not work at all. Remember that this is an *all or nothing* course.

**(3:1-2) It may not, however, be clear to you why the recognition that guilt is in your own mind entails the realization that salvation is there as well. God would not have put the remedy for the sickness where it cannot help.**

As a brief summary of what was discussed in my Preface to these volumes, let me return to the theme of the language of *A Course in Miracles.* If taken literally, 3:2 would mean that God does things. Obviously making it real, He has seen the error of sin and sickness, and gives us the answer. Jesus' words do say this, as they sometimes do in the text as well.* To repeat a most important point, however, these are the words of metaphor. God does not have a plan in response to the separation, nor does He create the Holy Spirit and place Him in our minds. Moreover, our Creator does not set up an elaborate plan of the Atonement whereby his Sons will awaken from the dream. Jesus just finished telling us there is nothing outside that can save us. Yet he says here that God does save us! If so, He must be a dualistic Being Who is external to the one He is saving.

Jesus uses this dualistic language in *A Course in Miracles* because it is one with which we can identify; a comforting way of speaking since it is familiar to us. Recall the passage we discussed before from "The Link to Truth" (T-25.I.5-7): Being thoroughly identified with a separated (i.e., dualistic) self, the state of perfect Oneness is unknown to us and so would the "language" that spoke of it. Thus Jesus utilizes the "ego framework" (C-in.3:l) in which to express his teachings – the *reflection* of non-duality is what ultimately will lead us *to* non-duality.

We return now to the sentence I just read, and continue:

**(3:2-3) God would not have put the remedy for the sickness where it cannot help. That is the way your mind has worked, but hardly His.**

In other words, our minds have separated the problem from the solution. Fortunately, "God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7). The memory of His Love enables us to bring the problem (projected from the mind) back to the solution (in the mind).

**(3:4) He wants you to be healed, so He has kept the Source of healing where the need for healing lies.**

To repeat, God does not want you to be healed. If He did, He would recognize that you are sick. If so, He would be making the error real. To state it again, this is a comforting set of symbols that we all find reassuring. It is important to understand this is why *A Course in Miracles* is written dualistically. The non-dualistic truth is that God, by virtue of His very nature, is the ever-present Source of healing: His memory in our separated – and thus sick minds.

**(4:1) You have tried to do just the opposite, making every attempt, however distorted and fantastic it might be, to separate healing from the sickness for which it was intended, and thus keep the sickness.**

We have already discussed that the ego's real fear is not of the Love of God, about which it knows nothing, but of the mind's power to make the right choice – the decision maker's ability to say: "I chose the ego falsely, but there is a principle of truth in my mind still available for me to choose." That ability to correct the mistaken decision is the ego's fear, which supplies the motivation to carry out its strategy of making the Son of God mindless, thereby protecting itself against the "attack" of the Son's power to change his mind.

The solution, therefore, is in our minds, because that is the source of the problem, which does not lie in the ego thought system itself, but in our decision to identify with it. Consequently, the solution does not rest in changing the ego thought system (the first shield of oblivion), let alone the material expression of the ego thought system (the second shield of oblivion). The solution lies in changing our minds about the ego thought system. To cite again the wonderful line:

> Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world (T-21.in.1:7).

Changing our minds is therefore what *A Course in Miracles* is about, as we see over and over again in these lessons. This goal of the Course should be quite evident by now, as should the place of the workbook in its curriculum.

Let me re-read the first sentence of the paragraph: "You have tried to do just the opposite, making every attempt, however distorted and fantastic it might be, to separate healing from the sickness for which it was intended, and thus keep the sickness." That is what we want: to keep the sickness of specialness. The intricate thought system of the ego and the complex world which arose from it have one purpose only: to keep the sickness of believing we are special, autonomous, and separate from God.

**(4:2-3) Your purpose was to ensure that healing did not occur. God's purpose was to ensure that it did.**

Remember, the *you* whose purpose Jesus is talking about is the decision maker that likes the idea of being on its own. This puts the Son in direct opposition to God, Whose Will is that He and His Son are one and never separate, as the next paragraph reflects:

**(5) Today we practice realizing that God's Will and ours are really the same in this. God wants us to be healed, and we do not really want to be sick, because it makes us unhappy. Therefore, in accepting the idea for today, we are really in agreement with God. He does not want us to be sick. Neither do we. He wants us to be healed. So do we.**

Jesus has to convince us that holding onto grievances makes us unhappy. It may make everyone else unhappy, too. However, the only motivation that will work is ending our misery and pain. We are not going to study and practice *A Course in Miracles* because Jesus says we should, but because we finally recognized that everything we tried on our own has failed. We accept at last that only joining with Jesus will make us happy. Our decision to be with him thus reflects the union of our will with God's, reflecting the decision to heal the separation.

**(6) We are ready for two longer practice periods today, each of which should last some ten to fifteen minutes. We will, however, still let you decide when to undertake them. We will follow this practice for a number of lessons, and it would again be well to decide in advance when would be a good time to lay aside for each of them, and then adhering to your own decisions as closely as possible.**

Once again we see Jesus asking *us* to impose some structure on our practicing. It is not much, to be sure, but it is a beginning. His purpose here, as always, is to encourage us to pursue our training of wanting to think along with him, so that we can forget our egos and remember God.

**(7) Begin these practice periods by repeating the idea for today, adding a statement signifying your recognition that salvation comes from nothing outside of you. You might put it this way:**

***My salvation comes from me. It cannot come from anywhere else.***

**Then devote a few minutes, with your eyes closed, to reviewing some of the external places where you have looked for salvation in the past;—in other people, in possessions, in various situations and events, and in self-concepts that you sought to make real. Recognize that it is not there, and tell yourself:**

***My salvation cannot come from any of these things. My salvation comes from me and only from me.***

This is the purpose of our special relationships: the belief we can be helped and made happy by something other than God. The purpose of this exercise is to review how important this concept has been in our lives, and how painful. This is what will impel us, finally, to make the choice that will bring us true help and happiness.

**(8:1-5) Now we will try again to reach the light in you, which is where your salvation is. You cannot find it in the clouds that surround the light, and it is in them you have been looking for it. It is not there. It is past the clouds and in the light beyond. Remember that you will have to go through the clouds before you can reach the light.**

The aforementioned chart (see lesson 69) will serve us here as well, illustrating the process of moving beyond the clouds to the light; beyond the illusions of our special relationships to the truth of forgiveness. These lines make a very important statement: We cannot go from where we think we are directly to Heaven; we must first go through the clouds of illusions. That is why Jesus teaches that freedom lies in looking at the special hate relationship (T-16.IV.1:1). We must look at our disturbed, sick, insane, and hateful thoughts before we can move past them to the love that is underneath. Salvation cannot be found in the clouds of the world, but only in the light of Atonement the ego has kept hidden, but which has never ceased to shine in our minds.

**(8:6) But remember also that you have never found anything in the cloud patterns you imagined that endured, or that you wanted.**

We do not really believe this; there is a part of us that still believes there is hope for something here. We believe our specialness will yet work; we just have to do it better. This kind of thinking is why we feel *A Course in Miracles* does not help us. And so we have to be reminded – continually reminded – how nothing in the world has ever, or will ever, satisfy our longing for love and peace.

**(9) Since all illusions of salvation have failed you, surely you do not want to remain in the clouds, looking vainly for idols there, when you could so easily walk on into the light of real salvation. Try to pass the clouds by whatever means appeals to you. If it helps you, think of me holding your hand and leading you. And I assure you this will be no idle fantasy.**

This is one of the very few places in the workbook where Jesus speaks of himself Needless to say, it is a powerful statement. He is saying: "You would do much better going through the clouds with me." In fact, as Jesus makes it clear in other places: "You *cannot* go through the clouds without me." That is why, for example, he says that he needs you as much as you need him (T-8.V.6:10), a reference we have already seen. As long as you believe you are an individual body, you need another individual body to help you; a hand to hold as guide through the morass of specialness. When you attempt to go through the ego's clouds of guilt by yourself you are doomed to failure, for such attempt is a shadowy fragment of the original error of trying to exist and create by ourselves – *without God.*

In the end there is no you, no Jesus, no clouds – only God. But that is at the end. As long as you identify yourself as a student of his course, Jesus' help is extraordinarily meaningful. This is echoed in the plea to us in the clarification of terms, which states that although it is Jesus' message that is ultimately important, he can still be of help to us:

> Jesus is for you the bearer of Christ's single message of the Love of God. You need no other. It is possible to read his words and benefit from them without accepting him into your life. Yet he would help you yet a little more if you will

share your pains and joys with him, and leave them both to find the peace of God (C-5.6:4-7).

Thus Jesus says: “Do not make this journey without me.”

**(10) For the short and frequent practice periods today, remind yourself that your salvation comes from you, and nothing but your own thoughts can hamper your progress. You are free from all external interference. You are in charge of your salvation. You are in charge of the salvation of the world. Say, then:**

***My salvation comes from me. Nothing outside of me can hold me back. Within me is the world’s salvation and my own.***

The lesson closes with the important reminder that we are no longer justified in shifting responsibility for our spiritual impediments from ourselves to external influences. Jesus wants us to remember as often as possible throughout the day that salvation comes only from us. This is bad news to our egos, but the best news for the part of our minds that wants to return home. Nothing in the world can prevent this return, and since this is what we truly want, we cannot help but succeed.

* See *Few Choose to Listen,* Vol. 2 of *The Message of A Course in Miracles,* for a complete discussion of this linguistic characteristic of the Course, along with relevant examples.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 71**
**Only God's plan for salvation will work.**

This is not a very happy thought for the ego, because we still think our plans for salvation will work. To say it again, God does not have a plan. Terms like these are used because they are familiar and easily understood. We must always keep in mind, however, that they are Jesus' symbols of forgiveness to correct the ego's symbols of sin and punishment. In the Bible, and in the religions that have sprung from the Bible, God certainly does have a plan. The plan Jesus speaks of here is much different, as we have already seen, and will see again in this lesson.

**(1:1-2) You may not realize that the ego has set up a plan for salvation in opposition to God's. It is this plan in which you believe.**

Most of us do not think when living our special love and hate relationships that we are actively choosing against God. That is why Jesus asks in the text that if we knew our special relationships were a triumph over God, would we want them? (T-16.V.10:1) He is helping us understand that not only do we have a plan to save ourselves from pain, but this plan directly opposes God. It is helpful to think about this *one-or-the-other* aspect of our lives, for perceiving the situation as it is will enable us to change our minds and make the correct choice.

**(1:3) Since it is the opposite of God's, you also believe that to accept God's plan in place of the ego's is to be damned.**

That *is* what we believe: If we accept God's plan and forgive, our individuality is over and we are damned to eternal oblivion. This is reminiscent of the crucial discussion in the text where Jesus explains the ego's upside-down thinking: good is bad, and bad is good; forgiveness is to be shunned, and guilt embraced:

> Much of the ego's strange behavior is directly attributable to its definition of guilt. To the ego, *the guiltless are guilty.* Those who do not attack are its "enemies" because, by not valuing its interpretation of salvation, they are in an excellent position to let it go.... When it [the ego] was confronted with the real guiltlessness of God's Son [i.e., Jesus] it did attempt to kill him, and the reason it gave was that guiltlessness is blasphemous to God. To the ego, the *ego* is God, and guiltlessness must be interpreted as the final guilt that fully justifies murder (T-13.11.4:1-3; 6:2-3).

**(1:4-5) This sounds preposterous, of course. Yet after we have considered just what the ego's plan is, perhaps you will realize that, however preposterous it may be, you do believe in it.**

You may recall that in "The Laws of Chaos" Jesus says the very same thing. He describes the insanity of the ego's five laws, and then states:

> You would maintain, and think it true, that you do not believe these senseless laws, nor act upon them. And when you look at what they say, they cannot be believed. Brother, you *do* believe them (T-23.11.18:1-3).

Jesus knows we believe in the ego's plan, because we believe we are here. This means we believe projection is salvation, for it protects us from the mind's Atonement principle, the home of the memory of God's Love.

**(2:1) The ego's plan for salvation centers around holding grievances.**

You couldn't ask for a simpler statement, and one more directly reflective of the ego's use of projection. This leads to a cogent description of specialness:

**(2:2-5) It maintains that, if someone else spoke or acted differently, if some external circumstance or event were changed, you would be saved. Thus, the source of salvation is constantly perceived as outside yourself. Each grievance you hold is a declaration, and an assertion in which you believe, that says, "If this were different, I would be saved." The change of mind necessary for salvation is thus demanded of everyone and everything except yourself.**

There is not a person in this world who does not identify with this thought system, for it is what made and sustains the world. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud set forth his theory that all dreams are fulfillments of wishes. Jesus would take this same principle and expand it to *all* dreams: sleeping *and* waking. The physical universe as a macrocosm, and our individual world as a microcosm, were specifically made to fulfill the ego's secret wish of maintaining the separation, but shifting responsibility for it to others. Thus we all have our ego's cake of separation, and eat and enjoy it because someone else will pay the price for it. "The Picture of Crucifixion" offers a trenchant expression of this dynamic of selfishness and hate, wherein we preserve our innocence at the expense of someone else's guilt, for which the other will be punished instead of ourselves:

> Every pain you suffer do you see as proof that he is guilty of attack. Thus would you make yourself to be the sign that he has lost his innocence, and need but look on you to realize that he has been condemned. And what to you has been unfair will come to him in righteousness. The unjust vengeance that you suffer now belongs to him, and when it rests on him are you set free....
>
> Whenever you consent to suffer pain, to be deprived, unfairly treated or in need of anything, you but accuse your brother of attack upon God's Son. You hold a picture of your crucifixion before his eyes, that he may see his sins are writ in Heaven in your blood and death, and go before him, closing off the gate and damning him to hell (T-27.I.2:2-5; 3:1-2).

We shall return to this essential component of the ego's plan for salvation.

**(3:1-2) The role assigned to your own mind in this plan, then, is simply to determine what, other than itself, must change if you are to be saved. According to this insane plan, any perceived source of salvation is acceptable provided that it will not work.**

In the next paragraph Jesus describes this as the ego's maxim -- "Seek and do not find" – what everyone does. It is so clearly expressed here that there is no need to belabor it. It is the essence of projection, the heart of the ego's thought system, and its insurance that nothing will ever change in the mind of God's Son.

**(3:3-4) This ensures that the fruitless search will continue, for the illusion persists that, although this hope has always failed, there is still grounds for hope in other places and in other things. Another person will yet serve better; another situation will yet offer success.**

Later in the workbook Jesus says "another can be found" (W-pI.170.8:7). If we are truly honest with ourselves, we will realize we are doing precisely what has been described. Therefore, the last thing we want to do is embrace this course totally, both intellectually and in practice. Instead, we want to compromise its teachings so that it would fail to help us – exactly what we just read, which is the essence of the ego's specialness.

**(4) Such is the ego's plan for your salvation. Surely you can see how it is in strict accord with the ego's basic doctrine, "Seek but do not find." For what could more surely guarantee that you would not find salvation than to channelize all your efforts in searching for it where it is not?**

Remember, what the ego does not want us to find is that we have a mind, for then we would realize we could choose differently, marking the end of the ego and our special self. Therefore, we direct our efforts towards searching for salvation where it is *not.* We can see how Jesus has gradually been bringing us to this realization, on both the intellectual and experiential levels. He wants us to know how we use the world to distract us from *finding* the peace we truly *seek,* convincing us it will yet be *found* in the world outside, as we read in this passage from the text:

> No one who comes here but must still have hope, some lingering illusion, or some dream that there is something outside of himself that will bring happiness and peace to him.... And thus he wanders aimlessly about, in search of something that he cannot find, believing that he is what he is not.
>
> The lingering illusion will impel him to seek out a thousand idols, and to seek beyond them for a thousand more (T-29.VII.2:1,5-3:1).

Needless to say, all idols will fail: the ego's hidden agenda.

**(5:1-2) God's plan for salvation works simply because, by following His direction, you seek for salvation where it is. But if you are to succeed, as God promises you will, you must be willing to seek there only.**

That is the catch. Everyone who studies *A Course in Miracles* will say: "Of course I want to follow the Holy Spirit (the meaning of "God" here); of course I want to forgive – but I do not want to do *only* that. I want my specialness, too, to luxuriate in its pleasures every once in a while. I will read the text and do the workbook lessons faithfully ... *but,* I will do my specialness thing as well, making the body real and ignoring the mind ("where [salvation] is")." Unfortunately for the ego, salvation is without such compromise. This passage from "Salvation without Compromise" states this explicitly, in the context of the ego's attempt to attack and love together:

> Salvation is no compromise of any kind. To compromise is to accept but

> part of what you want; to take a little and give up the rest.... Let the idea of compromise but enter, and the awareness of salvation's purpose is lost because it is not recognized. It is denied where compromise has been accepted, for compromise is the belief salvation is impossible. It would maintain you can attack a little, love a little, and know the difference....
>
> This course is easy just because it makes no compromise.... Forgiveness cannot be withheld a little. Nor is it possible to attack for this and love for that and understand forgiveness (T-23.III.3:1-2, 5-7; 4:1,5-6).

It is this uncompromising nature of *A Course in Miracles* that is its greatest strength and greatest trial for the ego, hell-bent on maintaining the specialness of the body.

**(5:3-4) Otherwise, your purpose is divided and you will attempt to follow two plans for salvation that are diametrically opposed in all ways. The result can only bring confusion, misery and a deep sense of failure and despair.**

We can see how the early workbook lessons were leading to statements like these two sentences. The lessons helped us understand there is no outer world, and what we see outside is a projection of what is inside. In fact, Lesson 22 told how it is our attack thoughts that make up the world. Jesus has thus been training our minds to understand that the problem is within, not in our bodies or brains. This lesson provides an explicit statement that he could not have made without first having taught all he had done previously. The symphonic development of these ideas is indeed masterful to behold.

It is also interesting to behold the parallels between the text and the workbook. Although the development in each book is quite different, the core ideas are present in each. For example, Jesus' point here about the difficulty in following diametrically opposed plans for salvation parallels the following passage in the text, even in the use of language:

> The curriculum of the Atonement is the opposite of the curriculum you have established for yourself, but so is its outcome. If the outcome of yours has made you unhappy, and if you want a different one, a change in the curriculum is obviously necessary. The first change to be introduced is a change in direction. A meaningful curriculum cannot be inconsistent. If it is planned by two teachers, each believing in diametrically opposed ideas, it cannot be integrated. If it is carried out by these two teachers simultaneously, each one merely interferes with the other....
>
> The total senselessness of such a curriculum must be fully recognized before a real change in direction becomes possible. You cannot learn simultaneously from two teachers who are in total disagreement about everything. Their joint curriculum presents an impossible learning task. They are teaching you entirely different things in entirely different ways, which might be possible except that both are teaching you about yourself. Your reality is unaffected by both, but if you listen to both, your mind will be split about what your reality is (T-8.I.5:1-6; 6).

Within this context we can understand Jesus' purpose in *A Course in Miracles* as presenting us with the two "diametrically opposed" curricula of the two "diametrically

opposed" teachers, asking us to make the only meaningful choice open to us: Heaven or hell, God or the ego, happiness or misery.

**(6) How can you escape all this? Very simply. The idea for today is the answer. Only God's plan for salvation will work. There can be no real conflict about this, because there is no possible alternative to God's plan that will save you. His is the only plan that is certain in its outcome. His is the only plan that must succeed.**

The choice is a no-brainer, to use the popular expression. Only one plan will bring the end of misery and pain. However, this makes no sense unless it is recognized that the problem resides in the mind, the source of all suffering. That is why the workbook has been so emphatic on the mind's role in salvation.

**(7) Let us practice recognizing this certainty today. And let us rejoice that there is an answer to what seems to be a conflict with no resolution possible. All things are possible to God. Salvation must be yours because of His plan, which cannot fail.**

The joy of making the right choice is our ultimate motivation in making it. The end of conflict is the end of pain and misery, and the beginning of joy and happiness. Jesus never tires of reminding us of the joyous result of choosing the Answer.

**(8:1-2) Begin the two longer practice periods for today by thinking about today's idea, and realizing that it contains two parts, each making equal contribution to the whole. God's plan for your salvation will work, and other plans will not.**

It is that second clause that is the killer. We would be willing to accept the first if we did not also have to accept the second. Unfortunately for our egos, salvation makes no compromise. We have discussed before that in *A Course in Miracles* "yes" means "not no." To say "yes" to God's plan means saying "no" to the ego's, rejecting the thought system that is the source of our existence. Needless to say, that is the basis of our resistance to accepting Jesus' teachings. These lines, therefore, reflect the uncompromising nature of the Course's thought system: truth is true, and nothing else is; Christ is our true Identity, the ego's is the illusion. We shall happily return to this principle throughout the rest of the workbook.

**(8:3-6) Do not allow yourself to become depressed or angry at the second part; it is inherent in the first. And in the first is your full release from all your own insane attempts and mad proposals to free yourself. They have led to depression and anger; but God's plan will succeed. It will lead to release and joy.**

Anger and depression arise at this stage because we still want to do things our way. When we feel anxious or depressed, rather than go within and ask Jesus for help to undo the thoughts that led to the unpleasant feelings, we choose to cover them by indulging ourselves in a special relationship. This is the origin of all addictions – with people or substances. The pain is too great, and instead of resolving it in the mind – the source of our distress – we use the body to dull the pain. To truly practice *A Course in*

*Miracles* we must realize the ego's plan does not work. Insisting that it will bring us happiness and relief ensures that the pain will always be there, albeit appearing in different forms.

The next paragraph has us literally ask God what we should do. Here again, you must understand that Jesus does not literally expect God to answer us. In fact, he tells us later in the workbook that God does not even understand words nor does He answer prayers (see Lesson 184). Yet his words meet us where we are, and so we are supposed to ask God:

**(9:1-5) Remembering this, let us devote the remainder of the extended practice periods to asking God to reveal His plan to us. Ask Him very specifically:**

***What would You have me do?***
***Where would You have me go?***
***What You have me say, and to whom?***

In other places in *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus explains that imploring God with words has no effect. For example, in the manual for teachers he discusses "the role of words in healing," and says:

> God does not understand words, for they were made by separated minds to keep them in the illusion of separation. Words can be helpful, particularly for the beginner, in helping concentration and facilitating the exclusion, or at least the control, of extraneous thoughts. Let us not forget, however, that words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality (M-21.1:7-10).

Moreover, Jesus makes it clear in the opening pages of *The Song of Prayer* that asking for specifics is tantamount to – in my words, paraphrasing the ego principle of *forgiveness-to-destroy* – "asking-to-destroy." As is explained in the following passages, when we ask for specifics we are reinforcing the ego's belief in the *scarcity principle (A Course in Miracles,* Preface, p. xi) – "feelings of weakness and inadequacy" – and thus asking God to join us there. The central teaching of *A Course in Miracles,* however, is that we bring our beliefs in scarcity and lack to Him, and in His Love all such illusions are dispelled and problems answered:

> The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need. To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it *[forgiveness-to-destroy].* Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands. There they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him? Can this be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration? God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this (S-1.1.4).

Yet, because we are still "uncertain of [our] Identity," Jesus is telling us in this lesson that we should in fact ask God for specifics, because he is responding to us at different stages of our growth – different rungs of the ladder of prayer, the pamphlet's term for the process of forgiveness:

> Prayer has no beginning and no end. It is a part of life. But it does change in form, and grow with learning until it reaches its formless state, and fuses into total communication with God. In its asking form it need not, and often does not, make appeal to God, or even involve belief in Him. At these levels prayer is merely wanting, out of a sense of scarcity and lack.
>
> These forms of prayer, or asking-out-of-need [i.e., asking for specifics: *asking-to-destroy*], always involve feelings of weakness and inadequacy, and could never be made by a Son of God who knows Who he is. No one, then, who is sure of his Identity could pray in these forms. Yet it is also true that no one who is uncertain of his Identity can avoid praying in this way (S-1.II.1:1-2:3).

Students must be wary, however, that they not take statements like this out of their overall context in *A Course in Miracles.* Otherwise, they would be wrenching its *form* from the fabric of the Course's *content,* thereby altering its meaning by having *A Course in Miracles* teach the exact opposite of what it truly means. This is a course in undoing the *cause* the mind's decision for separation and not modifying the *effect* – the specifics of our daily lives.

To summarize this important point: In *A Course in Miracles* Jesus is leading us "up the ladder separation led [us] down" (T-28.III.1:2). We begin our ascent at the bottom rung, which is reflected in our embrace of the ego's dualistic thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, and the reality of the material world. At this level God must inevitably be perceived as a body:

> Can you who see yourself within a body know yourself as an idea? Everything you recognize you identify with externals, something outside itself. You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize (T-18.VIII.1:5-7).

This divine body, made in our image and likeness – the symbol of our belief in sin, guilt, and fear – is perceived by our egos as a vengeful and punitive God, obsessed with our destruction. Thus Jesus, our loving elder brother, gently corrects this fearful myth by providing us with a kinder one, a forgiving illusion in which God – *still perceived as a body* – is lovingly attentive to our needs, rather than punishing us for them. Once we ascend the ladder of prayer with the Holy Spirit as our Guide, we recognize the illusory nature of these myths and move beyond them to the love that is "beyond the world of symbols":

> A power wholly limitless has come, not to destroy, but to receive its own.... Give welcome to the power beyond forgiveness, and beyond the world of symbols and of limitations (T-27.111.7:2,8).

**(9:6-7) Give Him full charge of the rest of the practice period, and let Him tell you what needs to be done by you in His plan for your salvation. He will answer in proportion to your willingness to hear His Voice.**

This statement is very important. Lesson 49 told us that God's Voice speaks to us throughout the day. In that lesson, as I pointed out, Jesus does not say we *hear* God's Voice throughout the day, but only that the Holy Spirit's Love is continually present to us.

The problem is that we shut ourselves off from it. Therefore, it is our willingness to hear His Voice that will allow us to hear It. Needless to say, Jesus is not literally talking about an actual voice or specific words, but an experience of God's Love that comes when we say, in effect: "Only God's Love will bring me happiness; the ego's special love will not." It is thus not the ego's separating fear we seek, but the Oneness of God's Love, experienced as a Voice. This passage from the manual for teachers explains it this way, in a continuation of the previously quoted passage about words being "symbols of symbols":

> As symbols, words have quite specific references. Even when they seem most abstract, the picture that comes to mind is apt to be very concrete. Unless a specific referent does occur to the mind in conjunction with the word, the word has little or no practical meaning, and thus cannot help the healing process. The prayer of the heart does not really ask for concrete things. It always requests some kind of experience, the specific things asked for being the bringers of the desired experience in the opinion of the asker. The words, then, are symbols for the things asked for, but the things themselves but stand for the experiences that are hoped for (M-21.2).

Therefore, once we choose *against* the ego's fear and *for* the Holy Spirit's Love, we shall experience the effect of that choice in a form we understand, which reflects that we, a separated body, are in need of another separated body (even a discarnate one) to help us.

**(9:8-10) Refuse not to hear. The very fact that you are doing the exercises proves that you have some willingness to listen. This is enough to establish your claim to God's answer.**

Jesus is once again letting us know this is a process. The fact that we have come this far, are doing, the workbook and reading his text, is saying there is a part of us that wants this other way. In the end, "our [little] willingness to listen" ensures the happy outcome we are promised. However, what will speed us along in this process is realizing how much we do not want this other way, and asking Jesus to help us forgive our fear.

**(10) In the shorter practice periods, tell yourself often that God's plan for salvation, and only His, will work. Be alert to all temptation to hold grievances today, and respond to them with this form of today's idea:**

***Holding grievances is the opposite of God's plan for salvation. And only His plan will work.***

**Try to remember today's idea some six or seven times an hour. There could be no better way to spend a half minute or less than to remember the Source of your salvation, and to see It where It is.**

The lesson closes, as many of them do, with Jesus urging us to be as vigilant as possible for our decision for separation, guilt, and attack as the defense against returning Home to the heart of Love. Jesus is asking us continually – even *more* than every ten minutes to compare his plan with the ego's; forgiveness with holding

grievances. Thus would we be reminding ourselves of what we really want, and how choosing attack and blame merely interferes with the desire to return to our Source.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 72**
**Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation.**

Viewing the lessons as a series, different movements in a gigantic symphony, we see how each one is part of the larger whole, the lessons building upon themselves as the music of forgiveness evolves. In this lesson Jesus talks a great deal about the body. Yet it is not the body that is the problem, but our belief in it. This defends against the body's source: the guilt in our minds.

**(1:1) While we have recognized that the ego's plan for salvation is the opposite of God's, we have not yet emphasized that it is an active attack on His plan, and a deliberate attempt to destroy it.**

If we really experienced this "deliberate attempt" the instant we started making judgments and holding grievances, we would stop instantly. The ego splits off the effect from the cause, so that we are not aware of what we are doing, allowing us blissfully to keep on doing it. Jesus was making the same point in the text when he discussed the viciousness of the special relationship, not only to destroy God's "plan" of forgiveness but to destroy God Himself. We have already discussed the paragraph's opening sentence:

> If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you want it? Let us not think of its fearful nature, nor of the guilt it must entail, nor of the sadness and the loneliness. For these are only attributes of the whole religion of separation, and of the total context in which it is thought to occur. The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so you can live. And it is this theme that is acted out in the special relationship (T-16.V.10:1-5).

It is essential that we recognize the effects of our judgments; otherwise choosing against them would have no meaning and, indeed, could never happen.

**(1:2) In the attack, God is assigned the attributes which are actually associated with the ego, while the ego appears to take on the attributes of God.**

This is an important theme in *A Course in Miracles,* and helps us to understand why the world has made such hideous images of God: destroyer, avenger, punisher, arbiter of specialness, etc. We project our unconscious thoughts about ourselves, and have them now be in God. We discussed this in the previous lesson, citing the text's statement of the impossibility of *not* perceiving God as a body once we believe we are bodies – *projection makes perception.* It is not only our belief in the body that we project onto God, but the underlying thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. Given the immutable nature of this fundamental principle of the mind – again, *projection makes perception* – it cannot *not* be the case that we would project our unconscious attributes of selfishness and hate onto our Creator; He, the great killer. In the following images of sun and sunbeam, ocean and ripple, God is perceived by the little self to be the monster:

> In its amazing arrogance, this tiny sunbeam has decided it is the sun; this almost imperceptible ripple hails itself as the ocean. Think how alone and frightened is this little thought, this infinitesimal illusion, holding itself apart against the universe. The sun becomes the sunbeam's "enemy" that would devour it, and

the ocean terrifies the little ripple and wants to swallow it (T-18.VIII.3 :4-6).

Moreover, it cannot *not* be the case that we would believe – following another ego principle of *one or the other* – that what was once God's has become ours. We – the separated and autonomous ego self – have become the creators. We shall return to these fundamental ego dynamics later in the workbook.

**(2) The ego's fundamental wish is to replace God. In fact, the ego is the physical embodiment of that wish. For it is that wish that seems to surround the mind with a body, keeping it separate and alone, and unable to reach other minds except through the body that was made to imprison it. The limit on communication cannot be the best means to expand communication. Yet the ego would have you believe that it is.**

These are explicit statements of the ego's essence, the stark reality of its desire to become autonomous, independent, and free, *and then believing it has accomplished this impossibility!* The body, then, "is the physical embodiment of [the ego's] wish" to replace God and be on its own. In the text Jesus teaches that the body is a limit on love (T-18.VIII.1:2). *Communication* in the Course, however, is the song of unlimited love the Father and Son sing to each other, a song of perfect oneness and unity. The body keeps that reality separate from our awareness. "The Little Garden" also expresses the idea that the body keeps us separated from God, as we see in this representative passage:

> God cannot come into a body, nor can you join Him there. Limits on love will always seem to shut Him out, and keep you apart from Him. The body is a tiny fence around a little part of a glorious and complete idea. It draws a circle, infinitely small, around a very little segment of Heaven, splintered from the whole, proclaiming that within it is your kingdom, where God can enter not (1-18.VIII.2:3-6).

In the next two paragraphs Jesus explains that when we hold grievances they are always against a body. This relates to the idea in Lesson 161, which I mentioned earlier, that hate is specific. If I am going to hate, there must be a body out there to be hated. Jesus is helping us realize that our grievances always deal with bodies, the antithesis of our, and our brothers' identity as spirit:

**(3) Although the attempt to keep the limitations that a body would impose is obvious here, it is perhaps not so apparent why holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation. But let us consider the kinds of things you are apt to hold grievances for. Are they not always associated with something a body does? A person says something you do not like. He does something that displeases you. He "betrays" his hostile thoughts in his behavior.**

Recall the essential role the body plays in its plan to keep the Son of God mindless. It not only solidifies the ego's claim that the separation actually occurred, but the magical hope as well that someone else's body will be the secure repository of our guilt. Thus do our bodies' eyes roam viciously around their world, ready to pounce on any proof that our brother is the sinner, leaving us innocent and free of any threat of punishment. Our brother "says something [we] do not like" because we want him to say

something we do not like. This does not mean we are responsible for what is said, but we are most definitely responsible for our interpretation of what he said. In other words, we *want* the hostility to be in another, directed at ourselves, and so we see it there, as this graphic passage about the ego's "hungry dogs of fear" (T-19.IV-A.15:6) depicts:

> The messengers of fear are harshly ordered to seek out guilt, and cherish every scrap of evil and of sin that they can find, losing none of them on pain of death, and laying them respectfully before their lord and master.... Fear's messengers are trained through terror, and.... Its messengers steal guiltily away in hungry search of guilt, for they are kept cold and starving and made very vicious by their master, who allows them to feast only upon what they return to him. No little shred of guilt escapes their hungry eyes. And in their savage search for sin they pounce on any living thing they see, and carry it screaming to their master, to be devoured.... they will bring you word of bones and skin and flesh. They have been taught to seek for the corruptible, and to return with gorges filled with things decayed and rotted. To them such things are beautiful, because they seem to allay their savage pangs of hunger (T-19.IV-A.11:2; 12:3,5-7; 13:2-4).

Without the body, these fear-laden dogs would have nothing to feast on, and their guilt would devour them as punishment for their sin.

**(4:1-4) You are not dealing here with what the person is. On the contrary, you are exclusively concerned with what he does in a body. You are doing more than failing to help in freeing him from the body's limitations. You are actively trying to hold him to it by confusing it with him, and judging them as one.**

"Shadows of the Past" also tells us we do not see people for the Christ they are, but as shadowy bodies based on the projection of guilt: our perceived evil seen in them. The following passage describes the ego's unholy use of the body—"as means for vengeance":

> The shadow figures are the witnesses you bring with you to demonstrate he did what he did not.... They represent the evil that you think was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and not harm yourself ... They offer you the "reasons" why you should enter into unholy alliances to support the ego's goals, and make your relationships the witness to its power.... Without exception, these relationships have as their purpose the exclusion of the truth about the other, and of yourself. This is why you see in both what is not there.... And why whatever reminds you of your past grievances attracts you, and seems to go by the name of love.... And finally, why all such relationships become attempts at union through the body, for only bodies can be seen as means for vengeance. That bodies are central to all unholy relationships is evident (T-17.III.1:6,9-10,12; 2:3-7).

Strictly speaking, I cannot hold you in the ego's hell; but I can certainly reinforce your choice to be there by equating you with the body, the purpose of the special relationship. Thus every special relationship – unfortunately that means almost all our relationships – is based upon an illusion. It begins with the illusion we hold about

ourselves – "the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1) – which we then seek to dispose of through projecting it onto others. Our belief that we are separated, now projected onto another, leads to that projected thought given form *and made real.* Thus our brother *is* a body, and if we are too, it is not our fault. The sinful and guilty shadows of our past's mistaken decision have become reality to us, and our reality as spirit has become the illusion.

**(4:5-6) Herein is God attacked, for if His Son is only a body, so must He be as well. A creator wholly unlike his creation is inconceivable.**

In Lesson 68 I referred to the concept of God being whatever we conceive His Son to be. Thus, again, if we see ourselves and others as bodies, it is impossible that we not see God as one, too. This is because every belief we have about another comes directly from our belief about ourselves: *projection makes perception.* The way we perceive ourselves must be the way we perceive God, Jesus, and everyone else in the Sonship – *without exception.* That is why, to repeat this important point, Jesus speaks about God as if He were a body. He calls him "Father," asks us to have a conversation with Him, and ask Him questions. However, this is not because God knows about the illusion, as the continuation of the passage of the sun and ocean – metaphors for God – makes clear:

> Yet neither sun nor ocean is even aware of all this strange and meaningless activity. They merely continue, unaware that they are feared and hated by a tiny segment of themselves (T-18.VIII.4:1-2).

Once more, Jesus talks to us *as if* God knows about us, because this is how *we* experience God: like perceives like, bodies perceive bodies, illusions perceive illusions.

**(5:1-5) If God is a body, what must His plan for salvation be? What could it be but death? In trying to present Himself as the Author of life and not of death, He is a liar and deceiver, full of false promises and offering illusions in place of truth. The body's apparent reality makes this view of God quite convincing. In fact, if the body were real, it would be difficult indeed to escape this conclusion.**

This passage depicts the biblical God – in spades! When we make our thought system of individuality real, we make the body real. This means we believe we have destroyed the true God, replacing Him with a deity literally made up in our own bodily image, and a lying and deceiving one at that. If the body were real, which we certainly believe, this image of God *must* be real as well. The ego thought system, you may recall, is a totally coherent, internally consistent one. Thus, if the body were real, the thought system that made it and still informs it is real as well. And God, the projection of our guilt, must be an ego, too. This same argument begins Chapter 13 in the text, the context being the world of bodies, made by "those made mad by guilt":

> The acceptance of guilt into the mind of God's Son was the beginning of the separation, as the acceptance of the Atonement is its end. The world you see is the delusional system of those made mad by guilt. Look carefully at this world, and you will realize that this is so. For this world is the symbol of punishment, and all the laws that seem to govern it are the laws of death. Children are born into it

through pain and in pain. Their growth is attended by suffering, and they learn of sorrow and separation and death. Their minds seem to be trapped in their brain, and its powers to decline if their bodies are hurt. They seem to love, yet they desert and are deserted. They appear to lose what they love, perhaps the most insane belief of all. And their bodies wither and gasp and are laid in the ground, and are no more. Not one of them but has thought that God is cruel.

If this were the real world, God *would* be cruel. For no Father could subject His children to this as the price of salvation and *be* loving (T-13.in.2 :1-3 :2).

No wonder the biblical God is such a despicable creature. He is *us!*

**(5:6-9) And every grievance that you hold insists that the body is real. It overlooks entirely what your brother is. It reinforces your belief that he is a body, and condemns him for it. And it asserts that his salvation must be death, projecting this attack onto God, and holding Him responsible for it.**

Projection to the ego's rescue, once again! What better way to keep our true Identity hidden than to see only the mindless body as real. What better way to keep the body real than to continually see it as the object and perpetrator of attack. How better to keep the belief in attack real than by punishing it through the "natural" law of death. Finally, how fiendishly clever on the ego's part to keep this law immutable by attributing it to Almighty God Himself, as the Bible so blatantly asserts. One can only admire the ego's ingenuity, even as we suffer under its guilt-ridden yoke.

**(6) To this carefully prepared arena, where angry animals seek for prey and mercy cannot enter, the ego comes to save you. God made you a body. Very well. Let us accept this and be glad. As a body, do not let yourself be deprived of what the body offers. Take the little you can get. God gave you nothing. The body is your only savior. It is the death of God and your salvation.**

This is a rather strong passage, but if we are honest with ourselves we will realize this is not only what religions have believed, but what we believe, too. Indeed, religions teach this because they were made by the ego.

The reference here is to the little scraps of specialness we are so desperate to get, for which we so pitifully settle. This is why Jesus says in the text that the problem is not that we ask for too much, but for far too little (T-26.VII.11:7); and why he asks us to consider our use of the body:

To think you could be satisfied and happy with so little is to hurt yourself... (T-191V-A.17:12).

In *The Song of Prayer* he urges us not to settle for the parts of the song, but to seek instead the experience of the song itself. In other words, we should not accept the ego's shabby and specific substitutes of specialness when Jesus is offering us the totality of God's Love:

You cannot, then, ask for the echo. It is the song that is the gift. Along with it come the overtones, the harmonics, the echoes, but these are secondary. In true prayer you hear only the song. All the rest is merely added. You have sought

first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else has indeed been given you (S-1.I.3).

The ego has told us that God has given us nothing, for He gave us the body and left us here, and there is nothing we can do about it. Moreover, He is going to kill us. Therefore, the ego continues, as long as we are here let us make the best of it, and get whatever bodily crumbs of pleasure we can! In the pessimistic words of Isaiah, worthy of the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Let us eat and drink [and be merry, adds Ecclesiastes 8:15]; for tomorrow we shall die" (Isaiah 22:13). The ego then believes it has the last laugh, because the very fact there is a body that can live *and* die, means that God's and Christ's reality as eternal spirit must be illusory. Thus we are saved *from* God's Love, and *for* the ego's specialness.

**(7) This is the universal belief of the world you see. Some hate the body, and try to hurt and humiliate it. Others love the body, and try to glorify and exalt it. But while the body stands at the center of your concept of yourself, you are attacking God's plan for salvation, and holding your grievances against Him and His creation, that you may not hear the Voice of truth and welcome It as Friend. Your chosen savior takes His place instead. It is your friend; He is your enemy.**

There is no one in this world who does not believe the body saves us from God, for each of us has chosen to come into this world as a body. And who but the insane would choose to come to hell rather than remain in Heaven? We all have chuckled over the Cheshire Cat's response to poor Alice, perhaps without recognizing Lewis Carroll's wisdom:

> "In that direction," the Cat said, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter: and in that direction," waving the other paw, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."
>
> "But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
>
> "Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
>
> "How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice. "You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."

It makes no difference to the insane ego whether we embrace the body or are repulsed by it. Either way we have made it real. That is why Jesus tells us (twice!) in the sections on the obstacles to peace that whether the body is perceived as pleasurable or painful is irrelevant, as long as we believe it has that capacity (T-19.IV-A.17:10-11; T-19.IV-B .12). Thus have we made it real in our perception, and turned spirit into an illusion. These opposite sides – pleasure and pain – of the same bodily coin are discussed again in Lesson 155.

This devotion to the body goes right to the heart of our motivation: We do not want to hear the Voice of truth, which signals the end of our ego self. Therefore we first silence the Holy Spirit by our guilt, and then by glorifying the body as our friend and savior.

**(8) We will try today to stop these senseless attacks on salvation. We will try to welcome it instead. Your upside-down perception has been ruinous to your peace of mind. You have seen yourself in a body and the truth outside you, locked**

**away from your awareness by the body's limitations. Now we are going to try to see this differently.**

Again, after making his case, Jesus appeals to us to listen, and therefore to choose again. At the end of the text Jesus makes this same appeal, even more emphatically:

> Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel. It sets the limits on what he can do; its power is the only strength he has; his grasp cannot exceed its tiny reach. Would you be this, if Christ appeared to you in all His glory, asking you but this:
>
> > *Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there.*
>
> For He *has* come, and He *is* asking this (T-31.VIII.1).

The question is clear, the problem even clearer. The answer merely awaits our inevitable decision.

**(9) The light of truth is in us, where it was placed by God. It is the body that is outside of us, and is not our concern. To be without a body is to be in our natural state. To recognize the light of truth in us is to recognize ourselves as we are. To see our Self as separate from the body is to end the attack on God's plan for salvation, and to accept it instead. And wherever His plan is accepted, it is accomplished already.**

Referring to our chart (see lesson 69), the light of truth is in our minds – the inner circle – and the body is in the clouds – the outer circle. Once again, the decision is ours. It is helpful to return to the workbook's basic purpose: training us to return to our minds, within which we have a choice between the unnatural state of the body – reflecting the unnatural thought system of the ego – and the natural state of our Self as spirit. The decision is made possible by recognizing the painful futility of holding onto our grievances, when we could have the peace of God instead.

**(10) Our goal in the longer practice periods today is to become aware that God's plan for salvation has already been accomplished in us. To achieve this goal, we must replace attack with acceptance. As long as we attack it, we cannot understand what God's plan for us is. We are therefore attacking what we do not recognize. Now we are going to try to lay judgment aside, and ask what God's plan for us is:**

***What is salvation, Father? I do not know. Tell me, that I may understand.***

**Then we will wait in quiet for His answer. We have attacked God's plan for salvation without waiting to hear what it is. We have shouted our grievances so loudly that we have not listened to His Voice. We have used our grievances to**

**close our eyes and stop our ears.**

We have already discussed at length the use of dualistic language in *A Course in Miracles,* which is seen again here and requires no further commentary.

Jesus is asking us to set aside our judgments and grievances, for these are the ego's "raucous shrieks" that prevent us from hearing the gentle Voice reflecting God's plan for salvation: the Atonement. To quote again from that important passage on specialness:

> What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you (1-24.11.4:3-6).

Our judgments are thus calculated by the unconscious ego to deflect our attention from the guilt in our minds, focusing it on the body – our sinful brother's!

**(11) Now we would see and hear and learn. "What is salvation, Father?" Ask and you will be answered. Seek and you will find. We are no longer asking the ego what salvation is and where to find it. We are asking it of truth. Be certain, then, that the answer will be true because of Whom you ask.**

Jesus is assuming we have made our choice, released our grievances, and are free to hear the truth. We have *sought* for the answer where it can be *found,* where it has awaited our return. Salvation is really not an answer but a decision, and one which we now happily make.

**(12) Whenever you feel your confidence wane and your hope of success flicker and go out, repeat your question and your request, remembering that you are asking of the infinite Creator of infinity, Who created you like Himself:**

***What is salvation, Father? I do not know. Tell me, that I may understand.***

**He will answer. Be determined to hear.**

As he almost always does at the end of a lesson, Jesus urges us to remember his truth when we are tempted to forget our function and embrace the illusion of attack and judgment. Recall again that judgment is motivated by the decision *not* to hear the Voice that speaks for the Atonement – the salvation from separation and pain. Such recollection brings to mind our purpose of remembering the Love that is the Answer to all our problems and concerns.

**(13) One or perhaps two shorter practice periods an hour will be enough for today, since they will be somewhat longer than usual. These exercises should begin with this:**

**Lesson 72**

***Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation. Let me accept it instead. What is salvation, Father?***

**Then wait a minute or so in silence, preferably with your eyes closed, and listen for His answer.**

Today's instructions call for fewer practice periods than before, and we can see how Jesus does not want us to be bound by a rigid structure. His goal is for us to be dependent on the *content* of his message, not the *form* in which it comes and with which we practice. Thus he varies the *form* of the daily exercises, though hardly their *content.*

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 73**
**I will there be light.**

In this lesson Jesus continues to talk about grievances. He begins, however, by contrasting will with *wish,* a distinction that is explained more fully in the text (see, e.g., T-7.X.4-7): the ego wishes; spirit wills.

**(1:1-2) Today we are considering the will you share with God. This is not the same as the ego's idle wishes, out of which darkness and nothingness arise.**

The ego's idle wish is to be separate from the Will of God, an individual self apart from His living Oneness. Out of that illusory wish arise nothingness and darkness: first the ego thought system of sin, guilt, and fear; and then the world.

**(1:3-7) The will you share with God has all the power of creation in it. The ego's idle wishes are unshared, and therefore have no power at all. Its wishes are not idle in the sense that they can make a world of illusions in which your belief can be very strong. But they are idle indeed in terms of creation. They make nothing that is real.**

The ego's idle wishes have no power in reality, but they certainly do within the dream. On the level of truth, the ego is absolutely nothing, but within its own thought system it is very powerful. After all, it believes it destroyed Heaven. Yet because the ego is on its own, it lacks the power of Heaven's Oneness, which is the power of creation. The ego's "power" of miscreation can only make illusions; hence, it is idle. I mentioned above that in the text Jesus makes the same distinction. Here is an excerpt from his comments:

> God wills. He does not wish. Your will is as powerful as His because it is His. The ego's wishes do not mean anything, because the ego wishes for the impossible. You can wish for the impossible, but you can will only with God. This is the ego's weakness and your strength (T-7.X.4:6-11).

**(2) Idle wishes and grievances are partners or co-makers in picturing the world you see. The wishes of the ego gave rise to it, and the ego's need for grievances, which are necessary to maintain it, peoples it with figures that seem to attack you and call for "righteous" judgment. These figures become the middlemen the ego employs to traffic in grievances. They stand between your awareness and your brothers' reality. Beholding them, you do not know your brothers or your Self.**

When Jesus talks about "picturing the world [we] see," he does not mean there is a world out there that we simply misperceive. He is speaking of the *world of perception* that we see. It is not just that we see by means of our misthoughts. The fact that we see in the first place is the object of Jesus' correction. The perceptual world – "the delusional system of those made mad by guilt" (T-13.in.2:2) – was made by the wish to protect our mind's decision to be separate, and the dynamic of projection, which accomplished this, is also utilized to protect the original (or primary) projection. Our grievances against others – the secondary projections if you will – perpetuate the delusional system of separation by keeping them separate from us, at the same time holding them up as

sinners deserving punishment. All this – the special love and hate relationships that are the ego's bread and butter – continually attack our and our brothers' reality as Christ: God's one Son, undifferentiated and undivided. Our specialness clothes them in the darkness of our needs and demands, hiding the light that unites us all as one Self.

**(3) Your will is lost to you in this strange bartering, in which guilt is traded back and forth, and grievances increase with each exchange. Can such a world have been created by the Will the Son of God shares with his Father? Did God create disaster for His Son? Creation is the Will of Both together. Would God create a world that kills Himself?**

Once again, Jesus is not speaking of a world in which there is physical death, plane crashes, or other disastrous occurrences; he is speaking of a physical world, *period.* The world of perception is the world of duality; the world of special relationships in which each partner bargains with the other for some scraps of specialness. Each seeks to give as little and receive as much as possible in return. This strange and unnatural way of relating – one ego self trying to negotiate with another ego self for what is ultimately worthless – is depicted quite explicitly in this passage from "The Choice for Completion":

> Most curious of all is the concept of the self which the ego fosters in the special relationship. This "self" seeks the relationship to make itself complete. Yet when it finds the special relationship in which it thinks it can accomplish this it gives itself away, and tries to "trade" itself for the self of another. This is not union, for there is no increase and no extension. Each partner tries to sacrifice the self he does not want for one he thinks he would prefer. And he feels guilty for the "sin" of taking, and of giving nothing of value in return. How much value can he place upon a self that he would give away to get a "better" one? (T-16.V.7)

In reading the Bible, a student of *A Course in Miracles* can see how the biblical deity is directly involved with such strange bartering, continually trading grievances with his children. This reinforcement of the ego's principles of specialness explains the great attraction the Bible has had for its readers and adherents, and one can justifiably ask whether the God of Love and Oneness could possibly be involved with such insanity?

**(4) Today we will try once more to reach the world that is in accordance with your will. The light is in it because it does not oppose the Will of God. It is not Heaven, but the light of Heaven shines on it. Darkness has vanished. The ego's idle wishes have been withdrawn. Yet the light that shines upon this world reflects your will, and so it must be in you that we will look for it.**

This is the real world. While still an illusion, it yet reflects the reality of Heaven as it does not oppose God's Will in any way. In this peaceful state we stand outside the dream, seeing the physical world for what it is. We have accepted the Atonement for ourselves by choosing, *once and for all,* against the separation wishes of the ego. All that remains is the light of the Atonement's truth within our minds, patiently awaiting our decision to look for it.

**(5:1-4) Your picture of the world can only mirror what is within. The source**

**of neither light nor darkness can be found without. Grievances darken your mind, and you look out on a darkened world. Forgiveness lifts the darkness, reasserts your will, and lets you look upon a world of light.**

Truth and illusions are both within our minds; not outside, as the ego would have us believe. This idea is more than familiar to us by now: What we see outside is a projection of what we have first seen inside: *projection makes perception.* If we want to see light outside, we must first see it within, which we cannot reach without going through the darkness. Forgiveness – undoing the mind's guilt – is therefore the means of accomplishing this happy and light-filled outcome.

**(5:5-8) We have repeatedly emphasized that the barrier of grievances is easily passed, and cannot stand between you and your salvation. The reason is very simple. Do you really want to be in hell? Do you really want to weep and suffer and die?**

The barrier is easily passed because it consists of nothing but our decision to be in the hell of separation and attack. Once taught by Jesus that all suffering, even unto death, has come from this decision, the answer is very simple: change our minds and forgive.

**(6:1-4) Forget the ego's arguments which seek to prove all this is really Heaven. You know it is not so. You cannot want this for yourself. There is a point beyond which illusions cannot go.**

In other words, illusions will never make us happy. We have to accept that statement as fact before we can be willing to ask Jesus' help. The illusions of specialness can certainly bring us happiness and pleasure, but these can never last because our special relationships were made *not* to last. This is "the point beyond which illusions cannot go." Why would we want to seek for what will inevitably fail us? Jesus repeatedly returns to this point, since its appeal is what he hopes will eventually turn us away from hell.

**(6:5-6) Suffering is not happiness, and it is happiness you really want. Such is your will in truth.**

Once again, Jesus is pointing out our need to realize that what we do in this world does not make us happy. Until we can accept that, and accept that none of our specialness is going to end our pain or bring us joy, we are not going to ask for his help, at least not sincerely. Intrinsic to this process is acknowledging, as we have seen earlier, that only he can teach us the difference between pain and joy, imprisonment and freedom, suffering and happiness.

**(6:7-9) And so salvation is your will as well. You want to succeed in what we are trying to do today. We undertake it with your blessing and your glad accord.**

Jesus cannot help us unless we give such help our blessing. That is why he must first convince us he is right and we are wrong, and that we truly prefer to be happy and not right (T-29.VII.1:9). Without such conviction we would never choose to follow him.

That is why he needs us as much as we need him (T-8.V.6:10). We need to want to be helped; only then can our salvation be accomplished.

**(7) We will succeed today if you remember that you want salvation for yourself. You want to accept God's plan because you share in it. You have no will that can really oppose it, and you do not want to do so. Salvation is for you. Above all else, you want the freedom to remember Who you really are. Today it is the ego that stands powerless before your will. Your will is free, and nothing can prevail against it.**

Another pep talk from Jesus, reminding us to remember how much we want his salvation instead of the ego's slavation; that our freedom lies in ourselves as does our imprisonment. When we are tempted to forget, he reminds us that no matter how powerful the ego appears to be – external *and* internal – it can have no power over us unless we choose to let it. That is why nothing can prevail against our will, as he tells us in the text:

> The Kingdom is perfectly united and perfectly protected, and the ego will not prevail against it (T-4.III.1:12; italics omitted).

That is the source of our hope and our joy.

**(8) Therefore, we undertake the exercises for today in happy confidence, certain that we will find what it is your will to find, and remember what it is your will to remember. No idle wishes can detain us, nor deceive us with an illusion of strength. Today let your will be done, and end forever the insane belief that it is hell in place of Heaven that you choose.**

The pep talk continues, as Jesus wants us to understand the inherent weakness of the ego's illusory wishes, which in no way can compare with the strength of our will, always at one with the Will of our Creator and Source.

**(9) We will begin our longer practice periods with the recognition that God's plan for salvation, and only His, is wholly in accord with your will. It is not the purpose of an alien power, thrust upon you unwillingly. It is the one purpose here on which you and your Father are in perfect accord. You will succeed today, the time appointed for the release of the Son of God from hell and from all idle wishes. His will is now restored to his awareness. He is willing this very day to look upon the light in him and be saved.**

We are asked by Jesus to put into practice what he has been teaching us; to think seriously during the day's long practice periods about our mistake in thinking we would want, even if we could, to oppose God's Will. He asks us to see how unhappy such a mistake has made us, and how happy we could be by simply setting aside our ego's opposition to the truth. Thus do we welcome the Will of God where it is already, as the awareness of Heaven is restored to our minds in place of the hell we had made in its stead.

It is important to understand that we must truly accept this teaching; otherwise, we might choose to practice these lessons *behaviorally,* without really wanting to do so.

Early in the text Jesus cautions us against this very mistake of entering into the conflict of not wanting to do what we feel he is asking us to do, yet doing it anyway:

> You can behave as you think you should, but without entirely wanting to do so. This produces consistent behavior, but entails great strain.... resulting in a situation in which you are doing what you do not wholly want to do. This arouses a sense of coercion that usually produces rage, and projection is likely to follow (T-2.VI.5:4-7).

That is why Jesus is continually emphasizing the benefits to us of letting our grievances go. He wants us to *want* to forgive. Only then will we truly and joyfully choose to do so.

**(10) After reminding yourself of this, and determining to keep your will clearly in mind, tell yourself with gentle firmness and quiet certainty:**

***I will there be light. Let me behold the light that reflects God's Will and mine.***

**Then let your will assert itself, joined with the power of God and united with your Self. Put the rest of the practice period under Their guidance. Join with Them as They lead the way.**

We do our part by joining God and Christ in our minds. This allows our joint Will to shine through us, embracing the Sonship in the oneness of love. This process of reflecting creation's will of light the essence of healing – finds lovely expression in the final principle of miracle workers, known to many students of *A Course in Miracles* as the "Prayer for Salvation":

> *I am here only to be truly helpful.*
> *I am here to represent Him Who sent me.*
> *I do not have to worry about chat to say or what to do, because He* Who *sent me will direct me.*
> *I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me.*
> *I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal.* (T-2.V.18:2-6)

Thus are we guided daily to heal as we are healed, forgive as we are forgiven, and love as we are loved.

**(11:1-5) In the shorter practice periods, again make a declaration of what you really want. Say:**

***I will there be light. Darkness is not my will.***

**This should be repeated several times an hour.**

Our decision is reflected by the willingness to remember – as often as we can that our will and God's are one, the ego's delusions of grandeur notwithstanding. We reinforce this willingness because of our recognition that illusions breed darkness, while

the truth sets us free by virtue of its light – *our* light as God's Son, the Self He created as Himself.

**(11:6-7) It is most important, however, to apply today's idea in this form immediately you are tempted to hold a grievance of any kind. This will help you let your grievances go, instead of cherishing them and hiding them in darkness.**

Jesus is always asking us to pay careful attention to our attack thoughts and grievances. Thus we realize they will not make us happy, for they are an active attack on God's plan for salvation. We have come to understand that we have cherished our judgments because of their ability to keep our individuality safe and the light of Christ in darkness, and the cost to us of cherishing such defenses was too great. This recognition makes it easier and easier to let our grievances go, and choose the Holy Spirit's light over the ego' darkness.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 74**
**There is no will but God's.**

**(1:1) The idea for today can be regarded as the central thought toward which all our exercises are directed.**

This is Jesus' way of rephrasing for us our sole responsibility, which is to accept the Atonement for ourselves. The tiny, mad idea, once taken seriously by the ego, says that the separation from God is a fact, and that the Son has a will separate and distinct from the Will of his Creator. This "will" of the Son can now establish its own reality as an autonomous entity. From that basic premise the ego system logically follows, up to and including the making of the physical universe. The ego is thus a statement that says there is indeed a will apart from God's. This is in contrast to the principle of the Atonement that says there is no will *but* God's. Any other thought is illusory, and therefore has never happened. This idea is succinctly captured in the following lines from the manual for teachers, in the context of the idea of separation:

> In time this happened very long ago. In reality it never happened at all (M-2.2:7-8).

Again, Jesus is saying that this idea – "there is no will but God's" – is the central thought of these exercises. In fact, it is the goal of *A Course in Miracles* to teach us to accept the Atonement for ourselves; to deny the seeming reality of the ego thought system, which is based on the tiny, mad idea taken seriously – "[in the Son's forgetting to laugh at the tiny, mad idea] did the thought become a serious idea" (T-27.VIII,6:3) – and an individual self believed to have an autonomous will outside the Will of God.

**(1:2-3) God's is the only Will. When you have recognized this, you have recognized that your will is His.**

This is the last thing in the world the ego ever wants us to understand, because if our will is His, there is no separation – another way of stating the Atonement principle, which undoes the ego. Moreover, if there is no other than God, there can be no choosing and hence, no decision maker. The Holy Spirit holds this Atonement thought in our minds, and the ego's fear of our choosing to identify only with this motivates it to develop the strategy of mindlessness – the world of bodies. This fear is succinctly summarized in the following statement from the text:

> You are afraid to know God's Will, because you believe it is not yours. This belief is your whole sickness and your whole fear (T-11.I.10:3-4).

**(1:4) The belief that conflict is possible has gone.**

We find in these lessons – which is why we are studying them so closely – the entirety of the ego's thought system as presented more fully in the text. If I have a will that is separate from God's, the ego tells me I earned it by triumphing over my Great Adversary. By thus winning the great conflict, I deserve the wonderful fruits of individuality. This winning, however, is called *sin* by the ego, followed by *guilt,* the projection of which causes us to make a God in our own image and likeness: One Who has been sinned against, and now angrily and justifiably seeks retribution, an attack we

justifiably *fear.* As you may recall from our previous discussion, the second and third laws of chaos (T-23.II.5-8) specifically address this issue of a vengeful, angry God; an image present in everyone, regardless of their religion or lack thereof. In the Western world, the image is grounded in the biblical God – a vengeful deity who believes in the reality of sin.

Once we project our sin, a seemingly eternal battleground is established in our minds. *That* is the conflict – between ourselves and God, since He is the One we believe we have attacked, and Whose vengeance is demanded by our guilt. It goes without saying that this is not the true God. However, within our insane dream, which begins with the belief we are autonomous individuals, this conflict is quite real. It leads us to repress the terrifying thought, and – through projection – make up a world in which we see conflict all around us, but no longer within our minds. We believe everyone and everything is at war with us, the fragmentary shadows of the original conflict. Whether this takes the form of outright enemies – what we call special hate, or the more subtle enemies we call our special loves -- the conflict remains. It is a battle not only with individuals, but with life itself, the chief characteristic of which is death. Hence, as Freud taught, from the moment we are born we are preparing to die. The ultimate thought of death, therefore, is the primary conflict we experience here, yet this is but a fragment of the original conflict, based on the thought we have a will separate from God's. We won that will by destroying Him, and now He is going to rise from the grave and destroy us, seizing back the life we believe we took from Him.

**(1:5-6) Peace has replaced the strange idea that you are torn by conflicting goals. As an expression of the Will of God, you have no goal but His.**

Recall for a moment Lessons 24 and 25, in which Jesus explains that we do not know our own best interests. One of the exercises had us take a problem and think about its best solution. Jesus told us if we really did this conscientiously we would realize we have conflicting goals and thus could not be sure of what was best for us. One moment we think of something that would work well, and in the next we think of something else. This forces us to decide between these shifting goals, which is Jesus' way of teaching us that we do not understand anything, and certainly not our own interests.

The conflicting goals we experience reflect the original conflict in our minds between God and ourselves, which really is within ourselves. This ego-projection of a God is made up. Thus He is not truly there, being nothing but a split-off part of our already split minds. The ego's conflict is *one or the other, kill or be killed* – a conflict played out within our minds, because the figures in our lives we believe are victimizing us are but characters in our own dreams: hallucinatory figures of our delusional thought system. However, when we turn away from the ego's thought system – conflict, sin, and individuality – and are back with the Holy Spirit, we have accepted the Atonement. There is then only *one* goal – already accepted – which is remembering Who we are and returning home.

**(2:1) There is great peace in today's idea, and the exercises for today are directed towards finding it.**

In fact, we can find peace *only* through this idea. It comes in many, many different forms, but its essence is that peace is found in accepting the idea that we never

separated from God, and therefore are not separate from anyone or anything else.

**(2:2-4) The idea itself is wholly true. Therefore it cannot give rise to illusions. Without illusions conflict is impossible.**

The illusions are everything the ego tells us is true. Thus, once we begin with the basic premise there is another will besides God's – the tiny, mad idea taken seriously, which leads us to believe that we exist as separate individuals – the other illusions logically follow: I am sinful, guilty, and afraid of punishment, my inevitable fate if I am to remain in my mind. In order to protect this newly acquired self, I have to project the basic conflict between me and my image of God, making a world in which I experience a new set of problems – all perceived outside my mind.

These, then, are the illusions, and they stem from our not accepting the principle of the Atonement that there is no will but God's, which means the separation never happened. Therefore, once these illusions are looked at and let go, there can be no conflict, which, again, is between the guilty, sinful part of ourselves we do not want to let into awareness, and the guilty, sinful part of ourselves we have projected as the image of God. When the thought of sin is no longer accorded faith, there can be no illusions or conflict; and therefore no pain or suffering.

**(2:5-3:1) Let us try to recognize this today, and experience the peace this recognition brings.**

**Begin the longer practice periods by repeating these thoughts several times, slowly and with firm determination to understand what they mean, and to hold them in mind:**

I mentioned twice before that many statements in the workbook can be misunderstood as affirmations, similar to those found in many New Age systems where they are used to shout down people's egos by replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. It is quite obvious this does not work, for all it accomplishes is our repressing our bad thoughts into the unconscious, and whatever is repressed has a most unfortunate way of finding its way back out, either in attacking others (judgment) and/or attacking ourselves (sickness).

Jesus is not encouraging us to bring truth to the illusion – the truth of these statements to the illusion we believe in – but rather is teaching us to bring the illusions of our ego's thoughts to this truth. Whenever we are tempted to feel upset, therefore, we need to bring that upset and all its seeming causes to the truth: we made this up. We know we have because there is no Will but God's.

To repeat, these are not statements we should use to shout down our egos, but instead we should bring our ego's raucous shrieks of guilt and judgment to the lesson's gentle thought. This process holds not only for these exercises, but for all the others. Thus we say:

**(3:2-3)** ***There is no will but God's. I cannot be in conflict.***

This means that when you find yourself unhappy or upset in the course of the day and honestly look at your ego, you would realize you are upset because you believe you are in conflict – someone or something has brought you pain, and that is the "cause" of the problem. If you recall this statement – "There is no will but God's. I cannot be in

conflict" – you recognize that everything you now perceive comes from the thought that you are in conflict with God. You suffer at someone else's hands, feel ill, or have lost your peace as a result of conditions in the world – all because you believe you separated from your Creator. Stated another way, conflict means duality, which is the essence of the ego's illusory state of separation; while the Will of God expresses the non-dualistic truth of the oneness of our reality as God's Son.

This lesson continues the process of training that would have us begin to always – not just here, but always – revisit the ego thought system that underlies our being upset, angry, depressed, sick, anxious, or fearful. When we look at the ego with Jesus beside us, we automatically do what he is asking of us in this lesson. As he tells us at the beginning of the text, he is the Atonement (T-LIII.4: 1): the experience and symbol within our dream that there is no Will but God's. His loving presence within our minds is proof that nothing has come between us and the Love of God, and that, moreover, nothing *could* come between us and this Love, as we now read:

**(3:4-9) Then spend several minutes in adding some related thoughts, such as:**

***I am at peace.***
***Nothing can disturb me. My will is God's.***
***My will and God's are one.***
***God wills peace for His Son.***

Jesus continues by telling us how to proceed in these exercises:

**(3:10-13) During this introductory phase, be sure to deal quickly with any conflict thoughts that may cross your mind. Tell yourself immediately:**

***There is no will but God's. These conflict thoughts are meaningless.***

Once again, Jesus does not want us to shout down our pain or deny our experience of conflict with anyone or anything, but to bring our suffering to him. This is analogous to what the great Indian teacher Krishnamurti emphasized in his teachings: *Stay with the pain.* This was not a call to masochism. It was a plea to his students not to cover the pain, but to continue on through it to the love beyond. In *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus is the one who leads us through the pain we have first brought to him, to the peace that awaits us beyond the ego's veil of conflict.

**(4:1) If there is one conflict area that seems particularly difficult to resolve, single it out for special consideration.**

As we have seen throughout these lessons, Jesus is asking us to pay careful attention to our minds, to search them to find the thoughts of conflict. We then move back from our unhappiness and distress to the underlying thought of separation that is the basis for the experience of specific conflicts. Rather than seek to avoid the particularly difficult conflict situation, we are encouraged by Jesus to pay attention to it – to "single it out for special consideration" – which means bringing it to him so that the mind's guilt can be looked at and let go.

**(4:2-5) Think about it briefly but very specifically, identify the particular person or persons and the situation or situations involved, and tell yourself:**

***There is no will but God's. I share it with Him.***
***My conflicts about ____ cannot be real.***

I cannot realize the conflicts between you and me are unreal unless I accept the fact that I have made them real, *very real.* We have first to look at the conflict as we experience it, and then retrace it to its source. This process of looking, of course, is the sum and substance of *A Course in Miracles,* a process that is impossible unless we look in the right place: the decision-making part of the mind, where the mistake was first made. The close of Chapter 5 in the text provides one example of Jesus' explicit teaching in this regard:

> ...the undoing process, which does not come from you, is nevertheless within you because God placed it there. Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace (T-5.VII.6:4-5).

Elsewhere in the text Jesus discusses conflict and how it is resolved by the vision of the Holy Spirit, the sharing of which is the goal of A *Course in Miracles:*

> The Holy Spirit undoes illusions without attacking them, because He cannot perceive them at all. They therefore do not exist for Him. He resolves the apparent conflict they engender by perceiving conflict as meaningless. I have said before that the Holy Spirit perceives the conflict exactly as it is and it is meaningless. The Holy Spirit does not want you to understand conflict; He wants you to realize that, because conflict is meaningless, it is not understandable (T-7.VI.6:1-5).

Again, this is why Jesus wants us to perceive the conflict; that we may see *beyond* it to the truth.

This concludes the first part of the exercise. The second part follows:

**(5:1) After you have cleared your mind in this way, close your eyes and try to experience the peace to which your reality entitles you.**

In other words, we have first to be aware of our obscuring thoughts, the clouds that in an earlier lesson Jesus told us he would take us through (Lesson 70). Beyond these clouds of defense is the peace of God. Consistently Jesus reminds us that peace cannot come without first undoing the conflict; light is returned to only when we go through the darkness; and love cannot be remembered unless we look at the hate.

**(5:2-4) Sink into it and feel it closing around you. There may be some temptation to mistake these attempts for withdrawal, but the difference is easily detected. If you are succeeding, you will feel a deep sense of joy and an increased alertness, rather than a feeling of drowsiness and enervation.**

Many people experience a tendency to fall asleep when they begin to meditate or

do the lessons. This is Jesus' point of reference here, and he is helping us understand its defensive purpose of protecting our fear. Drowsiness does not happen because we are overtired or insincere students. It comes because we fear the state of peace. When we are aware of our thoughts of conflict we will not fall asleep. We should therefore ask ourselves why we stay awake with these thoughts, and fall asleep when we are on the verge of getting beyond them to the peace of God. The answer is obvious. Peace is threatening because it says there is no will but God's, and ours is one with His. If the separation never happened; then *we* never happened either. *That* is the fear; the fear of losing our individual self.

It is important when you begin to distract yourself – by being tired, falling asleep, or thinking of everything but the exercisethat you not judge yourself or feel guilty, but realize the distraction is coming, from your fear of the lesson's goal.

**(6) Joy characterizes peace. By this experience will you recognize that you have reached it. If you feel yourself slipping off into withdrawal, quickly repeat the idea for today and try again. Do this as often as necessary. There is definite gain in refusing to allow retreat into withdrawal, even if you do not experience the peace you seek.**

What is helpful about such statements is Jesus' gentleness in pointing out our potential resistance to these lessons. If he is expecting us to have difficulty and does not judge us for it, there is no reason, again, to judge ourselves when we forget to do the exercises, or begin them and promptly fall asleep.

When we allow ourselves to move beyond the thoughts of anger, depression, and conflict, we joyously feel the peace of knowing our sins are forgiven and have had no effect on the love and within. Such joy is impossible if we do not first accept our self-concepts of sin, guilt, and failure. "Failing" the workbook offers us perfect opportunities of looking at these ego concepts, and then moving beyond them to the truth about ourselves.

**(7) In the shorter periods, which should be undertaken at regular and predetermined intervals today, say to yourself:**

***There is no will but God's. I seek His peace today.***

**Then try to find what you are seeking. A minute or two every half an hour, with eyes closed if possible, would be well spent on this today.**

If the goal of peace is truly ours, we shall happily embrace the means of attaining it as well. Our constant remembrances throughout the day reflect this embrace. Therefore, once again, forgetting "the minute or two" we are asked to spend every thirty minutes helps us get in touch with our ambivalence about the goal. This alerts us to our inner conflict, and provides constant opportunities for forgiving ourselves for the "sin" of pushing God away. From time to time we shall return to this very important aspect of our workbook practice.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 75**
**The light has come.**

In this lesson Jesus speaks of the real world; and as is true of other lessons, he gives us a pep talk. Despite what he says overtly, Jesus obviously does not expect his students to identify with the light on this particular day. If he did, this message would not be in other lessons. These are words of encouragement that let us know that beyond the clouds of illusion – the complexity of our anger, judgments, suffering, and anxiety – there is really a light. It is the light of the real world, the truth that shines outside the ego's darkened dreams of separation and madness.

Let me also comment on the theme running through the lesson as a musical *leitmotif* which not so much tells us that the light *comes,* but that *we have come to the light.* Our experience is that the light has come to us, but in truth it never left, for it is always present in our minds. Since, then, we are the ones who left the light, we must be the ones who return. If the workbook statement were accepted literally, it would seem that we had nothing to do with the light's coming. It simply came on its own, implying that at some other point it had left.

This points again to the importance of understanding that the words in *A Course in Miracles* are simply symbols. The true dynamic at work here is that we were the ones who left the light by clinging to the ego's illusion of separation and individuality. Therefore, we are the ones who must realize our wrong choice – the darkness of our illusions does not make us happy. That realization leads us finally to say there must be another way, and then we do seek the light we had left. In fact, it is more than that we just left it. The ego tells us we were unfaithful to the light, having betrayed, abandoned, and destroyed its love. We therefore accuse ourselves of this sin, from which, as we have seen many times, comes the experience of guilt and horror that impels us to get rid of the guilt through projection, thereby making a God in our own image and likeness, and a world that also mirrors our self-concept of separation, guilt, and attack.

If we were to realize we simply made a mistake, taking the wrong turn because we listened to the wrong guide, we would remember the Guide Whom we could truly ask for help. His Love would teach that our "sin" was a mistake that has already been corrected. Thus there can be no sin, guilt, denial, or projection, and no world. It is at that point we come to the inner light *A Course in Miracles* refers to as the real world.

**(1:1-2) The light has come. You are healed and you can heal.**

If I am healed, it means the thought of separation in my mind has been undone, along with pain and suffering, leaving only God's Son as He created him. This is how I become a healer: accepting the Atonement's healing light instead of the ego's darkness. Since the Sonship is one with me, it is healed, too. This again is what is meant by Lesson 137: "When I am healed I am not healed alone."

**(1:3-4) The light has come. You are saved and you can save.**

This of course parallels "You are healed and you can heal." You are saved from the prison of your own mistaken choice, the pain and suffering of your mind's guilt. In the holy instant you become God's one Son, symbolizing, as does Jesus, the right-minded choice for light instead of darkness.

**(1:5) You are at peace, and you bring peace with you wherever you go.**

This is because *ideas leave not their source.* Throughout the day – wherever we go, whatever we do – our right minds are filled with the light that is always there. It is not anything we literally bring with us, but something that automatically happens, as natural to the mind as breathing is to the body. *Ideas leave not their source:* The body and its misuses of attack and judgment have never left their source – the thought of guilt in the wrong mind; the body as an instrument of Jesus' love has never left its source – the thought of light in the right mind. This light of peace automatically extends through the mind of God's Son, the meaning, again, of "you bring peace with you wherever you go."

**(1:6-7) Darkness and turmoil and death have disappeared. The light has come.**

Remember, it is *one or the other.* The ego uses this principle as a way of justifying attack: if I do not kill you, you will kill me. The same principle operates with Jesus as well, but with different content. If I join with the light there cannot be any darkness, not because I attacked it, but because the darkness disappears in the presence of light. To Jesus, then, *one or the other* is a non-dualistic principle. If there is light and oneness, there cannot be darkness and separation; since my mind and will are one with God's, and there is no Mind and Will but His, how could separation exist? The principle of *one or the other* is thus valid for both teachers: to the ego it means attack and murder; to Jesus it reflects the comforting fact of the Atonement – the separation from God never happened.

**(2:1) Today we celebrate the happy ending to your long dream of disaster.**

Regard this as another of Jesus' pep talks. If you feel distress or unhappiness today, do not use this statement as a way of judging yourself a failure. The fact that there is the rest of the workbook – and Jesus concludes the workbook by saying this course is a beginning and not an end – is letting you know that he does not expect you to end the ego's dream here and now. However, he does want to remind you of the Atonement principle: The light has come because it never left.

This is another way of telling us – as Jesus does throughout the workbook that there is another thought system in our minds that is totally separate from the ego. We believe there is nothing *but* the ego, and our interpretations of God, Jesus, and salvation are based on our specialness, in which we magically hope that someone or something outside us will be our savior. We do not know about another teacher, a Jesus who is outside the dream and not the more familiar figure who is very much a part of the ego's dreams – "a dream that comes in mockery" *(The Gifts of God,* p. 121). Lessons like this one, therefore, are Jesus' way of telling us there is another teacher in our minds; his way of communicating to us – just beginning to learn his lessons of forgiveness – our ultimate goal: the light at the end of the ego's tunnel that happily shines away our dreams of disaster and death. This outcome of light is indeed as certain as its Source.

**(2:2) There are no dark dreams now.**

From a different perspective we can view this lesson as Jesus providing the ideal, even as he knows we have miles to go before we wake, to paraphrase Robert Frost, and identify with the light. At least we now know there is a goal; and he teaches us how to

attain it. Another way of understanding the lesson is to regard it as Jesus' way of telling us: "If you follow me, do these lessons faithfully, read my text carefully, you will be at peace and your dark dreams will be over. If you persist in thinking you know better than I, however, your dreams of separation, specialness, and individuality will unhappily continue. Are they really worth the pain?"

**(2:3-4) The light has come. Today the time of light begins for you and everyone.**

It can never be said enough that if the light of Christ shines for me it must shine for everyone, since Christ is one. Therefore, it is not only that the light has come, in the sense that I have chosen to accept it in place of the ego's dark dreams of separate interests, but that the light has come for the entire Sonship, since the Holy Spirit's happy dreams see everyone's interests as the same.

**(2:5-7) It is a new era, in which a new world is born. The old one has left no trace upon it in its passing. Today we see a different world, because the light has come.**

When Jesus says the old world "has left no trace upon it in its passing," he echoes the lovely words I never tire of quoting: "Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4) – past sins have had no effect on the present; not the ego's guilty present, but the present of the holy instant. Once we are in the new world – the real world and accept forgiveness as our reigning principle instead of attack, the ego thought system is gone. When students sometimes ask if they will remember their world when they awaken from the dream, the answer is "no" – *there is nothing to remember.* The old world has left no trace upon the new one in its passing. What is gone is gone, because it never was.

**(3:1) Our exercises for today will be happy ones, in which we offer thanks for the passing of the old and the beginning of the new.**

"The passing of the old" is not something Jesus or *A Course in Miracles* does, but is our accomplishment when we exercise the mind's power to choose. Jesus offers us a glimpse of how wonderful it will be when we release our illusions of individuality, specialness, and judgment, as he tells us early in the text, and we repeat again and again:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

**(3:2) No shadows from the past remain to darken our sight and hide the world forgiveness offers us.**

This is an explicit statement that the shadows of our past – some expression of sin – "hide the world forgiveness offers us." In other words, our thoughts of attack and judgment are purposive and do not just happen. We choose them to hide the world of light forgiveness offers us. Being the key, forgiveness opens our mind's locked door, behind which stands the loving presence of Jesus. The door opens when we look at our

defenses: the shadows of guilt we projected onto our brothers. The very close of the text restates this now familiar thought in beautiful fashion:

> Not one illusion is accorded faith, and not one spot of darkness still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone (T-31.VIII.12:5).

**(3:3-5) Today we will accept the new world as what we want to see. We will be given what we desire. We will to see the light; the light has come.**

Jesus appeals to our motivation to be happy, for happiness is what we truly want. Without this desire, however, we will never find it. We are thus being taught, as was emphasized in the text, to associate the light of forgiveness with happiness and peace, and the darkness of guilt with misery and pain. In the following passage from the text, Jesus elaborates on his philosophy of teaching. Like any good reinforcement theorist, he knows that "learning through rewards is more effective than learning through pain" (T-4.VI.3:4). Thus he is teaching us to associate joy with valuing his teaching, and misery with ignoring it. In this way we come to desire his teaching of light because of the joy it would bring us:

> How can you teach someone the value of something he has deliberately thrown away? He must have thrown it away because he did not value it. You can only show him how miserable he is without it, and slowly bring it nearer so he can learn how his misery lessens as he approaches it. This teaches him to associate his misery with its absence, and the opposite of misery with its presence. It gradually becomes desirable as he changes his mind about its worth. I am teaching you to associate misery with the ego and joy with the spirit. You have taught yourself the opposite. You are still free to choose, but can you really want the rewards of the ego in the presence of the rewards of God? (T-4.VI.5)

**(4:1-5:1) Our longer practice periods will be devoted to looking at the world that our forgiveness shows us. This is what we want to see, and only this. Our single purpose makes our goal inevitable. Today the real world rises before us in gladness, to be seen at last. Sight is given us, now that the light has come.**
**We do not want to see the ego's shadow on the world today.**

The "ego's shadow on the world" is our thoughts of pain and attack, arising from our minds' guilt. We know how the ego makes up an illusory world of sin, guilt, and fear, based on the equally illusory thought of individuality. It does not let this world of thought go, but buries it within our minds before projecting it. It is this thought system of guilt that casts a long and despairing shadow on what we think of as the world. Guilt's final destination is thus the body, the perceived source of all pain and distress, up to and including death. Yet this is nothing more than a flimsy veil used by the ego to conceal the truth we do not want to see because it is the truth (T-21.VII.5: 14). Recognizing our mistake, we choose again: forgiveness instead of judgment, the world of light instead of the ego's shadows of guilt.

**(5:2) We see the light, and in it we see Heaven's reflection lie across the world.**

## Lesson 75

We do not see Heaven in the world; we see its reflection, known as the real world. We have first looked within, and then seen the ego's projected shadows of guilt all around us: loss, abandonment, sacrifice, and death. When we change our minds and ask Jesus for help, we let the shadows go, allowing his inner light to be all that we see reflected in the world.

**(5:3-5) Begin the longer practice periods by telling yourself the glad tidings of your release:**

***The light has come. I have forgiven the world.***

"Glad tidings," of course, is a biblical phrase that referred to Jesus coming as the light of the world. He thus uses a phrase that has had one series of connotations, and gives it a totally different meaning. Here, the good news – "the glad tidings" is not that the light of Jesus came into the world, but that the light of Jesus in our minds has never gone away, despite our belief that we had destroyed it. The Holy Spirit's principle of the Atonement was true after all. What gladder tidings could there be than that?

We can forgive the world only because we forgive ourselves for destroying the light of the world, the inner world of love that our deranged minds convinced us was actually gone. Thus we realize – through accepting Jesus' love for us here – that we have not separated from love, which means we have not crucified it nor destroyed its Source. That, again, is the truly good news. We happily realize that our attempts to shroud this light in darkness have had no effect because the light has not left. Once we accept this joyous fact the shrouds disappear, the veils of darkness part, the shadows evanesce, and only the light remains. This happens only by forgiving ourselves for having made a mistake – glad tidings indeed!

**(6:1) Dwell not upon the past today.**

The past expresses sin, *literally;* the belief we sinned against God. We catch ourselves dwelling on the past each and every time we hold a grievance, for each one is the shadowy fragment that reminds us of our original grievance: *against ourselves.* We thus come to recognize that withholding forgiveness reflects our desire to keep the sinful past alive, reinforcing the separate identity that is protected by our projections onto others.

**(6:2) Keep a completely open mind, washed of all past ideas and clean of every concept you have made.**

Lesson 189 contains a prayer that nicely expresses this idea. It is important enough to quote it here, even though we shall be returning to it later:

> Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything,. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God (W-pI. 189.7).

This implies we have to know we are truly happy that we are wrong and Jesus is right. We are wrong because we believe there is a world of attack and pain here, and he is right because he tells us all this is made up. Only when we allow ourselves to be taught that our reward of peace is far greater than the punishment of pain, can we allow our minds to be cleansed.

**(6:3-9) You have forgiven the world today. You can look upon it now as if you never saw it before. You do not know yet what it looks like. You merely wait to have it shown to you. While you wait, repeat several times, slowly and in complete patience:**

***The light has come. I have forgiven the world.***

Jesus is telling us we do not bring the real world to us, since we are the ones who must choose it. Moreover, our patience does not include waiting for Jesus because there is a long waiting list; we wait but for ourselves, for we are still too afraid to accept the light, in the presence of which the darkness of our individual self is gone. We once again see how Jesus is letting us know that *he* knows we are not yet at the point when we can look upon the forgiven world. That is why there is no need to pretend we are farther along than we really are. Such arrogance hardly befits a Son of God; moreover, such arrogance ensures we shall never remember that we *are* the Son of God.

It is evident in Jesus' approach throughout *A Course in Miracles* that while he is unequivocally consistent in presenting the truth, he is always gentle, patient, and understanding of our not yet being ready to accept it. It is extremely important to experience his patience, so we can demonstrate it to everyone else. When we find ourselves becoming upset with others and impatient with their mistakes, it is only because we do not want to accept Jesus' patience with *our* mistakes. This is because we want to see them as sins, and rather than accept responsibility for these mistaken thoughts, we project them out and find ourselves seemingly justified in being impatient with everyone else. Statements like these make clear how lovingly patient Jesus is with us, a model for us all.

**(7:1) Realize that your forgiveness entitles you to vision.**

The theme of vision returns, this time in the context of our acceptance of the real world through forgiveness. In other words, when we are unforgiving we cannot see, and what we think we see is simply a distortion. When we forgive, on the other hand, our eyes are washed clean of guilt's shadows, and then vision comes.

**(7:2) Understand that the Holy Spirit never fails to give the gift of sight to the forgiving.**

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit withholds the gift from us when we judge others or ourselves, but rather that we reject the gift when we are filled with judgments. Indeed, that is why we judge in the first place, to keep the gift away. As with God's grace, the Holy Spirit's vision is for all, and embraces all. It merely awaits our forgiveness for the acceptance of His gift.

**(7:3-11) Believe He will not fail you now. You have forgiven the world. He will be with you as you watch and wait. He will show you what true vision sees. It is His Will, and you have joined with Him. Wait patiently for Him. He will be there. The light has come. You have forgiven the world.**

Once again, if we take these words literally it sounds as if we have to wait for the Holy Spirit to come. Obviously that makes no sense, just as it makes no sense that for over two thousand years Christians have waited for Jesus to come: the so-called Second Coming. At issue is not *his* Second Coming but *ours,* as the term is re-defined in *A Course in Miracles* (T-4.IV.10:2-3). Thus when Jesus says "wait patiently for Him," he really means wait patiently for ourselves to let go of our fear sufficiently so we could accept the Holy Spirit. Thus we watch and wait with patience, reflective of his infinite patience:

> Your patience with your brother is your patience with yourself. Is not a child of God worth patience? I have shown you infinite patience because my will is that of our Father, from Whom I learned of infinite patience. His Voice was in me as It is in you, speaking for patience towards the Sonship in the Name of Its Creator (T-5.VI.11:4-7).

**(8:1-3) Tell Him you know you cannot fail because you trust in Him. And tell yourself you wait in certainty to look upon the world He promised you. From this time forth you will see differently.**

To make this point about metaphor once again, we are not really telling the Holy Spirit, Who hardly has to be told anything from us. The meaning of this first sentence is simply that we have to reinforce *our* decision to trust Him. We learn to recognize the causal connection between abandoning our belief that we are better off on our own, and the wonderful effects that vision brings: seeing a gentle world of shared interests, quite different from the ego's hateful world of separate interests.

**(8:4-5) Today the light has come. And you will see the world that has been promised you since time began, and in which is the end of time ensured.**

This last is an intriguing sentence. When Jesus says "you will see the world that has been promised you since time began," he is not talking about the *you* you think you are. *You* have not existed since time began; *you* are not fifteen billion years old. Hence he is referring to the decision maker in our minds, which is a part of the one Son who was promised at the beginning that "the light has come" – the principle of the Atonement. In that ontological moment when we believed we separated from God, the promise was there, already fulfilled. We just had not accepted it. Projecting the blame for the rejection, we believed that the Holy Spirit did not keep His promise, nor did God, Jesus, and now *A Course in Miracles.* This is the problem Jesus corrects. The Atonement was in our minds from the first instant the thought of separation seemed to begin, reflecting God's promise to us (and ours to Him), as we read in this inspiring passage from the text. It comes in the context of our choosing sickness instead of healing, having made a promise to the ego instead of God:

> God keeps His promises; His Son keeps his. In his creation did his Father

> say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." His Son remembers not that he *replied "I* will," though in that promise he was born. Yet God reminds him of it every time he does not share a promise to be sick, but lets his mind be healed and unified. His secret vows are powerless before the Will of God, Whose promises he shares. And what he substitutes is not his will, who has made promise of himself to God (T-28.VI.6:3-9).

Once again, if you pay close attention to a statement like the above, it is clear that Jesus is not talking about the *you* you think is reading, studying, and practicing these words, but the one Son of God outside time and space, the decision-making self that believed in itself, rather than its Self As a later lesson so succinctly puts it:

> Let me not forget myself is nothing, but my Self is all (W-pII.358.1:7).

**(9:1-4) The shorter practice periods, too, will be joyful reminders of your release. Remind yourself every quarter of an hour or so that today is a time for special celebration. Give thanks for mercy and the Love of God. Rejoice in the power of forgiveness to heal your sight completely.**

As in many other lessons, Jesus wants us to experience the joy of learning his message. The end of our misery lies in forgiving our brothers and ourselves – truly one and the same. Who, knowing this fact, could not want to remember every fifteen minutes that the light has come and is ours. Yet that light is what we still need to accept as the truth about ourselves.

**(9:5-7) Be confident that on this day there is a new beginning. Without the darkness of the past upon your eyes, you cannot fail to see today. And what you see will be so welcome that you will gladly extend today forever.**

Notice Jesus says "a new beginning," which, incidentally, is the title of Chapter 30 in the text. He is not saying the journey is over, even though many of the statements in the lesson would indicate that, for he is not coming from a linear perspective. He is saying "the light has come" because the light is already here within us. Yet we must undertake the process of accepting it, which consists of releasing the darkness of our sinful past. Only then can we acquire the joy of Christ's vision, welcomed once we no longer desire to make sin real, and protect it by the guilt perceived in another. As this vision is welcomed, *and nothing else beside it,* it extends into the forever of knowledge.

**(10) Say, then:**

***The light has come. I have forgiven the world.***

**Should you be tempted, say to anyone who seems to pull you back into darkness:**

***The light has come. I have forgiven you.***

We practice so that this vision of light would come more quickly, along with the joy

of forgiveness. What speeds us along is our willingness to practice vigilance against our grievances, that forgiveness would shine away the darkness of guilt that had enshrouded us and the world in pain and misery.

**(11) We dedicate this day to the serenity in which God would have you be. Keep it in your awareness of yourself and see it everywhere today, as we celebrate the beginning of your vision and the sight of the real world, which has come to replace the unforgiven world you thought was real.**

Jesus continues to inspire with the happy outcome of peace he assures us is ours. We need merely desire it as fully as we desire to leave the unforgiven world, and walk into the light born of forgiving our partners in specialness. This light is our reality and reward, as Jesus portrays so beautifully in this passage from the text, a lovely way to end our discussion of this lesson:

This loveliness is not a fantasy. It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. Nothing is hidden here, for everything has been forgiven and there are no fantasies to hide the truth.... All this beauty will rise to bless your sight as you look upon the world with forgiving eyes. For forgiveness literally transforms vision, and lets you see the real world reaching quietly and gently across chaos, removing all illusions that had twisted your perception and fixed it on the past.... Go out in gladness to meet with your Redeemer, and walk with Him in trust out of this world, and into the real world of beauty and forgiveness (T-17.II.2:1-3; 6:1-2; 8:5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 76**
**I am under no laws but God's.**

If memory serves me correctly, it was well over twenty years ago that questions asked about this particular lesson led me to speak about the two levels on which *A Course in Miracles* was written. As I discussed in the Prelude, Level One is the Course's metaphysical foundation, which contrasts the reality of God and Heaven with the illusion of the ego's thought system and the world that arose from it. On this level there is no compromise between truth and illusion. Level Two treats *only* the illusory realm, contrasting the ego's wrong-minded thought system of separation with the Holy Spirit's right-minded thought system of Atonement.

The reason students find this lesson so difficult, not to mention infuriating, is their confusion of these levels, not understanding that the purpose of the Level Two discourse is to meet us in the illusory state we believe we are in, and not to make statements of absolute truth. Thus, even though the body is inherently illusory, we are not asked to dismiss it. Quite the contrary. We are asked to pay careful attention to it and its place in our special relationships, for these become the classrooms in which we learn the Holy Spirit's lessons of forgiveness.

From this perspective we can see how Jesus pokes fun at the body; more importantly, at our use of it. You may recall Jesus' statement that it is practically impossible to deny our physical experience in this world (T-2.IV.3:10). Therefore, he is not asking us in this lesson to deny our bodies by not taking medicine, let alone not eating, breathing, spending money, etc. Rather, Jesus presents a vision of what it is like to be in the real world, without the belief in bodies. A passage in "The Attainment of the Real World" highlights the complete absence of separation that characterizes this advanced state of mind:

> The real world... has no buildings and there are no streets where people walk alone and separate. There are no stores where people buy an endless list of things they do not need. It is not lit with artificial light, and night comes not upon it. There is no day that brightens and grows dim. There is no loss. Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever (T-13.VII.1).

This is not describing a physical place, but the healed mind in which the thought of separation has been undone. In that state, the holy instant wherein we have accepted the Atonement for ourselves, there is no longer a body ("At no single instant does the body exist at all" [T-18.VII.3:1]). Therefore if there is no body, there can be no laws to govern it. That is the point here. Jesus is not making fun of us, nor, again, challenging us to give up our beliefs in the necessity for medicine, food, or relationships. He simply reminds us that what we believe in is not really there. This new understanding enables us no longer to take our physical and psychological experiences in the world as seriously as we once did, reflecting our having learned not to take the tiny, mad idea of separation seriously either (T-27.VIII.6:2-5).

Once again, this is not meant to be a statement in which Jesus is pressuring us to give up our belief in the body. In fact, he says in the text:

> Your question should not be, "How can I see my brother without the body?" Ask only, "Do I really wish to see him sinless?" (T-20.VII.9:1-2).

Rather than having us deny our experience that bodies exist external to us, Jesus

stresses that his goal for us is to change our *minds* about the body; i.e., its purpose. He urges us no longer to project our perceived sin onto others, thereby attacking them and reinforcing the belief in separate interests. Forgiveness – the message of *A Course in Miracles* – rests on the simple premise that our interests are one.

We shall discuss all this in greater detail as we read through the lesson.

**(1:1) We have observed before how many senseless things have seemed to you to be salvation.**

The reference of course is to our special love objects, the idols we made to show God we did not need His Love. Special hate objects function that way as well, insofar as we feel salvation comes when we can truly hate another or suffer pain. By blaming someone (or something) other than ourselves for our misery, we establish our innocence. Salvation, then, takes either form, and the ego does not care whether it is special love or hate, as long as salvation is seen to be external to our minds.

**(1:2-4) Each has imprisoned you with laws as senseless as itself. You are not bound by them. Yet to understand that this is so, you must first realize salvation lies not there.**

This is a reference to the laws of specialness, which center on the rock on which the ego's salvation rests: *one or the other* – someone must lose so that another can win. Every law of the ego – in the mind as well as in the world – reflects this basic principle. One finds them as well in the ego's five laws of chaos (T-23.II), the virtual grandfather of all laws. The key point is that these laws not only emanate from the mind, but they remain there as well, following the fundamental principle *ideas leave not their source.* Yet do they appear to be external, and our lives governed by them. The truth, however, is that we are bound only by our mind's decision, and this truly is the good news. We have very little – if any – control over the body's laws, and this would seem to condemn us to a life of hopeless victimization, the helplessness felt by almost all people. But only *we* – the decision-making part of our minds – can control the fact that we have chosen to identify with these laws. Therein lies our true help.

This is an extremely important concept to grasp, for it would keep you honest as you work through this lesson. In order to understand why you are under no laws but God's, and why you are not bound by any of the body's laws, you must first realize that you have a mind, because that is where salvation lies. The problem is that we do not believe we do. No matter how many times Jesus tells us this in *A Course in Miracles,* no matter how many times we read the same lines, there remains a part of us that does not believe it, because we still believe he is teaching us *as a body.* He repeatedly teaches how we are not really here, and so the body does not do anything: it is not born, nor does it live or die; it does not suffer pain or feel pleasure. In other words, everything occurs in the mind. Yet this means absolutely nothing to us, because, again, we still think Jesus is talking to us as a person, living in a body.

We refuse to go to the source of this self – the mind – that is not in the body at all, and find the real problem. Were we to find this in our minds – the guilt over the separation – we would see the answer of the Atonement.

This lesson, then, is a plea to all of us to pay careful attention and think about what Jesus is teaching us in *A Course in Miracles.* When he has us say over and over again – as he does later in the sixth review – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am

still as God created me," he means it very literally. When he has us say "I am spirit," he means that very literally as well. We must be really clear that we do *not* believe it, because we still think Jesus, a separated person, is talking to *us,* as separated persons, and teaching us very nice things. However, we do not yet realize he is not teaching us as a body. What we think of as our bodily self but reflects a thought in the mind. This is such an important lesson because it points out so clearly the illusory nature of the body. Just as clear, if we study it carefully, is the reason we have so much trouble with it: *We do not want to believe it!* The basis of our difficulty is the refusal to accept that salvation does not lie outside us, but rather within our minds, the locus of both problem and answer.

**(1:5-6) While you would seek for it in things that have no meaning, you bind yourself to laws that make no sense. Thus do you seek to prove salvation is where it is not.**

That, again, is the problem: We do not want to know we have a mind, for if we do, we will at some point choose against the ego, and our individuality will disappear. The ego tells us the problem is sin and guilt, found either in our body or someone else's. Since that is where the problem is, salvation is found there as well. If I believe sin is in my body, I believe in suffering and sacrifice; if I believe it is in yours, I believe in judgment and attack. The ego's plan for salvation therefore consists of punishing the body – mine or yours.

Evading the truth that we have a mind can take another form. For example, *A Course in Miracles* says that I am under no laws but God's and that I am not a body. Therefore since my body is an illusion, I do not have to see doctors; nor need I lock my car or apartment; I do not have to take care of my body and so it does not matter what I eat or what I do. These are but a few examples of what I refer to as "blissninnyhood": the simplistic and naive denial of the body and its problems. Rather than accepting the fundamental unreality of the body as a shadow of guilt, "blissninnies" simply deny they have a body, which renders the source of the shadow – our minds' guilt – even more inaccessible. Thus does the answer of Atonement remain buried still further beneath the ego's arsenal of defenses.

This lesson is certainly *not* intended to discourage *Course in Miracles* students from seeking medical attention, or to decline inoculation if they plan to travel abroad, for example. It is not meant to discourage students from eating foods that are good for them, or doing whatever it is that they believe is healthy. We all have some notion of what is good or bad for us  there is no right or wrong in this regard – and whatever you believe in is what you should do. Moreover, Jesus is not saying you should give up friendship or anything that reflects the laws of the world. He is simply saying it would be of value to realize the source of these laws, and to understand their place in the ego's thought system. Only then may you choose to shift their purpose so that they fill their more proper place in the Holy Spirit's thought system of correction.

Implicit in all of this, to make the important point again, is the necessity of realizing the tremendous resistance we have to accepting the fact we are not bodies. This is an important theme in the text, and is one of the centerpieces of the workbook. Again, Jesus uses these statements to poke gentle fun at us, as he does in these passages from the text that highlight the futility of trying to protect the body and make it real and attractive:

> Can you paint rosy lips upon a skeleton, dress it in loveliness, pet it and pamper it, and make it live? (T-23.11.18:8)

> What would you save it [the body] *for?* For in that choice lie both its health and harm. Save it for show, as bait to catch another fish, to house your specialness in better style, or weave a frame of loveliness around your hate, and you condemn it to decay and death (T-24.VII.4:4-6).

> It [the body] puts things on itself that it has brought with little metal discs or paper strips the world proclaims as valuable and real. It works to get them, doing senseless things, and tosses them away for senseless things it does not need and does not even want (T-27.VIII.2:2-3).

Thus we are encouraged to ask Jesus for help in learning not to take our bodily identification so seriously. But – one more time – he is not asking us to *deny* our bodies in the process.

We would know we have fallen into the trap of seriousness when we find ourselves becoming impatient with those who do not deny their body, or accusing others of not doing *A Course in Miracles* right, seeing that they have physical or psychological concerns. Those judgments should be a red flag, indicating we are accusing others of what we secretly accuse ourselves. Remember, we want the complete patience the previous lesson spoke about, and we cannot have it without being completely gentle. Patience and gentleness go hand in hand – that is why they are among the ten characteristics of God's teachers (M-4.IV,VIII).

**(2:1) Today we will be glad you cannot prove it.**

The part of us that clings to our individual and special self is *not* glad! We need to be aware of our resistance to being truly glad that salvation is not outside us but within. That awareness will eventually make it possible for true gladness to come.

**(2:2-4) For if you could [prove it], you would forever seek salvation where it is not, and never find it. The idea for today tells you once again how simple is salvation. Look for it where it waits for you, and there it will be found.**

Salvation waits for us, and so the one we have to be patient with is ourselves – to choose the salvation that awaits us in our minds. We must be willing to *seek* salvation where we can *find* it. To achieve that goal Jesus instructs us in seeing the body as the effect of the mind, which is the cause: the *cause* that is the problem; the *cause* that is the solution. What could be simpler?

**(2:5) Look nowhere else, for it is nowhere else.**

Once again, Jesus is not insisting we give up bodily things, but he is asking to understand why we do them. This is not about changing the *effect* there is no point in that – but in changing the underlying *cause,* accomplished through gently forgiving ourselves. Stated another way, we change the cause by looking at it with Jesus' love and gentleness beside us. We do not seek to change the body, nor deny what we are doing. We merely look.

Now come the lines every student loves!

**(3) Think of the freedom in the recognition that you are not bound by all the strange and twisted laws you have set up to save you. You really think that you would starve unless you have stacks of green paper strips and piles of metal discs. You really think a small round pellet or some fluid pushed into your veins through a sharpened needle will ward off disease and death. You really think you are alone unless another body is with you.**

Jesus is taking three of the most important aspects of our existence here: dependence on *Money,* fear of *sickness* and the need to go to doctors for help, and the *special relationship* that says if I do not have another person with me, I will be all alone in my misery. However, Jesus is not telling us to give these things up; merely to look at our investment in them.

Near the end of the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet, in a section called "The Question of Payment" (P-3 MI), Jesus discusses money, but does not say therapists should not charge their patients. He says that "even an advanced therapist has some earthly needs while he is here" (P-3111.1:3), and will thus require payment. It is evident, however, that Jesus is not talking about money *per se,* but rather the therapist's attitude that would lead to gouging patients, for example, or that would insist that they pay even if they lacked funds. Again, as long as we are here we are going to have needs, which means money is a necessity. Therefore, Jesus is not against our making money, just as he is not against our taking care of the body. He is helping us shift our emphasis from the body to the mind, which the understanding of purpose allows us to do.

At the end of the journey, in the real world, there will be no emphasis at all on the body, because we shall have realized there is none. At that point, recognizing the illusory nature of the body is not denial, nor is it the basis of affirmations to repress an experience with which we do not want to deal. We have become aware of what Jesus refers to in the text as "a simple statement of a simple fact (T-26.III.4:5). What enables us to reach this simple fact of the real world, in which there is no separation and no body, is gently looking at our investment in denying both the guilt and Atonement that are in our minds. We learn we are gentle with ourselves by the degree to which we are gentle with others. When we *un*gently judge them, it is only because we have attacked ourselves for pushing Jesus away once again. Further, since he is within, we have pushed the mind away as well, which roots our attention to the body, the ego's principal faun of protection and the consummation of its plan for salvation.

**(4) It is insanity that thinks these things. You call them laws, and put them under different names in a long catalogue of rituals that have no use and serve no purpose. You think you must obey the "laws" of medicine, of economics and of health. Protect the body, and you will be saved.**

It is essential that you take care of your body *as long as you think you are one.* Not doing so as long as you identify with it is only an expression of self-hatred and self-punishment, not to mention silliness. *Taking care of your body can therefore be a gentle and kind way of forgiving yourself.* Remember, no one who reads *A Course in Miracles* fully believes in what Jesus says, because if he or she did they would not need it. We very much believe we are bodies. In fact, these lessons are geared specifically to those who believe in them. As bodies, we live in time, and it is obvious these lessons are

geared toward time-bound people. Almost every lesson mentions some aspect of our temporal existence – minutes, hours, days, weeks, years – because Jesus' students believe they are bodies existing in time and space, and he does not ask us to deny them. Once again, he but asks that we be gentle and kind towards our and other people's bodies, reflecting the desire to forgive ourselves for our misuse of them, the shadow of our misuse of the mind.

Nonetheless, it is also important for us to recognize that these "laws" hold *only* because we have given them the power to do so. We are not bound to the body's laws, but rather to our mind's decision to be a body, which has been specifically designed to be under laws that appear to bind us. Thus it is that we seek to "protect the body ... [to] be saved," while our true protection – the Atonement – is kept buried beneath the ego's laws of guilt and specialness.

**(5:1) These are not laws, but madness.**

They are madness because in reality there are only God's laws: the laws of love, oneness, and eternal life. All other "laws" are outside the Mind of God, and therefore dwell in the ego's mind of madness.

The next paragraph explicitly states the causal relationship between the mind and body, which relationship is, in a sense, the very heart of the lesson:

**(5:2-3) The body is endangered by the mind that hurts itself. The body suffers just in order that the mind will fail to see it is the victim of itself.**

How does the mind hurt itself? Guilt. The original "injury" to my mind was the belief I separated from God, for in that decision I denied my true reality. From that moment on I continually punished myself through guilt. My ego does not want me to realize it is my mind that is victimizing me, and that I – the decision maker cloaked by the ego's thought system – am the one who is suffering. Therefore, my decision maker, now identified with the ego, projects the guilt onto the body, which thus becomes guilt's shadow. It now appears that the body suffers – the smoke screen that keeps my mind out of awareness. In the following passage Jesus explains the insanity of seeing the body as the problem, when all along it is the clever ego mind calling the shots from behind its veil of secrecy:

> Who punishes the body is insane.... It is indeed a senseless point of view to hold responsible for sight a thing that cannot see, and blame it for the sounds you do not like, although it cannot hear. It suffers not the punishment you give because it has no feeling. It behaves in ways you want, but never makes the choice (T-28.VI.1:1; 2:1-3).

Our mind is indeed the source of the problem, but even there its guilt does not deserve punishment, as the ego would have us think, but simply correction.

**(5:4) The body's suffering is a mask the mind holds up to hide what really suffers.**

What Jesus means by "mind," of course, is the decision maker, which chooses the ego, chooses to make guilt real, and then chooses to project it onto the body. It is

thus the decision maker that uses the body to hide the real cause of the suffering: its decision for separation and guilt. The cleverness of the ego's strategy is described in more detail below, part of the section from which we have just quoted. Here we see how the you – our decision maker hides behind the body so that no one is ever the wiser about what is really going on: the mind's decision to be separate and guilty:

> The thing you hate and fear and loathe and want [the ego's guilt], the body does not know. You [the decision-making part of our minds] send it forth to seek for separation and be separate. And then you hate it, not for what it is, but for the uses you have made of it. You shrink from what it sees and what it hears, and hate its frailty and littleness. And you despise its acts, but not your own. It sees and acts for *you.* It hears your voice. And it is frail and little by your wish. It seems to punish you, and thus deserve your hatred for the limitations that it brings to you. Yet you have made of it a symbol for the limitations that you want your mind to have and see and keep (T-28.VI.3).

**(5:5) It** [the mind's decision maker] **would not understand it is its own enemy; that it attacks itself and wants to die.**

If we knew this, of course, we would change our minds in an instant. If we knew that *we* were the problem – our decision maker having chosen the ego – we would not hesitate to choose the Holy Spirit, marking the end of the ego. Once again, to ensure that this catastrophe never occurs, the ego – the part of our minds that embraces separation – devises its strategy of mindlessness, which has the Son identify with a body that becomes a constant source of attention and concern. Thus we come to believe that the world and body – others' and our own – are the enemies, while the true "enemy" – our decision maker's wrong-minded choice – remains safely hidden out of awareness, concealed by guilt and fear.

**(5:6-7) It is from this your "laws" would save the body. It is for this you think you are a body.**

Jesus helps us to understand the motivation or purpose for having a body: to have a place in which to hide the mind's guilt. Thus the ego tells us we do indeed have a real problem – in our bodies – but fortunately there are laws that will take care of it. The problem, the ego convinces us, is not our inner emptiness because we left God, but, for example, the emptiness in our stomachs. Therefore, we fill them with food and we feel fine. The "law" states: if you are hungry, you eat. Furthermore, if you want to stay healthy by your eating, you must eat specific foods – whatever it is you believe in, for the food itself does not matter.

The ego has thus taken the problem of lack – the absence of Christ because I believe I crucified Him – splits it off and projects it, so now there is a lack perceived in my body. The ego's "laws" then come to save it, and solve the problem of maintaining our physical and psychological existence as creatures of the world. Thus it becomes, in addition to the problem of food:

1. The problem is that I am all alone in the universe, since I destroyed God. Yes, the ego agrees, there is a problem of loneliness, but it is in the body. Therefore, I will invent special relationships and teach you the laws of manipulation and

seduction, which will enable you to keep other bodies close to you. Thus is the problem of your loneliness solved.

2. The problem is that I am impoverished because I threw away the treasure of God. I have nothing. Yes, the ego agrees, there is a problem of impoverishment, but it is in the body. Therefore I will invent money and teach you the laws of earning it. Thus is the problem of your impoverishment solved.
3. The problem is that I am sick at heart because I betrayed God. Yes, the ego agrees, there is a problem of sickness, but it is in the body. Therefore, I will invent medicine and teach you the laws of acquiring and using it. Thus is the problem of your sickness solved.

And on and on it goes.

This lesson helps us understand that the laws the ego tells us will save the body only uphold the separation and guilt that is in our minds. Jesus' purpose, once again, is not to make us feel guilty or like failures, but simply to help us realize where the problem is so it can be *truly* solved.

**(6:1-2) There are no laws except the laws of God. This needs repeating, over and over, until you realize it applies to everything that you have made in opposition to God's Will.**

By "repeating, over and over," Jesus does not mean, once again, that we use his words as a mantra or affirmation. Rather, they are a statement of truth to which we bring the ego's laws of illusion. The body is nothing but the end product of a long series of thoughts that were made in opposition to God's Will: separation, specialness, sin, guilt, fear, and death. Thus we need to pay careful attention to our experiences of victimization at the hands of laws over which we have no control, and on which we believe the fate of our peace rests. It is this misplacement we bring to the truth, recognizing how we have used the body's laws as a cloak to conceal our guilt over believing we had, in fact, chosen against the laws of God.

**(6:3) Your magic has no meaning.**

The laws of the world have to do with magic because they are external. The miracle -- magic's counterpart – is internal. Magic helps us change our bodies; the miracle helps us change our minds. Magic is the ego's solving a problem where it cannot be solved – in the *body.* The miracle is the Holy Spirit's solving a problem where it can be solved – in the *mind.*

**(6:4-5) What it is meant to save does not exist. Only what it is meant to hide will save you.**

This is a nice Level One statement: the body does not exist. Moreover, the body and its laws were made to hide the guilt in our minds. Yet they not only hold the guilt but its undoing, brought about through acceptance of the Atonement, which alone can save us.

**(7) The laws of God can never be replaced. We will devote today to rejoicing that this is so. It is no longer a truth that we would hide. We realize instead it is a**

**truth that keeps us free forever. Magic imprisons, but the laws of God make free. The light has come because there are no laws but His.**

We need to pay careful attention to the ego's laws we obey in order to trace them back to what they represent in our minds, as I just did above. Thus: money undoes our experience of spiritual *impoverishment;* putting food in our stomach and oxygen in our lungs supplies the *lack* in our split minds; and specialness undoes the *loneliness* that is the "natural" state of a separated mind. We can therefore use the ego's laws to reflect back to us what they were meant to hide: the belief that the laws of God can be replaced. Indeed, they have been replaced – by *me;* at least by the wrong-minded, deluded me that thinks it is a separated self. However, we are now ready to learn that this delusion occurred only in our dreams. Our real Self but awaits the opening of our eyes.

Jesus now pokes further fun at us:

**(8:1-5) We will begin the longer practice periods today with a short review of the different kinds of "laws" we have believed we must obey. These would include, for example, the "laws" of nutrition, of immunization, of medication, and of the body's protection in innumerable ways. Think further; you believe in the "laws" of friendship, of "good" relationships and reciprocity.**

It should be quite obvious by now that Jesus is not asking us to give up our belief in these laws, which are the very bedrock of our existence in the world. But we are asked to step back with him – to go *above the battleground* (T-23.IV) – and look through his eyes at the place these laws hold in our ego's defensive system and strategy of mindlessness. Thus we learn not to take them or our lives as seriously as before. This point, like so many others, cannot be stated too often. Our resistance to looking at the ego without judgment is enormous, and needs the gentle persuasion of gentle repetition to be effectively diminished.

**(8:5) Perhaps you even think that there are laws which set forth what is God's and what is yours. Many "religions" have been based on this.**

Jesus puts "religion" in quotes because he is telling us that these – the formal religions of the world – are not *true* religions. The etymological meaning of *religion* is "to bind together again," and we "bind together again" by realizing God's Son is one – we are one with each other and one with God. The "religions" of the world separate, their adherents judging everyone who does not agree with them, unconsciously believing they themselves are separate from God. Thus Jesus states the following in the pamphlet on *Psychotherapy,* addressing the issue of religion's place in the practice of psychotherapy:

> Formal religion has no place in psychotherapy, but it also has no real place in religion (P-2.II.2:1).

Once religion, regardless of its inspirational origin, becomes formalized, it becomes separatist. It inevitably then becomes subsumed under the laws of *homo sapiens,* which not only demarcate the respective and hierarchical places of different members of the species, but also the respective and hierarchical places of God and us. Separation becomes Heaven's law, while the true law of unity and oneness disappears

into the reality that has been hidden by the externalization of God's Love, the only law.

**(8:6-7) They would not save but damn in Heaven's name. Yet they are no more strange than other "laws" you hold must be obeyed to make you safe.**

These "laws" of formal religions are indeed strange, for they make the Love of God conditional, accessible through the body. On the other hand, the universality of love makes it totally accessible, and easily remembered when the world is seen as a classroom in which we learn the lessons of forgiveness that enable us to *transcend* the world and body entirely.

Yet Jesus wants us to recognize that the strangeness of religions' laws are no more strange than any other. There is, after all, no hierarchy of illusions (T-23.112:3). He is not asking us to deny our dependence on nutrition, immunization, medication, protection, specialness, or anything else, but simply says to us: "Look at your dependence on these laws through my eyes, and you will realize they are shadows of your mind's guilt. Look gently with me at the relationship between the shadow and its source, and realize how this causal connection has not brought you peace." Jesus is not asking to make the point still once again – that we let go of our investment in our own or anyone else's body. His words ask us only to let go of the purpose we have given the body, allowing him to shift this purpose from guilt to forgiveness.

**(9:1-2) There are no laws but God's. Dismiss all foolish magical beliefs today, and hold your mind in silent readiness to hear the Voice that speaks the truth to you.**

How do you become silently ready? You quiet the ego's raucous shrieks and stubborn insistence that you are right and God is wrong. And then wait in patience for yourself to move beyond the resistance born of fear to the truth born of love.

**(9:3) You will be listening to One Who says there is no loss under the laws of God.**

In all the ego's laws – whether religious or not – there is loss. If I am to eat, an animal or vegetable must lose its "life"; if I am to have my specialness needs met, another must suffer; and if I am to be forgiven by God, I must sacrifice. It must be so, for the rock on which the ego's *slavation* rests is that one must lose so that another can win. Statements like the above gently correct that illusion.

**(9:4-6) Payment is neither given nor received. Exchange cannot be made; there are no substitutes; and nothing is replaced by something else. God's laws forever give and never take.**

The ego is born of the original thought that I am a substitute for God or Christ, and everything else logically follows from that ontological premise. In other words, from the sin of substitution I experience guilt, which then demands I be punished. In order to assuage the vindictive wrath of the sinned-against deity, I concoct a theory of salvation in which it appears as if He demands my payment for what I stole, a payment that drips with the blood of my suffering and sacrifice: the ego's meaning of atonement. From this insane thought arises a world in which we believe that we can achieve happiness or

salvation only through payment of some kind. Thus we find the following statements in *Psychotherapy* regarding the question of payment. Unlike the world's view, in which patients pay therapists for their expertise, a *quid pro quo,* Jesus advocates the more Marxist view: *From each according to his ability. To each according to his need.* This utopian vision has, unfortunately, never been tried, yet Jesus makes it the basis for his view on *payment,* distinguishing it from cost:

> Only an unhealed healer would try to heal for money, and he will not succeed to the extent to which he values it. Nor will he find his healing in the process. There will be those of whom the Holy Spirit asks some payment for His purpose. There will be those from whom He does not ask.... There is a difference between payment and cost. To give money where God's plan allots it has no cost. To withhold it from where it rightfully belongs has enormous cost.... Patients can pay only for the exchange of illusions. This, indeed, must demand payment, and the cost is great.... If their relationship is to be holy, whatever one needs is given by the other; whatever one lacks the other supplies.... The therapist repays the patient in gratitude, as does the patient repay him. There is no cost to either.... This ... [reflects] the law of God, and not of the world.

Anticipating the inevitable complaint, Jesus states:

> This view of payment may well seem impractical, and in the eyes of the world it would be so. Yet not one worldly thought is really practical. How much is gained by striving for illusions? How much is lost by throwing God away? And is it possible to do so? (P-3.III.2:1-4, 6-8; 3:3-4; 4:4,6-7; 5:4; 7:1-5)

The law we are asked to reflect in our relationships is the law of perfect Oneness, in which there can be no cost or loss. Its loving expression within the world of illusion is the rock on which salvation rests: "And everyone *must* gain, if anyone would be a gainer" (T-25.VII.12:2).

The next paragraph asks us to listen to the Holy Spirit tell us, again, how foolish indeed are the "laws" we have striven to follow:

**(10) Hear Him Who tells you this, and realize how foolish are the "laws" you thought upheld the world you thought you saw. Then listen further. He will tell you more. About the Love your Father has for you. About the endless joy He offers you. About His yearning for His only Son, created as His channel for creation; denied to Him by his belief in hell.**

The Holy Spirit does not take our laws away from us, but shows us their foolishness in that they reflect a thought system that is foolish. Remember how miracles do not make the correct choice. They simply show us how incorrect we have been in our prior choices:

> The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content it not true.... The miracle does nothing but to show him [the dreamer] that he has done nothing (T-28.II.7:1,10).

Once He has our attention, the Holy Spirit "speaks" to us of the heavenly Love we

chose to forget, when we chose to remember the hell of the ego's special love.

**(11:1) Let us today open God's channels to Him, and let His Will extend through us to Him.**

The way we open God's channels -- our minds – is to forgive ourselves for having chosen the ego as substitute for the Love of God. Forgiveness is the key that opens the right-minded home of the Holy Spirit, which we had sealed with locks of guilt and specialness.

**(11:2-6) Thus is creation endlessly increased. His Voice will speak of this to us, as well as of the joys of Heaven which His laws keep limitless forever. We will repeat today's idea until we have listened and understood there are no laws but God's. Then we will tell ourselves, as a dedication with which the practice period concludes:**

***I am under no laws but God's.***

Once we choose to accept the Atonement and remember our Identity as Christ, we identify with our true function of creation: the endless increase of God's Love *through* us and *as* us. This "us" is God's one Son, the Christ He created as one with Him; the Self that is no longer *under* the laws of God – It *is* the law of God.

**(12) We will repeat this dedication as often as possible today; at least four or five times an hour, as well as in response to any temptation to experience ourselves as subject to other laws throughout the day. It is our statement of freedom from all danger and all tyranny. It is our acknowledgment that God is our Father, and that His Son is saved.**

We are back where we began – the acceptance of the Atonement. Jesus is asking us to strengthen our resolve to accept this acceptance throughout the day – *at least* every twelve-to-fifteen minutes. Thus we seek to remember—as often as we can and especially when tempted to believe in the ego's laws of scarcity and deprivation, of specialness and loss – that "there is no will but God's; no laws but His." We then gladly acknowledge: "Yes, I made these laws and still believe in them. But I am now willing to admit I was wrong. The truth is that God is my Father and not the ego, and therefore I am saved from my thoughts of sin and guilt, for they have disappeared into His Love." The only remaining question for ourselves is why would we *not* remember this happy fact throughout the day.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 77**

**I am entitled to miracles.**

This is the first mention of miracles in the workbook. There is an indirect reference earlier in the lessons, but discussion of this central theme occurs here for the first time. Since it is so easily misunderstood, I shall talk briefly about the miracle before moving into the lesson itself.

In *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus is fond of using terms that seem to suggest one thing, and providing them with an entirely different meaning. The term *miracles,* which gives its name to the Course, is a prime example. Almost everyone associates the word with something external. Whether or not one believes in the Bible, everyone in our Western world has been influenced by the accounts of the various miracles described in the Old and the New Testaments. An examination shows that they involve some change in the body or the world, whether it is the parting of the Red Sea, healing of illness, or raising the dead. In the Course, miracles are understood differently, having nothing to do with the external, but only with a change of mind. Lessons 77 and 78 indicate that the best way of thinking about a miracle is as a correction for our faulty perceptions and, above all, as the means for undoing our distress or pain. In Lesson 193 Jesus explains that all distress comes from a lack of forgiveness: "Certain it is that all distress does not appear to be but unforgiveness" (W-pI.193.4:1); and in our next lesson he discusses miracles as the answer to our grievances.

As we go through these lessons, therefore, think of the miracle as a change in mind or, even more specifically, a change in teachers: from the ego to the Holy Spirit. That change corrects all misperceptions and misthoughts, the source of our suffering. Therefore, when Jesus says at the beginning of this lesson "I am entitled to miracles," he, again, is not referring to something external, nor God's grace descending upon us from on high, blessing us, our families, or anyone else. We are entitled to the end of our pain simply because we are God's Son, who cannot be in pain. He may dream he suffers, dream he separated from God, but the truth is that he remains as God created him. The miracle is Jesus' name for the dynamic that allows us to understand that everything we have made – our personal and collective worlds – is a dream. We are the dreamers of this dream, and therefore we are the ones who can change our minds about it, as we see in this passage from the text:

> Nothing at all has happened but that you have put yourself to sleep.... The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is. It teaches you there is a choice of dreams while you are still asleep, depending on the purpose of your dreaming. Do you wish for dreams of healing, or for dreams of death? (T-28.II.4 : 1-4)

We turn now to the lesson, which takes us another step towards accepting the dreams of healing, the precursor to our awakening from the sleep of separation:

**(1:1-2) You are entitled to miracles because of what you are. You will receive miracles because of what God is.**

The source of the miracle is the presence of Jesus or the Holy Spirit in our minds. This presence reminds us of who we are as God's one Son. In "Principles of Miracles," Jesus explains that their Source is beyond our evaluation (T-1.I.2:2), meaning God is beyond our understanding. Jesus or the Holy Spirit reflect God's truth – the Atonement

principle – which is that the separation from God never happened. Thus, we will receive miracles because we have *already* received them. The correction is fully present in our minds, awaiting our acceptance.

**(1:3) And you will offer miracles because you are one with God.**

When we choose the miracle – the choice to return to our minds and change the decision from the ego to the Holy Spirit – we have undone the belief in separation. In that holy instant there is no separated Son of God, only the *one* Son. Thus does the miracle we have accepted naturally extend though us to the whole Sonship, because our healed mind is the whole Sonship. In the instant we have chosen Jesus – the great symbol of the one Son – as our teacher and identified with his love, we become like him. Helen's "A Jesus Prayer," expresses the fervent wish that this be so, in our first of several references to this inspired and inspiring poem:

> A perfect picture of what I can be
> You show to me, that I might help renew
> Your brothers' failing sight. As they look up
> Let them not look on me, but only You.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 83)

Moreover, Jesus tells us in the text that when we take his hand we reach beyond the ego because he is beyond the ego:

> I go before you because I am beyond the ego. Reach, therefore, for my hand because you want to transcend the ego (T-8.V.6:7-8).

In the holy instant we have transcended thoughts of separation, and offer miracles in the sense that we are one with God when we have chosen His Teacher. As one with our Creator, we must then be one with His creation; a unity that embraces its seemingly separated fragments.

The words of the lesson seems to suggest that a miracle is something we do. In fact, many statements early in the text seem to suggest that as well. As we have discussed previously, however, the language of *A Course in Miracles* allows Jesus to speak to us on a level we can understand, which involves experiencing ourselves and others as bodies. Although the language in many places suggests that miracles involve behavior, in truth they are but correction thoughts we choose and therefore accept. Again, once accepted, the miracle naturally extends through our joined minds. We, as separated individuals – body and ego – do not do anything. We do not offer miracles on the bodily level, nor do we receive them there. The miracle is simply a process of decision in our minds that allows extension to occur.

**(1:4) Again, how simple is salvation!**

This is a recurring theme throughout *A Course in Miracles.* Salvation is simple because it says, for example: "what is false is false, and what is true has never changed" (W-pII.10.1:1). What is false is the ego system, regardless of the many forms in which it comes; and what has never changed is the truth of God. As Jesus repeatedly reminds us: What could be more simple?

**(1:5-6) It is merely a statement of your true Identity. It is this that we will celebrate today.**

Choosing the miracle corrects the misperception we are an ego, we have a split mind, and we are not as God created us. When we realize what we are *not,* the memory of who we are – Christ, the Identity of God's Son – will dawn on our minds.

**(2:1) Your claim to miracles does not lie in your illusions about yourself.**

The primary illusion about ourselves is that we are bodies. We are therefore not entitled to miracles on the bodily level to better our dream or those of our loved ones. Our true claim is to a change in mind or, again and more to the point, a change in teachers. Thus we are taught by our new teacher that we are not travesties of our Self: bodies instead of spirit. Recall Jesus' statement to Helen in "The Gifts of God": "For I am not a dream that comes in mockery" *(The Gifts of God,* p. 121). In other words, Jesus is not a body, the hero of the ego's dream that would mock our creation as spirit. Likewise, neither are we. Thus we claim the miracle of correction that reminds us of the truth about ourselves.

**(2:2) It does not depend on any magical powers you have ascribed to yourself, nor on any of the rituals you have devised.**

From the perspective of *A Course in Miracles,* the miracles that are described in the Bible are forms of magic. They are what one miraculous body does on behalf of other bodies. The biblical God, too, is very much involved in the physical world, and He is portrayed as the source of the miracles, often working through His chosen agents – the prophets or Jesus himself. All these are forms of magic because they have nothing to do with a change of mind. The problem requiring the miracle's intervention is external to the mind. In fact, there is nothing in the Bible about a mind – even though the word is used occasionally – in the sense in which it is defined in the Course. The problem is thus perceived to be external, and the miracle correspondingly acts to remedy the problem.

In *A Course in Miracles* this is all different. The source of the problem is shifted from the body to the mind that conceived of the problem. This is ultimately some aspect of guilt, which can be solved only by the miracle.

**(2:3-5) It is inherent in the truth of what you are. It is implicit in what God your Father is. It was ensured in your creation, and guaranteed by the laws of God.**

The truth of what we are is Christ, and His memory is in our right minds through the presence of the Holy Spirit. That is where the miracle is found, waiting to be chosen. The "It" throughout this paragraph refers to our claim to miracles. We are entitled to them because of who we are as God's Son, which means we are entitled to the correction already present in us.

**(3) Today we will claim the miracles which are your right, since they belong to you. You have been promised full release from the world you made. You have been assured that the Kingdom of God is within you, and can never be lost. We**

**ask no more than what belongs to us in truth. Today, however, we will also make sure that we will not content ourselves with less.**

Again, miracles belong to us because they are within our minds, and cannot be found in anything outside them. The promise of the "full release from the world that you made," and the assurance "that the Kingdom of God is within you, and can never been lost," is the purpose of the Atonement principle – the separation from God never happened. It is that truth of the Holy Spirit that releases us from the world, because the world came from the belief that we did in fact separate, a belief that initiated the development of the thought system of individuality – sin, guilt, and fear – culminating in the projection that made the world. Therefore, if there is no individuality, because the separation from God never happened, we are automatically released from the world. This is the truth to which we are entitled because we *are* the truth: an extension of God's loving Will.

We see here a recurring theme in *A Course in Miracles:* By choosing the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, littleness instead of magnitude (T-15.III), we settle for a parody of our creation instead of the glorious truth of who we are. In other words, we settle for the crumbs instead of the banquet, the parts of the song instead of the song itself. Thus we are told in the opening pages of *The Song of Prayer:*

> The real sound is always a song of thanksgiving and of Love.
> You cannot, then, ask for the echo. It is the song that is the gift. Along with it come the overtones, the harmonics, the echoes, but these are secondary. In true prayer you hear only the song. All the rest is merely added (S-112:9-3:5).

Or, as Jesus says of "the forgotten song": "The notes are nothing" (T-21.I.7:1). Our preferring life in the body to life as spirit is the height, not only of insanity, but of self-deprecation. Jesus says further in the text:

> Be not content with littleness. But be sure you understand what littleness is, and why you could never be content with it. Littleness is the offering you give yourself. You offer this in place of magnitude, and you accept it. Everything in this world is little because it is a world made out of littleness, in the strange belief that littleness can content you. When you strive for anything in this world in the belief that it will bring you peace, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory. Littleness and glory are the choices open to your striving and your vigilance. You will always choose one at the expense of the other (T-15.III.1).

In summary, we are told that our problem is that we ask for far too little, and not for too much (T-26.VII.11:7). We are indeed entitled to everything.

**(4:1-2) Begin the longer practice periods by telling yourself quite confidently that you are entitled to miracles. Closing your eyes, remind yourself that you are asking only for what is rightfully yours.**

We have repeatedly seen the importance of using these ideas whenever we are tempted to believe we are separated: feeling special, angry, guilty, anxious, or depressed. Having thus made real some aspect of the ego thought system, we need to realize as soon as possible that we have made the wrong choice of the wrong teacher.

At this point we ask for help to see that the problem we are experiencing is one we made up because we needed it to preserve our individual identity. This self is in the mind, chosen by the decision maker, and as long as we see the problem in the world or body, we affirm our mindlessness. Thus there is no way we can change our minds, a state that is the ego's salvation, and with which we have all so strongly identified. That is why exercises such as these are so vital for our unlearning.

**(4:3-5) Remind yourself also that miracles are never taken from one and given to another, and that in asking for your rights, you are upholding the rights of everyone. Miracles do not obey the laws of this world. They merely follow from the laws of God.**

The five laws of chaos discussed in Chapter 23 of the text, are the most cogent descriptions in *A Course in Miracles* of these "laws of the world." The fourth law of chaos says that "You have what you have taken" (T-23.II.9:3), which rests on the now-familiar teaching of the ego: *one or the other* – if you have it, I do not; if I have it, you do not. Thus, if you have innocence and I want it, I must take it from you. This establishes you as sinful – being without innocence – leaving me as sinless, for I have taken your innocent state and made it my own.

The law of God is that we are one. What is therefore true for you must be true for me. The laws of the ego – the laws of chaos – rest on the belief in differences. The ego's first law is that there is a hierarchy of illusions and that differences are real (T-23.II.2:1-3). *A Course in Miracles* teaches instead that there is only one law in Heaven – perfect Oneness and Love. Miracles are thus present in everyone because the Holy Spirit is equally present in everyone. There are no exceptions because there can be no exceptions in Heaven's truth or its reflections on earth.

**(5) After this brief introductory phase, wait quietly for the assurance that your request is granted. You have asked for the salvation of the world, and for your own. You have requested that you be given the means by which this is accomplished. You cannot fail to be assured in this. You are but asking that the Will of God be done.**

As the text reminds us – *twice:* "The outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10; T-4.1I.5:8). We cannot fail. However, we believe we can, if we do not avail ourselves of the means -- the miracle or forgiveness – that is provided by the Holy Spirit to help us remember the Will that God has for us, to remember that we *are* His Will. In that remembering, brought about by the miracle, is salvation come.

**(6) In doing this, you do not really ask for anything. You state a fact that cannot be denied. The Holy Spirit cannot but assure you that your request is granted. The fact that you accepted must be so. There is no room for doubt and uncertainty today. We are asking a real question at last. The answer is a simple statement of a simple fact. You will receive the assurance that you seek.**

The problem, as we have seen many times, is our arrogance in thinking we know the problem and therefore know which question to ask, always some version of: How should I behave? What should I say? What is the answer to my problem? Where should I move? What job should I take? What relationship should I be involved with? All these

are but pseudo-questions, designed to distract us from realizing the true problem of separation, the focus of Lessons 79 and 80.

In truth we are not asking *for* anything. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us realize we made a mistake, and can now make the correct choice. That is the meaning of Jesus saying early in the text that "the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything" (T-3.V.6:3). Our true prayer is that we accept the miracle or correction that is already present within us. This means we have to take our eyes off the distractions – perceived problems, either in my body or another's – bringing them to our minds so we can understand the problem is not something outside, but a mistaken choice within. Again, this correction is the essence of the miracle, and asking for it is the only real request we can make, the answer to which is found in the holy instant, as the following passage explains:

> Therefore, attempt to solve no problems in a world from which the answer has been barred. But bring the problem to the only place that holds the answer lovingly for you. Here are the answers that will solve your problems because they stand apart from them, and see what can be answered; what the question *is*. Within the world the answers merely raise another question, though they leave the first unanswered. In the holy instant, you can bring the question to the answer, and receive the answer that was made for you (T-27 IV.7)

**(7:1-4) Our shorter practice periods will be frequent, and will also be devoted to a reminder of a simple fact. Tell yourself often today:**

***I am entitled to miracles.***

**Ask for them whenever a situation arises in which they are called for.**

Jesus is again telling us that these lessons – and therefore his course – have no meaning if we do not use them to help undo our pain and distress. He asks us to think very specifically of the idea for today, and go to it for help when we are upset and tempted to blame someone or something else for our discomfort.

**(7:5-6) You will recognize these situations. And since you are not relying on yourself to find the miracle, you are fully entitled to receive it whenever you ask.**

This is an extremely important point – the big shift. Heretofore we have relied on ourselves, or a projected image of ourselves we call Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or God – some magical figure who will undo our pain and distress without *our* having to change our minds. The plea to these magical savior figures was really a prayer for magic, not true healing. Jesus is now assuming we are no longer telling ourselves what the problem is, and therefore not asking the image we made of him to solve the problem for us. Instead, we go to the source of the problem, the mind's decision to be on its own and be right, rather than happy. Truly asking Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help says we do not want to be on our own anymore, ensuring that the miracle will once again be ours. A special message to Helen addressed this very issue, Jesus cautioning his scribe against trying to define the problem that needed answering:

> Any specific question involves a large number of assumptions which

> inevitably limit the answer. A specific question is actually a decision about the kind of answer that is acceptable. The purpose of words is to limit, and by limiting, to make a vast area of experience more manageable. But that means manageable by *you (Absence from Felicity: The Story of Helen Schuman and Her Scribing of A Course in Miracles,* p. 445).

The point lies in our recognizing that all problems are the same, and therefore asking for the miracle – asking ourselves to choose it  is the only meaningful thing to do. Only the miracle allows true and unlimited correction of the separation to occur.

**(8) Remember, too, not to be satisfied with less than the perfect answer. Be quick to tell yourself, should you be tempted:**

***I will not trade miracles for grievances. I want only what belongs to me. God has established miracles as my right.***

This paragraph leads into the next lesson's theme: miracles and grievances are mutually exclusive states. The former reside in our right minds, when we choose the Holy Spirit as our Teacher; the latter in our wrong minds, when we project responsibility for our attack onto others, even God Himself.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 78**
**Let miracles replace all grievances.**

In this lesson we can see much more specifically that grievances are the problem and miracles the solution. I might mention that this is the first lesson that is in blank verse. This has no bearing on the meaning of the lesson of course, but for those who appreciate Shakespeare, whose primary verse was iambic pentameter, this is a bonus. Prior to this lesson there were occasional passages that slipped in and out of blank verse, but this is the first time a lesson is written entirely in meter. Jesus then shifts back to prose until later. If as you go through this lesson you find yourself reading in rhythmic cadences, you are responding to the iambic pentameter, even without being aware of it.

**(1:1) Perhaps it is not yet quite clear to you that each decision that you make is one between a grievance and a miracle.**

We think the decisions we make are between A and B, choices that are always seen as external. Do I see this person or that one? Do I eat this food or something else? Do I go here or there? Jesus is telling us these choices are but forms that conceal the underlying and only choice: Do I choose the ego or the Holy Spirit, attack or forgiveness, grievances or miracles?

**(1:2) Each grievance stands like a dark shield of hate before the miracle it would conceal.**

Note the purposive nature of grievances. We have seen that purpose is everything in A *Course in Miracles,* and Jesus states that the only question we should ask of anything is: What is it for? (T-17.VI.2:1-2) The purpose we give to a circumstance is all the meaning it has. Directly implied here is that the grievance is a defense, "a dark shield of hate" that prevents us from choosing the miracle "it would conceal." We are therefore never angry or judgmental for the reasons we think. We believe our anger is caused by something outside us: what someone does or says, or a situation we do not like. However, this statement lets us know that the real purpose – the attack thought's underlying content – is our desire to hide the miracle from our vision.

**(1:3) And as you raise it up before your eyes, you will not see the miracle beyond.**

Why do we not want to see the miracle? If we did, we would be seeing within our minds, realizing the reason we are upset is that we made the wrong choice. In other words, we are the dreamers of our dreams, and therefore the only ones who have the power to change them – the last thing in the world the ego wants us to discover. What preserves the belief in the reality of the ego is the fact that we do not remember we made it up. The ego has no existence in itself, which means the world that arose from it has no existence either. Their seeming reality rests in the power of the Son's mind to believe in it.

The ego's problem, to recap our earlier discussions, is not the Love of God, of which it knows nothing. Its problem is the decision maker, the power of the Son's mind to choose the ego. This means that at any given moment – the holy instant the Son can withdraw that power and choose the Holy Spirit's miracle instead. The ego would then disappear, as would our individual existence. That, then, is the ego's fear: redemption,

not crucifixion (T-13.III.1:10-11). To ensure this does not happen, the ego makes up an elaborate thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, and projects this into a specific world in which we can justifiably hold grievances. These defend against the mind's guilt, which in turn defends against the love in our minds. Thus the ego's "shield of hate" prevents us from seeing the miracle, thereby preventing our ever choosing it.

**(1:4) Yet all the while it waits for you in light, but you behold your grievances instead.**

The miracle of correction waits, which ultimately means the One Who *is* the correction. Consequently, if you want to keep the Holy Spirit's Love away from you, you need only pick a fight with someone. Jesus says the same thing in the manual in the context of the peace of God:

> God's peace can never come where anger is, for anger must deny that peace exists. Who sees anger as justified in any way or any circumstance proclaims that peace is meaningless, and must believe that it cannot exist (M-20.3:3-4).

Anger is like a solid shield or wall, behind which is the Love of God. If you fear this Love, knowing that in its presence your specialness disappears, you keep it away by fighting with someone – physically, verbally, or in your thoughts. The form anger takes does not matter, since the dynamic is the same: the darkness of our grievances conceals the miracle's light.

**(2:1-2) Today we go beyond the grievances, to look upon the miracle instead. We will reverse the way you see by not allowing sight to stop before it sees.**

Implied here is that our eyes are not the instruments of seeing. True seeing, or vision, occurs in our minds, as we have seen many times already. It occurs only when we choose Jesus as the source of our vision. When we exclude him we become blind. We "see" separation and sin within; and therefore we think we see a separated and sinful world without. But none of that is seeing. Recall our earlier quoted line – "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" – now seen in its fuller context:

> Everything the body's eyes can see is a mistake, an error in perception, a distorted fragment of the whole without the meaning that the whole would give.... The body's eyes see only form. They cannot see beyond what they were made to see. And they were made to look on error and not see past it. Theirs is indeed a strange perception, for they can see only illusions, unable to look beyond the granite block of sin, and stopping at the outside form of nothing. To this distorted form of vision the outside of everything, the wall that stands between you and the truth, is wholly true. Yet how can sight that stops at nothingness, as if it were a solid wall, see truly? It is held back by form, having been made to guarantee that nothing else but form will be perceived.
>
> These eyes, made not to see, will never see. For the idea they represent left not its maker, and it is their maker that sees through them. What was its maker's goal but not to see? For this the body's eyes are perfect means, but not

> for seeing. See how the body's eyes rest on externals and cannot go beyond. Watch how they stop at nothingness, unable to go beyond the form to meaning. Nothing so blinding as perception of form. For sight of form means understanding has been obscured (T-22.III.4:3; 5:3-6:8).

That is why Jesus teaches us never to trust our perceptions. They are based on form, the shadowy fragment of the ego's thought system of separation and guilt.

**(2:3) We will not wait before the shield of hate, but lay it down and gently lift our eyes in silence to behold the Son of God.**

In the early years of studying *A Course in Miracles,* we inevitably think the Son of God we behold is someone external to us. It is only later, as we work with the Course over a period of time, that we come to realize that the Son of God has nothing to do with what our physical eyes see, for we experience him in the mind, the image of which we project onto others. The Son we have made real within is thus what we perceive outside: *projection makes perception.* To be sure, the context of these lessons is the shift in our perception of our special love or hate partners. In truth, however, we are only changing our minds about the Son of God *in our minds.* Before we can shift the inner perception of the Son from guilty to sinless, we need first recognize that the Son is ourselves and not another. Only then do we happily lay down our shield of hate.

**(3:1-2) He waits for you behind your grievances, and as you lay them down he will appear in shining light where each one stood before. For every grievance is a block to sight, and as it lifts you see the Son of God where he has always been.**

The Son has always been within his Father, Whom he never left. Therefore he has always been within the mind, which contains the memory of his Source. The principle of the Atonement reminds us that the darkness of our hate has no power over the light; the ego's grievances cannot withstand the face of Christ shining in forgiveness beyond the block to sight.

**(3:3) He stands in light, but you were in the dark.**

The Son of God is the Christ Who remains in our right minds through the Holy Spirit, even though we shrouded him in veils of separation, guilt, and hate. These are veils that we, in our deluded minds, had chosen to replace the light in our awareness.

**(3:4-4:1) Each grievance made the darkness deeper, and you could not see. Today we will attempt to see God's Son.**

We come now to another exercise of forgiveness, which helps us see the light that is just beyond the ego's darkness of hate and judgment. Keep in mind, again, that the context is seeing God's Son in our brother, against whom we believe we hold grievances. However, since what we perceive outside mirrors what we perceive inside, the light of Christ I see in you is nothing more or less than the Son of God I made real in my mind. My learning to see God's Son in you, my brother in specialness, reflects my seeing the same Son in me.

**(4:2-5) We will not let ourselves be blind to him; we will not look upon our grievances. So is the seeing of the world reversed, as we look out toward truth, away from fear. We will select one person you have used as target for your grievances, and lay the grievances aside and look at him. Someone, perhaps, you fear and even hate; someone you think you love who angered you; someone you call a friend, but whom you see as difficult at times or hard to please, demanding, irritating or untrue to the ideal he should accept as his, according to the role you set for him.**

In "Dream Roles" near the end of the text, Jesus explains that we get angry at others because they do not fulfill the role we have given them in our dream (T-29.IV.4:1). This kind of exercise, repeated in different ways throughout the workbook, is something we should practice all the time, not just when we are working with a particular lesson. It should be applied whenever we are tempted to get upset with anyone. Sometimes it is the same person – we all have our favorite targets – but it could be someone, as Jesus describes here, whom we think of as a friend or loved one. When people behave in a way that pushes our buttons, we can see this as an opportunity to realize that the relationship is only a screen onto which we projected guilt over having pushed the love of Jesus away. If we allowed ourselves to experience his love, we could never be angry or upset with anyone. It would be impossible because of the mind's principle of *one or the other:* hate or forgiveness; fear or love.

When we find ourselves upset, it is always because: 1) we decided Jesus' love was too threatening to our specialness, and separated from it; 2) we next repress the guilt over this perceived sin, committed still again; and 3) sought and found others onto whom we could project our guilt, magically believing we had become free of it. We then forget this three-step process, aware only of its end product – hurt, anger, and disappointment. At this point we should remind ourselves of the exercise, returning to our minds to ask Jesus for help, saying, as a variation of T-5.VII.6:7: "I must be looking at these people wrongly, because I am blaming my loss of peace on them." We thus use the circumstance as an opportunity to realize that what we are perceiving outside directly reflects the sin and guilt we first perceived inside. Instead of seeing it in ourselves and accepting it there, we had chosen to see it in other people.

It is only in asking Jesus for help – i.e., joining with him – that we undo the cause of our upset, which lies in our guilt over pushing him away. That is why going to him or the Holy Spirit is a major theme of A *Course in Miracles.* Asking Their help is precisely what undoes the root cause of our distress, regardless of its foul'. In an important passage at the end of the manual for teachers, Jesus tells us that asking the Holy Spirit for guidance is the way out of guilt:

> There is another advantage, – and a very important one, – in referring decisions to the Holy Spirit with increasing frequency. Perhaps you have not thought of this aspect, but its centrality is obvious. To follow the Holy Spirit's guidance is to let yourself be absolved of guilt. It is the essence of the Atonement. It is the core of the curriculum. The imagined usurping of functions not your own is the basis of fear. The whole world you see reflects the illusion that you have done so, making fear inevitable. To return the function to the One to Whom it belongs is thus the escape from fear. And it is this that lets the memory of love return to you. Do not, then, think that following the Holy Spirit's guidance is necessary merely because of your own inadequacies. It is the way out of hell for you (M-29.3).

This view of seeking the Holy Spirit's help shifts the focus from the *form* of what we think we are asking for to the *content* of undoing the ego's arrogance in thinking it is better off on its own.

The process of healing thus begins with the experience of anger or disappointment with another, our having repressed the mind's decisions for sin, guilt, and projection. Our commitment to learning and practicing this course can be seen in how quickly we are able to ask the Holy Spirit's help to shift how we see someone outside, as a way of reflecting the shift in how we wish to see ourselves.

**(5:1-3) You know the one to choose; his name has crossed your mind already. He will be the one of whom we ask God's Son be shown to you. Through seeing him behind the grievances that you have held against him, you will learn that what lay hidden while you saw him not is there in everyone, and can be seen.**

We find here an intimation of the theme of generalization, which is central to the next two lessons. If I could accept that I made up my grievance against you – and no one has trouble finding someone to use for the exercise – I will at some point generalize the lesson and realize I have made up my grievances against everyone. The darkness I saw in you I saw in all people, because it is in me. However, the light I now see in you is also in all people, because that, too, is in me. We have to practice with specifics, but only so we can learn to generalize and recognize there is only one problem and one solution. As Jesus says later in the workbook:

> The mind that taught itself to think specifically can no longer grasp abstraction in the sense that it is all-encompassing. We need to see a little, that we learn a lot (W-pI.161.4:7-8).

**(5:4-6) He who was enemy is more than friend when he is freed to take the holy role the Holy Spirit has assigned to him. Let him be savior unto you today. Such is his role in God your Father's plan.**

Our brother is our savior – "more than friend" – not because he possesses magical attributes, but because we realize that what we are seeing in him is a projection of what is in ourselves. This enables us to be saved from our guilt and the disastrous effects of our wrong choices. Had it not been for this special relationship, we would have had no opportunity for salvation. This, then, is the essence of "God's" plan of Atonement: The world, which was made as an attack on God and substitute for His Love, becomes a classroom in which we learn to remember Him. There is nothing redeeming in the world itself, but our redemption comes from giving it a different purpose.

**(6) Our longer practice periods today will see him in this role. You will attempt to hold him in your mind, first as you now consider him. You will review his faults, the difficulties you have had with him, the pain he caused you, his neglect, and all the little and the larger hurts he gave. You will regard his body with its flaws and better points as well, and you will think of his mistakes and even of his "sins."**

Jesus is asking us to be honest with ourselves (and with him) about our

grievances: to hold no perception back from awareness. If we do, we are choosing to retain some "spots of darkness" (T-3 1.VIII.12:5) in ourselves that we never wish to relinquish to the healing light of forgiveness. It is these "spots" we have projected onto another – our savior – that become the means of healing ourselves.

**(7:1) Then let us ask of Him Who knows this Son of God in his reality and truth, that we may look on him a different way, and see our savior shining in the light of true forgiveness, given unto us.**

Again, we need ask for help to change the wrong choice in our minds, not the external situation; we change our minds, not someone else. As Jesus says in a parallel passage from the text:

> Dream softly of your sinless brother, who unites with you in holy innocence. And from this dream the Lord of Heaven will Himself awaken His beloved Son. Dream of your brother's kindnesses instead of dwelling in your dreams on his mistakes. Select his thoughtfulness to dream about instead of counting up the hurts he gave. Forgive him his illusions, and give thanks to him for all the helpfulness he gave. And do not brush aside his many gifts because he is not perfect in your dreams (T-27.VII.15:1-6).

**(7:2-3) We ask Him in the holy Name of God and of His Son, as holy as Himself:**

***Let me behold my savior in this one You have appointed as the one for me to ask to lead me to the holy light in which he stands, that I may join with him.***

We ask for help "that I may join with him." Strictly speaking, of course, we do not join with someone else, because we are already joined. However, the experience of joining with someone undoes the attack thought that kept us separated. It is really a prayer to ourselves – the decision-making part of our minds – that we begin the process of recognizing that God's Son is one. If I attack you, my special love or hate partner, I am saying the Son is separated, split in two: *me* and *you,* and the rest of the Sonship contained in you. The above prayer for the experience of oneness is thus the correction for such insane thinking.

**(7:4) The body's eyes are closed, and as you think of him who grieved you, let your mind be shown the light in him beyond your grievances.**

Jesus is certainly not talking about an external perceptual shift, but a miraculous shift in the Course's sense of that term: the mind's shift from grievances to miracles.

**(8:1-3) What you have asked for cannot be denied. Your savior has been waiting long for this. He would be free, and make his freedom yours.**

This can be understood on two levels. We each need each other's forgiveness because we can help each other understand we made the wrong choice and now can make the correct one. When you identify with your guilt and I attack you, I reinforce it by saying, in effect, your decision for the ego was right. However, when I am in my right

mind and do not attack, regardless of how you may perceive me, I send a different message, communicating to you that the same choice I made you can make: "Your mind contains two alternatives. The one you have chosen – the one I had chosen as well – was a mistake. As I have corrected my mind, I represent for you the same choice." Recall the passage from the manual for teachers we have seen before, in which we say to each other:

> "Behold, you Son of God, what life can offer you. Would you choose sickness [or guilt] in place of this?" (M-5.III.2:11-12)

Ultimately, of course, the savior who "has been waiting long for this" is ourselves. We understand metaphysically that there is no one out there, and so the person we perceive is a split-off part of ourselves – the guilty self that needs forgiveness. Our misperception of this person thus becomes the means whereby we correct the original misperception of ourselves.

**(8:3-5) He would be free, and make his freedom yours. The Holy Spirit leans from him to you, seeing no separation in God's Son. And what you see through Him will free you both.**

At this stage of one's work with *A Course in Miracles,* one would most likely not be aware that these lines are meant literally. It is not that the Holy Spirit sees me and you as separate, both beloved Sons of God. He does not see us as separate at all, because we are not. As our experience of the Course deepens over time, our understanding of lines like these will deepen, too. We will come to realize that this literally means we are not separate selves, but split-off parts of a larger self that is one, as our true Self is One.

**(8:6-8) Be very quiet now, and look upon your shining savior. No dark grievances obscure the sight of him. You have allowed the Holy Spirit to express through him the role God gave Him that you might be saved.**

Our quietness is the result of having silenced the ego's shrieking voice of specialness, allowing us to hear the gentle sound of the Holy Spirit's Atonement. His vision of the inherent sinlessness of God's Son is allowed to replace the darkened sight of grievances and hate. This vision embraces the Sonship as one – my brother and myself – as I come to recognize my savior in the very person I had chosen to exclude from love; the savior who is my self.

**(9) God thanks you for these quiet times today in which you laid your images aside, and looked upon the miracle of love the Holy Spirit showed you in their place. The world and Heaven join in thanking you, for not one Thought of God but must rejoice as you are saved, and all the world with you.**

This gratitude is our own, for finally having made the right choice: oneness instead of separation; miracles instead of grievances; God instead of the ego. In that choice is all the Sonship healed as it remembers the unity it had never destroyed, its voice joined at last with the song of gratitude – the prayer of love – Jesus describes in the beautiful opening to *The Song of Prayer:*

> Prayer is the greatest gift with which God blessed His Son at his creation. It was then what it is to become; the single voice Creator and creation share; the song the Son sings to the Father, Who returns the thanks it offers Him unto the Son. Endless the harmony, and endless, too, the joyous concord of the Love They give forever to Each Other. And in this, creation is extended. God gives thanks to His extension in His Son. His Son gives thanks for his creation, in the song of his creating in his Father's Name. The Love They share is what all prayer will be throughout eternity, when time is done. For such it was before time seemed to be (S-1.in.1).

**(10) We will remember this throughout the day, and take the role assigned to us as part of God's salvation plan, and not our own. Temptation falls away when we allow each one we meet to save us, and refuse to hide his light behind our grievances. To everyone you meet, and to the ones you think of or remember from the past, allow the role of savior to be given, that you may share it with him. For you both, and all the sightless ones as well, we pray:**

***Let miracles replace all grievances.***

This, again, is an expression of the oneness of God's Son. As long as we believe he is many – separate bodies involved with other bodies – we need to practice with each one, applying "God's salvation plan": the forgiveness of our special relationships. Each person then becomes our individual savior, for each offers the opportunity of being saved from the mistaken choice of making the separation real. At some point we realize that each person is every person, and, finally, that *there is no person out there at all* – only the one Son of God contained in our minds. Since minds are joined, God's Son is in all people as well. This vision of the light of miracles replacing the darkened veil of grievances is given lovely expression in "The Savior's Vision":

> Behold your role within the universe! To every part of true creation has the Lord of Love and life entrusted all salvation from the misery of hell. And to each one has He allowed the grace to be a savior to the holy ones especially entrusted to his care. And this he learns when first he looks upon one brother as he looks upon himself, and sees the mirror of himself in him. Thus is the concept of himself laid by, for nothing stands between his sight and what he looks upon, to judge what he beholds. And in this single vision does he see the face of Christ, and understands he looks on everyone as he beholds this one. For there is light where darkness was before, and now the veil is lifted from his sight (T-31.VII.8).

We move now to Lessons 79 and 80, which present the familiar theme of salvation, but expressed differently. Our symphony based on the theme of forgiveness thus continues, with its almost endless series of variations.

being some form of the statement we saw in Lesson 71: “If this were different, I would be saved.”

(4:2-3) The world seems to present you with a vast number of problems, each requiring a different answer. This perception places you in a position in which your problem solving must be inadequate, and failure is inevitable.

We all can identify with this sense of inevitable failure. The world was set up so that we would fail, seeking the cause of failure outside our minds. To continually attempt to solve problems that are destined to remain insoluble is extremely frustrating, which prompted this passage on the ego’s tactic of seek and do not find:

> The search the ego undertakes is therefore bound to be defeated. And since it also teaches that it is your identification, its guidance leads you to a journey which must end in perceived self-defeat.... Do not attempt to teach yourself what you do not understand, and do not try to set up curriculum goals where yours have clearly failed. Your learning goal has been not to learn, and this cannot lead to successful learning. You cannot transfer what you have not learned, and the impairment of the ability to generalize is a crucial learning failure.... I have said that the ego’s rule is, “Seek and do not find.” Translated into curricular terms this means, “Try to learn but do not succeed.” The result of this curriculum goal is obvious.... If you are trying to learn how not to learn, and the aim of your teaching is to defeat itself, what can you expect but confusion? (T-12.IV.2:1-2; T-12.V.6:2-4; 7:1-3,5)

(5) No one could solve all the problems the world appears to hold. They seem to be on so many levels, in such varying forms and with such varied content, that they confront you with an impossible situation. Dismay and depression are inevitable as you regard them. Some spring up unexpectedly, just as you think you have resolved the previous ones. Others remain unsolved under a cloud of denial, and rise to haunt you from time to time, only to be hidden again but still unsolved.

This describes the state of the world. It should impress us as students of A Course in Miracles that we read lines like this and know they are true, yet persist in holding onto the idea we are right. It cannot be this simple, we claim. If we are upset, it is definitely not because we chose our individuality over God, nor that we pushed Jesus away. Our upset is due to what someone else said, what just happened, our poor upbringing, our faulty bodies, etc., etc., etc. It is helpful to observe how quickly we fall prey to the ego’s temptation.

However, if we can retreat, to make this point again, and objectively look at the nature of the world and body, it would be patently obvious that depression is the only

answer because you would see its relevance. Perceiving the underlying constancy in all the problems that seem to confront you, you would understand that you have the means to solve them all. And you would use the means, because you recogn ize the problem.

These thoughts should be incorporated into your daily activities as specifically as possible. The problem is not the separation in some abstract sense; it is here right now in your desire to see yourself separated from the Holy Spirit. Make your practice as personal as you can in applying the principle that separation is the problem. If you awaken in the morning and are not feeling well, it is because you have pushed love away – that is the separation. You can be clear about your responsibility and still not blame yourself. This non-judgmental stance allows you to receive the answer and understand the significance of the first principle of miracles: there is no order of difficulty among them (T-1 .I. 1: 1). Since every problem is the same – separation – every solution is the same – Atonement. One problem, one solution.

However, you cannot receive the answer if you are filled with guilt, judgment, and blame. You accept the answer only when you acknowledge personally that you have pushed love away again; not because you are sinful, but because you are afraid. By choosing Jesus' forgiveness, you let his love gently wash over you, assuring you that you have done nothing wrong, except bring pain upon yourself.

Once again, as you read this lesson and do its exercise, make your practice as specific as you can. This will help you see that everything in your daily life is directly relevant to your salvation and peace. Thus will you find yourself increasingly motivated to practice and learn.

(7-8:1) In our longer practice periods today we will ask what the problem is, and what is the an swer to it. We will not assume that we already know. We will try to free our minds of all the many different kinds of problems we think we have. We will try to re alize that we have only one problem, which we have failed to recognize. We will ask what it is, and wait for the answer. We will be told. Then we will ask for the solu tion to it. And we will be told.

The exercises for today will be successful to the exten t to which you do not insist on defining the problem.

You cannot ask for the solution if you think you know what and where the problem is. This arrogance forestalls your progress with this course. It is necessary to return to the choice point in your mind in which you re-enact over and over again the separation from God. Whether you speak of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or any other name, you have pushed away the loving experience of oneness because you are threatened by the loss of your special self, which you are convinced will happen if you join with love. That is the problem. Thinking you know the problem ensures you will never learn the answer. As the early workbook lesson said:

> You will not question what you have already defined. And the purpose of these exercises is to ask questions and receive the answers (W-p1.28.4:1-2).

This point about developing the humility that undoes the ego's arrogance, so essential to our learning, is repeated throughout these lessons, and we shall see how often Jesus returns to it.

Once again Jesus does not intend this as an affirmation or mantra that you simply say by rote, over and over again. Whenever you are tempted to be upset and your peace disturbed, think of this statement and realize that if your problem has been solved, why are you upset? Begin to understand the motivation for your disturbance: I want to keep the answer away because in it my specialness disappears. Thus I want to be upset, because that proves I am right and Jesus is wrong. It proves I do not have a mind because it is my body that is abused and unfairly treated. To this new understanding of the nature of your problem and its underlying purpose, bring your perceived problems, and watch them fade away, back into the nothingness from which they came (M-13.1:2).

**(2:3-5) You have recognized your only problem, opening the way for the Holy Spirit to give you God's answer. You have laid deception aside, and seen the light of truth. You have accepted salvation for yourself by bringing the problem to the answer.**

That is what opens the way for the Holy Spirit to give us God's answer, meaning I am wrong about my perceptions. Perhaps what my eyes see is true within the illusion, but my ego's reaction is far from true. Since all that is important is the way I react, does it make any real difference whether my perception is accurate or not? What does matter is whether I let Jesus or the ego interpret this for me. Choosing the ego is the problem. By thus realizing I am wrong, I am saying the problem is not outside me but within, which means I am now bringing it to the answer; the ego's deception to the Holy Spirit's truth.

**(2:6) And you can recognize the answer, because the problem has been identified.**

The crucial aspect in this process is not the answer as such, but identifying *where* and *what* the problem is. Again, simply stated, the problem is my decision to push away God's Love so I can continue to be right, to be a special individual. That is the problem. Once I recognize it and can look without judging myself, I have availed myself of the answer. The process of healing does not lie in affirming the Holy Spirit's answer, but in *recognizing the problem.*

making, so it can be corrected. In that simple act is the ego's defensive shield of the thought and world of guilt removed.

**(3:1-2) You are entitled to peace today. A problem that has been resolved cannot trouble you.**

Therefore, if you are troubled by something you must be making it up, because the answer is already within you. How can you be troubled by something that does not exist and a problem that is no longer there? That question takes the wind out of your ego's sails. When you begin to build a case against yourself or someone else, remember this is a nonexistent problem – you are literally angry over nothing – which makes it difficult to justify your reactions.

**(3:3-6) Only be certain you do not forget that all problems are the same. Their many forms will not deceive you while you remember this. One problem, one solution. Accept the peace this simple statement brings.**

We see how often Jesus repeats this theme. He would like us to repeat it as often, each and every time we are tempted to forget its simple truth of *one problem, one solution,* choosing instead to be blinded by our perceptions of faint.

**(4:1-2) In our longer practice periods today, we will claim the peace that must be ours when the problem and the answer have been brought together. The problem must be gone, because God's answer cannot fail.**

If something is bothering me, I am in effect telling Jesus he is wrong, because he is telling us here there is no problem, for God's answer has never failed us. However, we counter: "Wait just a minute and I will show you how you failed me. Look at what is going on! Look how upset or sick I am! Look at my real problems!" Thus we keep the problem from the answer and retain our misery and pain; a price we gladly (and insanely) pay in order to maintain our "rightness" and Jesus' "wrongness."

**(4:3-6) Having recognized one, you have recognized the other. The solution is inherent in the problem. You are answered, and have accepted the answer. You are saved.**

The problem and solution are in one place. The solution is inherent in the problem because the problem never happened. That is the solution! Remember, the Atonement principle is that the separation was a non-event. Moreover, since the belief in separation and its correction are in the mind because there is only the mind – the ego's strategy of mindlessness is answered and undone.

**(5) Now let the peace that your acceptance brings be given you. Close your eyes, and receive your reward. Recognize that your problems have been solved. Recognize that you are out of conflict; free and at peace. Above all, remember that you have one problem, and that the problem has one solution. It is in this that the simplicity of salvation lies. It is because of this that it is guaranteed to work.**

The "reward" of peace is the ultimate motivator for choosing the answer over the

problem. We recognize at last that the latter has brought us only pain, while the former alone brings us peace. Simple! That is how we know it is the truth, for truth is simple.

**(6:1-3) Assure yourself often today that your problems have been solved. Repeat the idea with deep conviction, as frequently as possible. And be particularly sure to apply the idea for today to any specific problem that may arise.**

Once again Jesus is urging you to use the idea for the day very specifically when you are upset. Realize how quickly you forget what he has taught you, and then forgive yourself for having forgotten, for having let the ego's engine of hate and judgment rev up again. When you find yourself becoming upset, as soon as you can, stop and say: "But the problem has already been solved. Stubbornly insisting I am justifiably upset and right in my perceptions tells Jesus he is wrong again. My upset proves it." At that point you should say quickly:

**(6:5)** ***Let me recognize this problem has been solved.***

And then peace will happily return.

**(7) Let us be determined not to collect grievances today. Let us be determined to be free of problems that do not exist. The means is simple honesty. Do not deceive yourself about what the problem is, and you must recognize it has been solved.**

To make this point again, grievances are a way of saying I am right and Jesus is wrong: the problem is outside – just look at what these terrible people are doing to me! Honesty is thus vitally important in this and all the exercises; the honesty of looking within and understanding you made it all up. What will aid you in this process is understanding the motivation for the problem: preserving your separated self. That recognition is the simple honesty to which Jesus refers. Anything outside you that bothers or upsets you is there because you put it there to hide the answer, in the presence of which your separate and special identity would gently fade away. Therefore, to preserve yourself you ensured you were right by seeing external problems, and blaming everyone else for your miserable situation. As King Lear observed: "That way madness lies" (III,iv,21). We come to learn through these lessons that sanity is our only real choice, for only from that sane decision comes the peace and joy that is our just reward. It is that – *and only that* – we choose today in simple honesty.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 81**
**REVIEW II**

## Introduction

The reviews in the workbook are an integral part of its pedagogy, as they are for most teachers during a class or semester. However, these reviews are more than just the sum total of the preceding lessons. Something new is always added, as we shall see. The introductions to the reviews are also extremely important, and this one is no exception.

**(1:1-2:1) We are now ready for another review. We will begin where our last review left off, and cover two ideas each day. The earlier part of each day will be devoted to one of these ideas, and the latter part of the day to the other. We will have one longer exercise period, and frequent shorter ones in which we practice each of them.**

**The longer practice periods will follow this general form: Take about fifteen minutes for each of them, and begin by thinking about the ideas for the day, and the comments that are included in the assignments.**

Note the increasing use of structure Jesus is asking us to follow. We have already travelled a great distance from the relatively unstructured opening exercises, and have advanced as well in the awareness of our resistance to them. We can in fact observe two major forms of this resistance, which appeal to the ego's fear of our achieving the goals of these practice sessions. The first is the more obvious one of "forgetting" to remember the exercises periods throughout the day. The second is more subtle, and reflects the ego's premier defense of special love. Rather than avoid the practice periods, we may find ourselves impatiently waiting for them, as their quasi-ritualistic form can provide a welcomed respite in the *sturm and drang* of our daily lives. This would allow our egos to become dependent on them, rather than learning to integrate the lessons into all life's situations.

**(2:2) Devote some three or four minutes to reading them over slowly, several times if you wish, and then close your eyes and listen.**

One of the important themes of this Introduction – and indeed of these lessons – is that the truth of the Atonement is already present in us. The problem is that we have covered it over. Even though the reason for our doing so is not discussed in this review, we know from other lessons, not to mention from our study of the text, that in the presence of the Atonement's truth our individual identity will disappear. Therefore, to ensure that this self is not threatened by God's Love, we protect ourselves by the ego's defenses, as this passage describes:

> You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. You are afraid it would sweep you away from yourself and make you little, because you believe that magnitude lies in defiance, and that attack is grandeur. You think you have made a world God would destroy; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you *would.* Therefore, you have used the world to cover

> your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. *And it is this that frightens you* (T- 13.111.4).

The *you* that is frightened is the part of the mind that has identified with the ego's thought system of separation. The first line of defense is our belief that we are guilty sinners, which leads us to believe the mind is a dangerous place. To escape, we project ourselves and make a world and separate identity that we encase in a body. Once this is accomplished, we believe the guilt and sin rest elsewhere, but not in us. This leads us to hold grievances and make judgments. We prove the separation is real by virtue of the fact that these attacks – my attacking you or your attacking me – make us separate and different. Even more to the point is that I attack you because *you* are sinful, and therefore my anger is justified.

We have thus silenced the voice of truth within our minds, covered by the belief that we are sinful and guilty, which we deny, project, and then believe is present in others. The purpose of these lessons – as indeed it is of *A Course in Miracles* itself – is to have us learn, first and foremost, that this is what we have done and why. We then want to recognize that these defenses do not serve our interests, because they do not make us happy. If we would set them aside, along with the fear of losing our special self, we would hear the Voice that speaks to us of truth and reflects the Atonement principle.

This is what Jesus reminds us of in this Introduction, and he urges us to see the truth of our defenses as he appeals to the power of our minds to choose again. It was by this power we believed we could leave Heaven and accept as truth the ego's lies of sin, God's wrath, and need for a world in which to hide. The mind's power continues to allow the lies to persist, which we justify by attacking everyone else. Thus it is the power of our minds that Jesus addresses, in the hope we shall soon return to sanity and choose his love instead of the ego's hate.

**(3:1) Repeat the first phase of the exercise period if you find your mind wandering...**

The mind does not wander on its own, but wanders because we choose to have it so. Ultimately, this wandering takes the mind away from itself into the world. Rather than look at our choice to be sinful and guilty, we look at everyone else's sin and guilt. This was the mind wandering Jesus cautioned Helen and all of us not to tolerate:

> You are much too tolerant of mind wandering, and are passively condoning your mind's miscreations (T-2.VI.4:6).

The *miscreations* are our projections, and when we try to practice an exercise, meditate, or pray, they often come in the faun of extraneous thoughts arising to distract us. We need to remember these do not come into our minds unbidden. They are present because we want them there, for the defensive reason of protecting us from love.

**(3:1-4) ... but try to spend the major part of the time listening quietly but attentively. There is a message waiting for you. Be confident that you will receive it. Remember that it belongs to you, and that you want it.**

The final phrase – "that you want it" – is crucial. We have to *want* to hear that

message. The fact is, however, that all of us as one Son chose at the beginning *not* to hear it, because to hear the message of the Atonement – the separation never happened – means the end of our special existence. Why, then, would our egos want to receive the message? As egos, this is the same feeling we express and reenact in our daily lives. Remember, time is an illusion and is not linear. Everything is happening at once. The key point is realizing that the message we have chosen to hear instead has not made us happy. Yet, within our minds is another message that will indeed bring us happiness: God's Voice has not disappeared; we wandered off, but His Love has remained. Jesus thus appeals to us to be vigilant about which message we are choosing.

**(4:1-2) Do not allow your intent to waver in the face of distracting thoughts. Realize that, whatever form such thoughts may take, they have no meaning and no power.**

This last statement is the end of the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, because sin is the thought that says our thoughts do have power. They have destroyed God, crucified Christ, and shattered the unity of Heaven. They indeed have so much power that they caused God to rise from the grave of specialness in which we confined Him, and to seek to destroy us. A major theme in these review lessons, therefore, is that our distracting and attacking thoughts have accomplished nothing. The power they seem to have is simply the power we have given them. That, again, is the bottom line: *we* give the power – our minds believe in illusions, and then react to them as if they were real. The power we believe we misused to destroy God is the power we believe is around us – in our thoughts as well as in what we see in the world. Nonetheless, regardless of its seeming magnitude, this strength comes from what we believe was our decision to leave Heaven and destroy God. Jesus is saying, however, that none of this is power, for it had no effects: "Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). The only real power is God's, which does nothing. It simply is.

**(4:3-5) Replace them** [distracting thoughts] **with your determination to succeed. Do not forget that your will has power over all fantasies and dreams. Trust it to see you through, and carry you beyond them all.**

More important lines! Our will – the power of our minds that is aligned with the power of God's—"has power over all fantasies and dreams." This is not power as we conceive it – to overcome or dominate – but the power of truth. The well-known line in a later lesson "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak" (W-pI.169.5:4) – expresses the meaning of our will's power: there is nothing but the Love of God; and we are that Love. The only problem – "Ay, there's the rub," as Hamlet exclaimed (III,i,65) – is our not choosing it. Without deciding for the power, we cannot know it is ours.

**(5:1) Regard these practice periods as dedications to the way, the truth and the life.**

This is a reference to the famous saying of Jesus in John's gospel (John 14:6a), a line frequently quoted in *A Course in Miracles.** Jesus parallels it now with the ego's version:

**(5:2-4) Refuse to be sidetracked into detours, illusions and thoughts of death. You are dedicated to salvation. Be determined each day not to leave your function unfulfilled.**

We have made up a thought system that is the exact opposite of Heaven's. Thus Jesus represents for us "the *way,* the *truth* and the *life,"* just as the ego represents the *detour* that keeps us from our Home – an *illusory* thought system culminating in *death.* Once again Jesus appeals to our desire to be happy and return to our Source. To the extent to which we do not want to return, and wish instead to remain separate individuals, we choose against our happiness, and consequently continue to imprison our minds with "illusions and thoughts of death." We will believe our minds have no power because we have denied we have a mind at all, leaving power to rest in the body and in the world.

**(6:1) Reaffirm your determination in the shorter practice periods as well, using the original form of the idea for general applications, and more specific forms when needed.**

Jesus is again counting on our determination not to be sidetracked by the ego's detours into separation and specialness. He seeks to reinforce our vigilance against the decisions for guilt and fear—the purpose of this review period.

**(6:2-4) Some specific forms are included in the comments which follow the statement of the ideas. These, however, are merely suggestions. It is not the particular words you use that matter.**

We find in the workbook – illustrated here especially – intimations of the complete thought system of *A Course in Miracles.* This final statement clearly enunciates the theme of form and *content.* It is never the form that is important – e.g., the words of the workbook lesson – but the decision the mind makes to choose Jesus as our teacher. The *content* of this choice reflects itself in specific *forms,* but it is a mistake to think the problem and solution are found in the world. They rest only within our minds, which alone contain hope for true and lasting change.

* See also T-6.I.10:3; T-7.III.1:9; W-pII.FL.4:4; P-1.2:3.

## LESSON 81

Our ideas for review today are:

As I mentioned when discussing the first review, Helen had informed Jesus she did not want the same mundane introductory statement repeated throughout. One of her criteria for judging whether Jesus really was who he claimed to be, was to see if he would dictate different words for the opening of each lesson (e.g., *Our ideas for review today are; We will review these ideas today; Today let us review these ideas;* etc.). Having now seen another example of how these lessons share the same content, but different form, we can proceed from the ridiculous to the sublime.

**(1)** (61) **I am the light of the world.**

**How holy am I, who have been given the function of lighting up the world! Let me be still before my holiness. In its calm light let all my conflicts disappear. In its peace let me remember Who I am.**

In this first lesson we find a clear statement of our real Self, reflected in what the Holy Spirit's Voice reminds us of: our function of lighting up the world. As we had seen when we discussed this lesson earlier, we do not illuminate an external world, as would a lamp casting its glow. The world exists only in the mind of God's Son, and is darkened because we have chosen to listen to the ego. By thus choosing the Holy Spirit, we become His light of truth. Since God's Son is one, and the world is in the Son's mind, we become the world's light as well. In this light conflict cannot be, for it exists only in the darkness of the ego's thought system of opposition.

**(2) Some specific forms for applying this idea when special difficulties seem to arise might be:**

***Let me not obscure the light of the world in me.***
***Let the light of the world shine through this appearance.***
***This shadow will vanish before the light.***

When we choose Jesus, the world's shadows – the projection of our guilt – must disappear. They have no power before the light as long as we choose the light, regardless of the shadows' form. An illusion is an illusion is an illusion, and has no power before the truth. Our daily function is thus to bring our perceptions of darkness to the light of Jesus' truth.

The next lesson deals with forgiveness, the major theme of *A Course in Miracles.*

**(3:1)** (62) **Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.**

Our function in Heaven is to create, with which no one here is in touch, for it has no worldly reference. On the other hand, forgiveness does have meaning for us. Previewing Lesson 192, we are reminded:

> It is your Father's holy Will that you complete Himself... extending love, creating in its name, forever one with God and with your Self. Yet what can such

a function mean within a world of envy, hatred and attack?

Therefore, you have a function in the world in its own terms. For who can understand a language far beyond his simple grasp? Forgiveness represents your function here (W-pI.192.1:1-2:3).

Elsewhere in the text, as you may recall, Jesus says our function is to heal:

As your function in Heaven is creation, so your function on earth is healing. God shares His function with you in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit shares His with you on earth (1-12.VII.4: 7-8).

It is our function of forgiveness (or healing) that enables us to release the ego's thought system, first by not seeing it in another, and then realizing it is not truly present in our minds either. This undoing of guilt removes the barriers that kept our true function of creation hidden, as it kept hidden our Identity as Christ.

**(3:2-3) It is through accepting my function that I will see the light in me. And in this light will my function stand clear and perfectly unambiguous before my sight.**

Again and again we see the focus on removing the blocks – the meaning of forgiveness – that keep the light of Christ's Love from us. It is always helpful to recall the beginning of the text:

*The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance* (T-in.1:6-7).

**(3:4-5) My acceptance does not depend on my recognizing what my function is, for I do not yet understand forgiveness. Yet I will trust that, in the light, I will see it as it is.**

This is important. When we begin our work with *A Course in Miracles,* we think forgiveness is something we do with someone else. Even more to the point, we think forgiveness involves overlooking some terrible thing others have done, and saying we forgive them. A step above that is realizing: "No, I am the sinner instead of you." This leads us to understand that forgiveness has nothing to do with anyone else, but only with ourselves, for there is no world apart from our minds.

Jesus is thus saying we can begin this process without really understanding what it entails; making our ascent up the ladder with no awareness of its top rungs, let alone of the God Who is beyond the ladder entirely. It is enough to know we have been wrong about everything we have thought, felt, and perceived. We can do very well now without understanding the answer to the problem of the ego. Indeed:

You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing. Salvation is easy just *because* it asks nothing you cannot give right now (T-1 8.IV.7:5-7).

Yet we can at least understand that we do not know. That is the first step. The next ones easily follow as we practice, as in these three specific applications:

**(4:2-4)** ***Let this help me learn what forgiveness means.***
***Let me not separate my function from my will.***
***I will not use this for an alien purpose.***

As always, Jesus asks us to see our daily experiences as opportunities for learning how to forgive. Again, we anticipate the later wonderful Lesson, *All things are lessons God would have me learn* (W-pI.193). We learn the proper use of our mind's power, shifting from the ego's alien purpose of attack to the Holy Spirit's right-minded purpose of healing. Thus we return our will to the Will that God created.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 82**

We will review these ideas today:

**(1:1)** (63) **The light of the world brings peace to every mind through my forgiveness.**

This lesson extends the previous one.

**(1:2-5) My forgiveness is the means by which the light of the world finds expression through me. My forgiveness is the means by which I become aware of the light of the world in me. My forgiveness is the means by which the world is healed, together with myself. Let me, then, forgive the world, that it may be healed along with me.**

We see the by-now familiar theme that the mind of God's Son is one, the basis for the world's healing. If I forgive you, I must be forgiving me because we come from the same guilty self.* When I accept Jesus' love as my identity instead of the ego's special love, I realize there is no separation in the Sonship. It is thus impossible I forgive one part of the Sonship without forgiving all of it. This is an essential part of the Course's message. To say it again, Jesus is not talking about healing an external world. *There is no external world!* That is why he says in the text, "seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.in.1:7). The world, being an idea, has never left its source in the mind; therefore it still exists there. Thus, when my mind is healed of thoughts of separation – sin, guilt, and attack – the world must be healed accordingly.

Next we see these three statements, to be applied in our daily practicing:

**(2:2-4)** ***Let peace extend from my mind to yours, [name].***
***I share the light of the world with you, [name].***
***Through my forgiveness I can see this as it is.***

If there is peace in your mind, it must extend to everyone. One clear way of discerning whether you have chosen God's peace or the ego's hatred is to pay attention to your perceptions. If you perceive anything in the world disturbing you, peace cannot be in your mind. This reflects the early lessons that taught that everything we perceive outside comes from our thoughts. We will thus realize that if we are not peaceful outside, our minds cannot be peaceful. This helps us understand the ego choice we have made, which we can correct and undo.

While at this point in our practice of *A Course in Miracles* we are not directly in touch with our minds, we can recognize them by understanding that what we perceive outside directly reflects what we have made real inside. To say it again, if we want to know whether we have chosen Jesus or the ego as our teacher, we need but pay attention to our reactions in the world. We need to remember that whenever we find ourselves making judgments or getting upset, this is a red flag that says: "I have chosen my ego again. Rather than assume responsibility for this decision, I choose to project it, seeing it in everyone else, but not in me." This insane thinking is easily undone through forgiveness.

**(3:1)** (64) **Let me not forget my function.**

## Lesson 82

We return to the theme of our real Self.

**(3:2) I would not forget my function, because I would remember my Self.**

If I truly want to remember Who I am and return home, I must forgive. My function of forgiveness, then, is the means whereby I achieve the end of remembering my Identity.

If you find yourself making judgments – special hate or special love – that is a sure sign you have chosen not to awaken from the dream and remember your Self You have chosen instead to remain a prisoner, yet blaming others for your condition. When you discover what you have done, you should not judge yourself nor feel guilty. You simply ask Jesus for help to remember you are not happy here, and that no judgment you have made, or specialness you have sought, has brought you anything but the illusion of happiness and peace. Ask Jesus to help you look without judging yourself, which also means looking at others without judgment.

To repeat, if you want to know what is going on in your mind, pay attention to what you are thinking, perceiving, and feeling. If there is peace and a spirit of joining with others in a common goal, you know you have chosen the Holy Spirit as your Teacher. On the other hand, if you are feeling disquieted, that is the certain sign you have chosen the ego.

**(3:3) I cannot fulfill my function if I forget it.**

Thus we need a Teacher Who reminds us of our function of forgiveness, which can be defined as letting go of judgment. Therefore, if you find yourself judging, you are choosing – it does not happen automatically – to forget your function because you do not want to return home. Forgetting is purposive.

**(3:4) And unless I fulfill my function, I will not experience the joy that God intends for me.**

Whenever we feel special, make judgments, or are engaged in anything of the ego system, we are saying we do not want the joy that God intends for us, accepting the ego's substitute instead. In our guilt over pushing the joy of God away, we project it out and find fault with everyone else. The idea, once again, is not to judge ourselves for projecting, but to be aware that this is what we have done, and the tremendous cost to us of having done so.

We are then asked to practice applying this idea, saying:

**(4:2) *Let me not use this to hide my function from me.***

"This" is anything we are experiencing during the day; e.g., being unhappy with the change of weather or with what someone did or did not do. We should then say: "I am choosing the situation as an excuse to hide my function from me, which I want to do to keep the joy of God away."

**(4:3) *I would use this as an opportunity to fulfill my function.***

Rather than use a situation as an opportunity to deny our function, we can let

Jesus redefine it as an opportunity to forgive. In other words, we could look at everything as a classroom the Holy Spirit can use to teach us that our happiness does not lie in anything external, nor in being a separated self, but in choosing Jesus as the teacher who leads us beyond our specialness and takes us home. This, again, applies to anything that happens during the day.

**(4:4)** ***This may threaten my ego, but cannot change my function in any way.***

In other words, if I perceive what someone says or does as threatening, this does not mean my function is gone. It means only that I have chosen to be upset because I want to obscure it. Yet it rests safely within me because its Teacher does. Therefore, nothing has the power to remove the function of forgiveness from me, *except my own decision.*

* For an in-depth discussion of how our perceived self, and the self with which we perceive ourselves in relationship are split-off parts of a larger self, see my *The Message of A Course in Miracles:* Vol 1 – *All Are Called,* Chapters 2-4.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 83**

Today let us review these ideas:

**(1:1)** (65) **My only function is the one God gave me.**

There *is* nothing else.

**(1:2-5) I have no function but the one God gave me. This recognition releases me from all conflict, because it means I cannot have conflicting goals. With one purpose only, I am always certain what to do, what to say and what to think. All doubt must disappear as I acknowledge that my only function is the one God gave me.**

Our function is to forgive, the only right-minded reason for being in the world. We are not here to save it, make a lot of money, raise a happy family, have a healthy body, or live to be a hundred and fifty years. Remembering this will remove conflict, because believing our function is external will inevitably conflict with our internal function of realizing that nothing external is important; only the change of thinking brought about by the change of teachers.

Conflict results as well from wanting to study this course and return home, at the same time yearning to be its great teacher, or, seemingly more humbly, its devoted student, while still desiring the gifts of specialness: money, fame, power, and love. In these cases we regard an external goal as important – if not more so – than the internal one, setting up the conflict that was the ego's goal from the beginning. Yet this course will end conflict, not exacerbate it, and the only right-minded purpose of the external world, once we have made it, is for it to be the mirror that shows us the choice we have made internally. Only then can our minds – the true source of the conflict – be healed, as the following passage explains:

> Forget not that the healing of God's Son is all the world is for. That is the only purpose the Holy Spirit sees in it, and thus the only one it has. Until you see the healing of the Son as all you wish to be accomplished by the world, by time and all appearances, you will not know the Father nor yourself. For you will use the world for what is not its purpose, and will not escape its laws of violence and death (T-24.VI.4:1-4).

Healing is thus the world's only sane purpose. Once we made it as an expression of our hatred of God and Christ, our new Teacher shifts its purpose. The world becomes the vehicle for showing us, first, that we have a mind, and second, the ego decision we made within it. Now the right decision is inevitable, and we are certain of the purpose of forgiveness as doubt disappears.

We now seek to apply what we are learning:

**(2:2-3)** ***My perception of this does not change my function.***

***This does not give me a function other than the one God gave me.***

Whatever situation I believe is disrupting my peace has no effect on my mind. Stated another way, nothing I perceive as external has the power to change my purpose of forgiveness. Regardless of the ego reactions to a situation, my function remains

within, gently and patiently held for me by Jesus. The reader may recall our earlier citation of this lovely passage in the text – Jesus echoing his gentle and patient role as our teacher – part of which we look at again:

> I have saved all your kindnesses and every loving thought you ever had. I have purified them of the errors that hid their light, and kept them for you in their own perfect radiance (T-5.IV.8:3-4).

Despite our ego's shenanigans, we cannot lose. Our insanity has no effect on the sanity within, nor on our sane function of forgiveness.

**(2:4)** ***Let me not use this to justify a function God did not give me.***

Let me not use an external situation as a means of justifying the belief there is some purpose in my life other than undoing the ego's thought system. The world is only too happy to cooperate in the ego's plan – after all, the ego made the world to cooperate – by providing us with one opportunity after another to justify our judgments and grievances, our perception that we have been unfairly treated; an unfairness that can be remedied only by our defensive and, at times, aggressive response. However, we are twice told: Anger is never justified (T-6.in.1:7; T-3 0.VI.1:1-2). Restoring the mind's peace is our only responsibility, and recognition of this happy fact is the heart of our function of forgiveness.

**(3:1)** (66) **My happiness and my function are one.**

This is because our happiness does not result from anything in the world. Remember that the laws of specialness tell us our happiness comes from the body: our own or another's, or anything external. This, again, must engender conflict, because happiness comes only when we let go of guilt, the joyous effect of forgiveness. However, if we think there is pleasure in the world, we will inevitably be in conflict. This certainly does not mean we should feel guilty because we still seek bodily pleasure, but only that we should be aware of what we are doing. This is not a course in sacrifice or giving up what we feel is important, but in our learning, as Jesus instructs us near the end of the text, that giving up the world is giving up nothing, and therefore there is no sacrifice involved. Thus at the same time he is asking us to give up nothing, Jesus is helping us recognize that everything here is nothing. Only then can we truly give up the world:

> Give up the world! But not to sacrifice. You never wanted it. What happiness have you sought here that did not bring you pain? What moment of content has not been bought at fearful price in coins of suffering? Joy has no cost. It is your sacred right, and what you pay for is not happiness. Be speeded on your way by honesty, and let not your experiences here deceive in retrospect. They were not free from bitter cost and joyless consequence (T-30.V.9:4-12).

This is a course in opening our eyes so that we understand how what we think, feel, and do fits into God's plan of Atonement. Everything we desire outside can serve a holy purpose, if we let the Holy Spirit teach us its true meaning. Thus, to repeat this important point, realizing that our happiness does not come from the external should not make us feel guilty. It is a statement that merely helps us realize that our entire lives are

based on conflict, and from that realization comes the end of conflict and the dawning of true happiness.

**(3:2-4) All things that come from God are one. They come from Oneness, and must be received as one. Fulfilling my function is my happiness because both come from the same Source.**

The ego tries to split us off from God and from our self – *in the mind* – and then have us believe that our happiness and function rest outside us – *in the body.* Once we understand the principle of oneness, however, everything is clear. The contrast is striking between this principle and how we live our lives, which are characterized by separation, differences, and discrete events: We feel good some days and not others; good with some people but not others; good with the same people sometimes but not other times, and on and on and on. Our experience is never unified, for everything is governed by adherence to the ego's principle of *one or the other:* My interests and yours are separate if I win you lose, if I lose you win. Jesus helps us realize that the way back to God's living Oneness is through reflecting Its Love, which we do by perceiving each other through the lens of shared interests.

**(3:5) And I must learn to recognize what makes me happy, if I would find happiness.**

The purpose of these lessons is to teach what would make us happy. We have seen repeatedly that happiness does not lie in the fulfillment of something external, for that is merely transitory.

Jesus asks us to apply the idea of the lesson as follows:

**(4:2-3)** ***This cannot separate my happiness from my function.***
***The oneness of my happiness and my function remains wholly unaffected by this.***

As in the previous lesson, we are asked to recognize that whatever form of upset confronts us, it has no power to change the happiness that forgiveness brings. Happiness comes from the mind's decision, and no power in the world can take that from us. Only our decision can, and unfortunately has done so.

We can see again and again in these applications how Jesus asks us to take these relatively abstract ideas and apply them in our diurnal situations. That is mandatory if we are going to learn this course, which is not really an intellectual process. While intellectually learning its message is important – that is the purpose of the text, after all – if we do not apply the teachings, they mean nothing. Therefore, the emphasis of these lessons is to have us go through our day as we normally would, but the moment something disturbs our peace or makes us excited, to realize this can have no effect on our happiness and function, which are within. We have merely covered them with illusions, which have no effect on the truth.

The last statement repeats this thought:

**(4:4)** ***Nothing, including this, can justify the illusion of happiness apart from my function.***

**Lesson 83**

When something makes you happy and gives you pleasure, realize this experience is separate from your function of forgiveness, and so it will not last. True happiness in this world comes from letting go of guilt, the problem that caused us to flee our minds, as we believed we fled from Heaven. Guilt's undoing, then, is the source of joy, because it undoes all suffering and pain, and returns us to the home we never left.

Our happiness during the day is equated with forgiveness, wherein we recognize that nothing and no one has the power to take away the peace of God. It is ours, awaiting our acceptance. Awareness of this fact, even if we are not yet ready to choose peace, provides an intimation of joy and a sense of hope, which are impossible as long as we think we need to manipulate, seduce, or change the world. This may work some days, but never all the time. Indeed, this is the criterion Jesus asks us to use in evaluating the worth of anything in the world, as he says in Lesson 133. Previewing this incisive passage, we read:

> ... if you choose a thing that will not last forever, what you chose is valueless. A temporary value is without all value. Time can never take away a value that is real. What fades and dies was never there, and makes no offering to him who chooses it (W-pI.133.6:1-4).

Simply realizing that we no longer have to "value what is valueless" (W-pI.133, title), even if we are not yet ready to let it go, is a source of hope.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 84**

These are the ideas for today's review:

**(1:1)** (67) **Love created me like itself.**

This is a statement of the Oneness of God: our Identity as Christ.

**(1:2) I am in the likeness of my Creator.**

This is taken from the biblical verse that says man was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Jesus uses this idea, but speaks of a totally different Creator. I am made in the image and likeness of my Source because God is pure spirit, *as am I.* He is formless, eternal, and undivided, *as am I.* Therefore:

**(1:3-6) I cannot suffer, I cannot experience loss and I cannot die. I am not a body. I would recognize my reality today. I will worship no idols, nor raise my own self-concept to replace my Self.**

Clearly Jesus does not expect us to live out this truth; not yet. He told us only a couple of lessons earlier that we are not at the point where we could understand forgiveness, let alone what lies beyond it. This, then, is another of Jesus' pep talks, in which he tells us we do indeed have the potential at any given moment to choose this truth for our own. Even if we were to choose not to avail ourselves of it, truth is not absent. In reality, we are not bodies but spirit, and therefore cannot suffer loss or die. This is the memory of our Self that patiently waits at the top of the ladder for our ascent through the clouds of guilt and attack. As we are told over and over again, in different forms:

> Peace is a natural heritage of spirit. Everyone is free to refuse to accept his inheritance, but he is not free to establish what his inheritance is (T-3.VI.10:1-2).

We are free within the dream of separation to believe what we wish, but these idle wishes for idols have nothing to do with the Will of God, which alone is our reality and our Self.

**(1:7-8) I am in the likeness of my Creator. Love created me like itself.**

Jesus returns to the lesson's theme, and asks us to return as well. We are speeded along our journey by our willingness to set aside the ego's shabby substitutes and accept the truth about ourselves: We are created in the image and likeness of our Creator and Source – Love Itself.

This is reiterated in the specific applications:

**(2:2-4)** ***Let me not see an illusion of myself in this.***
***As I look on this, let me remember my Creator.***
***My Creator did not create this as I see it.***

The "this" is any situation that causes us to believe we are vulnerable bodies, reinforcing the belief we are not the glorious Self of spirit that God created. Jesus' point is that if we see ourselves as hurt or exhilarated by anything, it is because we have

chosen to see it that way. Nothing has the power to make us feel good or bad but the mind's choice for the ego, made because we value it over the non-dualistic Self created by God. Jesus asks us to want to choose differently; to see each event of our day as an opportunity to remember our Creator. This choice is reflected by our recognition that Perfect Love could not have created the situation we experience, and so it cannot be real. And what is not real can have no power over us.

**(3:1)** (68) **Love holds no grievances.**

Jesus returns to the important theme of grievances and attack thoughts. Implied here is that our grievances do not just come; *we actively choose them* because we want to hold another responsible for the misery we feel from having separated from love. Rather than accept responsibility for our "sin" and admit the fear that caused us to separate, we deny the sin, split it off from our self and, through projection, hold grievances against someone else – *anyone* else – accusing that person of what we secretly believe we have done. All this is brought about to fulfill the ego's purpose of protecting its existence through denying the mind and making us mindless, leaving us "at the mercy of things beyond [us], forces [we] cannot control" (T-19.IV-D.7:4).

**(3:2-5) Grievances are completely alien to love. Grievances attack love and keep its light obscure. If I hold grievances I am attacking love, and therefore attacking my Self. My Self thus becomes alien to me.**

That is the purpose of grievances. I want my Self to be alien because there is no individuality in Christ, and so grievances represent the culmination of the ego strategy of keeping the memory of Who I am hidden from me. My decision for individuality, my guilt over this decision for specialness, my projections of attack – all constitute the ego's lines of defense that keep this memory of love away. That is why external events cannot be seen as obscuring the light of my Self. Yet this does not stop me from exclaiming to Jesus:

"Of course I cannot think of holy things or remember God and Christ. Look what happened to me today! Look what this terrible person said to me! Look at the devastation that has just occurred! Look! Look! Look!"

We use these tales of victimization as excuses, which is why we made them in the first place—to have the perfect way of justifying our grievances, thereby allowing ourselves to say, with all the self-righteousness we can muster: "It is not my fault. How can I possibly know love and remember my Self? *They* won't let me."

In the same way Jesus appealed to us in the preceding paragraph, he says again:

**(3:6) I am determined not to attack my Self today, so that I can remember Who I am.**

Realizing what we are doing, and seeing the tremendous cost of holding on to our grievances, we strengthen the determination not to attack the Self that unites the seemingly separated fragments of the Sonship. We wish now to remember that Self and no longer cherish the purpose our grievances served.

These specific applications are what will bring us home to our Self:

**(4:2-4)** ***This is no justification for denying my Self***

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 84**

***I will not use this to attack love.***
***Let this not tempt me to attack myself.***

Jesus, as always, appeals to the power of our minds to make another choice. His appeal takes the fowl of recognizing there is no justification for attack thoughts of any kind. Recalling the shift in purpose, of which the Holy Spirit is the reminder, allows us to release our grievances. Thus does the love underneath ascend in our awareness and bring us peace, the steppingstone to remembering the Self we had denied.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 85**

Today's review will cover these ideas:

**(1:1)** (69) **My grievances hide the light of the world in me.**

This is a continuation of the thought we just explored.

**(1:2) My grievances show me what is not there, and hide from me what I would see.**

There is a part of my mind that wants to know my true Self Yet there is also a part that is fearful and chooses to defend against that truth. Thus Jesus asks us to choose again. We made the wrong choice – to cover our Self – but by exercising the mind's power to choose, we can reverse the decision and reveal what we had kept hidden.

**(1:3-4) Recognizing this, what do I want my grievances for? They keep me in darkness and hide the light.**

That darkness is what we unfortunately want. In the light of God's truth there is no individual or special existence. We need to realize there is a purpose behind holding on to grievances: to keep our special self intact by using the darkness of guilt and attack to hide the light of love.

**(1:5-6) Grievances and light cannot go together, but light and vision must be joined for me to see. To see, I must lay grievances aside.**

This is the bottom line: Do I want to see or not? If I do, Jesus must be my eyes, which means I cannot judge. I will know which choice I made by its outcome. Finding myself angry, depressed, guilty, fearful, or anxious is what tells me I do not want to see. With the ego, my individuality and separation are all I know and my self is safe, though miserable.

**(1:7) I want to see, and this will be the means by which I will succeed.**

We are no longer willing to be safe *and* miserable. We want the vision that embraces all Sons as the same, the precursor to remembering our Oneness as Christ. In this vision born of letting go of grievances—we find our true happiness.

How happy are we then to practice these specific applications:

**(2:2-5)** ***Let me not use this as a block to sight.***
***The light of the world will shine all this away.***
***I have no need for this. I want to see.***

Diligently practicing these lessons helps us realize we have a split mind. The part that does not want to return home is responsible for our being in the world. The other part is a student of *A Course in Miracles.* We must be aware of both so we can make a meaningful choice between them. We need to understand that the ego's grievances hold the light of peace and joy from ourselves, leaving us in the darkness of misery and pain. Only by realizing the connection between our decision to attack and our suffering will we be motivated to say and mean: "I have no need for this." In that recognition we shall see,

and in that vision all pain is shined away in the light of forgiveness.

**(3:1)** (70) **My salvation comes from me.**

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not outside me; nor is salvation. Indeed, *I* am not outside me!

**(3:2-6) Today I will recognize where my salvation is. It is in me because its Source is there. It has not left its Source, and so it cannot have left my mind. I will not look for it outside myself. It is not found outside and then brought in.**

That is what people want to do with God, Jesus, and *A Course in Miracles:* see them outside themselves. We must realize that salvation rests only within, in the power of the mind to choose Jesus as our teacher and not the ego. It is not found *in* Jesus, but in our minds' capacity to choose him. As we discussed earlier, Jesus has always asked us to come to him *outside the dream.* Yet we have continually striven to bring him *into the dream,* so that our ego identity will remain secure and intact. We need to take Jesus' hand and walk through the dream, that we may walk with him out of it.

The ego, on the other hand, attempts to keep the dream alive and well, and that is Jesus' caution here. The memory of God is in our minds, where the dream has its beginning and ending. Its undoing constitutes salvation, which rests in choosing to remember our Source – *in our minds.* As an idea in the Mind of God we have never left Him, and He has never left us: *ideas leave not their Source.* That is why we must seek salvation in our right minds, the home of Jesus, where the memory of God awaits our acceptance as we awaken at last from the dream of separation and death.

**(3:7) But from within me it will reach beyond, and everything I see will but reflect the light that shines in me and in itself.**

"Everything I see," as we now realize, does not refer to physical sight; we do not really see physical light in people, nor light in objects. Since the light is a right-minded thought, it is this light of forgiveness that is reflected in what our eyes "see." Moreover, from the light's extension in the mind the Son is healed, since the mind of God's Son is one.

Jesus makes his ongoing appeal to apply this idea throughout the day.

**(4:2-4)** ***Let this not tempt me to look away from me for my salvation.***
***I will not let this interfere with my awareness of the Source of my salvation.***
***This has no power to remove salvation from me.***

In other words, it is *our* choice whether the world will take our peace from us, for in and of itself, being an illusion, it can do nothing. We alone have power, which we then project onto the world. It is the mind that chooses against Jesus' peace, and he asks us not to give in to this temptation because it will not make us happy. He directs our sight inward and away from the world; the shift in purpose – from guilt to salvation – reflects our decision to remember our Source and our Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 86**

These ideas are for review today:

**(1:1)** (71) **Only God's plan for salvation will work.**

It can only be God's plan for salvation that will work, because no other plan can save us. All others are external and designed to fail, since each would distract attention from our minds – the source of our problem and the Source of our salvation.

**(1:2-3) It is senseless for me to search wildly about for salvation. I have seen it in many people and in many things, but when I reached for it, it was not there.**

We senselessly followed the ego's plan of *seek but do not find,* and wherever we sought for salvation we were disappointed. Idols of salvation – our special relationships – will always fail, since they were made for that purpose, being the substitutes for What alone can save us. Even more to the point, idols were made to keep us in a perpetual state of mindlessness, ensuring we would never exercise the mind's power to choose again – salvation instead of slavation.

**(1:4-5) I was mistaken about where it is. I was mistaken about what it is.**

The reference is to special relationships, and Jesus' purpose for us is to forgive our special indulgences, to look with him and realize our insanity in wildly looking around for things to make us happy. Thus would we recognize the futility of specialness as a way of life: *It does not work.* Peace and love will never come when we seek for them outside ourselves. Note this summarizing statement from "Seek Not Outside Yourself' on the hopelessness of pursuing idols of specialness, and the hope in seeking only God:

> An idol cannot take the place of God. Let Him remind you of His Love for you, and do not seek to drown His Voice in chants of deep despair to idols of yourself Seek not outside your Father for your hope. For hope of happiness is *not* despair (T-29.VII.10:4-7).

Whenever we look without judgment at our mistaken search for idols, we are free to make another choice—salvation in place of specialness.

**(1:6-8) I will undertake no more idle seeking. Only God's plan for salvation will work. And I will rejoice because His plan can never fail.**

Coming to our sanity at last, we pledge no longer to waste time seeking for what can never be found, choosing only to follow the path of forgiveness, which alone will bring us home. In that choice is found our salvation; in that choice is found our joy.

We look now at the first specific application:

**(2:2)** ***God's plan for salvation will save me from my perception of this.***

Notice that we are not going to be saved from "this," whatever the "this" is. We do not have to be saved from any situation, but from our perception of it. The language is quite specific and intentional: "God's plan for salvation will save me from my perception

of this." When tempted to be upset by something, we need only realize this is our perception of the problem. It is not what we perceive to be the problem – something outside; it is the way we see it, which means the teacher with whom we are seeing: Jesus or the ego. If we are upset, we know we have chosen the ego. God's plan for salvation calls for us to change our minds, or more to the point, to change our teacher. Again, if we are not happy with how something is going, we need simply realize it is because we chose the wrong voice and its interpretation of the situation.

To restate this point: God's plan to save us is to have us choose a new teacher. Looking at the situation through His eyes, we realize this is an opportunity to look at what is going on within our minds. If we were not upset by what seems to be external, we would have no opportunity to bring it inside and realize it was a projection. That is why our special relationships are our saviors. They offer us the chance to reconsider our faulty perceptions. Once we realize the problem is within, we are free to make another choice.

**(2:3)** ***This is no exception in God's plan for my salvation.***

The principle of forgiveness always works: "There is no order of difficulty in miracles." There is no perception of difficulty, pain, or discomfort that will not change when we choose to set aside our grievances and guilt, and accept the Atonement for ourself. God's plan for salvation is simple. That is why it always works.

**(2:4)** ***Let me perceive this only in the light of God's plan for salvation.***

Thus we choose Christ's vision to replace the ego's misperceptions. Note the play on words, wherein "light" has the *double entendre of perspective* as well as the *light* that abolishes the darkness of our grievances.

**(3:1)** (72) **Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation.**

Jesus takes us a step further, by introducing the purposive element of anger: it directly attacks the plan of the Atonement, which redirects our focus inward, where the ego's thought system of guilt and attack is undone.

**(3:2-4) Holding grievances is an attempt to prove that God's plan for salvation will not work. Yet only His plan will work. By holding grievances, I am therefore excluding my only hope of salvation from my awareness.**

The only hope of salvation, again, lies in my accepting full responsibility for the misery I experience, which reflects my original choice to be a sinful and guilty individual deserving of misery and punishment. Therefore, in an insane attempt to be free of the pain, I choose to project the guilt and attack you for it. I can thus be saved only by returning to the decision-making part of my mind and correcting this mistaken choice. By being angry, however, and justifying my judgments, I assert the reality of the body and sin – yours and mine. Moreover, I consciously believe the sin is not in me and that there is no mind – everything happens only in a world of bodies where grievances are real and not my responsibility.

By saying to Jesus there is something wrong because I am not at peace, I allow him to teach me that what I am upset about in you is a split-off part of what I am upset

about in me: my guilt for separating from the Love of God. Jesus helps me realize I am choosing between misperception and salvation as I look on this. I come to understand that my perception is the effect of my choice: the ego's grievances or the Holy Spirit's miracle. The former roots me still further in the world of guilt and attack, while the latter leads me to my mind, the home of salvation.

**(3:5-6) I would no longer defeat my own best interests in this insane way. I would accept God's plan for salvation, and be happy.**

The pain of my wrong choices impels me finally to choose against the insanity of believing that *I* know what is best for me. I joyfully exclaim: I prefer to be happy and not right (T-29.V11.1:9), and am glad and grateful I was wrong (W-pI.184.15:4).

In this spirit of choosing sanity because I want to be happy, I gladly practice these specific applications of today's idea:

**(4:2-4)** ***I am choosing between misperception and salvation as I look on this. If I see grounds for grievances in this, I will not see the grounds for my salvation. This calls for salvation, not attack.***

I am learning that all circumstances in my life – past, present, or anticipated – offer me the opportunity of choosing to see differently. My problems are *perceptual,* my perceptions come from *thinking,* and my thinking originates in the mind's *decision* for the ego or the Holy Spirit. The right-minded choice for forgiveness corrects the ego's thinking, which led to my wrong-minded perceptions of grievances and attack. Because I now choose to be happy, I see grounds for forgiveness and salvation in everything. Only by wishing to remain in the pain of my guilt would I choose to see grounds for grievances. Yet, as Jesus fortunately reminds us (e.g., T-16.VI.8:8), I am no longer wholly insane and so I call for salvation and not attack.

One final point – salvation does not mean I save you, the situation, or even myself. I save the situation in my mind, by *changing my mind.* All situations call for this inner shift. Remember, "Seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.in.1:7).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 87**

Our review today will cover these ideas:

**(1:1)** (73) **I will there be light.**

This is a direct appeal to the power of our minds to make another choice: the light of forgiveness instead of the darkness of attack.

**(1:2-3) I will use the power of my will today. It is not my will to grope about in darkness, fearful of shadows and afraid of things unseen and unreal.**

This was my ego's wish in contrast to the Holy Spirit's Will, which I now reflect in the right-minded use of my decision-making ability. Despite my wish for shadows, my will remains one with God's, held in safekeeping by the Holy Spirit. I had substituted what the ego would say is my will – really the ego's wishes – to be an individual, a decision which inevitably led to the ego's darkened thought system of separation and fear, culminating, in the shadowy physical world of separation and fear. This lesson, then, is a direct appeal to look at things differently, to exercise the power of my mind ("the power of my will") to make another choice.

**(1:4-6) Light shall be my guide today. I will follow it where it leads me, and I will look only on what it shows me. This day I will experience the peace of true perception.**

Learning our lessons, we happily choose to let the light of Jesus' wisdom guide us each day. We look on the world through his non judgmental eyes of forgiveness and peace. Our eyes "see" what they have always seen, but now we see differently: calls for love or expressions of it, as opposed to the ego's "eyes" that see only sin, guilt, and the need for punishment. From its perception come conflict and fear, but from the true perception of Jesus' forgiveness comes the peace that, in the famous words of St. Paul, passeth all understanding (Philippians, 4:7).

Now to the day's specific applications:

**(2:2)** ***This cannot hide the light I will to see.***

Looking at situations that heretofore had reflected the ego's darkened world of guilt and judgment, I recognize they had no power to hide the light of forgiveness from me. It was my mind that had the power, by choosing not to see the light that was always there. In other words, nothing here has power over that light. But within the delusional dreams of shadows and death, we can choose not to recognize it, even though it shines so brightly within, and its reflections all around us. We choose now to recognize these witnesses to the light and see them as our own. Thus we say to each special love and hate partner:

**(2:3)** ***You stand with me in light, [name].***

Those we had condemned to hell join as one Son, along with us, together awakening from the dream of death. All that is necessary for this happy recognition to occur is the willingness to look at the ego's lies for what they are, choosing instead to believe the truth Jesus has always held out for us, patiently waiting our acceptance.

**(2:4)** ***In the light this will look different.***

In Lesson 193, Jesus says, *"Forgive, and you [I] will see this differently"* (W-pI.193.3:7). When I let him be my eyes, the external situation does not change, but the way I perceive it does. Rather than seeing the situation as a way of proving I am right and Jesus is wrong, that differences are real and sin rests in you and not in me, I realize that together we share the purpose of awakening from the dream. Again, this shift has nothing to do with what is external, but only with what is in our minds.

**(3:1)** (74) **There is no will but God's**

**(3:2) I am safe today because there is no will but God's.**

The ego says we are not safe, because there *is* a will other than God's. Yet it is my ego's will, which means it is not will at all, but the wish to be separate – the opposite to God's Will that we believe we have accomplished. The vulnerability we feel within our minds – the product of the ego's law that guilt demands punishment – has been projected into the world, the result being that we now fear everyone and everything: if we are not careful, we will be dead; if we do not eat the right foods, our bodies will deteriorate; if we are not with the right people, our personalities will wither. Thus are we never safe. Yet the truth is that we *are* safe, because none of this has happened; a dream is not reality. Paraphrasing Jesus' words in the text, borrowed from the biblical commandment (Exodus 20:3): Thou shalt have no other will before His, because there is none (T-4.III.6:6). That is why we are safe.

**(3:3-4) I can become afraid only when I believe there is another will. I try to attack only when I am afraid, and only when I try to attack can I believe that my eternal safety is threatened.**

Once we identify with the ego's thought system of separation, we must also identify with its thoughts of sin, guilt, and attack. It is this wrong-minded choice for the ego that makes us afraid.

**(3:5-6) Today I will recognize that all this has not occurred. I am safe because there is no will but God's.**

Even though Jesus does not expect us to accept this totally, we can begin the process of understanding that there is a part of our minds that knows that none of this occurred. We are fearful of that part because it signifies the end of our special self.

On the practical level this means that what has not occurred is that you hurt me, for the truth is *I* have hurt me. In the perceptual world, you may indeed have said or done something unkind, but I am upset because I want you to hurt me, accusing you of sin instead of me. In that sense, I forgive you for what you have *not* done. Only as I progress up the ladder do I realize this is a dream that is not actually occurring at all.

The three specific applications all reflect the Oneness of God.

**(4:2-4)** ***Let me perceive this in accordance with the Will of God.***
***It is God's Will you are His Son, [name], and mine as well.***

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 87**

***This is part of God's Will for me, however I may see it.***

Everything in our personal and collective worlds is a reflection of God's Will – forgiveness – if we choose to see it through Jesus' eyes, the vision of Christ that unifies perception. This *everything* includes the totality of the Sonship, regardless of how the ego perceives a situation. Since there is no hierarchy of illusions, all situations are the same, for they share the wrong-minded purpose of separation as well as the right-minded one of forgiveness. This unanimity of purpose unites us all: unseparated and undivided – one in illusion and one in truth.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 88**

Today we will review these ideas:

**(1:1)** (75) **The light has come.**

The light has come because the light has always been in our minds. This is reflected in the first sentence:

**(1:2) In choosing salvation rather than attack, I merely choose to recognize what is already there.**

That is why "the light has come." The light of the Atonement is in our minds, but when we choose it we experience it as coming to us. In truth, however, we have come to it. We left the light when we chose the ego's darkness, and now we have returned. Coming to the light is salvation, just as leaving it constituted the first attack, mirrored in the specific attacks within our lives that are merely the shadowy fragments of the original thought.

**(1:3-5) Salvation is a decision made already. Attack and grievances are not there to choose. That is why I always choose between truth and illusion; between what is there and what is not.**

Within the dream we are free to believe we can choose attack and grievances. In reality, however, we choose nothing, because the ego thought system is non-existent. This reflects the fundamental idea that we believe we have the power to choose illusions, but the only meaningful choice open to us is undoing the belief in the illusions that never were.

**(1:6-8) The light has come. I can but choose the light, for it has no alternative. It has replaced the darkness, and the darkness has gone.**

When we choose the light we recognize that the darkness was never there. In our deluded dream we believed in the darkness of separation and attack. However, when we choose to take Jesus' hand and walk the path that awakens from the dream, the darkness is gone and we happily realize it was not even there.

Our three applications highlight this choice:

**(2:2-4)** ***This cannot show me darkness, for the light has come.***
***The light in you is all that I would see, [name].***
***I would see in this only what is there.***

Confronted by the ego's perceptions of specialness – the darkened world of guilt, judgment, hate, punishment, and fear – we go quickly to Jesus that we may see the situation differently. His vision – all people calling for love or expressing it; *all* people sharing in the ego's insanity of hate and the Holy Spirit's sanity of forgiveness – reflects Heaven's light. This light, born of our inherent sameness as God's Son, we now wish to see in others, for it is what we wish to see in ourselves.

**(3:1)** (76) **I am under no laws but God's.**

**Lesson 88**

We spent considerable time discussing this when we read Lesson 76, and so this lesson is truly a review.

**(3:2-3) Here is the perfect statement of my freedom. I am under no laws but God's.**

This is the same as saying "There is no will but God's." All the laws we believe govern our lives physically and psychologically have effects only because we choose to be an ego. Therefore, choosing to be a separated individual and placing ourselves under the ego's "divine" guidance, we must subscribe to its laws. On the other hand, when we choose Jesus as our teacher and raise ourselves above the battleground, outside the dream, the "laws" of the world – reflecting the "laws" of the wrong mind – have no power. Therein lies our freedom.

**(3:4-6) I am constantly tempted to make up other laws and give them power over me. I suffer only because of my in them. They have no real effect on me at all.**

These are important words. For example, we believe in the body's laws: If we drink poison or eat bad food we feel ill; if we expose ourselves to a virus we are sick. We then believe our distress is due to the noxious elements we took in from the outside. Yet the truth remains that we suffer only because of our belief in these laws. However, Jesus is certainly not saying we should feel guilty because we feel poorly, but he is asking us to be aware of the true source of our pain. This is not found in bodies, nor in anything external, but in the mind's decision to affirm its individuality and rejection of Christ. Thus are we invested in the laws of hate and their justification. This decision to separate, protected by projection, is the cause of all suffering.

**(3:7-8) I am perfectly free of the effects of all laws save God's. And His are the laws of freedom.**

On the other hand, by choosing to learn from Jesus, we learn that the only laws that truly hold are God's. Since nothing outside His Mind is real, it must also be that no laws outside Him are valid. Therefore, the world's laws can have no effect unless, once again, we choose to believe they do. Our freedom lies in the decision to be free; to be under no laws but God's.

We look now at our three applications:

**(4:2-4)** ***My perception of this shows me I believe in laws that do not exist. I see only the laws of God at work in this. Let me allow God's laws to work in this, and not my own.***

Whatever we perceive outside shows us that we believe in the ego's "laws that do not exist." Our daily practice, therefore, consists of first looking at the world through the ego's eyes of special and separate interests, the reflection of its fundamental law of separation. Recognizing this false perception allows me, next, to ask my new Teacher to teach me its correction. And so the Holy Spirit gently instructs me in the practice of forgiveness, the reflection on earth of God's law of love. Regardless of the situation I am in, regardless of the pain (or pleasure) afforded me in a relationship, I can see God's laws reflected by seeing the opportunity to learn how separate interests lead to hell,

while shared purpose leads to the Heaven I never truly left—the Home of God's laws of love and life.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 89**

These are our review ideas for today:

This review contains two lessons that deal specifically with miracles.

**(1:1)** (77) **I am entitled to miracles.**

This statement corrects the ego's assertion that we are entitled to punishment because of our sin. Jesus teaches us we are entitled to the loving correction the miracle bestows on our tortured and terrified minds.

**(1:2-3) I am entitled to miracles because I am under no laws but God's. His laws release me from all grievances, and replace them with miracles.**

God's laws are an expression in our dream of the Atonement principle. His law in Heaven is the Oneness of His Love. As reflected here, it is the thought that says the separation never happened, expressed in the recognition that the grievances we hold against others – our sins of which we accuse everyone else – have not happened either. Thus our brother's "sins" have had no effect on us. Choosing Jesus as our teacher and the miracle as the correction helps us realize that everything held against others is secretly held against ourselves. Yet this has not changed our reality.

**(1:4-5) And I would accept the miracles in place of the grievances, which are but illusions that hide the miracles beyond. Now I would accept only what the laws of God entitle me to have, that I may use it on behalf of the function He has given me.**

The important point, emphasized again and again, is that we choose to hold grievances because we are afraid of the love in our minds, because in its presence our special existence is gone. Thus are our grievances purposive, and until we change our purpose – from remaining asleep to awakening – the grievances will persist, if not consciously, then remaining fiercely active in the vaults of guilt well beyond our awareness. Our function of forgiveness likewise will remain hidden from us as we continue to obey the ego's laws of guilt and projection instead of God's law, reflected in the Holy Spirit's miracle.

The day's specific applications directly follow from the teaching of the lesson:

**(2:2-4)** ***Behind this is a miracle to which I am entitled.***
***Let me not hold a grievance against you, [name], but offer you the miracle that belongs to you instead.***
***Seen truly, this offers me a miracle.***

Once again we observe the simplicity of Jesus' message: no complicated formulas or exercises; no intricate metaphysics or theology. All we need do is observe, with his gentle love gently beside us, how our judgments keep us from the peace we so fervently desire. Each circumstance throughout the day offers us the opportunity to forgive ourselves by choosing the miracle instead of a grievance. Jesus' true perception – the vision of Christ – is now ours for the asking and accepting. Perhaps today.

**(3:1-2)** (78) **Let miracles replace all grievances.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 91**

**Miracles are seen in light.**

The twenty lessons comprising this next series share the same theme, though expressed in different ways, reflecting the musical form of *theme and variations.* The theme is the contrast between the ego self and true Self, and Lesson 91 focuses on the power of our minds to choose between the ego's interpretation of our identity – a sinful, guilty, and fearful self – and the Holy Spirit's reminder of Who we are as Christ. Another aspect of this theme is that since our ego is directly manifest in the body, we ultimately shift this identification to the spirit that is our Self.

The title of the first lesson in this series expresses its theme of the miracle, the choosing of which is the *cause* that leads to vision, the *effect.* We are reminded that vision has nothing to do with the body's eyes, but with a state of mind that is achieved by choosing Jesus as our teacher. Thus we perceive the world through the lens of forgiveness, rather than the ego's judgment.

**(1:1) It is important to remember that miracles and vision necessarily go together.**

I pointed out earlier that *miracle* in *A Course in Miracles* can best be defined as a correction of false perception, having nothing to do with anything external. It shifts our way of seeing the world – separation, differences, attack, and bodies – to Jesus' vision of the world as a classroom offering us opportunities to learn forgiveness. Therefore, the immediate effect of choosing the miracle is this new way of seeing – the meaning of vision.

**(1:2)**

these workbook lessons, which call on us to practice, practice, practice what he asks us to learn.

**(1:3) It is a central idea in your new thought system, and the perception that it produces.**

Jesus is explicitly letting us know that he is teaching us a new way to think. When accepted, we have a new way of seeing. Again, this perception is not rooted in an external shift, but in the mind's change of teachers.

**(1:4-5) The miracle is always there. Its presence is not caused by your vision; its absence is not the result of your failure to see.**

Again, vision is the *effect* and the miracle is the *cause.* The correction it brings is always in our minds through the Presence of the Holy Spirit. The problem is that we choose not to avail ourselves of His loving correction, choosing instead to believe that our individuality is the truth, inevitably leading to the belief that oneness is the enemy.

**(1:6-7) It is only your awareness of miracles that is affected. You will see them in the light; you will not see them in the dark.**

Remembering that the miracle is a correction clarifies these passages. Our choosing not to accept it does not mean it is gone, but simply that we have gone. When our decision maker wanders away, we no longer recognize the correction because we look in the wrong place. Following the ego's bouncing ball remember Mitch Miller's bouncing ball? – we end up in the world, continually searching for solutions where the ego has led us. No longer identified with the mind, we look in the world's darkness for answers we can never find, since miracles are seen only in the mind's light of forgiveness, the choice held for us by the Holy Spirit.

**(2:1) To you, then, light is crucial.**

To repeat this important thought, light has nothing to do with the physical, including auras or any other psychic expression. In *A Course in Miracles* light is equated with the Holy Spirit's correction – the Atonement, forgiveness, the miracle. That is why it is so crucial to us. It is the way out of the ego's darkened hell of guilt.

**(2:2-3) While you remain in darkness, the miracle remains unseen. Thus you are convinced it is not there.**

When we are immersed in the ego's thought system of darkness, it appears as if there is no correction – no Jesus or Holy Spirit – and *A Course in Miracles* is a lie. We seem to have successfully barricaded ourselves against the miracle, making our false identification first in thought, and then in the body – to be the truth. Indeed, that is why we made the world: to provide evidence confirming we are right and the Holy Spirit is wrong, convincingly demonstrating that the separation has been accomplished in reality.

**(2:4) This follows from the premises from which the darkness comes.**

**Lesson 91**

Darkness is equated with the thought system of the ego, founded on the premise that the separation from God is a fact. Moreover, the ego tells us that when we separated, God was destroyed. If He is perfect Oneness and Wholeness, He cannot be separated from and remain Who He is. Therefore, if we believe the impossible has happened and we seem to be the living witness to that "fact" – God cannot be perfect Oneness and Wholeness. Thus He ceases to be God, and how can He be known if He is not there? This, incidentally, is the foundation of the ancient Sophist argument that truth is not absolute but relative. Truth can now be whatever one chooses, for absolute truth no longer exists.

**(2:5-7) Denial of light leads to failure to perceive it. Failure to perceive light is to perceive darkness. The light is useless to you then, even though it is there.**

If we equate the light with Jesus, the Holy Spirit, *A Course in Miracles,* and not ourselves, They are useless to us because we are not included. We have separated from the truth, and are stubbornly convinced we are right. Darkness reigns supreme because the light is nowhere to be seen.

**(2:8-9) You cannot use it [the light] because its presence is unknown to you. And the seeming reality of the darkness makes the idea of light meaningless.**

That is the purpose served by the body and the world – making real the darkness of the separation. The ego's belief in the meaningfulness of darkness and the meaninglessness of light makes it impossible, therefore, to know light's presence; and since we believe we see the darkness, the light and its meaning are gone.

**(3:1-2) To be told that what you do not see is there sounds like insanity. It is very difficult to become convinced that it is insanity not to see what is there, and to see what is not there instead.**

Over and over we see Jesus using this classic definition of psychosis. Among the tell-tale clinical signs of mental illness are visual and auditory hallucinations. This is yet another instance of Jesus gently telling us we are insane. Once again we see the purposive nature of the world and body, and its strategic importance in the ego's plan to keep us in a state of mindlessness. The body witnesses to the seeming reality of "what is not there," while "what is there" cannot be seen. This is the meaning of the following passage from the text:

> When you made visible what is not true, what *is* true became invisible to you. Yet it cannot be invisible in itself, for the Holy Spirit sees it with perfect clarity. It is invisible to you because you are looking at something else (T-12.VIII.3:1-3).

It is the body that enables us to look at the "something else" and believe it is there.

**(3:3-5) You do not doubt that the body's eyes can see. You do not doubt the images they show you are reality. Your faith lies in the darkness, not the light.**

Jesus discusses faith at great length in the text, in the context of the mind's decision-making power to put its faith in whatever it believes to be true: the ego or the Holy Spirit (e.g., T-19.I and T-21.III). Faith, then is neutral: Do we choose to believe the ego's teachings on separation, or do we put our faith in Jesus' message of its illusory nature? If our faith is in the darkness, we will believe that is truth; if in the light, that will be our belief. The following passage summarizes our choice for faithlessness, the belief in illusions:

> Every situation in which you find yourself is but a means to meet the purpose set for your relationship. See it as something else and you are faithless.... Faithlessness is the servant of illusion, and wholly faithful to its master. Use it, and it will carry you straight to illusions.... Accept not the illusion of peace it offers, but look upon its offering and recognize it *is* illusion (T-17.VII.5: 1-2,5-6,9).

To make this important point again, it is the body's purpose, from its inception in the ego's thought system, to have us believe that illusion is reality, and reality is illusion. Our faith thus is put in nothing, yet we remain unaware of the faithlessness of our decision.

**(3:6-7) How can this be reversed? For you it is impossible, but you are not alone in this.**

The *you,* as always, is the decision maker. This is not a reversal we accomplish by ourselves, the action that began the separation when we attempted to be apart from God. Our decision to separate is corrected by shifting our identification with the ego to the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of "you are not alone in this." In other words, there is another thought system and Teacher that can help us. The purpose of these lessons is to facilitate acceptance of this help.

**(4:1) Your efforts, however little they may be, have strong support.**

This is an echo of the familiar theme of *a little willingness* that is so important in the text:

> The holy instant is the result of your determination to be holy.... You prepare your mind for it only to the extent of recognizing that you want it above all else. It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more. Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask, or you will add the ego to Him and confuse the two. He asks but little. It is He Who adds the greatness and the might.... The holy instant.... is always the result of your small willingness combined with the unlimited power of God's Will (T-18.IV.1:1, 4-8; 4:1-2).

We are not asked to do a great deal, like teach the Holy Spirit's lessons, but only to choose Him as our Teacher as an expression of our little willingness. We are not even asked to learn His lessons, for that will come later. Jesus asks us but to recognize we have been wrong in our choice of teacher, and to understand there is another One in our minds to Whom we can go.

**Lesson 91**

As our fear diminishes and we choose the correct Teacher, we learn His lessons. At first the little willingness expresses the happy thought we are wrong. We are even more grateful there is Someone within us Who is right. This is the first and perhaps the most important step, because it moves us to the right path. To use another image, it places us on the right ladder. How long it takes to climb to the top is of no real concern, for what alone is important is that Jesus helps us find our way home. Finding it, again, means happily realizing we are wrong about where we thought it was.

**(4:2-5) Did you but realize how great this strength, your doubts would vanish. Today we will devote ourselves to the attempt to let you feel this strength. When you have felt the strength in you, which makes all miracles within your easy reach, you will not doubt. The miracles your sense of weakness hides will leap into awareness as you feel the strength in you.**

This rests on one thing and one thing only utilizing the power of the mind to correct our previous mistake of identifying with the ego's weakness. The next paragraph is explicit about the distinction between mind and body. Recognizing this distinction is essential, for if we are not a body the only remaining option is that we are a mind. Near the end of the text, as we have already seen, Jesus explains our simple choice:

> You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. And what you choose is what you think is real. Simply by never using weakness to direct your actions, you have given it no power. And the light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you do. For you have brought your weakness unto Him, and He has given you His strength instead (T-31.VIII.2:3-7).

Christ's strength lies in our minds, remembered when we understand that weakness and vulnerability come from having chosen the ego as our self, a decision culminating in the identification with the body. The miracle is the gentle correction for our mistake.

**(5:1) Three times today, set aside about ten minutes for a quiet time in which you try to leave your weakness behind.**

As the lessons progress, we see how Jesus increases the time we spend with him each day. At the beginning of the workbook he asked for only a couple of minutes, if we could manage even that. Now he is up to ten minutes, three times a day, and the time will continue to increase.

**(5:2) This is accomplished very simply, as you instruct yourself that you are not a body.**

Who is the *you* instructing yourself? – the decision maker teaching itself it is not a body. Thus the *you* doing the instructing is not the body, and the *yourself* being instructed is the self we believe we are as a personality. This, then, is the answer to Jesus' rhetorical question, asked near the beginning of the text:

> You may ask how this is possible [realizing that *all* perception is unnecessary] as long as you appear to be living in this world. That is a

> reasonable question. You must be careful, however, that you really understand it. Who is the "you" who are living in this world? (T-4.II.11:5-8)

Perception is ultimately unnecessary because there is no one there to perceive, let alone to be perceived. Returning our self-awareness to the mind, specifically to the decision-making part of the mind, is what allows us ultimately to realize there is no decision maker at all!

**(5:3) Faith goes to what you want, and you instruct your mind accordingly.**

The *you, again*, is the part of the mind that chooses. We put our faith either in the ego or the Holy Spirit, reflecting the desire to remain an individual entity separate from God, or to return home and awaken to our reality as God's one Son.

**(5:4-6) Your will remains your teacher, and your will has all the strength to do what it desires. You can escape the body if you choose. You can experience the strength in you.**

By will Jesus is referring to the power of our minds to choose between the ego and the Holy Spirit. We have seen this usage before, and it highlights the importance of calling upon this will to undo the ego's usurpation of God's Will. The ego's weakness is no match for the strength of Christ, which the Holy Spirit holds for us in our minds, even as we seek to conceal it, substituting in its place the ego's belief in domination, masquerading as strength.

We have to be careful not to take sentence 5 out of context ("You can escape the body if you choose"). In truth we cannot escape the body because we are not in the body. Jesus is really telling us we can escape from the thought system with which we have identified, and in which we have imprisoned ourselves. This imprisonment is expressed in form when it is projected onto the body. Thus, it seems – as it has seemed to centuries of philosophers and theologians – as if we are indeed trapped in the body. How, though, can we be trapped in a body that does not exist? We can be trapped only in an illusion of a body, which rests within our thought system. It is the mind's belief in guilt that is the prison, and if the guilt is not undone we remain forever imprisoned, regardless of what we do with the body. This theme is the subject of "Beyond the Body" in Chapter 18 of the text, and the following passage summarizes its central thought:

> You see yourself locked in a separate prison [the body], removed and unreachable, incapable of reaching out as being reached. You hate this prison you have made, and would destroy it. But you would not escape from it, leaving it unharmed, without your guilt upon it.
>
> Yet only thus *can* you escape. The home of vengeance is not yours; the place you set aside to house your hate is not a prison, but an illusion of yourself.... Everyone has experienced what he would call a sense of being transported beyond himself ... If you will consider what this "transportation" really entails, you will realize that it is a sudden unawareness of the body, and a joining of yourself and something else in which your mind enlarges to encompass it.... There is no violence at all in this escape. The body is not attacked, but simply properly perceived.... You are not really "lifted out" of it; it cannot contain you. You go where you would be, gaining, not losing, a sense of Self (T-18.VI.7:5-8:2; 11:1,

4; 13:1-2,4-5).

Thus we gently achieve our escape from the littleness of weakness to the magnitude of strength.

**(6:1-5) Begin the longer practice periods with this statement of true cause and effect relationships:**

***Miracles are seen in light.***
***The body's eyes do not perceive the light.***
***But I am not a body. What am I?***

That question is the problem. Remember, we made the world and body in the first place as one collective Son – to escape from the vengeful wrath of God the ego told us is the mind's reality. The ego told us our independence from God was bought at the cost of sin. We destroyed God, and now He is going to rise up and return the favor. That is the terror the ego placed in everyone's mind, and which drove us out of our minds figuratively and literally – making up the physical world: the Course's version of the Big Bang.

The question Jesus raises is: If you are not a body, what are you? Reading that carefully should strike terror in your heart, because you would suddenly have to address his question. Who are you if not your problems, list of grievances, personality, skin color, sex, height, weight, age, nationality, etc.? We are thus returned to the bottom line of *A Course in Miracles:* our ability to understand that everything we made is false. Our goal is to say that we are glad truly glad – that we are wrong. The miracle is the means whereby we come to recognize our mistaken choice, made not in the body but the mind, and so corrected there.

**(6:6) The question with which this statement ends is needed for our exercises today.**

As we go through the workbook, we notice that the stakes are getting higher. The previous ninety lessons have gently led us to this point. We have been presented with several key ideas, among which are that our thoughts give meaning to everything, they make the world, and ultimately there is no world outside us. These ideas have been presented in such a way that most of the time we do not seriously think about their implication: If there is no world outside our minds, there can be no body outside our minds either. This means confronting the question: Who am I? Jesus has taken us to the point in our training where he asks us to do just that.

**(6:7) What you think you are is a belief to be undone.**

We think we are bodies, underlying which is the belief we are "the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1). This is what needs to be undone. Note the word *belief.* Our bodies are not facts, but beliefs. You cannot change a fact, which of course is the point of the ego's thought system. Our separation, embodied in our bodies, is taken as fact, part of the so-called natural order. Its immutability seems to have cast us permanently out of Heaven, never to return. That is why Jesus has placed so much emphasis on our understanding the power of thought – in the mind, not the brain. The

**the helpless and afraid, the sad, the poor, the starving and the joyless. These are seen through eyes that cannot see and cannot bless.**

True seeing, however, or vision, is the result of returning our "sight" to its rightful place in the mind. By turning to the Holy Spirit for guidance, we shift our identification from the sightless to what alone can see. The ego would have us see through "eyes that cannot see and cannot bless," and thus we "see" the shadowy fragments of the ego's weakness: a world in which "everyone ... wanders ... uncertain, lonely, and in constant fear" (T-31.VIII.7:1). Yet we "see" in darkness, for we have first looked within and seen the ego's weakness, itself cowering in fear in the darkness of its separated mind. This is the darkness we projected and believe we now see. However, it is the darkness of nothingness, for the ego is nothing and makes nothing, and what we see must therefore also be nothing: *nothing* making *nothing,* being seen by *nothing.* Certainly then, these eyes cannot bless, because they were made to damn. After all, the ego came into existence by damning God, thereby killing His Son, in the anguished words of Job's wife: "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9).

Another theme implicit in this passage is the contrast of Christ's strength with the ego's weakness, similar to the statement we have seen before: "You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you" (T-3 1.V111.2:3).

**(4:1-2) Strength overlooks these things by seeing past appearances. It**

> is the way they are protected.... we must look first at this [the "dynamics" of the ego] to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth.... What is healing but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge? And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them directly, without protecting them? ... Clarity undoes confusion by definition, and to look upon darkness through light must dispel it (T-11.V.1:1, 5-6; 2:1-2,9).

This point is important, because it can be tempting for students of *A Course in Miracles* to think Jesus is asking them to deny their eyes' perception. This previously discussed statement, made in the context of healing, makes clear what he means:

> The body's eyes will continue to see differences. But the mind that has let itself be healed will no longer acknowledge them. There will be those who seem to be "sicker" than others, and the body's eyes will report their changed appearances as before. But the healed mind will put them all in one category; they are unreal (M-8.6:1-4).

Our goal is to see through Christ's vision, which enables us to reinterpret the perceptual world the ego told us was true. The *form,* now seen differently, reveals the *content* of reality's reflection that the ego tried to conceal from our awareness. The clarity of this new perception looks beyond the seeming differences among illusions to the one truth that categorizes them all: *they are unreal.*

**(4:3-6) It unites with light, of which it is a part. It sees itself. It brings the light in which your Self appears. In darkness you perceive a self that is not there.**

That self is the ego thought system of separation and sin. By joining with the light of the Atonement, we have chosen to unite with the strength of Christ instead of the ego's weakness, the strength of love rather than the weakness of specialness.

**(4:7) Strength is the truth about you; weakness is an idol falsely worshipped and adored that strength may be dispelled, and darkness rule where God appointed that there should be light.**

Where is it that "God appointed... there should be light"? The mind. That is why we flee from it. In the presence of the light of truth – the thought of Atonement that reminds us the separation never occurred our individual and special self disappears.

Over and over we see Jesus asking us to choose the light of strength that reflects our true Self as Christ, as opposed to the ego's weakness, which holds in its darkened shadows our identity as a separated and special self.

**(5:1) Strength comes from truth, and shines with light its Source has given it; weakness reflects the darkness of its maker.**

The maker is the ego, but it can do nothing without the decision maker's joining with it. Therein lies the ego's "strength," built upon an illusion that the Son of God has a real choice about his Identity. Only in the light of the correct choice – for the Atonement – can the Son regain the awareness of his true strength.

**(5:2-7) It is sick and looks on sickness, which is like itself. Truth is a savior and can only will for happiness and peace for everyone. It gives its strength to everyone who asks, in limitless supply. It sees that lack in anyone would be a lack in all. And so it gives its light that all may see and benefit as one. Its strength is shared, that it may bring to all the miracle in which they will unite in purpose and forgiveness and in love.**

The weakness we have chosen is the subject of the first sentence of this passage, which is quickly countered by the strength of truth. An important point is that the ego is sick and weak because it separates its specialness excludes certain parts of the Sonship from love. Truth on the other hand is all-inclusive. It sees God's Son as one, which oneness is his strength. In this world of separation, Heaven's Oneness is reflected in our vision of shared interests: all share the same need to awaken from the dream of sickness and illusion. In words we can never tire of hearing, Jesus states this principle of all-inclusiveness:

> To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VI11.8:4-7).

By sharing his gift of vision with everyone we meet, its strength becomes our own. Thus Jesus joyously exclaims:

> For we are one in purpose, and the end of hell is near (T-3 LVIII.10:8).

Our joining with our brothers in the common purpose of Atonement marks the end of hell's weakness and the return of Heaven's memory and the strength of Christ.

**(6:1-2) Weakness, which looks in darkness, cannot see a purpose in forgiveness and in love. It sees all others different from itself, and nothing in the world that it would share.**

The theme of weakness and strength continues, in this form: The ego thought system is kept intact by the concept of differences, wherein everyone is perceived as different from everyone else. Ultimately, this difference is your sin and my sinlessness, having its source in the original perception of difference: I am the creator and God is not – the principle of *either-or, one or the other, kill or be killed.* We are established strong in the ego's thought system of darkness by our weakness, born of the fragmented Sonship. This weakness thus reflects the separation of God's Son, for we are all made different, protected by our grievances and threatened by forgiveness.

**(6:3) It judges and condemns, but does not love.**

This is specialness. Even in the guise of love, it is judging. Judgment thus is the shadow of our inherent weakness as a separated Son; vision is the reflection of the strength of Christ, God's one and undivided Son.

**(6:4) In darkness it remains to hide itself, and dreams that it is strong and conquering, a victor over limitations that but grow in darkness to enormous size.**

This is the ego. It feeds off everything around it, which provides its illusion of strength and growth. As we read in this searing passage on the mantra of specialness, *kill or be killed:*

> The central theme in its [the ego's religion of separation] litany to sacrifice is that God must die so you can live. And it is this theme that is acted out in the special relationship. Through the death of your self you think you can attack another self, and snatch it from the other to replace the self that you despise.... You think it safer to endow the little self you made with power you wrested from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless. See how exactly is this ritual enacted in the special relationship. An altar is erected in between two separate people, on which each seeks to kill his self, and on his body raise another self to take its power from his death. Over and over and over this ritual is enacted.... The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning (T-16.V.10:4-6; 11:3-6; 12:4).

A towering illusion of strength is thus built up, and yet it remains united to its source: the illusion that God has been destroyed so we can live. His strength has become our own, replacing the weakness that has become His. Repeatedly Jesus asks: Could anyone in his right mind believe this insanity? Could any sane person want it to be true? (T-16.V.10:1; 12:5).

**(7:1-3) It fears and it attacks and hates itself, and darkness covers everything it sees, leaving its dreams as fearful as itself. No miracles are here, but only hate. It separates itself from what it sees, while light and strength perceive themselves as one.**

That is why we fear the light, the strength of which comes from perfect unity, what the ego judges as weakness. Our individuality grows weak in the presence of thoughts of oneness, and strong in perceptions of differences. Yet we cannot distinguish between weakness and strength. Thus we need *A Course in Miracles* in general, and the workbook specifically.

**(7:4-6) The light of strength is not the light you see. It does not change and flicker and go out. It does not shift from night to day, and back to darkness till the morning comes again.**

Jesus is referring to the different kinds of light in this world: artificial light electricity – and natural light – the sun. Yet nothing here lasts, and everything changes. The light of truth, on the other hand, is constant and eternal, and its reflected perception of the world is always the same: it is an illusion and is not here. Recall the first test Jesus cites as helping us to "distinguish everything from nothing" (W-pI.133.5:4):

> ...if you choose a thing that will not last forever, what you chose is valueless. A temporary value is without all value. Time can never take away a value that is real. What fades and dies was never there, and makes no offering to him who chooses it. He is deceived by nothing in a form he thinks he likes (W-pI.133.6).

Thus is our impermanent world inherently valueless.

Moreover, everyone here shares the sameness of believing in illusion. It is helpful to observe that the word *same* does not appear in the ego's dictionary, for it only understands the concept of difference. Analogously, the word *different* does not appear in the Holy Spirit's dictionary, because everything to Him is the same: We are the same, as one illusion and as one Christ.

**(8) The light of strength is constant, sure as love, forever glad to give itself away, because it cannot give but to itself. No one can ask in vain to share its sight, and none who enters its abode can leave without a miracle before his eyes, and strength and light abiding in his heart.**

This statement is true because everything is one, reflecting the important principle we shall see later: giving and receiving are the same (e.g., W-pI.126, 158). If we are one, I cannot give to another nor receive from another, but only to and from myself. Such insight belongs to our right-minded self that has learned the value of sharing, not the ego's wrong-minded self that sees only separate interests. The former leads to the strength of Christ's light; the latter to the weakness of the ego's darkness.

**(9) The strength in you will offer you the light, and guide your seeing so you do not dwell on idle shadows that the body's eyes provide for self-deception. Strength and light unite in you, and where they meet, your Self stands ready to embrace you as Its Own. Such is the meeting place we try today to find and rest in, for the peace of God is where your Self, His Son, is waiting now to meet Itself again, and be as One.**

As our choices become increasingly right-minded – the strong light of forgiveness over the weak darkness of attack; the reflection of spirit's oneness over the body's separation – we stand on the edge of the real world, beyond which is the Self that patiently awaits our return to the Oneness we never truly left.

As we shall now see, Jesus is up from ten to twenty minutes in the quiet periods he asks us to give him in these exercises. As we realize the benefits to us of these lessons, the quiet times spent with the idea for the day will become increasingly joyful, as will be the specific opportunities for application the day provides:

**(10:1-2) Let us give twenty minutes twice today to join this meeting. Let yourself be brought unto your Self.**

Who brings us to our Self? – the decision maker, joined with Jesus. He cannot carry us until we first jump into his arms. This is extremely important. We must first go to him and say: "Please carry me." Jesus cannot bring us home without our help, and, needless to say, we cannot return without him. That is why he reminds us, as we have already seen:

...I need you as much as you need me (T-8.V.6:10).

**(10:3-4) Its strength will be the light in which the gift of sight is given you. Leave, then, the dark a little while today...**

Jesus is not saying we should leave the dark permanently. It is extremely important to understand this so we do not panic at the thought of being in the light. He simply asks us to practice for "a little while": "Join with me and let me look at your silly thoughts with you," he says to us. We need only realize our silliness in having placed faith in the body, not withdraw it. There are many passages throughout *A Course in Miracles* that explain how the body constantly fails us, and so deserves but a knowing smile for our seriousness in having trusting it. One of my (and Helen's) favorites comes early in the text, where Jesus presents an imaginary conversation between the mind's decision maker and the ego, it having previously followed the ego's counsel to choose the body for its safety, only to discover that the body is hardly a safe refuge at all:

> The body is the ego's home by its own election. It is the only identification with which the ego feels safe .... Here is where the mind [i.e., the decision maker] becomes actually dazed. Being told by the ego that it is really part of the body and that the body is its protector, the mind is also told that the body cannot protect it. Therefore, the mind asks, "Where can I go for protection?" to which the ego replies, "Turn to me." The mind, and not without cause, reminds the ego that it has itself insisted that it is identified with the body, so there is no point in turning to *it* for protection. The ego has no real answer to this because there is none, but it does have a typical solution. It obliterates the question from the mind's awareness. Once out of awareness the question can and does produce uneasiness, but it cannot be answered because it cannot be asked (T-4.V.4:1-2,5-11).

According to the ego, the body will keep us safe and secure, and so we cling to our bodily identification because we believe it protects us. Yet as we look at our lives and the lives of everyone else, it is all too clear that the body does a terrible job of protection. That is why Jesus does not ask us to give up this identity, but to step back with him "a little while" and question it. When we look at the body from his point of view, we join his gentle laughter in response to the silliness of our own and everyone else's life, simply because the body does not work. Unaware of our choice to identify with the body, however, we are condemned to a life of weakness in which we do not really see. Thus the purpose of these lessons is to help us learn we do have a choice: light or darkness, strength or weakness, God or the ego.

**(10:4) Leave, then, the dark a little while today, and we will practice seeing in the light, closing the body's eyes and asking truth to show us how to find the meeting place of self and Self, where light and strength are one.**

In other words, we ask Jesus to show us how we get from the perception of our little self, manifest in the body, to the memory of Who we are as Christ. The way back to this memory is the shift in perception that forgiveness brings.

**(11) Morning and evening we will practice thus. After the morning meeting, we will use the day in preparation for the time at night when we will meet again in trust. Let us repeat as often as we can the idea for today, and recognize that we are being introduced to sight, and led away from darkness to the light where only miracles can be perceived.**

Our two longer practice periods thus become the two ends of the day's rainbow, under which kind and gentle arch we draw meaning from the day's events. We rest comfortably in this meaning, as we gratefully welcome each opportunity to choose the miracle that leads us from darkness to the light.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 93**

**Light and joy and peace abide in me.**

This lesson is among the more important ones in the workbook, for it provides clear descriptions of both selves. The lesson ends with "Light and joy and peace abide in me," our true Self, but before we can reach that glorious truth, we first have to work through the ego's opposition.

**(1:1) You think you are the home of evil, darkness and sin.**

This is another expression of the ego's unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear. Why is this my home? Because I murdered God to get here. In order for me to exist as an individual, God had to be destroyed and the world of good, light, and innocence along with Him.

**(1:2) You think that if anyone could see the truth about you he would be repelled, recoiling from you as if from a poisonous snake.**

A wonderful and graphic description of guilt! Yet because I do not want to experience my serpentine sin, I project it and see it in you instead. Now *you* are the poisonous snake and I am "safely" off the hook.

**(1:3) You think if what is true about you were revealed to you, you would be struck with horror so intense that you would rush to death by your own hand, living on after seeing this being impossible.**

In other words, if our defenses were shattered and we realized the perceived truth about ourselves, we would "be struck with horror so intense" suicide would be an irresistible temptation and hell the inevitable consequence. Our honor, therefore, in looking at our sin impels us to project, making a world of specific bodies that will be punished instead of us. The guilt over that projection is even more enormous, because we know we attack others falsely: our egos want God to confine others to hell so we can go to Heaven. Yet it whispers that we are the true guilty ones, and God will pursue us beyond the grave to everlasting hell.

This is the vicious guilt-attack cycle I discussed in the Prelude and elsewhere:* The guiltier I feel, the greater my need to project and attack others so they would be punished instead of me. However, my guilt is reinforced by these false accusations, and I go around and around and around the ego's circle: guilt-attack-guilt-attack-guilt-attack.

**(2:1) These are beliefs so firmly fixed that it is difficult to help you see that they are based on nothing.**

This sentence is important in counteracting Course "blissninnies." Our teacher is telling us it is difficult to help us realize that everything we believe about ourselves is "based on nothing." Once again, this is a process, conducted by Jesus in a gentle, patient way. Our fear – first of confronting the ego's truth of sin and guilt, and then the deeper fear of the real truth – is what makes approaching the Love of God so difficult.

**(2:2-3) That you have made mistakes is obvious. That you have sought salvation in strange ways; have been deceived, deceiving and afraid of foolish**

**fantasies and savage dreams; and have bowed down to idols made of dust, – all this true by what you now believe.**

Jesus speaks to us once again about our need for honesty, and his good news: "You no longer have to pretend that light and joy and peace abide in you. I know that deep down you know, so you will now know that I know that you know that you nonetheless think you are the home of evil, darkness, and sin. Let us begin with your 'facts,' and then move beyond them to the truth." In other words, there is no need to pretend we are not creatures of specialness, dedicated to preserving our special selves by feeding off other special selves. Without the need to pretend, there will be no guilt, for we shall have brought our specialness to Jesus' love, thereby letting it go.

Thus, he continues:

**(3:1) Today we question this, not from the point of view of what you think, but from a very different reference point, from which such idle thoughts are meaningless.**

In effect, Jesus tells us: "Do not drag me down to where you are, but come to where I am. From your reference point – the battleground you will understand nothing. In order to join me, you must have the humility that says: 'Thank God I am wrong, and with this recognition I choose you as my teacher because I know you are wiser than I.'

If we are truly honest, we will see the difficulty in saying and meaning these words. As Jesus says later, in the context of wanting peace: "To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything" (W-pI.185.1:1-2). To be wrong about everything means we are looking from our reference point – the puny self that thinks it sees and thinks, and even thinks it exists – and need help from a reference point outside our thought system. At the end of Chapter 23 in the text, Jesus calls this reference point "above the battleground," the place to which we go with him to look differently at our special relationships, and in which we choose forgiveness instead of attack, miracles instead of murder:

> The overlooking of the battleground is now your purpose.
>
> Be lifted up, and from a higher place look down upon it. From there will your perspective be quite different.... Here murder is your choice. Yet from above, the choice is miracles instead of murder. And the perspective coming from this choice shows you the battle is not real, and easily escaped.... When the temptation to attack rises to make your mind darkened and murderous, remember you *can* see the battle from above.... See no one from the battleground, for there you look on him from nowhere. You have no reference point from where to look, where meaning can be given what you see (T-23.IV.4:7-5:2, 5-7; 6:1; 7:1-2).

**(3:2-4) These thoughts are not according to God's Will. These weird beliefs He does not share with you. This is enough to prove that they are wrong, but you do not perceive that this is so.**

Jesus is letting you know, again, that he knows you still think you are right and he is wrong. This is an extraordinarily important idea, because studying, learning, and practicing *A Course in Miracles* – not to mention living it rest on the assumption you have accepted that you understand nothing, beginning with the words of this course.

Remember, you think you understand because your brain interprets its words for you, based on your past experience and learning. Yet if your brain does not think, everything you think *A Course in Miracles* says must be wrong. The words do not mean what you think they mean, because their meaning comes from your interpretation. You understand them through the filtering lens of duality, not through the unclouded lens of non-dualistic truth. Thus you will misinterpret everything you read here. As Jesus succinctly states regarding the ego's perennial calls to war, a sentence we have quoted often before: "And God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7).

**(4:1) Why would you not be overjoyed to be assured that all the evil that you think you did was never done, that all your sins are nothing, that you are as pure and as holy as you were created, and that light and joy and peace abide in you?**

The answer is obvious, because to accept this means we are not who we think we are, and thus our specialness would be gone. The truth is that we should be overjoyed to know our evil, darkness, and sin are not true. Yet this would mean the ego self preceding these beliefs is not true either. We must see our ego's fear of *A Course in Miracles* and its teachings, for only then can we move beyond this resistance to learning and accepting its happy truths.

**(4:2-4) Your image of yourself cannot withstand the Will of God. You think that this is death, but it is life. You think you are destroyed, but you are saved.**

The *you* that thinks it is destroyed is the decision maker that has identified with the ego. The *you* that thinks that truth, the Will of God, and this course are death, is the *you* that has identified with its special existence. Jesus is saying that, yes, your individuality will ultimately disappear into its nothingness; but the glorious truth about you will be returned to your awareness. We are thus saved from the terrible image we made of ourselves. As we have repeatedly seen, the process of salvation is just that: a *process.* Once again:

> Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality (T-16.VI.8:1).

**(5:1) The self you made is not the Son of God.**

As you read these lines, think about what you think you are, using whatever words or concepts come to you. Then realize that none of them is the Son of God, for they define the son of the ego. As Jesus observes in the text:

> The son of man [the ego] is not the risen Christ (T-25.in.2:6).

**(5:2) Therefore, this self does not exist at all.**

Many have gone through the workbook and most likely read these lines very quickly, paying no attention. If they had, they probably would have closed the book, seeing it was not what they thought it was and certainly not what they wanted. "The self you made is not the Son of God"! When they look in the mirror, whom do they see but the self they made? Not only is that not the Son of God; that self does not exist. What

self-respecting ego would not be afraid? Once again, that is why to study *A Course in Miracles* you need to be serious and committed. This does not mean you commit to letting go of your ego, but simply to look at what the ego is. Jesus only asks that you look. Do not seek to change, correct, or let it go. Just look, a process that will gradually end your ego identification, for the self that looks is not the self that is looked at. Thus is your identity returned to the decision-making part of your mind and away from the ego.

**(5:3) And anything it seems to do and think means nothing.**

This statement merely invalidates our lives, let alone the civilization of which we think we are the glorious product.

**(5:4) It is neither bad nor good.**

It would be great if the self *were* good or bad. Religions, for one, always tell us that. The problem is that the self is nothing, to which "good" and "bad" have no meaning.

**(5:5-9) It is unreal, and nothing more than that. It does not battle with the Son of God. It does not hurt him, nor attack his peace. It has not changed creation, nor reduced eternal sinlessness to sin, and love to hate. What power can this self you made possess, when it would contradict the Will of God?**

This is a lovely statement of the Atonement principle. The separation never happened and thus had no effect. Thus we see the ego's purpose lurking behind our individual and collective lives, which fulfill the ego's goal of proving it exists and God does not. Our only hope is to raise ourselves above the battleground and shift our reference point, that we finally see beyond the ego to the Holy Spirit's teaching purpose for the world: our learning to forgive.

**(6:1-2) Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God. Over and over this must be repeated, until it is accepted.**

Once again Jesus tells us we are not going to accept his truth. However, he does not mean we should repeat this phrase as an affirmation to shout down the ego's thought system. We are simply asked to bring our illusory thought system to the truth, *and look at it.*

**(6:3-5) It is true. Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God. Nothing can touch it, or change what God created as eternal.**

Jesus knows his audience, and so he needs to assure us: "It is true." We are indeed sinless, the separation never happened and the Holy Spirit has spoken the truth from the beginning. We merely made a mistake, which is now easily corrected.

**(6:6-7) The self you made, evil and full of sin, is meaningless. Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God, and light and joy and peace abide in you.**

The way we reach the light is through looking at the self we made, which we believe is the home of evil, darkness, and sin. Our deeply rooted belief in this self

prevents the experience of our sinlessness. To make this essential point once again, the ego self will not just disappear by our repeating lovely phrases. Its undoing requires hard work and commitment, for the resistance to looking at this evil self is enormous. That is why Jesus makes important statements like the following, as we have already seen:

> You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself (T-13.III.1:1-2).

Once we become aware of our self-hatred through recognizing our projections onto others, we can meaningfully bring it to Jesus' healing love. With our resistance gone, his message of light and joy and peace is gratefully and joyously accepted.

**(7) Salvation requires the acceptance of but one thought; – you are as God created you, not what you made of yourself. Whatever evil you may think you did, you are as God created you. Whatever mistakes you made, the truth about you is unchanged. Creation is eternal and unalterable. Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God. You are and will forever be exactly as you were created. Light and joy and peace abide in you because God put them there.**

This anticipates the next lesson, and, along with its variants, is the most widely quoted statement in the workbook: "You are as God created you." Remember, the Atonement principle always holds. No matter what we think we did, the separation had no effect: God's creation is unaffected by our mad and feverish dreams, evil has no power over Good, and we remain as God created us – the home of light and joy and peace.

**(8:1-3) In our longer exercise periods today, which would be most profitable if done for the first five minutes of every waking hour, begin by stating the truth about your creation:**

***Light and joy and peace abide in me. My sinlessness is guaranteed by God.***

The hard work begins. Jesus asks us to remember the lesson every hour for five minutes, and to do the following:

**(8:4) Then put away your foolish self-images, and spend the rest of the practice period in trying to experience what God has given you, in place of what you have decreed for yourself.**

How can you "put away your foolish self- images" if you do not know you have them? It is to make you aware of your ego that Jesus teaches as he does. If you are to move beyond these images – the home of evil, darkness, and sin – you must recognize they come from your belief; otherwise there would be no motivation to set them aside in order to know that light and joy and peace abide in you. The way to know the truth about yourself is to be honest about the illusions of self in which you first believed. At that point you can bring their darkness to the light of truth, of which this lesson so happily reminds you.

**(9:1-2) You are what God created or what you made. One Self is true; the other is not there.**

Again, we are not asked to trade the little self we made for the glorious Self that God created. This would be too threatening. We are simply asked to understand that in the light of our Self's truth, the self we made makes no sense. Jesus wants us to begin the process of questioning the validity of everything we believe we are. Thus, the kindly reflection of the *one or the other* principle – God or the ego – is the choice between the separating attacks of the ego and the healing forgiveness of the Holy Spirit. With either choice our self remains; until the end, when even the right-minded self gently disappears into the Heart of God. That is the culmination of the process. We are asked only to begin it.

**(9:3-8) Try to experience the unity of your one Self. Try to appreciate Its Holiness and the love from which it was created. Try not to interfere with the Self which God created as you, by hiding Its majesty behind the tiny idols of evil and sinfulness you have made to replace It. Let It come into Its Own. Here you are; This is You. And light and joy and peace abide in you because this is so.**

Jesus is pointing out our concealment, and asks us to look at how we have used the ego and its false images to hide the truth. The "tiny idols of evil and sinfulness" symbolize our self-concepts and the special images we made of our relationships. We give them up to the extent we recognize we no longer wish the purpose of guilt that they served. Forgiveness alone will bring us the happiness we seek and open the gates to Heaven, which allows the memory of our Self to return to our awareness. With the obstacles of the ego's tiny idols gone, the Love of Christ flows unhindered and unabated through our minds, and we are home.

**(10:1-2) You may not be willing or even able to use the first five minutes of each hour for these exercises. Try, however, to do so when you can.**

Jesus tells us: "I know you are not going to do this, for it is difficult. But make the attempt." As we shall see presently, Jesus helps us understand that his purpose for these exercises is not so much that we do them, but that we forgive ourselves when we do not. He expects us to be frightened and forget. Yet he also expects us to learn honesty, and see how resistant we are to understanding his teachings.

**(10:3-6) At least remember to repeat these thoughts each hour:**

***Light and joy and peace abide in me. My sinlessness is guaranteed by God.***

**Then try to devote at least a minute or so to closing your eyes and realizing that this is a statement of the truth about you.**

Jesus' instructions are always gentle. If we cannot manage five minutes an hour, we should try at least to remember the ideas for the day. Even this small effort will help break our identification with the ego's thought system of evil, darkness, and sin.

**Lesson 93**

**(11:1) If a situation arises that seems to be disturbing, quickly dispel the illusion of fear by repeating these thoughts again.**

It is important to note that the purpose of these exercises is to apply the ideas every time we are upset. Honesty here means realizing we are upset almost all the time, whether it involves something we deem major or judge as trivial. Early in the workbook Jesus explained that even "a slight twinge of annoyance" is the same as "intense fury" (W-pI.21.2:5). He asks us to monitor our minds so that when we find ourselves disturbed, we can say: "This comes from an image of myself, which I have used to protect my separate existence. Yet this has not made me happy, and so I no longer want it."

**(11:2-4) Should you be tempted to become angry with someone, tell him silently:**

***Light and joy and peace abide in you.***
***Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God.***

Similarly and more specifically, when we find ourselves ready to attack, criticize, or find fault, we should try as best we can to remember that such thoughts hide the light and joy and peace from us. Since we and our brothers are the same, our accusations come back to hurt us. However, by giving others the message of light, we remind ourselves that the same light is in us, too. Thus do we all return home together.

**(11:5-7) You can do much for the world's salvation today. You can do much today to bring you closer to the part in salvation that God has assigned to you. And you can do much today to bring the conviction to your mind that the idea for the day is true indeed.**

The reason we can do much for the salvation of the world is that God's Son is one. This theme will return very shortly. If my Self is one, an indivisible part of perfect Oneness, the whole Sonship is contained in me. Yet this is not the *me* that is the home of evil, darkness, and sin. Therefore, what enables me to save the world is to save my mind, accomplished by the diligent practice of the lesson for the day. I accept that what Jesus teaches is true indeed, as I accept my resistance to this truth. In that honesty my resistance will gently dissolve, leaving only the light and joy and peace that abide in me, God's Son.

* See, for example: *A Talk Given on A COURSE IN MIRACLES,* pp. 52-58; *Forgiveness and Jesus,* pp. 35-39, 69-72.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 94**

**I am as God created me.**

This is the only lesson repeated in the workbook. It appears again in Lesson 110, and still again in Lesson 162. It is also the central theme of Review VI and an important part of the last section of the text (T-31.VIII). This crucial theme is the basis of the Atonement principle that corrects the ego thought system, which says: I am *not* as God created me, but a separated mind that now makes its home in the body.

**(1:1-2) Today we continue with the one idea which brings complete salvation; the one statement which makes all forms of temptation powerless; the one thought which renders the ego silent and entirely undone. You are as God created you.**

In the section I just alluded to, "Choose Once Again," Jesus talks about the temptation that continually confronts us: seeing ourselves as a body, thus making real the ego and its thought system of weakness, sickness, and pain:

> Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel.... Learn, then, the happy habit of response to all temptation to perceive yourself as weak and miserable with these words:
>
> *I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing. And I am His Son.*
>
> Thus is Christ's strength invited to prevail, replacing all your weakness with the strength that comes from God and that can never fail.... You *are* as God created you, and so is every living thing you look upon, regardless of the images you see. What you behold as sickness and as pain, as weakness and as suffering and loss, is but temptation to perceive yourself defenseless and in hell. Yield not to this, and you will see all pain, in every form, wherever it occurs, but disappear as mists before the sun (T-31.VI11.1:1-2; 5:1-5; 6:1-3).

In saying "I am as God created me" we accept the Atonement for ourselves. Believing this happy fact, we turn our backs on the ego; its thought system resting on the premise that our separated state is reality. The world is undone as well, for nothing here is the perfect Oneness of our Creator. Moreover, in choosing the truth of Atonement over the illusion of separation, we choose to end all suffering. Indeed, all of *A Course in Miracles* is a commentary on this truth, and how we can learn to accept it.

**(1:3-5) The sounds of this world are still, the sights of this world disappear, and all the thoughts that this world ever held are wiped away forever by this one idea. Here is salvation accomplished. Here is sanity restored.**

This is another example of the underlying metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles,* which rests on this *all-or-nothing* principle. If God is true and we remain as He created us, everything the ego has taught and the world represents is false. Not only is it false, it never was in reality. The terror this engenders in us comes from the recognition that if that statement is true – the world never was – and since our bodies are an integral part

of the world, this means we never were either. That is the fear the ego never wants us to discover. Our descent into the bowels of the ego's insanity has as its purpose to keep the original insane thought away from us. This in turn prevents us from choosing the Holy Spirit's sanity. Helen's wonderful Easter poem, "Transformation," expresses the world's shift from everything to nothing, complementing the above passage from the workbook. Here is an excerpt:

> It happens suddenly. There is a Voice
> That speaks one Word, and everything is changed.
>
> what seemed large
> Resumes the littleness that is its due.
> The dim grow bright, and what was bright before
> Flickers and fades and finally is gone.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 64)

**(2) True light is strength, and strength is sinlessness. If you remain as God created you, you must be strong and light must be in you. He Who ensured your sinlessness must be the guarantee of strength and light as well. You are as God created you. Darkness cannot obscure the glory of God's Son. You stand in light, strong in the sinlessness in which you were created, and in which you will remain throughout eternity.**

Jesus elaborates on the meaning of the day's idea. "I am as God created me" means that nothing the ego's thought system of darkness ever conceived has affected the light of Heaven. Since we, as Christ, are part of that light referred to in the text as the *Great Rays* (see, e.g., T-18.III.8:7) – we have been unaffected as well. Sinlessness is our strength, for it reflects the Atonement's truth: the separation from light never happened. The darkness of guilt can cover this light in our nightmares, but in reality there remains only light.

**(3) Today we will again devote the first five minutes of each waking hour to the attempt to feel the truth in you. Begin these times of searching with these words:**

> ***I am as God created me.***
> ***I am His Son eternally.***

**Now try to reach the Son of God in you. This is the Self that never sinned, nor made an image to replace reality. This is the Self that never left Its home in God to walk the world uncertainly. This is the Self that knows no fear, nor could conceive of loss or suffering or death.**

We are now asked to think of the day's thought every hour. We begin with a clear statement of the truth of our Identity, a truth that invalidates the ego's illusions of sin and fear, alienation and suffering. They have no home in our Self. Recall the text's reference to the first commandment:

> Thou shalt have no other gods before Him because there *are* none (T-

4.III.6:6).

In the next paragraph Jesus describes how we reach the true Son of God, moving beyond our illusory self, rooted in the belief that separation is sin, to the glorious truth of Christ:

**(4:1) Nothing is required of you to reach this goal except to lay all idols and self-images aside; go past the list of attributes, both good and bad, you have ascribed to yourself; and wait in silent expectancy for the truth.**

This succinctly describes the process of forgiveness: in order to remember God we have to let go of the ego. Our task, therefore, is not to affirm the truth we are as God created us, but to deny the ego's denial. We have already seen this summarizing statement:

> The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to deny the denial of truth* (T-12.11.1:5).

In order to reach this goal of remembering our Self, we have "to lay all idols and self-images aside." The key obstacle is the belief we *are* our self-image, the core of which is our specialness. We seek to protect this image by denying responsibility and making a world in which the sin of existence is seen in everyone except ourselves. Thus our self-image is not only that of a special individual, but a special, *innocent* individual. This means someone else is guilty.

The ego's defensive system makes forgiveness virtually impossible: In order for us to reach God and remember Who we are as Christ, we have to let go of *all* images. As Jesus reminds us, these images include not only the bad, but the good. We have already seen that if we talk about a positive self- image, we imply there is a negative one, too. This results in a dualistic world of opposites, a state impossible in Heaven. In the end, therefore, we need to transcend even the wrong-mind right-mind duality. However, we first must bring our illusions of hate to the correction of forgiveness, the darkness of separation to the light of Atonement. Only then can we complete the journey and find our One-minded Self.

**(4:2) God has Himself promised that it will be revealed to all who ask for it.**

In other words, it is not God Who can reveal the truth to us, nor Jesus or his course. We have to ask for it, which reflects the little willingness to admit we were wrong and Jesus was right: we were wrong about being the separated and special Son of God, and Jesus was right we *are* the Christ, at *one* with our Source.

**(4:3-4) You are asking now. You cannot fail because He cannot fail.**

This implies we have a split mind; and while a part of us does not want to give up our individuality and return home, the other part is doing these lessons because it wants to leave the ego. Jesus is appealing to the decision maker to choose the mind's sane thought system, accomplished by recognizing the ego's insanity so we can let it go.

**(5:1-4) If you do not meet the requirement of practicing for the first five**

**minutes of every hour, at least remind yourself hourly:**

***I am as God created me. I am His Son eternally.***

**Tell yourself frequently today that you are as God created you.**

The test of our resolve to remember our Self is the commitment to remembering the day's lesson. As we shall see in Lesson 95, the true value of the workbook lies in showing us how much we do not wish to remember its exercises, which, again, reflects our not wishing to remember we are as God created us.

**(5:5-7) And be sure to respond to anyone who seems to irritate you with these words:**

***You are as God created you.***
***You are His Son eternally.***

This is a point I return to over and over, because Jesus returns to it over and over. If these lessons are to work, they must be applied very specifically whenever we find ourselves irritated, discouraged, angry, fearful, or depressed. In other words, those are the times when we most need to remember the lesson, and bring the illusion of our upset – seeing ourselves unfairly treated or victimized – to the truth Jesus holds out to us. If I am to be as God created me, so must you, since God's Son is one. If I harbor grievances against you, I must also be harboring them against me. Again, God's Son is one, both in Heaven and on earth. Thus are we healed together, because it cannot be that one of us is healed alone. Thus we remember the Self God created, and remember Its Source, at one with Him:

> ... all power is of God. You can remember this for all the Sonship. Do not allow your brother not to remember, for his forgetfulness is yours. But your remembering is his, for God cannot be remembered alone. *This is what you have forgotten.* To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember (1-12.11.2:4-10).

Jesus concludes by summarizing the main point of the exercise:

**(5:8-9) Make every effort to do the hourly exercises today. Each one you do will be a giant stride toward your release, and a milestone in learning the thought system which this course sets forth.**

Jesus reminds us this is a curriculum in which we are the student and he the teacher, and we want to learn from him because it will make us happy. Our teacher is gentle and patient (the fourth and eighth characteristics of God's advanced teacher: M-4.IV, VIII), and takes each small yet giant step of forgiveness with us. He asks only our little willingness, which his magnitude converts into our own, for each holy instant is a window that opens to the Magnitude of eternity.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 95**
**I am one Self, united with my Creator.**

This is a unique lesson, being the only one where, midway through, Jesus drops his discussion of the thought for the day and addresses us specifically about what to do when we do *not* do what is asked; i.e., forget to do the day's exercises. It is a remarkable discussion, and we will spend considerable time on it. The first three paragraphs deal with the lesson's theme, a continuation of the discussion of our true Self. As I mentioned earlier, this series of twenty lessons – 91 through 110 – contrasts our true Self as Christ with the separated self of the ego. We are thus reminded again, in this lesson, of the essence of our Identity: *oneness.* The Son of God is not divided into multitudinous fragments, but is one, and His Oneness is at one with His Source.

**(1:1-3) Today's idea accurately describes you as God created you. You are one within yourself, and one with Him. Yours is the unity of all creation.**

This is directly opposite to what the ego tells us. Its thought system began with the idea we separated from God, our Creator and Source, and as that thought evolved, it continued to separate, the result being we are separate from everyone and everything. Thus the world was made, as described in the following passage, which we looked at earlier:

> You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution. It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation for wholeness. It has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was. That one error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. Your whole world rests upon it. Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is part of it.
>
> You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see. You do not realize the magnitude of that one error. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge. What else could come of it? Its fragmented aspects are fearful enough, as you begin to look at them. But nothing you have seen begins to show you the enormity of the original error, which seemed to cast you out of Heaven, to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions, and to force you to make further substitutions (T-18.I.4-5).

The world is thus the opposite of the "unity of all creation." Having its source in the thought of separation and fragmentation, the world of bodies can only be a place of separation and fragmentation; certainly not the home of God's Son. The belief that the world is our home denies the principle of the Atonement that states the unity of Heaven, the perfect wholeness of God and Christ, has never changed, which means we never left our Source.

**(1:4-5) Your perfect unity makes change in you impossible. You do not accept this, and you fail to realize it must be so, only because you believe that you have changed yourself already.**

This is the essence of the wrong-minded belief. Despite our right-minded self that desires to accept Jesus' teaching, our ego self most certainly does not, for it seeks to preserve its changed and special identity. Statements like these reflect Jesus' awareness of our resistance to learning the Son of God is changeless, which should help alleviate our guilt and need to hide our "sin" from him. However, because we believe we have changed ourselves already, this change has become reality for us, and it no longer seems an option to believe otherwise. I am changed, which means I am separated from God and from all fragmented Sons as well. The state of perfect unity has become a dream.

Jesus will now describe this little self we believe is our reality:

**(2:1-2) You see yourself as a ridiculous parody on God's creation; weak, vicious, ugly and sinful, miserable and beset with pain. Such is your version of yourself; a self divided into many warring parts, separate from God, and tenuously held together by its erratic and capricious maker, to which you pray.**

Elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles* Jesus refers to the ego and the body as travesties on creation (T-24.VII.10:9); here we are called "a ridiculous parody." This is the "glorious" self we believe God created, which we have adopted as substitute for the truly glorious Self we are as God's one Son, perfectly united within ourselves as Christ, and perfectly united with Him.

Thus Jesus shows us the contrast between these two selves. If we raise ourselves above the battleground, return to the decision-making part of our minds and look back down upon this self, we would realize what we felt as so important and special, and has defined us, is a ridiculous parody of Who we are. When we find ourselves becoming upset, regardless of its form or seeming cause, we need step back and look, saying to ourselves that our reactions are nothing more than ridiculous parodies of our Self. This means separating from this identity, our investment in being unfairly treated, and the pain of this perception. This constellation of victimized thoughts and feelings establishes our bodies as real, proving conclusively that God is dead. This also means – happily to our egos – that Jesus is wrong and we are right.

On one level, the "self divided into many warring parts" is the body, where one system is in opposition to another, and where we seek to remedy a problem in one part of the body, which then becomes painful for another part. But we are never totally happy for we are never integrated. Fragmentation has triumphed over wholeness.

On a larger level, we can also understand that this fragmented version of ourselves as the Son of God is at war with every other fragment. It is thus not only a war we wage within our physical and psychological selves, but with every other seemingly separated Son of God. *Ideas leave not their source:* What is *within* must also be what is *without.*

**(2:3-5) It [our maker, the ego] does not hear your prayers, for it is deaf. It does not see the oneness in you, for it is blind. It does not understand you are the Son of God, for it is senseless and understands nothing.**

This returns us to previous discussions: we have eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear, brains that do not think. Once we believe we are separate from God, we do not see anything but projected shadows of our own nothingness. The body is irrelevant to true sight, or vision, which reflects the thought system of the Holy Spirit that is totally

independent of our sensory apparatus. In a favorite passage, Jesus asks why we ask the "only thing in all the universe that does not know" our reality, to tell us what it is:

> There is a stranger [the ego] in him [the Son of God], who wandered carelessly into the home of truth and who will wander off.... Ask not this transient stranger, "What am I?" He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know. Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer that you would adjust. This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth, becomes your guide. To it you turn to ask the meaning of the universe. And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, "How shall I look upon the Son of God?" (T-20.III.7:2, 5-10).

The "thing" we ask to tell us who we are, "to which we pray," is the ego, which is reflected in our bodies, brains, and sensory apparatus. We ask the body to tell us what reality is, but being made specifically to screen it out, it cannot know. This is one more way Jesus gently reminds us we cannot understand anything. This also means that we cannot understand *A Course in Miracles* if we persist in trying to approach it from our perspective as individual and special selves. The Course can be understood only when we detach from that self and return to the right-minded home of Jesus. This means relinquishing all thoughts about who we think we are. In other words, we cannot understand truth (spirit) from the perspective of illusion (the body), as the following incisive passage from the text explicitly states:

> Think you that you can bring truth to fantasy, and learn what truth means from the perspective of illusions? Truth *has* no meaning in illusion. The frame of reference for its [truth's] meaning must be itself. When you try to bring truth to illusions, you are trying to make illusions real, and keep them by justifying your belief in them (T-1715:1-4).

**(3) We will attempt today to be aware only of what can hear and see, and what makes perfect sense. We will again direct our exercises towards reaching your one Self, which is united with Its Creator. In patience and in hope we try again today.**

Jesus and the Holy Spirit represent the right-mind that sees through the vision of Christ, negating the importance or even reality of what our eyes see. However, we are not asked to deny our sight, but only the interpretation of what we see. From the ego's point of view, this always involves some aspect of difference, specialness, judgment, and attack. Vision corrects this misinterpretation, clearing the way for the memory of our one Self to return to awareness.

These lines end the first part of the lesson. Through the beginning of paragraph 10, Jesus now speaks to us of our response when we forget to do the exercises and accuse ourselves of failure. This is extremely instructive, not only for what he says specifically about doing the workbook, but for its larger implications of undoing the thought system of separation and sin the ego has told us is reality, and which justifies our guilt.

**(4) The use of the first five minutes of every waking hour for practicing the idea for the day has special advantages at the stage of learning in which you are**

**at present. It is difficult at this point not to allow your mind to wander, if it undertakes extended practice. You have surely realized this by now. You have seen the extent of your lack of mental discipline, and of your need for mind training. It is necessary that you be aware of this, for it is indeed a hindrance to your advance.**

Jesus is letting us know in no uncertain terms that he does not expect us to be totally faithful to the lessons: "It is difficult at this point not to allow your mind to wander, if it undertakes extended practice." Thus he does not expect us to spend five minutes of every hour thinking of God, think of the lesson six or ten times an hour, or ask his help each and every time we get upset. Jesus is telling us, again, that he knows of our "lack of mental discipline," which is why he provides us with so much structure, even though this is not ideal. Recall this statement from the manual for teachers:

> Routines as such are dangerous, because they easily become gods in their own right, threatening the very goals for which they were set up (M-16.2:5).

Yet Jesus is also saying we need routines and structure now, for reasons that are quite apparent.

This is another example of Jesus gently informing us we are on the bottom rung of the ladder, and that we should not try to pretend we are any higher. When we are higher on the ladder we will not need structure or discipline, nor will we need to practice the exercises. However, we are still at the bottom. In the aforementioned section in the manual, Jesus states:

> To the advanced teacher of God this question *[How should the teacher of God spend his day?]* is meaningless. There is no program, for the lessons change each day. Yet the teacher of God is sure of but one thing; they do not change at random. Seeing this and understanding that it is true, he rests content....
>
> But what about those who have not reached his certainty? They are not yet ready for such lack of structuring on their own part (M-16.1:1-4; 2:1-2).

Speaking to us unadvanced ones at the bottom of the ladder, Jesus therefore says: "You have seen the extent of your lack of mental discipline, and of your need for mind training"; hence the need for structure. There are always those, however, who believe they are the exception. If you are among them, at least be clear about it. If you are like everyone else, your mind will wander, and you will be more concerned with preserving your specialness than with learning a thought system that undoes it.

Jesus is thus giving his students permission to be normal; i.e., to be fearful and forgetful. Yet he implies as well that we are not to feel guilty because of our forgetfulness. In effect, Jesus is telling us we would not need his course if our minds were trained, and if we were not already "too tolerant of mind wandering," as he reminded Helen (T-2.VI.4:6). His point is that we should not use our forgetting as an excuse not to do the lesson, or to conclude that *A Course in Miracles* is too difficult for us to practice and learn, and therefore why bother.

Jesus is not asking that we do the lesson perfectly, to say this another way, but that when we fail to do it perfectly we forgive ourselves. That is not beyond anyone's capability. Again, Jesus is not saying that we have to be perfect students of the workbook; he is simply saying that we should be aware that we are not doing it perfectly.

That is why he says: "It is necessary that you be aware of this, for it is indeed a hindrance to your advance." The lack of mental discipline, which indicates our need for mind training, is the hindrance to our advance.

Yet it is not really the lack of mental discipline that is the hindrance, but our guilt over it. I have spoken before of a similar idea: the problem was not the tiny, mad idea, but choosing the ego's interpretation of it, which always leads to guilt. That is why the bottom line in undoing the ego thought system is undoing guilt. Jesus thus helps us understand that doing the workbook imperfectly is an excellent classroom for learning to undo our guilt. Indeed, the implication is that by doing the workbook imperfectly and then forgiving ourselves, we are actually doing the workbook *perfectly* and being *perfect* students.

**(5:1-2) Frequent but shorter practice periods have other advantages for you at this time. In addition to recognizing your difficulties with sustained attention, you must also have noticed that, unless you are reminded of your purpose frequently, you tend to forget about it for long periods of time.**

Jesus is saying two things here: Not only do we have difficulty in sitting quietly for five, ten, or fifteen minutes without our minds wandering to thoughts our egos deem safe, but we have difficulty in even thinking about the need to sit quietly for five, ten, or fifteen minutes. However, Jesus is not pointing an accusing finger, for he is teaching us to recognize that our "failures" are not coming from sin, but fear; the former are punished, the latter gently corrected.

**(5:3) You often fail to remember the short applications of the idea for the day, and you have not yet formed the habit of using the idea as an automatic response to temptation.**

Once again Jesus is telling us he knows that we forget, and that it is all right. This is a course whose purpose is to undo our false learning through forgiveness, not instilling fear and reinforcing guilt through punishment.

**(6:1) Structure, then, is necessary for you at this time, planned to include frequent reminders of your goal and regular attempts to reach it.**

It is extremely important that you realize you are at the beginning of the journey, reflecting the humility without which learning *A Course in Miracles* is impossible. Being at the bottom rung of the spiritual ladder is not a sin. It is really quite fine, for at least you are on the right ladder with the right teacher, and you should feel grateful to yourself for choosing Jesus instead of the ego. Feeling guilty for being on the bottom rung, or feeling bad because you have to take baby steps while others are "higher up," is the ego's arrogance rearing its ugly head once more. Such arrogance, masquerading as humility, ensures you will never get anywhere. The way a baby learns to run is learning first to crawl, then walk. Going from crawling to running ensures the child will never walk properly, let alone run. It is important to see ourselves as little children, with an elder brother to guide us. If we insist we are older than we are, we will be much less prone to listen, because we will think we know as much as he. Thus will we remain spiritual cripples the rest of our lives, not being able to forgive, let alone love.

**(6:2) Regularity in terms of time is not the ideal requirement for the most beneficial form of practice in salvation.**

This is parallel to the phrase I just quoted from the manual: "Routines as such are dangerous ...." (M-16.2:5).

**(6:3) It is advantageous, however, for those whose motivation is inconsistent, and who remain heavily defended against learning.**

If you are honest, you would say: "That includes me. My motivation is inconsistent, and I am `heavily defended against learning.' I do not want to learn that my body, scintillating personality, and victimization stories are nothing. I do not want to learn that being here is an attack on God's Love, and an attempt to limit It. I do not want to learn that my self is made up, and is an attack on God and Christ. I want to learn instead how wonderful I am, and that Jesus is going to make me even more wonderful." Honesty lies in realizing this inconsistency and resistance, and accepting our need for the "regularity in teens of time" Jesus offers us. Returning to the manual for teachers once more, we read:

> At the beginning, it is wise to think in terms of time. This is by no means the ultimate criterion, but at the outset it is probably the simplest to observe. The saving of time is an essential early emphasis which, although it remains important throughout the learning process, becomes less and less emphasized. At the outset, we can safely say that time devoted to starting the day right does indeed save time (M-16.3:1-4).

Jesus continues with the day's assignment:

**(7:1-2) We will, therefore, keep to the five-minutes-an-hour practice periods for a while, and urge you to omit as few as possible. Using the first five minutes of the hour will be particularly helpful, since it imposes firmer structure.**

We can again observe Jesus telling us that despite being aware of our lack of discipline, he is proceeding with "firmer structure," since that is our need if we are to become disciplined.

We now come to the heart of this discussion:

**(7:3-5) Do not, however, use your lapses from this schedule as an excuse not to return to it again as soon as you can. There may well be a temptation to regard the day as lost because you have already failed to do what is required. This should, however, merely be recognized as what it is; a refusal to let your mistake be corrected, and an unwillingness to try again.**

Jesus does not use the word *guilt* here, but that is his subject. Guilt prevents the Holy Spirit from correcting our mistakes, by screaming: "I have committed sins that are beyond correction and forgiveness. I am thus a terrible person and a failure as a student of *A Course in Miracles."* The text's discussion on sin versus error is relevant here, for it points to guilt's critical role in the ego's defensive thought system of protecting its separate existence:

> It is essential that error be not confused with sin, and it is this distinction that makes salvation possible.... Sin calls for punishment as error for correction, and the belief that punishment *is* correction is clearly insane.
>
> Sin is not an error, for sin entails an arrogance which the idea of error lacks. To sin would be to violate reality, and to succeed. Sin is the proclamation that attack is real and guilt is justified. It assumes the Son of God is guilty, and has thus succeeded in losing his innocence and making himself what God created not.... the ego brings sin to fear, demanding punishment. Yet punishment is but another form of guilt's protection, for what is deserving punishment must have been really done. Punishment is always the great preserver of sin, treating it with respect and honoring its enormity. What must be punished, must be true (T-19.II.1:1,6; 2:1-4; T-19.III.2:2-5).

Thus do we see that our individuality is preserved once it is called *sin,* protected by the experience of *guilt,* which demands the punishment that *we fear.* Moreover, the instant we feel guilt it will be driven underground, or repressed in our minds, because the feeling is intolerable. Projection is inevitable, and our experience of sin and guilt metamorphoses into: It is someone else's fault. The mind's guilt is now safely buried, with no hope of it ever being undone, for the belief in another's sin covers the cherished belief it is ours.

Returning to our failures to remember the requirements of the daily exercise, we can see that these are but fragmentary shadows of the original mistake when we forgot about God entirely, thinking: Concern over losing our individuality is too pressing, and so the God of Love and Oneness is the last thing we want to think about, for in remembering Him we find our Self, in which there is no self. We relive this ontological instant over and over, as the following statement from the text makes clear:

> 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).

Remember, there is no gap of billions of years between what we believe is occurring right now, and what we believe occurred in the original instant when "terror took the place of love." Linear time is an illusion, and all of it occurs in any given moment of our present experience. Each time we forget the workbook lesson, are upset, or neglect to ask Jesus for help, we relive that original moment – *always present in our minds* – when we pushed the Love of God away and said to the Holy Spirit: "I am not interested in what You say, even if it is the truth. I want only to maintain my individual and differentiated self."

Rather than smile at the mistake, we judged it as sinful. The guilt became overwhelming, and we feared God's wrathful punishment for our sin. To avoid this divine retribution we fled from our minds projected our sinful and guilty self and made a world in which everyone else is accused of sin, while we remain its innocent victims. Again, this is the all-too-familiar scenario we relive when we forget our workbook lesson. Jesus is thus telling us the problem is not that we forgot, but that we were not willing to have the mistake be corrected by his gentle love. We once again took the tiny, mad idea seriously, and now need Jesus' help to remember to smile its seriousness away, as the following core passage from the text urges us to do:

> Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, and possible of both accomplishment and real effects. Together, we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time (T-27.VIII.6:2-5).

As an example, let us say you are doing this lesson, and are thus asked to think of God at the top of each hour. All of a sudden you realize it is 1:15, and you exclaim: "Oh dear, I did not think of the lesson at 1 o'clock; in fact I did not think of it at 12 o'clock, 11 o'clock, or 10 o'clock either, but I am remembering now at 1:15." You then should say to yourself: "I forgot because I was afraid. The individual needs of my specialness were so demanding that I had all I could do to pay attention to my body and those around me. And so I forgot because I was afraid, not bad. Wishing to preserve my special identification is not a sin, but a mistake to be corrected. How wonderful that I now can see my resistance to learning this course! Yet, I remembered the lesson now, and can ask Jesus to help me look at what I did, understand why, and choose to accept his forgiveness rather than my ego's guilt." This, then, is Jesus' message to us here, and is echoed in the manual's comforting message from the Holy Spirit, the answer to our belief in the reality of guilt. We present it again, this time with its introductory sentence:

> Correction has one answer to all this [our belief in guilt], and to the world that rests on this:
>
> *You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong. But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes. God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world. His Love remains the only thing there is. Fear is illusion, for you are like Him* (M-18.3:6-12).

**(8:1) The Holy Spirit is not delayed in His teaching by your mistakes.**

In other words, it does not matter how often you forget Who you are; the timeless truth of your Self is unaffected. Needless to say, this goes beyond the daily workbook lesson. Whenever you are tempted to see yourself unfairly treated or not given the love and attention your specialness demands, go as quickly as possible within and say to Jesus: "I must be looking at this wrong, please help." His role in helping us forgive ourselves, learning not to take the tiny, mad idea seriously, constitutes the essence of our relationship with him. Again, Jesus is not delayed by our mistakes, but the experience of our happiness most definitely is.

**(8:2) He can be held back only by your unwillingness to let them go.**

That is guilt's purpose: to express our unwillingness to let mistakes go by labelling them as sins that demand punishment. Fear of this punishment is so overwhelming we have to project the sin and believe we are not the guilty, sinful ones. That makes us paranoid, because we now look around with our beady, little eyes, seeking sin in others and terrified they will attack us. Yet all we see are our own attack thoughts projected

outward. The problem, however, does not lie in this, but in feeling guilty about it.

Jesus, therefore, urges us to come to him as soon as we remember what we have done or failed to remember. Again, even though *guilt* does not appear here, it underlies everything that is being said. It is the unwillingness to let sin go, for it is the irrevocable truth that deserves only punishment.

**(8:3-4) Let us therefore be determined, particularly for the next week or so, to be willing to forgive ourselves for our lapses in diligence, and our failures to follow the instructions for practicing the day's idea. This tolerance for weakness will enable us to overlook it, rather than give it power to delay our learning.**

If we find our weakness intolerable, we are giving it now called sin – tremendous power, not only to delay our learning, but to destroy it and make forgiveness impossible. To repeat, the problem is never our failure to remember, nor our specialness or anger. It is our holding on to the perceived failure through guilt.

Remember, the ego always wants to prove that our individuality is true, which is accomplished by the belief in sin, which in turn is established by guilt. The ego, thus, wastes no time in trying to prove, over and over, how guilty we are. When you make a mistake, therefore, realize it came from fear, not from some inherent evil, wickedness, or sinfulness in you. Then say to Jesus: "I was afraid of your love, for I was afraid of losing my individuality and specialness. Thus I had to protect myself by pushing you away, and that is why I forgot." If you have such a conversation with Jesus there will be no guilt, and without guilt there will be no problem. Feeling guilty, however, ensures the forgetting will recur. That is why Jesus underscores the meaning of our daily practice of the workbook exercises.

To make this point one more time: the way we overlook something is not by *not* seeing it, but by actually looking at it. When we do, with Jesus's love beside us, we look through it. Thus, as we have seen, overlooking really means looking beyond.

**(8:5) If we give it power to do this [to delay our learning], we are regarding it as strength, and are confusing strength with weakness.**

If we allow ourselves to feel guilty over the "weakness" of forgetting the lesson, we reflect the underlying thought that the ego has destroyed God, rather than seeing the ego's inherent weakness because it can do nothing. To requote the text:

> It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time (T-27.VIII.6:5).

This means there is no ego as well. The Atonement principle alone is our strength.

**(9:1-2) When you fail to comply with the requirements of this course, you have merely made a mistake. This calls for correction, and for nothing else.**

In other words, "failure" is not a sin, for Jesus gives us permission to "fail to comply with the requirements." He is not expecting us to be model students in terms of form. As I have stated, the best way to do the workbook and learn from it is to do it imperfectly, *and then forgive yourself.* Thus you learn to forgive yourself for forgetting

God in the beginning. Learning to forgive your mistakes is what turns you into a true model student.

**(9:3-4) To allow a mistake to continue is to make additional mistakes, based on the first and reinforcing it. It is this process that must be laid aside, for it is but another way in which you would defend illusions against the truth.**

This is telling us again that the way we stop making mistakes is by not feeling guilty. We avoid guilt by inviting Jesus in so he can look with us at our mistakes. He will then explain how we made them out of fear, not sin; and without sin, the guilt disappears. If, however, guilt remains, it is certain we will repeat the error. With guilt in our minds, repression must occur, leading to projection in the form of the mistakes of attack and sickness. Thus, when the belief in sin is undone, healing is accomplished for projection is impossible.

Jesus now bridges the gap between his discussion of the individual workbook lesson and the real lesson:

**(10:1-2) Let all these errors go by recognizing them for what they are. They are attempts to keep you unaware you are one Self, united with your Creator, at one with every aspect of creation, and limitless in power and in peace.**

My awareness that I am one Self undoes my belief that I am separated. My errors – such as forgetting to do the workbook lesson every hour, or forgetting to ask Jesus for help when I am upset – are nothing more than the defense against losing my individual self, which I would certainly do if I remembered the day's lesson.

Jesus continues by returning to the theme of the lesson, after having discussed how we will defend against it. "I am one Self, united with my Creator" means that everything I ever thought about myself is wrong, without exception. Forgetting this lesson, therefore, is my ego's way of protecting itself from remembering the truth, which would lead me to forget the illusion I am a special self, separate from all others, and certainly separate from my Creator and Source:

**(10:3-4) This is the truth, and nothing else is true. Today we will affirm this truth again, and try to reach the place in you in which there is no doubt that only this is true.**

We are returned to our task – remembering the truth – by bringing to it the illusions of our self. Thus our minds are cleansed of the ego's silliness, and we have reached the inner place of truth.

In the remaining five paragraphs of the lesson Jesus affirms this truth – we are one Self, at one with God and everyone else – and does so over and over and over again:

**(11) Begin the practice periods today with this assurance, offered to your mind with all the certainty that you can give:**

***I am one Self united with my Creator, at one with every aspect of creation, and limitless in power and in peace.***

**Then close your eyes and tell yourself again, slowly and thoughtfully, attempting to allow the meaning of the words to sink into your mind, replacing false ideas:**

***I am one Self.***

**Repeat this several times, and then attempt to feel the meaning that the words convey.**

As we have discussed before, the process of healing set forth in *A Course in Miracles* is that of bringing the darkness of our ego's illusions to the light of the Holy Spirit's truth. This specifically means bringing our thoughts of specialness to the thought of forgiveness; the goal of satisfying our needs, and the sacrifice of another as the means of satisfying them, to our only need of recognizing all needs are the same. Thus our daily lives reflect the truth of this lesson: "I am one Self, united with my Creator, at one with every aspect of creation, and limitless in power and in peace."

**(12) You are one Self, united and secure in light and joy and peace. You are God's Son, one Self, with one Creator and one goal; to bring awareness of this oneness to all minds, that true creation may extend the allness and the unity of God. You are one Self, complete and healed and whole, with power to lift the veil of darkness from the world, and let the light in you come through to teach the world the truth about yourself.**

The way we bring "awareness of this oneness to all minds" is to demonstrate our shared interests to each other. In this manner the ego's dark veil of separation and specialness is lifted from the minds of God's Son, and the light of truth about ourselves allowed to shine forth: We are one Self. This truth is reflected in acknowledging we are one in the separated mind as well every apparent fragment of the Sonship contains within itself the one problem and the one solution.

**(13) You are one Self, in perfect harmony with all there is, and all that there will be. You are one Self, the holy Son of God, united with your brothers in that Self; united with your Father in His Will. Feel this one Self in you, and let It shine away all your illusions and your doubts. This is your Self, the Son of God Himself, sinless as Its Creator, with His strength within you and His Love forever yours. You are one Self, and it is given you to feel this Self within you, and to cast all your illusions out of the one Mind that is this Self, the holy truth in you.**

Our only function within the dream of separation is to undo the illusions of separate interests that hide the memory of our true Self. Jesus thus sets the stage for later lessons that will focus more specifically on forgiveness: the means taught by *A Course in Miracles* to remember our Identity and the Creator's Love.

**(14) Do not forget today. We need your help; your little part in bringing happiness to all the world. And Heaven looks to you in confidence that you will try today. Share, then, its surety, for it is yours. Be vigilant. Do not forget today. Throughout the day do not forget your goal. Repeat today's idea as frequently as possible, and understand each time you do so, someone hears the voice of hope,**

**the stirring of the truth within his mind, the gentle rustling of the wings of peace.**

Even though the earlier part of this lesson discussed how resistance to remembering our Self impedes our practice and learning, Jesus continues to urge us to remember how important these lessons are to our happiness. Moreover, the Sonship, which is us, needs our effort to awaken from its dreams of suffering and death, and feel the gentle rustlings of hope that rekindle light's presence in our darkened minds. Thus will the peace of Heaven come at last to replace the conflicts on earth.

**(15) Your own acknowledgment you are one Self, united with your Father, is a call to all the world to be at one with you. To everyone you meet today, be sure to give the promise of today's idea and tell him this:**

***You are one Self with me, united with our Creator in this Self I honor you because of What I am, and What He is, Who loves us both as One.***

It must be so, since "everyone you meet" is yourself. Thus, as the text has reminded us:

> When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him you will see yourself. As you treat him you will treat yourself. As you think of him you will think of yourself. Never forget this, for in him you will find yourself or lose yourself. Whenever two Sons of God meet, they are given another chance at salvation. Do not leave anyone without giving salvation to him and receiving it yourself (1-8.111.4:1-7).

Thus we end this important lesson by remembering to see each situation as another opportunity to correct the ego's misperceptions of separation and specialness. We pledge ourselves, as we begin the day, to bring Jesus with us so we can remember we are one in the ego and one in spirit. Thus this day, and all that follow, will be joyously filled with the promise of forgiveness as we return home together to the Oneness we never truly left, and which never left us.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 96**

**Salvation comes from my one Self.**

This is a potentially confusing lesson because of the conflicting ways Jesus uses the term *mind.* Addressing this confusion will make going through this lesson much easier. *Mind* is used here in two ways, similar to what is found in the section "Mind – Spirit" in the clarification of terms (C-1). It is equated both with spirit and the split mind. The confusion enters because the specific referent is not always specified. I shall clarify this as we go through the lesson.

When used as the equivalent of spirit, *mind* refers to spirit's "activating agent" (C-1.1:1). The word *spirit,* referring to our true nature as Christ, is not capitalized in *A Course in Miracles,* except when it is used, rarely, as a synonym for God or the Holy Spirit. *Mind* is not capitalized unless it specifically refers to the Mind of God and the Mind of Christ.

This lesson is essentially a discussion of the relationship among spirit, mind, and body. This trinity is embraced by most new age thinkers and many followers of alternative medicine, but the view of *A Course in Miracles* is quite different, as we shall see.

**(1:1) Although you are one Self, you experience yourself as two; as both good and evil, loving and hating, mind and body.**

Here *mind* refers to *spirit,* parallel to the words *good* and *loving.* We believe we are split, and that it is possible for the Son of God to be separated from the Mind of God and Christ. This is the exact opposite of the Atonement principle, which teaches that the separation did not occur: the perfect Self of Oneness can never be separated *from;* otherwise it could not have been perfect and perfectly one.

**(1:2-5) This sense of being split into opposites induces feelings of acute and constant conflict, and leads to frantic attempts to reconcile the contradictory aspects of this self-perception. You have sought many such solutions, and none of them has worked. The opposites you see in you will never be compatible. But one exists.**

We have set up a war in our minds, having been convinced by the ego that we are at war with God. The ego's understanding, of course, has nothing to do with the true God, Who does not know about the separation or the split mind. The ego's God most definitely does. When we pushed away our Source, and then His memory – the Holy Spirit – we set up a conflict in our minds. The ego fabricated the cause of the problem by telling us that the Holy Spirit was going to push back, and drag us to God Who would destroy us for our sin. Believing the reality of this conflict, we split it off and projected it from our minds so that our sinful self was perceived to be outside and at war with us. This culminates in our experience that we are the innocent victims, and this newly made sinful self is the victimizer.*

Our special relationships – our "frantic attempts to reconcile" – represent the ego's plan to resolve the conflict. In the special hate form I believe the enemy is outside, and by destroying it my innocence will prevail. In the special love form, my inner conflict is concealed by the love I experience when I am with this special person. I do not have to feel the pain and terror lurking in my mind, because in the presence of this special person I feel comfortable and secure. This person's attention, devotion, and approval

leave me feeling good about myself, and I never have to look at the fact that I believe that *I* am "the home of evil, darkness and sin."

**(2:1) The fact that truth and illusion cannot be reconciled, no matter how you try, what means you use and where you see the problem, must be accepted if you would be saved.**

Here again we see Jesus falling back on the non-dualistic metaphysics of his course: *There is no conflict.* We are not at war with God or anyone else, because truth is undivided and indivisible. When we believe we separated from truth and attacked it, truth is perceived as coexisting with illusion and in conflict with it. Thus we find dualistic religions teaching that truth is at war with sin, which is why, for example, the Bible is replete with accounts of great battles, culminating in Revelation, home of the bloodiest battle of all – Armageddon. In the end, truth and good will triumph over illusion and evil, exemplified by the biblical tale of Jesus' triumph on the cross. From the perspective of *A Course in Miracles,* however, once we see truth as involved with illusion, we no longer speak of real truth, which is absolute and whole. Nothing else *is* at all, as Jesus reminds us in this important passage:

> There is nothing outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you. For God created only this, and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself. The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him. Heaven is not a place nor a condition. It is merely an awareness of perfect Oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within (T-1 8 .VI. 1).

By remembering this happy Fact, brought about by our acceptance of the Atonement, we are saved from the conflict that never was.

**(2:2) Until you have accepted this** [the irreconcilability of truth and illusion], **you will attempt an endless list of goals you cannot reach; a senseless series of expenditures of time and effort, hopefulness and doubt, each one as futile as the one before, and failing as the next one surely will.**

This is how we experience everything in this world, and why nothing works. We consistently attempt to solve the unbearable problem of anxiety and guilt. However, all the while our secret attempt to perpetuate our individuality *through* anxiety and guilt remains in full force, dictating the futile attempts to find peace through war and conflict, the familiar ego doctrine of *seek and do not find.*

**(3:1) Problems that have no meaning cannot be resolved within the framework they are set.**

All problems are experienced within the framework of the body and the world, but they cannot be resolved here because they do not exist here. They are within our minds, coming from the choice to believe in the ego. This one problem is repressed because the guilt is overwhelming and, having projected it, we now see problems all around us, but never within us. Once the ego's strategy is accomplished, we continually seek to

solve these pseudo- problems, investing vast expenditures of time and effort in doing so. Yet our problem-solving efforts will never work because they *can* never work. Indeed, nothing works in this world, and thus no one is ever truly happy here. To be sure, our specialness needs may be met at any given moment, but that moment is short-lived, for guilt demands we never be truly happy. Thus we would never be able to accept the happiness that specialness affords us. Our egos would question, for example: How could someone love us, let alone stay with us?; or: let me wait for the other shoe to drop. These doubts arise only because the underlying problem of guilt is never examined.

Thus, forgiveness proceeds to go the other way, reversing projection. We are taught by our new Teacher to bring the problem to the answer, the ego's illusion to His truth. Once the problem of guilt is brought into its correct framework – the mind's decision to be guilty – it can easily be resolved.

**(3:2) Two selves in conflict could not be resolved, and good and evil have no meeting place.**

This, again, expresses the underlying metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles,* which, discussed in great detail in the text, forms the foundation of the workbook. Its early lessons – let alone the statement we were just looking at – cannot be understood without first recognizing this is a non-dualistic thought system. There is God, Heaven, truth, and nothing else. The problem rests in our believing there is something else. It is this belief that has to be undone, not the pseudo-problems that merely reflect the true problem. The above sentence parallels "The Meeting Place," which makes the same point in the context of the two sons: our own beloved son (specialness) and the Father's Son:

> And thus are two sons made, and both appear to walk this earth without a meeting place and no encounter. One do you perceive outside yourself, your own beloved son. The other rests within, his Father's Son, within your brother as he is in you. Their difference does not lie in how they look, nor where they go, nor even what they do. They have a different purpose. It is this that joins them to their like, and separates each from all aspects with a different purpose. The Son of God retains his Father's Will. The son of man perceives an alien will and wishes it were so. And thus does his perception serve his wish by giving it appearances of truth (T-24.VII.11:1-9).

We thus see the all-important theme of purpose holding the key to understanding our fascination with the "evil" of specialness, which supports the wish to make it our son. Our choice for the "good" of God's Son serves the purpose of proving we were wrong, and happily so.

**(3:3) The self you made can never be your Self, nor can your Self be split in two, and still be what It is and must forever be.**

When we believe our Self can be split, leading to the specialness we think is our self and which has to be undone, we are saying it actually happened. Yet what has to be undone is not the split nor our specialness, but our belief in them. The distinction is crucial. When we say we have to undo our belief, we speak of the mind's decision that can be corrected. If we attempt to undo the split or our specialness, we have merely

strengthened the belief in their reality.

**(3:4) A mind and body cannot both exist.**

Jesus is not talking about the split mind, but *mind* equated with *spirit,* expressing the familiar idea of *one or the other* – the ego or God. We find it also in the following passage from the text:

> You see the flesh or recognize the spirit. There is no compromise between the two. If one is real the other must be false, for what is real denies its opposite. There is no choice in vision but this one (T-31.VI.1:1-4).

**(3:5) Make no attempt to reconcile the two, for one denies the other can be real.**

So many students of *A Course in Miracles* attempt to reconcile the two – mind and body – by bringing spirit, God, or Jesus into the world to fix it. When people speak of integrating mind, body, and spirit, from the perspective of A *Course in Miracles* they are denying the reality of spirit. Once dragged into the world, spirit ceases to be itself. "What is all-encompassing can have no opposite" (T-in.1:8), and the all-encompassing spirit has no place in a world of opposites. The current thought is that to be truly integrated as a person we must integrate mind, body, and spirit. This again is exactly what the ego wants. Such an approach may indeed work, but it is not what *this course* teaches. Spirit, mind, and body cannot be integrated, for spirit transcends the mind and body entirely. Moreover, the body has no true substance, being merely a thought in the mind and never having left that source.

**(3:6-7) If you are physical, your mind** [spirit] **is gone from your self-concept, for it has no place in which it could be really part of you. If you are spirit** [mind], **then the body must be meaningless to your reality.**

That is the problem. If I am one Self united with my Creator, unified within myself, I cannot be a body. This means I cannot be an individual, nor special. This idea is presented more fully in the following, part of the previously quoted passage:

> On this one choice [between spirit and flesh] does all your world depend, for here have you established what you are, as flesh or spirit in your own belief. If you choose flesh, you never will escape the body as your own reality, for you have chosen that you want it so. But choose the spirit, and all Heaven bends to touch your eyes and bless your holy sight, that you may see the world of flesh no more except to heal and comfort and to bless (T-31.VI.1: 6-8).

In other words, in each and every moment we have the opportunity of deciding who we are: children of specialness or God; separation or oneness, the body or spirit. What we choose determines our experience. Quite simply, it is the choice between Heaven or hell.

**(4:1) Spirit makes use of mind as means to find its Self expression.**

This is analogous to the line I referred to above: "mind is the activating agent of spirit" (C-1.1:1). Here, too, *mind* is used in the sense of *spirit. We* can see again the importance of reading *A Course in Miracles as* a work of art rather than a scientific treatise, where the words need to be dissected, analyzed, and understood for their literal meaning. Our study and practice of the Course, however, is best served by allowing the words to permeate our hearts, the brain merely being the vehicle that allows the thoughts back into the mind's awareness. Thus Jesus uses concepts with spatial and temporal connotations – "means to find its Self expression" – to lift us beyond these dimensions to the infinite realm of the timeless.

The focus now shifts:

**(4:2-3) And the mind which serves the spirit is at peace and filled with joy. Its power comes from spirit, and it is fulfilling happily its function here.**

Our function here is salvation, healing, and forgiveness. The power to forgive comes through the Holy Spirit, the memory of our reality as spirit. Thus Jesus speaks of the right mind, rather than the Mind of Christ, Whose function is only creation.

**(4:4) Yet mind can also see itself divorced from spirit, and perceive itself within a body it confuses with itself.**

Here Jesus speaks of the wrong mind. Our right minds are linked with spirit through the Holy Spirit, Who we defined as the memory of God we took with us into the dream of separation. Thus, in our right minds we are forever joined with the Holy Spirit, and therefore with Christ. When we separate from that unity, however, we are wrong-minded, believing we exist in a body, independent of God, spirit, and our true Self. This wrong mind is the home of sin, guilt, fear, and individuality. We project our sin and see it in other bodies, which establish ours as innocent of what has been done to us. Even if we see ourselves as sinful, there remains a thought saying someone made us this way. We were not born like this, and even if we were, we protest it was not our choice. The bad genes were given us by someone else. In other words, it does not matter whether I see your or my body as sinful. There will always be those I hold responsible – self-blame and blame are but the same dynamic with different forms:

> If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them. That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere. Lay it to yourself and you cannot know yourself, for only the ego blames at all. Self-blame is therefore ego identification, and as much an ego defense as blaming others (T-11TV.5:1-5).

**(4:5) Without its function then it has no peace, and happiness is alien to its thoughts.**

The function of our minds is to undo guilt – the belief in the body's reality – through forgiveness. This concept of undoing is a *leitmotif* running through the Course. We are not asked to deny the body – ours or another's – but to undo the false perception of the body's purpose, substituting the Holy Spirit's instead: forgiveness for attack, spirit for body, returning home for remaining in the ego's far country of separation:

> Salvation is undoing.... [It] does not ask that you behold the spirit and perceive the body not. It merely asks that this should be your choice. For you can see the body without help, but do not understand how to behold a world apart from it. It is your world salvation will undo, and let you see another world your eyes could never find.... The veil of ignorance is drawn across the evil and the good, and must be passed that both may disappear, so that perception finds no hiding place. How is this done? It is not done at all. What could there be within the universe that God created that must still be done? (T-31.VI.2:1; 3:1-4, 8-11)

Peace comes through undoing thoughts of conflict, which requires no effort, for "what must still be done?" By choosing to forgive the mind's decision for guilt, rather than solve it in the body, we have made the choice to accept reality as it is. We do not seek to change it, and then preserve its transformed and illusory image. Through undoing what never was, Christ's vision lifts the veil that kept hidden the memory of our Self. Forgiveness is complete, and disappears as the function of creation dawns on our awakening minds.

**(5:1) Yet mind apart from spirit cannot think.**

This refers to the wrong mind; and, as we know, the ego cannot think. True Thought is reflected in our right minds as the Atonement principle, which reminds us of our Identity as a Thought of God. When we separate from that Thought, we think we are thinking, but that is not thinking at all, just as we do not truly see through our eyes, nor hear through our ears.

**(5:2-3) It has denied its Source of strength, and sees itself as helpless, limited and weak. Dissociated from its function now, it thinks it is alone and separate, attacked by armies massed against itself and hiding in the body's frail support.**

This is what happens when we separate from the Love of God and the Source of our strength. We project responsibility for that wrong-minded state and thus believe everyone is our enemy. We feel totally alone, and there is indeed no hope, for the vulnerability our guilt teaches is our reality demands we see ourselves forever "at the mercy of things beyond [us], forces [we] cannot control, and thoughts that come to [us] against [our] will" (T-19.IV-D.7:4). Only by changing our self- perception can we find the peace and rest of the innocent. Thus we read:

> Are you invulnerable? Then the world is harmless in your sight. Do you forgive? Then is the world forgiving, for you have forgiven it its trespasses, and so it looks on you with eyes that see as yours. Are you a body? So is all the world perceived as treacherous, and out to kill. Are you a spirit, deathless, and without the promise of corruption and the stain of sin upon you? So the world is seen as stable, fully worthy of your trust; a happy place to rest in for a while, where nothing need be feared, but only loved. Who is unwelcome to the kind in heart? And what could hurt the truly innocent? (T-3 1 .W.6)

**(5:4) Now must it reconcile unlike with like, for this is what it thinks that it is for.**

Now we try to resolve the conflict where it is not, seeing ourselves as unlike God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We are the illusion, They the truth; and we seek to reconcile with Them by asking Their help – but not Their *real* help. We seek to reinforce our illusory individual existence and the false sense of security and happiness on which our egos thrive. By bringing the truth to the illusion the ego has ensured its survival, which can never withstand exposing its lies. The last thing our egos want us to remember is that we, like the Trinity, are spirit, and that *the Idea of God's Son (spirit) has never left Its Source (spirit).* Like remains forever joined with Like.

**(6:1-2) Waste no more time on this. Who can resolve the senseless conflicts which a dream presents?**

In other words, Jesus is telling us to stop wasting our time trying to solve problems in the world. This is the meaning of "I Need Do Nothing" (T-19.VII). We think we need do something, because there is a perceived problem that demands our attention and action. Yet we need do nothing because what we think to be the problem – something external to our minds – is not the problem at all. However, this does not mean that on the level of the dream we should not resolve problems here or take care of our or other people's bodies. Jesus means not to proceed on our own. We need realize, he tells us, that the real problem of our discontent or disease is our separation from him. By not separating from him and his love by asking him to help us, the real problem of separation from love will be undone. This had led to our anxiety, fear, depression, and sense of failure. Once those thoughts are out of the way and Jesus' love has become reality, together, joined in that love, we can address what needs to be addressed, and there will be no tension, anxiety, or fatigue. The problem will be resolved smoothly, for we shall have been freed from the inner conflict that would have impeded the effective solution of any perceived problem in the world.

To repeat this crucial thought: Jesus is not saying to ignore problems here. He is instructing us to address our concerns with him by our side, that his vision becomes our own, and we may grow to understand the true nature of the problem and its solution.

**(6:3-5) What could the resolution mean in truth? What purpose could it serve? What is it for?**

We have seen this idea – purpose is everything – many times before. The purpose of the world's problems is to root us in the dream and keep our ego identity sacrosanct. Thus we would never recall our non-dualistic Identity. The decision maker, the dreamer of our dream, makes up smoke screens to distract and upset us *here* (in the body), so that nothing will change *there* (in the mind). Once again, the nature of the real problem is that we pushed Jesus away. If we invite him back and join him in our minds, the problem of separation is undone. Our concerns with external problems are thus alleviated, allowing us to devote unconflicted attention to them and to their resolution.

**(6:6) Salvation cannot make illusions real, nor solve a problem that does not exist.**

If you read this statement carefully, it is clear that Jesus is saying we should not ask the Holy Spirit to solve our worldly problems: "Salvation cannot make illusions real,"

which is what solving a problem means, nor can it "solve a problem that does not exist," which would obviously make no sense. Salvation solves a problem at its source: choosing the ego over the Holy Spirit. Asking the Holy Spirit's help undoes the problem entirely, allowing the memory of His answer to return.

**(6:7-8) Perhaps you hope it can. Yet would you have God's plan for the release of His dear Son bring pain to him, and fail to set him free?**

Our hope is that "salvation" would solve a problem here. Yet whenever we ask Jesus for help in the world, we ensure we will never leave it and return home. Furthermore, we ensure that pain will come to the Sonship, since the ego's salvation can be attained only through the sacrifice of happiness – ours or another's – thus enslaving us in its thought system. That is why we call it *slavation*

.

**(7:1) Your Self retains Its Thoughts, and they remain within your mind and in the Mind of God.**

This is the right mind again, and its thoughts are expressions of the Atonement principle, such as forgiveness or healing. These reflect the unified Thought of Love, which is in the Mind of God and has never left its Source.

**(7:2) The Holy Spirit holds salvation in your mind, and offers it the way to peace.**

The way to peace is to turn from the ego to the Holy Spirit, the thought of Atonement that saves us from our belief in the reality of the separation.

**(7:3) Salvation is a thought you share with God, because His Voice accepted it for you and answered in your name that it was done.**

When we chose to make the separation real, we drowned out the Holy Spirit's Voice and heard only the voice of specialness. The effectiveness of the ego's plan of using specialness as static to prevent us from hearing the Voice of truth is movingly expressed in this passage from "The Treachery of Specialness":

> What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you (T-24.11.4:3-6).

The good news is that although we have the power within the dream not to listen, this does not mean the Voice of Love is not in our right minds, kept for us in safekeeping.

**(7:4) Thus is salvation kept among the Thoughts your Self holds dear and cherishes for you.**

This, then, is another statement of the Atonement theme: The thought of separation never occurred, and merely seems to cover awareness of the Thought that reminds us of our Identity. Jesus, the voice that speaks for our Self, has held this Thought for us, as we recall from this inspiring passage we have already quoted, and happily read again:

> I have saved all your kindnesses and every loving thought you ever had. I have purified them of the errors that hid their light, and kept them for you in their own perfect radiance. They are beyond destruction and beyond guilt. They came from the Holy Spirit within you, and we know what God creates is eternal (T-51V.8:3 -6).

That is why salvation is not something to be accomplished, but merely accepted.

**(8:1-2) We will attempt today to find this thought, whose presence in your mind is guaranteed by Him Who speaks to you from your one Self. Our hourly five-minute practicing will be a search for Him within your mind.**

As we have already seen, the way we search for the Holy Spirit within our right minds, which is the meaning of *mind* here, is to turn away from our wrong minds. This means turning from our investment in being right about our autonomous individuality. Our recognition that such self-reliance has not brought us the happiness and peace we sought is what will motivate us to remember each hourly practice. It is our fear of such recognition that causes us to forget.

**(8:3-9:3) Salvation comes from this one Self through Him Who is the Bridge between your mind and It. Wait patiently, and let Him speak to you about your Self, and what your mind can do, restored to It and free to serve Its Will.**
**Begin with saying this:**

***Salvation comes from my one Self. Its Thoughts are mine to use.***

Remembering that we can only find happiness through changing teachers, we devote our day to reinforcing what we wish to learn. Thus we turn from the false self of specialness by choosing the thoughts that reflect the Thought of Who we truly are, as we listen to the Voice reminding us of our Self; thus we turn to the Holy Spirit, the Voice that bridges the gap between illusion and truth, and gently teaches us to forgive what never happened.

**(9:4-7) Then seek Its Thoughts, and claim them as your own. These are your own real thoughts you have denied, and let your mind go wandering in a world of dreams, to find illusions in their place. Here are your thoughts, the only ones you have. Salvation is among them; find it there.**

Our decision maker cherished the idea of being on its own, and therefore chose to deny its real thoughts – expressions of the Atonement principle – and accepted in their place the thoughts of specialness. This caused its mind to wander in the far country of the world of dreams, which took the place of truth. Like the Prodigal Son in the

parable, we have come to see the error of our ways – the mistaken choices that led to pain and suffering – and choose instead the thoughts of salvation that will bring us home to the Father we never left. Once we have chosen these thoughts, they become our own.

**(10:1) If you succeed, the thoughts that come to you will tell you you are saved, and that your mind has found the function that it sought to lose.**

This is the function of our right minds: to choose salvation. We cannot but succeed, once we shift our purpose from guilt to forgiveness, damnation to salvation, self to Self.

**(10:2-5) Your Self will welcome it and give it peace. Restored in strength, it will again flow out from spirit to the spirit in all things created by the Spirit as Itself. Your mind will bless all things. Confusion done, you are restored, for you have found your Self.**

This is the Oneness of creation, the opposite of the separation that flows from the ego. Restoring the function of forgiveness to our awareness, we reclaim the strength we had sought to lose. Being found, it rejoins the Source of strength, which rests in our function of creation: love extending to love, joy flowing to joy, Christ coming unto His Own. Together, with all God's Sons,

> we will disappear into the Presence beyond the veil, not to be lost but found; not to be seen but known. And knowing, nothing in the plan God has established for salvation will be left undone. This is the journey's purpose, without which is the journey meaningless. Here is the peace of God, given to you eternally by Him. Here is the rest and quiet that you seek, the reason for the journey from its beginning (T-19.IV-D.19:1-5).
>
> And we are home, where God would have us be (T-31.VIII.12:8).

**(11) Your Self knows that you cannot fail today. Perhaps your mind remains uncertain yet a little while. Be not dismayed by this. The joy your Self experiences It will save for you, and it will yet be yours in full awareness. Every time you spend five minutes of the hour seeking Him Who joins your mind and Self, you offer Him another treasure to be kept for you.**

We do not know we are home, for the experience of our Self still awaits us. Yet Jesus assures us Christ is there, and reassures us we shall remember, for each daily and hourly remembrance speeds us closer to our goal.

**(12:1-2) Each time today you tell your frantic mind salvation comes from your one Self, you lay another treasure in your growing store. And all of it is given everyone who asks for it, and will accept the gift.**

Our celestial "pep talk" continues. Jesus wants us to have faith in our practicing and not to lose heart when we forget a time period, or are tempted to believe what we are doing has no effect. Needless to say, the *you* mentioned here is the decision maker,

which tells the frantic wrong mind it was mistaken in its original choice. It is our self telling our self that our identity as a wrong-minded individual is untrue. Thus we come to understand we chose that identity because we were afraid of the glorious truth of our one Self, a mistake we can now forgive as we joyfully accept the Holy Spirit's gift of salvation.

Moreover, the gift is given everyone because minds are joined, even though each separated Son must accept it for himself. That is the key. Sometimes people wonder why they are here if Jesus has already accepted the Atonement. From his point of view, of course, we are not here. The problem is that we have refused to accept his Atonement and love, and therefore remain asleep in our world of dreams, still dreaming. Again, our gift of remembering is given everyone, but we must want it for ourselves.

**(12:3) Think, then, how much is given unto you to give this day, that it be given you!**

What is given us to give is the memory of Who we are as God's one Son, the Christ that God created one with Him. Once we choose that for ourselves, we know God has only one Son, our Self. We then become the symbol of salvation for the world. This acceptance of our true Identity—the acceptance of the Atonement for ourselves – becomes an important theme in the lessons that follow.
* For an in-depth examination of this dynamic, see my *The Message of A COURSE IN MIRACLES,* Vol 1: *All Are Called,* Chapters 2-4.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 97**
**I am spirit.**

This lesson continues the theme of our true Self or Identity, which we explored in earlier lessons. Here, our true Self is specifically identified with spirit.

**(1:1-2) Today's idea identifies you with your one Self. It accepts no split identity, nor tries to weave opposing factors into unity.**

I spoke earlier about the trend, especially in holistic medicine, to unify spirit, mind, and body. This lesson again makes it clear that it is impossible to weave into a unity two states that are mutually irreconcilable: spirit and the split mind; spirit and body. Thus we are asked to choose between truth and illusion. This important theme will also be expressed as the lessons continue.

**(1:3-4) It simply states the truth. Practice this truth today as often as you can, for it will bring your mind from conflict to the quiet fields of peace.**

This truth is that we are spirit, the Self to which we bring all false thoughts of our identity. These illusions have been so well learned that it takes much practice to unlearn. To motivate us, as well as to provide a framework for this unlearning is the purpose of these exercises. Over time, therefore, we are gently led from fields of battle and conflict to "the quiet fields of peace" in which our Self is remembered.

**(1:5) No chill of fear can enter, for your mind has been absolved from madness, letting go illusions of a split identity.**

Jesus is reminding us that we have chosen against the ego and for the Holy Spirit, recalling that our reality is spirit, not the split mind or body. When we choose the Holy Spirit, we choose the thought in our minds that is the memory of Who we are as Christ. Since perfect love casts out fear, to quote the famous biblical line (1 John 4:18), when we choose to remember love no chill of fear can enter our minds. This is the miracle's role, as this early syllogism in the text points out:

> In sorting out the false from the true, the miracle proceeds along these lines:
>
> *Perfect love casts out fear.*
> *If fear exists,*
> *Then there is not perfect love.*
> But:
>
> *Only perfect love exists.*
> *If there is fear,*
> *It produces a state that does not exist* (T-1.VI.5:3-8).

Thus is the sanity of our right minds returned to us, and we remember our identity as spirit.

**(2) We state again the truth about your Self, the holy Son of God Who rests in you, whose mind has been restored to sanity. You are the spirit lovingly**

**endowed with all your Father's Love and peace and joy. You are the spirit which completes Himself, and shares His function as Creator. He is with you always, as you are with Him.**

Asking the Holy Spirit to teach us to forgive restores us to the sanity that corrects the ego's illusions. Fear has been brought to love, which gently dissolves it in the truth. As we fulfill our function of forgiveness here, our function of creation in Heaven returns to our awareness as spirit, and we remember the Oneness that created us as one with It.

**(3) Today we try to bring reality still closer to your mind. Each time you practice, awareness is brought a little nearer at least; sometimes a thousand years or more are saved. The minutes which you give are multiplied over and over, for the miracle makes use of time, but is not ruled by it. Salvation is a miracle, the first and last; the first that is the last, for it is one.**

This passage makes the same point seen in the early pages of the text where Jesus discusses the miracle's role in our salvation. Its purpose is to collapse time, saving us even a thousand years. Without going in depth into *A Course in Miracles'* metaphysics of time,* we can simply say that since time is not linear, all of it having occurred in one instant, Jesus teaches that when we choose a miracle, we choose to undo huge sections of our thought system that we believe exist in time. Thus he says:

> The miracle minimizes the need for time.... [It] has the unique property of abolishing time to the extent that it renders the interval of time it spans unnecessary. There is no relationship between the time a miracle takes and the time it covers. The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years.... [It] shortens time by collapsing it, thus eliminating certain intervals within it. It does this, however, within the larger temporal sequence (T-1 .II.6:1, 5-7, 9-1 0).

As an example, consider yourself as one who has experienced much abandonment in your life. This script, of course, covers the entire hologram of time and space, and therefore this theme has no doubt been relived again and again over many lifetimes. For the sake of this discussion, let us just think of ten lifetimes, each spanning a hundred years. When you forgive the abandoning figures in your current life, the result is like a domino effect, erasing the remaining nine non-linear lifetimes along with the current one. In that sense, then, you have saved "a thousand years." To shift metaphors, think of a computer in which you have a file called *Abandonment* containing the many times you have been abandoned. Incidentally, understanding the dynamic of projection helps us understand that behind our accusations is the self-accusation of having abandoned love first. When the holy instant comes in which we forgive, the entire file of *Abandonment* – grievances held against others, guilt held against ourselves – is deleted.

It should also be obvious that Jesus does not literally mean a thousand, because there is no time. The content behind the numeric symbol is Jesus' teaching that *A Course in Miracles* will save you time. When you forgive one of your special partners, behind that one stands thousands of other objects of your projected hate:

> Your brother first among them will be seen, but thousands stand behind

him, and beyond each one of them there are a thousand more (T-27.V.10:4).

This, then, is what Jesus means by the miracle. Mistakenly, we believe each time we think of God throughout the day we are thinking of God just for that single moment. In truth, however, we *are undoing* a long series of mistakes in which we have forgotten God and chosen the ego instead. Through this undoing we are saved from our mad illusions of separation, guilt, and specialness. The same are one, since there is but one mistake. Thus the miracle undoes them all, since there is only one problem from which we need to be saved.

**(4) You are the spirit in whose mind abides the miracle in which all time stands still; the miracle in which a minute spent in using these ideas becomes a time that has no limit and that has no end. Give, then, these minutes willingly, and count on Him Who promised to lay timelessness beside them. He will offer all His strength to every little effort that you make. Give Him the minutes which He needs today, to help you understand with Him you are the spirit that abides in Him, and that calls through His Voice to every living thing; offers His sight to everyone who asks; replaces error with the simple truth.**

The miracle is outside time, and so "all time stands still" within it. It represents our right minds, to which we go when we want to recognize we have been wrong and the Holy Spirit correct. Choosing the miracle thus means letting the ego's hand go and taking the Holy Spirit's in its stead. The decision-making part of our minds is outside time and space, and in that sense is timeless. We experience the effects of this change within the world of time, which is why Jesus speaks of saving time – thousands of years. In reality, however, we have simply returned to our timeless minds and chosen again.

The underlying theme here is that the Holy Spirit cannot help us unless we allow Him to. In other words, our part is to give "these minutes.... [and] every little effort" to the Holy Spirit. Rather than expend them on denying the truth, we are asked to apply that same effort to correct our mistake. This reflects the central theme of a little willingness:

> Your part is only to offer Him a little willingness to let Him remove all fear and hatred, and to be forgiven (T-18.V.2:5).

Note as well the theme of all-inclusiveness, an integral part of the fabric of Jesus' teaching. Our true Self – spirit – calls to everyone, without exception. God's Son is one, and to offer vision's correction to some and not all ensures the correction will never be. This idea is found throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and the following passage is representative:

> To everyone has God entrusted all, because a partial savior would be one who is but partly saved. The holy ones whom God has given you to save are but everyone you meet or look upon, not knowing who they are; all those you saw an instant and forgot, and those you knew a long while since, and those you will yet meet; the unremembered and the not yet born. For God has given you His Son to save from every concept that he ever held (T-31.VII.10:4-6).

By learning to forgive *all* the Sonship, we come to know that the inner Voice we have followed is truly God's.

**(5:1) The Holy Spirit will be glad to take five minutes of each hour from your hands, and carry them around this aching world where pain and misery appear to rule.**

Note that Jesus does not say the Holy Spirit will carry them around this happy and joyful world. He wants us to understand this is a world of pain, misery, and suffering. You may recall a similar sentiment expressed in the manual for teachers:

> ... it is time alone that winds on wearily, and the world is very tired now. It is old and worn and without hope (M-1.4:4-5).

If we fail to understand the world's pain, there would be no motivation to choose a different thought, and without such choice our misery cannot be undone.

The manual closes with a lovely prose poem, expressing Heaven's gratitude for our decision to accept and extend the message of hope the tired world yearns to hear. It begins:

> And now in all your doings be you blessed. God turns to you for help to save the world. Teacher of God, His thanks He offers you, And all the world stands silent in the grace You bring from Him.
> (M-29.8:1-3)

**(5:2-3) He will not overlook one open mind that will accept the healing gifts they bring, and He will lay them everywhere He knows they will be welcome. And they will increase in healing power each time someone accepts them as his thoughts, and uses them to heal.**

I spoke earlier about *A Course in Miracles'* use of language, and I return briefly to that theme here. Jesus does not literally mean that the Holy Spirit "will not overlook one open mind," and that He will lay His healing gifts "everywhere He knows they will be welcome." *The Holy Spirit does not do things.* He is spoken of here as if he does, as if He were a member of homo sapiens, but this is only a metaphor to express *our* experience of Him. In reality the Holy Spirit's Love is present only in the Son's one mind, and does nothing. It simply is.

In the holy instant – when I choose to accept the Holy Spirit's healing love – my mind is joined with the *whole* Sonship, not *part.* Choosing His Love I become one with It, for He has become fully present to my mind, which is now one with His. Moreover, my mind must be one with the Sonship, for it is one within itself. Therefore His Love must be present to the entire Sonship when I have accepted It in mine. That is the meaning of the later lesson, "When I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pI.137). Each aspect of the Sonship still must choose to accept that gift. However, once my mind has been healed in the holy instant, the Sonship as a whole receives the gift I have now accepted for myself.

**(6:1) Thus will each gift to Him be multiplied a thousandfold and tens of thousands more.**

This is so because in the holy instant, again, the Sonship is healed, not just my mind alone. There can be no thought of fragmentation when the mind is healed. The

importance of this theme of total inclusion is apparent by its recurrence throughout the Course. It forms the basis of forgiveness and the undoing of the ego's thought system of separation.

**(6:2-3) And when it is returned to you, it will surpass in might the little gift you gave as much as does the radiance of the sun outshine the tiny gleam a firefly makes an uncertain moment and goes out. The steady brilliance of this light remains and leads you out of darkness, nor will you be able to forget the way again.**

It is tempting to exclaim: "Oh really? I'll show you!" It is helpful to keep in mind our ego that seeks to prove Jesus wrong. An effective way of succeeding is to take statements like the above and prove otherwise. If we can forget the truth of this paragraph we will have proven him wrong, and will have once again established that the separation is a fact and we are right.

We should therefore always be aware of the need to prove Jesus wrong by demonstrating to him what a healthy ego we have. And the more people we collect to corroborate our egos, the more convincing our case becomes. That is why we need to attack others. Attack gives the message we are "bad"; and a defensive response demonstrates we are right and Jesus is wrong. '

Jesus' images of the sun and the firefly's "tiny gleam" bring to mind that what we think we experience within the tiny "reality" of our bodies has nothing to do with the glorious truth of his love present in our minds. Thus he tells us in the text that what we judged to be our greatest advances were our deepest retreats, while our perceived failures were our greatest successes (T-18.V.1:6). We do not understand anything. What to us seems as only a tiny expression of Jesus' love – acting kindly towards someone, for example – in truth has a tremendous impact on the Sonship. Keep in mind that it appears tiny because we judge from the limited and distorted perspective of our own experience. A passage such as this explains that the effect in our minds when we ask Jesus' help has far greater ramifications than we are aware.

**(7) Begin these happy exercises with the words the Holy Spirit speaks to you, and let them echo round the world through Him:**

***Spirit am I, a holy Son of God, free of all limits, safe and healed and whole, free to forgive, and free to save the world.***

**Expressed through you, the Holy Spirit will accept this gift that you received of Him, increase its power and give it back to you.**

These exercises are happy because their goal is to make us happy. We have already commented on the section "The Happy Learner" (T-14.11), which reflects this happy thought. Accepting the truth about ourselves undoes all pain and suffering, releasing the mind to the happiness the Holy Spirit holds for us and the Sonship, joined *with* us and *as* us.

**(8:1-2) Offer each practice period today gladly to "Him. And He will speak to you, reminding you that you are spirit, one with Him and God, your brothers and your Self.**

This lesson also enunciates the theme of oneness: We are one with God, the Holy Spirit, and the Sonship. The word "reminding" is important because it is a crucial description of the Holy Spirit's function. He does not do things on our behalf, nor tell us things. His Presence is the simple reminder of the truth. Recall this already familiar passage:

> The Voice of the Holy Spirit does not command, because It is incapable of arrogance. It does not demand, because It does not seek control. It does not overcome, because It does not attack. It merely reminds. It is compelling only because of what It reminds you *of* It brings to your mind the other way, remaining quiet even in the midst of the turmoil you may make (T-5.II.7: 1-6).

It remains for us to accept His remembrance. Such is the purpose of these lessons, to speed along acceptance of "the other way."

**(8:3) Listen for His assurance every time you speak the words He offers you today, and let Him tell your mind that they are true.**

He cannot tell our minds these words are true – our reality is spirit and not the body – unless we let Him. The responsibility is never on Jesus' shoulders or the Holy Spirit's, but our own. The bottom line in *A Course in Miracles* – and this cannot be emphasized enough – is not what They will do for us, but our choosing against the ego so that Their love is free to permeate every aspect of our lives.

**(8:4) Use them against temptation, and escape its sorry consequences if you yield to the belief that you are something else.**

Again, Jesus is saying these lessons have no relevance unless you apply them to specific instances when you are upset, anxious, or in any way disquieted. Before you reach for the form of magic that will allay your disquiet, ask Jesus to help you. He will never tell you *not* to use the magic, but his point is that he cannot help you awaken from your dream of pain unless you ask him.

Therefore, whenever you are tempted to use some form of specialness as a way of alleviating your anxiety or guilt, think first of the lesson and say to Jesus: "Please help me look at my upset differently." Without your fear, instead of reaching for the hand of specialness, you would reach for his hand instead. Even when you drop it, at least you will know that is what you have done. The little willingness to be honest with yourself is all he requires that you be his student and learn his lessons.

**(8:5-6) The Holy Spirit gives you peace today. Receive His words, and offer them to Him.**

We return to our motivation for learning *A Course in Miracles—the* Holy Spirit's peace:

> Forget not that the motivation for this course is the attainment and the keeping of the state of peace. Given this state the mind is quiet, and the condition in which God is remembered is attained (T-24.in.1:1-2).

Once we forgive and accept His peace – "the condition in which God is remembered" – it becomes our own, allowing the memory of our Self to dawn upon our minds. Thus is the Holy Spirit's gift returned to Him, and through Him to the Sonship.
* For a full discussion of *A Course in Miracles' view* of time, the interested reader may consult my *A Vast Illusion: Time According to A COURSE IN MIRACLES.*

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 98**

**I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation.**

In my introductory comments to Lesson 91, I said that the next twenty lessons directly or indirectly contrasted Self with self. The past seven have emphasized this distinction, and urged us to choose spirit as our identity instead of the body. These next two lessons introduce a subsidiary theme – our special function of forgiveness. This is the bridge enabling us to shift from our identity as an ego self to the glorious Self of Christ.

**(1:1) Today is a day of special dedication.**

As students work with *A Course in Miracles,* it is important they understand Jesus does not always reserve the word *special* for the ego. Students sometimes avoid the word as they would the plague, because of its connotations of scarcity, guilt, and murder. However, there are many places where Jesus uses *special in* a positive way, by way of telling us that it is not the word itself that is terrible, but its underlying thought system; the *content,* not the *form.* Thus today is special because of its place in the curriculum that will help us undo our belief in specialness and remember Who we are as God's Son.

**(1:2-3) We take a stand on but one side today. We side with truth and let illusions go.**

This is difficult because our choice for truth instead of illusion is a choice against our self. We therefore need a bridge to ease our fear. This bridge is our function of forgiveness – our part in God's plan for salvation.

**(1:4-6) We will not vacillate between the two, but take a firm position with the One. We dedicate ourselves to truth today, and to salvation as God planned it be. We will not argue it is something else.**

In other words, we will not argue that salvation is specialness; that it is what *we* think it is, rather than accepting what it really is – undoing guilt through forgiveness. Jesus thus urges us to make the one choice that will make us happy.

**(1:7-8) We will not seek for it where it is not. In gladness we accept it as it is, and take the part assigned to us by God.**

That part has nothing to do with behavior, nor with being God's holy messenger who speaks His words, literally. The part "assigned to us" is forgiveness, an activity solely of the mind, since *the dream leaves not its source.* Thus salvation is in the mind, and cannot be found where it is not; i.e., in the world or body.

**(2:1) How happy to be certain!**

In order for us to be happy we must realize what we thought we were certain about was wrong: "Do you prefer that you be right or happy?" (T-29.VII.1:9). To be happy means to be truly certain, identifying with the certainty of the Holy Spirit, not the ego's arrogance in believing it is right.

**(2:2-3) All our doubts we lay aside today, and take our stand with certainty of purpose, and with thanks that doubt is gone and surety has come. We have a mighty purpose to fulfill, and have been given everything we need with which to reach the goal.**

Our "mighty purpose" is to forgive, and "everything we need...to reach the goal" is the classroom of hate we made – the ancient script of specialness – which is still present to us as a classroom of forgiveness, with a new teacher. The presence of Jesus in our minds guarantees that when we choose, we will learn the lessons his classroom offers. Please note that Jesus does not send us lessons, nor is he the author of our script. He is its correction, without whom forgiving our specialness is impossible. This is not something we can do on our own.

That is why it is so important to pay careful attention to our world – personal and collective – for these are our classrooms. Remember, paying attention means recognizing the world is a miserable and painful place. Since it is not our home, and happiness is found only when we are home with God, not being with Him, by definition, means we will not be happy. Recognizing our unhappiness impels us to cry out for help: There must be another way and another teacher within our minds who can utilize this classroom not to punish or imprison, but to release.

To summarize, when Jesus says we have "everything we need" to reach the goal of truth, he is speaking of the classroom of our lives along with its teacher of forgiveness.

**(2:4-6) Not one mistake stands in our way. For we have been absolved from errors. All our sins are washed away by realizing they were but mistakes.**

Yet we cannot realize our sins were mistakes until we first recognize we have called them sins, established by our guilt. Only by understanding that guilt follows the use of everyone and everything as a substitute for the Love of God will we be motivated to ask for help in seeing our sin as merely the end product of a mistaken thought, which we can change with Jesus' help.

Jesus now turns to our guiltlessness: the state opposite to sin. He refers to those who have chosen the holy instant as their reality within the dream, and so are in the real world:

**(3:1) The guiltless have no fear, for they are safe and recognize their safety.**

The reason the guilty have fear is that guilt demands punishment, and therefore we will always fear the punishment we believe is forthcoming. However, if there is no guilt there can be no projection, which means we will no longer believe the sinner is outside, poised to attack us. Therefore, there is no fear and we are free to recognize our safety.

**(3:2-5) They do not appeal to magic, nor invent escapes from fancied threats without reality. They rest in quiet certainty that they will do what it is given them to do. They do not doubt their own ability because they know their function will be filled completely in the perfect time and place. They took the stand which we will take today** [i.e., "I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation."], **that we may share their certainty and thus increase it by accepting it ourselves.**

Those who are guiltless have accepted the Atonement for themselves, and have no need to seek substitutes for the Love of God, for they realize they *are* that Love. Jesus uses *magic* here to denote our special substitutes. The quiet certainty of the guiltless embraces the loving thoughts in the mind of the Sonship, the strength of which is always present in our minds – regardless of the symbol with which we choose to identify it – awaiting our decision to embrace it. The decision to accept that loving presence and its fruits of forgiveness comes only when we let go of the investment in being right and special.

**(4) They will be with us; all who took the stand we take today will gladly offer us all that they learned and every gain they made. Those still uncertain, too, will join with us, and, borrowing our certainty, will make it stronger still. While those as yet unborn will hear the call we heard, and answer it when they have come to make their choice again. We do not choose but for ourselves today.**

This reflects the important theme of the Sonship's unity, found not only in Heaven, as Christ, but in the fragmented world of billions and billions of separate parts. This crucial idea can never be understood from our point of view – individuality, separation, and differences. From this perspective, my being saved does not mean you are saved, or your being damned that I am damned. The truth, however, is that as one Son, we are saved and damned *together.* Therefore, what **I** see in you can only be what I see in myself If I seek to crucify you to escape my guilt, I am crucified as well. "It can be but myself I crucify," a later lesson tells us (W-pI.196). On the other hand, if I see you as absolved from sin because you are not responsible for my loss of peace, I am absolving myself as well. Keep in mind that this unity transcends the seeming limitations of time and space. Thus this oneness extends throughout what we consider to be the history of the cosmos – a history that spans many billions of years, and an almost infinite number of miles.

This paragraph, incidentally, is one of many passages in *A Course in Miracles* that strongly suggest reincarnation. Jesus specifically addresses this subject in the manual for teachers (M-24), where he states that belief in it is irrelevant to one's learning his curriculum of forgiveness:

> It is certain, however, that the way to salvation can be found by those who believe in reincarnation and by those who do not. The idea cannot, therefore, be regarded as essential to the curriculum.... For our purposes, it would not be helpful to take any definite stand on reincarnation (M-24.2:5-6; 3:1).

Jesus' statement makes perfect sense when one considers that a single or many bodily lives make no difference – an illusion remains an illusion: "There is no life outside of Heaven" (T-23.11.19:1). Salvation can be accepted in the only part of time that reflects reality: the holy instant.

**(5) Is it not worth five minutes of your time each hour to be able to accept the happiness that God has given you? Is it not worth five minutes hourly to recognize your special function here? Is not five minutes but a small request to make in terms of gaining a reward so great it has no measure? You have made a thousand losing bargains at the least.**

This is what Jesus asks us on almost every page of *A Course in Miracles* (see, e.g., T-20.VII.1:7-8): "I am asking you to give up so little, and in exchange **I** am offering you so much. Why don't you do it?" It is not because we are stupid; insane perhaps, but not stupid. We realize that if we give Jesus five minutes out of the hour, next time he is going to want ten, and then fifteen; and before you know it, he is going to demand the hour's full sixty minutes. We then protest: "What about *me?* What about my personal needs and self? Don't *I* count for anything?" And Jesus gently shakes his head and says: "No, you do not, because your individuality is an illusion." He does not demand we give it up, however, but he does ask us to look at the fact that the reason we cherish our individual identity so much is so we will not even give him five minutes an hour. This is not meant to be guilt inducing, to be sure, but a simple acknowledgment of our fear of love and truth, holding on to specialness instead. Learning about this fear is useful information as we seek to fulfill our special function. Incidentally, this term reflects the important section "The Special Function" (T-25.VI), which describes our function not in terms of form or behavior, but the change of mind brought about by our decision to forgive.

The idea of "a thousand losing bargains" is expressed throughout *A Course in Miracles* in discussions of special relationships. Jesus says to us: "Look honestly at the losing bargains you have made, all the times your specialness has failed you, despite your certainty that this time it would be different. Does not that tell you you should 'resign now as your own teacher' (T-12.V.8:3) and let me teach you instead?" If we look honestly at the terrible mistakes we have made in our lives, we would discover this underlying thought: "I can make a bargain with God and win. I can make a bargain with this person and win." Jesus gently reminds us this is not the truth. If one wins and another loses, the essence of any bargain, both lose. The oneness of the Sonship can never be compromised.

**(6:1) Here is an offer guaranteeing you your full release from pain of every kind, and joy the world does not contain.**

The problem is that we all respond: Who would I be without my pain, without the joys of specialness that is directed at an object, substance, or person? Where would I be if I did not have my daily fix, whatever its form? The problem is that we would gladly hold on to these forms because, as Jesus tells us in the text, we do not know the difference between pain and joy (T-7.X). We think the world gives us joy, but in fact it offers pain; and what truly gives us joy – accepting the Atonement – the ego tells us is painful.

**(6:2-5) You can exchange a little of your time for peace of mind and certainty of purpose, with the promise of complete success. And since time has no meaning, you are being asked for nothing in return for everything. Here is a bargain that you cannot lose. And what you gain is limitless indeed!**

Students may believe these are Jesus' words, yet there is a part of them that does not believe him. Therefore, allow yourself to experience Jesus telling you this, and listen as you say – it is important that you let yourself *hear* your words – "I do not believe you. I am not willing to let go of my specialness – my grievances, my addictions, my self – because there is a part of me that does not believe I will be better off taking your hand and accepting what you say."

Though students say these words to Jesus, they are usually unaware of having said them, let alone having such thoughts. However, if you *hear* yourself say these words, and understand the fear that caused them, there will be no guilt, which thrives on being hidden. Guilt prevents awareness through repression, and then protects itself through projection, which is when you inflict suffering on another or yourself. As you read these words – for example: "You can exchange a little of your time for peace of mind and certainty of purpose, with the promise of complete success" – hear your little voice say to Jesus: "Is that right! I do not trust your promise that I will be happy without my specialness." This thought of resistance is the ultimate source of all pain.

Again, you need, in all honesty, to let yourself be free enough to say to him: "I do not believe you." If you can speak thus, there will be no guilt, and the day when you can truly accept his words will be speeded along, as you happily greet this passage from the text:

> Here [in the world] does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little. He would sacrifice his own identity with everything, to find a little treasure of his own. And this he cannot do without a sense of isolation, loss and loneliness. This is the treasure he has sought to find. And he could only be afraid of it. Is fear a treasure? Can uncertainty be what you want? Or is it a mistake about your will, and what you really are? (T-26.VII.11:7-14)

**(7:1) Each hour today give Him your tiny gift of but five minutes.**

That is all Jesus asks. He is not asking for the full hour. Indeed, if all you gave him were three minutes, it would be enough. Try to be aware of resisting the thought of him every hour, and do not buy a wrist alarm watch to remind you. Such good intentions miss the point. Jesus wants you to *want* to think of him, and to forgive yourself for not doing so. If you have such a watch, for example, you are merely exchanging form for *content,* and will never learn the lesson of forgiveness. The idea is not that you spend five minutes each hour thinking of God, as if there were some magical or salvific value in these thoughts. Rather, it is that you learn to forgive yourself for *not* wanting to think of him. Recall our discussion of this idea from Lesson 95.

**(7:2-6) He will give the words you use in practicing today's idea the deep conviction and the certainty you lack. His words will join with yours, and make each repetition of today's idea a total dedication, made in faith as perfect and as sure as His in you. His confidence in you will bring the light to all the words you say, and you will go beyond their sound to what they really mean. Today you practice with Him, as you say:**

***I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation.***

We see Jesus once again asking for our little willingness, as he knows we lack the certainty it is the function of the Holy Spirit to provide. The willingness to remember our practice periods strengthens our fear-weakened certainty. Furthermore, as our conviction strengthens and resolve to forgive grows – our part in God's plan – we are able increasingly to move beyond the *form* of the words – "go beyond their sound" – to their *content* – "what they really mean." Thus we reach more deeply into the mind, where the ego has kept the truth from our remembrance.

**(8) In each five minutes that you spend with Him, He will accept your words and give them back to you all bright with faith and confidence so strong and steady they will light the world with hope and gladness. Do not lose one chance to be the glad receiver of His gifts, that you may give them to the world today.**

This is similar to what we saw at the end of Lesson 97. When we choose to accept Jesus' words and release our egos, we receive greater gifts than we would have thought possible. They are gifts that are not for us alone, but for the entire Sonship, without exception. Because of the rich treasures such gifts offer, we are urged by our teacher to practice as faithfully as we can.

**(9:1) Give Him the words, and He will do the rest.**

In the text, Jesus tells us our responsibility is to choose the miracle, and not be concerned with any of its effects. To revisit that important passage:

> Concern yourself not with the extension of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do not understand. Nor do you do them. It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you do not do them. Why should you worry how the miracle extends to all the Sonship when you do not understand the miracle itself? (T-16.11.1:3-6)

Our responsibility is to let go of the barriers to our forgiveness, not to extend it. If we believe our function is to extend forgiveness, we allow the ego to get in the way again and guide us to believe it is our function to forgive another and preach this holy gospel to the world. Once we say it is our function in the sense of behavior or form, we are adopting the ego's point of view.

The right-minded function of the split mind is to let go of the ego, *and that is all.* By identifying with the love of Jesus in our minds we have fulfilled our one responsibility. This allows his love to extend throughout the Sonship because that love is already in the Sonship. In fact, that love *is* the Sonship. Hence, all we need do is release the problem of our believing we are separated from love. That is salvation's simplicity (T-31.I).

**(9:2-4) He will enable you to understand your special function. He will open up the way to happiness, and peace and trust will be His gifts; His answer to your words. He will respond with all His faith and joy and certainty that what you say is true.**

Jesus is continually reminding us of the happy effects of having chosen the Holy Spirit as our Teacher. Our little willingness, expressing the decision to be happy rather than right, ensures we will indeed be happy. The words of acceptance of our part in God's plan for salvation – however ambivalent that acceptance may be – is all that is needed for our Teacher to reinforce our desire for happiness and peace and make them our own. Thus we come to understand the importance to us of our special function.

**(9:5-6) And you will have conviction then of Him Who knows the function that you have on earth as well as Heaven. He will be with you each practice period you share with Him, exchanging every instant of the time you offer Him for**

**timelessness and peace.**

In the next lesson we will see more specifically the Holy Spirit's function as a "bridge." In this passage He is described as knowing that our function here is to forgive, and in Heaven to create. This is not meant to be taken literally, but to remind us that as long as we believe we are in this dream, our function is forgiveness, accomplished through asking the Holy Spirit for help.

At the same time we ask His help to forgive, we allow ourselves to be in contact with His thought that contains the memory of Who we are as Christ; the thought that serves as the bridge that awakens us from the dream, as it reminds us there is a reality beyond the dream – the reality of our Self.

**(10) Throughout the hour, let your time be spent in happy preparation for the next five minutes you will spend again with Him. Repeat today's idea while you wait for the glad time to come to you again. Repeat it often, and do not forget each time you do so, you have let your mind be readied for the happy time to come.**

Jesus does not want us to underestimate the effect of even one five-minute period we give to him. Like money in the bank, it will grow, with each period building a strong foundation on which the next five minutes rest, and the ones to follow resting on what preceded them. This is similar to the passage in the text where Jesus describes the process of Atonement as a strong chain that is welded (T-1.III.9:2). In this case the welded chain is our personal journey that is strengthened with each and every practice period.

**(11:1) And when the hour goes and He is there once more to spend a little time with you, be thankful and lay down all earthly tasks, all little thoughts and limited ideas, and spend a happy time again with Him.**

Jesus speaks here in the context of the workbook, which provides structured exercises that help us take a little time throughout the day in which we divert our attention from the world – our earthly tasks and limited thoughts and ideas – and think only of God. Needless to say, exclusive attention to the mundane reflects our decision maker's choice to identify with the ego's limited littleness, instead of the happy and limitless ideas of the Holy Spirit. Yet these exercises will eventually lead to our going through the day paying attention to earthly tasks, at the same time remembering there is a love beyond the dream. Thus we are able to retain contact with that love at the same time our bodies go about their busy activities. The ultimate goal of our study and practice is that these teachings and lessons become so integrated that our day expresses *our* being the bridge between earth and Heaven. Such is the vision – retaining that quiet center within, all the while being active in the everyday world – that closes "I Need Do Nothing":

> Yet there will always be this place of rest to which you can return. And you will be more aware of this quiet center of the storm than all its raging activity. This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent. For from this center will you be directed how to use the body sinlessly (T-1 8.VII.8: 1-4).

Until we are able to identify with that quiet center of love, however, it is important we take specific time out of each hour – or whatever the lesson asks of us – to think of the Holy Spirit. We need to be aware of our mind's wrong-minded, right-minded split, not just the ego portion of the mind. There is a part of us that indeed gets caught up with specialness, but there is also a part that can be quiet and still.

**(11:2) Tell Him once more that you accept the part that He would have you take and help you fill, and He will make you sure you want this choice, which He has made with you and you with Him.**

This is not a choice the Holy Spirit makes for us, nor is it one we make on our own. It is a choice we make *with* Him. Therefore, we need to remember that what gives our daily lives meaning is not the fulfillment of our specialness needs, nor the destruction of our enemies; the meaning lies in seeing all things – "good" and "bad" – as classrooms in which we learn from our new Teacher how to forgive. The more we learn, the greater the joy that inevitably comes when we let go of our guilt. That is what reinforces our "little" efforts.

thought system that underlies it.

**(7:5-6) Forgive yourself the thought He wanted this for you. Then let the Thought with which He has replaced all your mistakes enter the darkened places of your mind that thought the thoughts that never were His Will.**

The responsibility is placed on us. We are the ones who have to choose the Atonement, the Thought of the Holy Spirit, and see it as the replacement for the ego's darkened thoughts. To effect that replacement we must fulfill our function of forgiveness: bringing the darkness to the light. Two passages from the text amplify this teaching of allowing the Holy Spirit's light and love to enter the darkened places of our minds, from which we had excluded Him. Thus does His light come streaming through to heal all pain the ego's darkness caused:

> The Holy Spirit's function is entirely communication. He therefore must remove whatever interferes with communication in order to restore it. Therefore, keep no source of interference from His sight, for He will not attack your sentinels. But bring them to Him and let His gentleness teach you that, in the light, they are not fearful, and cannot serve to guard the dark doors behind which nothing at all is carefully concealed. We must open all doors and let the light come streaming through (T-14.VI.8:1-5).

> The Holy Spirit asks of you but this; bring to Him every secret you have locked away from Him. Open every door to Him, and bid Him enter the darkness and lighten it away. At your request He enters gladly. He brings the light to darkness if you make the darkness open to Him.... Bring, therefore, all your dark and secret thoughts to Him, and look upon them with Him. He holds the light, and you the darkness. They cannot coexist when both of You together look on them (T-14.VII.6: 1-4,8-10).

Once again, bringing our dark thoughts of judgment to the Holy Spirit's light of forgiveness is the core of our curriculum, the purpose of *A Course in Miracles.*

**(8:1-2) This part belongs to God, as does the rest. It does not think its solitary thoughts, and make them real by hiding them from Him.**

Our right mind holds the correction thought; our wrong mind holds all other thoughts. It is these thoughts – of specialness and hate – we have to bring to the Holy Spirit, the reflection of our Creator's Love.

**(8:3-9:1) Let in the light, and you will look upon no obstacle to what He wills for you. Open your secrets to His kindly light, and see how bright this light still shines in you.**
**Practice His Thought today, and let His light seek out and lighten up all darkened spots, and shine through them to join them to the rest.**

This is another statement of the forgiveness process, echoing the above passages from the text. With openness and honesty we look with Jesus at our ego thoughts, without shame or guilt, thus non-judgmentally bringing the darkness of our

specialness to the light of his gentle undoing. We have repeatedly seen that Jesus cannot shine away our illusions unless we ask his help. And we certainly cannot shine them away without him. Thus is forgiveness a collaborative venture; not an occurrence between two special partners, but between us and Jesus. We recall again his words that echo our mutual dependence:

> I need you as much as you need me (T-8.V.6:10).

**(9:2-4) It is God's Will your mind be one with His. It is God's Will that He has but one Son. It is God's Will that His one Son is you.**

This theme of oneness is recurrent, for the bedrock of Jesus' teaching is the Oneness of Heaven, and its reflection on earth that returns us to the unified state we never left.

**(9:5-8) Think of these things in practicing today, and start the lesson that we learn today with this instruction in the way of truth:**

***Salvation is my only function here.***
***Salvation and forgiveness are the same.***

**Then turn to Him Who shares your function here, and let Him teach you what you need to learn to lay all fear aside, and know your Self as Love which has no opposite in you.**

Thus we affirm our willingness to learn the lessons from our new Teacher, hoping to reinforce what He would have us learn. Our recognition that identifying with the ego self has brought us only fear and unhappiness is what motivates us to continue our happy journey with Him Who will bring us to our Self.

**(10:1-3) Forgive all thoughts which would oppose the truth of your completion, unity and peace. You cannot lose the gifts your Father gave. You do not want to be another self.**

It is important to acknowledge that there is a part of us that wants to be this other self. We need to let this go if we are to remember we are one with God. Without looking at this resistance to the truth, there is no hope of minimizing it sufficiently to enable truth's reflection to occupy more and more of our minds, allowing the darkness of our separation to be replaced by the light of unity. Thus we learn that the gift we thought we had lost was held for us in safekeeping through its Memory; thus we learn we are forgiven for the sin of stealing that we never committed. This reassurance finds lovely expression in the following excerpts from Helen's poem, "Heaven's Gift":

> No one can rob infinity.
> No one can take away from everything.
> Its very wholeness is a guarantee
> It is complete forever.
>
> No one can lessen love. It is itself

The Great Restorer. It can but return
All that is taken to itself. It knows
No loss, no limit and no lessening.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 80)

**(10:4-7) You have no function that is not of God. Forgive yourself the one you think you made. Forgiveness and salvation are the same. Forgive what you have made and you are saved.**

It is the darkness born of our belief we usurped God's function of creating that established the need for our earthly function of forgiveness. By forgiving what we never did, we erase the veil that interfered with our remembering that our function in Heaven is one with our Creator's, and can never be separate from it. Thus are we saved by the Atonement from what never was, for forgiveness undoes illusion. Incidentally, the final sentence echoes the one in Lesson 93: "You think you are destroyed, but you are saved" (4:4). The problem is we do not believe it. The culmination of "sin" is the making of our self, with which we identity, and so we do not believe that by letting go of this special self we will be saved. This is what we have to learn, and these exercises are part of Jesus' plan of undoing the false beliefs about ourselves (and others), so they may be replaced by truth.

**(11) There is a special message for today which has the power to remove all forms of doubt and fear forever from your mind. If you are tempted to believe them true, remember that appearances can not withstand the truth these mighty words contain:**

***Salvation is my only function here.***
***God still is Love, and this is not His Will.***

Jesus is again asking us to use these thoughts whenever we are tempted to believe they are not true. The light cannot shine away our ego's darkness unless we bring the darkness to it. The vigilance asked by these exercises facilitates the process of healing—our only function here.

**(12) Your only function tells you you are one. Remind yourself of this between the times you give five minutes to be shared with Him Who shares God's plan with you. Remind yourself:**

***Salvation is my only function here***

**Thus do you lay forgiveness on your mind and let all fear be gently laid aside, that love may find its rightful place in you and show you that you are the Son of God.**

This final paragraph summarizes the lesson's *form* and *content.* Diligence in applying the lesson's special message to all distressing situations in our day – the *form* – reflects the mind's decision to "let all fear be gently laid aside" – the *content* – as forgiveness replaces it with the love that gently brings us Home to our Self: God's one Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 100**
**My part is essential to God's plan for salvation.**

These next six lessons, 100 through 105, teach that God's Will for us is happiness, peace, and joy, not suffering. This is the obvious correction for the commonly held belief, not just in religious circles, that the Will of God (or of nature) is that we suffer and sacrifice, and happiness cannot be found without it.

**(1:1) Just as God's Son completes his Father, so your part in it completes your Father's plan.**

This does not mean that until I forgive, everyone suffers. It means that the instant I let my mind be healed of the belief in separation – the acceptance of the Atonement for myself ("your Father's plan") – the Sonship as a whole is healed, since it is one.

**(1:2) Salvation must reverse the mad belief in separate thoughts and separate bodies, which lead separate lives and go their separate ways.**

Jesus is speaking here of undoing the entire thought system of separation, in all its myriad number of shapes and sizes. Despite their differences in form, all thoughts and bodies share one salient characteristic: they are equally illusory. Nowhere is this better expressed than in this passage on the senseless substitutions of specialness with which we so fervently identify and believe to be reality:

> Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, have no substance. They fuse and merge and separate, in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all. To judge them individually is pointless. Their tiny differences in form are no real differences at all. None of them matters. *That* they have in common and nothing else. Yet what else is necessary to make them all the same? (T-18.I.7:6-12)

By seeing our illusory relationships for what they are, recognizing their fundamental sameness, we are gently "directed up the ladder separation led [us] down" (T-28.III.1:2). As another passage states:

> The Holy Spirit takes you gently by the hand, and retraces with you your mad journey outside yourself, leading you gently back to the truth and safety within. He brings all your insane projections and the wild substitutions that you have placed outside you to the truth. Thus He reverses the course of insanity and restores you to reason (T-1818:3-5).

The next line amplifies this process of reversal:

**(1:3) One function shared by separate mind unites them in one purpose, for each one of them is equally essential to them all.**

What enables us to ascend the ladder separation led us down is seeing the *one* purpose uniting us here. Thus is the truth of the oneness of God's Son reflected within the separated world of illusion. Asking Jesus' help that we may see through his eyes

allows us to overlook – look beyond – the superficial distinctions that would separate us from the purpose that makes us one.

**(2:1-4) God's Will for you is perfect happiness. Why should you choose to go against His Will? The part that He has saved for you to take in working out His plan is given you that you might be restored to what He wills. This part is as essential to His plan as to your happiness.**

We all know the answer to the question in the second sentence. If we are to be truly happy, we will have no problems – no past, specialness, or grievances. Without them we will not know who we are. As a result, we gladly sacrifice our true happiness so we can keep our little self intact. That explains why, as we go though each day, we are not always happy. Unhappiness is a decision that says we prefer to be unhappy and remain here, rather than happy and disappear into the Heart of God. We thus steadfastly resist fulfilling our part of forgiving our special relationships. The ego tells us if we retain our grievances we shall retain our separate identity, thus fulfilling its will instead of God's. We therefore remain right, but certainly not happy!

**(2:5-6) Your joy must be complete to let His plan be understood by those to whom He sends you. They will see their function in your shining face, and hear God calling to them in your happy laugh.**

Recall that the language of *A Course in Miracles* is that God or the Holy Spirit "sends" us to people. In truth, They send us nowhere, because there is no one to be sent to. Jesus, therefore, uses terms metaphorically in order to communicate with us at the level of our own experience. Christianity has used this language for centuries, although the terms were meant literally. The gospels explicitly state, and are meant to be taken literally, that God sends people to each other, and Jesus specifically exhorts his disciples to go out and teach the unbelievers (e.g., Matthew 28:19). In his course, Jesus uses identical language, but with a meaning decisively different from the traditional Christian one. Our lives are scripts that *we* – the decision makers in our minds – have written. The Holy Spirit provides His answer of forgiveness for every problem of guilt and attack we have made. Thus it is, once we have chosen to experience relationships through His eyes rather than our own, that every person we meet is "sent" to us, because every person offers us yet another opportunity to forgive. Every encounter therefore becomes a holy one, for in each is found Jesus' gentle reminder that because he is always with us, God's *one* Son is as well:

> When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him you will see yourself. As you treat him you will treat yourself. As you think of him you will think of yourself. Never forget this, for in him you will find yourself or lose yourself. Whenever two Sons of God meet, they are given another chance at salvation. Do not leave anyone without giving salvation to him and receiving it yourself. For I am always there with you, in remembrance of *you* (T-8.III.4).

Through learning this joyful lesson, we join in Jesus' "happy laugh": the gentle laughter that arises from the mind's joy that says our sins have been forgiven. That is the only true joy possible within our earthly dreams of pain and suffering. Needless to say, Jesus is not referring to a physical laugh, although the thought of laughter can be

reflected in a joyful and happy face.

**(3:1-2) You are indeed essential to God's plan. Without your joy, His joy is incomplete.**

It is impossible that God's joy be incomplete. We are again in the land of metaphor, symbolizing the love and joy of Heaven, conveyed in forms we can accept and understand. Do not let the language of duality compromise the non-duality of God's perfect truth: The Oneness and Wholeness of God can never be rendered separated and incomplete.

**(3:3-4) Without your smile, the world cannot be saved. While you are sad, the light that God Himself appointed as the means to save the world is dim and lusterless, and no one laughs because all laughter can but echo yours.**

Laughter here has to do with undoing the misery of believing you are separate from God, and therefore deserve to be punished. Jesus is describing the joy of knowing you have been forgiven. No matter what you believe you have done to others, yourself, or God, it has had no effect on reality. The source of guilt is the belief that our "sin" has affected reality. All sadness comes from believing this illusion; all joy from accepting its unreality. Moreover, this passage highlights for us again the all-inclusive nature of salvation: one Son is all Sons; one smile is all smiles; one light is all lights – the truth of Oneness is absolute and universal.

**(4) You are indeed essential to God's plan. Just as your light increases every light that shines in Heaven, so your joy on earth calls to all minds to let their sorrows go, and take their place beside you in God's plan. God's messengers are joyous, and their joy heals sorrow and despair. They are the proof that God wills perfect happiness for all who will accept their Father's gifts as theirs.**

The theme of oneness returns, and never too often, for we need constant reminders to help us unlearn our strongly held belief in the reality of separation and separate interests. Acceptance of these reminders is the source of our joy: we were wrong and Jesus right. Moreover, our acceptance is everyone's, even if that choice remains unconscious. Thus we become God's joyful messengers, calling all minds to remember there is another choice. Our call is not by words, but the peace, joy, and happiness that extends from our minds to all minds. Our example teaches that the Atonement is true, and the ego's myth of sin, guilt, and fear a lie:

God is not angry; His Love remains unchanged throughout eternity.

**(5:1-2) We will not let ourselves be sad today. For if we do, we fail to take the part that is essential to God's plan, as well as to our vision.**

This does not mean you should put on a happy face, nor that you should stop yourself from feeling sad. However, when you do feel sad, know it comes from your mind's thought of sadness, born of having chosen the ego over God. Then ask Jesus for help to change your mind so that you may take your part in God's plan to save His Son from suffering and pain. His appeal to us is constant; recall this example from near the end of the text:

> Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there (T-31.VIII.1:5; italics omitted).

Our decision to be sad is a decision to hold ourselves and the Sonship apart from salvation, and in hell. Thus we deny the vision that finds joy in the gentle laughter, which softly smiles at the thought that God's Son could ever be sad.

To emphasize this point, Jesus is not saying we should literally smile all day. Rather, he is teaching us to be mindful of the sadness that comes when we do not smile. In such manner we become free to ask the Thought of happiness in our minds for help.

**(5:3-5) Sadness is the sign that you would play another part, instead of what has been assigned to you by God. Thus do you fail to show the world how great the happiness He wills for you. And so you do not recognize that it is yours.**

The ego's part is to prove God wrong. The Holy Spirit's part is to prove Him right. Sadness demonstrates our ego has won; happiness that it has lost. By denying our brothers the fruits of our happiness, we deny the same fruits for ourselves.

**(6:1-2) Today we will attempt to understand joy is our function here. If you are sad, your part is unfulfilled, and all the world is thus deprived of joy, along with you.**

If you identify your part with forgiveness, when you are sad you know it is because you hold onto a grievance, believing it is salvation. You are thereby, again, telling Jesus that he is wrong and you are right. A paraphrase of Lesson 5 applies here: I am never sad for the reason I think. My sadness never comes from circumstances beyond me – whether in my body or another's – but from my mind's decision to attack instead of forgive, to follow the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That is why salvation is simple. As we have already seen: one problem, one solution.

**(6:3-5) God asks you to be happy, so the world can see how much He loves His Son, and wills no sorrow rises to abate his joy; no fear besets him to disturb his peace. You are God's messenger today. You bring His happiness to all you look upon; His peace to everyone who looks on you and sees His message in your happy face.**

Over and over Jesus reminds us of these happy thoughts, reflecting his desire for us to learn his happy lessons of forgiveness. This learning is really unlearning the ego's tale of God's unending wrath and wish for us to suffer for our sins. As we replace the ego's nightmare of sorrow and pain with the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of peace and joy, our choice echoes round the world the ego had damned, but which is now blessed through our happy face. By accepting God's happy message for ourselves, we become His messenger to the world of sorrow.

**(7) We will prepare ourselves for this today, in our five-minute practice periods, by feeling happiness arise in us according to our Father's Will and ours. Begin the exercises with the thought today's idea contains. Then realize your part**

**is to be happy. Only this is asked of you or anyone who wants to take his place among God's messengers. Think what this means. You have indeed been wrong in your belief that sacrifice is asked. You but receive according to God's plan, and never lose or sacrifice or die.**

This theme will be reiterated in the lessons to come: The ego teaches us that sacrifice is asked of us by a God Who says we can be happy only through striking a deal with Him that results in our pain, suffering, and loss. In our everyday lives, this ontological bargain emerges in the shadowy fragment that says I cannot be happy unless I give you something that you want, because if I do not, you are not going to give me what I want. For the ego, therefore, sacrifice is the means of finding happiness through the special relationship's principle of *giving to get.* Salvation, however, teaches that giving and receiving are the same, the process of love in which no one loses and everyone gains. We shall return to this happy theme in later lessons.

**(8:1-3) Now let us try to find that joy that proves to us and all the world God's Will for us. It is your function that you find it here, and that you find it now. For this you came.**

The ego had us come into this world to prove we are right, and that we are innocent victims of a sin that is not our own. Yet in asking Jesus for help, we realize there is another purpose for being here: to learn the lesson we are not victims, and neither is anyone else. Thus Jesus would have us *seek* for what we truly wish to *find:* the joy that comes from setting aside our belief in separate interests; the joy that comes from forgiveness.

**(8:4-5) Let this one be the day that you succeed! Look deep within you, undismayed by all the little thoughts and foolish goals you pass as you ascend to meet the Christ in you.**

Jesus has you coming and going. On the one hand he is asking you to look *down* into your mind; on the other hand, he is asking you to *ascend* to the Christ in you. This illustrates how Jesus does not care about the *forms* of his symbols, for their *content* alone is what matters. His emphasis here is on looking deep within you – with honesty – at what your ego is doing, and as the mists of guilt fade from your mind, the memory of your Identity as Christ ascends in your awareness.

**(9:1-3) He will be there. And you can reach Him now. What could you rather look upon in place of Him Who waits that you may look on Him?**

Jesus is asking us to weigh our substitutions of specialness against the Love of Christ. He is not necessarily asking us to choose that Love, but simply to compare the two gifts: the ego's specialness that results in suffering, guilt, and pain; with Jesus' love that results in happiness, peace, and joy. When seen this clearly, the choice can hardly be difficult to make, which is why the ego seeks to conceal the simplicity of choice behind its obscuring clouds of complexity.

**(9:4-5) What little thought has power to hold you back? What foolish goal can keep you from success when He Who calls to you is God Himself?**

The ego's puny nature is continually juxtaposed in *A Course in Miracles* with the mind's mighty strength to choose to answer God's call of the Atonement. What power can illusion have over truth, or fear over love? As Helen's lovely poem "Bright Stranger" states, in the context of our attempts to keep Jesus' love from us:

> I tried to shut Him out
> With locks and keys that merely fell away
> Before His coming. I could not escape
> The gentleness with which He looked at me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 43)

The ego's seeming strength comes from our belief in it, born of the desire to be separate from our Source. True strength, however, resides in the power of decision. Once our minds are convinced of the mistaken choice, the ego's "strength" fades into its own nothingness as we join with the truth of God Himself. Love's gentle strength always prevails over fear's weakness.

**(10) He will be there. You are essential to His plan. You are His messenger today. And you must find what He would have you give. Do not forget the idea for today between your hourly practice periods. It is your Self Who calls to you today. And it is Him you answer, every time you tell yourself you are essential to God's plan for the salvation of the world.**

God will be there because God has always been there: in Heaven, and as a memory in our sleeping minds. We left Him in our dream, but now choose to waken and return, no longer choosing to be an alien to our Self. Forgiveness is the means appointed for this return, for it undoes the mistake that was never made, returning us to the Self we never left. Why would we not choose to hear Its Call? Why would we not choose to remember our Self? Why would we not take our part in God's plan for salvation?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 101**

**God's Will for me is perfect happiness.**

As I commented before, Lesson 100 began a six-lesson series that discusses some aspect of God's Will for us, in which Jesus talks about the undoing of the ego's mistakes, *the* central theme of *A Course in Miracles.* The ego's undoing is the way in which we fulfill our function of forgiveness, thereby remembering Who we are. The particular aspects of the ego's thought system addressed by Jesus in this series are sin, suffering, fear, the ego's version of giving – i.e., special relationships – and the thought system of separation itself.

Before we start, let me return to my earlier remarks about *A Course in Miracles'* use of language. This is especially important when one considers the workbook, and even more so when one thinks that studying the Course means practicing the lessons without paying much attention to the text. Jesus' use of language for the most part has to be understood as metaphorical, especially here. We have already noted that when he speaks of God as lonely or incomplete, he is not speaking literally. In saying that God's Will for us is perfect happiness, Jesus speaks the way a parent would to a child: all I want is that you be happy. The context is that God is a loving Father, which corrects the ego thought that He is punitive and wants only that we sacrifice and suffer as payment for our sins. Moreover, God does not have a plan, even though the workbook speaks a great deal of this. A loving parent, teacher, or friend has plans for us; doctors and therapists plan for our health, while financial advisers plan for our wealth. These are common symbols in our world, but in truth God has no plan. If He did, He would be recognizing a need or problem that does not exist, the exact opposite of the Atonement principle.

Thus, when you read these words, keep in mind that Jesus is our older brother speaking to younger siblings who can understand his message of love only in this metaphoric context: *Gods plan* or *Will for us* therefore merely points to His abstract and non-specific Love.

**(1:1-2) Today we will continue with the theme of happiness. This is a key idea in understanding what salvation means.**

We shall see presently how Jesus elaborates on his teaching that salvation means happiness, telling us about the ego's version of salvation – suffering and sacrifice. Again, it is the undoing of the ego's thought system that allows us to accept the truth of the Atonement that is already present in our minds, though covered by these ego thoughts.

**(1:3-5) You still believe it asks for suffering as penance for your "sins." This is not so. Yet you must think it so while you believe that sin is real, and that God's Son can sin.**

Recall the important principle that sin and guilt demand punishment, expressed again in this lesson and these two familiar statements:

> Sin calls for punishment as error for correction, and the belief that punishment *is* correction is clearly insane (T-19.II.1:6).

> For the ego brings sin to fear, demanding punishment. Yet punishment is

> but another form of guilt's protection, for what is deserving punishment must have been really done. Punishment is always the great preserver of sin, treating it with respect and honoring its enormity (T- 1 9.111.2:2-4).

Sin and guilt state I have done something terrible against God, Who is therefore justified in punishing me. If I believe He is a God of love, His punishment can only be seen as an extension of His loving Will. Consequently, my Father wants me to suffer so I will feel better. As Jesus asks, apropos of the crucifixion: "Can you believe our Father really thinks this way?" (T-3.I.2:8). Underlying this insane thinking is the ego's need to make sin real, and then have it appear it is God's plan that we atone for it through suffering and sacrifice. In this lesson we find another form in which Jesus corrects that mistaken thinking.

**(2:1-2) If sin is real, then punishment is just and cannot be escaped. Salvation thus cannot be purchased but through suffering.**

The phrase, "If sin is real," is a recurring motif throughout this lesson, and you will notice that this passage reflects the ego's second and third laws of chaos (T-23.II.4-8). Atonement now comes through satisfying the vengeance of God, which, needless to say, is the ego's projection. Wherever there exists a situation where one wins and another loses, you know the ego's hand is in it, expressing its thought system of pain, suffering, and loss.

**(2:3) If sin is real, then happiness must be illusion, for they cannot both be true.**

This is another appearance of the *all or nothing* principle, our Level One: Only God is real. If pain and sin are real, God is not. If He is equated with happiness, which is real, there cannot be sin. How can we be happy if we believe we murdered God, stole His treasure, ran away to escape His wrath, and now spend the rest of our lives hiding from His certain vengeance? And within the ego's dream it *is* certain vengeance, because we see how all living things die.

**(2:4) The sinful warrant only death and pain, and it is this they ask for.**

We know we have asked for pain and death because our lives center on avoiding suffering and forestalling death. We dream thus because it proves that sin is real, thereby establishing that the thought of separation is real as well. Thus we exist and God does not, and death and pain become our protectors and friends.

**(2:5) For they know it** [death and pain] **waits for them, and it will seek them out and find them somewhere, sometime, in some form that evens the account they owe to God.**

This is an explicit statement of the ego's thought system, revealing why everyone's life carries with it some aspect of pain and suffering. Occasionally they are broken into by periods of what we think are happiness and joy. Yet these are short-lived, because death is always around the corner. No matter how happy we think our lives have been, death is the certain end. As long as we believe we are sinful, we believe we

deserve the punishment of death. Thus we are attracted to sin and guilt – and make no mistake, we all do the very things that make us guilty – because that proves we exist. The first three obstacles to peace convincingly express our attraction to the ego's thought system of guilt, pain, and death (T-19.IV-A–C). The terror striking at our hearts, then, is: Who would I be without my guilt and my sin? But our fear of punishment guarantees that this thought system of sin and guilt remains intact, as does our ego identity.

**(2:6-7) They would escape Him in their fear. And yet He will pursue, and they can not escape.**

As one Son, we sought to escape the mind's fear of God's punishment by making a world and body in which to hide. Once here, however, we but reenact the separation thought in our individual lives, as expressed in this oft-quoted line:

> 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 hope against hope that God will be proven wrong and will not have to punish us. In the ego system, however, God is always right because we die, proof of His justified vengeance: our murder at God's hand is deserved because of our sin. In the final analysis there is no escape, as expressed in this evocative passage from the manual, partially cited before:

> How can this unfair battle be resolved? Its ending is inevitable, for its outcome must be death.... And now there is no hope. Except to kill. Here is salvation now. An angry father pursues his guilty son. Kill or be killed, for here alone is choice. Beyond this there is none, for what was done cannot be done without. The stain of blood can never be removed, and anyone who bears this stain on him must meet with death (M-17.6:1-2; 7:7-13).

Recall the wonderful passage in the text (T-4.V.4), already discussed, where Jesus exposes the insanity of the ego that tells us that we – guilt-ridden minds – should make a body to escape from certain death at the hands of God. We then live in the body, forgetting how and why we made it, and we end up dying anyway. Because we have forgotten the body's origins, we have no recourse but to accept death's inevitability. The only true escape – changing our minds – has been denied us by the ingenuity of the ego's strategy of making us mindless.

The fact of the matter, of course, is that we are in the body because we believed the ego, which lied. It told us we would be safe if we made a body. We proceeded accordingly, but though we are perhaps safe for a few years, the body's inherent vulnerability makes our moribund end inevitable. Through *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus hopes we will see through the ego's deception and realize everything it tells us is untrue. This means that everything the world tells us is untrue as well, as the world is nothing but the projected form of the ego thought system. Only through Jesus' vision of the truth can we escape the ego's bitter cycle of life and death.

Our set of theme and variations continues with the lesson's motif:

**(3:1) If sin is real, salvation must be pain.**

This is the essence of the third law of chaos:

> There can be no release and no escape. Atonement thus becomes a myth, and vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God (T-23.II.8:1-2).

In the ego's insanity, God's Will is that we suffer pain, satisfying the demand of His vengeful wrath. When this insatiable need for punishment has been appeased, pain becomes, in His "mercy," the means of our salvation. The next lines continue this theme:

**(3:2-3) Pain is the cost of sin, and suffering can never be escaped, if sin is real. Salvation must be feared, for it will kill, but slowly, taking everything away before it grants the welcome boon of death to victims who are little more than bones before salvation is appeased.**

This describes life in the body. Some appear to get away with less pain than others, because they die instantly in the height of their lives, having suffered minimally. Yet the world mourns them as even more victimized, because their lives were cruelly snuffed out at forty, instead of eighty. In the end, once again, everyone dies, which is why there is no hope. Readers may recall this description of the world's dream from the text, which parallels 3:3 above:

> A brother separated from yourself, an ancient enemy, a murderer who stalks you in the night and plots your death, yet plans that it be lingering and slow; of this you dream (T-27.V11.12:1).

Further, since our bodies are simply microcosms of the world, if they die, the physical world will ultimately die as well. Indeed, this is what scientists tell us, though they date its demise in millions, if not billions of years. It is all part of the same thought system, however. When you realize time is an illusion, it does not matter whether you live for one year, ninety years, or a hundred billion years; in the end your little life will end, which demonstrates it cannot have been true life, which, coming from God, is eternal. Recall, again these important lines:

> There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. Yet both are judgments on what is not life, equal in their inaccuracy and lack of meaning. Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere (T-23.II.19:1-6).

None of this makes sense unless you remember that your identity is found within the mind and not the body. Being an illusion, the body cannot be born, and thus cannot die.

**(3:4) Its wrath is boundless, merciless, but wholly just.**

This world is vicious, but the ego tells us the pain we feel is justified because of our sin, the stubborn belief we are right and God is wrong. With each breath we take,

therefore, we affirm our physical existence and sin against God. Since sin and guilt demand punishment, we are justified in our suffering. It is thus impossible to believe God wills our happiness. This means that as long as we believe we exist as individuals, we cannot believe God wants us to be happy, despite what the world's religions tell us. Indeed, He is just in carrying out His boundless and merciless wrath under the guise of salvation. Correcting this insanity, Jesus teaches that God's Will for us is perfect happiness, ensuring that we shall awaken from our nightmare of pain to learn that our individual existence was nothing but a dream, for our reality as Christ is unchanged.

**(4:1-2) Who would seek out such savage punishment? Who would not flee salvation, and attempt in every way he can to drown the Voice which offers it to him?**

Once we believe salvation is death, why would we not want to run away from God and Jesus? That is why, if we logically extend these words, no Christian could ever truly love its savior, because he demands suffering and sacrifice, judgment and punishment. In fact, Jesus was the ultimate suffering and sacrificial victim, in fulfillment of God's punitive notion of justice. Who could love someone who, representing God, wills our death? Moreover, this death, if it is truly redemptive, must be painful. Yet the situation gets worse: As we cannot tolerate the guilt over our sin of not loving Jesus, we repress it, inevitably leading to its projection. Thus is guilt the name of the ego's game. The guiltier we feel, the more secretive we are, and the greater our need to deny our sin and blame others, up to and including God and Jesus. These insane dynamics become the means to drown God's Voice. No wonder, then, there is no hope in this world.

**(4:3) Why would he try to listen and accept Its offering?**

This explains Jesus' use of metaphor to describe God's Love. We believe His Will for us is perfect misery and death. Therefore, addressing us at the level of terrified little children who have run away from home, Jesus says: "Do not be afraid. Daddy is not angry at you. His loving Will for you is perfect happiness." Thus does he undo the ego's hateful myth of punishment by substituting a gentle tale of forgiveness. This explains lessons like this, which counteract the ego's view of God that inevitably leads us to shun His kind and loving Voice of salvation.

**(4:4-5) If sin is real, its offering is death, and meted out in cruel form to match the vicious wishes in which sin is born. If sin is real, salvation has become your bitter enemy, the curse of God upon you who have crucified His Son.**

These statements offer a wonderful summary of the ego's thought system, and therefore the world's. Their logic is irrefutable, once we reject the basic premise that God's is a love of non-dualistic oneness. Sin, punishment, and cruelty have no place in such a thought system, but they certainly do in the ego's substitute, founded on the premise that God's is a love of separation.

**(5:1-2) You need the practice periods today. The exercises teach sin is not real, and all that you believe must come from sin will never happen, for it has no cause.**

We see here another articulation of the principle of *cause and effect.* The physical world, with its pains and suffering, joys and happiness, is the product of sin. If we learn sin is not real – because we never separated from the Love of God – we shall have undone the cause; and without a cause there can be no effect. Yet if we cherish the effects (guilt, fear, and pain), we affirm the cause (sin), which we want because it guarantees our existence.

**(5:3) Accept Atonement with an open mind, which cherishes no lingering belief that you have made a devil of God's Son.**

In subsequent lessons we will see this important theme of open-mindedness, reminiscent of the tenth characteristic of God's advanced teachers (M-4.X). This is attained by letting go of the ego's clutter we placed in our minds to banish the Atonement. The core of this clutter is guilt, which indeed had "made a devil of God's Son." However, through guilt's release is the Son of God redeemed; restored at last to his Identity as Christ.

**(5:4-5) There is no sin. We practice with this thought as often as we can today, because it is the basis for today's idea.**

The way you practice is to be aware of all perceived sins – in yourself and others – and how you cherish them. It does not matter whom you attack – yourself or others – for it is the same, as we see in this important statement from the text, part of which we have already quoted:

> ... as blame is withdrawn from without, there is a strong tendency to harbor it within. It is difficult at first to realize that this is exactly the same thing, for there is no distinction between within and without.
>
> If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them. That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere. Lay it to yourself and you cannot know yourself, for only the ego blames at all. Self-blame is therefore ego identification, and as much an ego defense as blaming others (T-11.IV.4:5-5:5).

Anything that makes sin real is cherished by the ego, whether seen in oneself or in another. Forgiveness, however, undoes all sin and attack as one.

**(6:1) God's Will for you is perfect happiness because there is no sin, and suffering is causeless.**

Again, if we are in pain, it is because we want its cause. We do not care about the suffering as such, but the purpose it serves. The source of pain has nothing to do with the causes we identify, but with the belief in our existence, defined by the ego as sin. Reinforcing this belief is the ego's purpose, for this denies that God's Will for us is perfect happiness.

**(6:2) Joy is just, and pain is but the sign you have misunderstood yourself.**

When you feel upset or ill, step back and say: "This is not caused by the reasons I think, but by my having believed that a wrathful God was going to punish me for my sin. I simply made a mistake and chose the wrong teacher. *A Course in Miracles* offers me the correct Teacher, Whose message of guiltlessness I now joyfully accept." How simple is salvation!

**(6:3-4) Fear not the Will of God. But turn to it in confidence that it will set you free from all the consequences sin has wrought in feverish imagination.**

Whenever we are afraid, it is ultimately because we have seen in another an image of the God we secretly fear. Everyone suffers from an authority problem; however it is not really the earthly authorities we fear, but the God they symbolize. We believe this ego God is determined to punish us because of our sin of rejecting and betraying Him, abandoning His Love to set up our own kingdom of special love. Instead of believing these feverish lies, we should say:

**(6:6-7)** ***God's will for me is perfect happiness.***
***There is no sin; it has no consequence.***

We want always to demonstrate – to ourselves, the world, and God – that sin has a consequence, and the consequence is *me.* I look in the mirror every morning and see the consequence, the physical effect of my sin. I then go about my day proving this is the truth. If I am guilty over what I am doing, I prove sin's reality by projecting it onto others. Either way, I exist, and God's Will for His Son is perfect misery. It is our perception of our brother that enables us to see how we have perceived God. This already-quoted passage from the text illustrates this perceptual fact:

> He [our brother] represents his Father, Whom you see as offering both life and death to you.
>
> Brother, He gives but life. Yet what you see as gifts your brother offers represent the gifts you dream your Father gives to you (T-27.VII.15:7-16:2).

Thus it is the forgiveness of others that allows us to forgive God. Beyond our belief in sin lies the Holy Spirit's vision of Christ – to be seen first in another, and then in ourselves – patiently awaiting our acceptance.

**(6:8) So should you start your practice periods, and then attempt again to find the joy these thoughts will introduce into your mind.**

The way we "find the joy" is through looking differently at the world around us, most especially our relationships. Rather than focusing on seeking happiness at someone else's expense – God's Will according to the ego: sacrifice is salvation, and therefore happiness – we see all situations as opportunities to learn forgiveness, the core of which is the perception that God's Sons share the same needs and interests. In that vision is found true joy.

**(7) Give these five minutes gladly, to remove the heavy load you lay upon yourself with the insane belief that sin is real. Today escape from madness. You are set on freedom's road, and now today's idea brings wings to speed you on,**

**and hope to go still faster to the waiting goal of peace. There is no sin. Remember this today, and tell yourself as often as you can:**

***God's Will for me is perfect happiness.***
***This is the truth, because there is no sin.***

If there is no sin, no one is guilty and everyone is mistaken. Remember that what is true for one must be true for all. This is Jesus' lesson: God's Son is one, and differences do not exist except in the insane mind that needs to have someone win and another lose. If "God's Will for me is perfect happiness," it must be so for everyone. This alone is the truth, and this alone is the pathway that leads from imprisonment to freedom, conflict to peace, hate to love. Thus we happily learn that God's Will is our own as well.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 102**
**I share God's Will for happiness for me.**

Continuing from the previous lesson, Jesus specifically addresses the idea of suffering.

**(1:1) You do not want to suffer.**

This is obviously not the case, because from beginning to end, our lives are filled with suffering. If it is our dream, whom can we blame but ourselves, the dreamer of suffering? Therefore, a statement like this is Jesus' appeal to change our minds. As always, the *you* he addresses is the decision maker, and he is really saying to us: "Yes, you do want to suffer, but you can learn it does not pay you. I therefore remind you to let go of your guilt and belief in sin." As he says later: "Come with wholly empty hands unto your God" (W-pI.189.7:5). In that sense, then, we will not suffer, for without guilt there can be no suffering.

**(1:2) You may think it buys you something, and may still believe a little that it buys you what you want.**

Suffering unfortunately buys us a great deal, which we can see three ways: 1) Suffering repays God so He will not kill us, seeing us already indulging in a little form of death (T-27.I.4:8). In other words, we tell God He need not concern Himself with our punishment, for we are taking care of the matter ourselves. Thus we hope successfully to bargain with our Judge, escaping with an easier sentence:

> ... illness is a form of magic. It might be better to say that it is a form of magical solution. The ego believes that by punishing itself it will mitigate the punishment of God (T-5.V.5:4-6).

2) Suffering proves that others have done this to us; we are the victims and they the victimizers. Thus they deserve punishment instead of us. This holds whether we are speaking of a person we accuse of hurting us, or a microorganism that makes us sick. Regardless of the form, the enemy is external to our minds, deserving of punishment and defeat:

> But every pain you suffer do you see as proof that he is guilty of attack. Thus would you make yourself, to be the sign that he has lost his innocence, and need but look on you to realize that he has been condemned. And what to you has been unfair will come to him in righteousness. The unjust vengeance that you suffer now belongs to him, and when it rests on him are you set free (T-271.2:2-5).

3) Suffering proves we are bodies, and if so, we are right, and God and Jesus are wrong. Indeed, if we are right, God does not exist at all:

> ... sickness is an election; a decision.... a method, conceived in madness, for placing God's Son on his Father's throne. God is seen as outside, fierce and powerful, eager to keep all power for Himself. Only by His death can He be conquered by His Son (M-5.I.1:4,7-9).

> Pain is a sign illusions reign in place of truth. It demonstrates God is denied, confused with fear, perceived as mad, and seen as traitor to Himself. If God is real, there is no pain. If pain is real, there is no God. For vengeance is not part of love. And fear, denying love and using pain to prove that God is dead, has shown that death is victor over life. The body is the Son of God, corruptible in death, as mortal as the Father he has slain (W-pI.190.3).

As long as we believe sickness and suffering bring us the innocence and life we want, we will have no motivation to let them go.

**(1:3) Yet this belief is surely shaken now, at least enough to let you question it, and to suspect it really makes no sense.**

Jesus is not asking us to let go of our thought system, but only to begin the process of questioning it. Is it really better for me to hold on to these "secret sins and hidden hates" (T-31.VIII.9:2)? to maintain these grievances? to insist that the fulfillment of my specialness needs – whether with a person, object, or substance – will get me what I want? After a while, none of the things of the world gives us what we want, or truly makes us happy. We think they bring relief from the pain of our guilt, but all they lead to is guilt's increase, thus revealing the ego's purpose from the beginning.

**(1:4) It has not gone as yet, but lacks the roots that once secured it tightly to the dark and hidden secret places of your mind.**

Jesus is telling us: "I am not expecting you to be free from suffering. Indeed, I know it has not gone yet. However, I am asking you to be open, allowing me at least to help you question the validity of your way of life."

The word *secret* here connotes guilt, which screams: "Keep your sin a secret, and do not look." The secret places of our minds are where we hold our guilt in shrouded vaults that bar the light of God from ever entering:

> And in these shrouded vaults are all his sins and yours preserved and kept in darkness, where they cannot be perceived as errors, which the light would surely show (T-31.V.6:6).

The prose poem Helen took down, "The Gifts of God," closes with a stirring call from God Himself to open these vaults, behind which His Love was kept secret:

> Open the door before the hidden place, and let Me blaze upon a world made glad in sudden ecstasy *(The Gifts of God,* p. 128).

At the same time Jesus tells us he knows we are holding on to suffering, he says: "By virtue of the fact you have come this far with me, we have already taken a large step towards questioning your thought system. Therefore, do not say you cannot let it go, because you are already well along in the process." Yet when we hit up against the stone wall of sin and guilt, we say *A Course in Miracles* is impossible to learn and we cannot do it. This, then, becomes our justification for returning to our old "friends," special relationships. However, Jesus does not buy it, and reiterates his message to us:

"You already know more than you think, for you realize that specialness does not work. You still may hold on to the need to suffer, but another part of you has grown sufficiently strong that it can at least step back and question with me what you are doing."

**(2:1) Today we try to loose its weakened hold still further, and to realize that pain is purposeless, without a cause and with no power to accomplish anything.**

We return to the *cause-and-effect* principle. "Pain is purposeless" because we now realize our purpose – to keep separated from God – makes no sense. Once the purpose is gone, it can have no effects. Thus is pain weakened, and eventually negated.

**(2:2) It cannot purchase anything at all.**

The ego tells us our pain purchases a great deal – atonement and salvation – and Jesus is hoping we recognize that pain and suffering purchase nothing. They only make us upset and more filled with pain. Clearly, the more we suffer, the more our need for salvation. The problem is that we often end up looking in the wrong place: in expiation, punishment, and pain.

**(2:3-6) It offers nothing, and does not exist. And everything you think it offers you is lacking in existence, like itself. You have been slave to nothing. Be you free today to join the happy Will of God.**

The problem with accepting this statement is that if pain does not exist, nether does my body that suffers it, nor the thought of individuality my body represents. The fear of losing this self perpetuates our clinging to very maladaptive defenses, such as pain and suffering.

There is in truth nothing holding us back from joining "the happy Will of God," symbolized for us by Jesus. We have been "slave to nothing," meaning we have been enslaved by our wrong decision, which had no effects. Without effects, there can be no cause; and without a cause, pain does not exist.

**(3:1) For several days we will continue to devote our periods of practicing to exercises planned to help you reach the happiness God's Will has placed in you.**

These exercises help us reach the goal of happiness by helping undo the interferences – pain, guilt, and specialness – we placed between ourselves and the goal's attainment.

**(3:2-5) Here is your home, and here your safety is. Here is your peace, and here there is no fear. Here is salvation. Here is rest at last.**

*Here* represents the right mind where we join with Jesus, and happily look with him at the ego thought system and question it. We look without judgment and without guilt; *but we look.* In other words, we undo the veils that hold our guilt in secret. Remember, secrecy and guilt are the same, for guilt cannot abide in the light of our awareness. When brought to the guiltlessness held for us by the Holy Spirit, the guilt can no longer be protected by the dark sentinels of defense. And so it disappears:

**Lesson 102**

> The quiet light in which the Holy Spirit dwells within you is merely perfect openness, in which nothing is hidden and therefore nothing is fearful.... There is no darkness that the light of love will not dispel, unless it is concealed from love's beneficence. What is kept apart from love cannot share its healing power, because it has been separated off and kept in darkness. The sentinels of darkness watch over it carefully, and you who made these guardians of illusion out of nothing are now afraid of them.... But let them go, and what was fearful will be so no longer. Without protection of obscurity only the light of love remains, for only this has meaning and can live in light. Everything else must disappear (T-14.VI.2:1, 3-5; 3:6-8).

With the illusions of defense gone, happiness comes at last to replace our pain.

**(4) Begin your practice periods today with this acceptance of God's Will for you:**

***I share God's Will for happiness for me, and I accept it as my function now***

**Then seek this function deep within your mind, for it is there, awaiting but your choice. You cannot fail to find it when you learn it is your choice, and that you share God's Will.**

We pledge ourselves to remember as often as we can that our function of forgiveness awaits our decision, for only there can we find the happiness we deserve as God's Son. Suffering is not God's Will, but its distortion. However, coming simply from our mistaken choice, the pain is easily corrected.

**(5) Be happy, for your only function here is happiness. You have no need to be less loving to God's Son than He Whose Love created him as loving as Himself. Besides these hourly five- minute rests, pause frequently today, to tell yourself that you have now accepted happiness as your one function. And be sure that you are joining with God's Will in doing this.**

We do deserve to be happy, and that is what we need to remember throughout the day. We also need not to forget that happiness must be shared with everyone, otherwise it cannot express the Oneness of God's Will. Since God's Son is one, so must his happiness be one as well.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 103**
**God, being Love, is also happiness.**

This lesson continues the theme of happiness, but Jesus focuses as well on fear, love's opposite. We need to undo our investment in fear before we can experience love and find the happiness we seek.

**(1:1-3) Happiness is an attribute of love. It cannot be apart from it. Nor can it be experienced where love is not.**

Love is not of this world, nor is it of the body. Indeed, the world was made to exclude God and His Son:

> The world was made as an attack on God. It symbolizes fear. And what is fear except love's absence? Thus the world was meant to be a place where God could enter not, and where His Son could be apart from Him (W-pII.3.2:1-4).

And the body to be love's limitation:

> It is only the awareness of the body that makes love seem limited. For the body *is* a limit on love. The belief in limited love was its origin, and it was made to limit the unlimited. Think not that this is merely allegorical, for it was made to limit *you* (T-18.VIII.1:1-4).

It is therefore not in the body nor the world that we would find love and happiness. In these opening sentences of the lesson, Jesus has undone the ego's thought system of specialness, which holds that love is possible here, and can always be bought at a price. This does not mean you should be guilty when attracted to things of the world and the body, seeing them as sources of happiness or peace. However, Jesus is asking that you step back with him from the world and realize that in the end these things will not give you what you want. They may give what you *think* you want, but not what you *really* want. This is where honesty enters and is so important to our progress in *A Course in Miracles.* We need to be open about having been wrong in the specialness we thought we wanted and devoted our lives to acquiring.

**(1:4-6) Love has no limits, being everywhere. And therefore joy is everywhere as well. Yet can the mind deny that this is so, believing there are gaps in love where sin can enter, bringing pain instead of joy.**

Within the dream, the mind is capable of making illusions, in which the decision maker chooses the ego and makes separation and individuality real. That is the gap, where the ego places sin. The world becomes the means of avoiding the pain of returning to the mind and looking at that gap, for we are told that love and happiness can be found *here,* if only we do not look *there.* The ego tells us further that going within will lead to the certain destruction of ourselves as punishment for our sin. This fear gives birth to the specialness that says there is a gap between you and me, for we are different. Whether we speak of a person, animal, plant, object, money, or an addictive substance, specialness teaches there is something in the world that can make us happy. God's Will, Jesus' love, the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, will not; but this special person or thing can. Thus is the apparent gap between us filled. Yet all the while, the true gap in

our minds – between ourselves and God – remains unhealed.

**(1:7) This strange belief would limit happiness by redefining love as limited, and introducing opposition in what has no limit and no opposite.**

The ego's strange notion of love – special love – is that it is limited to certain people, places, things, and events, but is not available to all; only for those special ones who meet my needs. The ego tells me you have what I lack, which I need to be complete – the definition of special love – and the reason you have the *special something* and I do not is that you took it from me. Thus you and I exist in a state of perpetual opposition – the principle of *one or the other.* The aforementioned fourth law of chaos summarizes the situation:

> The ego values only what it takes. This leads to the *fourth* law of chaos, which, if the others are accepted, must be true. This seeming law is the belief you have what you have taken. By this, another's loss becomes your gain.... enemies do not give willingly to one another, nor would they seek to share the things they value. And what your enemies would keep from you must be worth having, because they keep it hidden from your sight.
>
> All of the mechanisms of madness are seen emerging here: the "enemy" made strong by keeping hidden the valuable inheritance that should be yours; your justified position and attack for what has been withheld; and the inevitable loss the enemy must suffer to save yourself (T-23 .11.9:1-4,6-10:1).

Thus we are continually in conflict with each other and with the world. I need always get the *special something* from outside, which is lacking in me and what I secretly believe is mine Moreover, I know you will not give it to me unless I pay for it, which means you and I, again, are in a perpetual state of war: I, unfairly, have to pay you for what I secretly believe belongs to me; and you believe the same injustice exists for you. When this insane bargain is enacted with God, it takes the form of paying God back for our sin, achieving salvation through a life of suffering we believe He demands of us.

**(2:1) Fear is associated then with love, and its results become the heritage of minds that think what they have made is real.**

Fear is associated with love because we have come to believe that if we do not give God what He asks of us, we will be destroyed. To preserve the ego's insane thinking is one reason the Bible was written, for it speaks in no uncertain terms of the ego God's demands. Indeed, it is impossible to read it and not come away without feeling terrified. We are told in any number of ways that if we cross God's imaginary line in the sand, becoming goats instead of sheep, we will be destroyed (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). How, then, could fear not be associated with love?

Fear leads to the multitudinous painful effects of our lives, all of which are experienced as palpably real. Thus is our existence as individuals reinforced, and everything we have made here as well. Fear has become reality because our sin has become reality. Sin demands punishment; and punishment means our fear has been justified. Our fear-laden and vulnerable bodies but witness to the reality of this insanity.

**(2:2) These images, with no reality in truth, bear witness to the fear of God,**

**forgetting being Love, He must be joy.**

If we are honest with ourselves, we would realize our lives are not happy. Whatever joys we think we can steal from others, or from things in the world, never last. This should tell us, if we are truly open-minded, that this life of alternating joy and pain, with the greater emphasis placed on the latter, cannot be of God because His joy is eternal. It does not wax and wane with the vicissitudes of the world.

**(2:3-5) This basic error we will try again to bring to truth today, and teach ourselves:**

***God, being Love, is also happiness.***
***To fear Him is to be afraid of joy.***

Jesus says to us: "Don't tell me you love God. If you did, you would still be with Him. If you think you are here in this world, it is because of fear." It is crucial to understand, practice, and live *A Course in Miracles* that we be honest with Jesus about what is going on inside us, and cease pretending we can keep secrets from him. Since he is within us, we are only keeping secrets from ourselves. This will never work, and certainly will not make us happy. That is why he urges us, in words we have already noted:

> Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other (T-4.III.8:1-2).

> Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God's. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it (T-4.IV.2:4-6).

The process of bringing our dark secrets of guilt and fear to Jesus' light-filled forgiveness is how we learn that "God, being Love, is also happiness."

**(2:6-7) Begin your periods of practicing today with this association, which corrects the false belief that God is fear. It also emphasizes happiness belongs to you, because of what He is.**

We see again the emphasis on undoing our false beliefs. These lessons, as we have seen, are not meant to be affirmations that we can use to shout down the ego's guilt or fear, but to express the truth, *to which we bring our false thinking.* In this lesson the false belief is fear; in previous lessons it was suffering and pain.

**(3:1) Allow this one correction to be placed within your mind each waking hour today.**

The correction, through Jesus' presence, is already in our minds, but we must choose to allow it into awareness. Our guilt, sin, terror, secrecy, and specialness are ways of preventing this loving thought from being remembered. The little willingness to

bring these secret thoughts to him – at least once an hour – is all he asks of us.

**(3:2-7) Then welcome all the happiness it brings as truth replaces fear, and joy becomes what you expect to take the place of pain. God, being Love, it will be given you. Bolster this expectation frequently throughout the day, and quiet all your fears with this assurance, kind and wholly true:**

***God, being Love, is also happiness.***
***And it is happiness I seek today.***
***I cannot fail, because I seek the truth.***

The point I make over and over again – because Jesus makes it over and over again – is that these lessons mean nothing if you do not apply them. Throughout the day you must be aware of your fear – in other contexts, guilt, unhappiness, or pain – for it is at that moment of awareness you ask for help. Again, do not shout down your discomfort by repeating the title of the lesson. Instead, bring your discomfort to the one who gave you these words, and let him remind you it is God's Love you want, for you recognize at last the shabby substitute you had chosen in its stead; a substitute you no longer want to take the place of true happiness and joy.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 104**
**I seek but what belongs to me in truth.**

As Jesus continues his theme of happiness, he speaks to us specifically about letting go of what the ego has told us is the truth, for only real truth will make us happy.

**(1:1) Today's idea continues with the thought that joy and peace are not but idle dreams.**

It can be tempting when working with *A Course in Miracles* to believe that when Jesus talks about our peace, joy, and happiness, they are idle words that sound pretty, but do not work. However, they do not work because we do not want them to. If we were truly peaceful, joyful, and happy, we would no longer be the miserable and victimized selves we thought we were. Thus we are attracted to finding guilt in others, reinforcing its presence in ourselves and proving we are right and Jesus is wrong.

**(1:2-5) They are your right, because of what you are. They come to you from God, Who cannot fail to give you what He wills. Yet must there be a place made ready to receive His gifts. They are not welcomed gladly by a mind that has instead received the gifts it made where His belong, as substitutes for them.**

This condition – "Yet must there be a place made ready" – is not something God ordains, a condition to which we must adhere otherwise He will not love us. The fact is we cannot know we are God's beloved child whose sins are undone as long as we cherish the gifts we made. In other words, responsibility comes back to us, a theme enunciated over and over in this lesson. It is short, but what comes through repeatedly in the lesson is that in order for us to experience the truth, we have first to let go of what we believed was the truth. *A Course in Miracles* is thus helping us restore to the mind its power to have chosen against God, realize the mistake, and then correct it by choosing Jesus as our teacher. His love teaches us to bring our illusory self-image to the truth of what we are: God's holy Son.

Jesus continues with the same thought:

**(2:1) Today we would remove all meaningless and self-made gifts which we have placed upon the holy altar where God's gifts belong.**

Jesus cannot give us God's gifts of love until we first give him ours of sin, guilt, and specialness. We exchange the gifts we made for the love he holds out to us. He cannot take them from our hands, for it is our responsibility to give them to him. That is why forgiveness is not something we do, anymore than forgiveness is something Jesus does; we do it together. This means we must bring to him – in the language again of the closing pages of the text – our "secret sins and hidden hates" (T-3 1.VIII.9:2). Another lovely passage from "The Gifts of God" expresses Jesus' call:

> Open your hands, and give all things to me that you have held against your holiness and kept as slander on the Son of God.... Give me these worthless things the instant that you see them through my eyes and understand their cost.... I take them from you gladly, laying them beside the gifts of God that He has placed upon the altar to His Son. And these I give to you to take the place of those you give to me in mercy on yourself. These are the gifts I ask, and only

> these. For as you lay them by you, reach to me, and I can come as savior then to you. The gifts of God are in my hands, to give to anyone who would exchange the world for Heaven. You need only call my name and ask me to accept the gift of pain from willing hands that would be laid in mine.... In my hands is everything you want and need and hoped to find among the shabby toys of earth. I take them all from you and they are gone. And shining in the place where once they stood there is a gateway to another world through which we enter in the Name of God *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 118, 119).

The remainder of this paragraph is an elaboration of God's gifts to us, held for us by Jesus' love:

**(2:2-3) His are the gifts that are our own in truth. His are the gifts that we inherited before time was, and that will still be ours when time has passed into eternity.**

These are the gifts of our life as Christ: love, unencumbered freedom, creation, and eternal life.

**(2:4) His are the gifts that are within us now, for they are timeless.**

Jesus is the presence within our dreaming minds that reminds us the truth is there, even though we have run away from it. Our free will within the dream has power *only* within the dream. God's gifts remain outside, where the ego has no power:

> *The Kingdom is perfectly united and perfectly protected, and the ego will not prevail against it* (T-4.III.1:12).

**(2:5-6) And we need not wait to have them. They belong to us today.**

Traditional Christianity, as well as other religions, teaches that we suffer now in order to receive God's Love in the hereafter as reward for our sacrifice. As we know, a major theme in *A Course in Miracles* is that salvation is now, since there is no future that needs to be prepared for:

> Salvation *is* immediate.... For a miracle is *now* It stands already here, in present grace, within the only interval of time that sin and fear have overlooked, but which is all there is to time.
>
> The working out of all correction takes no time at all (T-26.VIII.3:1; 5:8-6:1).

It is only our guilt, born of *the past,* that demands we pay God back in the *"present"* for the hoped-for promise of *future* salvation. Jesus, however, happily tells us we need not wait for Heaven's gifts (W-pI.131.6:1); we need merely accept them now.

**(3:1) Therefore, we choose to have them now, and know, in choosing them in place of what we made, we but unite our will with what God wills, and recognize the same as being one.**

Jesus again emphasizes the role of our minds to choose. The focus is not on the

wonderful gifts, for these mean nothing if we do not know we can choose them. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to help us choose these gifts by choosing against the ego's shabby substitutes. The words describing these gifts are lovely and comforting, but they are of no help as long as we are unaware of our fear. Jesus thus reminds us that we are afraid of love, and he teaches that it is the attraction to this fear, born of the need to preserve our individuality, that keeps the gifts of God separate from us. Once aware of this decision to be afraid, we can undo our mistake and choose again, reflecting the recognition that our will and God's are one.

**(3:2-4) Our longer practice periods today, the hourly five minutes given truth for your salvation, should begin with this:**

***I seek but what belongs to me in truth,***
***And joy and peace are my inheritance.***

**Then lay aside the conflicts of the world that offer other gifts and other goals made of illusions, witnessed to by them, and sought for only in a world of dreams.**

Remember, Jesus does not say he will take our conflicts away from us. Rather, we have to lay them aside, which means looking at our need to be in conflict and pain: guilty, angry, and depressed. These are the ego's secret attraction, and it is our responsibility to choose attractions different from those of specialness, the "other gifts" offered by the world. Now we choose to practice the exercises that will restore to our awareness the true gifts of joy and peace – our inheritance – that happily wait for us.

Jesus continues by reiterating the same point:

**(4:1) All this we lay aside, and seek instead that which is truly ours, as we ask to recognize what God has given us.**

The only way I meaningfully ask for help in recognizing God's loving gift is to say I am willing to let go of the specialness I put in its stead. That is what Jesus means later in the workbook when he speaks about the peace of God: "To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything" (W-pI.185.1:1-2). If I am serious about wanting to be with Jesus and experience his love, I must be willing to set aside the demands of my specialness. Or certainly, as an early step, I have to be willing to recognize these *are* the demands of specialness, the purpose of which is to keep Heaven's love away. This ensures I do not deceive myself by thinking I really want Jesus' love. I could say to him, for example: "I do not want your love yet; perhaps tomorrow, but for now I want my specialness. It comes first." At least that is an honest statement, which means there will be no guilt. Without guilt I leave open my mind's door for Jesus to enter and help me. He says the same thing in the next sentence:

**(4:2) We clear a holy place within our minds before His altar, where His gifts of peace and joy are welcome, and to which we come to find what has been given us by Him.**

The altar is our minds. Whenever Jesus uses this term, think of it as the decision maker, which can choose to have its mind be an altar that drips with blood – when it

chooses to worship the ego – or one that radiates the love and light of God when it chooses Jesus as its teacher. He is thus asking us to clear our minds by bringing to him the clutter – our belief in sin, guilt, secrecy, and shame – so that the light of his love can shine it away. Thus do our minds, cleansed of sin, become the holy reminders of the joyous light of Christ that is our true and only reality:

> The holiest of altars is set where once sin was believed to be. And here does every light of Heaven come, to be rekindled and increased in joy. For here is what was lost restored to them, and all their radiance made whole again (T-26.IV.3:6-8).

**(4:3-4) We come in confidence today, aware that what belongs to us in truth is what He gives. And we would wish for nothing else, for nothing else belongs to us in truth.**

Jesus tells us once again that in order to have the gifts of God and to accept His love and truth, we need to let go of everything else we have wished for. We cannot have love without letting go of our investment in fear, suffering, and specialness.

Jesus closes the lesson by repeating what he has already said six, seven, and eight times in this very short lesson:

**(5:1-2) So do we clear the way for Him today by simply recognizing that His Will is done already, and that joy and peace belong to us as His eternal gifts. We will not let ourselves lose sight of them between the times we come to seek for them where He has laid them.**

We have the power to lose sight of these gifts by being attracted to the gift of specialness. Yet the power is also ours to clear from our minds the ego's impediments to the truth. Thus we dedicate this day to the practice that will bring the time ever closer when the irrevocable choice for peace and joy will be made.

**(5:3-5) This reminder will we bring to mind as often as we can:**

***I seek but what belongs to me in truth.***
***God's gifts of joy and peace are all I want.***

When we are tempted during the day not to be joyful and peaceful, rather than blame ourselves or anyone else, we should realize instead: "I am attracted to feeling upset because I do not want to remember the glorious truth of Who I am. The glitter of my individuality is the cause of my distress." When we look at the situation clearly, it will make no sense at all. The original choice to be an individual, the ego told us, was to make us happy, yet we now see that the ego's thought system did not make us happy at all; quite the contrary. Our eyes open, we see the causal connection between our decision and our misery: feeling upset is the *effect,* and the belief that being on our own would make us happy is its *cause.* We are aware at last that our choice for the ego reflected the insane thinking that prevented us from looking for the other Teacher. Thus we are grateful for having been wrong and learning there is One Who is right, as we gladly claim the gifts of joy and peace that are our true inheritance as God's Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 105**
**God's peace and joy are mine.**

In the context of "undoing," Jesus teaches us here about the ego's strange notion of giving. Even though he does not use the word *specialness,* that is his point of reference – the *giving-to-get* bargain: I give something to you, so I get something back in return. If I give you more than I really want to give, then I lose. The oft-cited fourth and fifth laws of chaos (T-23.II.9-13) are among the clearest expressions of this ego dynamic of scarcity and hate.

**(1:1-2) God's peace and joy are yours. Today we will accept them, knowing they belong to us.**

The way we accept them is by no longer accepting the ego's substitutes. Letting go of the blocks of specialness is how we remember that God's peace and joy are ours.

**(1:3-4) And we will try to understand these gifts increase as we receive them. They are not like to the gifts the world can give, in which the giver loses as he gives the gift; the taker is the richer by his loss.**

This ego principle is reflected in the fourth law of chaos: "you have what you have taken" (T-23.II.9:3). The ego tells us: "If you have peace and joy, you must have stolen it because if you have it someone else does not. You therefore do not deserve to be happy, for you are a thief who steals what is not yours." That is why happiness is intolerable. People can stand being happy for a while, but not for long; their guilt tells them they do not deserve it. Everyone shares this insane thinking. This lesson, therefore, corrects the ego's insanity by teaching that God's gifts of happiness, peace, and joy, if they are ours, are everyone else's too. They cannot be stolen or taken, but simply accepted. Since God's gifts are in everyone, no one loses and everyone gains. It cannot be otherwise if God is love, for love is perfect oneness.

**(1:5) Such are not gifts, but bargains made with guilt.**

That is the heart of specialness: "bargains made with guilt." I give you my gifts in exchange for yours. However, mine are worthless since they come from me, whom I have already judged as being worthless, while yours are valuable for they offer me what I want. Thus my inherent guilt as a separated ego is reinforced by my stealing still further, exchanging a gift of value for one of little or no worth. We have already cited the following passage from the text on the ego's strange bargains, but it can certainly use another reading:

> Most curious of all is the concept of the self which the ego fosters in the special relationship. This "self' seeks the relationship to make itself complete. Yet when it finds the special relationship in which it thinks it can accomplish this it gives itself away, and tries to "trade" itself for the self of another. This is not union, for there is no increase and no extension. Each partner tries to sacrifice the self he does not want for one he thinks he would prefer. And he feels guilty for the "sin" of taking, and of giving nothing of value in return. How much value can he place upon a self that he would give away to get a "better" one?
>
> The "better" self the ego seeks is always one that is more special. And

whoever seems to possess a special self is "loved" for what can be taken from him (T-16.V.7:1-8:2).

Thus does guilt feed on another's, reinforcing our own insatiable thirst and driving the ego's engine of specialness on its hate-filled path, spiraling downward until it catapults over the precipice of death, taking us and our brothers together to our inevitable fate.

**(1:6) The truly given gift entails no loss.**

When I am loving towards you, I lose nothing, for there is no sacrifice of time, energy, or self. I simply allow the love of Jesus to come through me; and as it does, it washes away my guilt as it does yours. I need focus only on releasing the guilt that prevents love's flow. "The truly given gift entails no loss," and what is no loss must benefit the Sonship as one – you and me alike.

**(1:7-8) It is impossible that one can gain because another loses. This implies a limit and an insufficiency.**

This ego principle implies an insufficiency in God, as the ego sought to prove at the beginning: I have the love and life that God lacks – *one or the other.* This is the origin of the ego's scarcity principle, the basis for its thought system of guilt, and the world that arose from it.

The thought that "one can gain because another loses" is countered in the text by what Jesus refers to as "the rock on which salvation rests": *no one loses and everyone gains* (T-25.VII.12). Believing we are in this world means we believe we got here by stealing from God. Thus the ego's fundamental law: *I have the life I have taken. God's loss is my gain.* We must therefore believe if we are happy, peaceful, or joyful, we stole from another. The ego reasoning, again, is that if I am feeling happy, someone else lost. The laws of specialness demand this insanity, and they uphold it as well. That is why guilt attends the happiness of the world. Indeed, it is why guilt attends every special relationship. My happiness means I sinned, and I hope against hope that no one saw me. It is not only that I want to keep my guilt a secret to myself, but from everyone else, including Jesus. If he knew, my sins would certainly be punished.

**(2) No gift is given thus. Such "gifts" are but a bid for a more valuable return; a loan with interest to be paid in full; a temporary lending, meant to be a pledge of debt to be repaid with more than was received by him who took the gift. This strange distortion of what giving means pervades all levels of the world you see. It strips all meaning from the gifts you give, and leaves you nothing in the ones you take.**

This is another description of special relationships. I want something from you, but you withhold it because you are fighting the same war I am. It must be so, because you do not exist outside my specialness, I must pay you for what I want, for we are both playing by the same rules: I want to give up as little as I can, and get as much as possible from my investment. That is the meaning of "a loan with interest to be paid in full," a gift that is given in hopes of "a more valuable return." These are not gifts at all, but the ego's insane bargains made with guilt.

Through our suffering and misery, we hope to pay God sufficiently so He will not be angry. In return, we want His forgiveness to rest on us and not others, that we may return to Heaven at the expense of another: the unbeliever, the unchristian Christian, the bad student of *A Course in Miracles.* This hateful application of *one or the other* has been at the heart of the Christian message, a phenomenon rapidly spreading throughout the Course's world as well. Needless to say, this is not loving or giving, because such an attitude implies a belief in sacrifice – one winning, another losing; one saved, another damned. The bottom line is our feeling unworthy of happiness or love, and grasping at the ego's straws of specialness to hide the pain.

**(3:1) A major learning goal this course has set is to reverse your view of giving, so you can receive.**

We know this from the text; and there are many lessons in the workbook that discuss undoing the ego's notion of *giving to get.* To the ego it is always *one or the other.* Lesson 108 "To give and to receive are one in truth," and Lesson 126 "All that I give is given to myself" provide major emphasis to this theme (W-pI.108; W-pI.126); and there are many passages in the text as well.* Among others, we can cite the following incisive discussion from the text:

> Only those who have a real and lasting sense of abundance can be truly charitable.... To the ego, to give anything implies that you will have to do without it. When you associate giving with sacrifice, you give only because you believe that you are somehow getting something better, and can therefore do without the thing you give. "Giving to get" is an inescapable law of the ego, which always evaluates itself in relation to other egos. It is therefore continually preoccupied with the belief in scarcity that gave rise to it.... The ego never gives out of abundance, because it was made as a substitute for it. That is why the concept of "getting" arose in the ego's thought system (T-4.II.6:1, 3-6; 7:3-4).

Unlearning a principle that is the foundation of our very existence requires dedication and persistence, traits the workbook aims at instilling in us by teaching how vital they are for achieving our happiness.

**(3:2) For giving has become a source of fear, and so you would avoid the only means by which you can receive.**

Giving becomes a source of fear because I believe what I give is cheating you, since I am not giving love but special love, and I certainly hope I have gotten the better of the bargain. This is thievery, which my ego insists will be met with attack and punishment. No wonder I am fearful. The only means by which I can receive without fear is by undoing fear, accomplished as I undo my dependence on the laws of specialness to make me happy. I release this dependence through looking at my specialness with Jesus, exposing its true nature. Thus I consciously and happily choose to follow the law of forgiveness – love's reflection.

**(3:3-5) Accept God's peace and joy, and you will learn a different way of looking at a gift. God's gifts will never lessen when they are given away. They but increase thereby.**

The way we learn to accept God's gifts is learning what our gifts have been instead, and then letting them go. Over and over, in different forms, Jesus returns to his theme of bringing the ego's gifts of fear, specialness, and hate, to his gifts of peace, forgiveness, and joy.

**(4:1) As Heaven's peace and joy intensify when you accept them as God's gift to you, so does the joy of your Creator grow when you accept His joy and peace as yours.**

Here we find another metaphor. God's joy does not grow. The world's "joy" grows, in that the more we steal, the more joyful we become. These lines then are part of Jesus' gentle fairy tale that lovingly reassures us that "Daddy loves us, and His joy increases the closer we come to Him." The truth behind the fairy tale is that God's infinite Love is always; it cannot lessen, it cannot grow. It simply *is.* Our experience of His love "grows," however, as we choose to identity with it more and the ego less. In this world, concepts such as *more* and *less* have meaning, but only insofar as they reflect the mind's decision for God or the ego, the gifts of love or fear.

**(4:2-5) True giving is creation. It extends the limitless to the unlimited, eternity to timelessness, and love unto itself. It adds to all that is complete already, not in simple terms of adding more, for that implies that it was less before. It adds by letting what cannot contain itself fulfill its aim of giving everything it has away, securing it forever for itself.**

Once again, we see the problem of using words to express a reality that lies beyond them. Words like *giving* and *adding* have no meaning in Heaven, yet must Jesus use them to express Heaven's creation that has no quantitative – i.e., spatial and temporal – dimensions. Thus Jesus tells us in the clarification of terms that *A Course in Miracles* comes within an ego framework (C-in.3:1), explaining that he uses the words and concepts of the ego's world to point to reality. They therefore lead beyond the limited to the limitless and unlimited, beyond time to eternity and timelessness, beyond specialness to love.

**(5:1-2) Today accept God's peace and joy as yours. Let Him complete Himself as He defines completion.**

This implies God was incomplete, and therefore this statement, too, must be understood metaphorically. Completion for God is the totality and wholeness of His being. Therefore, what "completes God" is our acceptance of His truth and denial of the ego's form of completion: our lack is supplied by taking; which means stealing from the outside in order to be complete.

**(5:3-6) You will understand that what completes Him must complete His Son as well. He cannot give through loss. No more can you. Receive His gift of joy and peace today, and He will thank you for your gift to Him.**

Jesus returns to the theme of giving and receiving being one, which corrects the ego's principle of *one or the other.* God does take away in order to give. While sacrifice

is the cornerstone of the world of separation, it is unknown in Heaven. Our willingness to learn this happy lesson is all we are asked for in order that we be happy and feel complete.

Paragraphs 6 through 7 present an exercise that Jesus repeats throughout the workbook, asking us to choose someone we think of as an enemy or friend, realizing this person is one with us. Here the focus is on the people we think of as enemies:

**(6) Today our practice periods will start a little differently. Begin today by thinking of those brothers who have been denied by you the peace and joy that are their right under the equal laws of God. Here you denied them to yourself. And here you must return to claim them as your own.**

We are told our attacks on another constitute an attack on ourselves, since God's Son is one. This idea of seeing that the enemy is "us," to cite the famous line from Walt Kelly's *Pogo,* finds consummate expression in *The Song of Prayer,* and the following passage about praying for others is illustrative:

> Praying for others, if rightly understood, becomes a means for lifting your projections of guilt from your brother, and enabling you to recognize it is not he who is hurting you. The poisonous thought that he *is* your enemy, your evil counterpart, your nemesis, must be relinquished before *you can* be saved from guilt (S-1.III.1:4-5).

These exercises help us reconsider our perceptions of others and ourselves, correcting them from separate to shared interests.

The instructions for the exercise continue:

**(7:1-2) Think of your "enemies" a little while, and tell each one, as he occurs to you:**

**My *brother, peace and joy I offer you,***
***That I may have God's peace and joy as mine.***

This is the central focus of *A Course in Miracles:* learning to accept Jesus' gifts by correcting our misperceptions. In the end, we realize there is no one to forgive, but until we understand we are really forgiving ourselves, we need to practice on others. Through the successful completion of the exercise we shall come to recognize there is no enemy out there, which is why the word is in quotation marks. The enemy was simply our faulty decision making.

As an example, if I think of you as an enemy, at some point I realize something is wrong because I see you as separate and different from me. Jesus teaches that what I see as enmity between you and me is a projection of the enmity I believe is between me and God. The special relationship – love or hate – I experience between us *(in the body)* is nothing but the projection of my special relationship with the ego *(in my mind).* In asking Jesus to help me forgive you, I am really asking his help to forgive myself. This occurs through realizing the relationship I see outside mirrors the relationship I made real and sinful inside, so much so, that I cannot look at it. The problem that needs correcting, therefore, is not external, but within me. As Jesus states in the text:

> The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself (T-27.VIII.10:1).

**(7:3) Thus you prepare yourself to recognize God's gifts to you, and let your mind be free of all that would prevent success today.**

Jesus tells us again that our minds have to choose to be free of all thoughts of guilt and projection. He can remove them for us only when we bring them to him. This cannot be said often enough, for it contains the essence of forgiveness and is the core of the curriculum.

**(7:4-6) Now are you ready to accept the gift of peace and joy that God has given you. Now are you ready to experience the joy and peace you have denied yourself. Now you can say, "God's peace and joy are mine," for you have given what you would receive.**

Through my classroom of special relationships I eventually learn that the way I see you is the way I see me. The guilt I perceive in you is in me, for we are the same. Likewise, if I see peace and joy in you, realizing your sins are but mistakes, I realize mine are, too, and thus peace and joy abide in me as well. Giving and receiving are the same because I give only to myself: *There is no one else.* I receive only from myself: *There is no one else.* You and I are not two, but one: *There is no one else.* Thus do I claim God's peace and joy for the whole Sonship, including me.

**(8:1-2) You must succeed today, if you prepare your mind as we suggest. For you have let all bars to peace and joy be lifted up, and what is yours can come to you at last.**

Once again we see the message of *A Course in Miracles* succinctly expressed. If I want to know God's peace and joy, I need to lift up the bars I placed between myself and them. They are the belief that peace and joy come at someone else's expense. The bars strengthen the more I suffer and the guiltier I can be, because my secret peace and joy is my existence, for which God will not punish me. Thus I did it again – I stole, and keep what I stole. My secret is hidden and no one will know, and we laughingly think this is what will make us happy. The ego is happy, to be sure, because we have solidified our individual self and blamed someone else for the sin. Such projection perpetuates the ego's peace and joy. Recognizing the sheer insanity of this position is what allows its bars to be lifted up. Returning to *The Song of Prayer,* we read:

> But once the need to hold the other as an enemy has been questioned, and the reason for doing so has been recognized if only for an instant, it becomes possible to join in prayer. Enemies do not share a goal. It is in this their enmity is kept. Their separate wishes are their arsenals; their fortresses in hate. The key to rising further still in prayer lies in this simple thought; this change of mind:
>
> *We go together, you and I* (S-1.IV.1:3-8).

Realizing "the ark of peace is entered two by two" (T-20.IV.6:5) is the way we and our brothers return Home – *together.*

**(8:3-9:2) So tell yourself, "God's peace and joy are mine," and close your eyes a while, and let His Voice assure you that the words you speak are true.**

**Spend your five minutes thus with Him each time you can today, but do not think that less is worthless when you cannot give Him more. At least remember hourly to say the words which call to Him to give you what He wills to give, and wills you to receive.**

By silencing the ego's voice of specialness, we allow ourselves to hear the Voice that speaks to us throughout the day (W-pI.49). Jesus comforts us with the thought that we do not have to hear the Holy Spirit all the time, and we should not minimize the effect of *any* time we give to Him. This being said, however, Jesus does ask us to remember our Teacher at least once an hour. He would not be making such a request if he did not feel we were already far enough along in our training – almost a third of the way through – that we would at the very least want to think of the Holy Spirit and our salvation once an hour.

**(9:3) Determine not to interfere today with what He wills.**

The problem is not what God wills, but our determination to keep His Will apart from us. We have already learned the extent of our resistance to learning – the fear of turning more and more to His loving Will as we turn less and less to the ego's tempting words about the glorious wonders of an existence separate from our Creator and Source.

**(9:4) And if a brother seems to tempt you to deny God's gift to him, see it as but another chance to let yourself receive the gifts of God as yours.**

If someone makes you angry, you need realize that you *want to be made angry,* for that allows you to keep your individuality intact. Temptation has no power unless you *want* to be tempted. It is that wish that interferes with knowing God's peace and joy are yours. Whenever you are upset, see it as another chance to receive God's gifts by releasing your investment in specialness and pain, now made evident through your projections onto your brother. The process also works if that brother is you, when tempted to blame yourself for some perceived failing or limitation. Your body and personality are as much outside your mind as are your brother's. Therefore, the "chance to let yourself receive the gifts of God as yours" is not only when someone else tempts you to attack them, but when you are tempted to attack you.

**(9:5-6) Then bless your brother thankfully, and say:**

***My brother, peace and joy I offer you,***
***That I may have God's peace and joy as mine.***

If I am to be happy, I cannot exempt you from God's peace and joy. *The Song of Prayer* extends this teaching – it is not only that we share the same gifts of God; we share the same self:

> Now can you say to everyone who comes to join in prayer with you:
> *I cannot go without you, for you are a part of me.*

> And so he is in truth. Now can you pray only for what you truly share with him. For you have understood he never left, and you, who seemed alone, are one with him (S-1.V.3:8-12).

Thus is the Sonship blessed as one, as we learn to bless each other with the peace and joy of God.

* For a more complete list of these references, please see my *Glossary-Index for A COURSE IN MIRACLES,* pp. 82-83.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 106**
**Let me be still and listen to the truth.**

The title itself is extremely important because – as I have repeatedly emphasized, reflecting the Course's emphasis – the means by which we have access to the truth and experience Jesus' love is letting go of our egos. Recalling an earlier lesson, Jesus refers to the ego's voice in our minds as "raucous shrieks" (W-pI.49.4:3). Its noise is always in our minds, and being still means our decision maker recognizes it made a mistake. Thus we choose against the ego thought system of specialness and for its correction; against illusion and for the truth. This lesson – and the title itself – is another reminder of the need for us to be still to the ego, by shifting our investment from being right to being happy.

**(1) If you will lay aside the ego's voice, however loudly it may seem to call; if you will not accept its petty gifts that give you nothing that you really want; if you will listen with an open mind, that has not told you what salvation is; then you will hear the mighty Voice of truth, quiet in power, strong in stillness, and completely certain in Its messages.**

This restates what I was just saying. We have all preferred the ego's petty gifts of individuality and specialness over the glorious gift of God, which Jesus holds out for us. His gift of forgiveness undoes the ego through our realizing we all are one – united in the dream by sharing the need to return home, and united in our Identity as Christ.

The strength of the Holy Spirit's Presence and Jesus' love lie in their quietness and stillness. It is the ego that needs to make a racket. Whenever, for example, we are certain about something and need to let everyone know how right, wonderful, and holy we are, we know it is the ego speaking. The Voice of the Holy Spirit, with which we truly want to identify, is quiet and does not call attention to itself. It simply is: "quiet in power, strong in stillness, and completely certain in Its messages." The need to be special and right gives away the fact that we have chosen the ego as our teacher.

**(2:1) Listen, and hear your Father speak to you through His appointed Voice, which silences the thunder of the meaningless, and shows the way to peace to those who cannot see.**

Again, those who are certain do not make commotions about themselves. They do not make big deals about things, because in the certainty of their minds' quietness they realize nothing here is important, including one's individual and special self; only experiencing God's Love is important, and there is nothing comparable to it here. Hearing the Holy Spirit's Voice that speaks for that Love dissolves the meaningless self and ends all conflict, lighting the way for our return to peace. The "thunder of the meaningless" gives way to the simple silence of the truth.

**(2:2-4) Be still today and listen to the truth. Be not deceived by voices of the dead, which tell you they have found the source of life and offer it to you for your belief. Attend them not, but listen to the truth.**

Jesus tells us in the next paragraph that the "voices of the dead" are the voices of the world. It would be more technically correct to say the "voices of the non-living," because death presupposes there was life, and we have learned in *A Course in Miracles*

that the body simply does not exist; e.g.: "It is not born and does not die" (T-28.VI.2). However, the iambic pentameter requires a single-syllable word, which is one reason for that usage.

The world tells us life comes from the body. From a biblical standpoint one says the source of life is God, Who creates the body in His own image and likeness. However, Jesus tells us not to listen to these voices of the non-living or dead, which speak only of illusion. By being still, we quiet these deceptive voices so we may hear the truth.

**(3:1-5) Be not afraid today to circumvent the voices of the world. Walk lightly past their meaningless persuasion. Hear them not. Be still today and listen to the truth. Go past all things which do not speak of Him Who holds your happiness within His Hand, held out to you in welcome and in love.**

Jesus speaks this way because we fear that if we circumvent or avoid the world's voices, we would disappear. These voices witness to our seeming reality as separated and special individuals, and our fear of turning from their authority and going against its truth is of our vanishing into the "nothingness" of God, losing our individuality forever. This, then, is the thought preventing us from reaching for His Hand, symbolized for us by Jesus' presence on our journey home. As we see repeatedly throughout *A Course in Miracles,* the way we say "yes" to Jesus' love is to say "no" to the ego thought system we believe is our foundation. By thus going past the voices of the world – our special idols – we reach for the "Hand" of God, hearing only His Voice that speaks of the happiness and welcoming love awaiting us at the journey's end.

**(3:6-7) Hear only Him today, and do not wait to reach Him longer. Hear one Voice today.**

This is Jesus' appeal to us, which he makes throughout *A Course in Miracles:* "Why do you persist in making yourself suffer, when you could just as easily take my hand and leave your ego?" In other words, Jesus tells us we need not wait any longer to be happy. Nothing is really hurt by our delay, but within the dream we cause ourselves increased pain when we wait. "You do not have to do this anymore," Jesus says, "but I await your choice":

> I will never forsake you any more than God will, but I must wait as long as you choose to forsake yourself. Because I wait in love and not in impatience, you will surely ask me truly. I will come in response to a single unequivocal call (T-4.111.7:8-10).

**(4:1) Today the promise of God's Word is kept.**

When *Word* is capitalized in the Course, it almost always is understood as some expression of the Atonement principle—the correction for the error, the Holy Spirit, or forgiveness—which represents undoing the ego's thought system. By its very nature as the reflection of God's truth, it cannot *not* be true; its promise cannot *not* be kept.

**(4:2-4) Hear and be silent. He would speak to you. He comes with miracles a thousand times as happy and as wonderful as those you ever dreamed or wished**

**for in your dreams.**

The word *miracles* is used differently here from elsewhere, and we have seen how Jesus is somewhat loose with his language. Miracles correct the ego's thought system, yet here they express God's Love because they are eternal, as the next sentences express. Throughout *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus explains that miracles are not eternal and do not last beyond our need for them. In other words, when the illusory dream is undone, the illusory correction for the dream – its function now complete – is gone as well. A passage we shall see much later in the workbook expresses this nicely:

> A miracle is a correction. It does not create, nor really change at It undoes error, but does not attempt to go beyond perception, nor exceed the function of forgiveness. Thus it stays within time's limits. Yet it paves the way for the return of timelessness and love's awakening, for fear must slip away under the gentle remedy it brings (W-pII.13.1:1-2,4-6).

Thus again, *miracles* express our experience of God's Love *within the dream.* The content of this passage is similar to these lovely and comforting lines in the text:

> This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt (T-28.II.12:1-2).

These loving and shining corrections, the reflections of Heaven's love and light, remain in our minds, patiently awaiting our decision to choose them.

**(4:5-7) His miracles are true. They will not fade when dreaming ends. They end the dream instead; and last forever, for they come from God to His dear Son, whose other name is you.**

The dear Son, whose other name is ours, is Christ, not the separated self – name, body, and personality – we believe we are. The love, the reflection of which has called to us, remains with us forever, for we *are* that love. That is the meaning behind this otherwise inexplicable text passage on the eternal nature of the Holy Spirit, the anthropomorphized form of the Love of God:

> The Voice of the Holy Spirit is the Call to Atonement, or the restoration of the integrity of the mind. When the Atonement is complete and the whole Sonship is healed there will be no Call to return. But what God creates is eternal. The Holy Spirit will remain with the Sons of God, to bless their creations and keep them in the light of joy (T-515:4-7).

**(4:8-9) Prepare yourself for miracles today. Today allow your Father's ancient pledge to you and all your brothers to be kept.**

Jesus appeals to us because we must choose to accept his already-present gift. He again contrasts the glorious happiness his gifts provide with the inglorious happiness of specialness the ego's gifts offer, and asks: "Can this be a difficult choice for you to make? Are the things of this world – your sins, guilt, and judgments – really more important to you than the happiness you will surely find if you drop the ego's hand and

take mine'?" Our Father's ancient pledge to us remains empty in our awareness until we choose to recall our pledge to Him:

> God keeps His promises; His Son keeps his. In his creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." His Son remembers not that he replied "I will," though in that promise he was born (T-28.VI.6:3-6).

**(5:1-3) Hear Him today, and listen to the Word which lifts the veil that lies upon the earth, and wakes all those who sleep and cannot see. God calls to them through you. He needs your voice to speak to them, for who could reach God's Son except his Father, calling through your Self?**

This is a theme we shall see repeated. It is based on the now-familiar idea that God's Son is one. Jesus is not saying we should learn these lessons of forgiveness, and then preach his gospel to the world. Other systems teach that, but not this one. Indeed, we do not preach or teach anything. We simply accept Jesus' love, which embraces every seemingly separated mind in the Sonship, since minds are one. Mind extends to mind, reflecting the original extension of God's Mind to the Mind of Christ.

Again, we do nothing. If the love of Jesus motivates us, inspiring us to do things in the world, we of course do them. Yet the core of *A Course in Miracles'* curriculum involves stilling the ego's voices in our minds and identifying with Jesus' words. Accepting his love, we allow it to guide us in everything we think, feel, say, and do. In that sense the world is healed, because it does not exist outside our minds. Incidentally, we find here the adumbration of the beautiful and more developed passage in the Introduction to the fifth review, where Jesus says he needs us to hear his words and give them to the world, that it be saved (W-pI.rV.in.9:2-3).

**(5:4) Hear Him today, and offer Him your voice to speak to all the multitude who wait to hear the Word that He will speak today.**

We speak His Word in silence, because love soundlessly speaks no words. Since we believe we are bodies, however, the soundless word of love's presence will often take shape in our behavior and words as it extends through us. Yet it is not the words that are important, but the love that inspires them. Our task is simply to get in touch with that love. It then does the rest.

**(6:1-2) Be ready for salvation. It is here, and will today be given unto you.**

Salvation will be given us in the instant – the holy instant – we choose to accept it, which we do by setting aside the ego's voice. Our Teacher cannot wait to give us what we already have:

> The eagerness of the Holy Spirit to give you this is so intense He would not wait, although He waits in patience. Meet His patience with your impatience at delay in meeting Him Go out in gladness to meet with your Redeemer, and walk with Him in trust out of this world, and into the real world of beauty and forgiveness (T-17.II.8:3-5).

Knowing that beauty is what awaits our choice, who could not share the Holy Spirit's eagerness?

**(6:3-4) And you will learn your function from the One Who chose it in your Father's Name for you. Listen today, and you will hear a Voice which will resound throughout the world through you.**

The world exists in our mind, where the Holy Spirit's Voice resounds when we choose to accept It as the only Voice we wish to hear. Our choice thus echoes round the world, present in the Son's one mind.

**(6:5) The bringer of all miracles has need that you receive them first, and thus become the joyous giver of what you received.**

We will see presently the return of the theme of giving and receiving, foreshadowed here. Our responsibility is simply to receive or accept the gift; its giving occurs through Jesus. Lesson 154 echoes the idea of first receiving the miracle before its healing can be extended to others.

**(7:1) Thus does salvation start and thus it ends; when everything is yours and everything is given away, it will remain with you forever.**

Salvation begins in our minds – the source of the error – and ends there when we choose to correct the error and accept the Atonement, as the early passage in the text explains:

> ...the undoing process, which does not come from you, is nevertheless within you because God placed it there. Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace (T-5.VII.6:4-5).

Needless to say, this idea of giving and receiving has nothing to do with the world's understanding. When everything is mine and I accept God's Love as my Identity, the Sonship is united in that Self. There is no loss but only gain – for *all.*

**(7:2) And the lesson has been learned.**

The lesson that has to be learned is the Atonement: the separation from God never happened. This means you and I are not separate either.

**(7:3-8:2) Today we practice giving, not the way you understand it now, but as it is. Each hour's exercises should begin with this request for your enlightenment:**

***I will be still and listen to the truth.***
***What does it mean to give and to receive?***

**Ask and expect an answer. Your request is one whose answer has been waiting long to be received by you.**

The answer, again, is the Atonement principle. It is not a specific answer that would have Jesus telling us, for example, to say this, do that, or go there, but God's wordless Word. Even though the answer awaits us in our minds, we fear its implications. Therefore, we need these practice periods as gentle reminders that if we see through the ego's lies – e.g., giving and receiving are different – the resultant stillness would allow us to hear the Holy Spirit's Voice correcting our errors. Forgiveness enables us to be still, so we may receive the love that is ours and the world's, with no loss to anyone.

**(8:3-4) It will begin the ministry for which you came, and which will free the world from thinking giving is a way to lose. And so the world becomes ready to understand and to receive.**

When we accept the gift of becoming Jesus' manifestation in the dream – just as he was the Holy Spirit's – that becomes our function or ministry. But do not take this to mean something external, for that would be a total misunderstanding of *A Course in Miracles.* How can there be an external ministry when Jesus teaches there is no world? We first have to learn this lesson, meaning we learn there is no thought that underlies the world. When this learning occurs – the purpose of the miracle – love extends through us. The form it takes is irrelevant, for what matters is our choosing love instead of fear, identifying with the Self of the unified Sonship. The inheritance of this Self was never lost, and is now regained through Its remembrance.

**(9) Be still and listen to the truth today. For each five minutes spent in listening, a thousand minds are opened to the truth and they will hear the holy Word you hear. And when the hour is past, you will again release a thousand more who pause to ask that truth be given them, along with you.**

Recall that the term *thousand* in *A Course in Miracles* symbolizes a large number. Thus thousands will receive this gift of Atonement when we accept it for ourselves, reminding the Sonship, as did Jesus, that there is another choice that can be made. It yet remains the Sonship's decision, as it was ours, *when* to choose to accept God's Word.

**(10) Today the holy Word of God is kept through your receiving it to give away, so you can teach the world what giving means by listening and learning it of Him. Do not forget today to reinforce your choice to hear and to receive the Word by this reminder, given to yourself as often as is possible today:**

***Let me be still and listen to the truth.***
***I am the messenger of God today,***
***My voice is His, to give what I receive.***

Learning that giving and receiving are the same, we allow truth to be itself. Letting go of grievances, memories of victimization, and specialness needs entails no sacrifice or loss. To the contrary, the process of forgiveness that is our gift to Jesus, as it is to the Sonship, frees us to receive the memory of the love from which we had separated. Without the barriers of hate to block love's flow, it gently extends throughout the Sonship, delivering the happy message of God's Word: the truth is here, and is ours for

the asking.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 107**
**Truth will correct all errors in my mind.**

This is a lovely lesson that contrasts truth and illusion, and even more to the point, makes clear the impossibility of our understanding truth and how happy it will make us. This is why throughout *A Course in Miracles* Jesus talks to us about the *reflections* of truth or holiness. Strictly speaking, of course, truth and holiness exist only in Heaven.

**(1:1-2) What can correct illusions but the truth? And what are errors but illusions that remain unrecognized for what they are?**

This is the ego's thought system, which consists of the double shield of oblivion: The world is the external shield "protecting" us from the mind's guilt; and the guilt is the internal shield "protecting" us from the mind's love, which undoes our individuality and specialness. The point is to recognize the error, which is not in bodies, but in our minds, where truth resides as well.

**(1:3-5) Where truth has entered errors disappear. They merely vanish, leaving not a trace by which to be remembered. They are gone because, without belief, they have no life.**

It is important to remember that what gives the ego thought system of illusions its power is our belief in it, which comes from the power of the mind's decision maker to choose. As Jesus teaches us in the text:

> *Do not be afraid of the ego.* It depends on your mind, and as you made it by believing in it, so you can dispel it by withdrawing belief from it (T-7.VIII.5:1-2).

What could be simpler? Yet because salvation is so simple, the ego engages in its strategy of complexity that leaves us believing in the reality of illusions, because we believe in the reality of the body.

**(1:6-7) And so they disappear to nothingness, returning whence they came. From dust to dust they come and go, for only truth remains.**

That is all the ego thought system is, and the world as well: an error, which when looked at with Jesus, simply disappears back into its own nothingness. It is helpful to keep in mind that both error and truth are in our minds; nowhere else. It is thus not the world that has to be changed, but our belief that there is a world, and that the ego is right and Jesus is wrong. "Dust to dust," of course, is an allusion to the famous biblical verse from Genesis (2:7).

Jesus now describes what is basically impossible to describe:

**(2:1-3:1) Can you imagine what a state of mind without illusions is? How it would feel? Try to remember when there was a time, – perhaps a minute, maybe even less – when nothing came to interrupt your peace; when you were certain you were loved and safe. Then try to picture what it would be like to have that moment be extended to the end of time and to eternity. Then let the sense of quiet that you felt be multiplied a hundred times, and then be multiplied another**

**hundred more.**

**And now you have a hint, not more than just the faintest intimation of the state your mind will rest in when the truth has come.**

Our thoughts on happiness and peace are but a *very, very, very* faint glimmer of their true nature. Thus Jesus asks: "Why would you throw away the glorious reality of my love, reflecting to you God's Love and the source of your happiness, and choose instead the tiny bits of special nothings that you covet, cherish, and would even kill for? Whatever you think constitutes the truth of your safety is mistaken." Note that Jesus does not speak of the body but the mind – the source of our misery and pain, and happiness and peace.

This passage also implies there is no way the body could ever know real peace, for peace does not reside in the world nor the various states to which we aspire, but only in the mind made free of guilt and fear. That is the peace St. Paul described as passing all understanding (Philippians 4:7), and of which the manual for teachers speaks:

> It has been said that there is a kind of peace that is not of this world.... in every way it is totally unlike all previous experiences. It calls to mind nothing that went before. It brings with it no past associations. It is a new thing entirely.... [It is] the simple understanding that His Will is wholly without opposite. There is no thought that contradicts His Will, yet can be true.... The Will of God is One and all there is. This is your heritage. The universe beyond the sun and stars, and all the thoughts of which you can conceive, belong to you. God's peace is the condition for His Will. Attain His peace, and you remember Him (M-20.1:1; 2:2-5; 6:2-3,9-13).

Can anything here even approach that state? Jesus continues:

**(3:2) Without illusions there could be no fear, no doubt and no attack.**

As you practice *A Course in Miracles* you do not lose your individuality overnight. You lose your fear, doubt, anxiety, and guilt, all your thoughts of specialness and attack.

**(3:3) When truth has come all pain is over, for there is no room for transitory thoughts and dead ideas to linger in your mind.**

These thoughts comprise the "wonderful" gifts of specialness, the bodily experiences we believe are so vital to our well being and salvation.

**(3:4-6) Truth occupies your mind completely, liberating you from all beliefs in the ephemeral. They have no place because the truth has come, and they are nowhere. They can not be found, for truth is everywhere forever, now.**

Implied here – and actually stated in the preceding lesson – is that when your mind is healed, you no longer remember the dream because there is nothing there to remember. Accepting the Atonement – the separation, and therefore the dream that is the world, never happened – awakens us from the dream of sin, guilt, and death, which at that point is gone forever. As Jesus says near the close of "The Obstacles to Peace":

**Lesson 107**

Nothing that you remember now will you remember.

It seems to you the world will utterly abandon you if you but raise your eyes. Yet all that will occur is you will leave the world forever (1-19.1V-D.6 :6-7:2).

**(4:1) When truth has come it does not stay a while, to disappear or change to something else.**

Everything in this world changes and metamorphoses into something else. No matter how indulgent our specialness demands, no matter how much we covet and seek their satisfaction, we know from experience the good feeling does not last, the proof it is not the truth. Indeed, our most special relationship of all – with our bodies – ends in total failure, for we all die. Yet if the love of Jesus is present in our relationships, the good feeling must and will last. His love alone, reflecting the eternal Love of God, will endure while we dream. The forms of specialness – the thrills, excitements, and pleasures are transient. Thus Jesus' love is a constant appeal to us, for he designates "what lasts" as the criterion for distinguishing between the valuable and the valueless, as we shall see later in Lesson 133.

**(4:2-4) It does not shift and alter in its form, nor come and go and go and come again. It stays exactly as it always was, to be depended on in every need, and trusted with a perfect trust in all the seeming difficulties and the doubts that the appearances the world presents engender. They will merely blow away, when truth corrects the errors in your mind.**

Jesus is not saying we will not have needs. As long as we are in this dream, making our way home, we will have needs, concerns, and problems. As he says of the advanced psychotherapist: "Even an advanced therapist has some earthly needs while he is here" (P-3.III.1:3). Thus, the journey is a process, and Jesus implies that we are beginning to understand that the truth of his loving presence is always in our minds, awaiting our return. Since we do not have to be perfectly free of our specialness, he tells us: "When these thoughts arise, come to me, for I am the truth that will undo them, and therefore your pain." This comforting thought that we need not be free of our egos is also found in a discussion of the holy instant:

> The necessary condition for the holy instant does not require that you have no thoughts that are not pure. But it does require that you have none that you would keep.... In your practice, then, try only to be vigilant against deception, and seek not to protect the thoughts you would keep to yourself. Let the Holy Spirit's purity shine them away, and bring all your awareness to the readiness for purity He offers you (T-15 .IV.9: 1-2,8-9).

Thus we are not asked to be without the body and its needs. We are asked merely to shift their purpose by inviting Jesus back into our minds. This simple invitation reflects the willingness to take his loving hand and begin the journey home. Simple honesty with ourselves is all he needs in order to have his truth correct all errors in our minds.

**(5:1) When truth has come it harbors in its wings the gift of perfect constancy, and love which does not falter in the face of pain, but looks beyond it,**

**steadily and sure.**

Again, Jesus is not saying there will be no pain or difficulty; they are undone by realizing that their cause does not lie in the external, or in the failure of our needs to be met, but in, quite simply, having dropped his hand. Pain thus comes from telling Jesus: "I am not interested in you, for I know better"; while peace is the happy result of admitting we were wrong.

**(5:2) Here is the gift of healing, for the truth needs no defense, and therefore no attack is possible.**

This implies that sickness is a defense, which is the subject of Lesson 136, "Sickness is a defense against the truth" (W-pI.136). That is why choosing truth is healing. If there is no fear in our minds, there is nothing to defend against. Attack is the content behind every defense, for we have attacked our and our brother's reality as Christ, replacing love with fear. Yet this is so only in dreams. Healing simply accepts the truth behind the illusion, as we now see:

**(5:3-4) Illusions can be brought to truth to be corrected. But the truth stands far beyond illusions, and can not be brought to them to turn them into truth.**

This is what the world seeks to do, as it has sought to do with Jesus, God, and, unfortunately, with *A Course in Miracles.* We want to bring the Course's truth to the illusion, and have truth heal our problems here. Instead, Jesus asks us to bring the ego to his truth, which undoes the illusion and the pain that comes from it. He succinctly summarizes this principle in the following passage from the text:

> When you try to bring truth to illusions, you are trying to make illusions real, and keep them by justifying your belief in them. But to give illusions to truth is to enable truth to teach that the illusions are unreal, and thus enable you to escape from them (T-1715:4-5).

Recognizing the ego's duplicity in making illusions real by bringing truth to them enables us to reverse the process. Thus is Jesus restored to his rightful place in our minds, where truth is remembered, as we are.

**(6:1-4) Truth does not come and go nor shift nor change, in this appearance now and then in that, evading capture and escaping grasp. It does not hide. It stands in open light, in obvious accessibility. It is impossible that anyone could seek it truly, and would not succeed.**

If we do not feel the truth and comfort of Jesus' love, it is because we have not sought it, as we are afraid of the light and wish to remain in darkness. Our special bodies reflect the ego's thought system of darkness, which we cling to because we fear the light of truth in which our individuality would go, as would our problems, judgments, and grievances. Without these, who would we be? Revisiting these telling lines, we read of the ego's fear:

> There is no statement that the world is more afraid to hear than this:

> *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.*
>
> Yet in this learning is salvation born. And What you are will tell you of Itself (T-31.V.17:6-9).

Thus we do not seek truth truly, for we do not want to succeed and hear our Self tell us What we are.

**(6:5-9) Today belongs to truth. Give truth its due, and it will give you yours. You were not meant to suffer and to die. Your Father wills these dreams be gone. Let truth correct them all.**

We have previously discussed that to the ego, God's Will for us is suffering and death. These lessons correct that belief. Readers may recall these lines from the text:

> Swear not to die, you holy Son of God! You make a bargain that you cannot keep. The Son of Life cannot be killed. He is immortal as his Father. What he is cannot be changed (T-29.VI.2:1-5).

Thus we bring the illusion of death – our having chosen it over life – to the truth of God's Will. We have chosen at last to prove God right, abrogating the vow to the ego and pledging ourselves to the truth of eternal life as God's Son.

**(7) We do not ask for what we do not have. We merely ask for what belongs to us, that we may recognize it as our own. Today we practice on the happy note of certainty that has been born of truth. The shaky and unsteady footsteps of illusion are not our approach today. We are as certain of success as we are sure we live and hope and breathe and think. We do not doubt we walk with truth today, and count on it to enter into all the exercises that we do this day.**

Our asking for what belongs to us is the accepting of the Atonement, asking the decision-making part of our minds to choose again – the truth of what we are over the illusion. Since we are asking only for truth, we cannot fail. Illusions have no power once we withdraw our belief in them. Today's exercises take us further down the path of certainty, which we happily walk with the truth of Jesus' love by our side.

**(8:1) Begin by asking Him Who goes with you upon this undertaking that He be in your awareness as you go with Him.**

Jesus asks again to choose him or the Holy Spirit as our Guide as we go through the day, bringing to Them all forms of upset and disquiet, the myriad ways we had chosen illusion over truth. Changing teachers, our journey to nowhere becomes the journey home.

**(8:2) You are not made of flesh and blood and bone, but were created by the selfsame Thought which gave the gift of life to Him as well.**

God, the Source of the Holy Spirit, is also our Source. Jesus thus contrasts the ego's false self – as manifest in the body – with the glorious Thought of God, our true Identity: He the Thought that created us; we the Thought He created. We are reminded in this beautiful passage that our thoughts, the idols of self, have no power over the truth of our reality:

> Beyond all idols is the Thought God holds of you. Completely unaffected by the turmoil and the terror of the world, the dreams of birth and death that here are dreamed, the myriad of forms that fear can take; quite undisturbed, the Thought God holds of you remains exactly as it always was. Surrounded by a stillness so complete no sound of battle comes remotely near, it rests in certainty and perfect peace. Here is your one reality kept safe, completely unaware of all the world that worships idols, and that knows not God. In perfect sureness of its changelessness and of its rest in its eternal home, the Thought God holds of you has never left the Mind of its Creator Whom it knows, as its Creator knows that it is there (T30.III.10).

**(8:3-4) He is your Brother, and so like to you your Father knows that You are both the same. It is your Self you ask to go with you, and how could He be absent where you are?**

Recall those inspiring lines from Helen's wonderful poem, "A Jesus Prayer":

> Come, brothers, see
> How like to Christ am I, and I to you
> Whom He has blessed and holds as one with me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 82)

Our unity with our brothers reflects our unity with the Holy Spirit, which in truth reflects the unity of God's one creation. We, God's Son, are a oneness joined as one, part of the Oneness which unites all things within Itself (T-25.I.7:1-2). Christ, our Self, can never be separate from Himself, nor from the Spirit of God Who reminds us of the truth of our one Self.

**(9:1-5) Truth will correct all errors in your mind which tell you you could be apart from Him. You speak to Him today, and make your pledge to let His function be fulfilled through you. To share His function is to share His joy. His confidence is with you, as you say:**

> ***Truth will correct all errors in my mind,***
> ***And I will rest in Him Who is my Self***

Thus we choose to remember our function of forgiveness: bringing the errors of past mistaken choices to the truth in our minds, as we walk the path that leads to our Self.

**(9:6) Then let Him lead you gently to the truth, which will envelop you and give you peace so deep and tranquil that you will return to the familiar world reluctantly.**

Jesus addresses the integration of what we know to be the truth in our minds with our functioning in the world, an example of the biblical idea of being in the world and yet not of it (John 17:14,16,18). This means we continue to live in the world, knowing our reality is not there. Yet a part of us remains reluctant to return our attention to the world, because the experience of light, truth, and love is so wonderful that by contrast the world seems a veritable hell. Thus Jesus tells us he knows what we feel, at the same time encouraging the right-minded part of our minds. In fact, it is the experience of peace that enables us to "return" to the world, but differently, an important theme to which we shall return. The power of this peace was nicely captured in another of Helen's poems, "Awake in Stillness":

> Peace cover you, within without the same, In shining silence and in peace so deep
> No dream of sin and evil can come near Your quiet mind.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 73)

**(10:1-2) And yet you will be glad to look again upon this world. For you will bring with you the promise of the changes which the truth that goes with you will carry to the world.**

What are these changes? Before I asked Jesus for help, I was miserable, angry, depressed, anxious, and a very unhappy victim. Realizing I would be happier with a new teacher, I released my investment in the ego's specialness. Thus I am seen differently, for I *am* different. As the workbook says later: I "smile more frequently" (W-pI.155.1:2). This indicates something has changed – anger and depression to happiness and joy – and says, in effect: because minds are one, the choice I have made you can make, the teacher I have chosen is in your mind as well.

That is the meaning of Jesus' lovely statement in the text, "Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you" (T-11.VI.7:3-4). Our happiness demonstrates his life in us. This does not mean we literally walk around smiling, but that we remain peaceful, knowing that nothing in the world has power to disrupt our peace. Living in the presence of Jesus' love means we live with his presence all the time. Our quiet joy witnesses to his truth in our minds, as all ego thoughts are gently laid aside. The joy born of the forgiveness of ourselves extends gladly through the Sonship and is carried to the world.

**(10:3) They will increase with every gift you give of five small minutes, and the errors that surround the world will be corrected as you let them be corrected in your mind.**

Again, Jesus speaks of the correction of errors in our minds. The "errors that surround the world" are those that come from the belief in separation: I know better than God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus; I am right and They are wrong. When I demonstrate I am finally happy because I have been wrong, again, I become the example for everyone else. Each time I remember, I remember for the whole Sonship, as we now read:

**(11) Do not forget your function for today. Each time you tell yourself with confidence, "Truth will correct all errors in my mind," you speak for all the world**

**and Him Who would release the world, as He would set you free.**

What better way to end the discussion of this lesson than to quote the end of the manual for teachers. These lovely verses, already partly quoted, encapsulate our function of forgiving ourselves, thereby forgiving the world. Jesus' gratitude to us echoes our own to him, who led us to this sacred place, wherein our choice was made for truth instead of illusion, freedom instead of imprisonment, life instead of death:

> And now in all your doings be you blessed.
> God turns to you for help to save the world.
> Teacher of God, His thanks He offers you,
> And all the world stands silent in the grace
> You bring from Him. You are the Son He loves,
> And it is given you to be the means
> Through which His Voice is heard around the world,
> To close all things of time; to end the sight
> Of all things visible; and to undo
> All things that change. Through you is ushered in
> A world unseen, unheard, yet truly there.
> Holy are you, and in your light the world
> Reflects your holiness, for you are not
> Alone and friendless. I give thanks for you,
> And join your efforts on behalf of God,
> Knowing they are on my behalf as well,
> And for all those who walk to God with me.
>
> AMEN
> (M-29.8)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 108**
**To give and to receive are one in truth.**

The title gives us the two principal themes of this lesson: giving and receiving are one; and, derived from the first, our inherent unity as God's Son. Remembering our Oneness as Christ is the ultimate goal of Jesus' teaching.

**(1:1) Vision depends upon today's idea.**

Vision has nothing to do with our eyes, which literally do not see. All "seeing" reflects a choice we made in our minds for the teacher we want. If it is the ego, our eyes will see separation; if Jesus, they will bring back to us his message of oneness. In a separated world, oneness means shared needs and interests. Despite our different paths, we share the same hope and goal. Understanding the unity of sharing is the essence of vision, and why giving and receiving are the same: the Son gives to himself, who gladly receives the gift from his self.

**(1:2) The light is in it, for it reconciles all seeming opposites.**

Saying the ego thought system rests on separation, individuality, or differences, is the same as saying it rests on opposites. It began with the thought that God and His Son were opposites and in opposition. Once the world was made, the split mind's oppositional element became more pronounced: God's reality is spirit, while ours is the body. The world is thus based on opposites, and living here without opposition is impossible. *Perception,* Jesus' term to describe this world, is based on contrast: our perceiving in relationship to something else. The following passage from the manual for teachers describes this world of contrast and opposites:

> The belief in order of difficulties is the basis for the world's perception. It rests on differences; on uneven background and shifting foreground, on unequal heights and diverse sizes, on varying degrees of darkness and light, and thousands of contrasts in which each thing seen competes with every other in order to be recognized (M-8.1:1-2).

Special relationships are based on contrast, for its insane thought system begins with the premise of differences: You are more special than someone else, therefore different; you were more beloved of me yesterday when you gave me what I wanted, but you are different today when you did not please me. Vision, born of the Atonement principle that says the separation never happened, is the basis for shifting how we perceive the world. It reconciles the opposites, not by bringing them together as, for example, Jung emphasized, but by exposing the illusion that underlies both sides of the contrast. The only meaningful opposite to be discussed is the ego's opposition to the Holy Spirit. This opposition is "reconciled" when its error is brought to the truth of unity, where it is gently dispelled.

**(1:3) And what is light except the resolution, born of peace, of all your conflicts and mistaken thoughts into one concept which is wholly true?**

The "one concept which is wholly true" is the Atonement: we are joined, because we never separated from Oneness. Within the dream, God's Son is one; in Heaven,

God's Son is one. That is the concept that resolves all conflict, dissolving the falsity in the ego's equation.

**(1:4-5) Even that one will disappear, because the Thought behind it will appear instead to take its place. And now you are at peace forever, for the dream is over then.**

The Atonement thought will disappear because when it has achieved its purpose – the undoing of the error – the correction will no longer be needed and will disappear. Similarly Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, in the end He "returns to the eternal formlessness of God" (C-6.5:8). What remains, however, is the Thought behind the Atonement – our Identity as Christ – which never dies because it is beyond the opposites of life and death, and beyond their correction.

**(2:1) True light that makes true vision possible is not the light the body's eyes behold.**

Vision has nothing to do with seeing auras, physical light, or experiences in the world. Its light is only in the mind and beyond sensory perception. Simply stated, it is the light of truth, a thought within the mind that waits upon our decision to "see" it.

**(2:2-3) It is a state of mind that has become so unified that darkness cannot be perceived at all. And thus what is the same is seen as one, while what is not the same remains unnoticed, for it is not there.**

"What is not the same" is the seeming fragments of the Sonship. When one is in the real world, the referent here, one realizes everything here is a dream, and our reality is outside it, where God's Son is one and has no name. We assign names – Jesus, for example – but in truth only the thought of love exists in the real world, which, as Jesus explains, lasts but an instant, and then God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself. Thus we read, for example, these two beautiful renderings of what is elsewhere referred to as God's *last step:*

> God loves His Son. Request Him now to give the means by which this world will disappear, and vision first will come, with knowledge but an instant later. For in grace you see a light that covers all the world in love, and watch fear disappear from every face as hearts rise up and claim the light as theirs. What now remains that Heaven be delayed an instant longer? What is still undone when your forgiveness rests on everything? (W-pI.168.4)

> O my brothers, if you only knew the peace that will envelop you and hold you safe and pure and lovely in the Mind of God, you could but rush to meet Him where His altar is. Hallowed your Name and His, for they are joined here in this holy place. Here He leans down to lift you up to Him, out of illusions into holiness; out of the world and to eternity; out of all fear and given back to love (C-4.8).

**(3:1) This is the light that shows no opposites, and vision, being healed, has power to heal.**

Vision heals the belief in separation, the source of all sickness. Joining with Jesus, we join with the entire Sonship, ending the separation as it ends sickness. That is why vision and healing are the same.

We experience vision by denying, not what our eyes see, but that our perceptions mean something. Thus the early lessons teach that everything here is meaningless, for *we* have provided the meaning, which serves to prove that we are right and Jesus is wrong: separation is alive, well, and powerful, for look what it has accomplished. These thoughts are meaningless, however, because they come from nothing, and their darkness is shined away by the light of truth.

**(3:2) This is the light that brings your peace of mind to other minds, to share it and be glad that they are one with you and with themselves.**

There is that all-important word: *one.* Peace goes to every mind because minds are one. This is not true in the world and cannot be understood here. Yet it remains the truth, beyond our ego's understanding. When we have an experience – even for an instant – of being without the ego and with the love of Jesus, we understand the oneness of God's Son, an understanding that remains with us, even as we seek to cover it under clouds of complexity and obscurity.

**(3:3) This is the light that heals because it brings single perception, based upon one frame of reference, from which one meaning comes.**

Vision tells us that God's Sons, all of whom seem different, are one. We have differences, to be sure, but they are superficial. We are one because we share the same need to return to a home we believe we have destroyed. Our joint need is to realize our seeming sin has had no effect. The "one frame of reference" is the truth, to which we bring our disparate perceptions, there to be united in the single purpose of forgiveness. We revisit still again this extremely important passage that describes the vision of a healed mind, "its single perception, based upon one frame of reference":

> The body's eyes will continue to see differences. But the mind that has let itself be healed will no longer acknowledge them. There will be those who seem to be "sicker" than others, and the body's eyes will report their changed appearances as before. But the healed mind will put them all in one category; they are unreal. This is the gift of its Teacher; the understanding that only two categories are meaningful in sorting out the messages the mind receives from what appears to be the outside world. And of these two, but one is real (M-8.6:1-6).

**(4:1) Here are both giving and receiving seen as different aspects of one Thought whose truth does not depend on which is seen as first, nor which appears to be in second place.**

Once again, in the specialness bargains on which our relationships are based, there is a giver and receiver; and we want to be on top, giving as little as possible to receive as much as we can. To correct this ego axiom of *I win, you lose,* Jesus says later in the workbook: "I choose the second place to gain the first" (W-pII.328). When I no longer have to be number one, First Cause and the author of my existence, I choose

to be God's Effect. I thus remember I am one with my Source, which puts me first because in God there is no first and second. We "belong to the First Cause, created by Him like unto Himself and part of Him" (T-14.IV.2:1):

> The First in eternity is God the Father, Who is both First and One. Beyond the First there is no other, for there is no order, no second or third, and nothing but the First (T-14.IV.1:7-8).

In the dream, we reflect the truth of our oneness by living without winners and losers, happily understanding we do not have to steal love, destroy another to get what we want, or be right. If we learn this lesson, realizing we all are part of the one Son, we will have attained the non judgmental state of mind in which there is only vision.

**(4:2) Here it is understood that both occur together, that the Thought remain complete.**

The Thought of Love is complete in my mind because it is one. I cannot give what I do not have, and I cannot receive what I have not given. This is the experience of God's Love as It extends through the healed mind. I do not believe I have less, because I know minds are one, and realize there is nothing outside because I am the mind of God's Son, who is one with his Source. *Inside* and *outside* lose their meaning, for there is only the Mind of Love. *Giving* and *receiving* are but dualistic terms we use to connote the extension of God's Love through our minds, as it remains there: *ideas leave not their source.*

**(4:3-5:3) And in this understanding is the base on which all opposites are reconciled, because they are perceived from the same frame of reference which unifies this Thought.**
**One thought, completely unified, will serve to unify all thought. This is the same as saying one correction will suffice for all correction, or that to forgive one brother wholly is enough to bring salvation to all minds For these are but some special cases of one law which holds for every kind of learning, if it be directed by the One Who knows the truth.**

The message is clear: all is *one.* We have learned that in forgiving one person totally we have forgiven everyone, because one brother is all brothers. Recall the following statement, here placed more fully in the context of generalizing the Holy Spirit's lessons of forgiveness:

> Leave, then, the transfer of your learning to the One Who really understands its laws, and Who will guarantee that they remain unviolated and unlimited. Your part is merely to apply what He has taught you to yourself, and He will do the rest. And it is thus the power of your learning will be proved to you by all the many different witnesses it finds. Your brother first among them will be seen, but thousands stand behind him, and beyond each one of them there are a thousand more (T-27.V.10:1-4).

Thus Jesus says that our only responsibility is to accept the Atonement for ourselves (T-2.V.5:1), which we apply to our special relationships. Within that

specialness is found the entirety of the ego's thought system and the world's, just as in my forgiveness is found the entirety of the Holy Spirit's thought system – one problem, one solution.

**(6) To learn that giving and receiving are the same has special usefulness, because it can be tried so easily and seen as true. And when this special case has proved it always works, in every circumstance where it is tried, the thought behind it can be generalized to other areas of doubt and double vision. And from there it will extend, and finally arrive at the one Thought which underlies them all.**

In other words, when I practice the idea for today and ask Jesus' help to forgive, I learn to generalize from a single relationship to all relationships.

The term *double vision* has the meaning here of *duality.* When I see things in double, I see in opposites, an expression of duality. Thus I practice with my current special relationship by asking Jesus to help me shift from a perception of differences to one of shared needs and goals. Such practice will help me generalize to every aspect of my life. The *one Thought* refers to God's Love, the Oneness that is the source for all experiences of oneness – shared interests – in the world. My diligent and dedicated daily practice fosters the generalization that enables me to learn that the principle of "giving and receiving are the same" heals my split mind, "in every circumstance where it is tried."

**(7) Today we practice with the special case of giving and receiving. We will use this simple lesson in the obvious because it has results we cannot miss. To give is to receive. Today we will attempt to offer peace to everyone, and see how quickly peace returns to us. Light is tranquility, and in that peace is vision given us, and we can see.**

Eager to learn the lesson in the specific circumstances of our lives, we allow our Teacher to generalize our learning to the world. We choose to *give* forgiveness, so that we may *receive* it. Borrowing from the inspiring imagery of the text's closing pages, we see these tiny, scattered threads of forgiveness grow into one inclusive chorus of love, bringing light and peace to the Sonship, united and healed in Christ's tranquil vision of oneness (T-31.VIII.11:5).

**(8) So we begin the practice periods with the instruction for today, and say:**

***To give and to receive are one in truth.***
***I will receive what I am giving now***

**Then close your eyes, and for five minutes think of what you would hold out to everyone, to have it yours. You might, for instance, say:**

***To everyone I offer quietness.***
***To everyone I offer peace of mind.***
***To everyone I offer gentleness.***

These "affirmations" of our right-minded decision represent the truth to which we bring our wrong-minded thoughts of separation and *one or the other:* I win, you lose. I

choose to let this principle go so I may receive the quietness, peace, and gentleness I offer you, my brother in illusion as well as truth.

**(9:1-3) Say each one slowly and then pause a while, expecting to receive the gift you gave. And it will come to you in the amount in which you gave it. You will find you have exact return, for that is what you asked.**

How wonderful to learn that when we give we receive, and how instructive to see our resistance to accepting the truth that our guiltlessness deserves the peace and love we give our brothers! If we do not experience this peace, it is because we are not offering it. The reader may recall this stunning line from the text, to which we add the one that follows it:

> If he speaks not of Christ to you, you spoke not of Christ to him. You hear but your own voice, and if Christ speaks through you, you will hear Him (T-11.V.18:6-7).

Regardless of the ego actions of others, our perception has *only* to do with a decision our minds make. We must always receive what we ask for; we must always receive what we give: guilt or forgiveness, separation or unity.

**(9:4) It might be helpful, too, to think of one to whom to give your gifts.**

We are asked to think of one specific person with whom we practice this lesson in our minds. Through learning the lesson specifically, generalization will come.

**(9:5) He represents the others, and through him you give to all.**

We bring this message to the world by practicing it in our personal relationships. We need do nothing outside, because there is no outside. Learning occurs within the mind, and Jesus' love does the rest as it naturally extends to *all,* washing over the ego's projections of exclusion and specialness, which gently disappear into the light of our forgiveness.

**(10:1-2) Our very simple lesson for today will teach you much. Effect and cause will be far better understood from this time on, and we will make much faster progress now.**

My pain, unhappiness, and misery are the inevitable result of my belief that the ego is right and a better teacher than the Holy Spirit. The *effect* – what I receive – directly follows its *cause* – what I give. I give only what I wish to learn: the ego's separation or the Holy Spirit's Atonement. Accepting this fact without argument speeds us along the pathway Home.

**(10:3) Think of the exercises for today as quick advances in your learning, made still faster and more sure each time you say, "To give and to receive are one in truth."**

As you go through your day, practice the application of today's thought *any time,*

with *anyone,* in *any situation* in which there is a loss of peace. Seeing yourself and another as separate means you believe that giving and receiving are part of a bargain, reflecting the separation you think is the natural law. Continually bringing the ego's lie to the Holy Spirit's truth quickens our advance as it quickens our experience of peace.

**Lesson 109**

The Son of God
Has come to join you now. His shining hand
Is on your shoulder. And God's silent Voice
Speaks ceaselessly of Heaven. You will hear
His single message calling to His Own
From His abiding place, to wake in God.

(The Gifts of God, p. 73)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 110**
**I am as God created me.**

This statement first appeared in Lesson 94, and will appear again in Lesson 162, and finally in a review lesson that we study for twenty days. Thus Jesus ends this twenty-lesson series, the purpose of which was to remind us of the shabbiness of our little self in comparison with the glory of our true Self that God created one with Him.

**(1:1-3) We will repeat today's idea from time to time. For this one thought would be enough to save you and the world, if you believed that it is true. Its truth would mean that you have made no changes in yourself that have reality, nor changed the universe so that what God created was replaced by fear and evil, misery and death.**

The problem is that we believed we changed reality, and our individual existence is the seeming witness to that change. This is the source of our guilt, which has to be protected by projecting out a fearful and evil world in which we say: "Other people did this to me; I am innocent." To this insanity the Atonement softly whispers: "And God thinks otherwise" (T-2312:7). God's "thinking" is simply this: My Son is my Son, and nothing can change this Fact.

**(1:4) If you remain as God created you fear has no meaning, evil is not real, and misery and death do not exist.**

That is the Atonement principle, God's Word that nothing happened to change reality. Sin is thus impossible, as are its effects: evil, misery, and death. The dreams in which they are manifest remain but dreams. Reality continues unabated, its eternal state revealed by the miracle:

> Reality is changeless. Miracles but show what you have interposed between reality and your awareness is unreal, and does not interfere at … *Because* reality is changeless is a miracle already there to heal all things that change, and offer them to you to see in happy form, devoid of fear (T-30.VIII.4:1-2; 5:1).

**(2:1) Today's idea is therefore all you need to let complete correction heal your mind, and give you perfect vision that will heal all the mistakes that any mind has made at any time or place.**

This is so because, again, one mind is all minds. Remember, time and space have never left the mind's single thought of separation, undone by the Atonement's timeless Thought that reflects the oneness of eternity.

**(2:2-3) It is enough to heal the past and make the future free. It is enough to let the present be accepted as it is.**

In the holy instant there is no past, ego present, or future. The holy instant has led us to eternity, the love of which is reflected in our peace, born of forgiveness of God's Son.

**(2:4) It is enough to let time be the means for all the world to learn escape from time, and every change that time appears to bring in passing by.**

Jesus uses time to serve a different purpose from the ego's, which is to prove that sin, guilt, and fear are real. Our new teacher, however, helps us realize the ego's unholy trinity is illusory, and so the only meaningful change within the illusion is in teachers. This parallels the statement from the clarification of terms:

> In this world the only remaining freedom is the freedom of choice; always between two choices or two voices (C-1.7:1).

All other change but reinforces the illusion there is something here that needs changing.

**(3) If you remain as God created you, appearances cannot replace the truth, health cannot turn to sickness, nor can death be substitute for life, or fear for love. All this has not occurred, if you remain as God created you. You need no thought but just this one, to let redemption come to light the world and free it from the past.**

This marks the end of the ego thought system. Acceptance of the Word of God reverses our mad course into insanity (T-18.I.8:5), thus undoing its effects. The impossible did not occur because the impossible could not occur. To make the point again, you do not "light the world" externally, for there is no world to illuminate; no world to free, heal, or enlighten. You enlighten your *mind,* and in that experience the world is healed and undone, and with it all suffering. The light of the Atonement has shined away the darkness of fear, sickness, and death.

**(4) In this one thought is all the past undone; the present saved to quietly extend into a timeless future. If you are as God created you, then there has been no separation of your mind from His, no split between your mind and other minds, and only unity within your own.**

This succinctly summarizes our previous discussion. Choosing against the ego thought system of sin, guilt, and fear means choosing for the holy instant, in which time is undone; separation, too, releasing the remembrance of the mind's unity, reflecting the oneness of Christ.

**(5:1-2) The healing power of today's idea is limitless. It is the birthplace of all miracles, the great restorer of the truth to the awareness of the world.**

Miracles undo the ego's thought system, and these corrections have their birthplace in the Atonement principle that says to our sleeping minds: "You have not lost your Identity, and nothing your dream has made real affected truth. Throughout it all, you remain as God created you."

**(5:3-6) Practice today's idea with gratitude. This is the truth that comes to set you free. This is the truth that God has promised you. This is the Word in which all sorrow ends.**

This is the truth that corrects the ego's lies and frees us from the ego's tyranny of guilt and hate, and thus ends all sorrow. The world has become the classroom in which the Holy Spirit teaches us the opposite of what we had learned before. He shows the truth of our relationships, and asks us only to accept it, that it may be shared with all who shrink back to darkness:

> The ego made the world as it perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the reinterpreter of what the ego made, sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home.... You have not made truth, but truth can still set you free. Look as the Holy Spirit looks, and understand as He understands.... He is your Guide to salvation, because He holds the remembrance of things past and to come, and brings them to the present. He holds this gladness gently in your mind, asking only that you increase it in His Name by sharing it to increase His joy in you (T-5 MI.11:1,5-6,9-10).

Thus do we share gratitude with our brothers, having happily welcomed truth into our minds at last.

**(6-7) For your five-minute practice periods, begin with this quotation from the text** [T-31.VIII.5 :2-4]:

> ***I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing.***
> ***And I am His Son.***

**Then, with this statement firmly in your mind, try to discover in your mind the Self Who is the holy Son of God Himself.**

This lesson and series close with the return of the theme that our true Self is Christ, God's one Son. His memory is not lost to us, but was buried under layers of illusion born of our fear of the truth. We have seen the errors of our ways and the suffering they brought us. Thus we change our minds as we change our perceptions, and remember that we are as God created us – the holy Son of God Himself.

**(8) Seek Him within you Who is Christ in you, the Son of God and brother to the world; the Savior Who has been forever saved, with power to save whoever touches Him, however lightly, asking for the Word that tells him he is brother unto Him.**

By *seeking* reality, we are assured we will find it. We are healed as we accept salvation, as are all who make the choice we have made. Indeed, we are already healed, but must yet accept the truth by rejecting the false. If it is truly Christ we seek in ourselves and our brothers, it will be the Word of God to which we listen, for that alone corrects our false self-concepts. Without it we condemn ourselves to listen to the ego's uncorrected word of separation and self.

**(9:1-2) You are as God created you. Today honor your Self.**

We honor our Self, not by telling ourselves how wonderful we are, but by saying

no to the ego's self, as we read:

**(9:3) Let graven images you made to be the Son of God instead of what he is be worshipped not today.**

The way we remember our Identity is to let the "graven images" go. These are the idols of self we made as substitute for the Self of Christ. More than almost any other teaching in *A Course in Miracles,* the idea of learning to recognize our false images so we can release them goes to the heart of forgiveness. Indeed, the process *is* forgiveness. Thus, we are urged by Jesus, as we see again, and will again later:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6: 1-2).

Even more specifically, Jesus speaks of the need to turn away from false gods, the ego images that father our special idols – "graven images" – with which we have identified:

> What you think you are can be very hateful, and what this strange image makes you do can be very destructive. Yet the destruction is no more real than the image, although those who make idols do worship them.... You do not realize how much you listen to your gods, and how vigilant you are on their behalf. Yet they exist only because you honor them. Place honor where it is due, and peace will be yours. It is your inheritance from your real Father (T-10.III.1:6-7; 10:4-7).

**(9:4-10:1) Deep in your mind the holy Christ in you is waiting your acknowledgment as you. And you are lost and do not know yourself while He is unacknowledged and unknown.**
**Seek Him today, and find Him.**

The problem is that we do not want to seek Him, because we do not want to find Him. We seek instead to retain this shabby image of Christ's Self. The purpose of these exercises – indeed, the purpose of *A Course in Miracles* – is to teach us how lost we are when separated from our Self. Through letting go of grievances – against others and ourselves – we acknowledge our Identity. The memory of Christ dawns on our forgiven minds and we are found:

> Together we will disappear into the Presence beyond the veil, not to be lost but found; not to be seen but known. And knowing, nothing in the plan God has established for salvation will be left undone (T-19.IV-D.19:1-2).

**(10:2-3) He will be your Savior from all idols you have made. For when you find Him, you will understand how worthless are your idols, and how false the images which you believed were you.**

This calls for the recognition we made a mistake, and that our reality is with Jesus, above the ego's battleground of conflict and death. We look down with him upon the wrong-minded thought system of graven images, and see everything differently,

realizing the world has no effect on Who we are. The value of these images as protectors of our specialness disappears into their own worthlessness, leaving only the Self that is the true Image of God.

**(10:4) Today we make a great advance to truth by letting idols go, and opening our hands and hearts and minds to God today.**

If I am to open my hand, heart, and mind to God, I need to reject what the ego has made as substitute. We thus focus on the fear of losing our individuality, as well as the valued thought system of specialness. The ego had us close our minds to the truth; now we open them and gladly greet our Self. Christ has come to replace the ego, and idols have given way to God.

**(11:1) We will remember Him throughout the day with thankful hearts and loving thoughts for all who meet with us today.**

Before we greet someone with a grateful heart and thankful words, we first must realize how *ungrateful* we are. Remember, we find truth by undoing illusion, so these thoughts should not be used as mantras or affirmations to cover our specialness. These statements are truth's reflection, to which we bring our shadowy illusions. We thus need to be aware of our ego's perceptions, and then go to the truth in our minds for help.

**(11:2-6) For it is thus that we remember Him. And we will say, that we may be reminded of His Son, our holy Self, the Christ in each of us:**

***I am as God created me.***

**Let us declare this truth as often as we can. This is the Word of God that sets you free.**

We again find reference to the biblical statement: "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Yet what sets us free is accepting the Atonement principle; not God, Jesus, or *A Course in Miracles.* It is our rejection of the ego and acceptance of God's Word that frees us to remember our reality: We are as God created us.

**(11:7) This is the key that opens up the gate of Heaven, and that lets you enter in the peace of God and His eternity.**

The mind locked by guilt and grievances, forgiveness gently opens. Learning to trust the Voice that speaks the Word of God – the Atonement that sets us free – we reach for Jesus' hand that has never ceased reaching for ours. When we choose to take our brothers' hands along with his, the door quietly opens and we are home, where God would have us be (T-31.VIII.12:8). We return now to the clarification of terms and read its inspiring final words, and thus close the lesson and series with another beautiful expression of the beautiful truth:

> Let us go out and meet the newborn world, knowing that Christ has been reborn in it, and that the holiness of this rebirth will last forever. We had lost our way but He has found it for us. Let us go and bid Him welcome Who returns to us

to celebrate salvation and the end of all we thought we made. The morning star of this new day looks on a different world where God is welcomed and His Son with Him. We who complete Him offer thanks to Him, as He gives thanks to us. The Son is still, and in the quiet God has given him enters his home and is at peace at last (C-ep.5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 111**
**REVIEW III**

## Introduction

The introductions to the reviews provide important messages, as we have seen, and this one is no exception. Its basic theme is our vigilance in doing the reviews. Even more importantly – a point emphasized in almost every lesson – these exercises will have no relevance if we do not practice them. The importance this concept holds for Jesus will be evident as we go through the Introduction. He wants us to apply these thoughts throughout the day, especially when we find ourselves upset, which should be rather frequent if we are truly vigilant. It is thus essential to practice the thoughts set forth here. The idea that the world is an illusion, for example, is meaningless if we do not realize that if this is so, there is nothing outside us with the power to take God's peace from our minds. These, then, are ideas Jesus asks us to apply throughout the day, and our practice is the burden of this Introduction.

**(1) Our next review begins today. We will review two recent lessons every day for ten successive days of practicing. We will observe a special format for these -practice-periods, that you are urged to-follow just as closely as you can.**

Jesus is not a harsh judge, sitting in Heaven with a scorecard keeping track of how many times we forget a practice period. Yet he does appeal to the decision-making part of our minds that would be tempted to choose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, specialness and individuality instead of learning the lessons that would undo them and return us home. He urges us not because there is anything sacrosanct about these review periods, but for our well-being. He reminds us in statements like this that doing things our way brings pain, while having him guide us brings release from pain. We therefore will feel better if we acknowledge we are wrong and he is right, and indeed that he has always been right.

**(2:1-2) We understand, of course, that it may be impossible for you to undertake what is suggested here as optimal each day and every hour of the day. Learning will not be hampered when you miss a practice period because it is impossible at the appointed time.**

Jesus is not naive, nor harshly demanding. There certainly may be times throughout the day when at the hour's stroke it is impossible to spend a few minutes thinking of the lesson. If there is a fire, a drowning person, an automobile accident, or any urgent matter, you are going to pay attention to what is happening, and not necessarily take five minutes to sit with closed eyes and think of the lesson. Again Jesus is not harsh, but he is saying – as we will see in just a moment – to be careful in distinguishing between what is reasonable and what is not, in terms of missing a practice period. The "unreasonable" is choosing to forget out of fear.

The point is to respond to the gentleness with which Jesus acts as our teacher. This is not a punitive assignment, for he asks only that we be mindful of our fear thoughts when we find these lessons too threatening for our specialness. This fear often leads to forgetting them at the appointed time. Recall, too, our discussion in Lesson 95. Our success in these lessons does not lie in having a *perfect* record in remembering, but in being *perfectly* mindful of our temptation to feel guilty. We shall return to this thought

presently.

**(2:3-4) Nor is it necessary that you make excessive efforts to be sure that you catch up in terms of numbers. Rituals are not our aim, and would defeat our goal.**

Many years ago I was working with a community of cloistered nuns who, as part of their religious life, would have assigned prayer periods during the day. However, if they should miss one, they were required to make up their prayers before they went to sleep, an obvious confusion of the *form* of prayer with its *content* of thinking regularly of God. We find the same idea expressed here. Jesus is saying the goal is not that we actually remember the practice period, but that we be mindful of our thoughts and vigilant of the need to forget in order to protect the ego self hiding in the bodily state of mindlessness. It is not the *form* of remembering that is important, but the *content* of wanting to remember. Thus, Jesus does not wish these lessons ritualized. Remember the Course students who had special watches made to go off on the hour and half hour. Seeking to be reminded of the lesson, they in fact obstructed the workbook's mind-training purpose of showing them first how resistant they were to the lessons, the prerequisite for developing the motivation for learning what the lessons would teach.

**(3:1-3) But learning will be hampered when you skip a practice period because you are unwilling to devote the time to it that you are asked to give. Do not deceive yourself in this. Unwillingness can be most carefully concealed behind a cloak of situations you cannot control.**

Jesus distinguishes between those situations that are really beyond our control and those that are not. He asks that we be vigilant for our resistance to learning *A Course in Miracles* and practicing these exercises. Again, he is not being punitive or harsh, nor keeping track of our practice schedule. Helping us to implement what he teaches in the text, Jesus is simply re-training our minds to think with him, than the ego.

As I have said, our success with the workbook comes not by practicing its exercises exactly as they are written, but by learning to forgive ourselves when we forget. This forgetting is a shadowy fragment of the original thought when we chose to forget God. As all time has occurred, and is ongoing within one instant, we re-live this unholy instant when we chose to forget God's Love and Oneness, substituting instead our separated and special existence:

> Each day, each hour and minute, even each second, you are deciding between the crucifixion and the resurrection; between the ego and the Holy Spirit. The ego is the choice for guilt; the Holy Spirit the choice for guiltlessness. The power of decision is all that is yours.... You are guilty or guiltless, bound or free, unhappy or happy (T-14.III.4:1-3, 6).

We become aware of our original mistake by observing its re-enactment today, this very minute of choosing attack over forgiveness, guilt over guiltlessness.

You therefore need to see how quickly you forget the day's lesson, understanding that this forgetting is not because you are an amnesiac, have Alzheimer's, or are so extraordinarily busy and important. Most of the time, if not all of it, you forget because you want to. Remember, this is a course in motivation. You want to forget because to

remember God means forgetting your ego. Jesus asks you not to feel guilty when you forget, but that you be honest when you do, telling yourself you forgot because you were afraid. Period. Even in an emergency, the chances are that even as you attended to what was needed, you could have managed a few seconds to hold the thought of another way of looking at the situation. Jesus thus asks you to make the distinction between what is reasonably objective in terms of your schedule, and what is not:

**(3:4) Learn to distinguish situations that are poorly suited to your practicing from those that you establish to uphold a camouflage for your unwillingness.**

Jesus pleads with us to be mindful of our sneakiness. The serpent – i.e., the devil – has been referred to as the most subtle of beasts, and the ego, the source of the projected devil, is the archetype of subtlety. It is important ‘) catch the clever subterfuges we employ in tying to escape from the “terrible burden” of *peace A Course in Miracles* “threateningly” holds out to us.

**(4:1) Those practice periods that you have lost because you did not want to do them, for whatever reason, should be done as soon as you have changed your mind about your goal.**

Jesus again makes a distinction between practice periods we missed because of circumstances beyond our control, and those we forgot about. We should do the latter as quickly as possible when we become aware of our forgetting. In other words, if the exercise calls for remembering on the stroke of the hour, and fifteen minutes later we realize we forgot, we do it then; not that we rack up numbers to please Jesus, but rather to train our minds to think: “I want to do what is good for me; and thinking of God and these exercises is in my best interests. They will help correct all ego thoughts and end my pain.” We thus want to re-focus our attention so that we become aware of the resistance in our minds to remembering.

**(4:2) You are unwilling to cooperate in practicing salvation only if it interferes with goals you hold more dear.**

The goals we hold more dear are those belonging to specialness. Jesus asks us once again to be clear about the little goals we have valued over God. Our judgments prove we are right; and thus we do not value being told, and then asked to accept, that we are wrong.

**(4:3-6) When you withdraw the value given them, allow your practice periods to be replacements for your litanies to them. They gave you nothing. But your practicing can offer everything to you. And so accept their offering and be at peace.**

We first become aware of our litanies to the ego – the values associated with specialness – and then we bring these unholy values to the holy value of forgiveness; the illusion to the truth. We cannot substitute the thought for the day until we are aware of what we are substituting for. The idea, therefore, is to be mindful of resistance – our ego thoughts, needs, and values. The lesson then symbolizes the truth, to which we bring the unholy illusion, without judgment or guilt. We simply realize we no longer value

illusion, because it does not make us happy.

**(5) The format you should use for these reviews is this: Devote five minutes twice a day, or longer if you would prefer it, to considering the thoughts that are assigned. Read over the ideas and comments that are written down for each day's exercise. And then begin to think about them, while letting your mind relate them to your needs, your seeming problems and all your concerns.**

This final sentence is the central theme of the Introduction, articulated throughout: The lessons represent the truth to which we bring our needs, concerns, and problems; and whatever time we give to the practice will suffice, if it is time we truly want to spend.

**(6:1-5) Place the ideas within your mind, and let it use them as it chooses. Give it faith that it will use them wisely, being helped in its decisions by the One Who gave the thoughts to you. What can you trust but what is in your mind? Have faith, in these reviews, the means the Holy Spirit uses will not fail. The wisdom of your mind will come to your assistance.**

This is the wisdom of our right minds – the home of the Holy Spirit – and is expressed primarily in understanding we are never upset for the reason we think (W-pI.5). We are upset only by our resistance to the truth, not the projections onto people and circumstances. Such understanding of the true nature of the problem constitutes the practical application of the Holy Spirit's wisdom.

**(6:6) Give direction at the outset; then lean back in quiet faith, and let the mind employ the thoughts you gave as they were given you for it to use.**

These thoughts were not given as meditations on lofty ideas, but to be used when we are most tempted to be angry, anxious, guilty, or depressed. As we have seen, the proper and healing use of these thoughts is to be the truth to which we bring our upsetting and illusory ones.

**(7) You have been given them in perfect trust; in perfect confidence that you would use them well; in perfect faith that you would see their messages and use them for yourself. Offer them to your mind in that same trust and confidence and – faith. It will not fail. It is the Holy Spirit's chosen means for your salvation. Since it has His trust, His means must surely merit yours as well.**

Jesus is asking us to have trust and faith in the process. As serious students of his course, we know there is a part of the mind that is sane and wants to learn what it is teaching. This is the decision maker that has accepted the Holy Spirit's means, and so learns the difference between illusion's pain and truth's joy – both of which are present in our minds.

It is the right mind that understands, and wrong mind that becomes afraid. The former has faith we will learn and implement these lessons; the latter will do everything in its power to prevent such learning. Jesus thus reflects to us our split minds: the one part that believes in physical reality and its problems; the other part that recognizes the need to have a different Teacher. The Holy Spirit is in our right minds, where we go to have a better way of looking at what disturbs us. Intolerance for pain provides motivation

for the decision maker to withdraw faith from the ego and place it in the hands of the One Who alone loves us, supplying the means of forgiveness to bring us happiness and peace.

**(8) We emphasize the benefits to you if you devote the first five minutes of the day to your reviews, and also give the last five minutes of your waking day to them. If this cannot be done, at least try to divide them so you undertake one in the morning, and the other in the hour just before you go to sleep.**

Jesus lets us know we may not be able to do this as strictly as he sets it forth here, and that it is all right if we cannot. I recall some twenty-five years ago meeting a spiritual eager beaver who decided after receiving *A Course in Miracles* that he should leave his profession and family, and retire to a remote location. Only there, he reasoned, could he practice and study the Course without being encumbered by the daily demands of his life at home and office. He unfortunately missed the point. *A Course in Miracles* is not meant to be done in the desert, mountain top, or anywhere else you would *exclude* yourself from the world. It is generally meant to be done as part of your normal day. What this was before you started the Course should be the same as now, for that is where you need reminding that worldly distractions have no hold on you unless your mind chooses to have them do so. Thus we read Jesus' words addressing the issue of external changes:

> Changes are required in the *minds* of God's teachers.... It is most unlikely that changes in attitudes would not be the first step in the newly made teacher of God's training… There are those who are called upon to change their life situation almost immediately, but these are generally special cases. By far the majority are given a slowly evolving training program, in which as many previous mistakes as possible are corrected (M-9.1:1, 4, 6-7).

If things of the world distract you from God or Jesus, it is not because of the world, but because you do not want to be reminded of Them or Their peace. The workbook's mind-training program, again, allows you to get in touch with the resistance that seeks always to protect the ego's thought system of separation. It is helpful to see how quickly you may try to blame external circumstances for what is your own mind's mistaken choice.

**(9:1-2) The exercises to be done throughout the day are equally important, and perhaps of even greater value. You have been inclined to practice only at appointed times, and then go on your way to other things, without applying what you learned to them.**

This is where Jesus tells you: "I understand what you are doing. Do not judge yourself, and for your own sake stop excluding me and my message because it will not make you happy to continue to do so." You do not have to pretend you are an outstanding student of *A Course in Miracles* because you do the lessons faithfully. Being faithful does not mean meeting the half-hour or hourly obligation, but applying the daily thought whenever you are tempted to be upset. If you are truly vigilant, you would see yourself upset almost every minute, for there is always something you believe is intruding on your peace. When you fail to apply the thought to your upset, you learn to

forgive yourself for once again choosing the ego over the Love of God. This constitutes the faithful application of the lessons and the meaning of forgiveness.

**(9:3-4) As a result, you have gained little reinforcement, and have not given your learning a fair chance to prove how great are its potential gifts to you. Here is another chance to use it well.**

The great potential of our learning lies in the ability to apply the lessons. The gifts they offer rest in this, not in the beauty of the language or the holiness of the thought. It is their daily application, each and every day, that allows us to fulfill the wonderful potential they offer us.

**(10:1-5) In these reviews, we stress the need to let your learning not lie idly by between your longer practice periods. Attempt to give your daily two ideas a brief but serious review each hour. Use one on the hour, and the other one a half an hour later. You need not give more than just a moment to each one. Repeat it, and allow your mind to rest a little time in silence and in peace.**

It should be obvious by now how much Jesus wants us to apply these ideas – day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment. Only by such diligence and attention will the mind-training purpose for these exercises be achieved.

**(10:6) Then turn to other things, but try to keep the thought with you, and let it serve to help you keep your peace throughout the day as well.**

We spend quiet time on the half hour and hour, but in the interim we should not forget the thought. As we continue our day, busy with the multitudinous things that require attention, we hold the thought of correction in our minds as much as possible. This is accomplished by bringing the unpleasant experience to Jesus, not by shouting it down. We realize that the unpleasant experience has nothing to do with the external, but with our mind's choice to fear Jesus and push him away, again. The thought for the day, then, becomes a symbol of his presence, wisdom, and love for us. We bring our disquiet to that love, remembering: "I am not upset because of what someone has said or done, but because I became afraid of Jesus' closeness." Such is how these lessons reinforce our learning, speeding us along to our Final Destination.

**(11) If you are shaken, think of it again. These practice periods are planned to help you form the habit of applying what you learn each day to everything you do. Do not repeat the thought and lay it down. Its usefulness is limitless to you. And it is meant to serve you in all ways, all times and places, and whenever you need help of any kind. Try, then, to take it with you in the business of the day and make it holy, worthy of God's Son, acceptable to God and to your Self.**

This is an important paragraph. The language is simple, but Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms how essential these lessons are, as long as we practice and apply them. He told us earlier that the workbook is a one-year training program. The hope is that at the year's end we would have understood the importance of remembering thoughts from *A Course in Miracles* throughout the day, using them as symbols of the truth to which we bring the illusions of our upsets.

To reiterate, understanding the metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles* means nothing if we still find ourselves guilty, angry, depressed, and isolated. The metaphysics' importance lies solely in helping us realize that the world is indeed illusory, and that we made everything, including our upset, to keep specialness intact and the Love of God away. Therefore, we have to practice over and over the return to the decision-making part of our minds, where we had chosen against Jesus' truth by choosing the ego's illusion. Only then can we correct our choice for fear.

**(12) Each day's review assignments will conclude with a restatement of the thought to use each hour, and the one to be applied on each half hour as well. Forget them not. This second chance with each of these ideas will bring such large advances that we come from these reviews with learning gains so great we will continue on more solid ground, with firmer footsteps and with stronger faith.**

Jesus' final plea, then, is for us to use these lessons and not forget them, and when we do forget, to forgive ourselves. He closes with this little quatrain:

**(13:1-2) Do not forget how little you have learned.**
**Do not forget how much you can learn now.**

Our learning has nothing to do with the intellectual mastery of a thought system. As students of *A Course in Miracles,* we must certainly understand the text's teaching. However, understanding without application is meaningless – thus a text *and* a workbook. Practicing the lessons – being vigilant for our resistance to the truth – will help us a great deal. Note, too, the appeal to our humility by being reminded how little we have learned. Recognizing we still have much to learn leaves us open to learning it, reminiscent of a somewhat similar statement in the fourth stage of the development of trust in the manual for teachers: "He [the teacher of God] has not yet come as far as he thinks" (M-4.I-A.6:10); there yet remain stages five and six.

**(13:3) Do not forget your Father's need of you,**
**As you review these thoughts He gave to you.**

"God's need," of course, is metaphoric. We would all be in serious trouble if God needed us. When Jesus speaks of our Father's need, he is reflecting ours to accept the Atonement and remember we are already complete as God's Will. He thus asks us to think of our goal as we practice. Remembering that we want to be healed because we want to awaken from the dream of pain is what motivates us to practice, practice, practice. All teachers desire their students to learn, and Jesus is no exception. He cannot help us without our wanting to be helped.

## LESSONS 111-120

Each of these ten lessons, consisting of two of the previous twenty – Lessons 91 through 110 – summarize the important themes we have considered in our previous discussion. We shall go through them relatively quickly.

## LESSON 111

**(1)** (91) **Miracles are seen in light.**

***I cannot see in darkness. Let the light of holiness and truth light up my mind, and let me see the innocence within.***

**(2)** (92) **Miracles are seen in light, and light and strength are one.**

***I see through strength, the gift of God to me. My weakness is the dark His gift dispels, by giving me His strength to take its place.***

We cannot truly see when we are embedded in the ego's thought system of shadows, but we do see when we turn to the truth. Such vision reflects the strength of Christ in us that awaits our decision to set aside the ego's weakness.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 112**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (93) **Light and joy and peace abide in me.**

***I am the home of light and joy and peace.***
***I welcome-them into the home I share with God, because I am a part of Him.***

**(2)** (94) **I *am* as God created me.**

***I will remain forever as I was, created by the Changeless like Himself And I am one with Him, and He with me.***

The oneness of our Self is a highly important theme in the early lessons, and in these reviews as well. If I am truly God's Son, any belief you are separate from me denies that truth. Therefore my special thoughts of neediness and judgment deny we are part of God's one Self. We first recognize the unchanging light, joy, and peace that shine in everyone, and then awaken from this happy dream as the Self abiding in the Changeless.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 113**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (95) **I am one Self, united with my Creator.**

***Serenity and perfect peace are mine, because I am one Self, completely whole, at one with all creation and with God.***

**(2)** (96) **Salvation comes from my one Self.**
***From my one Self Whose knowledge still remains within my mind, I see God's perfect plan for my salvation perfectly fulfilled.***

Experiencing the serenity and perfect peace that come from forgiveness, I remember that "I am one Self, united with my Creator and His creation." Thus is the plan of the Atonement completed, and I along with you, my brother in Christ.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 114**
For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (97) **I am spirit.**

***I am the Son of God. No body can contain my spirit, nor impose on me a limitation God created not.***

**(2)** (98) **I will *accept my part in* God's plan for salvation.**

***What can my function be but to accept the Word of God, Who has created me for what I am and will forever be?***

We are thus reminded of Who we are as spirit. This remembrance comes when we accept our function of forgiveness. It is not so much the words of the lessons that are important, but the willingness to think of them throughout the day. It is the thought in our minds that grants importance to the words – reflecting the Word of God – and that is the essence of these reviews.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 115**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (99) **Salvation is my only function here.**

***My function here is to forgive the world for all the errors I have made. For thus am I released from them with all the world.***

**(2)** (100) **My part is essential to God's plan for salvation.**

***I am essential to the plan of God for the salvation of the world. For He gave me His plan that I might save the world.***

When we choose to forgive, we choose for ourselves and all the world, for they are one. Thus each of us is essential to the plan, for each of us contains the Whole.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 116**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (101) **God's Will for me is perfect happiness.**

***God's Will is perfect happiness for me. And I can suffer but from the belief there is another will apart from His.***

**(2)** (102) **I share God's Will for happiness for me.**

***I share my Father's Will for me, His Son. What He has given me is all I want. What He has given me is all there is.***

The theme of happiness returns, and we remember that the statement that God's Will for us is perfect happiness corrects the ego's teaching that God's Will is that we suffer as atonement for our sins. Forgiveness reflects our acceptance of His Love as all we want and all we are. There *is* nothing else.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 117**
For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (103) **God, being Love, is also happiness.**

***Let me remember love is happiness, and nothing else brings joy. And so I choose to entertain no substitutes for love.***

**(2)** (104) **I seek but what belongs to me in truth.**

***Love is my heritage, and with it joy. These are the gifts my Father gave to me. I would accept all that is mine in truth.***

Since the Love of God is all there is, why would I seek for anything else? To do so condemns me to a life of frustration, depression, and pain. I choose instead the joy that attends acceptance of the love that alone is mine, the heritage our loving Father has given us.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 118**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (105) **God's peace and joy are-mine.**

***Today I will accept God's peace and joy, in glad exchange for all the substitutes that I have made for happiness and peace.***

**(2)** (106) **Let me be still and listen to the truth.**

***Let my own feeble voice be still, and let me hear the mighty Voice for Truth Itself assure me that I am God's perfect Son.***

I happily accept God's peace and joy to the extent I set aside my feeble voice that speaks only of separation, specialness, and death. Now I hear the mighty Voice for Truth remind me that I *am* God's Son, perfect as He is perfect, and in that remembrance I am at peace at last.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 119**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (107) **Truth will correct all errors in my mind.**

***I am mistaken when I think I can be hurt in any way. I am God's Son, whose Self rests safely in the Mind of God.***

**(2)** (108) **To give and to receive are one in truth.**

***I will forgive all things today, that I may learn how to accept the truth in me, and come to recognize my sinlessness.***

Over and over Jesus reminds us that through our forgiveness – of others and ourselves – we will awaken from the nightmarish dreams of sin and guilt to the glorious truth of our Self: God's Son who rests safely in the Mind of His Creator.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 120**

For morning and evening review:

**(1)** (109) **I rest in God.**

***I rest in God today, and let Him work in me and through me, while I rest in Him in quiet and in perfect certainty.***

**(2)** (110) **I am as God created me.**

***I am God's Son. Today I lay aside all sick illusions of myself, and let my Father tell me Who I really am.***

Our review ends with the happy thought that despite "all sick illusions of myself" and the world, I have never ceased to rest in God. His Voice becomes the only voice I hear, and Its Love guides me gently through my day. I remain at rest, "in quiet and in perfect certainty," for I remember I am as God created me, and nothing in the world can change the changeless in my mind.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 121**
**Forgiveness is the key to happiness.**

In this very important lesson we find the contrast between forgiveness and the unforgiveness the ego would have us practice. The symbol of the *key* is important in considering what the ego does with our minds. When the decision maker was convinced by the ego to choose individuality over oneness, persuaded in the ontological instant to choose the ego's interpretation of the tiny, mad idea rather than the Holy Spirit's, and thus believe in its lie of individuality, it was as if the Holy Spirit became locked away in the right mind in which He dwells. The guilt in the wrong mind then replaced the Holy Spirit's right-minded love and Atonement in our awareness. At that point the ego had us view guilt as so intolerable that we had to leave the mind entirely and make up a world, encasing ourselves in a body. Consequently, not only did the right mind become closed off from awareness, but the wrong mind as well. The entire split mind, in a sense, became a locked box or vault, with the key cleverly concealed within the body.

Forgiveness, then, is the key that opens our minds. It is the name *A Course in Miracles* gives to the process of realizing that what upsets us is not what is going on within our own or another's body. Our guilt upsets us. This realization unlocks the first part of our minds. Going to the wrong mind and looking with Jesus at its guilt, we realize it, too, was made up. Our recognition causes it to disappear, which unlocks the right mind, where the Atonement principle has waited for us.

Forgiveness thus opens up the mind the ego had closed. It told us happiness is found in the world by meeting our body's needs. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, teaches that real happiness comes when we unlock the presence of love that had been buried—seemingly forever—in our minds. This wonderful lesson takes us still further along our journey through anger and guilt, to the guiltlessness that is our home.

**(1) Here is the answer to your search for peace. Here is the key to meaning in a world that seems to make no sense. Here is the way to safety in apparent dangers that appear to threaten you at every turn, and bring uncertainty to all your hopes of ever finding quietness and peace. Here are all questions answered; here the end of all uncertainty ensured at last.**

Once again we are told we are going to experience problems, danger, and disquiet here; and the answer to these rests in forgiveness. The answer will never be found in indulging our specialness, for we must return to the source of the problem – the mind's decision maker that chose wrongly. Forgiveness brings us there, to undo the mistake. Moreover, forgiveness is the only concept that provides any "meaning in a world that seems to make no sense." It indeed makes no sense when looked at through the mind of specialness and separate interests. However, forgiveness gently corrects this wrong- minded perception by shifting our thinking to shared interests. Our self-concept restored as decision maker, we are free at last to make the one right choice and see our brother as ourself.

Paragraphs 2 through 5 describe the nature of the unforgiving mind. Even though guilt is not specifically discussed in these paragraphs, it underlies Jesus's words that point to the mind's guilt over our sinful actions against God. The horror of this guilt impels us to project onto others, judging them for the secret sin we believe is in ourselves. I do not forgive you because I need grievances to make you responsible for my unhappiness, seeing you as the victimizer that unfairly impinges on my face of innocence. The reader may recall this important term from "Self-Concept versus Self "; the

self-concept that justifies our becoming an unforgiving mind, and happily remaining so:

> It [the face of innocence] believes that it is good within an evil world.... [It] can grow angry, for the world is wicked and unable to provide the love and shelter innocence deserves. And so this face is often wet with tears at the injustices the world accords to those who would be generous and good.... [It] never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse.
>
> The face of innocence the concept of the self so proudly wears can tolerate attack in self- defense, for is it not a well-known fact the world deals harshly with defenseless innocence? No one who makes a picture of himself omits this face, for he has need of it (T-31.V.2:9-4:2).

The unforgiving mind, hiding behind the face of innocence, thus has its basis in guilt, which is also the source of its characteristics, which Jesus now describes:

**(2:1) The unforgiving mind is full of fear...**

It is full of fear because the hatred and murder we believe is within, we project onto others. Thus all we hold against ourselves – beginning with the belief we murdered God so we could live – is seen elsewhere. It therefore follows that we are terrified because we see murderers all around us, not realizing it is our dream, and that we are the true killers, as this familiar statement from the text makes clear:

> The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself. No matter what the form of the attack, this still is true. Whoever takes the role of enemy and of attacker, still is this the truth. Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true. For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream (T-27.VIII.10).

Thus, the true source of my fear is forgetting the dream and its origins. Once I hold grievances against you – becoming an unforgiving mind – I forget that fear comes from me, the dreamer of the dream. All I then see is fear all around me, poised to strike:

> You see yourself as vulnerable, frail and easily destroyed, and at the mercy of countless attackers more powerful than you (T-22.VI.10:6).

Since I do not know the attack comes from my mind, there is no way to escape the fear except by continuing to defend myself, projecting and attacking still again.

**(2) The unforgiving mind is full of fear, and offers love no room to be itself; no place where it can spread its wings in peace and soar above the turmoil of the world. The unforgiving mind is sad, without the hope of respite and release from pain. It suffers and abides in misery, peering about in darkness, seeing not, yet certain of the danger lurking there.**

Jesus describes a classic paranoid: one who is terrified, though there is no

objective danger. All paranoid people see are their guilt-laden, murderous thoughts projected out. Even though the enemy cannot be seen, they know the enemy is there. The ultimate unseen enemy, whom we dread, is the God of the ego's projection of guilt and vengeance, hell-bent on destroying us because of our sins against Him. As long as guilt is in our minds, it will be projected and judged in everyone else. Suffering is thus inevitable, and peace impossible. The ego assures us our suffering is of value, because it proves that someone or something else has done this to us, establishing ourselves as innocent victims of another's sin. In a passage found later in the section quoted above, we read these lines, so devastating to all who think themselves to be justified in their pain and suffering:

> To see a guilty world is but the sign your learning has been guided by the world, and you behold it as you see yourself. The concept of the self embraces all you look upon, and nothing is outside of this perception. If you can be hurt by anything, you see a picture of your secret wishes. Nothing more than this. And in your suffering of any kind you see your own concealed desire to kill (T-31.V.15:6-10).

Jesus consistently helps us see our egos for what they are. Only then can we meaningfully choose against them. He continues with his exposure of the ego's unforgiveness:

**(3:1) The unforgiving mind is torn with doubt, confused about itself and all it sees; afraid and angry, weak and blustering, afraid to go ahead, afraid to stay, afraid to waken or to go to sleep, afraid of every sound, yet more afraid of stillness; terrified of darkness, yet more terrified at the approach of light.**

This is the condition of all who think they are in this world. We strive to conceal our fear, hatred, and self-doubt, absolutely certain we know what is true, yet deep within knowing that God thinks otherwise (T-23.I.2:7). The source of this fear is not outside, but comes from what we have made real within: the belief we murdered God and destroyed His Home. We now stand in terror that God will arise from the grave in which we put Him, and return to punish us. No one can exist with such fear, and we acted quickly to conceal it by making a world and body to hide within, and then invoked our specialness to protect our terrified minds from all we believed lurked there in malicious silence. We naively believed the ego's tale that such defenses would protect us from fear.

Remember that we have locked and buried both the wrong and right minds. We not only fear the darkness of guilt, but the light of Atonement, in the presence of which our individuality disappears. This makes our fear of guilt and attack mere defenses against the light that shines away the darkness of our self. The ego's hatred is a two-tiered defense that protects us from the light of truth within: the first is hate-filled guilt, and the second is the hate we project onto another. The former resides in the mind, the latter in the body, but both share the purpose of keeping us locked in the darkness that prevents our choosing the light.

**(3:2-3) What can the unforgiving mind perceive but its damnation? What can it behold except the proof that all its sins are real?**

I behold my damnation because I projected my sins onto the world, and I see their

damning punishment all around me. The ultimate sin is murder, which is why I believe everyone is out for my blood – in fact, or symbolically, by stealing from me. In other words, we deserve to be punished for the sin of destroying Heaven, and our pain and suffering prove the sins are real.

**(4:1) The unforgiving mind sees no mistakes, but only sins.**

The sins are not in me, but in everyone else. If I do admit to my own, it is only because someone else's sins made me that way. In the end, we seek to prove we are not responsible, the face of innocence we cherish as our own.

**(4:2) It looks upon the world with sightless eyes and shrieks as it beholds its own projections rising to attack its miserable parody of life.**

We have seen before that the body's eyes do not really see, but merely follow the dictates of the ego mind to see separation, sin, guilt, specialness, and death. The manual explains:

> Yet it is surely the mind that judges what the eyes behold. It is the mind that interprets the eyes' messages and gives them "meaning." And this meaning does not exist in the world outside at all. What is seen as "reality" is simply what the mind prefers. Its hierarchy of values is projected outward, and it sends the body's eyes to find it.... The mind classifies what the body's eyes bring to it according to its preconceived values, judging where each sense datum fits best (M-8.3:3-7;4:3).

Our eyes "see" the madness of hate in others, rather than acknowledging its guilty presence in ourselves. Thus does Jesus describe our taking the self-hatred of guilt, projecting it, and seeing our projections poised to attack us. Our guilt parodies love, and "the miserable parody of life" is our body, because that is what we think is born, lives, and dies, and strive so mightily to protect throughout its limited life. Yet is the body a parody of our true life as spirit.

**(4:3) It wants to live, yet wishes it were dead.**

The unforgiving mind wishes it were dead because the pain here is so extraordinary. Yet what is truly extraordinary is how craftily we defend our pain. No longer in Heaven, we exist in a state of terror and agony in this world. Even worse, we believe we are here because we believe we destroyed Heaven, which means not only that we are not at home, but there is no longer any home to which we can return. We are thus forever condemned to wander this world as aliens, knowing we do not belong, but not knowing where to go. That is when death appears preferable. I mentioned that the first part of Lesson 182, "I will be still an instant and go home," provides a wonderful account of how terrible we feel, believing we are here.

Implicit in this is Jesus telling us not to pretend we are happy here. True happiness comes from realizing it cannot be found here, but that there is a way to return to it. It is a joy to learn the world is a dream, and that there is indeed a way to awaken from its suffering and pain.

**(4:4) It wants forgiveness, yet it sees no hope.**

We all say we want to be forgiven, but are not in touch with the true source of the unforgiveness: the mind's decision for sinfulness. That is why we see no hope. The Catholic Church made an institution of this desire to be forgiven, called the Sacrament of Penance. However, the magic never works because the cause of sin – our decision to be separate from God – is never looked at. That is why we can say we want to be forgiven, but deep down it will never happen because we still wish for the *existence* of the ego instead of the *being* of God.

**(4:5) It wants escape, yet can conceive of none, because it sees the sinful everywhere.**

We want to escape, again, because deep within we realize there is no happiness here. Yet we know there is no escape from the all-pervasive nature of sin, the murderousness of which we have denied and made real outside us. What happens when you are confronted by a murderer, from whom escape is impossible? You die. Indeed, everyone in this world dies. Even if we manage to escape from the body's murderers – homo sapiens, microorganisms, or the "laws of nature" – in the end we know the unseen Murderer will get us, proven by the "reality" of death. That is the hopelessness of no escape that Jesus expresses here. Recall that within itself the ego thought system is fool-proof (T-5.VI.10:6).

**(5:1) The unforgiving mind is in despair, without the prospect of a future which can offer anything but more despair.**

The same point reiterated: there can be no hope because everything dies. This is how we made the dream world of our individual lives. Everyone is born but to die, for that proves that the sin of separation is real and has met its justified punishment. The ego has triumphed once again.

**(5:2) Yet it regards its judgment of the world as irreversible, and does not see it has condemned itself to this despair.**

That is the "beauty" of denial and projection. We are not aware of what we are doing; yet we are so sure we are right, as the rest of this paragraph will make clear. Our judgment of the world is irreversible. I *am* the face of innocence. It was not my choice to be born, and look at the terrible things that have happened to me, and will continue to happen to me and those I love. Moreover, there is nothing I can do to change the inevitability of this harsh and despairing fate. In other words, we do not realize we are the dreamers of the dream. The dream is not dreaming me, I – the mind's decision maker – am dreaming it. Yet we have forgotten we have a mind, aware only of what our sensory organs report and our brain interprets. It is the miracle's function to re-establish the correct cause-effect relationship, so we can filially undo the source of our despair and its defense known as the face of innocence:

> The dreamer of a dream is not awake, but does not know he sleeps. He sees illusions of himself as sick or well, depressed or happy, but without a stable cause with guaranteed effects.

> The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions. No one is afraid of them when he perceives he made them up. The fear was held in place because he did not see that he was author of the dream, and not a figure in the dream. He gives himself the consequences that he dreams he gave his brother.... Thus does he fear his own attack, but sees it at another's hands. As victim, he is suffering from its effects, but not their cause. He authored not his own attack, and he is innocent of what he caused. The miracle does nothing but to show him that he has done nothing (T-28.II.6:7-7:5,7-10).

**(5:3) It thinks it cannot change, for what it sees bears witness that its judgment is correct.**

We try to change and better ourselves, improve our lives, etc., but the essence of homo sapiens is immutable – all bodies end in the grave, because the thought of death does not change. We cannot change the mind's thought because we do not even know we have a mind, let alone one capable of change. Jesus' purpose for *A Course in Miracles* is to have us learn that we indeed do have a mind, and worldly change is meaningless because we change nothing but shadows. It is the mind's thought system alone that needs changing.

**(5:4-5) It does not ask, because it thinks it knows. It does not question, certain it is right.**

Our certainty is of the reality of the physical world and its "laws." These need not be questioned because they are obviously true. Indeed, history's greatest thinkers have affirmed them. Every once in a while a genius changes a seemingly immutable law, as we saw, for example, when we went from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican view of the universe. Yet we still speak of a universe. What difference does it truly make whether the earth revolves around the sun, or vice versa? There remains a world out there to observe and study, and very, very few question this fundamental assumption. Even the quantum physicists, who do question the reality of the material world, do not question the thoughts that made the material world. *A Course in Miracles,* on the other hand, has us question not only the world, but its underlying thought system of guilt. Thus Jesus says:

> To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning. No belief is neutral. Every one has the power to dictate each decision you make. For a decision is a conclusion based on everything that you believe (T-24.in.2:1-5).

By helping us uncover what we really believe, *A Course in Miracles* exposes the cause of our distress. Now raised to question, the heretofore hidden belief of separation and guilt can be examined, challenged, and changed.

In the two paragraphs that follow, Jesus turns to forgiveness, and the lesson concludes with a practical exercise that implements the principles he discusses now in paragraphs 6 and 7:

**(6:1-2) Forgiveness is acquired. It is not inherent in the mind, which cannot sin.**

Jesus begins by speaking of the true Mind, which cannot sin. Forgiveness, on the other hand, is the correction that has to be learned by the split mind in order to unlearn what the ego has taught. The ego speaks first, is always wrong, and the Holy Spirit is the Answer:

> Remember that the Holy Spirit is the Answer, not the question. The ego always speaks first. It is capricious and does not mean its maker well (T-6.IV.1:1-3).

Forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's means of teaching, and is something we need to learn and, as we have seen many times, to practice. We thus return to the point we made in discussing the third review lesson – these teachings have to be practiced and applied:

**(6:3) As sin is an idea you taught yourself, forgiveness must be learned by you as well, but from a Teacher other than yourself, Who represents the other Self in you.**

By teaching us to change our minds, Jesus is helping change our teacher. We – the decision maker identified with the ego – have taught ourselves that sin and individuality are real, but not our fault; someone did it first. This insanity is reinforced by the world, the purpose of which is to be a place that says: "I am born, I exist as an individual, but it is not my doing." Therefore we need another Teacher who tells us: "I am sorry, but you *are* the one who did it. However, the good news is that you only think you did. In reality this is all a dream." The practice of forgiveness – forgiving others for what they have not done – allows us to understand the illusory nature of the world, and our illusory part in making and sustaining it.

**(6:4) Through Him you learn how to forgive the self you think you made, and let it disappear.**

We first have to realize that we made this self. This is the principal burden of "Self-Concept versus Self," a section we have already cited, and cite again:

> A concept of the self is made by you. It bears no likeness to yourself at all. It is an idol, made to take the place of your reality as Son of God (T-31.V.2:1-3).

We think the world made us and that we are the face of innocence the sinful world has acted on, a world that is responsible for our unhappiness and deserves condemnation:

> "I am the thing you made of me, and as you look on me, you stand condemned because of what I am" (T-31.V.5:3).

However, we are learning that since we made the innocent self in order to blame everyone else, we are the ones who can do something about it.

Thus, with the first step in forgiveness I unlock the door to the wrong mind and realize the murderer is not outside, but is me – my false self. Unlocking the door and uncovering the first shield, I am able to take the next step and see that my guilty, murderous self is also made up. The second step is thus realizing that I only think I made up the self; I not only made you up as the victimizer, I made myself up as victimizer as well. The instant the second door is unlocked I realize it all was a dream, and that my reality, as Jesus', has remained unchanged: "You may cause a dream, but never will you give it real effects" (T-28.II.6:5).

**(6:5) Thus you return your mind as one to Him Who is your Self, and Who can never sin.**

With both doors unlocked, the entire split mind disappears and we reawaken to our Self as Christ. The above process is nicely summarized in this concluding paragraph to the section from which we have been quoting, "Reversing Effect and Cause":

> This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt. They are the dream's alternative, the choice to be the dreamer, rather than deny the active role in making up the dream. They are the glad effects of taking back the consequence of sickness to its cause. The body is released because the mind acknowledges "this is not done to me, but *I* am doing this." And thus the mind is free to make another choice instead. Beginning here, salvation will proceed to change the course of every step in the descent to separation, until all the steps have been retraced, the ladder gone, and all the dreaming of the world undone (T-28.II.12).

In the next paragraph Jesus talks specifically about the need to practice the theoretical principle of forgiveness:

**(7:1) Each unforgiving mind presents you with an opportunity to teach your own how to forgive itself.**

Jesus is not referring to my unforgiving mind, but to those I perceive around me. As long as I perceive the unforgiveness in another, I begin my practice there. This is not because in truth there is anyone out there to forgive, but since there is unforgiveness in my dream, I need to begin where I think I am. Jesus helps me realize that every experience I have with someone I believe is attacking me is my opportunity to look differently at myself; recognizing that my world is an "outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5): an opportunity to reconnect with my decision maker – the *you* of this sentence – so I may choose again.

**(7:2-4) Each one awaits release from hell through you, and turns to you imploringly for Heaven here and now. It has no hope, but you become its hope. And as its hope, do you become your own.**

Everyone in this world is calling for help, expressing the need for release from hell. We share the common need to learn we are wrong, and that there is indeed another thought system in our minds we can choose. You need me as a reminder, for my example of peace and love demonstrates there is another choice to be made. Thus Jesus

says in the text that every attack is an expression of fear, and fear is a call for the love that has been denied:

> Consider how well the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the motives of others will serve you then. Having taught you to accept only loving thoughts in others and to regard everything else as an appeal for help, He has taught you that fear itself is an appeal for help. This is what recognizing fear really means. If you do not protect it, He will reinterpret it. That is the ultimate value in learning to perceive attack as a call for love. We have already learned that fear and attack are inevitably associated. If only attack produces fear, and if you see attack as the call for help that it is, the unreality of fear must dawn on you. For fear *is* a call for love, in unconscious recognition of what has been denied (T-12.I.8:6-13).

If I am in my right mind, using Jesus' eyes instead of my own, when you attack me I see your attack as an expression of fear, and your fear a statement that says: "Please show me I am wrong; please show me there is another thought system I can choose." To the extent to which I can be defenseless and peaceful, to that extent I witness the right-minded choice for you; and as I do, I reinforce it in myself. That is how we are taught to see our special relationships, and that is how they become holy.

**(7:5) The unforgiving mind must learn through your forgiveness that it has been saved from hell.**

The reason is that there is a choice for Heaven you can make. I cannot choose for you, anymore than Jesus can choose for us. However, I can serve as an example of one who has – at least in the holy instant – made that choice for himself. We need each other to strengthen our resolve to be healed.

**(7:6-7) And as you teach salvation, you will learn. Yet all your teaching and your learning will be not of you, but of the Teacher Who was given you to show the way to you.**

Teaching is not done by us, but through us by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it is not I as an individual who learns, for the learning I think I undergo here reflects a process in my mind: the decision maker learning from the Holy Spirit. My personal self learns nothing here because it is not here. The mind, identified with the ego, cannot truly learn either. Only when I – the decision maker – have chosen a new Teacher does true learning begin.

The rest of the lesson deals with an exercise in forgiveness, in a form that recurs in other lessons as well. Jesus asks us to imagine an enemy – our special hate partner – and then see light there. Next we are to do the same with someone we think of as a friend – our special love partner. Jesus wants us to learn not to see differences between the categories of love and hate we made so real and important. In conclusion, we are to include ourselves in that light. The paradigm is thus to see all people – those we love, those we hate, and ourselves – as the same, exempting no one. Recall that differences are the home of the ego, while our common unity is the resting place of the Holy Spirit. Now the exercise:

**(8) Today we practice learning to forgive. If you are willing, you can learn**

**today to take the key to happiness, and use it on your own behalf. We will devote ten minutes in the morning, and at night another ten, to learning how to give forgiveness and receive forgiveness, too.**

Jesus has taught us the principles of forgiveness, and asks us to put them into practice. The lesson provides the form, but this is not something to be done only twice during the day. Following the instructions, the formal meditation need be done only once or twice, but the principles should be called upon throughout the day whenever we are tempted to form alliances and identify with one group against another.

**(9) The unforgiving mind does not believe that giving and receiving are the same. Yet we will try to learn today that they are one through practicing forgiveness toward one whom you think of as an enemy, and one whom you consider as a friend. And as you learn to see them both as one, we will extend the lesson to yourself, and see that their escape included yours.**

Implied here, and much more explicit elsewhere, is the theme of oneness, perhaps the most crucial theme in *A Course in Miracles.* Our reality is that we are one in Christ, Who is wholly at one with God – the perfect Oneness that is Heaven:

> Heaven is not a place nor a condition. It is merely an awareness of perfect Oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within (T-18.VI.1:5-6).

This state of unity can never be achieved in the dualistic world of bodies, but it can be reflected here through forgiveness. It comes by not seeing others with interests separate from our own. We differ in *form,* but not in *content,* for we share the same delusional thought system in which we believe we have murdered God, and then escaped to the world. We thus share the same need to escape from this delusion, and this, again, includes those we hate and those we love. That is the underlying meaning of the lesson: we are *one* in our wrong minds, *one* in our right minds, *one* in our ability to choose, and, ultimately, *one* in Christ.

**(10) Begin the longer practice periods by thinking of someone you do not like, who seems to irritate you, or to cause regret in you if you should meet him; one you actively despise, or merely try to overlook. It does not matter what the form your anger takes. You probably have chosen him already. He will do.**

Note that in this category Jesus includes all those against whom we hold negative thoughts. Whether these grievances are “big” or “small” is irrelevant. There is no hierarchy of illusions (T-23.11.2:3): slight irritation or intense rage are the same, as we see in this already-quoted passage that speaks of the relative intensity of our angry reactions to magic thoughts:

> It may be merely slight irritation, perhaps too mild to be even clearly recognized. Or it may also take the form of intense rage, accompanied by thoughts of violence, fantasized or apparently acted out. It does not matter. All of these reactions are the same. They obscure the truth, and this can never be a matter of degree. Either truth is apparent, or it is not. It cannot be partially

recognized. Who is unaware of truth must look upon illusions (M-17.4:4-11).

To attribute power to another to affect our peace of mind – a little or a lot – is enough to justify our negative reaction. Just as all expressions of love are maximal (T-1.I.1:4), so too are expressions of hate. If it is true for one it must be true for the other: there are no gradations in truth or illusion.

**(11:1-3) Now close your eyes and see him in your mind, and look at him a while. Try to perceive some light in him somewhere; a little gleam which you had never noticed. Try to find some little spark of brightness shining through the ugly picture that you hold of him.**

This is not a lesson in New Age affirmations where we see light in everyone. If we read this passage carefully, we can see Jesus saying we must first see "the ugly picture," for only then do we see the light shining beyond it. This ugly picture includes someone you think of as your enemy, as well as someone you think of as your friend. It is not difficult to notice the almost inevitable anger that is aroused when this "friend" no longer says or does what you need, or is no longer there for you. You must therefore first get in touch with the ugly picture, for only then can you realize that perceiving the ugliness in others is a defense you have chosen to conceal the light of truth that is in your mind as well as in others. The following message to Helen and Bill highlights the essence of practicing forgiveness: you cannot forgive what you do not accept in your perception, and you cannot remember love until you first acknowledge the hate. Thus Jesus told his first two students:

> You have no idea of the intensity of your wish to get rid of each other. This does *not* mean that you are not strongly impelled *toward* each other, but it *does* mean that *love is not the only emotion....* You do not realize how much you hate each other. You will not get rid of this until you *do* realize it, for *until* then, you will think you want to get rid of *each other* and *keep the hatred....* You *do* hate and fear each other, and your love, which is very real, is *totally* obscured by it.... Look as calmly as you can upon hatred, for if we are to deny the denial of truth, we must first *recognize* what we are denying *(Absence from Felicity,* pp. 297,298).

The last line is a direct reference to the familiar statement from the text: "The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to deny the denial of truth"* (T-12.II.1:5). This emphasizes the need to look at the ego's denial of truth – i.e., hate – in order to meaningfully say I no longer want it. Only then can the decision for love be effective; only then can we move through the ugliness of sin to the beauty of Christ.

The form of the lesson calls for practice with specific people, because of the self-evident assumption that we still identify with the body. We must also understand that the light of Christ shining in our minds – threatening because it means the end of our specialness – has been covered by the ugly picture of sin and guilt. This, then, is covered by the ugly picture of someone else. Before we see the light, we must first see the ugliness we miscreated in our special partner and us, and understand we did so to protect ourselves from oneness. Thus Jesus encourages us to look at the picture, which means the ugly picture.

**(11:4) Look at this picture till you see a light somewhere within it, and then**

**try to let this light extend until it covers him, and makes the picture beautiful and good.**

In "The Two Pictures," Jesus tells us over and over to *look at the picture* (T-17.IV), the ego's ugly gift of death. Again, we made the ugly external picture to conceal the inner ugliness, which was made to conceal the light and beauty of our Identity. When we look with Jesus, the ugliness simply disappears because it was held in place by a wish to be separate from him. With the wish gone, the defense of ugliness cannot remain, allowing the light that was always there to shine Thus, we do not need to perform mental gymnastics, whereby we change an ugly picture into a beautiful one. That is the Holy Spirit's function, not ours, brought about by recognizing the purpose for seeing ugliness in others and ourselves. With the veils of ignorance removed, the beauty of the light shines away the darkness of guilt, for our purpose has shifted from the ugliness of guilt to the beauty of forgiveness.

**(12) Look at this changed perception for a while, and turn your mind to one you call a friend. Try to transfer the light you learned to see around your former "enemy" to him. Perceive him now as more than friend to you, for in that light his holiness shows you your savior, saved and saving, healed and whole.**

The second part of the exercise calls for a repeat of the process, but now with our special friend. Learning the lesson of the inherent sameness of our enemy and friend, this chosen person becomes "more than friend," for he has transcended the specialness of our perception to the holiness that is in all people. Thus are we saved as we save, healed as we heal, made whole as we see wholeness. How beautiful our world has become!

Now that we have seen the beautiful light of the Sonship, and forgiven alike the darkness of specialness in our "enemy" and "friend," we embrace ourselves in the one light of the one Son:

**(13) Then let him offer you the light you see in him, and let your "enemy" and friend unite in blessing you with what you gave. Now are you one with them, and they with you. Now have you been forgiven by yourself. Do not forget, throughout the day, the role forgiveness plays in bringing happiness to every unforgiving mind, with yours among them. Every hour tell yourself:**

***Forgiveness is the key to happiness. I will awaken from the dream that I am mortal, fallible and full of sin, and know I am the perfect Son of God***

Throughout the day, whenever tempted to see anyone shrouded in darkness – in special hate or special love – say to yourself: I can waken from this dream of death because it is my dream, and therefore my mind has power to make another choice. The ugliness I have seen outside but masked the ugliness I made real within, though it is illusory. Now the dream of sin is ending, and the happiness born of forgiveness fills my glad and grateful heart, as it fills the Sonship as one sinless Whole:

> Forgiveness turns the world of sin into a world of glory, wonderful to see. Each flower shines in light, and every bird sings of the joy of Heaven. There is no sadness and there is no parting here, for everything is totally forgiven. And what

has been forgiven must join, for nothing stands between to keep them separate and apart. The sinless must perceive that they are one, for nothing stands between to push the other off. And in the space that sin left vacant do they join as one, in gladness recognizing what is part of them has not been kept apart and separate (T-26.IV.2).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 122**

**Forgiveness offers everything I want.**

This lesson and the next few are centered on positive themes: forgiveness here, and then gratitude, oneness, forgiveness again, and love. In *A Course in Miracles,* achieving what is positive is accomplished through undoing what is negative, with perhaps the clearest example being Lesson 126, where Jesus contrasts forgiveness with its opposite, *forgiveness-to-destroy,* even though the term itself is not used. As we go through the next five lessons, therefore, we will be looking at what is positive in terms of what the lesson is undoing. In this lesson, "Forgiveness offers everything I want," Jesus speaks to us about withdrawing our investments in everything we think we want and that will bring us happiness and peace, exchanging the false goals of specialness for the true one of forgiveness.

**(1) What could you want forgiveness cannot give? Do you want peace? Forgiveness offers it. Do you want happiness, a quiet mind, a certainty of purpose, and a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world? Do you want care and safety, and the warmth of sure protection always? Do you want a quietness that cannot be disturbed, a gentleness that never can be hurt, a deep, abiding comfort, and a rest so perfect it can never be upset?**

Everyone would say "yes" to these questions, at least consciously. The problem is that we are always seeking to fulfill our special desires instead. We seek in the world for anything that will make us happy, bring us peace, offer us safety, or end our pain, with which the world is very eager to oblige us. For a while, things here seem to bring the absence of pain, anxiety, and loneliness, for when we get what we think we want or need, we feel happy, joyful, and peaceful. In the end, however, nothing in the world works, the realization of which heralds the beginning of our work with *A Course in Miracles. We* then call out for help, saying there must be another way, another teacher within us. Only then can Jesus help us, by teaching us to undo our past learning through forgiveness, the precursor to real happiness and peace.

When entering the process of forgiveness, students begin to realize that it does not entail saying "yes" to Jesus, but rather "no" to the ego. In lines we have already examined in part, we read:

> For you have answered "yes" without perceiving that "yes" must mean "not no." No one decides against his happiness, but he may do so if he does not see he does it. And if he sees his happiness as ever changing, now this, now that, and now an elusive shadow attached to nothing, he does decide against it.
>
> Elusive happiness, or happiness in changing form that shifts with time and place, is an illusion that has no meaning. Happiness must be constant, because it is attained by giving up the wish for the inconstant (T-21.VII.12:4-13:2).

The constancy of happiness is ours when we look directly at the ego's negation of God's eternal constancy, and say: "I no longer want this." At that point, to quote from one of Jesus' personal messages to Helen: "... the help of God and all his angels will respond" *(Absence from Felicity,* p. 381). Our simple yet unequivocal decision against the ego – the meaning of forgiveness – allows the quiet gentleness of happiness to return to our awareness. Thus do we rest in peace and comfort.

**(2) All this forgiveness offers you, and more. It sparkles on your eyes as you awake, and gives you joy with which to meet the day. It soothes your forehead while you sleep, and rests upon your eyelids so you see no dreams of fear and evil, malice and attack. And when you wake again, it offers you another day of happiness and peace. All this forgiveness offers you, and more.**

Students of *A Course in Miracles* are continually asked to see the connection between *cause* and *effect:* our unhappiness and guilt over choosing the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. We are learning that if we want to change the effect – misery and pain to happiness and joy – we need to change the cause. Forgiveness is the name given to the process by which this occurs, changing our minds by changing our teacher.

If we are truly serious about wanting to return home, awakening from this dream of pain, we must also be serious about changing the *cause* of the unhappiness by saying no to the ego's negation of God's Yes. This means that when we are upset, we understand that it is not for any of the reasons we think, but because we stubbornly say we are better off with the ego as our teacher. We still maintain that holding grievances offers everything we want, as do sickness, suffering, and pain. We must believe this because we still choose it: we remain angry and judgmental at petty things; we yearn for fulfillment of that one glorious special relationship. This is why we are not at peace.

Again, if we want real happiness, we must choose forgiveness. Because most of us, most of the time, are not happy, we choose grievances instead, affirming the ego's counterpart to this lesson: attack thoughts, sickness, and pain offer everything we want. Admitting this is the honesty Jesus asks of us: understanding that we get what we ask for, and we cannot attribute our unhappiness to anything else.

The next paragraph provides a most clear statement of forgiveness: It does nothing positive, but removes the negative. We have already seen how forgiveness expresses stepping back with Jesus to look through his eyes at our egos. This looking without judgment – impossible without Jesus' gentle love beside us – enables the veils of guilt, pain, and misery to be lifted. Thus we read:

**(3:1-2) Forgiveness lets the veil be lifted up that hides the face of Christ from those who look with unforgiving eyes upon the world. It lets you recognize the Son of God, and clears your memory of all dead thoughts so that remembrance of your Father can arise across the threshold of your mind.**

The "dead thoughts" are the ego's, such as coveting our individuality and specialness, cherishing sin, guilt, and fear, and embracing the projections of these thoughts onto others. These all serve as veils that keep the memory of God buried in our minds. The reader may recall our discussion of the final obstacle of peace: *the fear of God.* What undoes this fear and restores remembrance of the Father to our awareness is forgiveness of our special brother. Seeing Christ's face in him – the Course's symbol of forgiveness – frees us both from the ego's prison house of guilt and hate, as we read in Jesus' inspiring and familiar words from "The Lifting of the Veil," the culmination of our journey through the ego's four obstacles to peace:

> Free your brother here, as I freed you. Give him the selfsame gift, nor look upon him with condemnation of any kind. See him as guiltless as I look on you, and overlook the sins he thinks he sees within himself. Offer your brother freedom and complete release from sin, here in the garden of seeming agony and death.

> So will we prepare together the way unto the resurrection of God's Son, and let him rise again to glad remembrance of his Father, Who knows no sin, no death, but only life eternal.
>
> Together we will disappear into the Presence beyond the veil, not to be lost but found; not to be seen but known. And knowing, nothing in the plan God has established for salvation will be left undone. This is the journey's purpose, without which is the journey meaningless. Here is the peace of God, given to you eternally by Him. Here is the rest and quiet that you seek, the reason for the journey from its beginning. Heaven is the gift you owe your brother, the debt of gratitude you offer to the Son of God in thanks for what he is, and what his Father created him to be (T-19.IV-D.18-19).

Therefore, if we truly want forgiveness' gifts, we shall extend them to each fragment of the Sonship, without exception.

**(3:3-5) What would you want forgiveness cannot give? What gifts but these are worthy to be sought? What fancied value, trivial effect or transient promise, never to be kept, can hold more hope than what forgiveness brings?**

This is the question, repeated from the lesson's opening, that Jesus continually poses. He contrasts the gifts of the ego with his; and thus his question: which do you want? One of the central points of *A Course in Miracles* is that we cherish being miserable, for that guarantees our separated existence, for which someone or something else is responsible. Our pain could be anything at all, as long as it does not come from our decision. If we are not happy, however, it is only because we have chosen not to be happy, and Jesus helps us to understand this insanity.

**(4:1) Why would you seek an answer other than the answer that will answer everything?**

This, again, is the heart of all special relationships: seeking an answer for pain in any place other than where the real answer can be found. Jesus asks us to look at how we do not ask for too much, but for far too little (T-26.VII.11:7); that we are happy to settle for the crumbs instead of the banquet, the parts of the song instead of the Song itself. Thus, as we have already seen in the opening pages of *The Song of Prayer,* Jesus makes this point very specifically:

> The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need. To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it. Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands. There they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no Love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him? Can this be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration? God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this (S-1.I.4).

Why would we then want the world's little answers of specialness, when instead we could have the one Answer that responds to all our needs and prayers, and offers the constant peace and happiness for which we so desperately seek?

**(4:2) Here is the perfect answer, given to imperfect questions, meaningless requests, halfhearted willingness to hear, and less than halfway diligence and partial trust.**

That encompasses just about everything we do! Despite our asking for help, it is never help we really want. If it were, we would not be in pain, for we would have gone within to ask the Holy Spirit for help and shifted our perception. Without doing that, all our requests are without meaning, for the only meaningful request is for forgiveness, which is also the only meaningful answer. What could be simpler?

> Prayer is a way of asking for something. It is the medium of miracles. But the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly meaningless. The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have (T-3.V.6:1-5).

Forgiveness makes possible the recognition of our abundance as God's Son. In the words of the famous Gershwin song: "Who could ask for anything more?"

**(4:3-5) Here is the answer! Seek for it no more. You will not find another one instead.**

The ego's answers are seen outside our minds, in the world and body, as are our problems. However, true forgiveness is not found externally, but in the mind, the true locus of the problem. As long as we maintain our separate identifications, we will see problems where they are not, seeking solutions in the world as we magically bring the Holy Spirit into our dream to help us there. As we will see later, this dynamic is known as *forgiveness-to-destroy.*

**(5:1-2) God's plan for your salvation cannot change, nor can it fail. Be thankful it remains exactly as He planned it.**

Once again, "God's plan" is meant metaphorically, expressing the fact that the answer, a reflection of God's Love in the Person of the Holy Spirit, is found in our minds. Nothing we believe we have done can change that fact of the Atonement, for nothing has changed Heaven. Accepting this happy correction to the ego's change of separation is God's plan of salvation.

**(5:3) Changelessly it stands before you like an open door, with warmth and welcome calling from beyond the doorway, bidding you to enter in and make yourself at home, where you belong.**

Jesus is speaking of the right mind, where the answer is found. The memory of God's Love waits changelessly there, the room we closed and sealed. As we saw in the preceding lesson, forgiveness is the key to happiness because it opens the door to this locked vault, revealing truth's answer that welcomes us. Choosing Jesus as our teacher allows us to use his loving key to open the locked door. The motivation for accepting

salvation's warm welcome comes from recognizing this world is not our home, and that life here invites only pain and misery. Thus are we able at last to join with the love that has always been joined with us:

> For what attracts you from beyond the veil [i.e., the open door] is also deep within you, unseparated from it and completely one (T- 1 9.IV-D. 7: 7).

**(6:1-2) Here is the answer! Would you stand outside while all of Heaven waits for you within?**

Again, the answer is in our right minds, patiently awaiting our decision to join with it. Standing outside this door means we prefer the ego's home of sin, guilt, and fear – the secret dream – beyond which is the world's dream of the body. The loving answer of the Holy Spirit waits outside both, inviting us to return and be at peace.

**(6:3-4) Forgive and be forgiven. As you give you will receive.**

Inherent in these words is the theme of oneness. If I hold something against you, since minds are joined I am also holding it against me. In fact, it is because I hold it against me that I have projected it. However, changing my mind about you – seeing the face of innocence instead of guilt – reflects the same change in me. The way I see you *is* the way I see myself, because we are figures in the one dream of sin and guilt, concomitant with the magical hope of escaping guilt's punishment by seeing sin outside the mind. Yet do we share the Holy Spirit's happy dream as well, in which forgiving and being forgiven, giving and receiving are one.

**(6:5-7) There is no plan but this for the salvation of the Son of God. Let us today rejoice that this is so, for here we have an answer, clear and plain, beyond deceit in its simplicity. All the complexities the world has spun of fragile cobwebs disappear before the power and the majesty of this extremely simple statement of the truth.**

The text tells us "complexity is of the ego" (T-15.IV.6:2), and its thought system is indeed extraordinarily complicated, bending reality to fit our needs so we become the miserable sinners who have pulled off the impossible. Moreover, God becomes as insane as we, for He will steal back what we stole from Him. This insanity is projected, making a physical universe and body that are complex, to say the least. Keeping the body sustained is an incredibly difficult task, demanding constant attention. To this add the psychological body with its specialness needs, and we see the chaotic mess the ego has wrought. It is a wonder we make it through the day.

The answer, however, is quite simple: none of this has happened – the world's dream remains a dream. Forgiveness means stepping back, and with Jesus' love beside us, looking at the two dreams – the world's and the mind's – and realizing they are but illusory and flimsy veils that would hide the truth and light from us. Yet when we look at guilt and its world, they disappear, and we see they had no power to hide the light of God's Love. Our willingness to de-invest from our need to be right and maintain the illusion of our identity allows these complexities to disappear, as we smile at the silliness of what we have tried to do. The thought system of guilt is not a solid wall of granite but a fragile cobweb, as this previously quoted passage explains:

> For the reality of guilt is the illusion that seems to make it heavy and opaque, impenetrable, and a real foundation for the ego's thought system. Its thinness and transparency are not apparent until you see the light behind it. And then you see it as a fragile veil before the light.
>
> This heavy-seeming barrier, this artificial floor that looks like rock, is like a bank of low dark clouds that seem to be a solid wall before the sun. Its impenetrable appearance is wholly an illusion. It gives way softly to the mountain tops that rise above it, and has no power at all to hold back anyone willing to climb above it and see the sun. It is not strong enough to stop a button's fall, nor hold a feather. Nothing can rest upon it, for it is but an illusion of a foundation. Try but to touch it and it disappears; attempt to grasp it and your hands hold nothing (T-18.IX.5:2-6: 6).

Illusions have no power to withhold the simple truth of the Atonement.

**(7:1) Here is the answer!**

This needs repeating, because the ego tells us the answer is found somewhere else – in our specialness. Thus Jesus matches the ego's over-learning with his repetitions of the correction.

**(7:1-5) Here is the answer! Do not turn away in aimless wandering again. Accept salvation now. It is the gift of God, and not the world. The world can give no gifts of any value to a mind that has received what God has given as its own.**

If this statement were true, as it is, I need only reject God and my ego is fine. However, once I let Jesus in my life and experience his love, even for an instant, I cannot justify any belief that this world has value for me. To ensure this does not happen, we are continually impelled by our ego's thought system to judge, hold grievances, and become ill, making up non-existent problems, for which we seek non-existent solutions. The overwhelming compulsion to carry out this "aimless wandering" - from love to guilt to the body – is born of the thought that if we allow light into our minds and experience its love, we can no longer justify the thought that there is anything important here. The Holy Spirit gently reminds us it is our choice to remain in hell or return home, for His Presence is proof that Heaven's Love has not disappeared. In our insanity we chose to disappear from it, but now we choose to return.

**(7:6) God wills salvation be received today, and that the intricacies of your dreams no longer hide their nothingness from you.**

We will not realize our dreams are nothing until we look at them. That is why forgiveness can be defined most simply as looking at the ego without judgment, which is impossible if we look by ourselves; thus the emphasis in *A Course in Miracles* on choosing a different teacher. The ego would have us believe that even if we did deserve salvation, its gifts remain in the future, thereby making linear time and its source – sin, guilt, and fear – real as well. Jesus teaches us rather that salvation is immediate – the sinful past that has caused the future has never been:

> The one remaining problem that you have is that you see an interval between the time when you forgive, and will receive the benefits of trusting in your brother.... Salvation *is* immediate. Unless you so perceive it, you will be afraid of it.... Salvation *would* wipe out the space you see between you still, and let you instantly become as one. And it is here you fear the loss would Future loss is not your fear. But present joining is your dread. Who can feel desolation except now? A future cause as yet has no effects. And therefore must it be that if you fear, there is a present cause. And it is *this* that needs correction, not a future state.... Be not content with future happiness. It has no meaning, and is not your just reward. For you have cause for freedom *now....* Look not to time, but to the little space between you still, to be delivered from.... The Holy Spirit's purpose now is yours. Should not His happiness be yours as well? (T-26.VIII.1:1; 3:1-2, 4-5; 4:3-8; 9:1-3,7,9-10)

Forgiveness brings us this truth, releasing us *to* happiness as it releases us *from* the fear of losing our time-bound identity. We can therefore accept salvation now – not next week, next year, the afterlife, or the next lifetime, but *right now.* God's gifts are "redeemed" in the holy instant, ours when we choose to join with it. These lessons hasten that happy day.

**(8:1) Open your eyes today and look upon a happy world of safety and of peace.**

This means our eyes are closed, which they are because we see what is not there. We think we are seeing, but Jesus keeps telling us the body's eyes do not see, as the ears do not hear and the brain does not think. What we see is but part of a dream. The opening of our eyes is tantamount to taking Jesus' hand and seeing the world through his eyes, the vision wherein the ego's world of danger and conflict is gladly exchanged for "a happy world of safety and of peace."

**(8:2) Forgiveness is the means by which it comes to take the place of hell.**

This happy world, as we will see in paragraph 12, is the real world, the state of mind in which our sins are forgiven. The beautiful section in the text called "Where Sin Has Left" describes this world that forgiveness brings about. Here is its opening paragraph:

> Forgiveness is this world's equivalent of Heaven's justice. It translates the world of sin into a simple world, where justice can be reflected from beyond the gate behind which total lack of limits lies. Nothing in boundless love could need forgiveness. And what is charity within the world gives way to simple justice past the gate that opens into Heaven. No one forgives unless he has believed in sin, and still believes that he has much to be forgiven. Forgiveness thus becomes the means by which he learns he has done nothing to forgive. Forgiveness always rests upon the one who offers it, until he sees himself as needing it no more. And thus is he returned to his real function of creating, which his forgiveness offers him again (T-26.IV.1).

**(8:3) In quietness it rises up to greet your open eyes, and fill your heart with**

**deep tranquility as ancient truths, forever newly born, arise in your awareness.**

These "ancient truths" – the separation from God never happened, and we forever remain His Son – are always within our minds. Since we have buried them, our function is to remove the barriers to their remembrance. Forgiveness is the *means,* and the reborn awareness of the peace of God is the *end.*

**(8:4-5) What you will remember then can never be described. Yet your forgiveness offers it to you.**

As Jesus has explained many times, our reborn awareness cannot be understood, for the Love of God transcends our capacity to understand. Yet we *can* understand the means of forgiveness provided for our remembrance.

Paragraph 9 begins the instructions for the practice period, which, like all the others, are designed to help us reach this new level of understanding:

**(9) Remembering the gifts forgiveness gives, we undertake our practicing today with hope and faith that this will be the day salvation will be ours. Earnestly and gladly will we seek for it today, aware we hold the key within our hands, accepting Heaven's answer to the hell we made, but where we would remain no more.**

If we are not earnest and glad in our practicing, we might as well not do the exercises. These characteristics are crucial to our advance in the curriculum, for without them we shall gladly remain slaves to the ego's earnestness of maintaining the separation. Recognizing that individuality is hell and oneness is Heaven supplies the motivation to learn a different lesson from a different teacher. Happily, then, we take the key that is forgiveness' gift from the hand that has always extended itself to ours. Joined now with Jesus, we possess the means for opening Heaven's gate and returning home.

**(10) Morning and evening do we gladly give a quarter of an hour to the search in which the end of hell is guaranteed. Begin in hopefulness, for we have reached the turning point at which the road becomes far easier. And now the way is short that yet we travel. We are close indeed to the appointed ending of the dream.**

Our newly found earnestness gladly welcomes each practice period, for it heralds our decision to complete the journey and awaken from the ego's nightmare. Confronted by "the branching of the road," we have made the choice that constitutes the turning point, thus smoothing our path. This decision is described in the following passage from the text:

> When you come to the place where the branch in the road is quite apparent, you cannot go ahead. You must go either one way or the other. For now if you go straight ahead, the way you went before you reached the branch, you will go nowhere. The whole purpose of coming this far was to decide which branch you will take now. The way you came no longer matters. It can no longer serve. No one who reaches this far can make the wrong decision, although he can delay. And there is no part of the journey that seems more hopeless and futile

than standing where the road branches, and not deciding on which way to go (T-22.IV.1).

**(11) Sink into happiness as you begin these practice periods, for they hold out the sure rewards of questions answered and what your acceptance of the answer brings. Today it will be given you to feel the peace forgiveness offers, and the joy the lifting of the veil holds out to you.**

How happy we are to practice the exercises that will bring us home! How filled with joy as our questions have been brought to the one Answer, in which is found the source of our peace! We continue with "The Branching of the Road," and one can almost feel Jesus' joy as his forgiveness awakens us to our joy:

> And so you and your brother stand, here in this holy place, before the veil of sin that hangs between you and the face of Christ. Let it be lifted! Raise it together with your brother, for it is but a veil that stands between you.... Yet it is almost over in your awareness, and peace has reached you even here, before the veil. Think what will happen after. The Love of Christ will light your face, and shine from it into a darkened world that needs the light. And from this holy place He will return with you, not leaving it nor you. You will become His messenger, returning Him unto Himself.
>
> Think of the loveliness that you will see, who walk with Him! And think how beautiful will you and your brother look to the other! How happy you will be to be together, after such a long and lonely journey where you walked alone. The gates of Heaven, open now for you, will you now open to the sorrowful. And none who looks upon the Christ in you but will rejoice. How beautiful the sight you saw beyond the veil, which you will bring to light the tired eyes of those as weary now as once you were. How thankful will they be to see you come among them, offering Christ's forgiveness to dispel their faith in sin (T-22.IV.3:1-3,5-9; 4).

Who, once having experienced this joy, would ever, except in insanity, choose to restore the veil of judgment that keeps two brothers apart and obscure such happiness? And how joyful to let the answer of forgiveness reach out to touch all those who have not yet accepted it!

**(12:1) Before the light you will receive today the world will fade until it disappears...**

When we bring the dark complexities of our thought system – our guilt and attack thoughts – to the light, it simply shines them away. The fading world seems to be the physical, but it is only guilt's shadow. Thus, when a person forgives, the world will not literally fade away – how can what never was fade away? – but what does fade are the mind's thoughts of guilt, the object of forgiveness. We need always keep that in mind, otherwise we will get off the track very quickly.

Thus, as I bring the darkness of my guilt to the light of Jesus' love, looking at it with him, the guilt disappears because it is born of my belief that I am separate from him and from God. As I join with Jesus, I undo the very cause of the darkness – the separation, of which the world is but a shadow. Thus it can only fade in the presence of oneness.

**(12:1-2) ... and you will see another world arise you have no words to picture. Now we walk directly into light, and we receive the gifts that have been held in store for us since time began, kept waiting for today.**

This is the real world. Since this is not a physical place, the lesson does not mean, for example, that if it is dark and cloudy before you do the lesson, the sun will suddenly emerge when you complete it. Such an expectation is magic; arrogant and irrelevant. It is the darkness of the mind that disappears, allowing the light of the Atonement, the basis of the real world, simply to shine. Let us look again at these inspiring words at the end of the text, as Jesus describes the indescribable world to which he is leading us, together with our brothers:

> My brothers in salvation, do not fail to hear my voice and listen to my words. I ask for nothing but your own release. There is no place for hell within a world whose loveliness can yet be so intense and so inclusive it is but a step from there to Heaven. To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VIII.8).

**(13) Forgiveness offers everything you want. Today all things you want are given you. Let not your gifts recede throughout the day, as you return again to meet a world of shifting change and bleak appearances. Retain your gifts in clear awareness as you see the changeless in the heart of change; the light of truth behind appearances.**

I have repeatedly emphasized, because the workbook repeatedly emphasizes, that these lessons have no meaning if you do not apply them to your everyday life. This is crucial to understanding this important paragraph. It is not enough to have a wonderful meditative experience in which you see the darkness of guilt disappear in your mind, and Jesus ablaze in glory with you ablaze alongside him, if when you step back to the world all this is gone, and you become angry, impatient, sick, annoyed, and worried. Jesus is asking us to pay careful attention to what goes on in our daily lives as we meet "a world of shifting change and bleak appearances," and, as we do so, to bring the light of truth, forgiveness, and love with us. Then, regardless of what is going on around us, we will remain at peace.

Therefore, the purpose of these lessons is not simply to have us experience holy moments early in the morning or a couple of times during the day, or late at night when we are all by ourselves. The purpose is to bring their truth to our daily experiences, and see "the changeless in the heart of change." Everything here changes. What pleases us one day will not please us another. A person whom we like today we will not like tomorrow. However, what is changeless is the Love of God, represented for us by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Thus he asks us to keep the daily thought in mind as we go through our day, accepting the challenge of bringing the changeable to the changeless, and the appearance to the reality, that we may see the light of truth behind appearances.

**(14) Be tempted not to let your gifts slip by and drift into forgetfulness, but**

**hold them firmly in your mind by your attempts to think of them at least a minute as each quarter of an hour passes by. Remind yourself how precious are these gifts with this reminder, which has power to hold your gifts in your awareness through the day:**

> ***Forgiveness offers everything I want***
> ***Today I have accepted this as true.***
> ***Today I have received the gifts of God.***

Jesus thus asks us – *for our sake* – to apply his teachings as often as we can throughout the day, every fifteen minutes if possible; indeed, even more than that. If we forget, we should attempt to remember it is our mind's fear that has motivated us, not the loss of brain function. Thus we can return our minds to the choice point when we chose pain and suffering as the price we were willing to pay to sustain our individual, separate self. Aware now of our choice, we can choose again, remembering that what we truly want is the end of pain and the attainment of peace. With this gift as our goal, we gladly and earnestly choose to forgive. And so a smile replaces a tear, a blessing removes a curse, and love banishes hate:

> An ancient miracle has come to bless and to replace an ancient enmity that came to kill (T-26.IX.8:5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 123**
**I thank my Father for His gifts to me.**

This lesson is about gratitude. Implicit here, as I mentioned at the beginning of Lesson 122, is the correction for the ingratitude we feel. As long as we believe we are individuals, cherishing our physical and psychological selves, with specialness our greatest value, there is no way we can be grateful to God because He is the greatest threat to our separated existence. Needless to say, it is the true God Who is threatening, because the ego's version is part of the dream, unlike God Himself Who does not even know of its existence. To remember God is to remember Who we are as part of Him. As one with Him, our individual existence means nothing. In fact, it *is* nothing – only a figment of our deluded imaginations.

This lesson, then, expresses the correction, born of the thought that there must be another way of looking at myself, not to mention looking at the world. I recognize that my individuality has not made me happy, nor has my seeking after specialness brought me the peace, love, and joy I want. In other words, we are grateful for being wrong and God being right. However, as long as we think we are right about our existence and understanding of the world, gratitude is impossible. Who could be grateful for a God, course, and teacher we believe are wrong?

**(1:1-3) Today let us be thankful. We have come to gentler pathways and to smoother roads. There is no thought of turning back, and no implacable resistance to the truth.**

We find pep talks like this throughout the workbook. Obviously Jesus knows that this is not the whole truth for us, because he continues with the lessons, but he appeals to our right minds that gentle pathways be our goal. Clearly this is not a judgment against us because we are resistant to the truth, have thoughts of turning back, and often wish to close the book – permanently. Jesus does not want our guilt, but our realization that these thoughts do not make us happy. Thus he addresses the part of us that truly does want to travel on the gentle pathways of forgiveness, and he seeks to reinforce it.

We all should appreciate this next sentence, recognizing how different Jesus' perspective is from our own:

**(1:4) A bit of wavering remains, some small objections and a little hesitance, but you can well be grateful for your gains, which are far greater than you realize.**

In the opening paragraph of "The Happy Dream," Jesus says in effect we have no idea what is going on with us:

> ...for you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat. Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success (T-18.V.1:5-6).

In other words, we cannot understand, appreciate, or evaluate our progress on the spiritual path. Since we are overwhelmed by the force of the ego, we think there is no way we could ever get beyond it, and so we think that the little we have already done is not much at all. Jesus is telling us here that we have done much more than we realize. We may not have ascended to the top of the ladder, but by dint of our commitment to

him and earnestness to succeed in learning his lessons, we have gained a great deal.

**(2:1) A day devoted now to gratitude will add the benefit of some insight into the real extent of all the gains which you have made; the gifts you have received.**

These gains come from my seriousness about returning home and my study and practice of the Course. I am already on Lesson 123, so I have spent at least one hundred and twenty-two days on this. After all, I could have stopped after day one, or did not have to start at all. The fact that I am practicing – however half-heartedly my efforts may sometimes be, however filled with specialness – means there is a part of me that wants to learn these lessons and stay with them. That is what we need look at in ourselves, rather than judge our failures and resistance. Thus we will feel grateful for our teacher, his lessons, and ourselves for having chosen to learn from them.

**(2:2) Be glad today, in loving thankfulness, your Father has not left you to yourself, nor let you wander in the dark alone.**

This undoes the ego's projection that we did not abandon God; He abandoned us. Further, even if we did, He should have stopped us, reaching His everlasting arm into the darkness and pulling us back. From the ego's standpoint, it is always God's fault. Real gratitude comes from understanding God does not save us because He cannot. If He did in fact reach into the darkness, it would mean it were real, and salvation necessary from the factual separation. Our gratitude to God is because He does not know of our separated state, and so does not try to save us. His unchangeable Being remains our only hope. Thus Jesus tells us in the text that we need to forgive God for His not being one of us. He does not join us in our game of sin, guilt, and fear, which means there is no sin and, therefore, no separated self that needs to be punished:

> Forgive your Father it was not His Will that you be crucified (T-24.III.8:13).

Once we have forgiven our Creator, we experience gratitude for the fact that He *is,* and that in His Being we rest secure as His Son. Even during our sleep of forgetfulness, His memory rests secure as well, its very presence gently calling us to awaken and be glad. Who could *not* then be grateful for such a light shining in the darkness of our guilt and fear?

**(2:3-4) Be grateful He has saved you from the self you thought you made to take the place of Him and His creation. Give Him thanks today.**

To repeat, God saves us by simply being Himself. Thus the line that comes later in the workbook: "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak" (W-pI.169.5:4). Nothing more can be said about God, and that is why and how He saves us – He does not change, make error real, establish illusion as reality, or see His Son as separate from Him. Reality itself is the salvation from illusion.

**(3) Give thanks that He has not abandoned you, and that His Love forever will remain shining on you, forever without change. Give thanks as well that you are changeless, for the Son He loves is changeless as Himself. Be grateful you are**

**saved. Be glad you have a function in salvation to fulfill. Be thankful that your value far transcends your meager gifts and petty judgments of the one whom God established as His Son.**

Gratitude is impossible as long as we think we are here. We are grateful only when we de-invest from our individual identity and specialness. In other words, we give thanks that God is right and we are wrong. This is the meaning of humility, the precondition for gratitude brought about by fulfilling our function of forgiveness.

**(4) Today in gratitude we lift our hearts above despair, and raise our thankful eyes, no longer looking downward to the dust. We sing the song of thankfulness today, in honor of the Self that God has willed to be our true Identity in Him. Today we smile on everyone we see, and walk with lightened footsteps as we go to do what is appointed us to do.**

"What is appointed us to do" is forgive, which means I first become aware of how much I do not want to let go of my judgments and specialness, how much I do not want to smile on everyone I see. Indeed, I want only to smile at those from whom I want something; a desire that is selective, specific, and special. My first step in learning to forgive, therefore, is being aware of how much I do not want to, how much I do not want to change my perceptions. It is only when I become aware of my withholding a smile or gentle word from you, that I can see I am withholding it from myself. Thus, I am not only *not* interested in being with you, but also not being with Jesus, and I certainly am not interested in returning to God. We need to see the causal connection between the *effect,* how we are towards others – separate, insensitive, and special – and the *cause,* not wanting to return home and remember God's Son. We look at that wish without judgment, thereby forgiving ourselves – our function on earth. How could one not feel gratitude for such a function, for only through forgiveness can our hearts be lifted above despair to share the vision of the Son of God: the Self that God created one with Him.

**(5:1-2) We do not go alone. And we give thanks that in our solitude a Friend has come to speak the saving Word of God to us.**

Our Friend is the Holy Spirit, and the "saving Word of God" is an expression of the Atonement: correction, forgiveness, this lesson. Hope is therefore present in our minds, if only we avail ourselves of it. Our gratitude knows no bounds, for this Friend and His healing Word are the way out of hell.

**(5:3-5) And thanks to you for listening to Him. His Word is soundless if it be not heard. In thanking Him the thanks are yours as well.**

The Atonement principle, for all its truth, radiance, and love, has no relevance until we choose to join it, which we do by separating from the ego's interference to it. We accept the Atonement for ourselves when we release all we made to hide its truth. We thus need to look at our investments in the inner and outer worlds of specialness. Without the Holy Spirit by our side, this is impossible, but with Him we are led to our Self. Our thanks to Him is His to us, His thanks to us is ours to Him, for the song of gratitude has no beginning and no end, reflecting the Song of God, as in this wonderful passage from later in the workbook:

> Our Love awaits us as we go to Him, and walks beside us showing us the way. He fails in nothing. He the End we seek, and He the Means by which we go to Him (W-pII.302.2).

**(5:6) An unheard message will not save the world, however mighty be the Voice that speaks, however loving may the message be.**

Jesus cannot save me until I choose to join with him. "Salvation is a collaborative venture" not only because I see my brother as one with me, but because I collaborate with him who represents salvation. Thus is Jesus' message of forgiveness accepted and offered as one:

> As you come closer to a brother you approach me, and as you withdraw from him I become distant to you. Salvation is a collaborative venture. It cannot be undertaken successfully by those who disengage themselves from the Sonship, because they are disengaging themselves from me. God will come to you only as you will give Him to your brothers. Learn first of them and you will be ready to hear God. That is because the function of love is one (T-4.VI.8).

And so we return together, as God's *one* Son.

**(6:1) Thanks be to you who heard, for you become the messenger who brings His Voice with you, and lets It echo round and round the world.**

The message echoes round and round the world by our choosing it. When in the holy instant we choose Jesus as our teacher and the Atonement as our guiding principle, we have joined with the Sonship, because there is no longer any separation in our minds. Further, since the physical world is the shadow of the Son's separated mind, the world is healed as well.

Again, this is not a message we broadcast around the world behaviorally, but one that automatically extends through us. This means the message remains within the mind of God's Son the instant it is chosen, and the miracle allows it effortlessly to extend, as we recall:

> You may still think that holiness is impossible to understand, because you cannot see how it can be extended to include everyone. And you have been told that it must include everyone to *be* holy. Concern yourself not with the extension of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do not understand. Nor do you do them. It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you do not do them (T-16.II.1:1-5).

**(6:2-3) Receive the thanks of God today, as you give thanks to Him. For He would offer you the thanks you give, since He receives your gifts in loving gratitude, and gives them back a thousand and a hundred thousand more than they were given.**

These numbers are obviously symbolic, but their magnitude expresses the magnitude of healing that occurs when we choose to release our guilt and look at our

judgments without judgment, accepting the gratitude of God even as we extend it to Him.

**(6:4-5) He will bless your gifts by sharing them with you. And so they grow in power and in strength, until they fill the world with gladness and with gratitude.**

The poetic language reflects the truth that awareness of our abundance as God's Son increases as we release our hold on guilt and specialness. As they decrease in the power we had invested in them, the natural power and strength of God's Love is allowed to be what they are. Thus is our mind filled with gladness and gratitude as we become aware that the night has ended and Christ's light has dawned. Our minds fill with this light, as does the mind of the Sonship – one mind is all minds – for the power and strength of God's Son excludes no one; otherwise they would not be true.

**(7) Receive His thanks and offer yours to Him for fifteen minutes twice today. And you will realize to Whom you offer thanks, and Whom He thanks as you are thanking Him. This holy half an hour given Him will be returned to you in terms of years for every second; power to save the world eons more quickly for your thanks to Him.**

True gratitude reflects Heaven's Oneness – a circle without separation. This is unknown on earth, and we are not asked to understand how thirty minutes saves eons, but we are asked to let it happen. This we do when, through our gratitude, we express our unity with God and the Holy Spirit, which emanates from the forgiveness of our brother and ourselves.

**(8) Receive His thanks, and you will understand how lovingly He holds you in His Mind, how deep and limitless His care for you, how perfect is His gratitude to you. Remember hourly to think of Him, and give Him thanks for everything He gave His Son, that he might rise above the world, remembering his Father and his Self.**

Again, and finally, God does not feel gratitude to us. He does not have a separated self that can experience another: in gratitude or in hate. This lovely passage, as indeed this lovely lesson, merely expresses God's Love in the specific form correction needs to undo the ego's tale of sin and guilt, punishment and pain, hate and death. As we allow ourselves to experience gratitude – to and from God – the chains of hate and fear drop away. No longer bound to the ego's shadowy world of despair, our hearts and minds are lifted above the world into the light, as Heaven sings its song of gratitude.

**Lesson 124**

**Let me remember I am one with God.**

Here we find the theme of oneness, the understanding of which means recognizing how much we do not want to let go of separation. To make the point again, what is positive in *A Course in Miracles* is undoing what is negative, because this is not a course about Heaven, where the only true Positive can be found. The thought system of separation is the cause of all our problems, and its undoing leads us to remember who We are. The process, as does this lesson, begins with an expression of gratitude:

**(1:1) Today we will again give thanks for our Identity in God.**

We give thanks to the extent we are willing to say: I no longer want to be who I thought I was— a unique and special person, separate from the Creator; I no longer want to be right.

**(1:2-5) Our home is safe, protection guaranteed in all we do, power and strength available to us in all our undertakings. We can fail in nothing. Everything we touch takes on a shining light that blesses and that heals. At one with God and with the universe we go our way rejoicing, with the thought that God Himself goes everywhere with us.**

As we do this lesson and read Jesus' beautiful and inspiring words, we need to be aware of a part within us that does not believe him. Moreover, there is a part that does not want to believe him. We have made a world in which we are vulnerable at every turn, and yet it is a world in which we take strange and perverse comfort. Our learning therefore takes us away from here, as we choose the strength of Christ instead of our weakness (T-31.VIII.2:3). As the journey continues, we come to know we fail in nothing because of Who walks with us and Who we are. Jesus' beautiful words thus cease to be mere words, but symbols of our reality.

**(2:1) How holy are our minds!**

Our minds are obviously not very holy if we think we exist as individuals. Guilt is not holy, but we remember the mind's holiness when we recognize that the Love of God is the only thing we want. Holiness is found in our right minds, to which we return when we forgive. Thus we recall our holy minds by forgiving our unholy projections onto others. One of the loveliest lines in *A Course in Miracles* states:

> The holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love (T-26.IX.6:1).

**(2:2) And everything we see reflects the holiness within the mind at one with God and with itself.**

This is so, as everything we see with our eyes reflects the mind's unholiness in believing it is not one with God or with itself. Once we chose to be an individual and reinforced the belief in separation, the mind filled with the darkness of guilt. The world arose from this thought as a shadow whose purpose was to conceal it. When we change our teacher we join the light, and everything we see through vision reflects it. To

continue the passage quoted above, we read how God and Christ return to the temple of forgiveness that has welcomed Them, as the world fills with the light reflected from Heaven's Love and gratitude:

> And They come quickly to the living temple, where a home for Them has been set up. There is no place in Heaven holier. And They have come to dwell within the temple offered Them, to be Their resting place as well as yours. What hatred has released to love becomes the brightest light in Heaven's radiance. And all the lights in Heaven brighter grow, in gratitude for what has been restored (T-26.IX.6:2-6).

**(2:3) How easily do errors disappear, and death give place to everlasting life.**

Jesus is not speaking of everlasting life in the body; only in thought, which is all he ever speaks about. Thus, when we choose the ego we make real the thought of death; when we choose the Holy Spirit the unreality of this thought is apparent, and the memory of our eternal life as Christ becomes the only thing with which we identify.

**(2:4) Our shining footprints point the way to truth, for God is our Companion as we walk the world a little while.**

To the extent to which I walk with Jesus, I become a reminder. My footprints shine the way for others, as I exemplify the right-minded choice. Indeed, to choose forgiveness for myself is my only function in the world, allowing me to become the symbol of truth Jesus has become. By the peace and love people experience in me, they hear the message: "The same choice I made is available to you, because our minds are one."

**(2:5) And those who come to follow us will recognize the way because the light we carry stays behind, yet still remains with us as we walk on.**

The light stays behind to the extent it is still in the mind of God's Son – within me, but within everyone else as well. It is a reminder, to repeat this important point, that says the choice I made you can make as well. This occurs within the mind, though it seems to be within the dream of bodies. Indeed, we have many symbols – Jesus among the most prominent – to whom we point as models for the right choice. We look to them, understanding that because they chose correctly, and minds are one, we can make the same choice. In fact, we already have!

You need be wary, however, that you do not identify with other people's behavior, for it is with their minds you wish to identify. It is pointless to emulate external appearances; e.g., how people act, dress, speak, or eat. It is the process of right-minded choosing that is the only proper focus. When Jesus tells us to take him as our model for learning (e.g., T-6.in.2:1), he is not really referring to the biblical life with which people associate him, but his mind's choice for truth instead of illusion – the separation never happened, for the Holy Spirit is the mind's true Voice.

**(3:1) What we receive is our eternal gift to those who follow after, and to those who went before or stayed with us a while.**

In other words, past, present, and future are one. When I choose the holy instant, I learn that the illusion of separation had no effect – no sin, guilt, or fear, and therefore no linear time. In the oneness of the holy instant, therefore, I am one with the Sonship: past, present, and future.

**(3:2-4:1) And God, Who loves us with the equal love in which we were created, smiles on us and offers us the happiness we gave.**

**Today we will not doubt His Love for us, nor question His protection and His care.**

This acceptance is possible only when we realize how much we doubt His Love and do not trust His protection or care. After all, how could He care about or protect me, let alone love me, if I am the one who betrayed Him? That is why we need realize that the way to experience God's Love is by releasing the interferences to His Presence. Needless to say, Jesus speaks to us in symbols – God does not literally smile on us, yet His Love transcends the ego's special (or unequal) love that would have us believe, for example, that He smiles on *some* of the Sonship, but not all, or *some* of the Sonship *some* times, but not all times.

**(4:2-6) No meaningless anxieties can come between our faith and our awareness of His Presence. We are one with Him today in recognition and remembrance. We feel Him in our hearts. Our minds contain His Thoughts; our eyes behold His loveliness in all we look upon. Today we see only the loving and the lovable.**

We need first be aware of the anxieties, before realizing they have no power. We first remove the interference before we can see, the static before we can hear. Acknowledging our faith in the ego, we correct the mistake and remember the Presence of truth. Identifying then with the Thoughts of peace, the thoughts of conflict dissolve into nothingness. Instead of war, "we see only the loving and the lovable" as the memory of God dawns on our quiet and holy minds.

To restate this important point, we do not use these statements as affirmations to cover the ego thought system, but as statements of the truth to which we bring the ego thought system. The next paragraph describes this process:

**(5) We see it** [the loving and the lovable] **in appearances of pain, and pain gives way to peace. We see it in the frantic, in the sad and the distressed, the lonely and afraid, who are restored to the tranquility and peace of mind in which they were created. And we see it in the dying and the dead as well, restoring them to life. All this we see because we saw it first within ourselves.**

This is the same thought expressed in Lesson 122, which spoke of our seeing the "changeless in the heart of change." As we go through our day, we do not deny appearances of pain in ourselves and others, nor do we deny what is distressing – fear, loneliness, and death. We see our ego's perceptions, but realize they come from a thought we first saw within ourselves. *Projection makes perception* is still the heart of Jesus' teachings: I look within, choose the ego or the Holy Spirit as my teacher, guilt or forgiveness as my truth, and from that choice a world arises. If guilt is my choice, I see the world Jesus describes here – a place of pain, distress, and death. I will have made it

real because I made the thought of guilt real. At that point, all that is described above must be so: *effect* follows *cause.* If, on the other hand, I choose forgiveness, I undo separation for I have joined with the Love of God, meaning there can be no sin, guilt, or fear. There thus could be no pain, loneliness, or death. Once the *cause* is removed, the *effects* are removed as well.

The final sentence is the key: "All this we see because we saw it first within ourselves." When Jesus says "we see it in the dying and the dead as well, restoring them to life," he is not speaking of physical resurrection, nor encouraging us to go to funeral homes or graveyards, saying words like this and expecting people to rise up. All this has nothing to do with the body because death is only a thought of guilt. Death ends when we choose against the thought *in ourselves:* the ego's guilt.

When your mind walks with Jesus, therefore, you do not see death as real because you know the body is an illusion, a mere figure in a dream. Moreover, you realize the person appearing as that dream figure is one with you in the mind; not only in separation, but in the Atonement. Beyond that, of course, the person is one with you in the Mind of Christ, in which there is no death, loneliness, or pain. There are two places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus instructs us in recognizing which teacher and lessons we have chosen. In the text:

> Whenever you feel fear in any form, – and you *are* fearful if you do not feel a deep content, a certainty of help, a calm assurance Heaven goes with you, – be sure you made an idol, and believe it will betray you. For beneath your hope that it will save you lie the guilt and pain of self-betrayal and uncertainty, so deep and bitter that the dream cannot conceal completely all your sense of doom. Your self-betrayal must result in fear, for fear *is* judgment, leading surely to the frantic search for idols and for death (T-29.IX.9).

And from the workbook, in a lesson we shall examine later:

> How can you tell when you are seeing wrong, or someone else is failing to perceive the lesson he should learn? Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned. And there remains an unforgiveness hiding in the mind that sees the pain through eyes the mind directs (W-pI.193.7).

These passages emphasize that the problems of fear and pain have their cause in self-perception. If you see pain as real in yourself or others, experience fear and a loss of peace, it is because you first made guilt real in your mind. The dead arise and the sick are healed not by a physical intervention, but by a change in you: *Projection makes perception.* If there is only a thought of love in your mind, which Jesus represents, there could no longer be perceptions of pain, suffering, and death. It does not mean your body's eyes do not see them, but you will give them no power to affect you.

To repeat, Jesus is not talking about what our bodies' eyes see, but our *interpretation* of the sensory data. Two brief passages, for example, express perception's interpretative function:

> All your difficulties stem from the fact that you do not recognize yourself, your brother or God. To recognize means to "know again," implying that you knew before. You can see in many ways because perception involves interpretation, and this means that it is not whole or consistent (T-3 .111.2 :1-3).

> There has been much confusion about what perception means, because the word is used both for awareness and for the interpretation of awareness. Yet you cannot be aware without interpretation, for what you perceive *is* your interpretation (T-11.VI.2:5-6).

To summarize, there is no objective data out there to be seen. It is only the *way* we see that is important. Thus our bodies' eyes continue to see what other eyes see; but our minds, joined with Jesus, will no longer give the interpretation that proves the reality of individuality and sin. Our minds see everything here as an ego defense to deny the truth of our shared interests with the world, the steppingstone towards remembering our shared reality in Heaven. Thus are the sick healed and the dead risen from their dreams of separation.

**(6) No miracle can ever be denied to those who know that they are one with God. No thought of theirs but has the power to heal all forms of suffering in anyone, in times gone by and times as yet to come, as easily as in the ones who walk beside them now. Their thoughts are timeless, and apart from distance as apart from time.**

As we just saw, when thoughts of sin, guilt, and fear are projected, they give rise to a world of past, present, and future. The world of time, therefore, is nothing but the expression in form of the ego's unholy trinity. When I join with Jesus and remember I am one with God, these thoughts disappear – the mutually exclusive thoughts of Atonement and sin, oneness and separation, cannot coexist. Thus, if there is no ego thought system, there is no time; likewise, if there is no separation, there is no body; if there is no body, there is no pain – oneness cannot suffer.

This passage expresses the first principle of miracles: no order of difficulty among them (T-1.1.1:1). This is because every problem is the same – the choice for the ego – as is its solution – the choice for Jesus. When I choose the ego, everything my eyes see will be true: pain, suffering, specialness, bodies that live and die – and all are equally illusory. When I choose Jesus, however, I stand outside the dream and, looking with him, gently smile at the silliness of believing anything here can be real. That is how pain disappears and God's smile wipes away all tears. The following passage from the text calls us to witness to the shared innocence of God's Son, instead of the pained bodily picture of sin, guilt, and fear:

> Now in the hands made gentle by His touch, the Holy Spirit lays a picture of a different you. It is a picture of a body still, for what you really are cannot be seen nor pictured. Yet this one has not been used for purpose of attack, and therefore never suffered pain at all. It witnesses to the eternal truth that you cannot be hurt, and points beyond itself to both your innocence and his. Show this unto your brother, who will see that every scar is healed, and every tear is wiped away in laughter and in love. And he will look on his forgiveness there, and with healed eyes will look beyond it to the innocence that he beholds in you. Here is the proof that he has never sinned; that nothing which his madness bid him do was ever done, or ever had effects of any kind. That no reproach he laid upon his heart was ever justified, and no attack can ever touch him with the poisoned and relentless sting of fear (T-27.I.5).

> you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you (T-24.II.4:3-6).

Given the fact of the "power" of specialness, how could our egos resist the temptation to choose its special love over the love of Jesus?

**(6:3-7:1) Await His Word in quiet. There is peace within you to be called upon today, to help make ready your most holy mind to hear the Voice for its Creator speak.**

**Three times today, at times most suitable for silence, give ten minutes set apart from listening to the world, and choose instead a gentle listening to the Word of God.**

We are asked to be aware of how much we listen to the world, and understand this means listening to our projected thought system. That is why we must choose against the ego, which we cannot do if we are not aware of it. Thus our daily vigilance, so crucial to hearing God's Voice. This point needs constant reiteration, as in this statement from the text:

> You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself (T-13.III.1:1-2).

Exercises like today's help lead us through our hatred to the love beyond the world, reflected in our split minds by God's Word, His Voice that speaks in quiet and peace for the Atonement.

**(7:2-4) He speaks from nearer than your heart to you. His Voice is closer than your hand. His Love is everything you are and that He is; the same as you, and you the same as He.**

We are hearing more about the important theme of oneness: our oneness with God, the Holy Spirit, and with each other. Rectheme of oneness: our oneness with

**listen to your Self today, and let Him tell you God has never left His Son, and you have never left your Self.**

In other words, God and His Son are one – no individuality, and no distinction between Them. Indeed, there is no other voice, speaking words of separation, that can come between us and our Self. How can we not find what has never been lost? How can our Father be without His Son?

> He has not left His Thoughts! He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in Their Oneness Both are kept complete. There is no road that leads away from Him. A journey from yourself does not exist. How foolish and insane it is to think that there could be a road with such an aim! ... Nowhere but where He is can you be found (T-31.IV.10:1-6; 11:6).

**(9:1-3) Only be quiet. You will need no rule but this, to let your practicing today lift you above the thinking of the world, and free your vision from the body's eyes. Only be still and listen.**

That is the only rule we need; not just this day, but every day. We need be quiet, which means, once again, becoming aware of the mind's noise in choosing to drown out the still, small Voice that tells us our dreams, thoughts, and feelings are made up – part of a single illusion, the purpose of which is to keep us from remembering our Identity as God's Son:

> This course attempts to teach no more than that the power of decision cannot lie in choosing different forms of what is still the same illusion and the same mistake (T-31.1V.8:3).

Thus we are asked to make the simple choice between the one illusion of separation and the one reflected truth of forgiveness.

**(9:4) You will hear the Word in which the Will of God the Son joins in his Father's Will, at one with it, with no illusions interposed between the wholly indivisible and true.**

To repeat this simple truth: Our reality is oneness, which we remember by looking at how we keep ourselves separate from each other. Such vigilance constitutes the daily practice of *A Course in Miracles* – becoming aware of the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways we put barriers between ourselves and others, either through special love or special hate: judging, holding onto grievances, building alliances, and being sure we are right. We recognize the importance of shifting from the world's perception of separate interests – *my gain is your loss* – to the Holy Spirit's perception of shared interests. Thus we learn it cannot be that we and our brothers are different – we are one in loss or gain, depending on our decision:

> All choices in the world depend on this; you choose between your brother and yourself, and you will gain as much as he will lose, and what you lose is what is given him. How utterly opposed to truth is this, when all the lesson's purpose is

to teach that what your brother loses *you* have lost, and what he gains is what is given *you* (T-31.IV.8:4-5).

Thus we choose today for *all* God's Sons, recognizing their inherent sameness.

**(9:5) As every hour passes by today, be still a moment and remind yourself you have a special purpose for this day; in quiet to receive the Word of God.**

You should do this not only every hour, but as often as you can, especially when aware of your attempts to say: "My brother and I are *not* one." It is your special purpose today to remember the ego's, and to choose against it and for the Voice that speaks the quiet Word of forgiveness and truth. This shift from the ego's false forgiveness to the Holy Spirit's true forgiveness is the theme of the next lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 126**
**All that I give is given to myself.**

This is another important lesson, one of the few places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus talks about *forgiveness-to-destroy,* the term from *The Song of Prayer* (S-2.II). There are three places where he does this: here in Lesson 126; again in Lesson 134, "Let me perceive forgiveness as it is"; and in "The Justification for Forgiveness" in Chapter 30 (T-30.VI). In these three places Jesus discusses – without using the terms – *false forgiveness and forgiveness-to-destroy,* which the ego uses to trap us still further in its own specialness.

The key theme of this current lesson is twofold: giving is of the mind, and the mind of God's Son is one. That is why giving and receiving are the same. *All that I give is given to myself* because there is no one outside me. My brother and I are one. If I give love to him, I am extending it to myself; if I attack him, I am doing it to myself as well. Giving and receiving occur only in the mind, and, since the mind of God's Son is one, they are one. *Forgiveness-to-destroy* reflects the ego's belief that we are not one, but two, and so its thought system of separation is reinforced, not to mention its justification for attack.

**(1:1) Today's idea, completely alien to the ego and the thinking of the world, is crucial to the thought reversal that this course will bring about.**

The reversal of the ego's thought system of separation undoes, through forgiveness, the belief in separate interests, which reminds us that our identity is one. In other words, as the text reminds us: "... you can interact but with yourself' (T-31.V.15:5). What I give to you I give to myself; guilt or love, hate or forgiveness. That is why our interests are shared: they are one.

**(1:2-3) If you believed this statement, there would be no problem in complete forgiveness, certainty of goal, and sure direction. You would understand the means by which salvation comes to you, and would not hesitate to use it now.**

We do not believe it because we fear its implication that we no longer exist as separate individuals. The separation began with the thought that God and I are separate. In fact we are so separate and different that I exist and He does not, the belief that is the ego's origin. We have already seen the fourth law of chaos: "I have what I have taken." God does not have life and I do; moreover, I sit on His throne of creation. That is how we differ. The principle of *one or the other* remains the bedrock of the ego's thought system of separation, hate, and murder.

Therefore, to question this thought means to question our own existence, which is why we choose not to. Yet despite being unaware of our unity with God, we still can learn of Him through our relationships. By accepting the *means* of forgiveness, we acknowledge we truly desire its *end:* salvation and the Love of God.

**(2:1) Let us consider what you do believe, in place of this idea.**

We turn to *forgiveness-to-destroy,* a concept based on the idea that you and I are separated, in purpose and in self. Our interests are different: You want what I want, and I want what you want. Thus we meet on the battleground of the special relationship.

**(2:2-3) It seems to you that other people are apart from you, and able to behave in ways which have no bearing on your thoughts, nor yours on theirs. Therefore, your attitudes have no effect on them, and their appeals for help are not in any way related to your own.**

That is because we are separate. Our bodies keep us that way, and if we knew we were minds, we would believe they were separate, too. The ego depends for its protection on our projecting sin, making up figures perceived as sinful and different from us: This person is the sinner; I the sinless one. I thus believe you have an effect on my body, but my thoughts about you remain my own, impervious to change.

Therefore, if you are in trouble, my ego is exultant, because this means you are punished and I am off the hook. In no way do I see myself related to your situation. I may choose to help you, but that is my decision, which has no effect on me for *I* am helping *you,* the one in difficulty. This is the culmination of the ego's strategy: you have the problem instead of me; you are the sinner God will destroy, not I, the sinless one. It is mandatory that I keep this perception, otherwise I will be horrified by the enormity of my sin and terrified of God's punishment. It is an intrinsic part of the ego's plan for our (read: *its)* salvation that we practice forgiveness-to-destroy, its weapon *par excellence* to prove that differences are reality, and sameness the illusion:

> Forgiveness-to-destroy has many forms, being a weapon of the world of form. Not all of them are obvious, and some are carefully concealed beneath what seems like charity. Yet all the forms that it may seem to take have but this single goal; their purpose is to separate and make what God created equal, different (S-2.II.1:1-3).

**(2:4) You further think that they can sin without affecting your perception of yourself, while you can judge their sin, and yet remain apart from condemnation and at peace.**

This is where the ego always leads us: Since you have the problem, I am free. Furthermore, my "innocence" gives me the right to judge your sin, because I no longer remember its origin. I am aware only of what I perceive outside me – what I made up – forgetting I am the dream's dreamer. Crucial here is the ego's principle, *ideas leave their source:* I am able, my ego tells me, to project my guilty thoughts of sin onto you, and thus escape punishment. Since we are not connected, the ego continues, it matters not what is in you, or even that I put the sin there. You do not contaminate me, nor have I contaminated you. Indeed, your sin proves my innocence, as in this passage from the text that begins with a line familiar to all Course students:

> Beware of the temptation to perceive yourself unfairly treated. In this view, you seek to find an innocence that is not Theirs [God's and Christ's] but yours alone, and at the cost of someone else's guilt. Can innocence be purchased by the giving of your guilt to someone else? And *is* it innocence that your attack on him attempts to get? Is it not retribution for your own attack upon the Son of God you seek? Is it not safer to believe that you are innocent of this, and victimized despite your innocence? Whatever way the game of guilt is played, there must be loss. Someone must lose his innocence that someone else can take it from him, making it his own (T-26.X.4).

This principle of *one or the other* – your guilt or mine—characterizes the special relationship, the ego's home of guilt and its barricade against love.

**(3) When you "forgive" a sin, there is no gain to you directly. You give charity to one unworthy, merely to point out that you are better, on a higher plane than he whom you forgive. He has not earned your charitable tolerance, which you bestow on one unworthy of the gift, because his sins have lowered him beneath a true equality with you. He has no claim on your forgiveness. It holds out a gift to him, but hardly to yourself.**

This is self-explanatory. We need to be vigilant throughout the day for how we continually act out this patent attack. Jesus' descriptions of this dynamic – whether here, *The Song of Prayer,* or elsewhere – unveils the destructive nature of this "forgiveness." We are unaware, however, of how subtly we exhibit this all the time. We judge someone else, for example, and let the accusation go under the guise of forgiveness, all of which clearly puts us in the superior position. This is the ego's distortion of forgiveness, in which it appears as if you are the gainer of the forgiveness I have so graciously bestowed upon you. Thus have you received my "innocence," even if you do not deserve it. *The Song of Prayer* cogently describes the arrogance and hatred that masquerades as kind forgiveness:

> In this group, first, there are the forms in which a "better" person deigns to stoop to save a "baser" one from what he truly is. Forgiveness here rests on an attitude of gracious lordliness so far from love that arrogance could never be dislodged. Who can forgive and yet despise? And who can tell another he is steeped in sin, and yet perceive him as the Son of God? Who makes a slave to teach what freedom is? There is no union here, but only grief. This is not really mercy. This is death (S-2.II.2).

**(4:1) Thus is forgiveness basically unsound; a charitable whim, benevolent yet undeserved, a gift bestowed at times, at other times withheld.**

In other words, if I think you deserve it, I will forgive you; otherwise I won't. But *I* am the one who determines it, a decision based on satisfying my own interests.

**(4:2) Unmerited, withholding it is just, nor is it fair that you should suffer when it is withheld.**

You are the one who should suffer when I withhold forgiveness, not I, because you do not deserve it, and that justifies my grievances, not to mention convincing others how right I am. The great projection of this dynamic is the biblical Deity, Who alone judges who should receive Heaven's Love, and from whom it should be withheld.

**(4:3) The sin that you forgive is not your own.**

Because the ego's bottom line is to make sin real, seen anywhere but in ourselves, we keep our individual existence; thus another's sin is not only responsible for it, but will pay its price.

**(4:4-5) Someone apart from you committed it. And if you then are gracious unto him by giving him what he does not deserve, the gift is no more yours than was his sin.**

To the ego, I do not have to receive the gift of forgiveness because I am not sinful; *you* are, and so I forgive you. Underlying my forgiveness is the perception that you and I are different, justifying this practice. Consider where we would be without differences. After all, it was the union of a sperm and an egg – two different cells – that gave us "life." Again, our separation is proven by the fact that your sin is not my own, and the forgiveness you have been so generously given is not my own either, since I have no need of it. However, by practicing forgiveness-to-destroy, we ensure that the Holy Spirit's forgiveness is denied us as well.

**(5:1) If this be true, forgiveness has no grounds on which to rest dependably and sure.**

If this version of forgiveness were true, it would rest upon a whim, what I think should be done. Again, the clearest example of the ego thought system in action is the way God has been perceived throughout the centuries, and certainly His portrayal in the Bible. God's forgiveness and Love can certainly be characterized, to be kind, as whimsical; sometimes He mercifully forgives sins, while at other times He destroys the people that have committed them. Jesus is no different. A not so well-known example of God's wrath in action comes in the book of Genesis (38:1-10), where God is displeased - no reason given – with Er, the first-born son of Judah:

> But Er ... offended Yahweh [God] greatly, so Yahweh brought about his death.

This divine crime is then repeated with Judah's next born, Onan, who was asked by his father to sleep with his widowed sister-in-law so as to produce a child for his slain brother. However, knowing the child would not be his, Onan practiced *coitus interruptus,* and:

> What he did was offensive to Yahweh, so he brought about his death also.

You never know which side of the bed God has awakened from that day until it is too late. Your very existence depends on His mood, or that of His Son. Divine love as practiced in the Bible is hardly consistent, unlike the love Jesus presents to us in his course.

**(5:2-3) It is an eccentricity, in which you sometimes choose to give indulgently an undeserved reprieve. Yet it remains your right to let the sinner not escape the justified repayment for his sin.**

Within the Catholic Church, the priest has the power to forgive or not forgive sins, unless the sin is a mortal one, which can never be forgiven. Again, it is the ego's changeable God Who is the source of this non-inclusive forgiveness, reserving unto Himself the right to judge, whether fairly or unfairly. Needless to say, this false God has

been made in our own image and likeness, for He mimics the practice *of forgiveness-to-destroy.*

**(5:4-5) Think you the Lord of Heaven would allow the world's salvation to depend on this? Would not His care for you be small indeed, if your salvation rested on a whim?**

The perfect Oneness of the true God's Love is what forgives, because it expresses the truth that nothing happened. Therefore, when I forgive you, I realize what I held against you was a projection of my own sin, and both your sin and mine were defenses against our inherent unity. Adumbrating a later lesson, we read:

> Your function here on earth is only to forgive him, that you may accept him back as your Identity. He is as God created him. And you are what he is. Forgive him now his sins, and you will see that you are one with him (W-pI.192.10:6-8).

**(6:1-2) You do not understand forgiveness. As you see it, it is but a check upon overt attack, without requiring correction in your mind.**

I attempt to stop you from the overt attack of your sinful actions. Nothing has to change in me because I am not the problem; you are. Yet, since *ideas leave not their source,* my mind's covert attack goes unnoticed, protected by projection, the unforgiving thought described in this passage from Part II of the workbook:

> An unforgiving thought is one which makes a judgment that it will not raise to doubt, although it is not true. The mind is closed, and will not be released. The thought protects projection, tightening its chains, so that distortions are more veiled and more obscure; less easily accessible to doubt, and further kept from reason (W-pII.1.2:1-4).

**(6:3-6) It cannot give you peace as you perceive it. It is not a means for your release from what you see in someone other than yourself. It has no power to restore your unity with him to your awareness. It is not what God intended it to be for you.**

"What God intended it to be for you" – through the Holy Spirit – is that forgiveness of another is the forgiveness of myself. In forgiveness-to-destroy, however, the perception is always one of separation. Forgiveness cannot give me peace because I have rejected the answer in someone else, and thus my inner disquiet remains, continually making its presence felt in the shadows of conflict found in my everyday life. Thus is our function of forgiveness denied, a function described in this way in the manual for teachers:

> And this is the function of God's teachers; to see no will as separate from their own, nor theirs as separate from God's (M-5.III.3:9).

Jesus proceeds now to true forgiveness, the means for fulfilling our function:

**(7:1) Not having given Him the gift He asks of you, you cannot recognize His**

**gifts, and think He has not given them to you.**

The way I remember God's gift of His Love – unchanged despite my insane dreams – is realizing what I am seeing in you is made up. I do not know I made it up until I first recognize my projected perceptions. I must therefore become aware of my judgments, the sins of which I accuse you. Jesus helps me by showing me that what I perceive in you is what I secretly perceive in me, which I can now change. Thus we are instructed in the text:

> If you perceive offense in a brother pluck the offense from your mind, for you are offended by Christ and are deceived in Him.... If what you perceive offends you, you are offended in yourself and are condemning God's Son whom God condemneth not. Let the Holy Spirit remove all offenses of God's Son against himself and perceive no one but through His guidance, for He would save you from all condemnation (T-11.VIII.12:1,3-4).

Once deceived by God's Son – we and our brothers – the dynamic of projection causes us to believe we have been denied God's gifts, as the following familiar passage explains:

> Christ is at God's altar, waiting to welcome His Son. But come wholly without condemnation, for otherwise you will believe that the door is barred and you cannot enter (T-11.IV.6:1-2).

The way to know it was *we* who barred the door is to recognize our own judgment and attack.

**(7:2-3) Yet would He ask you for a gift unless it was for you? Could He be satisfied with empty gestures, and evaluate such petty gifts as worthy of His Son?**

These "empty gestures" and "petty gifts" are the world's forms of forgiveness: e.g., you have done a terrible thing, but this time I will let you off the hook. They are based on the idea that the separate sins I see in you are real and demonstrable. Yet God could not be satisfied with our ego ploys of forgiveness because he does not know of separation, and therefore could not possibly know anything except the perfect Oneness of His Son.

**(7:4-6) Salvation is a better gift than this. And true forgiveness, as the means by which it is attained, must heal the mind that gives, for giving is receiving. What remains as unreceived has not been given, but what has been given must have been received.**

In other words, what is extended through me to you, heals me, because the *you* I think is outside is a split-off part of myself. By changing my perception of you, I change my perception of me. Moreover, whatever I give to you I give myself – the gift of salvation.

**(8:1-2) Today we try to understand the truth that giver and receiver are the same. You will need help to make this meaningful, because it is so alien to the**

**thoughts to which you are accustomed.**

Jesus lets us know this is difficult. It would be wonderful if we could accept the truth of this statement, but we cannot. The Oneness of God's Son is too alien to our separated self to be meaningful, for if the statement "giver and receiver are the same" were true, everything I believe about myself would be false. It always comes down to this: If by taking Jesus' hand I forgive, then all my self-concepts are wrong. This naturally includes the thought of separation, the foundation for believing that giving and receiving are different.

**(8:3-4) But the Help you need is there. Give Him your faith today, and ask Him that He share your practicing in truth today.**

The key point is asking the Holy Spirit for help. We will not do so unless we think we have a problem. Therefore, Jesus' burden as our teacher lies in teaching that whenever we perceive external problems that call for solution, we need recognize it is our problem. Allowing our peace and love to be affected by anything external is a projection of our own sin, the point behind this passage on reactions to the magic thoughts of others:

> How to deal with magic thus becomes a major lesson for the teacher of God to master. His first responsibility in this is not to attack it. If a magic thought arouses anger in any form, God's teacher can be sure that he is strengthening his own belief in sin and has condemned himself. He can be sure as well that he has asked for depression, pain, fear and disaster to come to him (M-17.1:4-7).

Magic thoughts – ego reactions on any level – happily serve as the mirror shining back to us our concealed belief in magic and sin: the power of the ego to supply our need for love and sustenance. This awareness of sin motivates us to have faith in the Holy Spirit's help: *for ourselves.* Since perception is interpretation, it is not what my eyes perceive that is the problem, but my interpretation of what I see – some version of believing there is a problem that is serious enough to take God's peace from me. Again, I need help to learn that my problem is within, where my Help is as well.

**(8:5) And if you only catch a tiny glimpse of the release that lies in the idea we practice for today, this is a day of glory for the world.**

Jesus is not saying we have to know this for twenty-four hours, every day. He is content if we have an instant of realizing the truth of his teaching and the falsity of our own; truly an instant of glory for us and the world within each of us.

**(9) Give fifteen minutes twice today to the attempt to understand today's idea. It is the thought by which forgiveness takes its proper place in your priorities. It is the thought that will release your mind from every bar to what forgiveness means, and let you realize its worth to you.**

As we go through the day, our priority should not be to accomplish the things we "need" to do, but to learn forgiveness. This means learning that separation from our brother is never justified. However, we do not yet have to accept the oneness of our

shared reality, but only that our perceptions of separation have been wrong, especially when they entailed giving power to something outside us to rob us of our peace.

To repeat this important point, if you do not put these principles into daily practice, there is no hope of learning this course. You need to recognize that regardless of what is going on during your day, the only important thing is letting Jesus teach you the proper way of perceiving your relationships. You thus gently monitor your mind to see how quickly you forget about him and elevate specialness to be your ultimate value.

**(10:1) In silence, close your eyes upon the world that does not understand forgiveness, and seek sanctuary in the quiet place where thoughts are changed and false beliefs laid by.**

This quiet sanctuary is the decision maker who has chosen the Holy Spirit over the ego. We bring the illusions of our misperceptions to His truth, which reminds us we are wrong. This happy and grateful state converts our minds to a holy altar – the silent space where Heaven's Love washes clean our fevered dreams of hate and pain. In the lovely words of the second stanza of Helen's poem, "Conversion":

> There is a silence into which God's Word
> Has poured an ancient meaning, and is still.
> Nothing remains unsaid nor unreceived.
> Strange dreams are washed in golden water from
> The blazing silence of the peace of God,
> And what was evil suddenly becomes
> The gift of Christ to those who call on Him.
> His final gift is nothing but a dream,
> Yet in that single dream is dreaming done.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 61)

**(10:2-3) Repeat today's idea, and ask for help in understanding what it really means. Be willing to be taught.**

This last sentence is crucial. You have to be "willing to be taught," which cannot happen until you first accept you have taught yourself incorrectly. Recall again these two statements from the text, placed together:

> Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1).

You have to be willing to say you are wrong. Whenever tempted to feel strongly about anything – good or bad – you know you have chosen the ego. The strength of God's peace lies in its quietness – calm, even, and unchanging. Your reactions of judgment, anger, anticipation, anxiety, or concern show you have dropped Jesus' hand and taken the ego's instead. The moment you are emphatic about something, you are no longer quiet. Again, peace is quiet and still, and does not ebb or flow. That is why Jesus borrows the biblical "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) to refer to the Holy Spirit's Voice, and states:

> The memory of God comes to the quiet mind (T-2311:1).

In that quietness we find the strength to be taught by the Voice that speaks for Quietness Itself.

**(10:4) Be glad to hear the Voice of truth and healing speak to you, and you will understand the words He speaks, and recognize He speaks your words to you.**

This idea was expressed at the end of the last lesson as well: the Holy Spirit's Voice is our voice, His words our words. It is not only that you and I are not separate, but that the Holy Spirit, Jesus and I are not separate either. We are indeed separate within the dream, where we still have need of a Teacher, Whose words we let substitute for our own. Yet joined with Them, we realize there is one Voice and Word behind all words.

**(11) As often as you can, remind yourself you have a goal today; an aim which makes this day of special value to yourself and all your brothers. Do not let your mind forget this goal for long, but tell yourself:**

***All that I give is given to myself The Help I need to learn that this is true is with me now And I will trust in Him.***

**Then spend a quiet moment, opening your mind to His correction and His Love. And what you hear of Him you will believe, for what He gives will be received by you.**

We close the lesson with still one more exhortation from Jesus to keep the goal of forgiveness uppermost in our minds. As we go through our day – tempted to see separate instead of shared interests, to believe that giving entails sacrifice and loss: silent reminders of our sin of stealing – we seek to remember Who goes with us, and Whose Love helps us to choose again. As soon as we remember, we go within to quiet our turbulent minds and silence our hate-filled thoughts. The Holy Spirit's Presence is the beacon, Whose forgiving light shines away all thoughts of separation and guilt. We now happily receive what He has given, as the gift shines throughout our minds to bestow the same gift upon the world. In giving we know we have received, and what we have received we now happily let be given through us. How lovely indeed is salvation!

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 127**
**There is no love but God's.**

Here we see the contrast between what is positive (love) with what is negative (special love).

**(1:1-2) Perhaps you think that different kinds of love are possible. Perhaps you think there is a kind of love for this, a kind for that; a way of loving one, another way of loving still another.**

The subject is special love. For example, love between spouses or lovers is different from love between parent and child, or between friends; love for an animal or plant is not the same as love for a human being; and love for Jesus and God differs from all other forms. The many kinds of love prove the ego is right: there is indeed a hierarchy of illusions, as the first law of chaos proclaims (T-23.11.2:3). Moreover, among the different kinds of love, some are deemed superior to others. Thus we say the Love of God exists on a higher plane than sexual or romantic love; or that nothing is purer than a mother's love, superseding love for a pet, plant, or a cause.

**(1:3-7) Love is one. It has no separate parts and no degrees; no kinds nor levels, no divergencies and no distinctions. It is like itself, unchanged throughout. It never alters with a person or a circumstance. It is the Heart of God, and also of His Son.**

Love in the dream is expressed differently for, as we have just seen, it has many different forms. Yet if our love here truly reflects Heaven's, it would be unchanging, unaffected by things the beloved does or does not do. However, when you love sometimes and not others, regardless of how holy your love appears to be, it must come from your ego and not your right mind. The reflection of true love reflects the Oneness and changelessness of God.

These statements are not meant to make us feel guilty, however, when we look on our love relationships and realize how variable and changeable they are. We cannot change our mistakes unless we first realize we have made them. Therefore it is helpful to see how unloving we are throughout the day: we love people when they are kind to us; if not, our love changes. We thus need to see our changeable feelings, so we could ask Jesus to help us realize we are reflecting our belief in sin, the origin of all change. Thus we see in another what we choose not to recognize in ourselves: the sinful separation from God and His Heart of Love.

The sin of which we accuse ourselves is having loved God once, but then deciding His Love was not enough; we wanted our specialness and individuality instead. We thus accused ourselves of a changing love, and in characteristic ego fashion, projected the sin, accusing others of being unfaithful and inconstant in their love. Indeed, we want people to be unfaithful and wavering, because that allows us to put on the ego's face of innocence.

**(2:1-3) Love's meaning is obscure to anyone who thinks that love can change. He does not see that changing love must be impossible. And thus he thinks that he can love at times, and hate at other times.**

We always try to justify our hate: "I was not always like this; you made me this

way." "I was born innocent and good, but my parents' mistreatment made me hate everyone. It was not my fault." We identify something that justifies our hate, allowing ourselves to avoid responsibility for our changeable love. Thus, these words spoken of the face of innocence:

> It believes that it is good within an evil world.
>
> This aspect can grow angry, for the world is wicked and unable to provide the love and shelter innocence deserves. And so this face is often wet with tears at the injustices the world accords to those who would be generous and good. This aspect never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse.
>
> The face of innocence the concept of the self so proudly wears can tolerate attack in self- defense, for is it not a well-known fact the world deals harshly with defenseless innocence? (T-31.V.2 :9-4: 1)

In this way our hate masquerades as love, and our self-hatred remains protected by the shield of defenseless innocence.

**(2:4) He also thinks that love can be bestowed on one, and yet remain itself although it is withheld from others.**

In this world it is impossible to love everyone the same way in *form.* Yet Jesus' focus is never on behavior, but only on *content* – the thought that withholds love from certain people or groups, or from people at certain times. In this incisive passage from the text, Jesus instructs us on the all-inclusive nature of love, the correction for the ego's thought of exclusion:

> You cannot love parts of reality and understand what love means. If you would love unlike to God, Who knows no special love, how can you understand it? To believe that *special* relationships, with *special* love, can offer you salvation is the belief that separation is salvation. For it is the complete equality of the Atonement in which salvation lies. How can you decide that special aspects of the Sonship can give you more than others? (T-15.V.3:1-5)

In the instructions for the early workbook lessons, Jesus said our eyes cannot light on everything in the room, nor can we think about everything. However, he was clear about our specifically not excluding anything, for the idea of non-exclusion is crucial to his curriculum. The statements we find here echo Jesus' earlier instructions. The *forms* are different, but their *content* is the same: becoming aware of how tempted we are to exclude. It is not so important if you exclude a painting as your eyes gaze around a room, but it does become important if you exclude certain people from your love.

**(2:5) To believe these things of love is not to understand it.**

Love is *content.* In the text sections on special relationships, Jesus is emphatic that specialness is the triumph *of form* at the expense of content. Here is one representative passage:

> Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is content, and not form of any kind. The special relationship is a ritual of form, aimed at raising the form to take the place of God at the expense of content. There is no meaning in the form, and there will never be (T-16.V.12:1-3).

Since we are almost exclusively identified with form – our bodies – it is inconceivable to us that the form of love is irrelevant. Thus we do not understand its all-inclusive nature, and believe we can truly love some parts of the Sonship, but not all.

**(2:6) If it** [love] **could make such distinctions, it would have to judge between the righteous and the sinner, and perceive the Son of God in separate parts.**

This exemplifies the decisive difference between the God and Jesus of the Bible, and *A Course in Miracles.* It is clear throughout the Old and New Testaments that the righteous are saved and sinners doomed to hell. Regardless of which book or epistle one reads, the message is the same: the Son of God is not one, but exists in separate parts; some are good and will be rewarded by God, and others evil and will be condemned by Him. The Son continues the Father's insanity, as seen if one is a scribe or pharisee. These unfortunate groups are not included in the "good" part of the Sonship, and in John's gospel, neither are Jews, as well as other undesirables. It would be truly incredible to think this specialness is characteristic of God's Love, except that we continually demonstrate its hate throughout our lives.

**(3:1-2) Love cannot judge. As it is one itself, it looks on all as one.**

Thus God does not know about the separated Son who exists in fragments. The Self He knows is Christ, at one with Himself. That is why love cannot judge, for only in separation is judgment possible. Indeed, judgment is one of the most important themes in *A Course in Miracles,* the giving up of which is the essence of the Atonement, the curriculum Jesus would have us learn:

> As the teacher of God advances in his training, he learns one lesson with increasing thoroughness. He does not make his own decisions; he asks his Teacher for His answer, and it is this he follows as his guide for action. This becomes easier and easier, as the teacher of God learns to give up his own judgment. The giving up of judgment, the obvious prerequisite for hearing God's Voice, is usually a fairly slow process, not because it is difficult, but because it is apt to be perceived as personally insulting. The world's training is directed toward achieving a goal in direct opposition to that of our curriculum. The world trains for reliance on one's judgment as the criterion for maturity and strength. Our curriculum trains for the relinquishment of judgment as the necessary condition of salvation (M-9.2).

**(3:3) Its meaning lies in oneness.**

When I love you in part it cannot be love, the meaning of which lies in its perfect unity, excluding no one and nothing. The ego's special love therefore attacks Heaven's

Oneness, making it the home of guilt:

> We have said that to limit love to part of the Sonship is to bring guilt into your relationships, and thus make them unreal. If you seek to separate out certain aspects of the totality and look to them to meet your imagined needs, you are attempting to use separation to save you. How, then, could guilt not enter? For separation is the source of guilt, and to appeal to it for salvation is to believe you are alone. To be alone *is* to be guilty. For to experience yourself as alone is to deny the Oneness of the Father and His Son, and thus to attack reality (T-15.V.2:2-7).

As we have observed earlier, the oneness of love – "the Oneness of the Father and His Son" – cannot be known here. Yet, we can learn to reflect Heaven's Oneness by recognizing the interests we share together. We dedicate our days to learning this all-inclusive lesson.

**(3:4) And it must elude the mind that thinks of it as partial or in part.**

That is another of those happy puns, to be revisited in a later lesson. To be partial means to make a judgment; e.g., we are partial to one group over another. When we demonstrate such partiality, we are seeing the Sonship in parts. There is a good and a bad part, and our partiality is to one or the other. Since love cannot be known in *part,* within this *partial* thought system love will never be known.

**(3:5-8) There is no love but God's, and all of love is His. There is no other principle that rules where love is not. Love is a law without an opposite. Its wholeness is the power holding everything as one, the link between the Father and the Son which holds Them both forever as the same.**

The principle we wish to uphold within our dream – the place where love is not – is of perfect oneness. This is reflected in our learning to forgive. It is impossible to experience oneness in the world, but it is remembered through realizing that we and our brothers are not separated, but share the same purpose and goal. Thus will we become the reflection of love's holiness, as the following passage so beautiful reminds us:

> In this world you can become a spotless mirror, in which the Holiness of your Creator shines forth from you to all around you. You can reflect Heaven here.... You need but leave the mirror clean and clear of all the images of hidden darkness you have drawn upon it. God will shine upon it of Himself. Only the clear reflection of Himself can be perceived upon it.... Clean but the mirror, and the message that shines forth from what the mirror holds out for everyone to see, no one can fail to understand (T-14.IX.5 : 1-2,5-7; 6:5).

These exercises are therefore designed to help us clean the mirror that is our mind, that it might sinlessly reflect Heaven's loving oneness for all the Sonship to remember. Thus do we come at last to the healing place of Atonement, where we cease to be love's reflection, but have become Love Itself:

> There [in Heaven], holiness is not a reflection, but rather the actual

condition of what was but reflected to them here. God is no image, and His creations, as part of Him, hold Him in them in truth. They do not merely reflect truth, for they *are* truth (T-14.IX.8:5-7).

**(4) No course whose purpose is to teach you to remember what you really are could fail to emphasize that there can never be a difference in what you really are and what love is. Love's meaning is your own, and shared by God Himself. For what you are is what He is. There is no love but His, and what He is, is everything there is. There is no limit placed upon Himself, and so are you unlimited as well.**

This means that anything that seems outside love and oneness cannot exist, because it is not of God. That is another way of understanding why God not only could not have created this world, but knows nothing about it:

> The ego's ceaseless attempts to gain the spirit's acknowledgment and thus establish its own existence are useless. Spirit in its knowledge is unaware of the ego (T-4.II.8:5-6).

The world is outside God's Mind, and thus has no reality. Our reality as God's Son, however, cannot be outside His Mind, for we are part of unlimited love. Indeed, we *are* love, the meaning of which is the limitless oneness that unites all creation with its Creator.

**(5) No law the world obeys can help you grasp love's meaning. What the world believes was made to hide love's meaning and to keep it dark and secret. There is not one principle the world upholds but violates the truth of what love is, and what you are as well.**

These are strong statements, and their truth lies in the fact that every worldly law, and all the world teaches relates to the seeming reality of the separation. We may quibble about interpretations of what happens in this world, but no one here really doubts its reality. Everything the world teaches is false. Even quantum physics ultimately ends up in the same ego trap, at least from the perspective of *A Course in Miracles.* It says the material world is an illusion, yet still makes real the thought underlying the universe. This course teaches that thought is separation, and therefore illusory as well. Always keep in mind the non-dualism that is the backbone of *A Course in Miracles.* There is the truth of perfect and absolute oneness, *and nothing else.* The content of this truth is succinctly expressed at the text's beginning:

> This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:
>
> *Nothing real can be threatened.*
> *Nothing unreal exists.*
>
> Herein lies the peace of God (T-in.2; italics and bold omitted, but emphasis retained for 2:2-3).

However, *A Course in Miracles* does more than proclaim the unreality of the world. It supplies the motivation behind its making: "to hide love's meaning, and to keep

it dark and secret." The following passage from the text, already cited, elaborates on the ego's purpose for its guilt:

> The circle of fear lies just below the level the body sees, and seems to be the whole foundation on which the world is based. Here are all the illusions, all the twisted thoughts, all the insane attacks, the fury, the vengeance and betrayal that were made to keep the guilt in place, so that the world could rise from it and keep it hidden. Its shadow rises to the surface, enough to hold its most external manifestations in darkness, and to bring despair and loneliness to it and keep it joyless. Yet its intensity is veiled by its heavy coverings, and kept apart from what was made to keep it hidden (T-18.1X.4:1-4).

How could one have faith in a world whose purpose is to protect guilt and attack God? (W-pII.3.2:1) How could one believe its lies and be taken in by its deceptions? These are the questions Jesus is asking us to consider.

**(6:1-2) Seek not within the world to find your Self. Love is not found in darkness and in death.**

Jesus tells us again this world is a place of darkness and death; hardly a place of light, life, love, or hope. It cannot *not* be so, since the world is the shadow of a thought of darkness and death. We exist because we believed we destroyed light, life, and love. This thought of destruction underlies the world, which continually reflects its darkness back to us. Jesus is therefore telling us not to look within the world or body for help, for we will never find it there. Remember that we specifically made the body's shadowy world to keep the light of love hidden in the ego's veils of sin and guilt. How, then, could it make sense to seek for love in the very place made to conceal it. You may recall our previous discussions of the important section near the end of the text, "Seek Not Outside Yourself" (T-29.VII), which expresses this key theme in *A Course in Miracles: seeking* the truth of our Self only where we can *find* it – in our minds.

**(6:3) Yet it is perfectly apparent to the eyes that see and ears that hear love's Voice.**

When we ask Jesus for help and use his eyes to look at the world, we perceive correctly and remember love. We have learned that the world of forgiveness, being "the outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5), reflects the love in our minds, spoken to us through the Voice of Atonement and peace.

**(6:4-5) Today we practice making free your mind of all the laws you think you must obey; of all the limits under which you live, and all the changes that you think are part of human destiny. Today we take the largest single step this course requests in your advance towards its established goal.**

If we are to remember who we are as God's Son, child of His love, we must free our minds of the laws we think are true. This means we must be aware of them, questioning every value we hold (T-24.in.2:1). This includes the "positive" changes we think have gone on, are going on, or will go on in the world as "part of human destiny." These ultimately have to do with nothing, because they have to do with separation. Love

does not change, but our belief that love has changed *can* change. Therefore, we abandon our thought system of guilt, with its concomitant laws of attack, specialness, and death, shifting from their limiting laws to the limitless law of forgiveness, the dream's reflection of Heaven's law of love.

In reviewing this paragraph, and the lesson as well, keep in mind that Jesus is not concerned with *external* laws, for these but reflect the ego's *internal* law of separation. This latter is Jesus' concern, for it comes from the mind's mistaken choice. The focus of his course is always on changing the *content* (the mind), not the *form* (the body).

**(7) If you achieve the faintest glimmering of what love means today, you have advanced in distance without measure and in time beyond the count of years to your release. Let us together, then, be glad to give some time to God today, and understand there is no better use for time than this.**

Jesus is telling us that if we have only one instant, that is enough, for it saves us thousands of years. This is a point we have discussed before, as it is an idea to which Jesus repeatedly returns. However, it is an idea that makes no sense to us who are creatures of time and space, until we join with him in the holy instant. Everything then looks different, because our experience is no longer mediated through temporal and spatial dimensions. Indeed, the Holy Spirit's use of time is to make it meaningless, leaving love's eternal meaning to take its place.

**(8:1-2) For fifteen minutes twice today escape from every law in which you now believe. Open your mind and rest.**

This implies our minds have been closed, which we must accept before we ask Jesus to help us open them. In the manual, Jesus explains that it is judgment that closes our minds to the truth, and so they open as we release our judgments of others and ourselves. Only then can we find the peace and rest he promises us:

> Open-mindedness comes with lack of judgment. As judgment shuts the mind against God's Teacher, so open-mindedness invites Him to come in. As condemnation judges the Son of God as evil, so open-mindedness permits him to be judged by the Voice for God on His behalf. As the projection of guilt upon him would send him to hell, so open-mindedness lets Christ's image be extended to him. Only the open-minded can be at peace, for they alone see reason for it (M-4.X.1:2-6).

Fifteen minutes, twice a day, is certainly worth the peace Jesus offers.

**(8:3-4) The world that seems to hold you prisoner can be escaped by anyone who does not hold it dear. Withdraw all value you have placed upon its meager offerings and senseless gifts, and let the gift of God replace them all.**

In the next three lessons Jesus discusses the world and our investment in it. It is not the world, body, or their laws that hold us prisoner, but our identification with them, which preserves our mind's identification with the ego. Thus it is not our identification with the separated *body* that is the problem, but with the separated *mind.* We shall discuss this in more detail in the lessons to come.

**(9:1-3) Call to your Father, certain that His Voice will answer. He Himself has promised this. And He Himself will place a spark of truth within your mind wherever you give up a false belief, a dark illusion of your own reality and what love means.**

The spark of truth that is the Holy Spirit's Presence awaits our giving up the covering to that truth. We must let our false beliefs go, which we cannot do until we first know we have them. Thus we return to the ongoing need to monitor our minds throughout the day for all dark thoughts of specialness and judgment – the many ways of withholding kindness from others and ourselves. Looked at with the Holy Spirit, these dark thoughts disappear into the light of forgiveness, reflecting the greater truth of Atonement in which is found the memory of our Self.

**(9:4-6) He will shine through your idle thoughts today, and help you understand the truth of love. In loving gentleness He will abide with you, as you allow His Voice to teach love's meaning to your clean and open mind. And He will bless the lesson with His Love.**

Again, this means our minds have been cluttered up with idle thoughts and closed to the truth. Since we are the clutterers of our minds, we are the ones who must open them. Yet we cannot do so without Jesus, and he cannot do so without us. Our minds thus await the choice to ask his help to release our grip on guilt that we may take his hand of love. This lovely passage from "The Gifts of God" describes this process of opening our hands to Jesus, releasing our ego's gifts so we may accept his and return home:

> How can you be delivered from all the gifts the world has offered you? How can you change these little, cruel offerings for those that Heaven gives and God would have you keep? Open your hands, and give all things to me that you have held against your holiness and kept as slander on the Son of God.... Give me these worthless things the instant that you see them through my eyes and understand their cost....
>
> I take them from you gladly, laying them beside the gifts of God that He has placed upon the altar to His Son. And these I give to you to take the place of those you give to me in mercy on yourself. These are the gifts I ask, and only these. For as you lay them by you, reach to me, and I can come as savior then to you. The gifts of God are in my hands, to give to anyone who would exchange the world for Heaven. You need only call my name and ask me to accept the gift of pain from willing hands that would be laid in mine, with thorns laid down and nails long thrown away as one by one the sorry gifts of earth are joyously relinquished. In my hands is everything you want and need and hoped to find among the shabby toys of earth. I take them all from you and they are gone. And shining in the place where once they stood there is a gateway to another world through which we enter in the Name of God *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 118-19).

**(10) Today the legion of the future years of waiting for salvation disappears before the timelessness of what you learn. Let us give thanks today that we are spared a future like the past. Today we leave the past behind us, nevermore to be**

**remembered. And we raise our eyes upon a different present, where a future dawns unlike the past in every attribute.**

Jesus is asking us to let go of the past, present, and future, the shadowy projections of sin, guilt, and fear. In the holy instant when we ask Jesus' help, we are outside linear time and the ego thought system, and therefore no longer bound by the world's laws. His vision releases the belief in the sinful past, guilty present, and fearful future, allowing the innocence of God's Son to be reborn into a bright and shining future, the extension of the holy instant's present love.

**(11:1) The world in infancy is newly born.**

This is an evocative image Jesus uses throughout *A Course in Miracles.* He says salvation and the holy relationship are like an infant (T-19.IV-C.9:3; 10:4; T-22.I.7:3), and Christ is reborn as a little Child (W-pI.182.10:1). Here he describes our process as an infant tentatively making its way home. Yet that choice to return is threatened as we practice, for the ego will not go gently into its good night (with apologies to Dylan Thomas). It is the constant diligence to be with Jesus that enables this newly born to grow, as our decision to shift needs strengthening, nourished by daily practice and trust in our new teacher, even as our old one tries to derail our progress.

**(11:2-4) And we will watch it grow in health and strength, to shed its blessing upon all who come to learn to cast aside the world they thought was made in hate to be love's enemy. Now are they all made free, along with us. Now are they all our brothers in God's Love.**

This inner world of infancy is newly born because we are still so afraid. Yet the child grows into adulthood as we release our fear and realize we are happier when with Jesus than when alone and separate. This image of a growing infant finds consummate expression in Lesson 182, "I will be still an instant and go home," and we shall delay further commentary until then.

Sentences 3 and 4 express that doing this with Jesus does it for all our brothers, because there is only one Son. When we are with Jesus we are beyond the ego, because he is. And all our brothers are there as well:

> When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you. The truth in both of us is beyond the ego. Our success in transcending the ego is guaranteed by God, and I share this confidence for both of us and all of us. I bring God's peace back to all His children because I received it of Him for us all. Nothing can prevail against our united wills because nothing can prevail against God's (T-8.V.4).

Thus does an old and tired world, conceived in hate's curse, become transformed into a place of blessing and of love.

**(12:1) We will remember them throughout the day, because we cannot leave a part of us outside our love if we would know our Self.**

**Lesson 127**

Seek to recognize during the day how you exclude others, in both obvious and subtle ways. Recall this is not about form or behavior, but our thoughts that would separate out those special ones for love or hate. Therefore, *those we are asked to remember throughout the day* refers to everyone who chooses to be made free, as Jesus pointed out in the previous paragraph.

**(12:2) At least three times an hour think of one who makes the journey with you, and who came to learn what you must learn.**

This "one" is whoever has captured your ego's attention at that moment: someone you live or work with, or simply think about; someone whom you are tempted to see as special, because he or she is one on whom you are dependent, or one you have chosen to hate. Anyone, therefore, is a suitable object for our practicing.

Jesus concludes the lesson by giving us the words to say to that special someone:

**(12:3-5) And as he comes to mind, give him this message from your Self:**

***I bless you, brother, with the Love of God, which I would share with you. For I would learn the joyous lesson that there is no love but God's and yours and mine and everyone's.***

We therefore end with the happy and saving thought of our oneness with those from whom we tried to separate, and at one with God and with ourselves. Thus do we learn the joyous lesson that God's Love is all there is, in which we are one with all who once believed they were apart from it.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 128**

**The world I see holds nothing that I want.**

These next three lessons form a unit. This one deals with the world: "The world I see holds nothing that I want"; Lesson 129, "Beyond this world there is a world I want," is a discussion of the real world, which is ours to choose; and Lesson 130, "It is impossible to see two worlds," reinforces our need to choose between the two.

It is difficult to understand this lesson without recognizing the difference between *form* and *content.* The world *(*the *form),* is the projection of the thought of guilt (the *content).* This lesson therefore should not be taken as supporting asceticism or sacrifice – giving up the world *(form)* – but rather encouraging us to give up the mind's guilt *(content),* the source of the world. It can be tempting for students, however, to feel guilty because they covet worldly things, believing Jesus demands their sacrifice. Again, this is not a course in denying the body, but only in releasing our thoughts about the body. These thoughts reflect our underlying guilt, which holds the secret wish to keep the separation intact. The ultimate ego value for the world, therefore, is as a place in which we maintain our special identity through guilt, but with someone else made responsible for it. We will return to this idea as we go through the lesson.

**(1:1-2) The world you see holds nothing that you need to offer you; nothing that you can use in any way, nor anything at all that serves to give you joy. Believe this thought, and you are saved from years of misery, from countless disappointments, and from hopes that turn to bitter ashes of despair.**

Still another reference to special relationships: our need to believe there are things, substances, and people in the world that satisfy us, give us pleasure, make us feel good about ourselves, and supply the lack we believe is our reality. Rather than turn to the Holy Spirit for what is lacking—the memory of Who we are as Christ—we deny His Presence, project the guilt that follows this denial, and seek outside for relief from the pain that inevitably results from pushing love away. This is the basis for feeling the world holds what we want, a value predicated on the belief we are bodies, with needs that have to be met; otherwise we feel lonely and deprived. Thus, our perception of the world is that it exists to meet our expectations and needs.

**(1:3) No one but must accept this thought as true, if he would leave the world behind and soar beyond its petty scope and little ways.**

Throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and here again, Jesus reminds us that the world's gifts are nothing compared to his. In "The Gifts of God," from which we have already quoted, Jesus contrasts the two, wanting us to see how quickly we settle for crumbs – the ego's fear-based gifts of "petty scope and little ways" – rather than the banquet of God's Love. We have discussed this important theme in *The Song of Prayer,* where Jesus urges us not to settle for an echo of God's Voice, but for Its full song (S-1.I.2:8-9). He asks us here to seek only an experience of the Love of God, and to foreswear the shabby substitutes the world offers in its stead.

**(2:1-2) Each thing you value here is but a chain that binds you to the world, and it will serve no other end but this. For everything must serve the purpose you have given it, until you see a different purpose there.**

**Lesson 128**

The concept of purpose is crucial for comprehending this lesson. It is not worldly things that are valuable, but the purpose we give them. We think we are attracted to a specific person, object, substance, or idea, but in truth it is the guilt that draws us. It proves we have sinned, are separated individuals, and are right while the Holy Spirit is wrong. Proving this is the purpose we value here, and fulfilling that purpose is our ego's only need.

Most spiritualities see – and unfortunately many students of *A Course in Miracles* concur – that our problems are rooted in the material world of sin. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that we should let the world go in order to find happiness. However, if we do not release the mind's purpose of maintaining guilt, we will simply substitute another form for what had heretofore served that purpose. Freud's formulation of *symptom substitution* is the psychodynamic model for this pattern of behavior.

**(2:3-5) The only purpose worthy of your mind this world contains is that you pass it by, without delaying to perceive some hope where there is none. Be you deceived no more. The world you see holds nothing that you want.**

Our only purpose for being in a world of time and space, in sharp distinction from the ego's, is to teach us there is no world of time and space:

> It is evident that the Holy Spirit's perception of time is the exact opposite of the ego's. The reason is equally clear, for they perceive the goal of time as diametrically opposed. The Holy Spirit interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for time unnecessary. He regards the function of time as temporary, serving only His teaching function, which is temporary by definition. His emphasis is therefore on the only aspect of time that can extend to the infinite, for *now* is the closest approximation of eternity that this world offers (T-13.1V.7:1-5).

Thus the world's only purpose is to provide us with the opportunity of choosing the holy instant, the *now* in which the ego thought system is chosen against, and only God's Voice is heard. The ego's first line of defense – the world and body – is passed by as we realize that value does not lie in what we see with our eyes, but in the mind's guilt. When we pass by the world, therefore, we come face to face with our guilt, the ego's second line of defense. Behind that defense is our decision to be an individual, and behind that is the Love of God.

We ask Jesus' help, not to let go of our attachments to people, objects, and substances, but to help us understand their purpose. Thus he tells us – twice – that the Holy Spirit will not take away our special relationships, but will transform their purpose from guilt to love:

> The Holy Spirit knows no one is special. Yet He also perceives that you have made special relationships, which He would purify and not let you destroy. However unholy the reason you made them may be, He can translate them into holiness by removing as much fear as you will let Him. You can place any relationship under His care and be sure that it will not result in pain, if you offer Him your willingness to have it serve no need but His. All the guilt in it arises from your use of it. All the love from His. Do not, then, be afraid to let go your imagined needs, which would destroy the relationship. Your only need is His (T-15.V.5).

> I have said repeatedly that the Holy Spirit would not deprive you of your special relationships, but would transform them. And all that is meant by that is that He will restore to them the function given them by God. The function you have given them is clearly not to make happy. But the holy relationship shares God's purpose, rather than aiming to make a substitute for it (T-17.1V.2:3-6).

These two passages are vital for understanding this lesson. To state this again, Jesus does not remove the various forms of our lives, but helps us transform the mind's purpose for them. Given to him, the ego's vehicles for reinforcing its thought system become the means by which we change our minds. Later in the workbook we are told that our bodies are neutral (W-pII.294), for they merely carry out the mind's wishes. Which thought system do we choose? Our decision rests upon the value we give it.

**(3:1) Escape today the chains you place upon your mind when you perceive salvation here.**

Crucial to this sentence is the word *you,* which refers to the decision maker having chosen to make the world a means of imprisonment. However, the prison is not the world's special relationships, but the mind's power to choose them; the chains representing the need to prove our individuality is alive and well. The key that unlocks these chains is the decision maker's reversing itself, choosing the freedom of salvation in place of the prison of guilt.

**(3:2) For what you value you make part of you as you perceive yourself.**

The clearest example of this is the body. We value it because it is the specific onto which we project the mind's unconscious guilt, thereby retaining no memory of our identity as a mind, and certainly not as Christ. The body thus has great value; and as we value it, we become it, at least in awareness: we become what we value, reminiscent of the famous line from the 1960s: "You are what you eat." If you value something, giving it a meaning it does not have in and of itself, you become that meaning. This passage from the manual exemplifies that principle:

> The central lesson is always this; that what you use the body for it will become to you. Use it for sin or for attack, which is the same as sin, and you will see it as sinful. Because it is sinful it is weak, and being weak, it suffers and it dies. Use it to bring the Word of God to those who have it not, and the body becomes holy. Because it is holy it cannot be sick, nor can it die (M-12.5:1-5).

The mind's decision is based on the thought system it values: the ego's or the Holy Spirit's.

**(3:3) All things you seek to make your value greater in your sight limit you further, hide your worth from you, and add another bar across the door that leads to true awareness of your Self.**

These bars are the ego's shields of oblivion, a phrase from Lesson 136 (W-pI.136.5 :2) we have already examined. The world and body guard against the inner shield of guilt, which drives us out of our minds (literally and figuratively), ensuring that

our decision maker will never change its mind. By valuing things in the world and believing they will help or hurt us – both the source of our problems and their solution – we reinforce the final bar to truth. As long as we believe the world is real, we will never return to the mind's thoughts that are the real issue.

**(4) Let nothing that relates to body thoughts delay your progress to salvation, nor permit temptation to believe the world holds anything you want to hold you back. Nothing is here to cherish. Nothing here is worth one instant of delay and pain; one moment of uncertainty and doubt. The worthless offer nothing. Certainty of worth can not be found in worthlessness.**

We repeatedly see that everything in this world is worth nothing. In fact the world is literally nothing, being a projection of a thought in our minds that is inherently nothing. Remember, the ego thought system is totally made up, beginning with our believing in the reality of the tiny, mad idea, instead of sharing the Holy Spirit's perception of its nothingness. We defend our belief by erecting one layer of defense after another, all of which are nothing because they come from nothing and defend nothing. Only through recognizing this fact will we be motivated to give up the innate worthlessness of the world, as we are reminded once again of the happiness that meets us when we cross the bridge to the real world:

> And you will think, in glad astonishment, that for all this you gave up *nothing!* (T-16.VI.11:4)

It is important not to feel guilty because of body thoughts. Whether they are good, holy, and healthy, or evil, ugly, and sinful is irrelevant. We cannot avoid body thoughts while here, but we can change the teacher who will help us look at them differently. Thus Jesus comforts us not to be upset with the ego's shadowy thoughts we brought with us into the world:

> ... be not disturbed that shadows surround it [our little willingness]. That is why you came. If you could come without them you would not need the holy instant (T-181V.2:4-6).

In the manual, Jesus gently reminds us that our function here does not entail being without limitations, but to be without the judgments of guilt we placed upon them:

> Do not despair, then, because of limitations. It is your function to escape from them, but not to be without them (M-26.4:1-2).

Jesus helps us understand that our judgmental preoccupations with our body or the bodies of others are the means he uses to teach us of our underlying need to have the problem and its solution be outside our minds. Bodily preoccupation thus distracts us so we do not look within, for our guilt is now perceived to be in someone else. We come to realize that the problem to be solved is not found in body thoughts, nor in various external attractions, but in the mind's purpose of reinforcing guilt, a purpose cleverly served by these distracting thoughts.

**(5:1-2) Today we practice letting go all thought of values we have given to**

**the world. We leave it free of purposes we gave its aspects and its phases and its dreams.**

Jesus emphasizes again and again that the problem lies with the "values we have given to the world," the ultimate value being to prove we are right and he is wrong.

As we see here, Jesus occasionally uses the term *aspects* to denote different parts of the Sonship. Thus, for example, speaking of the unity of healing, he says in the text:

> It extends to all aspects of the Sonship at the same time, and thus enables them to reach each other (T-13.VI.6:4).

And later, on special relationships:

> If you seek to separate out certain aspects of the totality and look to them to meet your imagined needs, you are attempting to use separation to save you (T-15.V.2:3).

Thus, each of our seemingly separated fragments constitutes an aspect of the Sonship. In the lesson, Jesus speaks to the various parts of our worldly experience: the values we give to people; our bodies, or parts of them; foods and substances; and the multitudinous things the world offers us, pleasurable and painful alike. To repeat this salient point, we do not let go of things, but the purpose we have bestowed on them. In that way is the world made free, and allowed to have another purpose given it, as we now see:

**(5:3-4) We hold it purposeless within our minds, and loosen it from all we wish it were. Thus do we lift the chains that bar the door to freedom from the world, and go beyond all little values and diminished goals.**

When we withdraw the purpose we have given to the world, it becomes purposeless, allowing the Holy Spirit to provide His. The world of our special relationships now becomes a classroom in which we learn our lessons of forgiveness, and as we learn them, the chains of imprisonment are lifted, without any external shift. Indeed, *we* have not done anything, which is the point.

**(6:1) Pause and be still a little while, and see how far you rise above the world, when you release your mind from chains and let it seek the level where it finds itself at home.**

The *you,* again, is the decision maker choosing the Holy Spirit's forgiveness instead of the ego's guilt, thus releasing the mind from its chains, put there by the imprisoning agent – our decision-making self. Our minds are freed to seek and find their true home: the right-minded dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the steppingstone to our return home. The opening phrase is taken from the beginning of the forty-sixth psalm, frequently quoted in the Course. Here is one such reference, which emphasizes the importance of purpose as we rise above the world, leaving an empty place in our minds for the Holy Spirit's Atonement to rise to ascendance in our awareness:

**Lesson 128**

> Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away (T-31.I.12).

**(6:2-5) It will be grateful to be free a while. It knows where it belongs. But free its wings, and it will fly in sureness and in joy to join its holy purpose. Let it rest in its Creator, there to be restored to sanity, to freedom and to love.**

The memory of our Creator and Source is in our right minds, where Jesus has waited patiently for us. In order to rest in his love, we first have to release our investment in guilt, which means releasing our investments in the world, accomplished by understanding – through Jesus' help – the purpose they serve. Therefore, if we are to be free of our unhappiness, misery, and pain, we need to ask Jesus' help to look differently at the world. We do not change the world, nor what we do there, but rather change how we look at it. This shifts its purpose from guilt to forgiveness, and we are restored to sanity, freedom, and love.

**(7:1-3) Give it** [i.e., the decision maker in our minds] **ten minutes rest three times today. And when your eyes are opened afterwards, you will not value anything you see as much as when you looked at it before. Your whole perspective on the world will shift by just a little, every time you let your mind escape its chains.**

What changes is our perspective, not necessarily the world or our behavior. Our attitude changes because we no longer value the world as before. The key to this lesson – as it is in so many others – is that we spend quiet time throughout the day with Jesus, thinking of his message. Thus we take the experience of Jesus' love and peace back to the world, as we again interact with it. If we have done this correctly, there will be a shift – even a small one – because we will now remember we have another teacher to interpret for us the events of the day. That is the perspective that shifts, as the following passage on the bridge to the real world explains:

> The bridge itself is nothing more than a transition in the perspective of reality. On this side, everything you see is grossly distorted and completely out of perspective. What is little and insignificant is magnified, and what is strong and powerful cut down to littleness.... This frame of reference is built around the special relationship. Without this illusion there could be no meaning you would still seek here (T-16.V1.7:1-3, 6-7).

This is a much gentler approach to our spiritual journey, for we are not asked to give up our special relationships, but only to shift our perspective from the ego's guilt to Jesus' forgiveness.

**(7:4) The world is not where it belongs.**

Our attention belongs not in the world but in our minds, where the Holy Spirit's correction is. That was Jesus' point when he cautioned Helen about her mind wandering:

You are much too tolerant of mind wandering (T-2.V1.4:6).

We allow our minds to wander into the world – the result of projection – believing that that is where the problem is, and the truth as well. Our focus then wanders onto the body – which we now believe is our self – with its pressing needs that demand that others meet them. Jesus, therefore, is asking us to step back with him and watch our minds and bodies, and look at their worlds differently.

**(7:5-8) And you belong where it would be, and where it goes to rest when you release it from the world. Your Guide is sure. Open your mind to Him. Be still and rest.**

In other words, you do not belong in the body but the mind, the place of rest that reflects Heaven's truth within the dream. On a practical level, this means that as you go through your day and are tempted to be upset, realize as quickly as you can that you have placed a value on something in the world. This ultimately means reinforcing your specialness and individuality; a way of proving you are right and Jesus is wrong. As soon as you become aware of your choice for the ego, go to the quiet place of rest in your mind – it can be only a few seconds if you cannot do ten minutes – and say to Jesus: "Please help me look at this differently." That is the bottom line, and is what Jesus means in the final paragraph:

**(8) Protect your mind throughout the day as well. And when you think you see some value in an aspect or an image of the world, refuse to lay this chain upon your mind, but tell yourself with quiet certainty:**

***This will not tempt me to delay myself***
***The world I see holds nothing that I want***

Again, the *you* is the decision maker choosing to reinforce and preserve its individuality by laying a chain of guilt across the mind. Guilt demands to be projected, resulting in our valuing the world. We shall see in other lessons, as we have already, that our words, let alone those of Jesus, mean nothing if we do not practice them every day, day in and day out.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 129**
**Beyond this world there is a world I want.**

Beyond this world is the real world, the right- minded place of truth. Jesus appeals here to our minds' power to choose between the two: the ego's shadowy world of guilt and hate; or the Holy Spirit's light-filled world of Atonement that reflects His Love.

**(1:1-2) This is the thought that follows from the one we practiced yesterday. You cannot stop with the idea the world is worthless, for unless you see that there is something else to hope for, you will only be depressed.**

It is not enough to be told the world is worthless, without the next step. Inherent in the above statements is looking with Jesus, which means being with him. This reminds us there is another choice we have made, for another teacher. If we look at our world through the ego's eyes, we will be depressed, and ultimately homicidal and suicidal. The following passage expresses this unfortunate result of having adapted the ego's wrong conclusion to the right facts:

> All its [the world's] roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death.... The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another. Men have died on seeing this, because they saw no way except the pathways offered by the world. And learning they led nowhere, lost their hope. And yet this was the time they could have learned their greatest lesson. All must reach this point, and go beyond it. It is true indeed there is no choice at all within the world. But this is not the lesson in itself. The lesson has a purpose, and in this you come to understand what it is for.... Its purpose is the answer to the search that all must undertake who still believe there is another answer to be found. Learn now, without despair, there is no hope of answer in the world.... No longer look for hope where there is none. Make fast your learning now, and understand you but waste time unless you go beyond what you have learned to what is yet to learn. For from this lowest point will learning lead to heights of happiness, in which you see the purpose of the lesson shining clear, and perfectly within your learning grasp (T-31.IV.2:3; 3:3-10; 4:2-3,6-8).

Looking through the eyes of Jesus, we learn to smile at everything that happens – personally and collectively. This smile is impossible unless his eyes are ours, and we stand beside his love. Only then have we truly and happily chosen to see another world beyond this one.

**(1:3-4) Our emphasis is not on giving up the world, but on exchanging it for what is far more satisfying, filled with joy, and capable of offering you peace. Think you this world can offer that to you?**

Jesus does not speak of a tangible, physical world, but the world existing in our thoughts. Thus, exchanging the world means exchanging the ego's thoughts that make up the world – specialness and guilt – for the Holy Spirit's thoughts of forgiveness and love, the foundation of the real world. Thus Jesus' $64 question to us is whether we really believe our world can offer the satisfaction, joy, and peace that his can.

**(2:1-2) It might be worth a little time to think once more about the value of this world. Perhaps you will concede there is no loss in letting go all thought of value here.**

Jesus is giving us at least this much credit – at this point we realize the world holds nothing that we want.

**(2:3-6) The world you see is merciless indeed, unstable, cruel, unconcerned with you, quick to avenge and pitiless with hate. It gives but to rescind, and takes away all things that you have cherished for a while. No lasting love is found, for none is here. This is the world of time, where all things end.**

The final sentence is important, for it helps students avoid the trap of thinking that when Jesus says, for example, "the world you see is merciless indeed," he refers to our way of seeing it, not the world itself. This line makes it clear he is speaking of the world of perception and time. *Everything* here fades and ultimately dies, for nothing in the world is eternal. No matter how wonderful things appear to be, they do not last: "This is the world of time, where all things end." There are many passages throughout *A Course in Miracles* that make this same point, speaking of the world we perceive – a place of form, bodies, change, and ultimately death. Early in this book we quoted perhaps the Course's most poetic statement of this idea. We repeat it now:

> What *seems* eternal all will have an end. The stars will disappear, and night and day will be no more. All things that come and go, the tides, the seasons and the lives of men; all things that change with time and bloom and fade will not return. Where time has set an end is not where the eternal is. God's Son can never change by what men made of him. He will be as he was and as he is, for time appointed not his destiny, nor set the hour of his birth and death (T-29.VI.2:7-12).

One of *A Course in Miracles'* greatest contributions is its stripping away illusions of the world's notions of truth and falsity, life and death, spirit and matter, love and hate:

> The world was made that problems could not *be* escaped (T-3 LIV.2: 6).

Covering our pain with thoughts and perceptions of beauty, goodness, truth, and love do not lead to escape from our guilt. To the contrary. Only forgiveness brings about true escape, returning us to the timeless, and to the beauty, goodness, truth, and love that are beyond all form. These are reflected in the real world, the last step before our return to Heaven and to our Self.

**(3:1) Is it a loss to find a world instead where losing is impossible; where love endures forever, hate cannot exist and vengeance has no meaning?**

This is the real world, which is not a place but the thought of perfect healing. When we choose the Holy Spirit's thought system once and for all, we identify with His Atonement principle – the reflection of Heaven's eternal Love that can never be lost. Our minds are then healed, and the ego's thought system – separation, sin, guilt, fear, pain, hate, and death – disappears, as it was held in place only by our identification with it.

When we shift our identity, and place it instead with the Love of God, the ego is gone, along with its hate and vengeance, cruelty and pain.

**(3:2) Is it loss to find all things you really want, and know they have no ending and they will remain exactly as you want them throughout time?**

Jesus tells us: "Of course you are not going to lose anything; look at the eternal gift I offer in its place." However, as long as we identify with our bodies and specialness, we will believe giving up things in this world involves sacrifice and loss. Thus we need a teacher to instruct us differently. The following poem of Helen's, "Heaven's Gift," was written for me when Helen's gift of a Holy Spirit medal had been stolen. It sweetly expresses Jesus' message to us all of the impossibility of real loss, the comforting message of the Atonement. We have already quoted from it, but its loveliness deserves another and full reading:

> No one can rob infinity. For when
> Something is taken, angels join their wings
> And close the space so rapidly it seems
> To be illusion; unoccurred, undone.
>
> No one can take away from everything.
> Its very wholeness is a guarantee
> It is complete forever. There can be
> No loss left unrestored before it comes.
>
> No one can lessen love. It is itself
> The Great Restorer. It can but return
> All that is taken to itself. It knows
> No loss, no limit and no lessening.
>
> Heaven can only give. This is the sign
> That losing is impossible. It seemed
> That it was gone. Yet angels quickly came
> And promised they would bring it back to you.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 80)

**(3:3) Yet even they** [the gifts of the real world] **will be exchanged at last for what we cannot speak of, for you go from there to where words fail entirely, into a silence where the language is unspoken and yet surely understood.**

This lesson refers to three worlds: *the ego's world,* which is merciless, unstable, and cruel; *the real world,* which corrects the ego, its loving gifts reflecting Heaven's Love and becoming the bridge allowing God to take the last step, wherein He reaches down and lifts us into *Heaven* (C-4.8:3). As Jesus says, there are no words to speak of it, yet we have these opening paragraphs from "The Changeless Dwelling Place" to reflect for us its stillness and peace:

> There is a place in you where this whole world has been forgotten; where no memory of sin and of illusion lingers still. There is a place in you which time

> has left, and echoes of eternity are heard. There is a resting place so still no sound except a hymn to Heaven rises up to gladden God the Father and the Son. Where Both abide are They remembered, Both. And where They are is Heaven and is peace.
>
> Think not that you can change Their dwelling place. For your Identity abides in Them, and where They are, forever must you be. The changelessness of Heaven is in you, so deep within that nothing in this world but passes by, unnoticed and unseen. The still infinity of endless peace surrounds you gently in its soft embrace, so strong and quiet, tranquil in the might of its Creator, nothing can intrude upon the sacred Son of God within (T-29.V.1-2).

Succinctly stated, the sequence is from the ego's world to the real world, and from there to Heaven. In truth, of course, there is no sequence nor are there separate worlds; we are on "a journey without distance" (T-8.VI.9:7). How could we journey to the Everywhere, when we never left it?

**(4:1-3) Communication, unambiguous and plain as day, remains unlimited for all eternity. And God Himself speaks to His Son, as His Son speaks to Him. Their language has no words, for what They say cannot be symbolized.**

The opening passage in *The Song of Prayer* beautifully expresses this level of communication: the song the Father sings to the Son, and the Son sings to the Father (S-1.in.1; 1.3). This song has no notes, intervals, harmonics, parts, or form. Indeed, it is beyond form entirely, and its ineffability reveals itself as Heaven – the state of perfect Oneness and Love beyond all words, because it is beyond all symbols:

> ... there is no symbol for totality. Reality is ultimately known without a form, unpictured and unseen.... Give welcome to the power beyond... the world of symbols and of limitations. He would merely be, and so He merely is (T-27.III.5:1-2; 7:8-9).

**(4:4-6) Their knowledge is direct and wholly shared and wholly one. How far away from this are you who stay bound to this world. And yet how near are you, when you exchange it for the world you want.**

No individuality exists in Heaven's state of perfect Oneness. Yet we do not go from our bodily experience directly home, but from the body's world to the real world of the mind. This intervening step has us look at the guilt and realize it is made up, thus dissolving its existence. When guilt is gone, all that remains is the love in our right minds – the real world. We thus stand at Heaven's gate, brought by forgiveness of our brother, who is transformed into our self:

> Forgive the past and let it go, for it *is* gone. You stand no longer on the ground that lies between the worlds. You have gone on, and reached the world that lies at Heaven's gate. There is no hindrance to the Will of God, nor any need that you repeat again a journey that was over long ago. Look gently on your brother, and behold the world in which perception of your hate has been transformed into a world of love (T-26.V.14).

**(5:1-2) Now is the last step certain; now you stand an instant's space away from timelessness. Here can you but look forward, never back to see again the world you do not want.**

You cannot look back because the world you have chosen against has disappeared. When we awaken from the dream there is nothing to remember, because awakening is understanding from within: not an intellectual awareness, but a knowing that the separation never happened. This means the world never happened, and so there is nothing to remember:

> And when the memory of God has come to you in the holy place of forgiveness you will remember nothing else, and memory will be as useless as learning, for your only purpose will be creating. Yet this you cannot know until every perception has been cleansed and purified, and finally removed forever. Forgiveness removes only the untrue, lifting the shadows from the world and carrying it, safe and sure within its gentleness, to the bright world of new and clean perception. There is your purpose *now.* And it is there that peace awaits you (T-18.IX.14).

Forgiveness has fulfilled its function of removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence (T-in.1:7). The peace of God remains, to be instantly replaced by Peace Himself in His last step, the final shift from the real world whereby we totally awaken from the dream.

**(5:3-5) Here is the world that comes to take its place, as you unbind your mind from little things the world sets forth to keep you prisoner. Value them not, and they will disappear. Esteem them, and they will seem real to you.**

The things we perceive in the world are simply shadows of the mind's thoughts of separation, sin, and guilt. It is from these thoughts alone that we loose ourselves. The decision maker looks at the ego with Jesus and says: "I made a mistake. I no longer want the thought system of individuality but your love. I no longer need the world as a defense to protect and preserve my separate identity by keeping my mind hidden."

Recall that the ego's purpose for the world is mindlessness, which it accomplishes through inculcating the fear of changing our minds and choosing a different Teacher. When we no longer fear His love, valuing God's Love more than the ego's specialness, we cease trying to protect ourselves from the mind, which becomes the aid in choosing the One Who will lead us home. Thus we have no need for a world, because we have no need to keep ourselves mindless.

The main point, again, is that we do not free our minds from the things of the world, but from the guilt that gives the world its purpose. Once unbound from the nothingness of guilt, our minds are free to return to the Holy Spirit, Who gladly takes us across the bridge to the real world, the place of truth and beauty:

> What guilt has wrought is ugly, fearful and very dangerous. See no illusion of truth and beauty there. And be you thankful that there *is* a place where truth and beauty wait for you. Go on to meet them gladly, and learn how much awaits you for the simple willingness to give up nothing *because* it is nothing (T-16.VI.10:4-7).

**(6:1-2) Such is the choice. What loss can be for you in choosing not to value nothingness?**

Jesus assures us we will lose nothing by choosing against nothingness. In the ego's thought system, however, sacrifice and loss are major factors: I have to give up something to get something in return – if I am to have the specialness I need to survive, I must pay for it; if I am to be redeemed by God for what I stole from Him, I have to recompense Him. Moreover, the ego teaches there is always loss if I take Jesus' hand. Yet we are taught differently:

> It takes great learning both to realize and to accept the fact that the world has nothing to give. What can the sacrifice of nothing mean? It cannot mean that you have less because of it. There is no sacrifice in the world's terms that does not involve the body. Think a while about what the world calls sacrifice. Power, fame, money, physical pleasure; who is the "hero" to whom all these things belong? Could they mean anything except to a body? Yet a body cannot evaluate. By seeking after such things the mind associates itself with the body, obscuring its Identity and losing sight of what it really is.
>
> Once this confusion has occurred, it becomes impossible for the mind to understand that all the "pleasures" of the world are nothing. But what a sacrifice, – and it is sacrifice indeed!—all this entails. Now has the mind condemned itself to seek without finding; to be forever dissatisfied and discontented; to know not what it really wants to find (M-13.2:1-3:3).

Incidentally, the four worldly values enumerated in 2:6 are taken from the famous statement by Freud in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,* spoken of the artist:

> He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honor, power, wealth, fame and the love of women ....*

Thus we learn that our choice of the Holy Spirit's real world over the ego's world of separation and pain carries with it no loss, but the gain of our Identity, awareness of which we had seemingly lost in that one instant of insanity:

> Teacher of God, do not forget the meaning of sacrifice, and remember what each decision you make must mean in terms of cost. Decide for God, and everything is given you at no cost at all. Decide against Him, and you choose nothing, at the expense of the awareness of everything (M-13.8:1-3).

**(6:3-5) This world holds nothing that you really want, but what you choose instead you want indeed! Let it *be* given you today. It waits but for your choosing it, to take the place of all the things you seek but do not want.**

Jesus is appealing once again to our sanity and reason to make the right choice, which is really no choice at all once the two alternatives are carefully weighed:

> God's teachers can have no regret on giving up the pleasures of the world. Is it a sacrifice to give up pain? Does an adult resent the giving up of children's

> toys? Does one whose vision has already glimpsed the face of Christ look back with longing on a slaughter house? No one who has escaped the world and all its ills looks back on it with condemnation.... Who in his sane mind chooses nothing as a substitute for everything? (M-13.4:1-5, 10)

**(7:1) Practice your willingness to make this change ten minutes in the morning and at night, and once more in between.**

The recommendation is to practice for thirty minutes, but clearly Jesus would like us to think throughout the day of what we really want, especially when we are tempted to forget.

**(7:2-4) Begin with this:**

***Beyond this world there is a world I want I choose to see that world instead of this, for here is nothing that I really want***

You cannot say these words and mean them as long as you seek to preserve your specialness. Thus you need to pay careful attention to this desire, otherwise these will be but empty words that mean nothing. The exercises will not work, and you will believe you did your part, but Jesus and his course failed you. Try to get in touch with the thought that says: "I value my individuality, specialness, and being right more than I do the Love of God." Now you can make a meaningful choice, as this passage explains, describing the futility of seeking what we want from the world:

> Who would be willing to be turned away from all the roadways of the world, unless he understood their real futility? Is it not needful that he should begin with this, to seek another way instead? For while he sees a choice where there is none, what power of decision can he use? The great release of power must begin with learning where it really has a use. And what decision has power if it be applied in situations without choice? (T-31.IV.5)

The choice is simple once we see the two choices side by side.
Now comes this beautiful sentence:

**(7:5) Then close your eyes upon the world you see, and in the silent darkness watch the lights that are not of this world light one by one, until where one begins another ends loses all meaning as they blend in one.**

As you practice over time, you will see light in someone else—not a physical light – because you will have seen it in yourself. As you do this more consistently, day in and day out, you will realize the light is the same in everyone. Then the statement "where one [light] begins another ends" becomes meaningless, because you realize the light in your brothers and yourself is the same, as it is in Jesus. It is the only light in your mind, for it is the light of God: a single unified presence with no beginning and no end. Yet you need practice with all circumstances and relationships, including with yourself, in which you are tempted to see only darkness and aspects of specialness. Thus will your eyes close on separation and open on unity:

> Unless you perceive His creation truly you cannot know the Creator, since God and His creation are not separate. The Oneness of the Creator and the creation is your wholeness, your sanity and your limitless power. This limitless power is God's gift to you, because it is what you are (T-7.VI.10:3-5).

**(8:1-2) Today the lights of Heaven bend to you, to shine upon your eyelids as you rest beyond the world of darkness. Here is light your eyes can not behold.**

The reference is not to physical light or auras, but to the light of Atonement that shines in our minds. Even if we experience this healing thought of light physically, we must remember it is only a symbolic reflection of the mind's thought of light. It is also important to move beyond the poetic loveliness of these words to their real meaning: There is no external light that shines on us, for the light is within. Indeed, the light *is* us, and is restored to awareness the instant we forswear the darkness.

**(8:3) And yet your mind can see it plainly, and can understand.**

Your eyes cannot see it, because your eyes were made not to see and know the mind's light. In fact, the eyes were made not to see the mind's darkness of guilt either. However, when you choose Jesus as your teacher, you will look out on the world and see only expressions of love or calls for it (T-14.X.7:1), realizing the expression and the call are one. Guilt blinds our vision of this single truth; forgiveness sets it free.

**(8:4-5) A day of grace is given you today, and we give thanks. This day we realize that what you feared to lose was only loss.**

What you "feared to lose" was the ego's thought of individuality, which is nothing. This individual self represents the loss of our Identity as Christ, which is everything. Our forgiveness allows us to recognize the difference between the valuelessness of nothing, and the value of everything. And we remember what we truly want:

> You may believe this course requires sacrifice of all you really hold dear. In one sense this is true, for you hold dear the things that crucify God's Son, and it is the course's aim to set him free. But do not be mistaken about what sacrifice means. It always means the giving up of what you want. And what, O teacher of God, is it that you want? You have been called by God, and you have answered. Would you now sacrifice that Call? (M-13.6:1-7)

Who in their right minds would ever choose to sacrifice that Call, once they remembered it was their own, calling them to the grace that dissolves all thoughts of sacrifice and loss.

**(9) Now do we understand there is no loss. For we have seen its opposite at last, and we are grateful that the choice is made. Remember your decision hourly, and take a moment to confirm your choice by laying by whatever thoughts you have, and dwelling briefly only upon this:**

> ***The world I see holds nothing that I want.***
> ***Beyond this world there is a world I want.***

It is not only important to remember your decision each hour, but throughout the day as well. When you become aware of ego thoughts – judgment, attack, and specialness – do not feel guilty but go quickly to Jesus for help to look at the situation differently. This means looking at the purpose you have given the situation, defending against his purpose of forgiveness that you are now ready to accept. Crucial to this process is recognizing that part of your mind does not want the world of light and love, but another part does; otherwise you would not be doing these lessons. Becoming aware of this split allows you to ask Jesus to help you change your mind, thereby saying, and truly meaning:

***The world I see holds nothing that I want. Beyond this world there is a world I want.***

We are ready now for the concluding lesson in this series, which reinforces the power of our minds to choose what alone will make us happy.

** The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* **(London: Hogarth Press, 1953), Volume XVI, p. 376.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 130**
**It is impossible to see two worlds.**

In this final lesson of the series, Jesus once again emphasizes our power to decide, making it clear that what we see outside is not outside at all, but is simply a shadow or reflection of what we first made real in the mind. This lesson, therefore, elaborates on the principle *projection makes perception:* we see within first, choosing either the ego's darkness of sin or the Holy Spirit's light of forgiveness; we then look out and perceive either a shadow of guilt or reflection of love. Thus the problem is never what we perceive outside, but the teacher we have chosen inside. That decision is the subject matter of this lesson.

**(1:1-3) Perception is consistent. What you see reflects your thinking. And your thinking but reflects your choice of what you want to see.**

It is not what we perceive outside that is consistent, because it always changes. Jesus' point is that our perception is consistent with our thoughts, as they are consistent with the teacher we have chosen – our choice of what we want to see. We find the same idea in "The Characteristics of God's Teachers" under the subsection "Honesty," where Jesus defines honesty as consistency: what we do or say is consistent with what we think (M-4.II). Thus honesty is not defined by form, the truth of the form of our words, but by its consistency with the content – what we have made real in our minds: Jesus' love or the ego's hate.

**(1:4) Your values are determiners of this, for what you value you must want to see, believing what you see is really there.**

What underlies our values is valuing our individual self: we want to prove the separation from God is real and that we exist. Since that is our value, we choose the ego as our teacher. Remember, at the beginning we, as one Son, were presented with two choices regarding the tiny, mad idea: to see it through the eyes of the ego or the Holy Spirit. We valued our separation, so we chose the former. From there we chose the ego's thought system of guilt and hate to protect our existence, and this gave rise to a perceptual universe of materiality. On the other hand, if we choose to value the perfect Oneness of God's Love, we choose Jesus as our teacher, and everything will shift accordingly. When that shift is total, we are in the real world.

**(1:5-6) No one can see a world his mind has not accorded value. And no one can fail to look upon what he believes he wants.**

If I want separation, individuality, and specialness, that is what I will perceive in the world. If I want to return home to disappear into the Heart of God, when I look out on the world I will ultimately realize there is nothing there. That is the experience of the real world, the place of truth in our minds that is outside the world's dream. Looking at the dream from outside means I take nothing here seriously because I know it is illusory. I understand the dream's purpose, and since I no longer share it, I no longer share the belief in its reality. You may recall this statement from the Sermon on the Mount:

> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21).

It is cited five times in *A Course in Miracles,* and forms the basis for this passage. Early in the text, for example, we read:

> Remember that where your heart is, there is your treasure also. You believe in what you value (T-2.II.1:5-6).

What we believe, we see: "And no one can fail to look upon what he believes he wants." That is why Jesus places such emphasis in his course on purpose. Our chosen purpose, based on belief, determines what we want, which in turn determines what we see: *projection makes perception.*

**(2:1) Yet who can really hate and love at once?**

Recall that *dissociation* is a psychological term that describes how we maintain two mutually exclusive thoughts simultaneously:

Dissociation is a distorted process of thinking whereby two systems of belief which cannot coexist are both maintained (T-14.VII.4:3).

The ego has us believe we can hate and love at the same time. I split off the love in my right mind and hide it, identifying only with the ego's hate. When I bring them to the same place, however – illusion brought to truth – the darkness of our hate must disappear:

> If they are brought together, their joint acceptance becomes impossible. But if one is kept in darkness from the other, their separation seems to keep them both alive and equal in their reality (T 14.VII.4:4-5).

Jesus speaks here of our need to make a choice. I cannot choose both love and hate, and that is the ego's fear: if we choose love, hate is gone, and with it goes the self that was conceived in hate and nourished by guilt:

> Their joining thus becomes the source of fear, for if they meet, acceptance must be withdrawn from one of them. You cannot have them both, for each denies the other. Apart, this fact is lost from sight, for each in a separate place can be endowed with firm belief. Bring them together, and the fact of their complete incompatibility is instantly apparent. One will go, because the other is seen in the same place (T-14.VII.4:6-10).

Thus we choose to live in the darkness of hate and judgment, fear and guilt. In this way, the individual and special self is guaranteed existence, preserved by the bodily shadows of separation and protected from the light of forgiveness at the expense of our living oneness:

> The world you see is based on "sacrifice" of oneness. It is a picture of complete disunity and total lack of joining. Around each entity is built a wall so seeming solid that it looks as if what is inside can never reach without, and what is out can never reach and join with what is locked away within the wall. Each part must sacrifice the other part, to keep itself complete. For if they joined each one

would lose its own identity, and by their separation are their selves maintained (T 26.I.2).

Jesus continues to explain this strange thought system of fear that strives to keep our individual self intact, separate from our Self:

**(2:2-3) Who can desire what he does not want to have reality? And who can choose to see a world of which he is afraid?**

If I fear the real world because of the threat to my individuality, I will not see it, for I see only what the ego programmed my eyes, ears, and brain to see, make real, and understand. We are afraid of Jesus' love because it proves our specialness is a lie, and so we see only the specialness of separate interests. *Projection makes perception* is the principle that underlies our understanding the seemingly real experiences in the perceptual world.

**(2:4-5) Fear must make blind, for this its weapon is: That which you fear to see you cannot see. Love and perception thus go hand in hand, but fear obscures in darkness what is there.**

The Love of God is in my mind, represented by the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle. The ego is afraid of my choosing the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, and so it keeps the love hidden, holding it in darkness with individuality and guilt as the cover. The ego teaches me I should be afraid of my guilt, its clever subterfuge. However, I really fear choosing love, and thus fear makes me blind. Typically in *A Course in Miracles* guilt is described as the blinding agent:

> Guilt makes you blind, for while you see one spot of guilt within you, you will not see the light. And by projecting it the world seems dark, and shrouded in your guilt. You throw a dark veil over it, and cannot see it because you cannot look within (T 13 .IX.7: 1-3).

Thus do guilt and fear tell us not to look within, for if we did we would see our sinfulness. We look only without, in self-preservation, and inevitably perceive a world that is real to us. In truth, however, if we looked within we would realize there was nothing there – *literally!* The following passage is perhaps the clearest expression in *A Course in Miracles* of the ego's reason for keeping us mindless and in a bodily state of fear. Its reasons are truly groundless, for there is nothing within the mind that can hurt us. Indeed, there is nothing within the mind except the light of Heaven's Love:

> Loudly the ego tells you not to look inward, for if you do your eyes will light on sin, and God will strike you blind. This you believe, and so you do not look. Yet this is not the ego's hidden fear, nor yours who serve it.... Beneath your fear to look within because of sin is yet another fear, and one which makes the ego tremble.
>
> What if you looked within and saw no sin? This "fearful" question is one the ego never asks. And you who ask it now are threatening the ego's whole defensive system too seriously for it to bother to pretend it is your friend (T-21.IV.2:3-5, 8; 3:1-3).

*A Course in Miracles'* purpose is to help us pose that very question to the ego, for in it rests our salvation and return from the darkness to the light.

**(3:1-2) What, then, can fear project upon the world? What can be seen in darkness that is real?**

What fear projects onto the world is nothingness, because it projects the thought system of the ego— separation, individuality, guilt, attack, suffering, and death – which is inherently nothing. The ego tells us its thoughts are real, and within them is our identity, safely protected by our friends. At the same time we are told these "friends" are so horrible we cannot look at them, at the risk of annihilation. We again see dissociation at work: on the one hand, we welcome sin, guilt, and fear as our self; on the other hand, we flee from their "sharp-pointed, bony fingers" of death (W-pI.189.5:4). Thus we need to deny these thoughts, projecting them away from our minds so we would see them outside. Yet all we are truly seeing is the shadow of our guilt, which is inherently nothing. Hallucinating would be a more proper term for this perceptual phenomenon of seeing what is not there:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it? (T-20.VIII.7:3-7)

"What can be seen in darkness that is real?" Nothing. What alone is real is the light, which patiently awaits removal of the covers of guilt that keep it hidden.

**(3:3) Truth is eclipsed by fear, and what remains is but imagined.**

Truth is not destroyed by fear, but is hidden by it. Analogously, when the sun goes behind the moon during an eclipse, the sun is not destroyed; it is just not visible for those few moments. Thus, we do not see love because of the mind's fear and its subsequent projection onto the world. But the fact that we think we see fear does not make it real, for it remains but an effete product of our insane imagination, as the following passage describes:

> When you made visible what is not true, what *is* true became invisible to you. Yet it cannot be invisible in itself, for the Holy Spirit sees it with perfect clarity. It is invisible to you because you are looking at something else. Yet it is no more up to you to decide what is visible and what is invisible, than it is up to you to decide what reality is. What can be seen is what the Holy Spirit sees. The definition of reality is God's, not yours (T-12.VIII.3:1-6).

It is only the ego's arrogance that causes it to believe something is there simply because it "sees" it. It is only our insanity that enables us to believe what the ego tells us is our reality, as we have already seen:

> Ask not this transient stranger [the ego], "What am I?" He is the only thing

> in all the universe that does not know. Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer that you would adjust. This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth, becomes your guide. To it you turn to ask the meaning of the universe. And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, "How shall I look upon the Son of God?" (T-20.III.7:5-10).

Yet despite our fears and imagined reality, the truth remains safely within, awaiting the return of our sanity.

**(3:4-6) Yet what could be real in blind imaginings of panic born? What would you want that this is shown to you? What would you wish to keep in such a dream?**

As in many other places, Jesus appeals to us, saying: "Look at what you are giving yourself; look at what you have accepted as flimsy substitute for the wonderful gift of Heaven's remembrance I offer you." He asks: "What would you want that this is shown to you? What would you wish to keep in such a dream?" He helps us realize what we are choosing and wishing to keep is nothing; moreover, a nothingness that makes us most unhappy. It is not the world, though, that saddens us, but the nothingness we have chosen in our minds. Yet before we choose against it and for the love of Jesus, we have first to be aware of the unreality of what we have chosen and what we perceive, as Jesus continues to instruct us:

**(4:1) Fear has made everything you think you see.**

Our body's eyes see it; but what they see is not there. In fact, our body's eyes do not see at all. Eyes blinded by fear's darkened veils of guilt cannot see, unlike vision's light:

> Vision depends on light. You cannot see in darkness. Yet in darkness, in the private world of sleep, you see in dreams although your eyes are closed. And it is here that what you see you made. But let the darkness go and all you made you will no longer see, for sight of it depends upon denying vision.... Dreams disappear when light has come and you can see.
>
> Do not seek vision through your eyes, for you made your way of seeing that you might see in darkness, and in this you are deceived. Beyond this darkness, and yet still within you, is the vision of Christ, Who looks on all in light. Your "vision" comes from fear, as His from love (T-13.V.8:1-5,9; 9:1-3).

We know what we see comes from fear if we have made differences real, for vision sees only the sameness that reflects the unity of the Sonship:

**(4:2-3) All separation, all distinctions, and the multitude of differences you believe make up the world. They are not there.**

Jesus is not only stating that God did not create airplane crashes, AIDS, cancer, or misery. He did not create separation, distinctions, or differences. The principle of Heaven is non-dualistic Oneness. Everything external does not and cannot exist,

because it is outside God's Mind. Oneness does not see separation and differences, which are the domain of the ego's insane world of perception. The following passage from the manual describes this inherently illusory world:

> The belief in order of difficulties is the basis for the world's perception. It rests on differences; on uneven background and shifting foreground, on unequal heights and diverse sizes, on varying degrees of darkness and light, and thousands of contrasts in which each thing seen competes with every other in order to be recognized.... What the body's eyes behold is only conflict....
>
> Illusions are always illusions of differences. How could it be otherwise?... Finding health a burden, it [the mind] retreats into feverish dreams. And in these dreams the mind is separate, different from other minds, with different interests of its own, and able to gratify its needs at the expense of others (M-8.1:1-2, 6; 2:1-2, 7-8).

What is it in the mind that causes these differences? The next sentence tells us:

**(4:4-5) Love's enemy has made them up. Yet love can have no enemy, and so they have no cause, no being and no consequence.**

Everything in the world – its separation, distinctions, and differences – has no cause, because it comes from fear – love's "enemy" – which does not exist. Without a cause there is no effect, and without effect, the things of the world have no being. In the real world you are outside the world's dream. You look on it – pain, suffering, and death – but being beyond it you know what you see is not real: the world's cause is a thought that has already been undone – in fact, it never existed – and if there is no cause, what you observe has "no being and no consequence."

**(4:6-8) They can be valued, but remain unreal. They can be sought, but they can not be found. Today we will not seek for them, nor waste this day in seeking what can not be found.**

We seek for happiness, peace, and joy, but we will never find them because the world was made to keep their source hidden: the Love of God in our right minds. We are free within our dreams to value whatever we choose, but we have no power to make such values real:

> Only what God creates is irreversible and unchangeable. What you made can always be changed because, when you do not think like God, you are not really thinking at all. Delusional ideas are not real thoughts, although you can believe in them. But you are wrong. The function of thought comes from God and is in God. As part of His Thought, you *cannot* think apart from Him (T-5.V.6:11-16).

This happy fact is the Atonement.
Another clear statement follows of the mind's power to choose:

**(5) It is impossible to see two worlds which have no overlap of any kind. Seek for the one; the other disappears. But one remains. They are the range of**

**choice beyond which your decision cannot go. The real and the unreal are all there are to choose between, and nothing more than these.**

This is the law of the split mind: the decision maker must decide between the ego and the Holy Spirit. It cannot choose both of them, nor choose neither of them. One or the other must always be chosen.

> ... you *cannot* make decisions by yourself. The only question really is with what you choose to make them. That is really all. The first rule, then, is not coercion, but a simple statement of a simple fact. You will not make decisions by yourself whatever you decide. For they are made with idols or with God. And you ask help of anti-Christ or Christ, and which you choose will join with you and tell you what to do (T-30114:3-9).

This lesson's paragraph reflects this same idea. We choose between truth and illusion, the real and the unreal. Once we see the conflict between these two worlds, the solution is easy:

> The way out of conflict between two opposing thought systems is clearly to choose one and relinquish the other. If you identify with your thought system, and you cannot escape this, and if you accept two thought systems which are in complete disagreement, peace of mind is impossible. If you teach both, which you will surely do as long as you accept both, you are teaching conflict and learning it There can be no conflict between sanity and insanity. Only one is true, and therefore only one is real (T-6.V-B.5:1-3; 6:1-2).

**(6:1) Today we will attempt no compromise where none is possible.**

The ego's compromise, as we will see near the end of the lesson, brings a little bit of hell to Heaven, or vice versa. It is the attempt to bring God into the world, saying truth, happiness, and hope exist here. This makes the world real, compromising Heaven's non-dualistic reality that contains no separation, distinctions, or differences. That is why, as noted earlier, Jesus teaches that salvation is without compromise. He speaks here specifically within the context of forgiveness, but the general principle certainly holds:

> Salvation is no compromise of any kind. To compromise is to accept but part of what you want; to take a little and give up the rest. Salvation gives up nothing. It is complete for everyone.... for compromise is the belief salvation is impossible.... This course is easy just because it makes no compromise (T-23.1113:1-4, 6; 4:1).

When we believe something here has value, or when we hope for a brighter outcome – even if it is something as noble as world peace, or as pure as family health and happiness—we are trying to effect this compromise. And it will never work. Our hopes will fail because true hope lies only in inviting Jesus to look with us at the ego's hopelessness, thereby letting it go.

**(6:2-5) The world you see is proof you have already made a choice as all-embracing as its opposite. What we would learn today is more than just the lesson**

**that you cannot see two worlds. It also teaches that the one you see is quite consistent from the point of view from which you see it. It is all a piece because it stems from one emotion, and reflects its source in everything you see.**

Jesus is reflecting the principle *ideas leave not their source.* The way we learn which teacher we have chosen in our minds is by paying attention to the world we made. If it is a world of specialness, pain and loss, good and evil, that is proof – since *ideas leave not their source* – we have chosen the ego. The world's only value is to reflect back to us the mind's choice. As I have said, Lesson 193 tells us that if pain is real in our perception, we have chosen the wrong teacher (W-pI.193.7). This is because pain comes from separation, distinctions, and differences, our having made the body real. The lesson is not just that we cannot see two worlds, but that the world we see is consistent with the teacher we have chosen in our minds: *ideas leave not their source.* Our having understood this, the world can serve a different purpose.

**(7:1) Six times today, in thanks and gratitude, we gladly give five minutes to the thought that ends all compromise and doubt, and go beyond them all as one.**

Our gratitude is not for pain and suffering, but for the teacher within our minds who helps us understand where they come from. Whatever the circumstances in our lives, we are grateful because of the lessons we can learn from our teacher. Under Jesus' gentle guidance we come to see that every situation, however different in form, contains the single lesson that will save us from our pain. For this opportunity to be healed, we gladly give thanks.

Notice that Jesus is still talking about thirty minutes. In the previous lessons it was ten minutes, three times a day; now it is five minutes, six times a day. His purpose is to have us become increasingly mindful, and to think of the lessons more and more frequently. It is tempting, once we leave our homes in the morning, to step into the world and forget everything else. It seems so pressing. As Wordsworth said: "The world is too much with us."* If we "gladly give five minutes to the thought that ends all compromise and doubt, and go beyond them all as one," we will come to realize that all problems in the world are but one problem, and this recognition allows us to choose its one solution.

**(7:2) We will not make a thousand meaningless distinctions, nor attempt to bring with us a little part of unreality, as we devote our minds to finding only what is real.**

Distinctions such as: this is a good thing that has happened to me today, this is a bad thing; this is a good person I am with, this is a bad person – are born of the ego's fear. Instead we want to learn that everything is the same, because we have one teacher who interprets God's *Sons – without exception* – as sharing the common content of needing forgiveness. This desire to see one content within the illusion opens the way to finding what alone is real: the Oneness of Self, the Christ that God created one with Him.

**(8) Begin your searching for the other world by asking for a strength beyond your own, and recognizing what it is you seek. You do not want illusions. And you come to these five minutes emptying your hands of all the petty treasures of this world. You wait for God to help you, as you say:**

**Lesson 130**

***It is impossible to see two worlds. Let me accept the strength God offers me and see no value in this world, that I may find my freedom and deliverance.***

Our focus is on giving up the pettiness we have chosen in place of the magnitude of God. Again, we need to be aware of what we are settling for, remembering that our problem is not that we ask for too much, but for far too little (T-26.VII.11:7). It is the true strength of Christ's eagle we seek, not the weakness of the ego's sparrow (M-4.I.2:2). Thus we bring to this strength our petty treasures, there to empty our hands and allow the Love of God to fill us. Our meaningless worldly values of specialness, brought to the value of the real world, are quickly replaced by true freedom and deliverance.

**(9:1-3) God will be there. For you have called upon the great unfailing power which will take this giant step with you in gratitude. Nor will you fail to see His thanks expressed in tangible perception and in truth.**

This is the reflection of the real world. As long as we believe we are here, we cannot know truth as it really is: abstract, non-specific, and transcendent. Yet we can perceive truth's reflection in the form of forgiveness: seeing another's interests as our own. The reflection itself is not holy, for holiness belongs only to what it symbolizes. Jesus makes this point early in the text when he discusses vision, a reflection of Heaven's knowledge.

> True vision is the natural perception of spiritual sight, but it is still a correction rather than a fact. Spiritual sight is symbolic, and therefore not a device for knowing. It is, however, a means of right perception, which brings it into the proper domain of the miracle. A "vision of God" would be a miracle rather than a revelation. The fact that perception is involved at all removes the experience from the realm of knowledge. That is why visions, however holy, do not last (T-3.III.4).

Thus we want to keep in mind that in the end it is God and His Love we want, not the specific forms in which They are reflected. Jesus emphasizes this point in the next paragraph.

**(9:4-5) You will not doubt what you will look upon, for though it is perception, it is not the kind of seeing that your eyes alone have ever seen before. And you will know God's strength upheld you as you made this choice.**

Elsewhere this is called Christ's vision: the seeing that comes when we ask Jesus' help to look at the world differently. His, not our own, is the strength we call upon; as the text says: we always choose between our weakness and the strength of Christ in us (T-31.VIII.2). It is important to understand we are wrong and do not recognize what we have made real. Moreover, we do not understand what upsets us, but think we know. Yet the fact we think we know and blame our upset on something external tells us we know nothing. Thus we humbly need to call upon the real strength within, enabling us to look differently at what was bothering us. Thus vision, still within the realm of perception, sets the stage for the transformation into knowledge.

**(10:1) Dismiss temptation easily today whenever it arises, merely by remembering the limits of your choice.**

We are again asked to be mindful of anything in our personal worlds that might tempt us to forget what we know to be the truth. Always keep in mind this pregnant sentence from the text:

> Nothing so blinding as perception of form (T-22.III.6:7).

Asking Jesus for help means wanting to go beyond the *form* of specialness to its *thought* in our minds. That is what this aforementioned sentence means from the text's final section:

> Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel (T-31.VIII.1:1-2).

We want to move beyond the temptation to see the body as real, to the mind that is the only home of choice. It is therefore our only hope for meaningful change. The real world is thus attained, not by deeds, but by a simple change of mind as we shift from guilt to holiness, the unreal to the real, the false to the true, as we now see:

**(10:2-3) The unreal or the real, the false or true is what you see and only what you see. Perception is consistent with your choice, and hell or Heaven comes to you as one.**

It is one or the other, and you need to be vigilant for how you seek to blend the two by bringing the Holy Spirit into the world. Rather, you want to bring your world to the mind, where He is. The worldly situation does not have to be rectified or healed; the mind's faulty perception is the problem. Perception begins with a thought of separation, and it is this that needs to be healed: the choice for hell over Heaven. It is instructive to recognize that the ego is a 100 percent thought system of hate, and the Holy Spirit a 100 percent thought system of love. There is no in between, which is the meaning of Jesus' words that hell and Heaven come to us as one, echoed in the manual:

> Do not forget that sacrifice is total. There are no half sacrifices. You cannot give up Heaven partially. You cannot be a little bit in hell. The Word of God has no exceptions. It is this that makes it holy and beyond the world (M-13.7:1-6).

The simplicity of this choice makes salvation simple, and therein lies our hope and the mind's true power.

**(11:1) Accept a little part of hell as real, and you have damned your eyes and cursed your sight, and what you will behold is hell indeed.**

This has nothing to do with the outer form. I "accept a little bit of hell as real" when **I** accept the ego thought system as real. Whatever I see outside is a shadow of this hell, regardless of how pretty or appealing its form: illusion is illusion; hate is hate. What we choose to believe in is what we will perceive, and what we perceive is what we believe to be real. Our choice for Heaven becomes meaningful only when we recognize our prior

choice for hell, and actively choose against it. Thus does our curse of God and ourselves become a blessing:

> An ancient miracle has come to bless and to replace an ancient enmity that came to kill (T-26.IX.8:5).

**(11:2-5) Yet the release of Heaven still remains within your range of choice, to take the place of everything that hell would show to you. All you need say to any part of hell, whatever form it takes, is simply this:**

***It is impossible to see two worlds. I seek my freedom and deliverance, and this is not a part of what I want.***

We close with the awareness that there is a part of us that wants to be in hell. It is that wish alone that makes us unhappy, not what anyone says or does. If we are truly serious about wanting the peace of God, we will be serious about looking at the personal hell we cherish and bring into our world. Fortunately, we can always choose again, and in that choice are we and the Sonship made free.

* The full passage reads: “The world is too much with us; late we see in Nature that is ours; / We have given our hearts away, and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: / Little a sordid boon! (“The World Is Too Much with Us” [1807], *l.* 1)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 132**

**I loose the world from all I thought it was.**

This is one of the more important lessons in the workbook, as it provides an explicit statement of the illusory nature of the world and its connection with our thoughts. The early workbook lessons, as you recall, centered on the relationship between our thoughts and the images we see in the world. The same ideas are spoken of here, but in

a morehe images we see1(n)the w(o)rld. The1(n)same ideas are spoken of3(e)here, but(e)in1.13))-27(1(n)ltn.4(s)-

> overlook truth.... a clear-cut attempt to demonstrate your own ability to understand what you perceive. This is shown by the fact that you react to your interpretations as if they were correct (T-12.I.1:7-8; 2:2-3).

Thus do we believe our perceptions of others, let alone the world, are true, simply because we say so. Yet it is our insane ego that makes the claim, buried behind our arrogant certitude.

Anyone who has worked with the clinically psychotic will tell you there is no way to convince them their thought system is unreal. Such attempts merely cause them to hold on to their delusions even more tenaciously. This then makes you another form of the enemy, who is already an integral part of the delusional system. However, it is the same situation with the rest of the world's population. We do not want to be told our thoughts are the cause of everything we experience, nor that the reason we are even here is to demonstrate just the opposite. If I am aware of the effects of my thoughts, I would change them. Being unaware, I can be the innocent victim of what the world has done to me. There is thus no hope of change and my ego is safe.

**(1:7) It is but when their source is raised to question that the hope of freedom comes to him at last.**

This is the freedom Jesus brings to us in *A Course in Miracles,* and what he asks us to bring to the world. This recalls the great philosopher Socrates, who caused ancient Athenians to question what they believed. He did not supply answers, but asked people to question their assumptions. When people were stirred up by this philosophical gadfly, disastrous consequences followed as the authorities succeeded in silencing for good his questioning and probing voice.

In the Introduction to Chapter 24, Jesus tells us that "to learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold" (T-24.in.2:1). He does not require us to relinquish our values, including our specialness, but he does ask us to question our thinking we are right about everything, and to consider that perhaps there is someone within us who knows better. Needless to say, we cannot raise our egos to question if we do not think we are responsible for them. If we believe we are the effects of what others have done to us, we will not accept the part we play in the dream we call our lives. Consequently, the first step in learning this course is to realize that everything originates in our minds, and nowhere else. Thus it is in our minds that the questioning must occur, the first step in forgiveness, ultimately enabling us to be present to others, calling them to question as we had questioned, to choose as we had chosen. Recall:

> To them God's teachers come, to represent another choice which they had forgotten. The simple presence of a teacher of God is a reminder. His thoughts ask for the right to question what the patient has accepted as true (M-5.111.2: 1-3).

In that questioning our healing begins, and freedom at last becomes possible.

**(2:1) Yet is salvation easily achieved, for anyone is free to change his mind, and all his thoughts change with it.**

To change our minds is to change our teacher, allowing our thoughts to change

as well. With the ego, these thoughts consist of sin, guilt, fear, suffering, attack, and death. With Jesus, they are ones of forgiveness, peace, and healing, which undo the ego. Anyone can make this choice, because the process does not depend on anything external. It is irrelevant if you live in a concentration camp, prison, or ghetto, or as a member of the privileged class; you can change your mind and forgive while lying in a hospital bed and dying. The state of your body or the world around you is irrelevant to salvation, which has to do only with your mind. Again, this change is born of the recognition that perhaps, just perhaps, you were wrong. You do not even have to be definite about it; only admit that such a possibility exists.

**(2:2-4) Now the source of thought has shifted, for to change your mind means you have changed the source of all ideas you think or ever thought or yet will think. You free the past from what you thought before. You free the future from all ancient thoughts of seeking what you do not want to find.**

Remember that the ultimate source of our freedom is the teacher we choose: the ego's guilt or the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. Both are in our minds, which means the past is freed there: the only focus of the Course's curriculum.

These lines refer to the previous lesson, and Jesus tells us that what is going on right now is part of an ancient thought that is still very much in the present, because linear time is an illusion. On an individual level we feel the shadowy fragment of what we all, as one Son, felt in that original instant. There is no difference because there is no time. The ego's world of time and space – past, present, future, and separate bodies – was specifically made to put a gap between the original and ongoing thought system of separation, and our experiences in the world. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to shrink that gap, which is why early on in the text Jesus says the miracle saves time, collapsing the time interval by shrinking the space between the cause – the ancient instant when we chose the ego over the Holy Spirit – and the effect – the suffering we experience now in the body; the same gap we have introduced to keep us separate from each other. This important passage warrants a second quotation, as it highlights the Course's central thrust of the miracle, which spares us the almost endless misery of our guilt:

> The miracle minimizes the need for time.... [it] entails a sudden shift from horizontal to vertical perception. This introduces an interval from which the giver and receiver both emerge farther along in time than they would otherwise have been. The miracle thus has the unique property of abolishing time to the extent that it renders the interval of time it spans unnecessary. There is no relationship between the time a miracle takes and the time it covers. The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years. It does so by the underlying recognition of perfect equality of giver and receiver on which the miracle rests. The miracle shortens time by collapsing it, thus eliminating certain intervals within it. It does this, however, within the larger temporal sequence (T-1.11.6:1, 3-10).

It is essential to read the words of *A Course in Miracles* carefully, for they often have an evocative intent. Thus Jesus' use of the word *ancient* is purposeful, hoping to dislodge us from our very narrow band of experience as creatures in time and space, and back to that ancient – *and current* – state of mind. There are, in fact, two ancient

states: *hatred,* when we believe we destroyed Heaven so we could exist; and *Atonement,* hatred's undoing.

**(3:1-2) The present now remains the only time. Here in the present is the world set free.**

The world is held in bondage by our identification with the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. Once projected, it gives rise to linear time: past, present, and future. In the holy instant – the meaning of "the present now remains the only time" – we are not in the world, meaning our attention is not riveted on bodies, our own or others'; we attend only our new Teacher:

> It is evident that the Holy Spirit's perception of time is the exact opposite of the ego's. The reason is equally clear, for they perceive the goal of time as diametrically opposed. The Holy Spirit interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for time unnecessary.... His emphasis is therefore on the only aspect of time that can extend to the infinite, for *now* is the closest approximation of eternity that this world offers (T- 13 .IV.7: 1-3,5).

When we are with the Holy Spirit, we are no longer separate from the Love of God. Therefore there is no ego thought system of sin, guilt, or fear, and no world that could arise as protection for that thought system. In the *now* of the holy instant the world is set free, because the world in that instant does not exist: "At no single instant does the body exist at all" (T-18.VII.3:1). In the holy instant there is no body, because, once again, the body is the embodiment of the ego thought of separation (W-pI.72.2:2), which has gone. At no single instant does the world exist either, because the world and body are the same, united in the one purpose of separation.

**(3:3) For as you let the past be lifted and release the future from your ancient fears, you find escape and give it to the world.**

We now are familiar with the idea there is no world to which we give anything, and so we do not literally give to the world the escape we have found. The world is simply part of our minds, and the mind of God's Son is one. Thus, the Word of Jesus in *A Course in Miracles* does not have to be preached, taught, or disseminated, and certainly does not need a church built around it. His Word is meant for one person only: you, the reader. When you identify with the Word of the Atonement principle, you *are* the Sonship and the world is healed. Thus is the world saved, and why, when you are healed, you are not healed alone, the subject of a lesson (137) we shall explore presently.

In summary then, Jesus does not literally mean you give escape to the world, which would be directly opposite to everything his course teaches. Escape is given to the world in the sense that it exists in your mind, and to the extent you identify with the ego, the world exists in a diseased mind, which is why there is a diseased world. However, when you choose the Teacher of healing and your mind is healed, the Sonship is healed with you. If there is no separation, there is no world. Thus is the world set free, the prerequisite for its healing and gentle disappearance:

> Can what has no beginning really end? The world will end in an illusion, as it began. Yet will its ending be an illusion of mercy. The illusion of forgiveness,

> complete, excluding no one, limitless in gentleness, will cover it, hiding all evil, concealing all sin and ending guilt forever. So ends the world that guilt had made, for now it has no purpose and is gone.... The world will end when its thought system has been completely reversed (M-14.1:1-5; 4:1).
>
> And so the world ends in joy, peace, laughter, and with a blessing (M-14.5:1-8).

**(3:4-5) You have enslaved the world with all your fears, your doubts and miseries, your pain and tears; and all your sorrows press on it, and keep the world a prisoner to your beliefs. Death strikes it everywhere because you hold the bitter thoughts of death within your mind.**

The focus again is on our thoughts – fear, doubt, misery, and pain exist only within the mind. They come, without exception, from the belief that we exist, which means God had to be destroyed. My individual existence was paramount and my only concern, and so I gladly killed if it meant my existence would continue. This selfishness is the real meaning of sin, and the thought of having killed to acquire individuality is the source of our tears and sorrows.

The beginning and end of this thought system is death: I killed God, and now fear He will kill me in return. Recall that since this is the ego's myth, the wrong-minded world follows the ego's rules, which means anything is possible, including God's return from the dead. Today's spate of horror movies well exemplifies this phenomenon. Because death is the consummation of the ego thought system, it is the consummation of everyone's existence. It must be so, as the world is nothing but the projection of our thoughts, as stated in this lesson. Since the mind's thoughts are of separation, sin, guilt, fear, and death, the world of time and space is likewise a place of separation, sin, guilt, fear, and death. This is how one passage describes the ego's vicious use of time, culminating in the body's death and the soul's eternal confinement in hell:

> The belief in hell is inescapable to those who identify with the ego. Their nightmares and their fears are all associated with it. The ego teaches that hell is in the future, for this is what all its teaching is directed to.... How bleak and despairing is the ego's use of time! And how terrifying! For underneath its fanatical insistence that the past and future be the same is hidden a far more insidious threat to peace.... the belief in guilt must lead to the belief in hell, and always does. The only way in which the ego allows the fear of hell to be experienced is to bring hell here, but always as a foretaste of the future. For no one who considers himself as deserving of hell can believe that punishment will end in peace (T-15.I.4:1-3; 6:1-3, 5-7).

Within this insane and vicious thought system of sin and punishment, guilt and death, there is no escape. Hope lies only outside it, in the right mind that transcends both the ego's thought system and its world.

**(4:1-3) The world is nothing in itself. Your mind must give it meaning. And what you behold upon it** [the world] **are your wishes, acted out so you can look on them and think them real.**

A most clear statement. The world is nothing in itself, being only a projection of a

thought that does not exist. Thus a thought of nothing gives rise to a world of nothing. None of this will make sense unless you step beyond it with a teacher who stands outside nothingness, a teacher who represents the Everything of God. An insane body looking at an insane thought system can only judge it as sane, for it knows not of reality. That is why Jesus continually calls us to join him on the journey beyond the ego:

> When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you. The truth in both of us is beyond the ego (T-8.V.4:1-3).

**(4:4-5) Perhaps you think you did not make the world, but came unwillingly to what was made already, hardly waiting for your thoughts to give it meaning. Yet in truth you found exactly what you looked for when you came.**

Our experience when we are born – which is why we come as innocent, helpless, and vulnerable babies – is: "What am I doing here? This is not my choice." From the moment we are conceived, a veil of amnesia fell across our minds, and we forgot our conception's real origin – the wish to exist, but not to be responsible for it. This is the thought that conceives itself as a separated physical entity. The world, part of the same thought system of separation, reinforces this experience for it is perceived as pre-existing our birth, a reality outside our minds.

Despite the common experience that we did not come willingly into this world, the truth is that we found exactly what we looked for when we came: a home for our individual specialness and, above all, a home where we escape all responsibility for being here. Thus we can tell God: "Yes, I exist, but it is not my fault. My life did not originate when I separated from You in my mind's decision, but with my parents." Yet the truth, again, is that we found in the world the desired proof of our innocence and our brother's guilt: our wishes acted out so we could look on them and think them real.

The workbook does not usually provide the in-depth metaphysical discussion found in the text, because of its different purpose. This lesson, however, reflects the underpinning of the Course's thought system, and shows why Jesus states at the beginning of the workbook that it is the theoretical foundation of the text that makes these lessons meaningful (W-in.1:1). This foundation is what we find here, though stated somewhat elliptically.

**(5:1) There is no world apart from what you wish, and herein lies your ultimate release.**

The world tells us our release comes from within the world itself, but it comes only from the recognition that the world emanated from the thoughts that represent our wishes. Recall these important words about the world of perception: "It is the outward picture of a wish; an image that you wanted to be true" (T-24.VII.8:10). It is therefore our thoughts from which we must be freed, for the power to change rests with us. In this world we rarely have power over what our or other bodies do to us, yet we and we alone have power over our thoughts. Indeed, it is our only power:

> The power of decision is your one remaining freedom as a prisoner of this world. You can decide to see it right (T-12.VII.9:1-2).

The decision to see the world right is the decision to see it as the projection of our secret wish.

**(5:2) Change but your mind on what you want to see, and all the world must change accordingly.**

Again, Jesus does not speak of the external world, but its source in the mind. The following passage describes the terrifying world of our perception that follows the mind's choice to identify with guilt:

> The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find (T-31.I.7:4-8).

If, on the other hand, we identify with the thought of guiltlessness, we perceive a world in which there is no blame, attack, or pain:

> The outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guiltless is a world in which there is no fear, and everything is lit with hope and sparkles with a gentle friendliness (T-31.1.8:1).

This is Jesus' point here. It is not that the external world necessarily changes – very often it does not – but my perception of the world most definitely will, because perception comes from the teacher I have chosen. *Projection makes perception:* I look within first, and what I see outside is what I have projected. If I choose the ego as my teacher – the teacher of guilt – I will perceive a world of judgment: sin, blame, guilt, suffering, and death. If Jesus is my teacher – the teacher of guiltlessness – I will perceive a world in which there is no blame or punishment. God's Son is thus seen as one, and each of us seemingly separated fragments is understood as sharing the same need and purpose. The ego's perception of separate interests shifts to Jesus' vision of the single purpose of Atonement.

**(5:3-4) Ideas leave not their source. This central theme is often stated in the text, and must be borne in mind if you would understand the lesson for today.**

Jesus is reminding us of this key principle of *A Course in Miracles.* Understanding this lesson, not to mention the Course itself, rests upon a proper understanding of this principle. The idea of a world in which there is suffering and death has never left its source: the guilt in our minds. The ego tells us the idea of guilt *does* leave its source and make a real world of guilt that is separate from, and independent of the mind. Jesus, however, thinks otherwise (T-23.I.2:7). The world we perceive outside is but the projection of the world we made real inside. Since what is projected never leaves its source in the mind, there is literally no external world. Thus there can be no world to save. The parallel principle to *ideas leave not their source is projection makes perception,* explained in a now familiar passage:

> Projection makes perception. The world you see is what you gave it,

> nothing more than that.... It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. As a man thinketh, so does he perceive. Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world. Perception is a result and not a cause (T-21.in.1:1-2, 5-8).

**(5:5-6:1) It is not pride which tells you that you made the world you see, and that it changes as you change your mind.**

**But it is pride that argues you have come into a world quite separate from yourself, impervious to what you think, and quite apart from what you chance to think it is.**

*Humility* and *arrogance* are central themes in *A Course in Miracles,* and it would seem to be the height of arrogance to claim we made the world, and a mark of humility to state we did not. However, as he often does, Jesus takes what we commonly think and turns it upside down to teach the exact opposite of the world's (i.e., the ego's) thought system. Thus, Jesus says it is not arrogance (pride) but humility to acknowledge we made the world, and that it exists only as a thought. Since *ideas leave not their source,* this thought of a separated world, once again, has never left its source in our minds. As our mind shifts from the ego's guilt to Jesus' forgiveness, our experience of the world shifts accordingly.

Arrogance tells us there is a world outside us, because it affirms we are right and God is wrong: we made a world outside Heaven, and are proud of it. If that were true, we would indeed have the power that could destroy truth. Yet there is nothing outside the Mind of God, and so a separated universe is impossible. Nonetheless, we believe an external world pre-dates our coming, is unaffected by our thoughts, and will post-date our leaving. This is based on the Newtonian model of the physical universe, as opposed to that of the quantum physicists, which also concludes that the world is a product of thought. As we have seen, *A Course in Miracles* adds that this fundamental thought is our illusory guilt.

**(6:2-3) There is no world! This is a central thought the course attempts to teach.**

Jesus is explicit – by virtue of the exclamation point and the statement itself – that this thought is crucial to understanding, practicing, and learning his course. There is probably no more important concept in its teachings, nor one more misunderstood. Students of *A Course in Miracles* – in a magical attempt at self-preservation – often seek to distort this statement of the world's unreality in order to minimize its radical nature. They claim that Jesus means that the world we *see* is illusory; in other words, the ego's misinterpretations of it. Yet, they maintain, the material universe itself is real; in other words, an extension of God. Although throughout the Course Jesus certainly focuses on our misperceptions, the underlying foundation on which he presents his thought system – "a central thought the course attempts to teach" – is that the physical world, meaning the entire cosmos, is an ego defense, the purpose of which is to find a hiding place that God could not enter (W-pII.3.2:4). Moreover, the world belies the changeless, perfect, and eternal nature of reality. The physical universe of time and space, being Heaven's opposite in every respect, seeks to prove that non-dualistic reality is illusion, and dualistic illusion is reality. Many passages in *A Course in Miracles* illustrate this. Here are three representative ones, which we have seen before:

> The world you see is an illusion of a world. God did not create it, for what He creates must be eternal as Himself Yet there is nothing in the world you see that will endure forever. Some things will last in time a little while longer than others. But the time will come when all things visible will have an end (C-4.1).
>
> What *seems* eternal all will have an end. The stars will disappear, and night and day will be no more. All things that come and go, the tides, the seasons and the lives of men; all things that change with time and bloom and fade will not return. Where time has set an end is not where the eternal is (T-29.VI.2:7-10).
>
> God's laws do not obtain directly to a world perception rules, for such a world could not have been created by the Mind to which perception has no meaning (T-25.III.2:1).

Why, then, would students deny what *A Course in Miracles* makes so clear? The dynamics of the ego provide the answer: If the world is an illusion, so too must our bodies, which means the selves we think we are – physically and psychologically – must also be illusory. That is why Jesus raises the question as to who is the *I* who am reading *A Course in Miracles* or applying these principles: "Who is the "you" who are living in this world?" (T-4.II.11:8) The right answer, of course, is that it is not the *I* we normally identify as ourselves, but the decision maker in the mind; the dreamer of the dream, not a figure within it we call by our name. Since there is no world, there can be no *you* living here. Thus the ego seeks to preserve its identity by arguing that the world really does exist. Moreover, it is a world in which God our Creator and Source is directly involved. Given the "reality" of materiality – otherwise how could God know about it – our individual selves must be "real" as well. Thus the ego once again seems to have triumphed over God.

**(6:4-5) Not everyone is ready to accept it** [this thought], **and each one must go as far as he can let himself be led along the road to truth. He will return and go still farther, or perhaps step back a while and then return again.**

This seems to suggest reincarnation: some of our experiences are positive and others negative, and thus we come back over and over until we learn the lessons. Indeed, there are many instances within *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus implies we are reincarnated; and he explicitly discusses the issue in the manual, yet without taking a position (M-24). The bottom line, however, is that since linear time is an illusion, as is the body and world, there is no world we could enter – once or many times. Closer to the truth is a model of the mind as holographic, wherein everything is seen to have occurred in one instant, and is still occurring in one instant. Therefore, what we experience in our individual lives are simply different aspects of the same illusory dream. For the purposes of our Atonement path, it matters not whether these different aspects occur within one lifetime or over many. Our function remains to choose the holy instant in the present, focusing on the forgiveness lessons the classroom of our immediate experience provides for us to learn – now.

**(7:1) But healing is the gift of those who are prepared to learn there is no world, and can accept the lesson now.**

This constitutes healing because if there is no world, there can be no thought of separation. Thus we return to the principle *ideas leave not their source:* the idea of a separated world has never left its source in the mind that thought it. Yet if there is no world, it must have come from nothing, since something must produce something. This means the separation thought must be nothing, since it "produced" nothing. All sickness, as we are told throughout *A Course in Miracles,* comes from the belief in separation. If there is no separation, there can be no sickness:

> No mind is sick until another mind agrees that they are separate. And thus it is their joint decision to be sick. If you withhold agreement and accept the part you play in making sickness real, the other mind cannot project its guilt without your aid in letting it perceive itself as separate and apart from you. Thus is the body not perceived as sick by both your minds from separate points of view. Uniting with a brother's mind prevents the cause of sickness and perceived effects. Healing is the effect of minds that join, as sickness comes from minds that separate (T-28.III.2).

Healing, then, undoes the ego's thought system, held securely in place by the belief that this world and our experiences here are real. Therefore, we forgive our brother for what he has *not* done, for nothing ever happens in a dream. Sickness reinforces this illusion; healing undoes it. As Lesson 80 said: "One problem, one solution" (W-pI.80.1:5).

**(7:2) Their readiness will bring the lesson to them in some form which they can understand and recognize.**

This means you do not have to learn this lesson through *this* course. Any spiritual path that emphasizes forgiveness instead of attack, unity instead of separation, teaches the same lesson in the end. A statement from the beginning of the manual makes this important unspecial point:

> There is a course for every teacher of God. The form of the course varies greatly. So do the particular teaching aids involved. But the content of the course never changes. Its central theme is always, "God's Son is guiltless, and in his innocence is his salvation." It can be taught by actions or thoughts; in words or soundlessly; in any language or in no language; in any place or time or manner (M-1.3:1-6).

**(7:3-4) Some see it suddenly on point of death, and rise to teach it. Others find it in experience that is not of this world, which shows them that the world does not exist because what they behold must be the truth, and yet it clearly contradicts the world.**

There are different ways of experiencing this truth. Some people have what is commonly referred to as a mystical experience, when they are suddenly transported by their minds beyond this world and their experience here. In that instant they recognize the world's unreality, and know that the unified Sonship has never left its Source. Regardless of any fear that might ensue, this experience becomes a standard against

which all else is evaluated, enabling them not to take this world quite as seriously as before. Once you have allowed the light of truth in your mind—even for an instant—you realize everything else is a defense against the experience of perfect love.

However, there is great resistance to allowing that light in, for doing so means the end of the ego's darkness. As the text reminds us, confirming our experience:

> As the light comes nearer you will rush to darkness, shrinking from the truth, sometimes retreating to the lesser forms of fear, and sometimes to stark terror (T-18.III.2:1).

This stark terror sometimes takes the form of suicide, once it is seen that the world is not what we thought:

> The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another. Men have died on seeing this, because they saw no way except the pathways offered by the world. And learning they led nowhere, lost their hope (T-31.IV.3:3-5).

However, if we remain with the light of our Teacher, His Love enables us to pass through the darkness of despair to the real world of life and truth.

**(8:1-2) And some will find it in this course, and in the exercises that we do today. Today's idea is true because the world does not exist.**

Again, *A Course in Miracles* is not the only way of experiencing and learning this truth: *"some* will find it in this course." Moreover, as I have repeatedly emphasized, Jesus literally means there is no world. He does not mean simply a world of pain, suffering, or illness, but absolutely everything in the perceptual world, since all materiality has shape, changes, and ultimately dies. Today's idea – "I loose the world from all I thought it was" – is true because the world does not exist. If it did, I would have no power to free it, which I can do because it is held in bondage only by the decision maker in my mind.

**(8:3) And if it** [the world] **is indeed your own imagining, then you can loose it from all things you ever thought it was by merely changing all the thoughts that gave it these appearances.**

On a practical level – we need not be metaphysical – as long as I identify with the ego and choose to learn from it, I will feel separated and guilty. Since guilt demands punishment, I am impelled by fear to project it outside my self in a maladaptive way of getting rid of it. I then believe that my guilt – now present in others in the form of sin and victimization – is poised to attack me, for that is the nature of sin. I thus cannot help perceiving a world in which I am vulnerable, and in which threat exists all around me. Almost always, there is very little I can do about it.

Once I change teachers, however, I release my guilt by withdrawing its projection. I may well be in the same situation that existed before, but I am now at peace because the love of Jesus is with me instead of the ego's hate. To make this point again, when our thoughts change, it is our perception of the world that changes, not the world itself.

For example, people will no longer be perceived as enemies, but as friends who are as insane as we. Thus we all make the same journey home, even though a part of us does not believe we deserve to return to a place we do not even believe is there. Yet our right minds no longer see the world as our enemy, as Jesus tells us later in the workbook, for we have chosen to be its friend (W-pI.194.9:6).

**(8:4) The sick are healed as you let go all thoughts of sickness, and the dead arise when you let thoughts of life replace all thoughts you ever held of death.**

Jesus is not literally suggesting we greet the dead who, because of our healed minds, will rise from their graves to thank us. Rather, he is using the symbolism of the Bible – in which healing the sick and raising the dead are regarded as signs of Jesus' return (Matthew 10: 1,8) – to speak of the Second Coming of Christ *(not Jesus),* the awakening of the Son from his dream of sickness and death. Jesus' point is about my healed *thoughts.* When I accept his love as my split mind's only reality, I will see sickness and death as expressions of the ego's insanity, of which I am no longer a part. I may return to the insanity, but in this holy instant, knowing Jesus is with me, I have undone all thoughts of separation, sickness, and death.

Again, if *ideas leave not their source,* the idea of a sick and dying body has never left its source, the sick, separation thought in the mind. When I join with Jesus this thought is undone, and can no longer be expressed as a sick or dying body. My physical eyes might perceive sickness and death, but my healed mind realizes these are only figures in a dream, and my reality and everyone else's is outside it. That is the meaning of healing. To repeat, Jesus is not talking about anything specific or external. His words suggest that, but since the world and bodies are illusions, sickness and death must be illusory, too. It cannot be emphasized often enough that Jesus speaks only of thoughts. As he says in the text: "This is a course in cause and not effect" (T-21.VII.7:8) – the *effect* is the body; the *cause,* our thoughts.

**(9:1-2) A lesson earlier repeated once must now be stressed again, for it contains the firm foundation for today's idea. You are as God created you.**

As noted previously, that lesson – "I am as God created me" – appeared twice before (W-pI.94,110), will appear still again (W-pI.162), and becomes the basis for a twenty-lesson review period (W-pI.rvVI). It obviously holds an important place in Jesus' curriculum.

**(9:3-4) There is no place where you can suffer, and no time that can bring change to your eternal state. How can a world of time and place exist, if you remain as God created you?**

Joining with Jesus, these become not mere words, but our reality. Thus, we take nothing in our personal or collective world seriously. To repeat the lines from the text:

> Learn, then, the happy habit of response to all temptation to perceive yourself as weak and miserable with these words:
>
> *I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing. And I am His Son* (T-31.VI11.5:1-4).

These words point to the reality of our Self, the "place" within that belies what the ego told us was true. They reflect the thought of truth, in the presence of which separation and suffering, time and place, cannot come. As Jesus happily reminds us:

> Together, we can laugh... and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time.
>
> A timelessness in which is time made real; a part of God that can attack itself; a separate brother as an enemy; a mind within a body all are forms of circularity whose ending starts at its beginning, ending at its cause (T-27.VIII. 6:4-7:1).

Thus we joyfully remain as God created us.

**(10:1) What is the lesson for today except another way of saying that to know your Self is the salvation of the world?**

If I know my Self, I have said "no" to the ego, thus saving my mind from its thought system of guilt. Since minds are joined and the world is a product of the mind, the world is saved as well. This oft-repeated point goes to the heart of Jesus' teachings in his course.

**(10:2-3) To free the world from every kind of pain is but to change your mind about yourself. There is no world apart from your ideas because ideas leave not their source, and you maintain the world within your mind in thought.**

This is almost exactly what we saw in paragraph 5, where Jesus said: "There is no world apart from what you wish," continuing with "Ideas leave not their source." Here, he says: "There is no world apart from your ideas because ideas leave not their source." It should be clear that the world is freed from pain and healed of suffering – including the belief in death – by *your* changing *your* mind, because your thoughts are the cause of your perception of pain. Change your thinking and the pain is gone. This change constitutes recalling the projection, recognizing that the problem of pain is not external (in the body), but internal (in the mind). Let me repeat this important paragraph from the text, explaining how we escape from all suffering:

> Now you are being shown you *can* escape. All that is needed is you look upon the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up. How could there be another way to solve a problem that is very simple, but has been obscured by heavy clouds of complication, which were made to keep the problem unresolved? Without the clouds the problem will emerge in all its primitive simplicity. The choice will not be difficult, because the problem is absurd when clearly seen. No one has difficulty making up his mind to let a simple problem be resolved if it is seen as hurting him, and also very easily removed (T-27.VII.2).

Thus the problem of suffering – *the* problem in the world – is nothing more than an ego set-up, designed to obscure the simplicity of the answer: changing our minds.

It is impossible to understand statements such as these from the perspective of

the body. They can be understood only from a point outside the dream – above the battleground. Only then can you look down on the world and body, and smile with gentleness at what had heretofore seemed so serious. From within the world, a smile that takes nothing seriously is an attack and hardly loving, tantamount to people hitting others over the head with the course, saying for example: "Why are you upset, don't you know the world is an illusion?" However, if you really knew the world were an illusion, you could never say that to someone in pain. These statements should be expressed only when you are *truly* clear – from a position outside the dream – that the world and body are illusory. Otherwise, once again, these gentle and healing teachings end up as attacks.

**(11:1-4) Yet if you are as God created you, you cannot think apart from Him, nor make what does not share His timelessness and Love. Are these inherent in the world you see? Does it create like Him? Unless it does, it is not real, and cannot be at all.**

What does not "share His timelessness and Love" is the body and world we made. In our feverish dreams we do believe we have done this, but in truth it was only make-believe. In the next lesson Jesus cites timelessness as one of the criteria to evaluate our choices. It is also one of the arguments Jesus utilizes, as we have seen, to prove that the eternal and perfect God could not have created something totally different from Him. He continues in the same vein:

**(11:5) If you are real the world you see is false, for God's creation is unlike the world in every way.**

This is the criterion Jesus asks us to apply: Is the world an expression of God's perfect Love, timeless and eternal? This standard, then, forms the basis for concluding that this imperfect world of time and death cannot be God's creation. Since God can only create like Himself, whatever He creates must be as perfect, changeless, and eternal as He. This is true only of spirit – not the body – so this lesson is crucial to understanding the Course's non-dualistic foundation.

**(11:6) And as it was His Thought by which you were created, so it is your thoughts which made it** [the world] **and must set it free, that you may know the Thoughts you share with God.**

Just as God is the Creator of Heaven and Christ, so are we the miscreators or makers of this world. It is therefore not God's responsibility to free it, but our own. All God does – through the Holy Spirit, His memory in our minds – is remind us that the world is indeed in sorry shape, and there is no hope of salvation here. Yet because it is a situation we made, we can undo it, thus remembering the truth of our reality as God's one Thought.

**(12:1) Release the world!**

Again, Jesus is not talking about anything external, for the world is nothing but the epiphenomenon of our thoughts. We release the world by releasing these thoughts, accomplished by choosing the Teacher of forgiving thoughts.

**(12:2-3) Your real creations wait for this release to give you fatherhood, not of illusions, but as God in truth. God shares His Fatherhood with you who are His Son, for He makes no distinctions in what is Himself and what is still Himself.**

"What is still Himself" is Christ, because Christ and God are one Self. As God is the Creator of Christ, we – as Christ – likewise extend Heaven's Love and create like our Father. Our creations are the product of this extension and establish our fatherhood, inherent in our Identity as God's Son:

> The Will of the Father and of the Son are One, by Their extension. Their extension is the result of Their Oneness, holding Their unity together by extending Their joint Will. This is perfect creation by the perfectly created, in union with the perfect Creator. The Father must give fatherhood to His Son, because His Own Fatherhood must be extended outward. You who belong in God have the holy function of extending His Fatherhood by placing no limits upon it (T-821.3:1-5).

**(12:4) What he creates is not apart from Him, and nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something separate from Him.**

This wonderful statement is another expression of the Oneness of Heaven, where there is no separation between God and Christ; no distinction between "what is Himself and what is still Himself." In our dualistic language we refer to God as the Source or First Cause, and we, Christ, are the Effect; but in Heaven there are not two separate beings. Only One.

**(13:1) There is no world because it is a thought apart from God, and made to separate the Father and the Son, and break away a part of God Himself and thus destroy His Wholeness.**

This is yet another statement of the Course's non-dualistic foundation. The Atonement establishes that while we are free within the illusion to believe we have accomplished the impossible, we are not free in truth to change the changelessness of reality. Not one note in Heaven's song could ever be missed (T-26.V.5:4). Wholeness remains whole; Totality remains total; God remains God.

**(13:2-4) Can a world which comes from this idea be real? Can it be anywhere? Deny illusions, but accept the truth.**

Another key theme in *A Course in Miracles:* We are asked not to affirm the truth, but to *"deny the denial of truth"* (T- 12.11.1:5). Jesus is asking us to look with him at the ego thought system – the denial of truth – and say this is no longer our choice. If we look honestly at the separated world through Jesus' eyes, we recognize how, coming from the illusory thought of separation, it cannot *not* be unreal.

**(13:5) Deny you are a shadow briefly laid upon a dying world.**

This is the body: a shadow that when it seems to be born is "briefly laid upon a dying world." It is a dying world because it comes from a thought of death, and what

comes from death can only be like itself: *ideas leave not their source.* The ego thought, too, must be a thought of death because it is the opposite of life. Remember, the ego thought system begins with the statement: "I exist because I destroyed God, and over His dead body I stand supreme." Incidentally, this sentence from the lesson is reminiscent of Macbeth's famous lines, uttered shortly before his death:

> Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more ... (V,5,21).

**(13:6) Release your mind and you will look upon a world released.**

The *your* and *you* in this sentence refer to the decision maker, and Jesus is telling us to make another choice: "Release your mind from the tyranny of the ego, under which you placed it, and choose my love instead. You will then look out upon a world freed from your belief in sin and the projections of your guilt, for in your freedom is the freedom of the world."

**(14:1) Today our purpose is to free the world from all the idle thoughts we ever held about it, and about all living things we see upon it.**

The focus is unmistakably clear – Jesus is speaking to us about our thoughts, not our bodies nor their behavior.

**(14:2-4) They can not be there** [the so-called living things we believe are here]. **No more can we. For we are in the home our Father set for us, along with them.**

God's Son is one. When I take Jesus' hand and walk with him out of the dream, we do not walk alone, for we walk with the entire Sonship to the home we never truly left: How can our reality be anywhere other than with the Creator of reality?

**(14:5) And we who are as He created us would loose the world this day from every one of our illusions, that we may be free.**

What frees us is not doing something with our body or those of others, but letting go of our thoughts: "I loose the world from all I thought it was."

**(15:1-3) Begin the fifteen-minute periods in which we practice twice today with this:**

***I who remain as God created me would loose the world from all I thought it was. For I am real because the world is not, and I would know my own reality.***

Note the either/or principle of *A Course in Miracles:* Either God *or* the world is real; they cannot coexist as reality. Since God and Heaven *are* real, everything in this world – including my body and personality – must be illusory.

**(15:4) Then merely rest, alert but with no strain, and let your mind in**

**quietness be changed so that the world is freed, along with you.**

If carefully read, this passage stands out as one of the more significant ones in *A Course in Miracles.* First, we are asked to rest, to be "alert but with no strain." In other words, this lesson should not produce strain, nor should we strive to do it perfectly by imposing on ourselves the belief we are not really here – a very silly thing to do. Recall Jesus' caution early on in the text:

> The body is merely part of your experience in the physical world. Its abilities can be and frequently are overevaluated. However, it is almost impossible to deny its existence in this world. Those who do so are engaging in a particularly unworthy form of denial (T-2.IV. 3:8-11).

Jesus asks us to let our minds "in quietness be changed," meaning the decision maker decides to be quiet, and in the stillness, silences the ego's thought system. This is not Jesus' responsibility. Since *I* am the source of the raucous shrieks that drown out the Voice for Love, *I* am the only one who can say I no longer want to be imprisoned. That is the change of mind effected in quietness. Once I am still, the mind is changed by the Holy Spirit, my having brought my illusions to Him. At that point their darkness disappears in the light of His truth.

In that one sentence, therefore, we find encapsulated the Course's process of healing: bringing the darkness of illusion to the light of truth. Thus are our thoughts healed; not by us, but by the Love of God. The world is freed as well from the yoke of our guilt, undone at last by the Atonement.

To conclude the lesson, Jesus returns to the theme of the Oneness of God's Son:

**(16:1) You need not realize that healing comes to many brothers far across the world, as well as to the ones you see nearby, as you send out these thoughts to bless the world.**

You do not literally send these thoughts out, because there is no outside to send the thoughts into. Once you choose the love of Jesus, his love naturally extends through you, which means extending through the mind of the Sonship. There *is* nothing else. The language of *A Course in Miracles* often seems to suggest there is an inner and an outer, the former extending to the latter. The *content* behind those words, however, is quite different. To repeat, you cannot extend love outside, because there is no outside. Once you join with Jesus as your teacher, you have joined with the Sonship, a process that finds expression in the statement that you send out your thoughts to the world.

**(16:2) But you will sense your own release, although you may not fully understand as yet that you could never be released alone.**

Jesus is not asking us to understand, for example, that "when I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pI.137), or that when I bless the world I am blessing myself (W-pI.187). But we will experience the love, peace, and joy that come when we let go of judgments and grievances, and accept that the love of Jesus is all we want. There is a lovely anonymous prayer that says: "I have nothing, I want nothing, I am nothing but the love of Jesus." In his love is the Sonship released as one from its burden of separation.

**Lesson 132**

**(17) Throughout the day, increase the freedom sent through your ideas to all the world, and say whenever you are tempted to deny the power of your simple change of mind:**

***I loose the world from all I thought it was, and choose my own reality instead.***

Jesus closes the lesson by urging you to apply the idea for the day when tempted to deny the power of your mind. Without such application, day in and day out, these principles will have no meaning. You are thus tempted, when you see yourself as victim of something or someone outside you, believing your change of mood is due to anything other than the power of your mind. You then seek for something not of the mind to fix the situation and make you feel better. Not only do you deny your mind's power to make you upset or disquieted, but you also deny its power to make you peaceful. The mind's power is returned to you when you can simply say you were wrong and Jesus is right, that he is the teacher you want. You thus not only loose the world from all you thought it was, but loose the ego from all you thought it was as well.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 133**
**I will not value what is valueless.**

This is another important lesson, which contrasts – as did the previous one – the reality of Heaven (truth and God's Love) with the illusory nature of everything in this world. Thus, only what is of God or would lead us back to Him has value, while everything that roots us still further in this world is valueless. The lesson also provides the foundation for the discussion in the manual of the stages in the development of trust, particularly the first three, which treat the difference between what is valuable and what is valueless (M-4.I-A).

**(1) Sometimes in teaching there is benefit, particularly after you have gone through what seems theoretical and far from what the student has already learned, to bring him back to practical concerns. This we will do today. We will not speak of lofty, world-encompassing ideas, but dwell instead on benefits to you.**

As you read through this lesson you will quickly realize that Jesus fibbed a little in his opening statement. It is impossible for him to discuss the practical applications of his course without returning to their metaphysical underpinning. These "lofty, world-encompassing ideas" include: the world is an illusion, and nothing here is of any value because there is nothing here. This is instructive because there is no way you could truly learn, understand, practice, or teach *A Course in Miracles* without understanding these metaphysical premises. The reason forgiveness is healing is that there is nothing to forgive, and this statement would be meaningless without an understanding of what we had discussed in the previous lesson: There is no world, because the world comes from a thought system that does not exist.

**(2:1) You do not ask too much of life, but far too little.**

This line should be familiar, as we have cited its almost verbatim reference from the text twice before, and will do so again: "Here does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little" (T-26.VII.11:7). We ask valueless gifts from the ego's nothingness, while we reject as unappealing the valuable gifts of God's everything.

**(2:2) When you let your mind be drawn to bodily concerns, to things you buy, to eminence as valued by the world, you ask for sorrow, not for happiness.**

It is tempting when you read a passage like this to be overwhelmed with guilt because of the things you like to buy when you shop, like to do to your body to feel better – avoiding pain and maximizing pleasure – or liking approbation from others. Guilt is not Jesus' point, however. Keep in mind that this is a course in *content, not form;* in *cause* (the mind), not *effect* (the body) (T-21.VII.7:8). Rather than feel guilty because of our special relationships – with people, substances, objects, or food – we should realize what we give up when we choose our specialness. Thus Jesus does not want us to judge ourselves or anyone else, but to step back with him and see that when we choose the concerns of the body – physical or psychological – we do so because we are afraid, and fear is not a sin. Moreover, pursuit of specialness will bring us sorrow, not happiness, which means it is silly to pursue it. The more aware we can be that our search for happiness outside the mind will not give us what we want, the more motivated we will be to let these special attachments go.

**(2:3-5) This course does not attempt to take from you the little that you have. It does not try to substitute utopian ideas for satisfactions which the world contains. There are no satisfactions in the world.**

This statement cannot make sense without understanding the previous lesson. While Jesus' focus in this lesson may be more practical, it still relies on underlying metaphysical principles, his "lofty, world-encompassing ideas." Jesus' role as our teacher is *not* to tell us: do not go shopping, avoid this food or this relationship. He simply reminds us that worldly things will not bring us the peace of God. Therefore, why invest time and energy in them? Yet he does not label such pursuits sinful or wrong, and this is his point. In an instructive passage from the text, Jesus discusses the non-evil nature of medication:

> All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles.... It does not follow, however, that the use of such agents for corrective purposes is evil. Sometimes the illness has a sufficiently strong hold over the mind to render a person temporarily inaccessible to the Atonement. In this case it may be wise to utilize a compromise approach to mind and body, in which something from the outside is temporarily given healing belief. This is because the last thing that can help the non-right-minded, or the sick, is an increase in fear. They are already in a fear-weakened state. If they are prematurely exposed to a miracle, they may be precipitated into panic. This is likely to occur when upside-down perception has induced the belief that miracles are frightening (T-2.1V.4:1, 4-10).

Thus, the use of anything in the world to gain pleasure or avoid pain – defined in *A Course in Miracles* as magic – becomes holy if its purpose is to reduce fear. The Holy Spirit's purpose for worldly activities is to help us learn the single lesson there is no world nor satisfactions to be found here. How can nothing satisfy?

**(3:1-2) Today we list the real criteria by which to test all things you think you want. Unless they meet these sound requirements, they are not worth desiring at all, for they can but replace what offers more.**

As we will see, Jesus provides four criteria to evaluate whether what we want is valuable or valueless. "What offers more" are the gifts Jesus tells us are ours if we simply take his hand.

**(3:3) The laws that govern choice you cannot make, no more than you can make alternatives from which to choose.**

There is but one choice: God or the ego, the valuable or the valueless, everything or nothing.

**(3:4-5) The choosing you can do; indeed, you must. But it is wise to learn the laws you set in motion when you choose, and what alternatives you choose between.**

Jesus will present two laws, followed by the four criteria. We choose between the everything of Heaven's Love and the nothingness of the ego's specialness. Note again that the *you* Jesus addresses is the decision maker who chooses between the wrong-minded thought system of attack, guilt, and hate, and the right-minded thought system of forgiveness, love, and peace.

**(4:1-2) We have already stressed there are but two, however many there appear to be. The range is set, and this we cannot change.**

This is an inherent characteristic of the split mind – *the first law* – which chooses only between the ego and the Holy Spirit. Recall this earlier quote from the "Rules for Decision":

> You will not make decisions by yourself whatever you decide. For they are made with idols or with God. And you ask help of anti-Christ or Christ, and which you choose will join with you and tell you what to do (T-301.14:7-9).

No other alternatives are possible to choose between:

**(4:3) It would be most ungenerous to you to let alternatives be limitless, and thus delay your final choice until you had considered all of them in time; and not been brought so clearly to the place where there is but one choice that must be made.**

The "place" is the decision maker's home, and Jesus says it would not be fair of him to help you make choices here, where they are multitudinous and illusory. He urges us instead not to bring him into this dream of multiplicity, but to join him in the decision-making part of the mind where he helps us see that the only meaningful choice is whether to remain asleep or awaken. The reader may recall our earlier references to "The Real Alternative," where Jesus discusses this same theme (T-3 1.IV). It is also the basis for his remarks on fear, originally meant for Helen, that we have also considered before. Their relevance justifies an abridged revisiting:

> The correction of fear *is* your responsibility. When you ask for release from fear, you are implying that it is not. You should ask, instead, for help in the conditions that have brought the fear about. These conditions always entail a willingness to be separate. At that level you *can* help it (T-2.VI.4:1-5).

> I know it [fear] does not exist, but you do not. If I intervened between your thoughts and their results, I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect; the most fundamental law there is. I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course. It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough (T-2.VII.1:3-7).

Since salvation can be attained only through *our* changing our minds, Jesus reminds us to exercise this power of decision. Indeed the Course's purpose is to help us do just that.

**Lesson 133**

**(5:1) Another kindly and related law is that there is no compromise in what your choice must bring.**

The ego's version of this *second law* of *one or the other is kill or be killed.* The Holy Spirit tells us, however, that only what He teaches is true, and nothing of the ego is:

> You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong. But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes. God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world. His Love remains the only thing there is. Fear is illusion, for you are like Him (M-18.3:7-12; italics omitted).

We choose either God or the ego, with no in between, as Jesus underscores:

**(5:2-4) It cannot give you just a little, for there is no in between. Each choice you make brings everything to you or nothing. Therefore, if you learn the tests by which you can distinguish everything from nothing, you will make the better choice.**

We come now to the four tests or criteria to evaluate whether what we have chosen is valuable or valueless, true or illusory. Does our choice reflect the everything of God, or become a shadowy fragment of the ego's nothingness? The above paragraph also echoes Jesus' teaching that we cannot bring a little bit of Heaven to hell, or a little bit of hell to Heaven – it is always *one or the other.* We have already discussed that many students of *A Course in Miracles,* and of religion in general, try to bring God into the world, magically hoping that this Heaven-hell combination would alleviate our suffering and pain.

*The first criterion:*

**(6:1) First, if you choose a thing that will not last forever, what you chose is valueless.**

This returns us to Lesson 132: The world does not share the timelessness of Heaven, and so cannot be real. If you therefore choose something that will not last forever, it must be valueless since it cannot be of the eternal God. Almost everything we value here does not last, such as material objects or the ecstatic highs many strive for. Indeed, our pleasures are set up not to last, for our frustration continually impels us to go back for more. In this way the ego has convinced us to seek outside ourselves for pleasure and peace, rather than for the Love of God present in our minds. Each failure merely reinforces our need to keep looking until we fmd our "treasure."

**(6:2-3) A temporary value is without all value. Time can never take away a value that is real.**

The ego's response is that time *can* take away a value that is real, to which Jesus counters: "It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time" (T-27.VIII.6:5). Yet when we value the transient in this world, we are saying the world of time and space is not a joke, but a serious reality: Time *can* interrupt eternity, not to mention destroy it; thus its value for our individual selves, creatures of

time.

**(6:4-5) What fades and dies was never there, and makes no offering to him who chooses it. He is deceived by nothing in a form he thinks he likes.**

If you think of "The Two Pictures," which we will return to presently, we find a similar idea. The ego tantalizes, attracts, and seduces us with the glittering frame of specialness, within which it conceals its picture of death, here described as nothing. The frame's glitter attracts us because it preserves our special self, rooted in a world in which everything fades and dies. Again, Jesus is not asking us to feel guilty as we survey our choices for the temporality of nothingness, but he does want us to understand that we prefer the frame to the picture because we value our individuality, which we think we like.

*The second criterion:*

**(7:1) Next, if you choose to take a thing away from someone else, you will have nothing left.**

This is a corollary to our now familiar *fourth law of chaos:* "you have what you have taken" (T-23.II.9:3). If I want something I lack, I can get it only by taking it from you, which means you are now without it. This cannot, then, be a true gift – love's reflection – which expresses the right of everyone to have everything. Under the laws of specialness, however, my acquiring the desired treasure means it is only *my* right, one more shadowy fragment of the ego's nothingness. Thus it is not a gift shared by all, making it valueless for it is not based on God's total Love.

**(7:2) This is because, when you deny his right to everything, you have denied your own.**

If I believe I have something and you do not, our differences make the ego thought system of separation alive and well in our minds. Such denial of the truth of our inherent oneness denies everything and affirms nothing.

**(7:3) You therefore will not recognize the things you really have, denying they are there.**

The things I truly have are God's gifts to me, reflected in my dream as forgiveness, peace, and healing. None of these is possible, however, unless shared by everyone:

> To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VIII.8:4-7).

**(7:4-5) Who seeks to take away has been deceived by the illusion loss can offer gain. Yet loss must offer loss, and nothing more.**

Thus I have it and you don't; I gain and you lose. Now I learn I have lost, too, for what is valuable can entail no loss for anyone. If there is loss, therefore, it must be valueless. God's Love is given all His Sons in equal measure, and it is impossible one would have more or less:

> When the Atonement has been completed, all talents will be shared by all the Sons of God. God is not partial. All His children have His total Love, and all His gifts are freely given to everyone alike.... The specialness of God's Sons does not stem from exclusion but from inclusion. All my brothers are special. If they believe they are deprived of anything, their perception becomes distorted. When this occurs the whole family of God, or the Sonship, is impaired in its relationships (T-1.V.3:1-3, 5-8).

However, if I believe in loss and scarcity, this thought, born of the idea I exist by stealing from God, means Heaven's loss has become my *gain.*

*The third criterion:*

**(8:1-4) Your next consideration is the one on which the others rest. Why is the choice you make of value to you? What attracts your mind to it? What purpose does it serve?**

The ego's underlying purpose is to preserve my individuality, the motivation for having chosen the ego in the first place. Seeking things in this world proves I exist. Further, my needs demonstrate there is indeed a separated *I,* and I am attracted to the principle that in order for this self to continue, someone has to be held responsible for my separated state. Thus do the fourth and fifth laws of chaos come to the rescue (T-23.H.8-12). If I lack something and you have it, it is because you took it from me. This establishes you as the sinner and me as the innocent victim. My state of lack is the proof you took what I need, thereby depriving me of it. Thus I come into the world valuing what will prove my sinlessness, attracted to another's guilt and living to fulfill the purpose of maintaining my innocence at someone else's expense.

**(8:5-7) Here it is easiest of all to be deceived. For what the ego wants it fails to recognize. It does not even tell the truth as it perceives it, for it needs to keep the halo which it uses to protect its goals from tarnish and from rust, that you may see how "innocent" it is.**

I am reminded of how politicians lie to us. They say their goal is to help the country and better our lives, but their goal, hardly a secret, is to be elected. They want their specialness needs fulfilled: fame, power, wealth. The interesting thing is that we are all aware of this, but most of the time allow ourselves to be deceived. We really think, quite naively, there is a difference between the two candidates, or among the ten candidates. Yet they all want the same thing: the glorification of their specialness. What truly happens, reflected above, is that they become so good at their act they end up believing it themselves; becoming so involved with their self-made halo, they forget what the halo conceals. Likewise, we are all so invested in the glittering specialness of the frame that we lose awareness of the picture itself: guilt and death – the picture of nothingness. Perpetuating this guilt is the ego's secret goal, for it proves that the separation is alive and well. This goal is protected by the face of innocence, the halo of

hate that surrounds us with "light," even as it shrouds the world in the darkness of our guilt.

**(9:1) Yet is its camouflage a thin veneer, which could deceive but those who are content to be deceived.**

Therefore, when we are deceived by a politician, friend, or businessman, it can only be because we want to be deceived, and *are content being so.* Why? Because their secret goals are our secret goals, too. We all want our specialness glorified and our individuality firmly established. Thus we are content, by choice, to be attracted to the frame, coveted to hide the picture of the ego's guilt, its secret goal that reinforces our individuality and the thought we have destroyed God and love. No one wants to recognize that thought, and so we allow ourselves to be seduced by the world, even as we seduce it.

**(9:2) Its goals are obvious to anyone who cares to look for them.**

The Course's purpose is for us to learn of these secret goals. Jesus teaches how we never cease being deceived by the valueless in the world. No matter how many times we study this course and memorize its passages, we are still attracted by the glitter of the external: We do not want to learn what would teach us the exact opposite of everything our egos wish us to learn. In other words, *A Course in Miracles* threatens the individuality and specialness that constitute our existence. We do not see what it is teaching, choosing to look elsewhere for our salvation.

**(9:3-4) Here is the deception doubled, for the one who is deceived will not perceive that he has merely failed to gain. He will believe that he has served the ego's hidden goals.**

In other words, we experience loss and disappointment in the world as long as we believe we are here. Yet we do not recognize the ego set up our situations so we would fail, blaming others for our suffering. This is its hidden purpose, which we happily fulfill by keeping guilt in place. The fact that I am dismayed, discouraged, and depressed is proof I exist, which means I have achieved the ego's goals, successfully serving them as I maintain my special identity. I gladly suffer the disappointment of valuing the valueless because that ensures my separated existence, and proves I am right and God is wrong. It is by seeking after the valueless that I demonstrate I am not responsible, for the world is seen to deny me the happiness and peace I deserve; e.g., this person mistreats or abuses me, without which I would be happy. In other words, there is always someone or something causing me to suffer and be upset, enabling me to wear the face of innocence that says others are guilty sinners, but not me.

**(10:1) Yet though he tries to keep its halo clear within his vision, still must he perceive its tarnished edges and its rusted core.**

There is something in us that knows that our life of special hate and special love is a sham, because the guilt never goes away. In other words, the face of innocence does not really work, for a part of us is aware of "its tarnished edges and its rusted core." Guilt thus remains in our minds, and unsuccessfully generates the need for specialness

so we do not have to see that the problem is our own.

**(10:2) His ineffectual mistakes appear as sins to him, because he looks upon the tarnish as his own; the rust a sign of deep unworthiness within himself.**

This describes your guilt. You try to be at peace, seeking for happiness in the world and attempting to make the valueless valuable. Yet the search is futile, and the ego attributes its failure to your sinfulness. You feel terrible, not because you did not get what you wanted, but because you are reminded of the ontological belief you killed God in order to get what you wanted. However, you will never find peace, security, and joy because you look in the wrong place. Guilt casts its ugly shadow of failure and unworthiness, no matter how desperately you try to polish the frames and keep the halo aglitter.

**(10:3-4) He who would still preserve the ego's goals and serve them as his own makes no mistakes, according to the dictates of his guide. This guidance teaches it is error to believe that sins are but mistakes, for who would suffer for his sins if this were so?**

The ego says your pain and misery prove you have sinned, because sin demands punishment: If you were sinless you would not suffer. A variation of this idea is found in the ego's *third law of chaos,* where God is bound to believe in His Son's sin, because the Son has told Him it is so.

> The arrogance on which the laws of chaos stand could not be more apparent than emerges here [the ego's battleground]. Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. It is not seen as even necessary that He be asked about the truth of what has been established for His belief. His Son can tell Him this, and.... He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it (T-23.II.6:1-4, 6).

Thus is sin made real and beyond correction.

This is a variation of John Calvin's famous argument that you can recognize the elite – the ones that God loves and would therefore save – by their happy and prosperous lives. Their families would not become seriously ill, there would be no crises or financial hardships, and everything would always work out. For Calvin, these were the criteria for identifying sinlessness and knowing that God loved you, while suffering demonstrated your sinfulness.

**(11:1) And so we come to the criterion for choice that is the hardest to believe, because its obviousness is overlaid with many levels of obscurity.**

These levels of obscurity are the picture frames of specialness; our attempts to see in the world outside what we do not wish to know is within us.

*The fourth criterion:*

**(11:2-3) If you feel any guilt about your choice, you have allowed the ego's goals to come between the real alternatives. And thus you do not realize there are**

**but two, and the alternative you think you chose seems fearful, and too dangerous to be the nothingness it actually is.**

Guilt is the ultimate criterion for distinguishing what is valuable from what is not. Its presence proves you have chosen the valueless, for if you value anything in this world as a source of happiness, peace, or love, you will feel guilty. Jesus needs us to realize how guilty we truly are, and that guilt is the source of all misery. We overlay our guilt with levels of obscurity to deny its presence in our minds, thereby protecting our secret sin. Thus, whenever we seek something here as a source of joy, we re-enact the original moment when we sinfully chose the ego's individuality over God's Love; saying, in effect: "God's Love is not enough. I want my specialness instead, and rather than being part of God's creation, I want to be the First Cause who sits upon creation's throne as creator."

In other words, we all, as one Son, turned our backs on God and chose the ego. That instant of insanity is recalled whenever we seek for specialness. The message here, one more time, is not that we should feel guilty when we seek the valueless, but that we should recognize what we are doing. If we do not understand that our misery comes from sleeping guilt, we will not be motivated to change our minds. Because we cover our guilt, Jesus tells us of the Holy Spirit's plan to unveil our misery, so we can recognize its cause:

> The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery *is* happiness. This has so confused you that you... do not realize that the foundation on which this ... depends means absolutely nothing.... Have faith in nothing and you will find the "treasure" that you seek.... You will believe that nothing is of value, and will value it. A little piece of glass, a speck of dust, a body or a war are one to you. For if you value one thing made of nothing, you have believed that nothing can be precious, and that you *can* learn how to make the untrue true (T-14.II.1:1-5, 7, 9-11).

Recognizing our misery allows us to be taught the nothingness of our valued guilt. Thus we choose the world's truth that alone has value: the forgiveness that brings us from the illusion of fear to the reality of love.

Jesus draws the lesson to a close by summarizing:

**(12:1-3) All things are valuable or valueless, worthy or not of being sought at all, entirely desirable or not worth the slightest effort to obtain. Choosing is easy just because of this. Complexity is nothing but a screen of smoke, which hides the very simple fact that no decision can be difficult.**

The physical universe, not to mention the individual body, is incredibly complicated by design: to conceal the simple choice our minds have to make. We chose wrongly once, and before we could change our minds the ego made up a complex world, causing us to forget there was a choice, forgetting even the wrong picture we had chosen. We instead identified with the frame – the body of our specialness – that prevented recognition of the mind's choice between truth and illusion, the valuable and valueless, and rendering return to the mind almost impossible. Recall this passage from

the text, detailing how the ego's clouds of complication obscure the simplicity of the answer:

> How could there be another way to solve a problem that is very simple, but has been obscured by heavy clouds of complication, which were made to keep the problem unresolved? Without the clouds the problem will emerge in all its primitive simplicity. The choice will not be difficult, because the problem is absurd when clearly seen (T-27.VII.2:3-5).

**(12:4-5) What is the gain to you in learning this? It is far more than merely letting you make choices easily and without pain.**

The real gain is our return to Heaven. Once we realize this decision entails our happiness, the choice for God is inevitable, for who would choose against the joy?

Jesus returns to the important theme of reaching God by choosing against the ego:

**(13:1) Heaven itself is reached with empty hands and open minds, which come with nothing to find everything and claim it as their own.**

This statement foreshadows a lovely passage from Lesson 189: The way we reach Heaven is to empty our minds of all ego thoughts; undoing what is negative (W-pI.189.7). Recall that *A Course in Miracles* does not focus on the positive, the Love of God, but rather on releasing the interferences to remembering this Love. We abandon the ego thought system we had clutched so tightly, and our emptied hands become free to receive Heaven's gift.

**(13:2) We will attempt to reach this state today, with self-deception laid aside, and with an honest willingness to value but the truly valuable and the real.**

We are asked to practice self-honesty, laying aside the self-deception that we want to return home, for we continually value what is valueless: individuality, specialness, and judgment. Watch yourself as you go through the day, seeing how the ego tries to establish your wisdom in knowing what is best, and how it seeks to prove you cannot trust anyone, for people are always failing you. Since nothing works out right, your judgments about others and the world are justified.

To repeat, watch as you seek for what is valueless as opposed to what is valuable, the honest willingness of which Jesus speaks. Practicing this honesty means asking him to be your guide throughout the day. You will know you have chosen against him when you become angry, guilty, depressed, and judgmental. You will know you have chosen for him when you have let these ego thoughts go.

**(13:3-4) Our two extended practice periods of fifteen minutes each begin with this:**

***I will not value what is valueless, and only what has value do I seek, for only that do I desire to find.***

Before we articulate this statement and mean it, we first have to recognize how

we do not. We need to search our minds throughout the day – our honest willingness – for how we continually seek after the valueless. Anything involving a judgment against others, or even hinting of specialness, is inherently valueless. Therefore, asking Jesus to help us look at everything differently allows us to shift from the valueless to the valuable. Having asked for help in seeking what has true value, we are guaranteed we shall find it.

**(14) And then receive what waits for everyone who reaches, unencumbered, to the gate of Heaven, which swings open as he comes. Should you begin to let yourself collect some needless burdens, or believe you see some difficult decisions facing you, be quick to answer with this simple thought:**

***I will not value what is valueless, for what is valuable belongs to me.***

You may recall this early statement from the text:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

Judgments are the needless burdens to which Jesus refers. When you start making judgments of yourself and others, stop as quickly as possible and ask if you really want the consequences of such valueless thoughts. Difficult decisions, too, result from having valued the valueless, yet no decision can be difficult here because there is no "here." The only true decision is the mind's choice between the ego and Jesus. What can be simpler? Choosing him releases the ego's investment in being right, and when you return your attention to a decision on the level of form, you will automatically know the most loving thing to do.

We certainly need to make decisions while in the body, but our loving teacher renders them effortless, for they gently follow the mind's right-minded decision. Therefore, when such decisions are problematic, and anxiety, depression, and guilt surround them, you know you have chosen the wrong teacher. Jesus' request is simple at this point: Drop the ego's hand and take his instead. Difficulty follows only when you resist his simple request. This is your signal that you have once again seen the world as worthwhile or worthless, helpful or harmful – a valueless perception indeed! Recognizing the need to return to the mind, you remember that what alone is valuable in this world is learning to choose Jesus as your teacher and guide – to forgive instead of condemn – a choice you now happily make.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 134**

**Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.**

I have occasionally spoken about the symphonic nature of the text, in which Jesus introduces, re-introduces, and develops his themes of salvation. The same can be said about the workbook. To be sure, its structure differs from the text, but as you read through the lessons you can recognize their symphonic organization: themes introduced, discussed, dropped, and then brought back to be developed still further. These next three lessons illustrate this structure, as they center on a theme we saw in Lessons 68 through 72: the ego's plan for salvation. This plan, referred to in the text as the ego's plan for forgiveness, consists of holding on to grievances.

As an introduction to Lesson 134, let me review this ingenious plan. The ego's strategy calls for us to make real the mind's thought of sin, and then convince us our guilt is so horrific it can never be looked at, lest terror strike our hearts. In other words, sin leads to guilt, which in turn demands punishment. The ego thus establishes the painful "reality" of sin, and tells us if we remain within the mind and confront its guilt, we will run head on into the wrath of a furious God, hell-bent on destroying us by retrieving the life we stole from Him. The ego counsels us that the only way we can be saved from our sin is to deny its presence and project it out, having us believe it now exists in a body; whether someone else's or our own is irrelevant from the ego's point of view, as long as sin is perceived outside the mind, the definition of attack. Incidentally, when we project sin onto our own bodies we call the attack sickness, the theme of Lesson 136, "Sickness is a defense against the truth" (W-pI.136).

Lesson 134 begins with a discussion of the ego's plan of seeing sin as real, but in someone else. In the pamphlet *The Song of Prayer,* Jesus calls this dynamic of justified attack *forgiveness-to-destroy* (S-2.II), as the reader may recall.

**(1) Let us review the meaning of "forgive," for it is apt to be distorted and to be perceived as something that entails an unfair sacrifice of righteous wrath, a gift unjustified and undeserved, and a complete denial of the truth. In such a view, forgiveness must be seen as mere eccentric folly, and this course appear to rest salvation on a whim.**

We begin with our miserable sinfulness, believing we exist at God's expense. As I have explained before, the sin that deserves guilt is not really the murder of God and crucifixion of His Son, but our selfish self-centeredness, which assumes such monstrous proportions we wind up saying: "I want my individuality and specialness needs served, and I do not care the cost. Even if it entails destroying another – even *Another*! – I gladly do it to exist. Sacrifice of love is a small price indeed to pay for the survival of my special self."

That is the sin we deny, and projecting it out we claim it is in someone else. If that be true, as perception certainly witnesses to, I am innocent and others deserve judgment. Thus we say to our special relationships: "You, the object of my justified and righteous wrath, deserve to be punished." In order to ennoble myself still further and reinforce my self-proclaimed innocence, I assume a mantle of spirituality, proclaiming that despite the sin, in the goodness of my merciful heart I offer forgiveness and pardon. Thus is my righteous wrath sacrificed to serve a "higher" spiritual truth. This, then, is *forgiveness-to-destroy:* I forgive you, even though your sins do not deserve it. They are thus not truly forgiven, but condemned. As Jesus explains:

> While you regard it as a gift unwarranted, it must uphold the guilt you would "forgive." Unjustified forgiveness is attack. And this is all the world can ever give. It pardons "sinners" sometimes, but remains aware that they have sinned. And so they do not merit the forgiveness that it gives.
>
> This is the false forgiveness which the world employs to keep the sense of sin alive (T-30.VI.3 :4-4: 1).

In *The Song of Prayer,* Jesus makes the same point, but even more strongly:

> No gift of Heaven has been more misunderstood than has forgiveness. It has, in fact, become a scourge; a curse where it was meant to bless, a cruel mockery of grace, a parody upon the holy peace of God.... Forgiveness' kindness is obscure at first, because salvation is not understood, *nor truly sought for.* What was meant to heal is used to hurt because forgiveness is not wanted. Guilt becomes salvation, and the remedy appears to be a terrible alternative to life (S-2.I.1:1-2, 4-6).

Before we can learn the meaning of true forgiveness, we must first understand the ego's distorted version, which is why the lesson began as it did. Jesus continues now with *his* message of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit's blessing that replaces the ego's curse:

**(2:1-3) This twisted view of what forgiveness means is easily corrected, when you can accept the fact that pardon is not asked for what is true. It must be limited to what is false. It is irrelevant to everything except illusions.**

The word *pardon* appears infrequently in *A Course in Miracles,* and is a synonym for *forgiveness.* Its usage is often determined by the meter: *pardon* has two syllables, and *forgiveness* three. Identical in meaning, the words are thus used interchangeably.

In *forgiveness-to-destroy,* I forgive what I believe to be true: your sin. I know you are the sinner because I am. My existence as a unique and separated individual was sinfully acquired at God's expense, since individuality and Oneness cannot coexist. I have thus destroyed God so I can live, and my existence proves that perfect Oneness is a lie. The very fact I think I am here, therefore, existing in a body with a personality, means that not only am I an individual, but a sinner whose sin is as palpably real as my perceived body.

The ego's defense against the guilt that inevitably follows my belief in sin is projection: the sin is not in me, but in you. That is the ego's truth, not to be denied. However, we are taught in this lesson, and in other places as well, that we cannot forgive a sin we believe has actually occurred (e.g., T-27.11.1-5; T-30.VI.1-4), but the sin we see as a mistaken thought or perception, the product of a mistaken choice for separation – all of which is forgiven by correcting the mind's error. We speak here, by the way, only of a wrongness we have judged worthy of condemnation. Everyone in this world does things from a wrong-minded thought system. In fact, simply taking a breath is a product of the original wrong-minded thought system of separation and need. The point is not that we should feel guilty because we breathe, but that we look at the mistake of condemning another for what we have judged as sinful.

Seeing sin as an illusion means that it has had no effect. When we believe we have been hurt by others, and we demonstrate our hurt as proof of their sins of

insensitivity, withholding love, etc., we tell them their sins had an effect, and are therefore real. True forgiveness is thus impossible as the ego gloats once more in triumph. Jesus describes this dynamic of attack in the form of sickness, designed to prove another's guilt and therefore undeserving of forgiveness:

> A sick and suffering you but represents your brother's guilt; the witness that you send lest he forget the injuries he gave, from which you swear he never will escape. This sick and sorry picture *you* accept, if only it can serve to punish him. The sick are merciless to everyone, and in contagion do they seek to kill. Death seems an easy price, if they can say, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die." For sickness is the witness to his guilt, and death would prove his errors must be sins.... The bleak and bitter picture you have sent your brother *you* have looked upon in grief. And everything that it has shown to him have you believed, because it witnessed to the guilt in him which you perceived and loved (T-27.I.4:3-7, 10-11).

**(2:4) Truth is God's creation, and to pardon that is meaningless.**

This is because you pardon an illusion or a mistake, and there are no mistakes in Heaven. Love need not be forgiven, only accepted, for it is love's rejection the ego happily judges as sinful. When you withhold love, push Jesus away, or build a case against someone, your ego jumps in and cries "sin!" Then comes the guilt, which you deny by projecting it onto another, attacking still further. However, pushing love away is not a sin, but only the mad result of the fear of losing your individuality and specialness. Again, it is not a sin that deserves to be punished, but a mistake that needs correction.

**(2:5-7) All truth belongs to Him, reflects His laws and radiates His Love. Does this need pardon? How can you forgive the sinless and eternally benign?**

The reflection of God's laws in this world is forgiveness, which recognizes that illusions are not reality, and therefore only they need to be forgiven. God and Christ do not, nor do our brothers as they are in truth, for we forgive only the projection of our sin on to someone else. Thus it is not the other person who needs forgiveness, but ourselves for projecting our mistaken wish that sin be real. Jesus asks us to look at our brothers through his eyes, learning that our mistakes have had no effect on the sinless and eternally benign Son of God:

> God's Son is perfect, or he cannot be God's Son. Nor will you know him, if you think he does not merit the escape from guilt in all its consequences and its forms. There is no way to think of him but this, if you would know the truth about yourself.
>
> *I thank You, Father, for Your perfect Son, and in his glory will I see my own.*
>
> Here is the joyful statement that there are no forms of evil that can overcome the Will of God; the glad acknowledgment that guilt has not succeeded by your wish to make illusions real. And what is this except a simple statement of the truth? (T-30.VI.9)

**(3:1) The major difficulty that you find in genuine forgiveness on your part**

**is that you still believe you must forgive the truth, and not illusions.**

In other words, I forgive what you have not done. Again, we are not referring to behavior, but to the mind's interpretation of behavior. Recall that *A Course in Miracles* teaches that perception is not objective, for I look at you through the eyes of either the ego or Jesus. If with the ego, I must attack, because that is all the ego does. If with Jesus, however, I understand that what I attack in you is a projection of what I do not want to see in myself – as much an illusion as what I see in you. It must be so, since *ideas leave not their source:* your sins are mine; mine are yours. I thus forgive an illusion, behind which is hidden the changeless truth of God's Son:

> Forget not, then, that idols must keep hidden what you are, not from the Mind of God, but from your own (T-30.III.11:8).

**(3:2) You conceive of pardon as a vain attempt to look past what is there; to overlook the truth, in an unfounded effort to deceive yourself by making an illusion true.**

Importantly, Jesus is not saying we should deny what our eyes see. In this world people do unconscionable things, because being in this world is an unconscionable thing. Remember that Jesus is talking about interpretation. Our interpretation – what we believe is fact – is that people are bad because of what they do, and we demonstrate their sin through our injured self. *That* interpretation needs to be changed, not what our physical eyes behold. Thus we come back to the central issue: which teacher do we choose to instruct us on perceiving the world.

**(3:3) This twisted viewpoint but reflects the hold that the idea of sin retains as yet upon your mind, as you regard yourself.**

This is not the self with which we identify as a body or personality. Jesus speaks only about what the decision maker has made real in the mind: I am a miserable sinner, guilty of destroying Heaven's Love and crucifying Christ, and deserving of punishment. My ego's plan to escape this terrible burden is to point to someone besides me as the sinner. As a later workbook lesson says: "Thus were specifics made" (W-pI.161.3:1). We made a world of specifics that we fill with people who would become our scapegoats – that we see sin in them and not ourselves. Yet what we see reflects to us what we do not want to see, but have already made real in our minds.

**(4:1) Because you think your sins are real, you look on pardon as deception.**

Forgiving you is part of the ego's plan to deny my sinfulness, see it in you but overlook it, and assume the holy mantle of spirituality. In my state of "advanced holiness" I forgive and even love, no matter how poorly you have acted towards me (or others with whom I identify). This approach means that we secretly want people to behave abusively, to reject and betray us, so that we can adopt this holier- than-thou stance, lift ourselves above our personal wretchedness to look down on the sinners and say: "You are a miserable person, but with Jesus' love in my heart I forgive you." Thus are we seemingly forgiven and the other damned, though on the surface it looks like

forgiveness.

**(4:2-3) For it is impossible to think of sin as true and not believe forgiveness is a lie. Thus is forgiveness really but a sin, like all the rest.**

Forgiveness in this sense is a subterfuge, another way of attacking, yet looking as if it were loving. That is *why forgiveness-to-destroy is* such a graphic term; not particularly beautiful, but well expressing the ego's hidden purpose: God will destroy *you,* the sinner who stole from Him, and I am pardoned; thus will I go to Heaven, and you to hell. In words we have already seen, Jesus paints a searing portrait of our secret motives toward the one we accuse of sin:

> You hold a picture of your crucifixion before his eyes, that he may see his sins are writ in Heaven in your blood and death, and go before him, closing off the gate and damning him to hell. Yet this is writ in hell and not in Heaven, where you are beyond attack and prove his innocence (T-2713:2-3).

**(4:4-6) It** ["forgiveness-to-destroy"] **says the truth is false, and smiles on the corrupt as if they were as blameless as the grass; as white as snow. It is delusional in what it thinks it can accomplish. It would see as right the plainly wrong; the loathsome as the good.**

Another form taken by *forgiveness-to-destroy* is "blissninnyhood," the state of seeing the world as wonderful, filled with good people doing good things. To be sure, the blissninny asserts, everyone does something wrong once in a while, but there is such love and spirituality here, a palpable presence of God, that everything is a miraculous, albeit inscrutable part of our Creator's plan. The truth, however, is that it is not wonderful here. In Heaven, yes; but what can be wonderful about the belief we destroyed God, ran away from home, and will never find our way back? And even if we could, Heaven would be gone, or at least barred to our return.

Jesus thus describes one of the ego's subtle ploys of defending our real and secret belief in sin by painting over its projections with a happy and innocent face – whether it is someone committing a heinous crime against us that we overlook, or simply the world itself. It is essential we call a spade a spade: "The world was made as an attack on God" (W-p11.3.2:1), and attack *is* its nature. *Ideas leave not their source,* and the original attack thought of separation can never leave the mind, despite its projection into form: the world remains forever united with its source, at one with the mind's thought of attack. Therefore fear, hate, and attack are the defining characteristics of this world, while love, peace, and eternal life define Heaven – there is no in between, no compromise between illusion and truth. The best we can do here – a great deal, however – is undo our belief in the world's reality: the purpose of forgiveness.

**(5:1-2) Pardon is no escape in such a view. It merely is a further sign that sin is unforgivable, at best to be concealed, denied or called another name, for pardon is a treachery to truth.**

We have made sin real, and now seek to overlook or deny it – in ourselves, another person, or the world at large. Since what comprises the wrong mind is sin, and *ideas leave not their source,* the physical universe as a projection of sin is also a place

of sin, as it is the home of attack. What is sin but a statement that I exist and God has been destroyed, honoring my wish for individuality, specialness, and fulfillment of my selfish needs at the expense of others.

Thus the sinful thought we harbor within our minds is the thought that runs the world. *A Course in Miracles* helps us step back – with Jesus our guiding vision – and *see.* Only then can we smile gently and say illusions are not the truth, thereby undoing what never was – the essence of forgiveness. Yet we cannot undo what we believe is here if we do not recognize we believe it *is* here. Experiencing ourselves in a body reflects the belief sin is real. Without looking at this, sin will remain forever real, and forgiveness an eccentric folly and treacherous to the truth.

**(5:3-4) Guilt cannot be forgiven. If you sin, your guilt is everlasting.**

Guilt will remain as long as you believe your sin is real. Therefore, as long as you wish to be an individual – separate, autonomous, and independent – you must believe your guilt deserves punishment, and your sin beyond forgiveness.

**(5:5) Those who are forgiven from the view their sins are real are pitifully mocked and twice condemned; first, by themselves for what they think they did, and once again by those who pardon them.**

If you have done something terrible to me, you will feel guilty. That is how you are first mocked and condemned. The belief in your own sin – to which my suffering attests – says to you that you do not deserve to be forgiven. Secondly, if I protest that I love and forgive you, visit you in prison, for example, and tell you what a wonderful child of God you are, part of you will feel even more condemned and mocked as I condescendingly look down upon you, deigning to forgive such a miserable sinner. There can be no love in this practice, in which

> a "better" person deigns to stoop to save a "baser" one from what he truly is. Forgiveness here rests on an attitude of gracious lordliness so far from love that arrogance could never be dislodged. Who can forgive and yet despise? And who can tell another he is steeped in sin, and yet perceive him as the Son of God? Who makes a slave to teach what freedom is? There is no union here, but only grief. This is not really mercy. This is death (S-2.II.2:1-8).

Jesus turns back now to true forgiveness:

**(6) It is sin's unreality that makes forgiveness natural and wholly sane, a deep relief to those who offer it; a quiet blessing where it is received. It does not countenance illusions, but collects them lightly, with a little laugh, and gently lays them at the feet of truth. And there they disappear entirely.**

If you read this paragraph carefully, you will realize that Jesus is telling you not to be a "blissninny": Do not deny sin, he tells us; look at it. Collect illusions and lay "them at the feet of truth." Jesus thus articulates his course's basic principle of bringing illusion's darkness to truth's light. Bringing the illusion of sin to him, we join in his gentle laughter, the little laugh in which we leave the holy instant, joined with our brothers and with him (T-27 .VIII.9: 8).

Strongly implied here is taking care not to skip steps. Bringing illusions to truth means looking at them, not throwing the mistaken thoughts in a sack, tying them in a package that we bring to Jesus. magically hoping he will take them from us without our having to deal with them ourselves. Instead, Jesus urges us to examine the hatred, judgment, and selfishness in our hearts, as we see in these important lines we have already quoted:

> You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself (T-13.III.1:1-2).

We must do our part to allow Jesus to do his. When we do, this passage from today's lesson will make perfect sense to us, and the process of forgiveness will indeed lighten, accompanied by the gentle laugh that lifts us beyond the world and into the Heart of God.

**(7:1-2) Forgiveness is the only thing that stands for the truth in the illusions of the world. It sees their nothingness, and looks straight through the thousand forms in which they may appear.**

When you look at sin through Jesus' eyes, you see straight through it to the truth. Jesus does not mean pretending there is nothing there, but that as you look with him at the illusion of judgment, you will look beyond it. Rather than denying what your or another's body has done, you shift your interpretation of the body by changing teachers. What seemed to be a solid wall of granite – the belief in sin – becomes a flimsy veil that cannot block the light shining from beyond it, now clearly seen. Yet you will not see if you look through eyes of judgment. Only the vision of forgiveness parts the veil:

> Vision or judgment is your choice, but never both of these (T-20.V.4:7).

In summary, you look at your judgments and belief in sin, realizing they were not what you thought. Their different forms – seemingly major or minor – will disappear into their own nothingness, as the light of forgiveness sets you free.

**(7:3) It looks on lies, but it is not deceived.**

Forgiveness and the miracle look on the lies of destruction and devastation, but are not deceived by their seeming reality:

> A miracle is a correction. It does not create, nor really change at all. It merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false (W-pII.13.1:1-3).

Whatever I accuse me or you of has had no impact on our Self – one in Christ and in God's Love. Yet I cannot know Their Oneness until I realize you and I are also one in the split mind: sharing the insane thought system of separation and attack, and the sane correction of forgiveness and the miracle. One teacher lies, one Teacher sees truth's reflection.

**(7:4-5) It does not heed the self-accusing shrieks of sinners mad with guilt. It looks on them with quiet eyes, and merely says to them, "My brother, what you think is not the truth."**

This type of statement—"My brother, what you think is not the truth"—is found throughout the text, workbook, and manual in different forms. We are told, for example:

> Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken (T-10.V.6:1).

> You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong. But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes (M-18.3:7-8).

It makes no sense to have Jesus say to us, "My brother, what you think is not the truth," until we know what we think. That cannot be said too often. We need to become aware of our belief that the sin of separation is real: I exist because I have sinned, but **I** deny its presence by perceiving it in you. I am thus hell-bent – literally! – on proving that everyone in my life is the sinner and deserving of judgment. Thus our piercing and probing eyes look for sin and guilt in others in order to attack them:

> Fear's messengers are trained through terror, and they tremble when their master calls on them to serve him. For fear is merciless even to its friends. Its messengers steal guiltily away in hungry search of guilt, for they are kept cold and starving and made very vicious by their master, who allows them to feast only upon what they return to him. No little shred of guilt escapes their hungry eyes. And in their savage search for sin they pounce on any living thing they see, and carry it screaming to their master, to be devoured (T-19.IV-A.12:3-7).

We identify these hungry messengers of fear by looking within, with Jesus beside us saying: My brother, what you think about yourself and others is not the truth.

**(8:1) The strength of pardon is its honesty, which is so uncorrupted that it sees illusions as illusions, not as truth.**

Honesty in forgiveness sees the truth about the ego. Since its thought system is sin and hate, that is what we believe about ourselves. Thus honesty looks beyond what we believe is true to see the real truth: illusions as illusions—my illusions. Recall our oft-quoted line:

> The secret of salvation is but this: That you are doing this unto yourself (T-27.VIII.10:1).

**(8:2-5) It is because of this that it becomes the undeceiver in the face of lies; the great restorer of the simple truth. By its ability to overlook what is not there, it opens up the way to truth, which has been blocked by dreams of guilt. Now are you free to follow in the way your true forgiveness opens up to you. For if one brother has received this gift of you, the door is open to yourself.**

That is why the focus of *A Course in Miracles* is on the special relationship, asking Jesus' help to look at this person differently, which means our willingness to look at ourselves differently. Keep in mind that we cannot overlook what is not there until we first acknowledge that we indeed believe it is there. By looking beyond – *overlooking* – our brother's sins, we are looking beyond our own, since the same are one. Forgiveness thus becomes the key that opens the door through which we pass into the real world, and beyond that to Heaven.

This next important paragraph provides us with a practical way to direct our day:

**(9) There is a very simple way to find the door to true forgiveness, and perceive it open wide in welcome. When you feel that you are tempted to accuse someone of sin in any form, do not allow your mind to dwell on what you think he did, for that is self-deception. Ask instead, "Would I accuse myself of doing this?"**

The *myself* I accuse is not the self I think I am, for I accuse the mind, wherein lies the belief in sin. It is essential I understand the tremendous cost to me of accusing you of anything – significant or insignificant – for when I do, I accuse myself of the same sin. This means I am the one who is condemned, not you. The idea of sin has never left its source in my mind. Moreover, I have put you in my dream so I could escape the terrible burden of sin. Therefore, in my accusations I have given myself a wonderful gift, if only I ask Jesus to help me see I am not accusing you, but me. My judgments of you, then, are classrooms that allow me to expose the ego's plan by reversing its course, recalling the sin I had projected onto you.

These lessons thus help me see the ego's subtlety in keeping the sin, but with my having no awareness it is in my mind. The ego has enabled me to keep my individual and special existence, but magically blame another, who will pay the price of sacrifice instead of me. I thus seem to have the ego's cake of separation and enjoy it, too. Nonetheless, I am the one who pays the price, and it is insane to believe I could happily suffer as the effect of the sin of another, who is a worse sinner than I. The insanity of the ego system is that we all gladly suffer as innocent victims, up to and including our death, as long as we can say:

> "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die" (T-27.I.4:6).

We not only have to see the viciousness of the ego's plan, but its insanity. In addition, it does not work, nor make us happy. Yet these relationships, so filled with judgment and hate, can become loving classrooms when we change teachers. This shift enables Jesus to teach us how to turn attack into an appeal for help and a call for love (T-12.I.8:6-13); a call that exists equally in all of us, an appeal the Holy Spirit cannot but answer if we invite Him in.

**(10:1) Thus will you see alternatives for choice in terms that render choosing meaningful, and keep your mind as free of guilt and pain as God Himself intended it to be, and as it is in truth.**

The true alternative is not the ego's *kill or be killed:* either you or I are the sinner; one lives and the other dies. Our meaningful choice is: Which teacher do I want? Jesus' use of *mind* here is important, for he tells me the problem is not my body, but the thought

system I have chosen. The guilt is not in you as a body, nor in me. It is in my mind, where I put it. Because I put the guilt there, I can change my mind about it. That is the only way I can be truly free of it.

**(10:2-4) It is but lies that would condemn. In truth is innocence the only thing there is. Forgiveness stands between illusions and the truth; between the world you see and that which lies beyond; between the hell of guilt and Heaven's gate.**

Forgiveness brings us to the real world, the gate beyond which is Heaven itself. Though itself an illusion, forgiveness stands between the ego's illusions and the truth of God. It is the final illusion that undoes belief in all the others. In a passage we have partly seen, we read:

> Forgiveness might be called a kind of happy fiction; a way in which the unknowing can bridge the gap between their perception and the truth.... Forgiveness is a symbol, too, but as the symbol of His Will alone it cannot be divided. And so the unity that it reflects becomes His Will. It is the only thing still in the world in part, and yet the bridge to Heaven (C-3.2:1; 5).

Forgiveness is thus truth's reflection, undoing the lies of sin and separation that would condemn. Once undone, they disappear into the truth that waits for us beyond the real world, Heaven's lovely gate in which the Oneness of our Self is restored at last to our awareness.

**(11:1) Across this bridge, as powerful as love which laid its blessing on it, are all dreams of evil and of hatred and attack brought silently to truth.**

In this passage the bridge is forgiveness. Elsewhere, it is the Holy Spirit or the real world. Jesus' use of the symbol is loose, but its content of bringing illusions to the truth remains consistent. Here, forgiveness bridges the gap between the ego's illusions and the real world.

**(11:2-4) They are not kept to swell and bluster, and to terrify the foolish dreamer who believes in them. He has been gently wakened from his dream by understanding what he thought he saw was never there. And now he cannot feel that all escape has been denied to him.**

Now we have true hope in which escape becomes a meaningful thought. In the ego's plan, escape means hiding our sin, but experiencing it in another, thus believing we are free of it. True escape undoes the mind's belief in the sin which is the dream's beginning, and forgiveness is Jesus' gentle means to awaken us from the ego's nightmares, as we recall:

> So fearful is the dream, so seeming real, he could not waken to reality without the sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear, unless a gentler dream preceded his awaking, and allowed his calmer mind to welcome, not to fear, the Voice that calls with love to waken him; a gentler dream, in which his suffering was healed and where his brother was his friend. God willed he waken gently and

with joy, and gave him means to waken without fear (T-27.VII.13:4-5).

Again, the happy and gentle means is forgiveness, our only hope for lasting escape from the ego's dream of hate and fear.

**(12) He does not have to fight to save himself. He does not have to kill the dragons which he thought pursued him. Nor need he erect the heavy walls of stone and iron doors he thought would make him safe. He can remove the ponderous and useless armor made to chain his mind to fear and misery. His step is light, and as he lifts his foot to stride ahead a star is left behind, to point the way to those who follow him.**

This is also an important paragraph. We believe we have to fight against sin, which means fighting against hostility in other people, unfair practices in the world, or the sins of our own bodies. Many religious systems, for example, teach their adherents to fight against the sin in themselves: desires for sex, food, or any form of pleasure. Thus is sin localized in the body, not the mind; and whether sin is found in yours or mine, we are justified in fighting against it.

This need to oppose sin is rooted in the unconscious belief that sin is in my mind – I have killed, and will continue to kill in order to preserve my existence. I project that thought of murder and see it in you, making you in my own image and likeness. Thus I hear you say that in order to preserve yourself, you must kill me. Now I am justified in defending myself, which is the principal theme of the next lesson, "If I defend myself I am attacked" (W-pI.135). I, the face of innocence, have no choice but to fight to preserve my existence, a justification for attack we have seen Jesus describe:

> This aspect can grow angry, for the world is wicked and unable to provide the love and shelter innocence deserves. And so this face is often wet with tears at the injustices the world accords to those who would be generous and good. This aspect never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse (T-31.V.3).

Thus we are continually struggling against sin: against the world's pollutants, for example, to protect our physical body; against the terrible things people do to us, to protect our psychological body; or against the sin we believe is within us, needing to be rigid, strict, and disciplined to guard against sinful thoughts and behavior. All this falls nicely within the ego's plan because it makes sin real, which establishes the reality of the separated self that must be defended by a lifetime of struggle and battle.

In the first rule for decision, Jesus says: *"Do not fight yourself,"* placed in italics for emphasis (T-30.I.1:7). In other words: be aware of your ego, but do not fight against it. Not only need you not fight against someone else's ego thoughts, Jesus counsels, you need not fight against your own. In the manual he refers to these as magic thoughts, and highlights the importance of how we deal with these illusory and maladaptive attempts to preserve our ego's identity:

> How to deal with magic thus becomes a major lesson for the teacher of God to master. His first responsibility in this is not to attack it. If a magic thought arouses anger in any form, God's teacher can be sure that he is strengthening his

> own belief in sin and has condemned himself. He can be sure as well that he has asked for depression, pain, fear and disaster to come to him. Let him remember, then, it is not this that he would teach, because it is not this that he would learn (M-17.1:4-8).

Therefore, you are asked only to be aware of these magical thoughts and sinful deeds. Do not feel guilty about them, Jesus says, nor judge them as sinful, for this leads to the projection that builds a barrier between yourself and another, who then becomes the repository of your sin. Jesus asks you instead to accept his help in looking at your fear of him, because it is that fear of love you labeled as sin. Moreover, it is your need to defend against sin that has forced you to fight against everyone else in the world. As always, Jesus urges you to return to the source of the problem – the decision-making part of your mind that said: I am better off on my own, outside the Love of God:

> Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace (T-5.VII.6:5).

The Holy Spirit's Atonement principle reflects the Love of God, Who is the *All in All* (1 Corinthians 15:28; cited in *A Course in Miracles as* well [e.g., T-7.IV.7:4]). In this Love my self is nothing, but in *my* kingdom, God is the nothing and I the everything: *I* am the all in all. This usurpation is our sin, and yet it is nothing more than a silly mistake that had no effect on the All, Who *is* the All, outside of which is nothing. I therefore do not have to fight against the ego's dragons, whether in the world at large, my special relationships, or, above all, in myself. If I fight, I make them real. The famous biblical statement is appropriate here: "resist not evil" (Matthew 5:39). When you resist evil you reinforce its presence, since you do not oppose something you had not first judged as a threat. It is a shame the biblical God never paid attention to that line, because the Bible in its entirety is based on His resisting evil, reacting to His Son's perceived sin.

Therefore, all you need do with evil is smile gently and realize it is not so, being merely a silly thought with no effects. This is important to understand as you become increasingly aware of your ego, an occupational hazard of any student of the Course. It is tempting to despair that the ego never seems to change and is always with you. You need not despair: it never changes! What changes is the teacher with whom you choose to look at your ego. We have seen that from the beginning the ego has been 100 percent murder and viciousness: selfish, self-centered, and pre-occupied with its own specialness. This is a constant. What changes is how we look at it – with gentleness and kindness instead of guilt and judgment. Thus Jesus urges us to focus on the correction, not the shadows of the seeming problem:

> Concentrate only on this [our willingness], and be not disturbed that shadows surround it. That is why you came. If you could come without them you would not need the holy instant. Come to it not in arrogance, assuming that you must achieve the state its coming brings with it. The miracle of the holy instant lies in your willingness to let it be what it is. And in your willingness for this lies also your acceptance of yourself as you were meant to be (T-18.IV.2:4-9).

We accept ourselves as we were meant to be by our willingness to look at the ego's shadow self, made as substitute for the glorious Self God created. Fighting against the shadow reflects our disturbance over nothing, taking the tiny, mad idea seriously (T-

27.VIII.6:2-3), which reinforces its reality in our deluded minds Yet gently looking at the ego with Jesus' love beside us ensures that its "heavy walls of stone and iron doors" will softly disappear into their own nothingness. Again, we do not fight against the egos in others, and certainly do not fight against it in ourselves. We look with the love of Jesus, and at that point "a star is left behind." The star symbolizes forgiveness, pointing the way for others to follow, saying that our choice for the Holy Spirit's forgiveness is also theirs, because the same Teacher is in them. We thus become a shining example – as Jesus is our shining example – of what one looks like who has made the correct choice. We may not make it all the time, but in this instant we have released our judgments against others and ourselves. Our relationship with Jesus allows us to choose his star of forgiveness, as Helen's poem "The Star Form" reflects to us:

> The world can be to us a shining star,
> Because it represents a Thought of God....
> His Son abides where He would have him be.
> And not one beat in Heaven's song is missed
> Within the quiet shining of the star
> That is the silent Answer to the quest
> The world has set, but which does not exist.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 66)

**(13:1) Forgiveness must be practiced...**

This is a line that needs to be highlighted, and read again and again. Understanding *A Course in Miracles'* theory of forgiveness means nothing if you do not practice it and – going back to paragraph 9 – watch yourself accuse others, asking yourself: "Would I accuse myself of doing this?" The right answer is "yes" – I certainly would, for that means I exist and my identity remains secure. I pretend I am not accusing myself, as I pretend I am accusing you, but unconsciously I gladly accuse myself of sin because that, again, proves my reality. If I am sinless and innocent, I as an ego no longer exist. I do not know my Identity, yet I know my separate and sinful self that is witnessed to by my judgments, born of the unfair treatment I suffered at the hands of others. Thus Jesus says that the following words are terrifying to the separated world:

> *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself* (T-31.V.17:7).

That is why we must learn to say and mean those words:

> Yet in this learning is salvation born. And What you are will tell you of Itself (T-31.V.17:8-9).

The cost of our "yes" is salvation – remembering What we are.

**(13:1) Forgiveness must be practiced, for the world cannot perceive its meaning, nor provide a guide to teach you its beneficence.**

Forgiveness has to be practiced because the learning of the world – the projection of what we wish to learn from it – is opposed to it. The world says sin is real,

demonstrated by the victimized body. Everyone's goal is to keep the separated self, but give away the sin associated with it. We put on the face of innocence to justify and validate the self- concept of a damaged self, for which the world is responsible:

> The learning of the world is built upon a concept of the self adjusted to the world's reality. It fits it well. For this an image is that suits a world of shadows and illusions. Here it walks at home, where what it sees is one with it. The building of a concept of the self is what the learning of the world is for. This is its purpose; that you come without a self, and make one as you go along. And by the time you reach "maturity" you have perfected it, to meet the world on equal terms, at one with its demands.
>
> A concept of the self is made by you.... The concept of the self the world would teach is not the thing that it appears to be. For it is made to serve two purposes, but one of which the mind can recognize. The first presents the face of innocence, the aspect acted on. It is this face that smiles and charms and even seems to love (T-31.V.1:1-2:1, 4-7).

The second face, as the section goes on to discuss, is the hidden face of hate, the secret dream in which we are the sinful murderer (T-27.VII.11:6-12:2), which the face of innocence seeks to conceal. The disguise is so effective that we need a Guide to teach us the exact opposite of everything the world has taught, and, in fact, the exact opposite of what many spiritualities have taught. Therefore forgiveness requires a great deal of practice – to undo the resistance to recognizing the truth of our Self, and the falsity of our self. Recall that lovely summarizing line:

> Let me not forget myself is nothing, but my Self is all (W-pII.358.1:7; italics omitted).

**(13:2-4) There is no thought in all the world that leads to any understanding of the laws it follows, nor the Thought that it reflects. It is as alien to the world as is your own reality. And yet it joins your mind with the reality in you.**

Forgiveness is not our reality, but it forms the link between the illusions of sin and the truth of Atonement – both in our minds. Forgiveness as the world knows it – *forgiveness-to-destroy* – is alien to genuine forgiveness, for it makes the error real while overlooking it. It upholds the validity of the separated world, and does not recognize that everything here is a dream of our own choosing; not in some distant past, but now, for everything – right- and wrong-minded alike – occurs within the same instant. True forgiveness lifts us above the dream of time and space, and we look down with Jesus on ourselves and hear him say: "My brothers, figures in the dream, what you think, feel, and perceive is not the truth."

A specific exercise in forgiveness now follows:

**(14:1) Today we practice true forgiveness, that the time of joining be no more delayed.**

Our forgiveness of another – really, our projections – speeds us along the path that joins us with our true Self, Whose memory is kept for us in our minds. On a practical level, this means that when we do not forgive, and insist we are right and know better

than Jesus – believing that withholding love is preferable to extending it – it is because we do not want to rejoin the truth. If forgiveness is the only means of remembering Who we are as God's true Son, then adopting the ego's form of forgiveness is the means of remaining asleep and not returning home.

If we were really honest, therefore, we would say: "I want to be an individual and keep my uniqueness, and do not to want to lose my separated self. If I take Jesus' hand and walk through the ego's illusion, I will surely lose this specialness. My disappearing into the Oneness of Heaven means separation is gone, and this is what frightens me." Real honesty, then, admits we do not want to return home and therefore do not want Jesus as our teacher. In his place we choose the ego, which preserves our identity and keeps it sacrosanct. Thus Jesus explains to us, in words we have already seen, what is involved in joining with him:

> When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you. The truth in both of us is beyond the ego (T-8.V.4:1-3).

Forgiveness, again, is the means of remembering this truth, while retaining grievances enables us to forget. Jesus wants us to see the causal connection between holding onto judgments – overt or covert – and our unhappiness and pain. Only then can we realize our distress comes from a decision that says: I do not want to return home and rejoin the truth of Who I am as God's Son. Thus I choose not to forgive.

**(14:2-3) For we would meet with our reality in freedom and in peace. Our practicing becomes the footsteps lighting up the way for all our brothers, who will follow us to the reality we share with them.**

Since minds are joined, one brother is all brothers. When I let go of my grievances in the holy instant and realize you and I are one – in illusion as well as truth – I also realize I am one with the Sonship. At the end of the ladder of prayer, which forgiveness has helped me ascend, I say to everyone who comes to join in prayer with me:

> *I cannot go without you, for you are a part of me.*
> And so he is in truth. Now can you pray only for what you truly share with him. For you have understood he never left, and you, who seemed alone, are one with him (S-1.V.3:9-12).

My mind's thought of unity stands as a beacon of light that says to everyone – as does Jesus' light - "the decision I made you can make as well."

**(14:4-6) That this may be accomplished, let us give a quarter of an hour twice today, and spend it with the Guide Who understands the meaning of forgiveness, and was sent to us to teach it. Let us ask of Him:**

***Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.***

This means I must first see forgiveness *as it is not,* and be honest with myself that

I have chosen the ego as my guide. Thus the first half of this lesson spoke of the ego's forgiveness, and most of the sections in the text likewise begin by presenting the ego thought system.

**(15:1-2) Then choose one brother as He will direct, and catalogue his "sins," as one by one they cross your mind. Be certain not to dwell on any one of them, but realize that you are using his "offences" but to save the world from all ideas of sin.**

In other words, the sins I perceive in you become a classroom in which I learn that sin is an illusion; that is why the word is in quotation marks. If sin is illusory, so too are separation and specialness; the truth being we are one, the truth that saves the world. This has nothing to with anything external, because there is nothing external to save. We are saved from the thought system that says individuality is real and our selfishness justified. Thus Jesus speaks of the world ending in

> an illusion, as it began. Yet will its ending be an illusion of mercy. The illusion of forgiveness, complete, excluding no one, limitless in gentleness, will cover it, hiding all evil, concealing all sin and ending guilt forever. So ends the world that guilt had made, for now it has no purpose and is gone (M-14.1:2-5).

Jesus asks us to look directly at another's sins so we may recall our projection, the necessary step for forgiveness and healing. Since minds are one, our healing is the world's healing. Thus does Jesus use what we made to harm as an instrument of help (T-25.VI.4: 1).

**(15:3) Briefly consider all the evil things you thought of him, and each time ask yourself, "Would I condemn myself for doing this?"**

In doing a lesson like this we usually think of the self we condemn to be the body. It is almost impossible not to, but we need remember that the sin we accuse our brother of is a projection of the sin we accuse ourselves of. We may identify the sin with unloving feelings and behavior, yet these but shadow the sinful thoughts in our minds. We thus need to return there to choose again. What speeds us along this process of forgiveness is accepting that we know nothing and Jesus knows everything. Our perceptions are not true; not sinful, evil, or wicked, but unreal because they are based on separation. It is an illusion of ourselves we have projected out, giving rise to an illusion of attack. Working in reverse, Jesus uses our pseudo-attacks on another as the vehicle – Freud's *royal road* – for forgiving our pseudo-attacks on ourselves. Thus are we healed and our brother with us.

**(16:1-3) Let him be freed from all the thoughts you had of sin in him. And now you are prepared for freedom. If you have been practicing thus far in willingness and honesty, you will begin to sense a lifting up, a lightening of weight across your chest, a deep and certain feeling of relief.**

The burden we feel, the *tightening* of weight across our chest, is guilt. As Jesus says:

You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

Judgment is a major weapon in the ego's plan to save us from the guilt we made real in our minds. To correct that error, we now regard judgments as classrooms in which our new teacher retraces our steps with us, revealing their point of origin. Jesus tells us our judgments arose from the mind's belief in sin and guilt, and our need to escape from them by seeing them in another. That is why we addictively need to find fault with other people. Our judgments come, as we have repeatedly seen, from the need to protect our individuality by denying the sin in ourselves and seeing it in someone else.

This, then is the burden of judgment under which we live. The problem is that we have become so accustomed to it, we are not even aware we are living under such ego insanity. Being here is indeed a tremendous burden, because we are not with God and have denied our reality as spirit. We need to recognize this before we can take the next step of realizing we are not living here at all. We must not, however, skip these steps. Putting a happy face on our day is not going to work, because that denies the burden of judgment even more, making it ever more difficult to understand its onerous nature, the necessary condition for letting it go.

Jesus will therefore teach us the great cost of holding on to judgments against others, the shadow of the even greater cost of holding on to judgments against ourselves. Such judgments are not only insane, but silly and burdensome mistakes because we are not at peace. It would be one thing if murder made us happy, but it does not; and we cannot pretend anymore that faulting others and seeing ourselves as innocent victims work for us. When we finally let go of judgment – of others and ourselves – we will experience, miraculously, this "certain feeling of relief."

**(16:4) The time remaining should be given to experiencing the escape from all the heavy chains you sought to lay upon your brother, but were laid upon yourself.**

This self is the mind, not the person we think we are and which we see every morning in our bathroom mirror.

**(17:1) Forgiveness should be practiced through the day, for there will still be many times when you forget its meaning and attack yourself.**

As I say each and every time – because Jesus says it each and every time – forgiveness means nothing if you do not practice it. He tells you here – as he does throughout the workbook – that there will be times in the day when you will not do what he asks. That is when you need to practice all the more, to be truly mindful of your tolerance for the mind wandering (T-2.VI.4:6) that has taken you from your home in the Mind of God to the ego, and then to the sin and guilt you project onto everyone else. The ego thus has you focus on what other bodies do to hurt you, or what they do to make your body feel better; the emphasis clearly being on the body and not the mind. Therefore, Jesus instructs you to be attentive to how quickly you slip from the truth to what the ego tells you: the problem is not in you – the mind – but in everyone else – the body.

**(17:2) When this occurs, allow your mind to see through this illusion as you tell yourself:**

We cannot see through the illusion unless we ask Jesus for help. Indeed, forgiveness without his help is impossible, which is why we strive to do things on our own and practice forgiveness-to-destroy. And then Jesus has us say:

**(17:3-5)** ***Let me perceive forgiveness as it is. Would I accuse myself of doing this? I will not lay this chain upon myself.***

Jesus appeals to our selfish motives, saying we should forgive, not because it is wonderful, noble, and holy, or because he tells us to, but because we will feel better. It is essential we see the causal connection between our decision to be separate from him and its effect: the chain of pain we lay upon ourselves. Is it worth it to suffer so someone else will feel guilty? That insanity makes no sense to a sane person. Therefore, ask Jesus to help you realize that your judgments against others are attacks only on yourself. You deserve far better than that.

**(17:6-7) In everything you do remember this:**

***No one is crucified alone, and yet no one can enter Heaven by himself***

God's Son is one, and so if I seek to crucify you, I am crucifying myself. This undoes the ego's game of see-saw, wherein one is down and the other is up: I crucify you until you go down, thus enabling me to be resurrected as I go up. Forgiveness works only if I realize that what I do to you I do to myself. Recall that the ego does not understand *sameness,* but only *difference.* The ego teaches that you and I are different: one is sinful, the other sinless. However, the Holy Spirit teaches that you and I are the same: we share the ego thought system *and* the pathway home. When Jesus says "no one can enter Heaven by himself," he means I cannot enter Heaven at your expense, any more than I could have entered my own heaven – the ego's heaven – at God's expense. As he says in the text:

> Salvation is a collaborative venture (T-4.VI.8:2).
>
> Together, or not at all (T-19.IV-D.12:8).
>
> The ark of peace is entered two by two (T-20.IV.6:5).

This does not mean you literally walk the path with me. You do not have to be aware of salvation, nor even physically exist. What matters is that *I* do not see us as separated. In this way the perception of differences – *in my mind* – is healed. This occurs when I gladly and gratefully realize the teacher I have chosen has been mistaken and does not mean me well, and the real teacher, Jesus, will gently lead me home.

> Thus is the body healed by miracles because they show the mind made sickness, and employed the body to be victim, or effect, of what it made. Yet half the lesson will not teach the whole. The miracle is useless if you learn but that the body can be healed, for this is not the lesson it was sent to teach. The lesson is the mind was sick that thought the body could be sick; projecting out its guilt caused nothing, and had no effects (T-28.1I.11:4-7).

In sum, the problem is seeking to correct our problem on the level of the body, rather than directing our attention to its source – the mind's ongoing decision to identify with the ego. This decision is the sickness, and changing the decision is healing. Indeed, changing the mind's decision is the body's only real defense.

(10:4) You offer it protection of a kind from which it gains no benefit at all, but merely adds to your distress of mind.

The more we seek to protect the body, the more we reinforce and hide the guilt in our minds. Guilt is the source of our distress; and, if unnoticed, the distress will continue. Recall this line:

> Of one thing you were sure: Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them (T-27.V11.7:4).

We often have the illusion of having taken care of a problem externally, thinking everything is wonderful: God's in His Heaven, and all's right with the world. Yet all that has happened is the mind's guilt remains unnoticed, and therefore festers and is projected. Thus we make up more and more problems, whether in the body – mine or ours – or something else.

(10:5) You do not heal, but merely take away the hope of healing, for you fail to see where hope must lie if it be meaningful.

This is an important line, to which Jesus returns at the end of the lesson. Whenever we address an external problem – in our personal world or the world at large – we cannot heal anything. Indeed, we do the very opposite by destroying healing's true hope: the decision-making part of our minds – the source of the problem and its solution. Since the problem is our having chosen against God's Love, hope lies only in returning to the decision maker and choosing again, saying: I made a mistake by choosing the ego, a false teacher that does not speak the truth. The true Teacher is the Holy Sp

The next section of the lesson deals specifically with planning, and let me reiterate that Jesus does not mean we are to give up planning for the future. It is obvious, for example, that our Foundation could not have a teaching program if we did not plan for the future. He means not making plans on one's own. The important aforementioned section "I Need Do Nothing" makes the same point (T-18.VII) – Jesus does not mean this statement literally. Helen was obviously engaged in a great deal of "doing" when she took down his course. Again, we are not to do anything on our own. Even more specifically, when we plan or behave in any way, it is because we have defined the problem for ourselves, and therefore think we know the solution.

We often ask the Holy Spirit to help us solve a problem we have first established as real. The reason we need do nothing is that there is no problem to be solved. What requires solution is believing there is a problem from which we need saving. The only problem is why we would choose a teacher who would tell us that. Therefore, since mistaken choice is the problem, the correction is simply to choose the right teacher. That is why Jesus urges us not to do anything without him, and why "a healed mind does not plan," for we would be planning to solve a problem that does not exist, a smoke screen to hide the real problem of having chosen wrongly.

To repeat still again, Jesus is not saying we should not do things in the world. One of the most important things any student of A Course in Miracles needs to remember is to be normal. Lesson 155 says you should look like everyone else, the only difference being you would smile more frequently (W-pI.155.1:2-3). You would eat, drink, dress, and have insurance plans like everyone else – doing what others do, but differently because you act with a different teacher, smiling more frequently because Jesus only smiles. The ego smiles only when it wants something, which means its smile reflects murder. Recall this strong statement from the text:

> What is not love is murder (T-23.IV.1:10).

(11:1-2) A healed mind does not p lan. It carries out the plans that it receives through listening to wisdom that is not its own.

Many Course students think they follow this principle because they ask Jesus for everything. Yet they unknowingly fall into the ego's trap because they ask him their question, and therefore can receive an answer only on their terms. The very fact they ask for something specific – e.g., physical healing, a parking space, money, a relationship – limits the answer they receive. It is the arrogance of thinking they know the problem, and then demanding that Jesus solve it for them. That is why he cautions us against asking for specifics, as in this revisited passage:

> The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need. To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it. Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands. There they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no Love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him? Can this be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration? God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this (S-1.I.4).

Asking Jesus for specific help is not sinful, but it does limit his answer, as he

cautioned Helen in this message shortly before she began to scribe The Song of Prayer. We repeat its central point here, which underscores what was to come in what is now the pamphlet:

> Any specific question involves a large number of assumptions which inevitably limits the answer. A specific question is actually a decision about the kind of answer that is acceptable. The purpose of words is to limit, and by limiting, to make a vast area of experience more manageable. But that means manageable by you. For many aspects of living in this world that is necessary. But not for asking. God does not use words, and does not answer in words. He can only "speak" to the Christ in you, Who translates His Answer into whatever language you can understand and accept.... Answers are not up to you. Any limit you place on them interferes with hearing. God's Voice is silent and speaks in silence. That means that you do not phrase the question and you do not restrict the answer.... The only real request is for God's Answer. This needs the humility of trust, not the arrogance of false certainty (Absence from Felicity, pp. 445-46, 450).

This, then, is the answer to why we should not plan: We do not know what we need, let alone what we need to plan for. Thus planning-for-specifics is the same error as asking-for-specifics. Our energies and efforts are much better placed in asking for help to forgive, for that and that alone will remove the barriers to our hearing the Voice of love, Whose wisdom gently guides us in our words and actions. Guilt is the problem, forgiveness is the answer. We need never be more specific than that.

(11:3) It [the healed mind] waits until it has been taught what shou ld be done, and then proceeds to do it.

This presumes we are choosing the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, which means He is the One instructing as to the nature of our problem. Early in the workbook, Jesus taught us we are never upset for the reason we think (W-pI.5). In response to what we think to be the problem, we develop plans and defenses. If we are "good" Course students, we bring the Holy Spirit in to become part of our plan, to take care of the upset caused by what we have decided, and which needs defending against. His real teaching, however, is forgiveness – the undoing of our impediments to hearing. With these gone, we are free to be taught what to say or do. Our focus, therefore, is only on bringing the darkness of our illusions to the light of His truth:

> Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's function. Leave this to Him. Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can be extended. Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever. He will take each one and make of it a potent force for peace. He will withhold no blessing from it, nor limit it in any way (T-22.VI.9:2-7).

To really learn from our Teacher is not to learn what we should do, but to learn first what our problem is and ask for help to look at the situation differently. Looking through His eyes, we realize the situation – problems, grievances, pain – is part of the ego's plan to confuse us as to where the problem really is. Our plans take us still deeper into the world of bodies; the Holy Spirit's or Jesus' plan returns us to the mind. This

process is summarized succinctly in the following passage from an early chapter in the text:

> My control can take over everything that does not matter, while my guidance can direct everything that does, if you so choose. Fear cannot be controlled by me, but it can be self- controlled. Fear prevents me from giving you my control (T-2.VI.1:3-5).

By giving Jesus our fear, he can control it. This frees his love to flow through our minds, gently guiding our thoughts, words, and behavior.

(11:4-5) It [the healed mind] does not depend upon itself for anything except its adequacy to fulfill the plans assigned to it. It is secure in certainty that obstacles can not impede its progress to accomplis hment of any goal that serves the greater plan established for the good of everyone.

I am adequate to fulfill the plans assigned to my mind when I let the Holy Spirit be my Teacher and guide. The "greater plan" is the Atonement, carried out by each seemingly separate fragment of the Sonship practicing its daily lessons of forgiveness, which consists of choosing a different teacher of forgiveness. In Lesson 134 we saw how the ego teaches us to forgive by making sin real, and then overlooking it. The true Teacher of forgiveness helps us realize the problem needing forgiveness is within our minds, because we put it there to keep our separated existence intact. I know I am adequate to fulfill my part in this plan because I have a Teacher Who will guide me in looking within for help with the problem, rather than outside. The Holy Spirit is the great correction principle – the Atonement – as He undoes what never was.

(12:1) A healed mind is relieved of the belief that it must plan, although it cannot know the out come which is best, the means by which it is achieved, nor how to recognize the problem that the plan is made to solve.

The healed mind realizes it knows nothing, and is grateful it knows nothing. It does not arrogantly presume to know the problem, and therefore its solution. We think we know how people should respond to our problems – whether it is someone with whom we live or work, or Jesus himself – because we think we know what we need. However, this is all an ego set-up so when people do not give us what we need, we will be justified in being angry. Thus we do not really want help as long as we cherish our individuality. Yet when we recognize our mistake and choose the true Healer as our Teacher, a tremendous weight is lifted off us. We need no longer worry about anything because we realize worry itself is a defense, being a concern over an illusory defense (the body) for an illusory problem (the mind).

(12:2-3) It [the unhealed mind] must misuse the body in its plans until it recognizes this is so. Bu t when it has accepted this as true, then is it healed, and lets the body go.

Until we accept that we know nothing and Jesus knows everything, we will misuse the body. This must be so, for if I turn against Jesus I feel guilty, thinking I know better than he. The guilt is so overwhelming I am driven to project it, seeing my problem in the

body – yours or mine – and then doing something about it. I thus misuse the body because I see it as real, rather than as a defense against my mind's guilt that I first made real. Making the body part of reality, therefore, it becomes a serious problem and concern, demanding attention and defense.

(13:1) Enslavement of the body to the plans the unhealed mind sets up to save itself must make the body sick.

The plans the unhealed ego mind sets for itself are always an expression of forgiveness-to-destroy – seeing the problem in a body. It must make the body sick because an unhealed mind has turned against the Holy Spirit, leaving it separated – sinful and guilty, which is the sickness. Once sickened, the mind has no recourse but to project the guilt, thereby giving the body the physical/psychological symptoms we call sickness. Again, the true illness is in the mind, but is experienced in the body due to the ego's need to escape from the disease of guilt, thereby protecting the mind from any possibility of change.

(13:2) It [the unhealed mind] is not free to be the means of helping in a plan which far exceeds its own protection, and which needs its service for a little whi le.

The plan is the Atonement, and forgiveness is the means by which we fulfill our part in it. This has to do only with a change of mind or teachers, and nothing to do with behavior. It thus has nothing to do with A Course in Miracles as a book that has to be taught or preached. Our part in the plan is simply to ask Jesus' help to forgive our special relationships.

(13:3) In this capacity is health assured.

Without guilt in my mind, I know I am not a body. Therefore, how can it be sick? The "healing of the body" comes from recognizing I am not a body. It cannot be sick or well, and this is true regardless of the body's appearance.

(13:4) For everything the mind employs for this will function flawlessly, and with the strength that has been given it and cannot fail.

When my body serves under the Holy Spirit's guidance, it can but function flawlessly, regardless of its state. Thus we can never judge what is in someone's mind by what we observe in the body. If we observe something we think is important, we are already insane and distorting the truth. Therefore, anything we conclude will be mistaken. The world cannot be understood except from the point of love in our minds, in which there is no judgment or need to understand anyone or anything. We realize all people are insane, which means they are all sick, regardless of their personalities or bodies. It is enough for us to know that with no guilt in the mind, the body will effortlessly express love, in whatever form is needed. The following passage, already quoted, is perhaps the best instruction in A Course in Miracles for not making the mistake of looking to the form to understand the content. When one has identified with the thought of Atonement, this mistake can never occur. Judgment is indeed a shabby substitute for vision, which does not accept comparison as a means of approaching God's Son. Thus Jesus urges us to treat each other with the love we deserve, the very nature of which

can only reduce fear, not exacerbate it. Here is the wonderful passage:

> The value of the Atonement does not lie in the manner in which it is expressed. In fact, if it is used truly, it will inevitably be expressed in whatever way is most helpful to the receiver. This means that a miracle, to attain its full efficacy, must be expressed in a language that the recipient can understand without fear. This does not necessarily mean that this is the highest level of communication of which he is capable. It does mean, however, that it is the highest level of communication of which he is capable now. The whole aim of the miracle is to raise the level of communication, not to lower it by increasing fear (T-2.IV.5).

(14:1) It is, perhaps, not easy to perceive that self-initiated plans are but defenses, with the purpose all of them were made to realize.

In our world it does not seem that most of what we do falls under the category of self-initiated plans that are but defenses. Yet, this is clear when we understand that everything we do serves the purpose of making the world and body real, reflecting the ego's underlying purpose of denying guilt's presence in our minds, which has already denied the presence of the Atonement.

(14:2-4) They are the means by which a frightened mind would undertake its own protection, at the cost of truth. This is not difficult to realize in some forms which these self-deceptions take, where the denial of reality is very obvious. Yet planning is not often recognized as a defense.

To repeat, Jesus is not talking about planning, but self-initiated plans. Planning in and of itself is a natural part of living in this world, and, like the body itself, is neutral, serving the purpose of the ego or the Holy Spirit. The problem therefore is not planning, nor the body's condition, but the ego's purpose served by such planning. Once the problem has been identified, correction is easy and effortless.

(15) The mind engaged in planning for itself is occupied in setting up control of future happenings. It does not think that it will be provided for, unless it makes its own provisions. Time becomes a future emphasis, to be controlled by learning and experience obtained from past events and previous beliefs. It overlooks the present, for it rests on the idea the past has taught enough to let the mind direct its future course.

This summarizes everyone's experience in the world. We live our lives in the ego's present, planning for the future, based on our experiences in the past. Our planning is never based on a decision we make in the true present, the holy instant in which we choose Jesus instead of the ego. Indeed everything we do is based on the past. For example, I do not like you today because of what you said to me yesterday. If time is an illusion, however, what does yesterday have to do with anything? Nothing, unless I want an excuse to hate you today, because this hate prevents me from looking at the hatred of myself. The past thus becomes a way of justifying my decision in the present to hate you. Moreover, if I want to prove that my body's vulnerability is not my fault, I need only look at the past, which tells me that everyone dies in this world according to laws beyond our control. I therefore have to make provision for my death or

the death of my loved ones – all of which is based upon past perception. The underlying need served by this thought system is preserving my guilt, but seeing it in someone else.

As I have explained before, one way of understanding the world of time – past, present, and future – is to see it as a shadow of the inner world of sin, guilt, and fear. When these thoughts are projected from the mind, they give rise to the world of time, which says: "I sinned against God in the past, am guilty in the present for what I have done, and deserve the punishment I fear will come in the future." This means that sin, guilt, and fear, past, present, and future are united, and you cannot have one without the other. We speak of them as if they were separate dynamics or discrete thoughts, but they are interlocked in a single unit of separation and hate.

Indeed, everything I do, think, feel, or plan is based on the past. Yet if I act with Jesus, I am no longer separate from him, and therefore not separate from the Love of God. Without separation, there can be no thought system of hate and no temporal world. Therefore, with Jesus as my teacher, my future planning is not atoning for past sins, thereby trying to forestall an inevitable catastrophe I know is my inevitable punishment. Rather, my planning comes from love, and I need do nothing other than follow its gentle guidance.

(16:1) The mind that plans is thus refusing to allow for change.

As an unhealed mind that plans, I do not allow for change because I want separation to be real, but in someone else. Nor do I want any real change in the world, for that would reflect a change in my mind, and I want my original decision for the ego to stand. Thus Jesus teaches us about our fear of change:

> Many stand guard over their ideas because they want to protect their thought systems as they are, and learning means change. Change is always fearful to the separated, because they cannot conceive of it as a move towards healing the separation. They always perceive it as a move toward further separation, because the separation was their first experience of change. You believe that if you allow no change to enter into your ego you will find peace (T-4.I.2:1-4).

The ego's basic fear is that the Son will change his mind—realize he made a mistake by choosing the ego, reverse his decision, and choose the Holy Spirit. That is the change the ego never wants us to make, and why it reinforces the world of sin, guilt, and fear as a bodily presence outside the mind – a problem that need to be undone through planning and defense. Changing our perceptions of victimization must therefore never change, for this would set our feet along the path of change that ultimately ends the ego self with which we have identified.

(16:2-3) What it has learned before becomes the basis for its future goals. Its past experience directs its choice of what will happen.

The specifics of this past learning make no difference. What matters is that I believe I understand the situation, an understanding based only on the past that determines my needs and problems, and then my plans aimed at addressing these concerns.

(16:4-5) And it does not see that here and now is everything it needs to guarantee a future quite unlike the past, without a continuity of any old ideas and sick beliefs. Anticipation plays no part at all, for present confidence directs the way.

The phrase here and now is taken from Gestalt Therapy, inspired by Fritz Perls and others. It flowered in the 1960s, when A Course in Miracles was taken down. As the term is used in the Course, here and now means the holy instant, which was not the meaning of the Gestaltists. In the holy instant I choose against the ego's sin, guilt, and fear, and therefore against time. There is thus is no temporal experience of the body, and though my attention returns to the world of time and space, where my body seems to be, it is without the burden of sin, guilt, and fear – no guilt over a sinful past, nor fear over a dreaded future. I am therefore an empty vessel through which Jesus' love pours. The continuity he speaks of is the unity forged of sin, guilt, and fear, past, present, and future. In the holy instant I do not fear the future because there is no future. The past is gone as well, and all I know is the love of Jesus I choose in the here and now.

(17:1) Defenses are the plans you undertake to make again st the truth.

This looks forward to Lesson 136, "Sickness is a defense against the truth." The principle is presented a little more generally here: the ego's plan for salvation we have already discussed. Briefly summarizing these previous discussions, the ego tells us to erect defenses against the mind's guilt as part of its secret plan to keep us believing in its reality, a reality so horrific our sole defense is to project and see it in someone else. Yet the ego never tells us that guilt is also a defense, protecting our egos from the truth of who we are as God's Son.

(17:2) Their aim is to select what you approve, and disregard what you consider incompatible with your beliefs of your reality.

We approve of anything that reinforces our being right and God wrong; namely, the Son has separated from his Creator, and thus his sin of specialness is real. However, while we happily keep our special self, we just as happily give the sin to someone else through projection. Therefore, we approve of anything that demonstrates another's guilt, and reject anything that would prove the opposite. To say we are all part of God's one Son who does not deserve judgment or damnation, is incompatible with the ego's plan to make our individuality real but blame another for it. All such ideas are quickly denied, dismissed, or disregarded.

(17:3) Yet what remains is meaningless indeed.

In other words, what remains after we disregard the evidence proving God is right and we are wrong is the meaningless perception that sin is real, but in someone else. This is hardly meaningless to us, but is to God, Who does not recognize the separation, let alone our sin.

(17:4) For it is your reality that is the "threat" which your defenses would attack, obscure, and take apart and crucify.

The real threat to the ego is the power of the Son's mind to choose against it and for the Holy Spirit, the memory in our split minds of Who we are as spirit – God's Son as He created him. Thus the ego tells us that its defenses of guilt and the body will protect us from annihilation by God as punishment for our sin. It does not reveal that our defenses really protect us from recognizing we can change our minds and choose truth instead of illusion.

The following paragraph is among the most misunderstood in A Course in Miracles. By students taken it out of context, it has been used to attack themselves and everyone else:

(18) What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good? Perhaps you have misunderstood His plan, for He would never offer pain to you. But your defenses did not let you see His loving blessing shine in every step you ever took. While you made plans for death, He led you g ently to eternal life.

The ego loves to apply this passage to specifics, reinforcing our specificity and contradicting reality. There is no specificity in Heaven, and if the Holy Spirit is the memory of God's non-specific and abstract Love, there can be no specificity in the Holy Spirit, and certainly not in His "plan." The ego's plan disregards what is incompatible with its underlying goal and preserves what is. Its underlying goal is to protect specialness, but project responsibility for it onto someone or something else. Thus the ego's need to make specifics real. Lesson 161 states that "hate is specific" (W-pI.161.7:1), and "Thus were specifics made" (W-pI.161.3:1). We need a world of specifics in order to project our unconscious self-hatred onto another, so that sin would be seen outside us. An ingenious means of demonstrating the validity of the plan has the Holy Spirit, or even God Himself, be involved with the ego's specific plan to keep us specific.

Thus a passage like this is easily taken out of its non-dualistic context and used to prove that the Holy Spirit has a specific plan for me as a specific individual. Here, as in other places, the Course's language seems to suggest such specifics, because Jesus speaks to us as the specific individuals we believe ourselves to be:

> Yet must It [the Oneness within our minds] use the language that this mind can understand, in the condition in which it thinks it is (T-25.I.7:4).

Jesus speaks to us therefore in the dualistic language of specificity, for duality is the specific condition in which we think we live. As we make our way up salvation's ladder, we realize our reality is not the specific individual loved by God, but as part of God's one – non-specific – Son. The plan of which Jesus speaks – similar to the "the greater plan established for the good of everyone" – is the Atonement: the Holy Spirit's plan that corrects the ego's plan of separation.

In truth, the Holy Spirit does not have a plan, just as God does not. If there were a plan, there would have to be a real problem to be undone. What has to be undone is merely our mistaken belief there is a problem: separation and sin. Thus the Holy Spirit's "plan" undoes the ego's plan of making up a problem so we will seek and not find a solution for it. To refresh our memories, the ego's plan is to maintain the Son's individuality, defending against his ever changing his mind about it. That is why the Holy Spirit's plan of Atonement reflects Heaven's Oneness, which makes separation

impossible. The very fact the memory of our reality as Christ is in the mind corrects the ego's thought system of separation from God. Individuality and oneness cannot coexist. If the Holy Spirit is the memory of perfect Oneness, our identification with His loving Presence undoes the ego. In other words, nothing is done to counteract the ego's plan except quietly accepting truth's presence. In an important passage we have already considered, we read of this process of undoing, which "does nothing":

> The miracle does nothing. All it does is to undo. And thus it cancels out the interference to what has been done. It does not add, but merely takes away (T-28.I.1:1-4).

That is why the Holy Spirit's plan is not specific. His loving Presence of truth in our minds is the ego's undoing, and His plan is for us to call upon Him as we go through the specific plans of the ego's specialness, asking for help to look differently at our special relationships. This is what a later lesson refers to as "salvation's script" (W-pI.169.9:3).

The text tells us the ego speaks first, is always wrong (T-5.VI.3:5; 4:2), and the Holy Spirit is the Answer (T-5.II.2:5). The ego's speaking first is its plan to make our dream real and prevent us from ever returning home. That is its script, projected into the temporal and spatial world that is the manifestation of this atemporal plan of keeping separation intact and us in a perpetual state of mindlessness. The Holy Spirit's plan is simply looking, with Jesus' help, at what we are doing in our lives and how it preserves our specialness. Therefore, while we made plans for death – the ego's ultimate plan, for guilt deserves the ultimate punishment – the thought of eternal life remains with us. The specific purpose of A Course in Miracles, not to mention of these exercises, is to help us to choose this loving and eternal thought.

(19:1) Your present trust in Him is the defense that promises a future undisturbed, without a trace of sorrow, and with joy that constantly in creases, as this life becomes a holy instant, set in time, but heeding only immortality.

As in the early chapters of the text, Jesus plays with the concept of psychological defenses and their utilizing non-existent mechanisms against the non-existent problem of guilt, thereby making separation real. The Atonement is also a defense, but a healing one:

> You can defend truth as well as error. The means are easier to understand after the value of the goal is firmly established. It is a question of what it is for.... The Atonement is the only defense that cannot be used destructively because it is not a device you made.... The Atonement...becomes the only defense that is not a two-edged sword. It can only heal (T-2.II.3:1-3; 4:1,8-9).

In A Course in Miracles, therefore, two kinds of defenses are described: the ego's, which makes guilt real and then strives to protect us through projection; and the Holy Spirit's, which simply reminds us that truth is true and illusion is illusion. This latter defense is summarized in the aforementioned third lesson of the Holy Spirit, "Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom" (T-6.V-C). Joined with everyone, we gently smile with Jesus at the ego, and this constitutes our defense. Thus Jesus uses a word with decidedly ego connotations, but with a totally different meaning.

(19:2) Let no defenses but your present trust direct the future, and this life becomes a mean ingful encounter with the truth that only your defenses would conceal.

Strictly speaking, truth is not possible in this world, for truth cannot be present in unreality. Yet its reflection can, seen through forgiveness that undoes the ego's illusions, specifically its thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, and past, present, and future. We join with Jesus and his love in the holy instant, wherein there is no separation. All we do then flows from this love, the meaning of: "Let no defenses but your present trust direct the future."

As long as we see ourselves as specific individuals, our experience will be of a specific person named Jesus, speaking specifically to us and giving specific guidance. Most students of A Course in Miracles go through such a period. As you make your way up the ladder, however, you understand that what is important is not the specific guidance you receive, but the non-specific experience of God's Love. Once you have that experience, there can be no interest in the specific, nor concern for the future. In the holy instant, the locus of abstract love, there is no future. Therefore specific guidance is superfluous – what should I do tomorrow? what job should I take? what would make me happy in the future? – for once identified with the love of Jesus, your past guilt, present angst, and future fears all disappear.

This does not mean, as we have already discussed, that you do not plan. Normal people do. But when love is your identity, planning is carried out without effort, anxiety, or tension. You do whatever is the most loving thing for you and those people around you. Since you inhabit a world of time and space, your behavior must at times involve plans, yet their source is the guiltless world of the holy instant. When your attention returns to the world – as explained in Lesson 184 (W-pI.184.9, 10) – it is with Jesus' light-filled and loving presence beside you. This light and love inform everything you do – present and future – and your planning is not to alleviate anxiety or solve specific problems, but is the natural extension of love as it expresses itself in a world of time and space. Thus "this life becomes a meaningful encounter with the truth."

(20:1) Without defenses, you become a light which Heaven gratefully acknowledges to be its own.

When we set aside the ego's need to protect itself – our individuality and specialness – what remains is the light of Heaven, which the darkness of our defenses sought to cover. As we remove the veils, the light shines through our awareness to embrace the Sonship.

(20:2) And it will lead you on in ways appointed for your happiness according to the ancient plan, begun when time was born.

Jesus is not talking about a specific plan involving your becoming a celebrated teacher or holy person, or starting a group where everyone will worship you and/or each other. The ancient plan of Atonement, begun in the instant the separation seemed to happen, is the memory of God that came with us as we began our dream: "when time was born." As long as we identify as specific individuals, our minds will translate the abstract teachings of A Course in Miracles – not to mention the abstract Love of God –

into something specific. Consequently, we will think that Jesus is talking about a specific plan for me. Indeed, there is a specific plan for me: my ego's life of special relationships, in which everyone is perceived as the victimizing sinner, while I, and those with whom I identify, remain the innocent victim. With Jesus' help, I look at the ego's plan differently. In other words, the Holy Spirit's plan is the one I made up – the curriculum of my special relationships – looked at through His forgiving vision. Looked at without judgment, my relationships are healed. This ancient plan of the Atonement is thus our special function of forgiveness, described in the following familiar passage:

> Such is the Holy Spirit's kind perception of specialness; His use of what you made, to heal instead of harm. To each He gives a special function in salvation he alone can fill; a part for only him. Nor is the plan complete until he finds his special function, and fulfills the part assigned to him, to make himself complete within a world where incompletion rules (T-25 .VI.4).

(20:3-4) Your followers will join their light with yours, and it will be increased until the world is lighted up with joy. And gladly will our brothers lay aside their cumbersome defenses, which availed them noth ing and could only terrify.

This is another expression of the theme repeatedly mentioned in the Course: the oneness of God's Son. There can be no separation when you choose Jesus as your teacher, because his love itself expresses this oneness. The world is saved in that instant, and you become like Jesus – a light of truth shining throughout the Sonship. This is the meaning of "followers" – not people who hang on your every word and worship at your altar, but those who will make the same choice you made. Jesus also speaks of the entire Sonship, joined as one mind and light, as your mind changes from darkness to light.

(21) We will anticipate that time today with present confidence, for this is part of what was planned for us. We will be sure that everythi ng we need is given us for our accomplishment of this today. We make no plans for how it will be done, but realize that our defenselessness is all that is required for the truth to dawn upon our minds with certainty.

As long as we believe we are specific bodies with specific needs, we are at the bottom rung of the ladder. Moreover, in describing this ladder in The Song of Prayer, Jesus tells us that whenever we ask the Holy Spirit for specifics – asking-out-of-need (S-1.11.2: 1) – we reflect this position (S- 1.III.2:1). As we make our way up the ladder, identifying less with the body and more with the mind, we realize the only need is to choose the right teacher who will lead us home, kindly helping us to waken from the ego's horrifying dream and remember we never left our Father's house. Everyone shares this need, which unites us as one Son. Fulfilling that need for ourselves, the awakening blazes throughout the mind of the Sonship, happily embracing us all in its gentle peace:

> Whenever you are tempted to undertake a useless journey that would lead away from light, remember what you really want, and say:

The Holy Spirit leads me unto Christ, and where else would I go? What need have I but to awake in Him?

... The Holy Spirit will teach you to awaken unto us and to yourself. This is the only real need to be fulfilled in time. Salvation from the world lies only here. My peace I give you. Take it of me in glad exchange for all the world has offered but to take away. And we will spread it like a veil of light across the world's sad face, in which we hide our brothers from the world, and it from them (T-13.VII.14; 16:5-10).

Again, as long as we identify with our individual existence, the mind will translate into specifics our need for the teacher of forgiveness. Nothing is wrong with this, but the mistake enters when we think this is all there is, for we will then never make our way past the first couple of rungs. What will have happened – which in a sense leaves us worse off than before – is our having made this dream even more of a reality, because now Jesus himself is helping us find a happier dream here, wherein all specific needs are met. On the other hand, if we see the meeting of our needs as a transitional phase that leads to a far greater experience, we will not get trapped in the ego's web. Indeed, we will have paved the way for truth to dawn upon our minds.

(22:1) For fifteen minutes twice today we rest from senseless planning, and from every thought that blocks the truth from entering our minds.

Senseless planning means solving a problem that is non-existent, which is why it is senseless. Jesus is not saying you should not make plans – I cannot reiterate that enough – nor to have thoughts about the future. However, when your plans are filled with tension, fear, guilt, and anxiety, you have become involved in senseless planning, trying to defend against the problem of guilt that does not exist. How, then, can the truth of guiltlessness enter?

(22:2) Today we will receive instead of plan, that we may give instead of organize.

Whatever organizing we do comes after we first have been given the love we have chosen. It is, of course, not that Jesus gives us his love; it is always present. We wandered away from it, and therefore we need to return by accepting it. Even more to the point, love dawns on our minds by itself as we remove the cobwebs of sleep that kept our eyes closed by guilt and fear.

(22:3-5) And we are given truly, as we say:

If I defend myself I am attacked. But in defenselessness I will b e strong, and I will learn what my defenses hide.

Needless to say, my defenses hide the truth.

(23:1-2) Nothing but that. If there are plans to make, you will be told of them.

One more time, Jesus is not saying not to plan. Nor does he mean you will hear a

(26:1) Try not to shape this day as you believe would benefit you most.

The way “you believe this day would benefit you most” is if your specialness needs are met. Therefore – not

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 136**

**Sickness is a defense against the truth.**

This is among the most important lessons in the workbook, not only for what it says about sickness, but for its more general comments on how we defend against the truth. To review briefly, the ego's plan affirms that sin and guilt are real, a strategy to have us fear the mind so we will leave it, projecting our sinful, guilty selves so they are perceived in someone else. Thus we see sin and guilt in another's body – attack – or in our own – sickness. However, whether or not the guilt and pain are seen in your body or mine, I forget their source in my mind, thus fulfilling the ego's goal of keeping us mindless, and therefore unable to choose the truth.

Thus, while Jesus speaks specifically about sickness, especially in the second part of the lesson, he could just as easily say that judgment is a defense against the truth, as are anger, depression, anxiety, and specialness in any form. The *content* of anything we feel is a problem here – requiring our attention and planning – is the same. The *forms* may differ, but seeing problems in the world directs our attention away from the mind – the ego's purpose for everything. In this way we never remember that the true problem is within. This is why it is so tempting to see Jesus and the Holy Spirit doing things for us in the world. Their doing so means there are real problems here, demonstrating the reality of the world and making it easier to forget that the mind is the only source of problems and their solution.

**(1:1) No one can heal unless he understands what purpose sickness seems to serve.**

This important theme is echoed in statements from the text and manual for teachers:

> Sickness is a way of demonstrating that you can be hurt. It is a witness to your frailty, your vulnerability, and your extreme need to depend on external guidance. The ego uses this as its best argument for your need for *its* guidance (T-8.VIII.6:1-3).

> Healing involves an understanding of what the illusion of sickness is for. Healing is impossible without this.
>
> Healing is accomplished the instant the sufferer no longer sees any value in pain. Who would choose suffering unless he thought it brought him something, and something of value to him? He must think it is a small price to pay for something of greater worth. For sickness is an election; a decision (M-5.1:1—I.1:4).

Recall that in *A Course in Miracles,* purpose is everything. When you understand the purpose of something, you can do something about it. Thus it is important to understand the ego's fundamental strategy and purpose: to keep us rooted in the body so we forget we have a mind. True healing is impossible unless we realize the "purpose sickness seems to serve." It is not that sickness has chosen us, or has come unbidden. We have chosen it.

**(1:2-3) For then he understands as well its purpose has no meaning. Being causeless and without a meaningful intent of any kind, it cannot be at all.**

We are told in the manual that "all of them [forms of sickness] have the same purpose, and therefore are not really different" (M-5.III.3:2). Their purpose is to protect us from the sin and guilt in our minds. However, since sin and guilt are not truly there, the ego's purpose is meaningless. If we say that sin is the *cause* of sickness, but there is no sin, then sickness, as the *effect, is* as much an illusion as the belief we have separated from God. See, for example:

> All sickness comes from separation. When the separation is denied, it goes. For it is gone as soon as the idea that brought it has been healed, and been replaced by sanity. Sickness and sin are seen as consequence and cause, in a relationship kept hidden from awareness that it may be carefully preserved from reason's light (T-26.VII.2).

Stated another way, the purpose of sickness is to prove sin's existence, but sin is causeless because it comes from nothing: we never truly separated from God. Therefore, coming from nothing sin itself must be nothing, as is the defense against it. As King Lear said: "Nothing will come of nothing" (I, i). The world and body are nothing and come from nothing. The problem is we think sin is real, and therefore we think it needs a defense; i.e., sickness. Yet again, it is nothing causing nothing being defended by nothing.

**(1:4) When this is seen, healing is automatic.**

This is because sickness is the belief separation is real. Since sickness has nothing to do with the body, healing has nothing to do with the body. The manifestation of sickness in physical symptoms is nothing but the projection of the mind's sick or separating thought. Because *ideas leave not their source,* the idea of physical sickness has never left its source in the mind – the thought I am separate from God. Atonement undoes separation as healing undoes sickness – truth undoing illusion. This, then, is the core of healing: a change of mind about reality—from separation to Atonement – having nothing to do with the body at all. The following passage from the manual for teachers makes the nature of healing crystal clear:

> Healing must occur in exact proportion to which the valuelessness of sickness is recognized. One need but say, "There is no gain at all to me in this" and he is healed. But to say this, one first must recognize ...that decisions are of the mind, not of the body. If sickness is but a faulty problem-solving approach, it is a decision. And if it is a decision, it is the mind and not the body that makes it.... The acceptance of sickness as a decision of the mind, for a purpose for which it would use the body, is the basis of healing. And this is so for healing in all forms.... 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 (M-5.II.1:1-6; 2:1-2; 3:1-2).

**(1:5) It dispels this meaningless illusion by the same approach that carries all of them to truth, and merely leaves them there to disappear.**

You bring illusions to the truth, not the other way around. When you ask Jesus to

help you in this world, you bring his truth to your illusion, thinking Heaven is helping you here. Yet it is only the ego that is helped, for you perpetuate the illusion of separation by reinforcing the reality of the world and body, and that problems here are the cause of your unhappiness. Instead, Jesus asks you to bring this illusion to the mind, realizing the problem is not your sick body or another's, but the choice for the ego. The hidden illusion is that the ego speaks the truth, and the problem is believing it. Thus you bring the illusion of the body to the illusion in your mind, and on to the decision maker that corrects the mistaken choice. Healing is the happy result of this process of bringing the ego's darkness to the Holy Spirit's light:

> The Atonement.... merely brings unholiness to holiness; or what you made to what you are. Bringing illusion to truth, or the ego to God, is the Holy Spirit's only function (T-14 .IX.1:1, 3-4).

**(2:1-2) Sickness is not an accident. Like all defenses, it is an insane device for self-deception.**

Another term for *insane device is magic,* which is described in the Course as the attempt to solve a problem that does not exist, and therefore is not there. Sickness is "an insane device for self-deception" for it deceives us into thinking there is a problem in the body, necessitating a solution – yet another form of magic – that seeks to remedy the sick body:

> All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles (T-2.IV.4:1).

Magic is self-deception because the problem is not the sick body, but the sick mind. We would never realize this mind is also an illusion until we first remember we have a mind. Sickness, then, is one of the ego's more persuasive ways of keeping our attention rooted in the body; a specific form of the ego's more general strategy of keeping us mindless.

**(2:3-5) And like all the rest, its purpose is to hide reality, attack it, change it, render it inept, distort it, twist it, or reduce it to a little pile of unassembled parts. The aim of all defenses is to keep the truth from being whole. The parts are seen as if each one were whole within itself.**

This can be understood on two levels. First, I believe there are separate parts – organs, biological systems, etc. – within my body. In that vein, one of the frequently leveled criticisms against Western medicine is that it does not treat the whole person or body, but only its parts – a diseased liver, broken leg, bad stomach, headache, etc. Second, I see *this* body as the problem. Whether or not I see it holistically does not matter, for the body is still seen as separate from another's, not to mention from a mind of which I am not even aware.

The truth of the Son of God is that he is whole – as spirit. In this world's dream of fragmentation, it indeed appears as if we are separate: each of us a universe unto itself. If I take care of myself, what happens to anyone else is irrelevant for it has no effect on me—in stark contrast to John Donne's famous line: "No man is an island, entire of itself."* Yet the ego would have us believe that the Son of God has been shattered into

fragments, thereby attacking his Identity as unified spirit. Thus we think we are separate from each other, and that the systems in each separate body act independently. Hence we say, again, we have an upset stomach, sore throat, or an anxiety attack. In other words, we think in terms of specific symptoms, exactly what the ego wants. Separation is thus made real, with sickness a powerful means of reinforcing that "reality," and therein lies its purpose.

Jesus now leaves the discussion of sickness, to which he will return, and addresses defenses in general, describing how the ego fulfills its strategy of keeping us mindless.

**(3:1-2) Defenses are not unintentional, nor are they made without awareness. They are secret, magic wands you wave when truth appears to threaten what you would believe.**

Let us say you find yourself increasingly feeling Jesus' presence and believing in what his course teaches. You practice it with greater frequency, as you recognize that judgment no longer makes you happy, nor does doing things on your own. However, asking Jesus for help brings you peace, as does the happy fact of being wrong. Still there is a little voice whispering not so sweetly in your ear that if you continue to identity with Jesus and his teachings you will be annihilated, losing your individuality and specialness, and soon there will be nothing left of you. Hearing that threatening message, we become afraid and push Jesus away to return to our allies of guilt, fear, attack, and sickness, believing we are safe once again. This dynamic of the ego's fearful retaliation for our rejection of it is echoed in this already cited passage:

> When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you. The truth in both of us is beyond the ego.... Whenever fear intrudes anywhere along the road to peace, it is because the ego has attempted to join the journey with us and cannot do so. Sensing defeat and angered by it, the ego regards itself as rejected and becomes retaliative (T-8.V.4:1-3; 5:5-6).

Such retaliation constitutes our defenses, with sickness being one of the ego's favorite weapons.

These defenses seem to be something that just happen *to* us. However, as we shall see presently, there was a split second when we were aware of the threatening nature of Jesus' loving message. In that instant we quickly threw him away. So overwhelmed with guilt because we once more separated from the Love of God – reminiscent of the original instant when we believed we threw love away – we cannot but deny our guilt and project it. Thus is the source of our distress suddenly seen outside us – the ego's secret magic wand having waved again. What is perceived to be external can include people, circumstances, the weather, or our own bodies. The form is immaterial – all the ego cares about is placing our attention on an external cause for our upset, reflecting another successful defense against the truth.

**(3:3-4) They seem to be unconscious but because of the rapidity with which you choose to use them. In that second, even less, in which the choice is made, you recognize exactly what you would attempt to do, and then proceed to think**

**that it is done.**

This is not only a statement of what we do and how the world itself was made, but how our individual worlds are continually being made – day in and day out. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles* – in the context of this passage – can be understood as helping us return to that instant we have repressed, so we may choose again. Changing our minds is meaningless unless we go to the decision-making moment when we said to God: "I do not want You. My individuality and specialness are more important." We must return to that moment, yet it is not in time, being the same moment now as it was then. Recall:

> 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).

Progress in *A Course in Miracles* can be measured by how quickly we shrink the gap between the *effect* – our misery and pain – and its original *cause* – telling God His Love was not enough. Thus we do not want to take Jesus' hand and walk out of the dream, but seek instead to bring him into it, so we may be happy here. He asks us to realize what *we* are doing, not what is being done *to* us. This is the meaning of the clause: "you recognize exactly what you would attempt to do, and then proceed to think that it is done" – pushing Jesus away to preserve our specialness, but blaming another for it.

**(4:1) Who but yourself evaluates a threat, decides escape is necessary, and sets up a series of defenses to reduce the threat that has been judged as real?**

The *you* is the decision maker, not the individual self with which we identify. The wrong-minded decision maker says if we choose Jesus we will need to escape from the threat his love poses to our specialness. This line is a simplified version of what Jesus discusses in "Self-Concept versus Self" (T-31.V.10-13), where he asks us to consider what precedes the double image of ourselves as a sinner and innocent victim – the decision maker that is a shadow of the ontological instant when we, as one Son, evaluated the Holy Spirit's Atonement as a threat, rejecting it for the ego's promise of individuality. Here is an excerpt from that passage, in the context of the part of our mind that chose these self- concepts of sin and innocence:

> Yet who was it that did the choosing first?... someone must have first decided on the one to choose, and let the other go.... Something must have gone before these concepts of the self. And something must have done the learning which gave rise to them (T-31.V.12:6-7; 13:2-3).

This *something is* the mind's decision maker.

**(4:2-3) All this cannot be done unconsciously. But afterwards, your plan requires that you must forget you made it, so it seems to be external to your own intent; a happening beyond your state of mind, an outcome with a real effect on you, instead of one effected by yourself.**

Our plan requires such forgetting, because if we remembered what we were doing, we would realize the insanity inherent in attempting to escape from fear by a defense that makes us even more fearful. Sickness is a magical, highly maladaptive attempt to solve the problem of fear in the mind, born of our guilt. If we remembered, we would clearly give up the defense as it is senseless to begin with fear of annihilation in our minds from a vengeful God, and voluntarily end up with annihilation because our bodies will inevitably die.

The ego thought system thus makes no sense, which is why the plan calls for us to forget it, and why the Holy Spirit's plan calls for us to remember what we have done. Taking Jesus' hand means that together with him we unveil the ego's secret plan and see it for what it is. This is accomplished by our daily practice of seeing ourselves choose these maladaptive, magical defenses. When we recognize how they do not work, we will be motivated by the pain of our judgments and sickness to let them go, thereby accepting the Atonement.

**(5:1) It is this quick forgetting of the part you play in making your "reality" that makes defenses seem to be beyond your own control.**

Our thinking is "I am not the one who chose to be sick; something or someone made me this way." It does not matter if we are talking about a viral disease, or another's negative thoughts. The plan calls for me to believe I am the *effect* and something else is the *cause.* Not realizing I set this up – I am secretly glad to be upset and sick, even if it means my death – means I am off the hook. Remember this chilling line:

> "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die" (T-27.I.4:6).

**(5:2) But what you have forgot can be remembered, given willingness to reconsider the decision which is doubly shielded by oblivion.**

When we have forgotten – the ego's plan – all seems hopeless. That is why Jesus says that the ego's plan is "fool-proof," yet because of the Holy Spirit's presence in our minds, the plan is not "God-proof" (T-5.VI.10:6). All that is required for us to choose the Holy Spirit's plan of undoing is to realize our plan is not working. The motivation for learning this course is our pain and unhappiness, understanding these come from our choice and nothing else. This requires the "willingness to reconsider the decision," which is impossible if we remain mindless and do not even know there is a decision to reconsider.

The bottom line, therefore, is that we must return to the mind where the decision was made wrongly, and now can be undone. The *double shield of oblivion,* to which I have already referred, is first, the mind's guilt that prevents the decision maker's choosing the truth; and second, the world that shields us from the guilt. The world acts as a shield because when I see my guilt in you, I do not have to acknowledge it in myself. The guilt in my mind, likewise, shields me from the truth of Who I am. Moreover, guilt drives me away from my mind so I can never reconsider the decision, because *guilt is a decision* – not an ontological reality – to preserve my individual existence. To recap, the first shield is the guilt that protects me from choosing God's Love in my mind, and the second is the world and body that protect the guilt.

**(5:3) Your not remembering is but the sign that this decision still remains in**

**force, as far as your desires are concerned.**

When we do not remember our mistaken choice for individuality, it is because we are protecting it. In other words, forgetting is an active decision. It is not caused by stress or growing old, but by the mind's decision, saying: "I want to retain my separate existence, but do not want to be responsible for its concomitant pain. Thus I forget my decision and blame another."

**(5:4-6) Mistake not this for fact. Defenses must make facts unrecognizable. They aim at doing this, and it is this they do.**

The fact is not that I am separated nor an individual existing on my own, but that I am a child of God. That is the meaning of the Atonement principle – the separation never happened. The purpose of all defenses is to keep us from remembering that fact. The ego's "fact," in contrast, is that we chose our individuality over God. Everything else defends that truth, so we do not change our minds.

The ego, then, makes up a story of sin, guilt, and fear – contradicting the fact of God's loving Oneness – to drive us out of our minds – literally and figuratively. It says that sin, guilt, and fear are the fact, followed by the inevitable fact that God will punish us. We therefore flee the mind, and make up a world to hide in the body. This physical identity now becomes the fact: my body is sick, or suffers because of what someone else has done to it. We collect the witnesses of pain to confirm the body's reality: factless facts defending against factless facts. We thus become far removed from the dream's only fact: our mistaken choice against the true Fact. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles* in general, and this lesson in specific, is to have us remember what we have done, so we may properly forget it.

Before we continue with paragraph 6, let me make a few more comments about defenses. Recall how many times Jesus emphasizes that purpose is everything. He says, for example, that the only question we should ever ask of anything is: "What is it for?" (T-4.V.6:7-10; T-24.VII.6; T-29.VI.5) Through understanding purpose we will understand the meaning of preceding events and our defenses. If we think of truth as abstract, non-specific, and whole, the perfect way for the ego to defend against reality is to see to it that the decision maker never changes its mind and chooses the Holy Spirit. Thus it makes a world of specifics, the opposite of truth's wholeness. These specifics are gathered together to make nonexistent problems, which we spend the rest of our time and energy trying to solve. This massive defense serves to conceal the true problem, which rests in the mind having chosen the ego.

**(6:1) Every defense takes fragments of the whole, assembles them without regard to all their true relationships, and thus constructs illusions of a whole that is not there.**

A defense makes up a nonexistent problem, which appears to be a self-sustaining whole. In the context of this lesson, the problem or defense is sickness. The ego teaches us that pain is localized in the body, an entity in and of itself. Thus, the cause of our disease lies within the body – sickness – and the remedy – magical aid – is applied to the body. Again, we never realize that the true problem rests in the mind's decision for the ego. The following passage echoes this discussion in the context of our dreams of specialness:

> There is no dream of specialness, however hidden or disguised the form, however lovely it may seem to be, however much it delicately offers the hope of peace and the escape from pain, in which you suffer not your condemnation. In dreams effect and cause are interchanged, for here the maker of the dream believes that what he made is happening to him. He does not realize he picked a thread from here, a scrap from there, and wove a picture out of nothing. For the parts do not belong together, and the whole contributes nothing to the parts to give them meaning (T-24.V.2).

**(6:2) It is this process that imposes threat, and not whatever outcome may result.**

In other words, the problem is not what we specifically think it is – bodily pain, emotional trauma, a drained bank account, or a world problem. The problem or threat lies within the process itself of choosing the ego's fragmentation.

**(6:3) When parts are wrested from the whole and seen as separate and wholes within themselves, they become symbols standing for attack upon the whole; successful in effect, and never to be seen as whole again.**

In a larger sense, the separate parts are the seemingly separate segments of the Sonship, each one thinking it is a whole, an entity apart from the others. The separating body affirms this as reality. The problem, however, is that whether we think the issue lies in my body, yours, or in the world, the resultant pain is not a result of my specific experiences, but what they symbolize – the "fact" that I exist by having destroyed God. Again, the specifics "become symbols standing for attack upon the whole," and thus symbolize our guilt. We are not guilty over what we have done or failed to do, anymore than we are angry over what another did or failed to do. These feelings but represent the mind's choice for the attacking ego. Another passage from the text complements our discussion of how the ego seeks to make sense of an inherently meaningless – because illusory – world by literally making up a "unified" world of separate parts:

> Let not your eyes behold a dream; your ears bear witness to illusion. They were made to look upon a world that is not there; to hear the voices that can make no sound.... For eyes and ears are senses without sense, and what they see and hear they but report. It is not they that hear and see, but you, who put together every jagged piece, each senseless scrap and shred of evidence, and make a witness to the world you want (T-28.V.5:3-4, 6-7).

This world of separate parts negates the Whole that is the universe of God. Such is the ego's purpose for its defenses – sickness and anger – and the seeming success of its mission is witnessed to by the history of our individual and collective worlds.

**(6:4) And yet you have forgotten that they stand but for your own decision of what should be real, to take the place of what is real.**

We could not ask for a more explicit statement of how the ego hides from us the thought expressed in this sentence. It never wants us to be in touch with the decision-

making part of our minds, and rightly fears the mind's power to choose against it by choosing Jesus as its teacher. Once having judged the decision maker as the problem – it alone can end its existence, as it once gave it its reality – the ego makes up the defenses that constitute its thought system, culminating in the physical universe that conceals the fact it is our choice to be on our own. This choice of the mind is the problem and the sickness, not anything physical.

**(7:1-2) Sickness is a decision. It is not a thing that happens to you, quite unsought, which makes you weak and brings you suffering.**

This thought is repeated from the first part of the lesson, but here specifically addresses sickness. Our world attests to the "fact" that things happen *to* us; events beyond our control make us happy or sad, well or sick. However, the world is but a smoke screen to conceal the mind's fundamental decision to be an ego. That is the problem, and recognizing it is the solution.

**(7:3) It is a choice you make, a plan you lay, when for an instant truth arises in your own deluded mind, and all your world appears to totter and prepare to fall.**

The world that "appears to totter and prepare to fall" is the separated world of specialness, manifest in our physical/psychological existence that is the shadow of the mind's decision to be separate. When we choose Jesus as our teacher, however, choosing the correction instead of the problem, the ego becomes afraid and viciously strikes back:

> The ego is deceived by everything you do, especially when you respond to the Holy Spirit, because at such times its confusion increases. The ego is, therefore, particularly likely to attack you when you react lovingly, because it has evaluated you as unloving and you are going against its judgment.... This is when it will shift abruptly from suspiciousness to viciousness, since its uncertainty is increased (T-9.VII.4:4-5, 7).

Again, it is the world of our individual existence that totters and falls. As a defense, we quickly decide to return to our ally and friend, the thought system of the ego:

> The "loveliness" of sin, the delicate appeal of guilt, the "holy" waxen image of death, and the fear of vengeance of the ego you swore in blood not to desert... (T-19.IV-D.6:3).

Once guilt is chosen, it is projected onto the body and we are ill, or our anger seeks to make someone else sick for having treated us unfairly. As explained above, it all happens quickly; so quickly, in fact, we forget the problem originated in our minds. All we know is that we are angry, depressed, and in pain, having no memory of their cause, to the ego's great delight.

**(7:4) Now are you sick, that truth may go away and threaten your establishments no more.**

Our "establishments" are the defenses that seemingly protect our existence. *Truth* in this context is *spirit,* our reality and identity. It is the tangible body, as we will see in just a moment, that seems to prove our reality is anything but spirit.

**(8:1-2) How do you think that sickness can succeed in shielding you from truth? Because it proves the body is not separate from you, and so you must be separate from the truth.**

The underlying premise here is that the body is not the truth, because truth is non-specific, whole, changeless, and eternal; the exact opposite of the body's characteristics. Yet if I am identified with my body – witnessed to by my pain – and the body is not the truth, I cannot be the truth either. That is the ego's logical argument to keep us separate from it.

**(8:3) You suffer pain because the body does, and in this pain are you made one with it.**

Remember that the ego has convinced us we are bodies, not minds or spirit. We have a name and identity, and bodies all around who respond to us as if we exist – as bodies. I have already referred to Lesson 190, "I choose the joy of God instead of pain," which states:

> If God is real, there is no pain. If pain is real, there is no God (W-pI.190.3:3-4).

It is *one or the other.* If I want to prove I am not part of God, which means I am not like Him – changeless, eternal, and spirit – all I need do is be in pain. This firmly establishes the "fact" of my physical existence, which means I am different from what God created. Since my pain seems very real, my Identity as Christ can only be a dream.

**(8:4) Thus is your "true" identity preserved, and the strange, haunting thought that you might be something beyond this little pile of dust silenced and stilled.**

"True" is in quotation marks because our true identity is not the body. As discussed before, Jesus often refers to the body, which we think so wondrously important, as a "little pile of dust." We think we are this body, in order to forget our glorious Self.

**(8:5) For see, this dust** [the body] **can make you suffer, twist your limbs and stop your heart, commanding you to die and cease to be.**

Suffering and death are everyone's experience, which seem to prove the world is real and the body a fact. If this were so, our identity as spirit would be a dream, and nothing more than a fleeting thought. Remember, the ego's defenses have as their single purpose to cause us to forget the mind's decision to choose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit.

**(9:1-2) Thus is the body stronger than the truth, which asks you live, but**

**cannot overcome your choice to die. And so the body is more powerful than everlasting life, Heaven more frail than hell, and God's design for the salvation of His Son opposed by a decision stronger than His Will.**

Recall Wordsworth's wonderful line: "The world is too much with us." The world certainly seems to represent a power well beyond God's. This power becomes proof the ego has once again triumphed over Heaven. Look what we can do! We can make life, and then cause it to cease. God cannot do this, for He creates only life, not death. The fact that we can establishes us as lord of life *and* death. Thus do we have power over life, which ultimately gives us power over God. Moreover, the frail body – "this little pile of dust" – seems to witness to the reality of this insane thought of grandiose insanity.

God's design is the plan of the Atonement, but since God in truth does not have a design or plan, this but reflects the fact that God's Will and ours are the same. This unity of Will transcends all belief in separation, including the belief we can attack God and get away with it.

**(9:3) His Son is dust, the Father incomplete, and chaos sits in triumph on His throne.**

As long as you believe you exist in this world, you accept as truth everything stated in this paragraph. Indeed, it is impossible to believe your life hangs upon a breath, or your happiness rests on the whim of another – what we all believe – without accepting that we have indeed triumphed over God. In fact, there *is* no God; only the ego. That is why people love to proclaim: "I am God." Their egos cry out in joy: "I exist, and I exist because I triumphed over Heaven." This is the ultimate meaning of sin:

> There is no stone in all the ego's embattled citadel that is more heavily defended than the idea that sin is real; the natural expression of what the Son of God has made himself to be, and what he is. To the ego, this is no mistake. For this is its reality; this is the "truth" from which escape will always be impossible. This is his past, his present and his future. For he has somehow managed to corrupt his Father, and change His Mind completely. Mourn, then, the death of God, Whom sin has killed! And this would be the ego's wish, which in its madness it believes it has accomplished (T-19.11.7).

**(10:1) Such is your planning for your own defense.**

We see how beautifully this works as an ego strategy. As long as I am a body and believe I am real, I not only do not have a mind or decision maker, but there is nothing I can choose, even if I could, because there is no Holy Spirit to remind me of my Self and Its Source. There is only this "glorious" body that lives and dies, experiences pleasure and pain, and yearns for fulfillment of its own specialness.

**(10:2-4) And you believe that Heaven quails before such mad attacks as these, with God made blind by your illusions, truth turned into lies, and all the universe made slave to laws which your defenses would impose on it. Yet who believes illusions but the one who made them up? Who else can see them and react to them as if they were the truth?**

We thus have this delusional and grandiose thought system in which we believe we exist by having destroyed Heaven. However, when we awaken from the dream and look back, we see its inherent silliness, for only a madman could believe delusions are reality. Within the dream, however, it seems very real, for *we* are the ones who believe in it, unlike the Holy Spirit, and God Who does not even know about the dream.

**(11:1-3) God knows not of your plans to change His Will. The universe remains unheeding of the laws by which you thought to govern it. And Heaven has not bowed to hell, nor life to death.**

This is another place in *A Course in Miracles* that clearly states that God knows nothing about our insanity. This is a good thing, for if He did, it would mean the ego were real and the impossible had been accomplished. The most comforting thought of all is that God does not even know about us. To the ego, of course, such a statement is infuriating and insulting. Yet it remains the one truly salvific thought in the dream, reflecting the Atonement principle that the separation never happened. Jesus thus presents us here with the opposite of the ego's belief system he discussed in paragraph 9. Nothing has happened to change reality. God remains God, and there is nothing else:

> ... all He knows is One ... He knows of one creation, one reality, one truth and but one Son. Nothing conflicts with oneness.... The truth is simple; it is one, without an opposite.... What is everything leaves room for nothing else (T-26.111.1:2-4, 8, 12).

**(11:4) You can but choose to think you die, or suffer sickness or distort the truth in any way.**

We believe this, but belief does not make it real. Early in the text, Jesus says we are free to deny our inheritance, but not to establish what it is (T-3.VI. 10:2). Thus we can believe the ego is our treasure, but that does not make it true. Such insanity does not establish reality:

> You can violate God's laws in your imagination, but you cannot escape from them. They were established for your protection and are as inviolate as your safety (T-10.in.1:5-6).

> You have not attacked God and you do love Him. Can you change your reality? No one can will to destroy himself ... What you think you are can be very hateful, and what this strange image makes you do can be very destructive. Yet the destruction is no more real than the image, although those who make idols do worship them. The idols are nothing, but their worshippers are the Sons of God in sickness (T-10.III.1:1-3, 6-8).

**(11:5-8) What is created is apart from all of this. Defenses are plans to defeat what cannot be attacked. What is unalterable cannot change. And what is wholly sinless cannot sin.**

Again, defenses are a psychotic system of thought with the purpose of defending against another psychotic thought: the impossible has happened, reality is a dream, and

the dream is truth. Nonetheless, sin's madness has no effect on the truth of our reality as spirit, created at one with God, as sinless as He.

**(12) Such is the simple truth. It does not make appeal to might nor triumph. It does not command obedience, nor seek to prove how pitiful and futile your attempts to plan defenses that would alter it. Truth merely wants to give you happiness, for such its purpose is. Perhaps it sighs a little when you throw away its gifts, and yet it knows, with perfect certainty, that what God wills for you must be received.**

Jesus explains again that the Holy Spirit simply reminds us of another choice we can make. He does not do anything, because there is nothing to be done. He does not solve a non-existent problem, for that would establish the world's conditions as real. The ego would thus love for the Holy Spirit to address our problems here. Yet all He does is shine the truth, like a lighthouse in the mind that calls our wandering decision maker back to the only meaningful choice it could make. Needless to say, the final sentence about truth sighing is meant poetically, for truth does not sigh. This lovely image corrects the ego's image of truth as a destroyer, portraying in its place truth's kindly waiting for our return, wanting only that we accept the happiness it offers.

**(13:1) It is this fact that demonstrates that time is an illusion.**

The fact is that what God wills for us must be received, for He wills that we be part of Him, which means we *are* part of Him. We have already received God's gifts of eternal life and love because we are not separate from Him. Nonetheless, we desperately seek to deny this reality, affirming the illusion that the gifts *we* have established – existence and specialness – are true indeed. Yet they cannot extinguish the light of truth – *having* and *being* are one, as are *giving* and *receiving:*

> In your own mind, though denied by the ego, is the declaration of your release. *God has given you everything.* This one fact means the ego does not exist, and this makes it profoundly afraid. In the ego's language, "to have" and "to be" are different, but they are identical to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows that you both *have* everything and *are* everything. Any distinction in this respect is meaningful only when the idea of "getting," which implies a lack, has already been accepted. That is why we make no distinction between *having* the Kingdom of God and *being* the Kingdom of God (1-4.111.9).

**(13:2-3) For time lets you think what God has given you is not the truth right now, as it must be. The Thoughts of God are quite apart from time.**

We *are* a Thought in the Mind of God, and this Identity remains outside time. Thus does Jesus correct the traditional view of performing good works in order to receive God's future gifts, whether in this lifetime or beyond. Thus another major theme in *A Course in Miracles:* God's Love is apart from time, as is our reality, wherein His gifts have both been given and received. His Love is not something we earn or pay for, but simply accept – in the present – as our reality as a Thought of God, Who patiently awaits our decision to remember:

> The Thought God holds of you is perfectly unchanged by your forgetting. It will always be exactly as it was before the time when you forgot, and will be just the same when you remember. And it is the same within the interval when you forgot (T-30.III.7:6-8).

**(13:4) For time is but another meaningless defense you made against the truth.**

In later lessons we will discuss the topic of time in more depth. But here we see that time is just another defense, part of the separated world that seeks to prove our existence as an individual entity within a body, a creature of time and space. Recall that the ego's world of time – past, present, and future – is but a projection into form of its unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear. Time appears real because we believe sin, guilt, and fear are real, yet time is as meaningless as its source.

**(13:5) Yet what He wills is here, and you remain as He created you.**

In other words, nothing has come between us and our Creator and Source. This all-important theme is one of the foundation stones of the workbook, as we have seen, as well as of the text and manual. For example:

> As God created us so will we be forever and forever, and we wish for nothing but His Will to be our own. Illusions of another will are lost, for unity of purpose has been found (M-28.5:8-9).

**(14:1-2) Truth has a power far beyond defense, for no illusions can remain where truth has been allowed to enter. And it comes to any mind that would lay down its arms, and cease to play with folly.**

Our responsibility is to lay down our arms, setting aside our defensive system by the little willingness to go back to the place in the mind where we chose against Jesus. Now we choose for him, and look through his loving eyes at everything we had heretofore made real. He cannot bring truth to us. He *is* truth. We bring our illusions to him, and look without judgment at the illusions we made in the world and in our wrong minds. Looking with him, they disappear because they were nothing. When illusions are brought to truth, its light shines them away:

> Bringing the ego to God is but to bring error to truth, where it stands corrected because it is the opposite of what it meets. It is undone because the contradiction can no longer stand. How long can contradiction stand when its impossible nature is clearly revealed? What disappears in light is not attacked. It merely vanishes because it is not true (T-14.IX.2:1-5).

**(14:3) It is found at any time; today, if you will choose to practice giving welcome to the truth.**

We do not have to wait for some future time to have truth be our reality. It comes at the very moment we welcome it by our being aware of how much we do not want it, and how we erect the defense of specialness to keep it away. Such is the honesty Jesus

asks us to demonstrate.

**(15:1-3) This is our aim today. And we will give a quarter of an hour twice to ask the truth to come to us and set us free. And truth will come, for it has never been apart from us.**

As we have discussed, it is not that truth comes to us; we come to it. We who wandered away when we chose the ego's illusions, are the ones who must come back, like the prodigal son in the gospel parable, as Jesus explains in this passage from the text:

> Listen to the story of the prodigal son, and learn what God's treasure is and yours: This son of a loving father left his home and thought he had squandered everything for nothing of any value, although he had not understood its worthlessness at the time. He was ashamed to return to his father, because he thought he had hurt him. Yet when he came home the father welcomed him with joy, because the son himself *was* his father's treasure. He wanted nothing else (T-8.VI.4).

Such is the good news, not only of the parable, but ofA *Course in Miracles:* Truth never left us, and we only believed we had left it. Its love has remained just beyond our mind's wanderings into the dream of separation, patiently awaiting our awakening to its happy reality.

**(15:4-5) It merely waits for just this invitation which we give today. We introduce it with a healing prayer, to help us rise above defensiveness, and let truth be as it has always been ...**

The defensiveness is not the ego's strategy to be in a body and be sick, but our unwillingness to look at the strategy itself and say: "Perhaps I am wrong in the way I experience and perceive this." Thus it is our little willingness to admit we have been wrong and Jesus right that allows us to step beyond our defensiveness and pray:

**(15:6-7)** ***Sickness is a defense against the truth. I will accept the truth of what I am, and let my mind be wholly healed today.***

We are not the ones who heal our minds. We choose to let our minds be healed by the presence of the Atonement principle, which we now happily choose for ourselves.

**(16:1) Healing will flash across your open mind, as peace and truth arise to take the place of war and vain imaginings.**

In order for healing to occur, I first must realize I have chosen "war and these vain imaginings" – my daily life as a battleground – so as not to remember the truth beyond the battle. Only then can I know I am not a victim of the world or its unseen forces, but of my mistaken decision to keep Christ's love separate from my innate attraction to it. This is undone in the instant **I** choose to remember I am one with His Will, which is my own as well:

> This is the re-establishment of *your* will. Look upon it, open-eyed, and you will nevermore believe that you are at the mercy of things beyond you, forces you cannot control, and thoughts that come to you against your will. It *is* your will to look on this. No mad desire, no trivial impulse to forget again, no stab of fear nor the cold sweat of seeming death can stand against your will. For what attracts you from beyond the veil is also deep within you, unseparated from it and completely one (T-19.IV-D.7:3-7).

**(16:2) There will be no dark corners sickness can conceal, and keep defended from the light of truth.**

Sickness, one of the ego's premier defenses, keeps us in darkness because it roots us in the body's darkness, which reflects the guilt that conceals the Holy Spirit's light-filled presence in our minds. Anger serves the same purpose – shielding the dark cornerstones of guilt that defend us from the light of truth. Thus we read in the text's closing pages about these darkened images of separation and fragmentation – sickness and anger being among the most prominent – yet which have no power to withstand the strength and majesty of Christ, our Self:

> The images you make cannot prevail against what God Himself would have you be. Be never fearful of temptation, then, but see it as it is; another chance to choose again, and let Christ's strength prevail in every circumstance and every place you raised an image of yourself before. For what appears to hide the face of Christ is powerless before His majesty, and disappears before His holy sight.... Not one illusion is accorded faith, and not one spot of darkness still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone (T-31.VIII.4:1-3; 12:5).

**(16:3-4) There will be no dim figures from your dreams, nor their obscure and meaningless pursuits with double purposes insanely sought, remaining in your mind. It will *be* healed of all the sickly wishes that it tried to authorize the body to obey.**

The dim figures of our dreams of separation are but shadows of the mind's dim figures of sin, guilt, fear, attack, and death. Their double purposes pertain to the specialness by which everyone lives, as seen in special love: On the one hand our purpose is to attain and give love, and on the other to kill; on the one hand we seek happiness, and on the other to keep the real hope of happiness hidden from awareness.

**(17) Now is the body healed, because the source of sickness has been opened to relief. And you will recognize you practiced well by this: The body should not feel at all. If you have been successful, there will be no sense of feeling ill or feeling well, of pain or pleasure. No response at all is in the mind to what the body does. Its usefulness remains and nothing more.**

When Jesus says "Now is the body healed," the succeeding sentences make it clear that he is not talking about a bodily change. If you follow his guidance you will have identified with your mind, and since the mind is outside time and space, you are outside the body's dream. Thus:

**Lesson 136**

At no single instant does the body exist at all (T-18.VII.3 :1).

In the holy instant, the reference here, there is no body. Joined in Jesus' love, we cannot be separate, and so there is no sin, guilt, or fear to defend against the mind's decision maker, and no body to defend against the ego's unholy trinity – the aforementioned double shield.

When I experience Jesus' love and peace, my body does not feel anything – not good, not bad, not anything. I "feel" the Love of God that is in the mind, which has nothing to do with the body. Therefore, *A Course in Miracles* is not about healing the body, which can never be healed because it was never sick. Standing with Jesus within the holy instant, we perceive the body correctly – pain or discomfort, the upsets in our lives, are classrooms reflecting back to us the mind's decision to be an ego. Thus we learn it was our minds that decided to be sick and unhappy. Before, all we knew was that our bodies hurt, or were lonely, sad, or ecstatic. Everything was focused on them. Now, asking Jesus for help means looking through his eyes instead of our own, realizing the body is only the means by which we are reminded we have a mind that chose guilt instead of love, individuality instead of oneness, the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. That, again, is the meaning of: "Now is the body healed."

One of the central meanings of forgiveness is the lifting of the projections I placed upon you. There is nothing to forgive, because you have only done what I wanted you to do, for I wanted my sin to rest on you:

> When you are angry, is it not because someone has failed to fill the function you allotted him? And does not this become the "reason" your attack is justified? (T-29.IV.4:1-2)

Thus it is not our relationship that is healed, but the mind. Likewise, in true healing my projections of sin are lifted from your body, where I put them. As a relationship is "healed" when I choose Jesus instead of the ego, so my body is "healed" when I make the right choice. Healing then, like forgiveness, is simply withdrawing the projections from another's body or our own. The body, once again, becomes an instrument reminding us of the source of real pain and joy: the mind. This principle is underscored in Jesus' treatment of healing in psychotherapy:

> This realization [that forgiveness heals unforgiveness] is the final goal of psychotherapy. How is it reached? The therapist sees in the patient all that he has not forgiven in himself, and is thus given another chance to look at it, open it to re-evaluation and forgive it. When this occurs, he sees his sins as gone into a past that is no longer here. Until he does this, he must think of evil as besetting him here and now. The patient is his screen for the projection of his sins, enabling him to let them go. Let him retain one spot of sin in what he looks upon, and his release is partial and will not be sure (P-2.VI.6).

Healing then has nothing to do with the patient, nor the therapist's interventions, but *only* with the removal of the therapist's projections from the patient:

> It is in the instant that the therapist forgets to judge the patient that healing occurs (P-3. 11.6:1).

This principle of healing is important to understand so as to avoid being caught in the idea that the body has to feel better or change. That is what underlies this very familiar passage:

> Seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world (T-21.in.1:7).

It is not the world that is the problem, but our *thinking about the world* – the projections of our sin and guilt. The same is true of physical illness, which is our projected guilt onto the body. When we withdraw the projections, the guilt dissolves and so does the sickness. In the next lesson sickness will be identified with separation, the mind's insanity that has nothing to do with the body.

**(18:1) Perhaps you do not realize that this removes the limits you had placed upon the body by the purposes you gave to it.**

This is what we have seen. The purpose we gave the body was to be a limited self: a symbol of separation, sin, guilt, and attack. By removing that purpose through the Holy Spirit, the body becomes well, since it was never sick. In *A Course in Miracles* the positive consists of undoing the negative. The only true positive is the Love of God, and its reflection – forgiveness – dissolves the ego's guilt and hate. Therefore, being well or healed is only the undoing of the mistaken belief we could be sick. Remember, healing has nothing to do with the body, but only with removing guilt's projections from the mind.

**(18:2) As these are laid aside, the strength the body has will always be enough to serve all truly useful purposes.**

These useful purposes constitute our classroom. The body becomes a symbol of remembering we can make another choice. Therein lies its strength – the mind's correcting the body's weakness as the shadowy fragment of the ego's thought system of separation and fear.

**(18:3) The body's health is fully guaranteed...**

Once more, Jesus is not talking about the health of the body. *There is no body.* Everyone likes to catch Jesus in mistakes, and the *form* of his language seems to suggest he is contradicting himself. Yet when you understand the *content* behind his words, potential contradictions fall away. I like to remind students that when they study *A Course in Miracles* and apply it to their lives, they should never let the metaphysics get too far away. It keeps you honest, especially with a sentence like this. The body cannot be healthy because, again, it does not exist. It appears to be sick when guilt is projected onto it, and health is simply removing it – the mind's thought of sickness – from the body, not, for example, successfully combating a virulent microorganism. That is why Jesus states:

> Health is inner peace (T-2.I.5:11).

**(18:3-4) The body's health is fully guaranteed, because it is not limited by time, by weather or fatigue, by food and drink, or any laws you made it serve**

**before. You need do nothing now to make it well, for sickness has become impossible.**

Sickness should not be defined by how the body appears, whether it is yours or another's. Students often like to judge as they practice this Course, sniffing out symptoms. When successful, their egos pounce on the poor sufferer and say: "Ah ha! You see, you are not a holy person! You are failing this Course!" But sickness is separation, guilt, and judgment, and has nothing to do with the body.

**(19:1) Yet this protection needs to be preserved by careful watching.**

This is another line that should be underlined over and over. Careful watching is not of the world or body, but of thoughts of separation. These are the sickness; specifically the thought of guilt that results from choosing the ego's individuality over the Holy Spirit's Oneness. Preserving the body's protection by carefully watching the mind means not projecting. Thus we saw in the early lessons Jesus' emphasis on our developing the ability of mind searching. We cannot change a thought of which we are not aware. Denial protects thoughts from change; careful watching facilitates it.

**(19:2) If you let your mind harbor attack thoughts, yield to judgment or make plans against uncertainties to come, you have again misplaced yourself, and made a bodily identity which will attack the body, for the mind is sick.**

We can see from the first part of this sentence that Jesus defines sickness by attack thoughts, judgments, and plans to solve problems that do not exist. This is thus a summary of Lessons 135 and 136. He says, as always, that this lesson will mean nothing unless you practice it day by day, moment by moment; watching your mind for thoughts of judgment and specialness – the thoughts of sickness. Your body will be sickened by these thoughts, not necessarily in the *form* of disease that you or others will see, but in the *content* of not feeling well, since there is no way of avoiding guilt when you attack. Needless to say, this is why the ego directs us to do so. When you are guilty, you will no longer remember who you are as a child of Love, having misplaced yourself by seeing your identity as an ego, not to mention everyone else's.

**(20:1) Give instant remedy, should this occur, by not allowing your defensiveness to hurt you longer.**

This implies you cannot "give instant remedy" unless you know something has gone wrong, which is why you must be keenly vigilant for your ego. If you truly want to express your love for *A Course in Miracles* and its teacher, ask him to help you monitor your mind for thoughts of attack and judgment: the source of all dis-ease.

The defensiveness Jesus refers to here is sickness: thoughts of attack, judgments, and specialness. You must come to realize they not only hurt other people, they hurt *you.*

**(20:2) Do not be confused about what must be healed ...**

It is not the body that "must be healed," but the mind—specifically its mistaken decision.

**(20:2-7) ... but tell yourself:**

***I have forgotten what I really am, for I mistook my body for myself Sickness is a defense against the truth. But I am not a body. And my mind cannot attack. So I can not be sick.***

Sickness is but a figment of our imagination, literally a dream whose purpose is to protect us from choosing against the ego and for the Holy Spirit, Who teaches us to forget what we remembered – the ego's false self of sin and the body – and remember what we had forgotten – our innocent Identity as spirit. As Jesus reminds us in the text:

> Learning is impossible without memory since it must be consistent to be remembered. That is why the Holy Spirit's teaching is a lesson in remembering. I said before that He teaches remembering and forgetting, but the forgetting is only to make the remembering consistent. You forget in order to remember better (T-7.II.6:2-5).
> * *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624), Meditation No. 17.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 137**

**When I am healed I am not healed alone.**

This lesson continues the theme of sickness, here defined as separation. This means healing is unity: We accept our oneness as Christ, God's one Son, by joining with Jesus in our right minds – the process that undoes sickness. Jesus also equates sickness with sin and the belief that the physical world is real. Thus he equates healing with forgiveness of sin and perception of the real world, which undoes the belief in the world's reality. In the real world we are outside materiality, and with Jesus' love beside us we realize the world is a dream. We look at our bodies and see this is not who we are, for they are simply figures in the mind's dream. In sum, the real world, forgiveness, and healing are equated, as are sickness, sin, and the physical world.

The lesson's idea – "When I am healed I am not healed alone" – reflects back to us the unity of God's Son: one in Heaven as Christ, one in the dream. When I join with the love of Jesus in the holy instant and am healed, the Sonship is healed as well, because I am without my ego and thus without belief in separation and individuality. In that instant I know the Son of God is one, and I am part of that oneness. The manual expresses the same idea in answering the question: "How many teachers of God are needed to save the world?" (M-12) – one. Jesus is a manifestation of that one teacher, and since there is only one Son, in our healing we become that one as well. The unity of God's Son is our own.

**(1) Today's idea remains the central thought on which salvation rests. For healing is the opposite of all the world's ideas which dwell on sickness and on separate states. Sickness is a retreat from others, and a shutting off of joining. It becomes a door that closes on a separate self, and keeps it isolated and alone.**

The original sickness is the thought I am on my own. I begin by retreating from my oneness with God, which establishes me as separated and autonomous, isolated and alone. Through the evolution of the ego's defensive system, that thought of separation manifests as a separate body, keeping me separate from everyone else. When I have physical or psychological symptoms, my pain isolates me even more from others, for I cannot love when I am in pain, as all I seek is relief – love and pain are mutually exclusive states. Therefore, pain is a decision to be separate from love. When in pain, I only love those who will reduce it. This is my special need, and the special love object is the one to alleviate it. If the pain is psychological, that special person "helps" me with a telephone call, visit, or letter; if it is physical, I am helped by the amelioration of the symptom. However, this is not true joining, for our separate needs and interests preclude awareness of our shared purpose. Sickness divides our purpose; healing unites it. Recall:

> No mind is sick until another mind agrees that they are separate. And thus it is their joint decision to be sick. If you withhold agreement and accept the part you play in making sickness real, the other mind cannot project its guilt without your aid in letting it perceive itself as separate and apart from you. Thus is the body not perceived as sick by both your minds from separate points of view. Uniting with a brother's mind prevents the cause of sickness and perceived effects. Healing is the effect of minds that join, as sickness comes from minds that separate (T-28.III.2).

**(2:1-2) Sickness is isolation. For it seems to keep one self apart from all the rest, to suffer what the others do not feel.**

When I am sick I do not care about you. Probably more so than any other time in my life, my pain makes me the center of the universe. I care only that my pain be alleviated. You exist in my dream only to serve the purpose of alleviating my discomfort. Following the ego's *fourth law of chaos* – "you have what you have taken" (T-23.II.9:3) – we on some level paradoxically blame the helper for our painful situation. Thus: If you are free from pain, you must have taken my happy state from me and will not return it, leaving me alone in my suffering. As the ego's painfully familiar law states:

> For enemies do not give willingly to one another, nor would they seek to share the things they value (T-23.II.9:6).

Thus does sickness keep us separate, reinforcing the mind's decision to be separate:

> The cause of pain is separation, not the body, which is only its effect (T-28.111.5:1).

Only by returning our awareness to the sick mind can we be healed, recognizing we are one in suffering, just as we are one in healing.

**(2:3) It gives the body final power to make the separation real, and keep the mind in solitary prison, split apart and held in pieces by a solid wall of sickened flesh, which it can not surmount.**

Jesus speaks here of the projection of the original thought of sickness from the mind onto the body. As we saw in the previous lesson, a sick body establishes beyond a shadow of doubt that the thought of separation and the body are real, and therefore God is not. Thus does a sick body protect the sick thought, holding "the mind in solitary prison." Pain solidly roots my attention in the body, and the thought of having a mind – let alone a decision maker – is so far removed from my experience that even to conceive of it is impossible. All that matters is that my bodily needs be taken care of – satisfaction of pleasure or avoidance of pain.

**(3:1) The world obeys the laws that sickness serves, but healing operates apart from them.**

This is so because healing occurs in the mind that is outside time and space, and therefore outside the body. The body, and physical sickness specifically, are smoke screens concealing the trans-mundane mind – the source of the body's sickness.

**(3:2) It is impossible that anyone be healed alone.**

This makes sense only when we realize that sickness is a belief in separation. Healing undoes this belief when we choose Jesus instead of the ego. As always in *A Course in Miracles,* nothing written here will be understandable if you relate it to your experience in the world. Rather, you are asked by Jesus to relate your experience to

your mind, not the other way around. It is therefore best not to approach this course in terms of your physical experience, for healing is not of the body. Being "healed alone" reflects the mind's faulty thought system of separation and aloneness, which is undone as healing restores to awareness our inherent oneness as God's Son. We cannot be healed alone because we are not alone:

> Praise be to you who make the Father one with His Own Son. Alone we are all lowly, but together we shine with brightness so intense that none of us alone can even think of it (T-13.X.14:1-2).

This is the brightness of healing, resplendent with the light of Christ, God's one Son.

**(3:3-4) In sickness must he be apart and separate. But healing is his own decision to be one again, and to accept his Self with all Its parts intact and unassailed.**

When I join with Jesus, I also join with the memory of my and everyone's Identity as Christ – our true Self. Healing lifts us above the dream's battleground, from where we look at its figures, some of whom may be sick, one may even be the person I think of as myself. Being outside the dream, I remember the oneness of God's Son, and without separation there can be no thought of sickness. Therefore, the appearance of a sick body must be illusory because it comes from the illusion I am separate from God. However, if I am already joined with His Love by virtue of being with Jesus, the ego's whole thing is made up, allowing us to remember the Whole Thing. Thus we read in the text:

> Healing is a sign that you want to make whole. And this willingness opens your ears to the Voice of the Holy Spirit, Whose message is wholeness. He will enable you to go far beyond the healing you would undertake, for beside your small willingness to make whole He will lay His Own complete Will and make yours whole (T-11.11.4:1-3).

This is the essence of practicing *A Course in Miracles:* stepping back with Jesus to look at what you believe is causing your discomfort. Thus will you look at the world differently, and the effects of anger, upset and craving specialness will be gone. All you will now see are sick figures, as you realize truth is outside the dream, in the Wholeness and Oneness of God's Son.

**(3:5) In sickness does his Self appear to be dismembered, and without the unity that gives It life.**

In the ontological instant when we believed we separated from God, we also believed we dismembered the Self of Christ. It is another way of saying we crucified God's Son by believing He could be separated into fragments, as we see in this all-important passage:

> You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution. It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation

> for wholeness. It has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was. That one error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. Your whole world rests upon it. Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is part of it (T-18.I.4).

The good news is that we were wrong – our Self never left Its Source:

> You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see.... turn you to the stately calm within, where in holy stillness dwells the living God you never left, and Who never left you (T-18.I.5:1; 8:2).

**(3:6) But healing is accomplished as he sees the body has no power to attack the universal Oneness of God's Son.**

Healing occurs when you ask Jesus for help, stepping outside the dream to look back at its figures to realize you are literally looking at a dream or, better, an hallucination in which figures walk about, live and die (T-20.VIII.7:3-7). One of those figures is the person you thought was your self, a self you now realize resides in the decision-making part of your mind – the locus of healing. The body, and therefore the thought of separation, has no power here, and cannot attack the universal Oneness of God's Son. In other words, the separation had no effect at all. This is the principle of the Atonement, which leads back to the Oneness we never truly left. Its purpose accomplished, healing gently fades back into its Source – the Love of God:

> Healers there are, for they are Sons of God who recognize their Source, and understand that all their Source creates is one with them. This is the remedy that brings relief which cannot fail. It will remain to bless for all eternity. It heals no part, but wholly and forever. Now the cause of every malady has been revealed exactly as it is. And in that place is written now the holy Word of God. Sickness and separation must be healed by love and union. Nothing else can heal as God established healing. Without Him there is no healing, for there is no love (S-3.III.5).

**(4:1-4) Sickness would prove that lies must be the truth. But healing demonstrates that truth is true. The separation sickness would impose has never really happened. To be healed is merely to accept what always was the simple truth, and always will remain exactly as it has forever been.**

Nothing in reality has changed, but we are not asked to deny any level of experience here, to shed our clothes of individuality and leap into Heaven. We need only look through a different lens at what we thought was so important, thus comparing the ego's lie of separation (e.g., sickness) with the principle of the Atonement (the separation never really happened), coming to the conclusion Jesus offers near the end of the text:

> How simple is salvation! All it says is what was never true is not true now, and never will be. The impossible has not occurred, and can have no effects. And

that is all (T-31.I.1:1-4).

How simple, and how lovely!

**(4:5-6) Yet eyes accustomed to illusions must be shown that what they look upon is false. So healing never needed by the truth, must demonstrate that sickness is not real.**

Looking with Jesus at our egos is one of the key themes of *A Course in Miracles,* the heart of forgiveness. He explains that the miracle establishes that we dream a dream, the contents of which are not true (T-28.II.7:1). We look clearly at our experiences and those of others, and realize this is part of a dream wherein nothing is true. Yet I will not know it is a dream unless I look at it, which I cannot do unless I have chosen the guide to vision. However, our eyes have grown accustomed to the darkness of illusions, and so time is needed within the illusory dream of time to allow our fear to abate sufficiently that we may see. Recall this passage, inspired by Plato's allegory of chained prisoners in a cave of darkness:

> Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free. It takes a while for them to understand what freedom is (T-20.III.9:1-2).

The comfort of Jesus' presence by our side provides the gentleness of healing, slowly opening our eyes, so long kept closed.

**(5:1) Healing might thus be called a counter-dream, which cancels out the dream of sickness in the name of truth, but not in truth itself.**

Heaven's truth knows nothing of sickness, and therefore knows nothing of healing. Recall the earlier statement in the workbook that God does not forgive because He has never condemned (W-pI.46.1:1). Forgiveness and healing merely undo a mistaken thought that was never truly there. That is why Jesus describes healing as a counter-dream, and elsewhere calls forgiveness a final illusion (W-pI.198.3) or happy fiction (C-3.2:1), for it forgives what never happened:

*Forgiveness* is for God and toward God but not of Him. It is impossible to think of anything He created that could need forgiveness. Forgiveness, then, is an illusion, but because of its purpose, which is the Holy Spirit's, it has one difference. Unlike all other illusions it leads away from error and not towards it (C-3.1).

Likewise, healing is an illusion because it heals what was never sick. Here again we see the equation of healing with forgiveness and the real world, counterbalancing the equation of the sin of separation with sickness and the world. The following lovely line expresses this thought:

> The dream of healing in forgiveness lies, and gently shows you that you never sinned (T-28.III.8:4).

**(5:2-3) Just as forgiveness overlooks all sins that never were accomplished, healing but removes illusions that have not occurred. Just as the real world will arise to take the place of what has never been at all, healing but offers restitution for imagined states and false ideas which dreams embroider into pictures of the truth.**

The process is always the same. We use different words – the attainment of the real world, true perception, forgiveness, healing, the miracle – because the thought of separation takes different forms – attack, sickness, belief in the body. Yet there remains one problem and one solution, one illusion correcting another. Moreover, as with forgiveness and healing, Jesus is also an illusion:

> The man was an illusion, for he seemed to be a separate being, walking by himself, within a body that appeared to hold his self from Self, as all illusions do (C-5.2:3).

Jesus is but one form among many, answering our need for salvation in a form we can accept and recognize; the answer to the imagined state of separation, which dreams have embroidered:

> Helpers are given you in many forms, although upon the altar they are one. Beyond each one there is a Thought of God, and this will never change. But they have names which differ for a time, for time needs symbols, being itself unreal....
>
> Is he [Jesus] God's only Helper? No, indeed. For Christ takes many forms with different names until their oneness can be recognized. But Jesus is for you the bearer of Christ's single message of the Love of God. You need no other (C-5.1:3-5; 6:1-5).

As students of *A Course in Miracles* it is important to recognize that these aids - forgiveness, healing, and Jesus – are but truth's reflection, symbolic illusions that correct the ego's illusions of guilt, sickness, and separation. As Jesus reminds us in the third obstacle to peace, speaking of the idea of death:

Remember, then, that neither sign nor symbol should be confused with source, for they must stand for something other than themselves. Their meaning cannot lie in them, but must be sought in what they represent (T-19.IV-C.11:2-3).

Healing, forgiveness, and Jesus reflect the truth of our oneness and lead us back to it, yet it is important we remember it is the source we want, not its symbol.

**(6:1-2) Yet think not healing is unworthy of your function here. For anti-Christ becomes more powerful than Christ to those who dream the world is real.**

Even though healing is an illusion, we should not think we are unworthy of it, nor believe in our arrogance we want to leap beyond it to the truth. As long as we believe we are here, we will believe the ego has triumphed. Thus, "anti-Christ becomes more powerful than Christ to those who dream the world is real." As long as our bodily needs press upon us, the world is real, which means we believe that anti-Christ – the ego and its idols of specialness – has triumphed over God and Christ. Jesus is not asking us to

deny what we believe, but to correct it so it can be undone. The anti-Christ has power only because we have invested belief in it, making our insane dreams reality, in which the impossible has occurred and an idol has become God:

> An idol is established by belief, and when it is withdrawn the idol "dies." This is the anti-Christ; the strange idea there is a power past omnipotence, a place beyond the infinite, a time transcending the eternal. Here the world of idols has been set by the idea this power and place and time are given form, and shape the world where the impossible has happened. Here the deathless come to die, the all-encompassing to suffer loss, the timeless to be made the slaves of time. Here does the changeless change; the peace of God, forever given to all living things, give way to chaos. And the Son of God, as perfect, sinless and as loving as his Father, come to hate a little while; to suffer pain and finally to die (T-29.VIII.6).

**(6:3-4) The body seems to be more solid and more stable than the mind. And love becomes a dream, while fear remains the one reality that can be seen and justified and fully understood.**

Making itself real is the purpose the ego gives to its thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, expressing itself as the purpose it gives: the apparent reality of the physical world and body, specifically, in this case, sickness. Thus does disease prove the body's reality, caused by an external agent that is also deemed real. The powerful mind is thus relegated to impotence, and ultimately non-existence. If there is no mind, how could we choose against the ego, which remains free to exist within its fearful dream, protected from threat of the mind's power to choose the reality of love.

The next paragraph begins with the equation of forgiveness, the real world, and healing – terms that are used as virtual synonyms in this lesson:

**(7:1) Just as forgiveness shines away all sin and the real world will occupy the place of what you made, so healing must replace the fantasies of sickness which you hold before the simple truth.**

Holding sickness before the simple truth describes an ego defense. Choosing to be sick or angry, holding on to judgments that make sin real, come when we experience the presence of Jesus and the Love of God. The fear of the dissolution of our special self when in the presence of love, drives us to seek shelter in the ego's guilt-ridden arms, for once fear arises, there also rises the need to defend our selves. We have seen how sickness is one of the ego's primary defenses against truth, and the Holy Spirit's real world of forgiveness is blocked by our fantasies of sin and sickness. Truth must then await our healing return from the sick world of illusion.

**(7:2-3) When sickness has been seen to disappear in spite of all the laws that hold it cannot but be real, then questions have been answered. And the laws can be no longer cherished nor obeyed.**

The cause of suffering and anger is the decision to be guilty. When we change the decision by taking Jesus' hand instead of the ego's, the *cause* is gone, which means the *effect* is gone as well. If the effect has disappeared, it cannot have been real, for the

ego says effects are eternal. We have the illusion of their going away, but as long as the *cause* of guilt remains in our minds, its sinful *effect* is present in one form or another:

> But while the guilt remains attractive the mind will suffer, and not let go of the idea of sin. For guilt still calls to it, and the mind hears it and yearns for it, making itself a willing captive to its sick appeal (T-19.III.1:4-5).

The body's "laws" of sickness and healing are transcended as we withdraw belief in the thought system of sin, placing it under the mind's law of forgiveness that alone heals.

**(8:1-2) Healing is freedom. For it demonstrates that dreams will not prevail against the truth.**

This is a statement that the separation from God never happened—the Atonement principle, reflected by healing, forgiveness, and the perception of the real world. If, thus, the separation is an illusion, the ego's imprisoning dreams of anger, sickness, and judgment must also be illusory, with no effect upon our freedom. Jesus offers us these comforting words of truth:

> You are not free to give up freedom, but only to deny it. You cannot do what God did not intend, because what He did not intend does not happen (T-10.1V.5:1-2).

**(8:3-4) Healing is shared. And by this attribute it proves that laws unlike the ones which hold that sickness is inevitable are more potent than their sickly opposites.**

The idea that healing is shared, this lesson's theme, is the reflection in our dream of Heaven's Oneness. It is also represented by the Atonement principle, which is held for our sick minds by the comforting Presence of the Holy Spirit, forever linking us with God and with each other:

> What Comforter can there be for the sick children of God except His power through you? Remember that it does not matter where in the Sonship He is accepted. He is always accepted for all, and when your mind receives Him the remembrance of Him awakens throughout the Sonship. Heal your brothers simply by accepting God for them. Your minds are not separate, and God has only one channel for healing because He has but one Son. God's remaining Communication Link with all His children joins them together, and them to Him. To be aware of this is to heal them because it is the awareness that no one is separate, and so no one is sick (T-10.111.2).

That is why we are not healed alone. We cannot be! If the separation is an illusion, so too are the laws this world: sickness, aging, and death. Recall Jesus' discussion in Lesson 76: "I am under no laws God's." The world's laws hold only as long as the thought that made them is retained. When we have released that thought through the Holy Spirit, its seeming effects are gone as well, and we are healed.

**(8:5-6) Healing is strength. For by its gentle hand is weakness overcome, and minds that were walled off within a body free to join with of minds, to be forever strong.**

The ego gets this backwards, for in its insanity it believes that *it* is strength, as are its friends: attack, sickness, and physical prowess, all of which demonstrate the reality of the world and body, and the defeat of God. To the ego, its weakness – the inherent separation from truth – has become strength; but one more example of its upside-down thinking, and ours when we identify with it. The choice between the weakness of the ego and the strength of Christ is a major theme throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and the reader may recall this clear statement:

> *Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there.*
> For He *has* come, and He *is* asking this.
> How do you make the choice? How easily is this explained! You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. And what you choose is what you think is real (T-3 1.VIII.1:5-2:4).

One of Jesus' principal purposes in his course is to convince us that his love is strength, and the ego's hate is weakness. When in the holy instant we choose his strong hand, the Sonship is one in our experience, and all minds are healed. They may still choose to be separated, yet within the healed mind the Sonship is healed, because it has been perceived as one. The following passage from the text joyfully describes this healing in the context of our healed relationship with our brother:

> Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship, for in it lies the Sonship, whole and beautiful, safe in your love.... How lovely and how holy is your relationship, with the truth shining upon it! Heaven beholds it, and rejoices that you have let it come to you. And God Himself is glad that your relationship is as it was created. The universe within you stands with you, together with your brother. And Heaven looks with love on what is joined in it, along with its Creator....
> You have been called, together with your brother, to the most holy function this world contains. It is the only one that has no limits, and reaches out to every broken fragment of the Sonship with healing and uniting comfort (T-18.I.11:1,4-8; 13:1-2).

**(9:1) Healing, forgiveness, and the glad exchange of all the world of sorrow for a world where sadness cannot enter, are the means by which the Holy Spirit urges you to follow Him.**

Healing, forgiveness, and the real world are not the end, but the means the Holy Spirit uses to help us undo the mind's interferences of guilt that prevent us from remembering Who we are. Thus are His teachings the means, and the memory of our Self the end we seek.

**(9:2) His gentle lessons teach how easily salvation can be yours; how little practice you need undertake to let His laws replace the ones you made to hold**

**yourself a prisoner to death.**

When Jesus speaks of how little practice we need, he seems to contradict his words in many other places where he reminds us of how much we need to practice. Yet he is speaking here from *his* perspective, from which the vast universe, with its problems spanning millions of years, is reduced to a "feather of a wish" that we be separate from God and that illusion be true (T-19.IV-A.8:1). From his point of view within the healed mind, therefore, all this is nothing, and requires but a little shift from illusion to truth. It is the same perspective found in the later lesson: "I will be still an instant and go home" (W-pI.182). Thus it is in this vein he speaks here about how easily salvation can be ours, and how little practice we need. In *our* experience within the dream, however, this takes a tremendous amount of work, and is not so easily attained. The principle is easy, to be sure, but only from above the world's battleground. For us still imprisoned by the ego's thought of system of death, a great deal of vigilance and diligence is needed, which Jesus guides and encourages us to develop.

**(9:3) His life becomes your own, as you extend the little help He asks in freeing you from everything that ever caused you pain.**

The life of the Holy Spirit, the Atonement's symbol, becomes our own when we choose Him. Thus we, like Jesus, become the Atonement, and its forgiveness extends through the united mind of God's Son. The word *extension* in *A Course in Miracles* should not be taken as anything physical, for it refers only to a process within the mind when the choice for forgiveness is made. If we choose guilt instead, the process is denoted by the word *projection,* which describes the vicissitudes of the ego's mind wandering. The extension of forgiveness, however, is the reflected thought of Heaven's Love as it extends through the one mind of the Son. Whether we physically or verbally express the right mind's forgiveness is not our concern. It happens of itself, for when we undo the mind's barriers of judgment the light of the mind's holy relationship cannot but extend throughout the Sonship:

> This [healing and uniting comfort] is offered you, in your holy relationship. Accept it here, and you will give as you have accepted. The peace of God is given you with the glowing purpose in which you join with your brother. The holy light that brought you and him together must extend, as you accepted it (T-18.I.13:3-6).

Thus is healing's comfort extended, as we now see:

**(10) And as you let yourself be healed, you see all those around you, or who cross your mind, or whom you touch or those who seem to have no contact with you, healed along with you. Perhaps you will not recognize them all, nor realize how great your offering to all the world, when you let healing come to you. But you are never healed alone. And legions upon legions will receive the gift that you receive when you are healed.**

This is another wonderful statement of the Oneness of God's Son, which has nothing to do with the physical or behavioral. To think it does is a gross misunderstanding of *A Course in Miracles.* Healing occurs only within your mind,

because there *is* only your mind. When that mind is healed and you have chosen Jesus as your teacher, if only for an instant, you know God's Son is one: the separation is an illusion and its thought system of guilt – not to mention the world which arose from it – is illusion as well. "Legions upon legions" receive your gift of healing as you remember your natural oneness as God's Son, the miracle's gift to the Sonship that transcends the ego's insane thought system of hate and sickness:

> The miracle is the act of a Son of God who has laid aside all false gods, and calls on his brothers to do likewise. It is an act of faith, because it is the recognition that his brother can do it. It is a call to the Holy Spirit in his mind, a call that is strengthened by joining. Because the miracle worker has heard God's Voice, he strengthens It in a sick brother by weakening his belief in sickness, which he does not share. The power of one mind can shine into another, because all the lamps of God were lit by the same spark. It is everywhere and it is eternal (T-10.IV.7).

**(11:1-2) Those who are healed become the instruments of healing. Nor does time elapse between the instant they are healed, and all the grace of healing it is given them to give.**

In the holy instant you are outside the physical world, and so there is no separation thought – sin, guilt, and fear – nor a temporal/spatial world – past, present, and future – that could arise from it. Remove the *cause* – separation – and the *effect* – the world – disappears. In the holy instant, therefore, time is gone and healing is instantaneous. It need not extend over time and space, because there *is* no time and space. This is but another way of understanding why you do not consciously need to seek to extend love and healing. If you do – believing there are people you have to convert, teach, and heal – you are back in the separated world of time and space, which means your mind is now unhealed. In the holy instant no one is healed, because the recognition has dawned on our heretofore sick minds that everyone is already healed. Indeed, no one was ever sick.

**(11:3-4) What is opposed to God does not exist, and who accepts it not within his mind becomes a haven where the weary can remain to rest. For here is truth bestowed, and here are all illusions brought to truth.**

When your mind is healed, a message goes out to all who choose to avail themselves of it: the decision I made, the loving brother's hand I took, is yours to make and take as well. At that point you become a haven where the weary come to rest. "What is opposed to God" is the ego's illusory thought system of separation and sickness. Accepting its non-existence allows us to be a peaceful shelter for those still tempted to make the ego real. This haven of rest is portrayed in the following passage from "The Little Garden," where our desert of illusions, hate, and separation becomes a garden of truth, love, and union:

> The desert becomes a garden, green and deep and quiet, offering rest to those who lost their way and wander in the dust. Give them a place of refuge, prepared by love for them where once a desert was. And everyone you welcome will bring love with him from Heaven for you. They enter one by one into this holy

> place, but they will not depart as they had come, alone. The love they brought with them will stay with them, as it will stay with you. And under its beneficence your little garden will expand, and reach out to everyone who thirsts for living water, but has grown too weary to go on alone (T-18.VIII.9:3-8).

**(12:1-3) Would you not offer shelter to God's Will? You but invite your Self to be at home. And can this invitation be refused?**

The Self cannot be refused because once you choose It, It is already there. The memory of Who you are as God's Son, your Self as Christ, is totally present within your mind. When you choose It, you have merely chosen to accept it where it has always been. We left our home only in dreams, and the time for dreaming has ended, hastened as we forgive. Thus we invite our separated brothers to awaken from the dream of hate and sickness, even as we invite God and Christ, the Oneness of our Self, to come to where They are, as reflected in this inspiring passage from "For They Have Come":

> ... They [God and Christ] have come to dwell within the temple [of forgiveness] offered Them, to be Their resting place as well as yours. What hatred has released to love becomes the brightest light in Heaven's radiance. And all the lights in Heaven brighter grow, in gratitude for what has been restored.... No one on earth but offers thanks to one who has restored his home, and sheltered him from bitter winter and the freezing cold. And shall the Lord of Heaven and His Son give less in gratitude for so much more?
>
> Now is the temple of the living God rebuilt as host again to Him by Whom it was created. Where He dwells, His Son dwells with Him, never separate. And They give thanks that They are welcome made at last (T-26.IX.6:4-6; 7:3-8:3).

**(12:4-5) Ask the inevitable to occur, and you will never fail. The other choice is but to ask what cannot be to be, and this can not succeed.**

We all try to do this, of course, which is why nothing ever works in this world. No matter how brilliant the brains that conceive of the solution – political, educational, economic, or medical – in the end it will fail, because it asked that the thought of separation be real: "what cannot be to be." Since it is not real, everything that automatically follows from that one mistake will be equally illusory. That does not mean, however, that we cannot choose to continue to sleep and dream that what is, is *not,* and what is not, *is:*

> ... who can stand upon a distant shore, and dream himself across an ocean, to a place and time that have long since gone by? How real a hindrance can this dream be to where he really is? For this is fact, and does not change whatever dreams he has. Yet can he still imagine he is elsewhere, and in another time. In the extreme, he can delude himself that this is true, and pass from mere imagining into belief and into madness, quite convinced that where he would prefer to be, he *is.*
>
> Is this a hindrance to the place whereon he stands? Is any echo from the past that he may hear a fact in what is there to hear where he is now? And how much can his own illusions about time and place effect a change in where he really is? (T-26.V.6:6-7:3)

However, while we are free to establish our reality, we are not free to make our wish become reality (T-3 .VI.10:2).

**(12:6) Today we ask that only truth will occupy our minds; that thoughts of healing will this day go forth from what is healed to what must yet be healed, aware that they will both occur as one.**

The mind of God's Son is one. When your mind is healed – "what is healed" – you realize that everyone else who believes they still need healing are already healed – "what must yet be healed." From the perspective of the healed mind – being with the Holy Spirit in the holy instant – all sickness and problems are gone, because they are part of a dream you are no longer a part of, recognizing that everything here is an illusion. The healing thought of love with which you are now identified becomes a lighthouse signaling to all who still choose to remain outside that love, that they come to that light and rest in the oneness of God's Son, as you have. That is our function for each other, as we join in the light that shines away the darkness of sickness and hate, separation and illusion. The following passage inspires us to remember our function to be that light for the world:

> Not one light in Heaven but goes with you. Not one Ray that shines forever in the Mind of God but shines on you. Heaven is joined with you in your advance to Heaven. When such great lights have joined with you to give the little spark of your desire the power of God Himself, can you remain in darkness? You and your brother are coming home together, after a long and meaningless journey that you undertook apart, and that led nowhere. You have found your brother, and you will light each other's way. And from this light will the Great Rays extend back into darkness and forward unto God, to shine away the past and so make room for His eternal Presence, in which everything is radiant in the light (T-18.III.8).

**(13) We will remember, as the hour strikes, our function is to let our minds be healed, that we may carry healing to the world, exchanging curse for blessing, pain for joy, and separation for the peace of God. Is not a minute of the hour worth the giving to receive a gift like this? Is not a little time a small expense to offer for the gift of everything?**

As you go through your day, ask yourself the following question: Is it really worth it to hold on to this pain and anger, when in exchange I could have the blessing, joy, and peace of God? That is your function: to be in the holy instant when you undo your choice for the ego by choosing the Holy Spirit. Again, do you really want to hold on to the ego's thoughts and behavior, considering their cost? Monitoring your mind throughout the day reflects the correct answer to this question. Therefore, whenever you allow yourself to be aware of anger, hurt, depression, pain, or righteousness, step back and ask whether such specialness is worth the price: Why would I not choose to have the blessing, joy, and peace of God instead of separation's curse of pain? Note this wonderful line from Deuteronomy, where Moses comes before the Children of Israel, saying: "I have set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life ... " (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). Jesus sets the same choice before us.

**Lesson 137**

**(14:1) Yet must we be prepared for such a gift.**

Jesus seems to contradict what he said before about just a "little practice" being needed. He lets us know that we have to practice throughout the day, and our preparation for the holy instant is our desire for it. Recall:

> The holy instant is the result of your determination to be holy. It is the *answer.* The desire and the willingness to let it come precede its coming. You prepare your mind for it only to the extent of recognizing that you want it above all else (T-18.IV.1:1-4).

This, then, is Jesus' challenge as our teacher: to help us realize we truly want to be happy, and that only forgiveness will bring us our heart's desire.

**(14:2-4) And so we will begin the day with this, and give ten minutes to these thoughts with which we will conclude today at night as well:**

***When I am healed I am not healed alone. And I would share my healing with the world, that sickness may be banished from the mind of God's one Son, Who is my only Self.***

It should be clear here, as I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, that sickness is separation. It is not a physical symptom, though we experience it that way. The discomfort we may feel in our bodies is a direct expression of the discomfort we feel in our minds for choosing to be right rather than happy, to be separate from the love of Jesus rather than to be joined with him. Again, we want to ask ourselves throughout the day: Is it really worth it to remain separate from my brother, my Self, and my God?

**(15:1-3) Let healing be through you this very day. And as you rest in quiet, be prepared to give as you receive, to hold but what you give, and to receive the Word of God to take the place of all the foolish thoughts that ever were imagined. Now we come together to make well all that was sick, and offer blessing where there was attack.**

None of this is possible unless you first become aware of the foolish thoughts of sickness and attack. We thus return to the principal theme – the theme of the next lesson as well – that healing, correction, and forgiveness have no meaning if you do not have a problem to which you can apply them. You must therefore be aware of your attraction to being angry, sick, and judgmental, and feeling hurt, victimized, and depressed; and ask yourself, again: Is it really worth it to me? At that point, then, you are ready to drop the ego's hand and allow Jesus to guide you gently to the mind that is the source of sickness as well as healing.

**(15:4-6) Nor will we let this function be forgot as every hour of the day slips by, remembering our purpose with this thought:**

***When I am healed I am not healed alone. And I would bless my brothers, for I would be healed with them, as they are healed with me.***

**Lesson 137**

The anger I hold against you is the anger I hold against myself. My decision to exclude you from my love, and therefore from the Love of God is a decision – made in secret—to exclude myself from that same Love. We always need to ask the question: "Is the sickness of separation what I really what?" We are healed as we choose the quietness of forgiveness, which allows us to hear Jesus' gentle words exhorting us to remember our Self and be happy at last:

> You *are* as God created you, and so is every living thing you look upon, regardless of the images you see. What you behold as sickness and as pain, as weakness and as suffering and loss, is but temptation to perceive yourself defenseless and in hell. Yield not to this, and you will see all pain, in every form, wherever it occurs, but disappear as mists before the sun. A miracle has come to heal God's Son, and close the door upon his dreams of weakness, opening the way to his salvation and release. Choose once again what you would have him be, remembering that every choice you make establishes your own identity as you will see it and believe it is (T-31.VIII.6).

One final reminder: This is not a practice we do once in the morning and again at night. Jesus is asking us to vigilantly apply our willingness to remember throughout the day. Thus does the blessing of his forgiveness fall upon us and all our brothers in one healing embrace of love. The miracle has come at last to heal God's Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 138**
**Heaven is the decision I must make.**

We come to another important lesson, its major theme being the power of our minds to choose. Making a decision is meaningless unless we know what we are deciding between. Thus, to decide for Heaven we must first be aware of the ego's hell we are choosing against. This awareness of the split mind undoes the ego's strategy of mindlessness, a quick review of which will introduce the lesson that focuses specifically on this plan.

Once the decision-making power of the Son's mind has chosen the thought system of individuality and specialness, the ego's concern is that the Son might change his mind. It sets upon a brilliant strategy to make the Son of God mindless, by fabricating a tale of sin, guilt, and fear: separation means sin, because I attacked God so I could live; I feel guilty over what I have done; and am horrified of the monster that lurks now in my mind, poised to attack me in vengeance for my sin. Ontologically, I think of this "monster" as the supreme Authority, Whose position as Creator I usurped. Now I must escape this Monster in my mind, hell-bent on destroying me for what I did to Him. I have no recourse but to flee my mind and project myself into a world and body, making a physical universe of specifics in which I now see the sin and guilt I do not want to recognize in myself.

The result of this plan is that the decision-making part of my mind seems forever buried, hidden by the sin, guilt, and fear that are in turn hidden by my bodily experiences in the physical world. In order for me to make the decision for Heaven – deciding for the Holy Spirit – I must first recognize my original choice for the ego. Thus, the specific role of our new Teacher is to help us identify the ego's secret plan, so we may learn that what we perceive outside reflects what we first made real within. Only then does our choosing become meaningful. The Holy Spirit's "plan" of unveiling the ego's strategy thus underlies this lesson.

**(1:1) In this world Heaven is a choice, because here we believe there are alternatives to choose between.**

We learn in this lesson that Heaven is not really a choice. Since Heaven is perfect Oneness, there is, in truth, nothing to choose between. In our dualistic world, however, choosing is necessary, and it is essential we understand these two choices: the ego's thought system of hatred and death, and the Holy Spirit's of forgiveness and healing, the reflection of Heaven's Oneness.

**(1:2-3) We think that all things have an opposite, and what we want we choose. If Heaven exists there must be hell as well, for contradiction is the way we make what we perceive, and what we think is real.**

This is a classic statement of a dualistic thought system, such as we find in the Western biblical religions: God and the devil, Heaven and the world, spirit and body, good and evil, forgiveness and sin. There would be no Judaism, Christianity, or Islam if there were no duality. If Heaven exists, so too must hell. In the East this is commonly expressed by the yin-yang principle, in which everything is conceived in terms of its opposite. This, however, is not the metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles,* which is non-dualistic, and thus teaches that perfect Oneness is all there is. Reality is not found, contrary to what Jung said, by reconciling opposites – for example, God does not have a

shadowy, dark side. There is only truth, light, love—the definition of God. No Course student forgets this line from the Introduction:

> The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite (T-in.1:8).

Since our self is born out of the fear of love, and sustained by fear as well, this self becomes a creature of opposites, inevitably giving rise to a world of opposites that contradicts reality and witnesses to its seeming non-existence.

**(2:1-4) Creation knows no opposite. But here is opposition part of being "real." It is this strange perception of the truth that makes the choice of Heaven seem to be the same as the relinquishment of hell. It is not really thus.**

Within our world of duality, choosing Heaven appears to be a real choice, because, again, we perceive in terms of opposites. Perception occurs in the context of figure and ground: a figure – what is focused on – perceived in relationship to a background – what is judged as unimportant. In order to perceive, therefore, one must have a figure and a background. We saw this description of the perceptual world in the manual for teachers (M-8.1). Thus Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit teaches through opposites:

> The ego made the world as it perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the reinterpreter of what the ego made, sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home. The Holy Spirit must perceive time, and reinterpret it into the timeless. He must work through opposites, because He must work with and for a mind that is in opposition (T-5.III.11:1-3).

When we conceive of Heaven, it, too, is seen in terms of opposites, another way of stating the important line to which I frequently refer:

> You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize (T-18. VIII.1:7).

We believe bodies are reality, and by this belief we deny *A Course in Miracles'* non-dualism: "Creation knows no opposite." We thus need to learn that God does not know about us because He cannot know about us, whose individual *existence* is the opposite to Heaven's *being.*

**(2:5) Yet what is true in God's creation cannot enter here until it is reflected in some form the world can understand.**

This important principle underlies the pedagogy of the Course. Jesus does not teach the truth directly, but indirectly through reinterpreting illusion by contrasting it with truth:

> Indirect proof of truth is needed in a world made of denial and without direction (T-14. 1.2:1).

Thus Jesus says in the clarification of terms that *A Course in Miracles* comes within an ego framework – duality and contrasts:

> This course remains within the ego framework, where it is needed. It is not concerned with what is beyond all error because it is planned only to set the direction towards it. Therefore it uses words, which are symbolic, and cannot express what lies beyond symbols (C-in.3:1-3).

We are told repeatedly in the Course how the Holy Spirit teaches through contrast:

> You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery *is* happiness (T-14.II.1:2-3).

Jesus teaches us, as would any learning theorist, to contrast the pains of the ego with the pleasure that comes when we choose the Holy Spirit. He is conditioning us to associate peace and joy with forgiveness, and anguish and pain with judgment. He teaches through contrast because that is the only way we can learn about Heaven. Its Oneness and Love cannot be taught or experienced here, and no one in a body has a clue as to what They are. Yet Their reflection can be taught. As we have seen, Jesus presents this apologia for his methodology:

> How can you teach someone the value of something he has deliberately thrown away? He must have thrown it away because he did not value it. You can only show him how miserable he is without it, and slowly bring it nearer so he can learn how his misery lessens as he approaches it. This teaches him to associate his misery with its absence, and the opposite of misery with its presence. It gradually becomes desirable as he changes his mind about its worth. I am teaching you to associate misery with the ego and joy with the spirit. You have taught yourself the opposite. You are still free to choose, but can you really want the rewards of the ego in the presence of the rewards of God? (T-4.VI.5)

Jesus here underscores his method of teaching non-duality within a dualistic framework, where students often become confused and thrown off track. They do not understand that most of the time Jesus speaks metaphorically or symbolically. Whenever he speaks of duality or contrast, he is using metaphor. What he says *reflects* truth, but does not *express* it. The clearest statement in *A Course in Miracles* of non-dualistic truth comes later in the workbook:

> We say “God is,” and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless (W-pI.169.5:4).

You do not say God *is something.* You do not say God is *anything. God is.* Period – a perfect non-dualistic statement. However, we would not have *A Course in Miracles,* and certainly would not have a relevant spirituality if that were all the Course said. Once again, please do not confuse symbol with source, as Jesus reminds us in Chapter 19, a reminder that cannot be given often enough:

> Remember, then, that neither sign nor symbol should be confused with source, for they must stand for something other than themselves. Their meaning cannot lie in them, but must be sought in what they represent (T-19.IV-C. 11:2-3).

The symbol is the reflection, and the reflection is the means that will take us back to the End – our ultimate goal of God's Love.

**(2:6) Truth cannot come where it could only be perceived with fear.**

The ego tells us that in the presence of truth – God's Oneness – our individual and special selves must disappear. Thus we fear this truth, and continually build barricades of specialness to keep it out. Helen's poem, "The Second Chance," describes the role of hate in protecting her from the truth of her Lord's love:

> With hatred as a friend, I did not fear
> To lose it for a god I held more dear.
> For now I seemed secure, by hate held fast,
> And feeling I was safe from love at last.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 45)

**(2:7-8) For this would be the error truth can be brought to illusions. Opposition makes the truth unwelcome, and it cannot come.**

To say that truth is possible here in this world is to make the mistake of bringing truth to illusion, of believing that God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus are operative here. Their Love is *reflected* in this world, but They are not *in* this world. It is not so much that They do not do things here, They *cannot* do things here. Rather, it is the separated, dualistic mind that translates Their non-specific love, in our right minds, into a specific means of expression we can accept on a bodily level. That is why people have the experience of Jesus talking to them, guiding them, or the Holy Spirit making things happen for them. In point of fact, truth does not happen in the world, as this paragraph makes clear when you read it carefully. Again, we experience a reflection in our minds of the truth of God's non-specific Love, but we must be vigilant not to confuse the reflection with the truth, which is what occurs when religions and spiritualities build a theology based on the reflection: the elevation of *form* over *content.* The reader may recall this passage from the text that discusses this in the context of the special relationship, and exposes the specialness inherent in formal religions:

> Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is content, and not form of any kind. The special relationship is a ritual of form, aimed at raising the form to take the place of God at the expense of content. There is no meaning in the form, and there will never be. The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning (T-16.V.12:1-4).

**(3:1) Choice is the obvious escape from what appears as opposites.**

**Lesson 138**

If our choice is between the ego and the Holy Spirit – the wrong and right minds – then choosing one resolves the conflict and lets the other go. Since we cannot hold on to two mutually exclusive thought systems and expect to find peace, by choosing peace over conflict, truth over illusion, we gently make our escape to the reality beyond all opposites. Recall this important passage from the text:

> The way out of conflict between two opposing thought systems is clearly to choose one and relinquish the other. If you identify with your thought system, and you cannot escape this, and if you accept two thought systems which are in complete disagreement, peace of mind is impossible. If you teach both, which you will surely do as long as you accept both, you are teaching conflict and learning it. Yet you do want peace, or you would not have called upon the Voice for peace to help you (T-6.V-B.5:1-4).

**(3:2-3) Decision lets one of conflicting goals become the aim of effort and expenditure of time. Without decision, time is but a waste and effort dissipated.**

In other words, our time and effort will be futile if they are not geared towards helping us make this single decision for Heaven. There is indeed a mighty purpose for being here: to learn the lessons of our classroom – with Jesus as our teacher – that there is another way of looking at the world, reflecting for us another way of looking within our minds. This will open the door for us to make the right choice. Anything short of that goal is a waste of time. Thus, attempting to fix things in the world is pointless if it does not lead to changing our minds. Choosing the Holy Spirit remains the only meaningful decision we can make.

**(3:4-5) It is spent for nothing in return, and time goes by without results. There is no sense of gain, for nothing is accomplished; nothing learned.**

When we take an objective look at history – what we call civilization – it is obvious there has not been much progress. Technologically we have accomplished a great deal; but in terms of ending suffering and bringing peace to the world's citizens, we have not progressed past cavemen batting each other over the heads. Nothing has changed: homo sapiens' purpose has always been oriented towards remaining here, getting as much as possible from others, and not awakening from the world's dream. Yet such awakening is our only meaningful purpose.

When you can identify with the purpose of changing your mind and teacher, your life from birth to death, from the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep, will have great meaning. You will close your eyes at night with a sense of fulfillment, not necessarily because you learned all there was to learn, but because you understood your life in the world is a classroom – neither prison nor paradise. You rest easily with the thought that even if you had not learned all your lessons, tomorrow is yet another day, taught by a teacher who is infinitely patient. Thus you awake each morning with joy and return joyfully to bed at night, regardless of the day's perceived successes or failures, for you have identified with the only purpose that makes life meaningful. At the end of the manual, Jesus describes the course of this right-minded day:

> If you have made it a habit to ask for help when and where you can, you can be confident that wisdom will be given you when you need it. Prepare for this

each morning, remember God when you can throughout the day, ask the Holy Spirit's help when it is feasible to do so, and thank Him for His guidance at night. And your confidence will be well founded indeed (M-29.5:8-10).

**(4:1) You need to be reminded that you think a thousand choices are confronting you, when there is really only one to make.**

The important section near the end of the text, "The Real Alternative," expands on this idea (T-3 1.IV). We think there are thousands and thousands of choices yet to be made. In truth, however, there is only one: choosing to realize we made a mistake by having chosen the ego, a mistake we undo by choosing Jesus as our teacher.

**(4:2) And even this but seems to be a choice.**

This is because in Heaven, the only truth, there is no choice. Again, choice is an illusion, but right- minded choice is the final illusion, because when we once and for all choose the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, we will have corrected the one Son's original mistake. As that mistake is undone, the world, and the thought system that made the world, disappear.

**(4:3) Do not confuse yourself with all the doubts that myriad decisions would induce.**

Do not be confused by the world's multiplicity, Jesus tells us. It was made to confuse us and rivet our attention here – the end product of the ego's plan of our identifying with the state of mindlessness. Thus we think there are physical, psychological, and other forms of problems that demand solutions. Yet this is all made up; a smoke screen to confuse us about the real problem in the mind. "Complexity is of the ego," the text reminds us (T-1 5.IV.6:2), for it represents the ego's ingenious attempt to hide the Thought of Oneness in our minds by concealing the simplicity of decision that would negate the ego entirely:

> Complexity is not of God. How could it be, when all He knows is One? He knows of one creation, one reality, one truth and but one Son. Nothing conflicts with oneness. How, then, could there be complexity in Him? What is there to decide? For it is conflict that makes choice possible. The truth is simple; it is one, without an opposite. And how could strife enter in its simple presence, and bring complexity where oneness is? The truth makes no decisions, for there is nothing to decide *between.* And only if there were could choosing be a necessary step in the advance toward oneness. What is everything leaves room for nothing else (T-26.III.1:1-12).

**(4:4-5) You make but one. And when that one is made, you will perceive it was no choice at all.**

When we finally make the choice for God, the ego disappears, which means there was really no choice at all. By undoing the original mistake, we undid the thought *and* world of separation together. Indeed – there was no guilt or Atonement, and no decision-making mind to choose between them. There was, and is only the truth of God.

**(4:6-8) For truth is true, and nothing else is true. There is no opposite to choose instead. There is no contradiction to the truth.**

The instant we choose to accept the Holy Spirit's Atonement for ourselves – the attainment of the real world – all decision, conflict, and opposition end. With the world of opposites gone, all that remains is the memory of God. As the Course teaches, at that point God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself. This passage on resurrection expresses the end of the dream of opposites:

> It [the resurrection] is the acceptance of the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the world's purpose; the acceptance of the Atonement for oneself. It is the end of dreams of misery, and the glad awareness of the Holy Spirit's final dream.... It is the invitation to God to take His final step. It is the relinquishment of all other purposes, all other interests, all other wishes and all other concerns. It is the single desire of the Son for the Father (M-28.1:3-4, 8-10).

**(5:1-2) Choosing depends on learning. And the truth cannot be learned, but only recognized.**

This is a course in learning, which is why Jesus presents his message within a curricular framework. What we learn is not the truth, but how to undo the interferences to our remembering the truth. Recall these all-important lines:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16. IV.6:1-2).

By learning the Holy Spirit's forgiveness within the complexity of our insane world – the conditions for learning – we unlearn what the ego taught and thus recognize His simple truth:

> If you are blessed and do not know it, you need to learn it must be so. The knowledge is not taught, but its conditions must be acquired for it is they that have been thrown away.... The Holy Spirit, therefore, must begin His teaching by showing you what you can never learn. His message is not indirect, but He must introduce the simple truth into a thought system which has become so twisted and so complex you cannot see that it means nothing.... If you would be a happy learner, you must give everything you have learned to the Holy Spirit, to be unlearned for you (T-14.I.1:1-2; 5:1-2; T-14.II.6:1).

Thus we bring the illusions of our learning to the truth, and such unlearning leads us happily home.

**(5:3) In recognition its acceptance lies, and as it is accepted it is known.**

The way we recognize, accept, and know that truth is ours is to undo the obstacles to it. If truth is love, then separation, hate, suffering, and death are the interferences, and forgiveness is the means by which they are let go. As one by one the

darkness of these illusory thoughts is brought to the light of Jesus' truth, the thoughts disappear in the resplendent brilliance of his love. What remains is the truth. The process begins by *recognizing* its reflection, beginning to *accept* it more and more as the truth, and finally to *know* we are that truth. Adumbrating a later lesson, we read a description of this same process:

> This is the truth [suffering is a dream], at first to be but said and then repeated many times; and next to be accepted as but partly true, with many reservations. Then to be considered seriously more and more, and finally accepted as the truth (W-pII.284.1:5-6)

**(5:4) But knowledge is beyond the goals we seek to teach within the framework of this course.**

Jesus tells us:

> Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is (T-8.I.1:1-2).

Peace can be described as the total forgiveness of our belief in sin and guilt. Yet how can we *know,* when we still *perceive?* Thus our perceptions first have to be cleansed, leading to *true perception,* which opens the way to *knowledge:*

> Knowledge is not the remedy for false perception since, being another level, they can never meet. The one correction possible for false perception must be true perception. It will not endure. But for the time it lasts it comes to heal.... True perception is the means by which the world is saved from sin, for sin does not exist. And it is this that true perception sees (C-4.3:1-4, 8-9; italics omitted).

**(5:5) Ours are teaching goals, to be attained through learning how to reach them, what they are, and what they offer you.**

Jesus is demarcating for us the purpose and limits of his course. It is not meant to take us to Heaven, but to get us to its gate – the real world. In other words, his teaching goal is to have us undo the interferences that constitute our mad journey outside Heaven, that we may enter the real world, thus completing *A Course in Miracles'* work.

**(5:6) Decisions are the outcome of your learning, for they rest on what you have accepted as the truth of what you are, and what your needs must be.**

If I accept the ego as my teacher, my truth is that I am limited, sinful, guilty, and sick – a body that must die. Every decision I make will flow from the original mistaken choice. If, however, I choose Jesus, I begin the process of undoing the thoughts belonging to my false self. At that point my decisions will flow from his love and lead me to the truth.

**(6) In this insanely complicated world, Heaven appears to take the form of choice, rather than merely being what it is. Of all the choices you have tried to make this is the simplest, most definitive and prototype of all the rest, the one**

**which settles all decisions. If you could decide the rest, this one remains unsolved. But when you solve this one, the others are resolved with it, for all decisions but conceal this one by taking different forms. Here is the final and the only choice in which is truth accepted or denied.**

The world of Heaven is simple; there is only Oneness. The world of the Holy Spirit is simple; there is only forgiveness to undo our problems. When we deny His teaching, however, we inevitably believe in the ego's complexity, giving rise to this very complicated world. Yet until we are ready to undo our investment in individuality – which makes us complicated indeed – we still have choices to make. As we grow in learning, we generalize more and more until we reach the point of recognizing that everything we need help with is the same problem: illness, job uncertainty, difficulty in relationships, or lack of money – all result from the mind's mistaken choice for the ego. Our range of choices shrinks until we truly know there is one. When we accept that our problems come from the belief we are better off without the Holy Spirit, all concerns disappear for we have made the correct choice. We still have behavioral choices to make here, but they will no longer be attended by anxiety. We choose A, B, or C, but without the conflict that inevitably follows acting on our own. The problem, thus, is not what we think, but that we think we know best. When we exclude the Holy Spirit, our problems become legion and will never be resolved; when we choose Him, they gently evanesce:

> Before you make any decisions for yourself, remember that you have decided against your function in Heaven, and then consider carefully whether you want to make decisions here. Your function here is only to decide against deciding what you want, in recognition that you do not know. How, then, can you decide what you should do? Leave all decisions to the One Who speaks for God, and for your function as He knows it. So will He teach you to remove the awful burden you have laid upon yourself by loving not the Son of God, and trying to teach him guilt instead of love.... When you have learned how to decide with God, all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing. There is no effort, and you will be led as gently as if you were being carried down a quiet path in summer (T-14.IV.5:1-5; 6:1-2).

**(7) So we begin today considering the choice that time was made to help us make. Such is its holy purpose, now transformed from the intent you gave it; that it be a means for demonstrating hell is real, hope changes to despair, and life itself must in the end be overcome by death. In death alone are opposites resolved, for ending opposition is to die. And thus salvation must be seen as death, for life is seen as conflict. To resolve the conflict is to end your life as well.**

The ego made up time, as it did space, to show us hell is real and Heaven a lie, there is no hope here, and death is the only reality. Recall that time and space are the shadowy fragments of sin, guilt, fear, and separation that we made real in our minds. Once that wrong choice was made, Heaven's truth could be reflected in this illusion only by giving the world a different purpose. I awake each morning in a body and world that were made by the ego, filled with thoughts of concern, judgment, and pain, also made by the ego. However, if I ask Jesus for help, the very things I made to hurt me and others will be transformed in purpose into a classroom in which I learn all this is a dream. Time was made by the ego to hurt; it can be used by the Holy Spirit as an instrument of

healing through the holy instant:

> There is no escape from fear in the ego's use of time. For time, according to its teaching, is nothing but a teaching device for compounding guilt until it becomes all-encompassing, demanding vengeance forever.
>
> The Holy Spirit would undo all of this *now.* Fear is not of the present, but only of the past and future, which do not exist. There is no fear in the present when each instant stands clear and separated from the past, without its shadow reaching out into the future. Each instant is a clean, untarnished birth, in which the Son of God emerges from the past into the present. And the present extends forever. It is so beautiful and so clean and free of guilt that nothing but happiness is there....
>
> Time is your friend, if you leave it to the Holy Spirit to use.... Give the eternal instant, that eternity may be remembered for you, in that shining instant of perfect release. Offer the miracle of the holy instant through the Holy Spirit, and leave His giving it to you to Him (T-15.I.7:6-7; 8:1-6; 15:1, 10-11).

Within the ego thought system, to be in a conflicted, dualistic state is to be saved, and true salvation – choosing the Atonement principle – is damnation and the ego's dissolution. To the ego, then, salvation from conflict is death, for life as an individual means conflict. Remember, the ego's origin was its conflict with God: God or the ego, oneness or individuality. Since they cannot coexist, and I believe I exist, the ego's life means the destruction of our Creator and Source – the principle of *one or the other.* My specific life, then, is built upon this thought: If I exist, someone has to pay for it, and I must be forever on my guard lest the person I betrayed, stole from, and killed will return and do the same thing to me, which within the ego's dream is inevitable. Everyone we perceive has thus literally been made in our own image and likeness: betrayer, thief, and killer:

> ...those who project are vigilant for their own safety. They are afraid that their projections will return and hurt them. Believing they have blotted their projections from their own minds, they also believe their projections are trying to creep back in (T-7.VIII.3:9-11).

People have always been afraid of true salvation, which is why the world has been afraid of Jesus and his message of love. Spiritual seekers are still afraid of that message, now expressed in *A Course in Miracles. We* believe we attacked God and His Love, and thus believe He will attack us in kind. Yet is this fear a defense against the underlying terror that God's Love will end our specialness and individuality:

> Under the ego's dark foundation is the memory of God, and it is of this that you are really afraid. For this memory would instantly restore you to your proper place, and it is this place that you have sought to leave. Your fear of attack is nothing compared to your fear of love.... You realize that, by removing the dark cloud that obscures it, your love for your Father would impel you to answer His Call and leap into Heaven. You believe that attack is salvation because it would prevent you from this. For still deeper than the ego's foundation, and much stronger than it will ever be, is your intense and burning love of God, and His for you. This is what you really want to hide (T-131I1.2:1-3,6-9).

Our individual self therefore continually decides against love, and against the means—forgiveness – by which we remember it. Only by recognizing the cost to us of such a decision will we be convinced, in the words of King Lear, "That way madness lies" (III,iii); only then can we begin to consider the choice that "time was made to help us make."

**(8:1) These mad beliefs** [conflict is reality, death is part of truth] **can gain unconscious hold of great intensity, and grip the mind with terror and anxiety so strong that it will not relinquish its ideas about its own protection.**

What are the mind's "ideas about its own protection"? If the thought of individuality constitutes the ego's thought system and its very existence, anything that protects it must be sacred: attack, judgment, sickness, pain, pleasure - specialness in all its forms.

**(8:2) It must be saved from salvation, threatened to be safe, and magically armored against truth.**

Salvation means the end of the ego thought system of separation, and the mind identifying with it must therefore be saved from salvation. My individual self is safe as long as I experience fear, where everything around me is conceived as a threat, for that maintains the ego's laws of conflict: opposites, attack, and ultimately death – the ego's allies, and mine as long as I identify with this special self. Such identification is what is vicious and totally insane, as we see in the following passage on specialness:

> Specialness is a lack of trust in anyone except yourself. Faith is invested in yourself alone. Everything else becomes your enemy; feared and attacked, deadly and dangerous, hated and worthy only of destruction. Whatever gentleness it offers is but deception, but its hate is real. In danger of destruction it must kill, and you are drawn to it to kill it first. And such is guilt's attraction. Here is death enthroned as savior; crucifixion is now redemption, and salvation can only mean destruction of the world, except yourself (T-24.IV.1).

We do not escape destruction either, for specialness is vicious and insane:

> The death penalty is the ego's ultimate goal, for it fully believes that you are a criminal, as deserving of death as God knows you are deserving of life. The death penalty never leaves the ego's mind, for that is what it always reserves for you in the end. Wanting to kill you as the final expression of its feeling for you, it lets you live but to await death. It will torment you while you live, but its hatred is not satisfied until you die. For your destruction is the one end toward which it works, and the only end with which it will be satisfied (T-12.VII.13:2-6).

**(8:3) And these decisions are made unaware, to keep them safely undisturbed; apart from question and from reason and from doubt.**

This was articulated in Lesson 136. The ego's plan calls for me to forget there even is a plan, telling me my individuality is protected by a thought system of sin, guilt,

and fear, the end product of which is the punishment I believe is justifiably forthcoming. Guilt is the centerpiece here, because guilt reminds me of my sin, and then demands I be punished for it. This demand and expectation sets up a monstrous thought system in my mind informing me that if I remain there I will certainly be destroyed; *obliteration* being the ego's choice of word. Needless to say, it never tells me this is delusional; instead:

> Loudly the ego tells you not to look inward, for if you do your eyes will light on sin, and God will strike you blind. This you believe, and so you do not look (T-21.IV.2:3-4).

Thus the reason I never know sin is made up is that **I** do not even know it is there. As quickly as I chose to make separation real, along with the ego thought system, just as quickly did I choose to forget *I* am the one who made it so. I repress, project, and now see sin and guilt all around me. My fear is justified because of everyone else's sin, and I walk the earth in terror, needing defensive armament to protect my vulnerability, but never realizing why, for I believe it is the world and its inhabitants who will hurt me. Yet the real reason I am so frightened is the thought system I made up. Totally unaware of this fact, this thought system governs my thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The central purpose of *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, is for Jesus to strip away the veil that "protects us" from the monster in our minds that does not exist. The Course helps us understand the ego's strategy, so we can daily see the connection between our concerns, judgments, and specialness, and its carefully contrived strategy to confuse us. The ego never wants us to remember the mind's power that chose against the Love of God, but can choose again. The instant we would remember our choice for the ego, we would stop making it because it is so insane and hateful towards ourselves and others. If we do not know the world is our projection, however, there is no way we can change our minds about it. This cannot be emphasized enough, and we see this thought expressed again in paragraph 9:

**(9:1-3) Heaven is chosen consciously. The choice cannot be made until alternatives are accurately seen and understood. All that is veiled in shadows must be raised to understanding, to be judged again, this time with Heaven's help.**

You could not ask for a clearer statement of what this course is about, which helps you see why Jesus painstakingly describes the insane murderousness of the ego thought system. He must do this because we do not know it is there. We may believe there are expressions of viciousness in the world, but as long as we see through blissninny veils, we will think everything is wonderful, or potentially so. We do not realize that as long as we believe there is a world out there, there *is* nothing wonderful, for the only truly wonderful thing is learning the world is not wonderful because it is illusory. Again, we cannot recognize its illusory nature until we realize we have a mind that chose to make it so, the realization of which comes when we choose a teacher that shows us that the world's ugliness is a shadow of the mind's ugliness. Moreover, this inner world is illusory, a defense whose purpose is to prevent our decision maker from choosing against the ego. We need to see how this purpose operates in the specific contexts of our lives, making everyone's lessons the same in *content,* even as their *forms* differ from each other, which is why Jesus says our "curriculum is highly individualized" (M-29.2:6). All forgiveness is therefore the same, albeit expressed in very specific forms, which

reflect the differences that fulfill the ego's purpose of making difference be reality.

Throughout your day, therefore, you need pay careful attention to all things—whether mundane, calling for a mild twinge of annoyance because you did not like what someone did or said, or a serious circumstance leading to a raging fury. The forms do not matter, for they all serve the ego's unholy purpose of confusing you about the nature and source of the problem. Without understanding that problems are in the mind, the proper choice is impossible. This is the meaning of raising the dark shadows to the light of understanding, as we also see in the following passage from the text:

> Little child...your "guilty secret" is nothing, and if you will but bring it to the light, the light will dispel it. And then no dark cloud will remain between you and the remembrance of your Father, for you will remember His guiltless Son, who did not die because he is immortal (T-13.11.9: 1-3).

**(9:4-6) And all mistakes in judgment that the mind had made before are open to correction, as the truth dismisses them as causeless. Now are they without effects. They cannot be concealed, because their nothingness is recognized.**

When the veil is gone and the darkness of guilt has been brought to the light of truth, you look in your mind and realize nothing is there. Looking then on the world, you take nothing seriously, in the sense of giving it power to bring you pleasure or pain. You respect the pain of people's lives – their lessons and classrooms – but you realize they are classrooms in learning that an illusion never stops being an illusion. This means, on a practical level, that the peace of Jesus' love is never affected by anything going on around you, for you know it has nothing to do with you. This approach thus meets your selfish need of being at peace while living in the world, for you cannot be at peace as long as you believe you are here. However, with your new Teacher you learn that being in this world is a shadow of the mind's guilt, and because it is your mind's decision, you can correct it.

**(10:1) The conscious choice of Heaven is as sure as is the ending of the fear of hell, when it is raised from its protective shield of unawareness, and is brought to light.**

We see Jesus continually repeating the same thought: We must bring what we buried in our minds into awareness. This parallels Freud's famous statement that the purpose of psychoanalysis is to make the unconscious conscious. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is to make conscious the ego's thought system – the decision for hell – so we are aware of this decision. Without such awareness, we cannot change our minds about it. The Holy Spirit's purpose for the world, once again, is for it to be the classroom in which our new teacher, Jesus, instructs us to see how what we experience outside is a direct effect of the mind's decision. As we increasingly learn the lesson, our focus of attention shifts from perceived external problems – our specialness needs – to realizing these but reflect the ego's need to preserve its separation by keeping us unaware of the power of our minds that chose it.

**(10:2) Who can decide between the clearly seen and the unrecognized?**

We cannot make a meaningful choice if the choice is between A and B, and all we see is A. We must realize what we choose between, as these two questions explain:

What choices can be made between two states, but one of which is clearly recognized? Who could be free to choose between effects, when only one is seen as up to him? (T-27.VII.11:1-2)

**(10:3-5) Yet who can fail to make a choice between alternatives when only one is seen as valuable; the other as a wholly worthless thing, a but imagined source of guilt and pain? Who hesitates to make a choice like this? And shall we hesitate to choose today?**

Recall this frequently quoted line that closes Chapter 23:

> Who with the Love of God upholding him could find the choice of miracles or murder hard to make? (T-23.IV.9:8)

When you ask help from Jesus – the Love of God upholding you – you see the choice clearly: the miracle of choosing his love over the ego's thought system of murder. The choice is not difficult, once you have clearly seen the two choices, for only then can you meaningfully say one is valuable and the other valueless. This means, once again, that you pay careful attention to your daily life, asking Jesus' help to bring to him what you made real, allowing you to see it as reflecting the sin and guilt you first made real within your mind.

This process takes tremendous diligence and persistence, because it is so easy to let your emotions and thoughts be affected by what appears to be outside you, including your body – the *you* being the decision maker in your mind. Therefore, *see* how you are happy or sad, well or ill, based upon circumstances that are external to your mind. This is the focus of our vigilance, for it leads to our making a meaningful choice—miracles or murder, truth or illusion:

> It is still up to you to choose to join with truth or with illusion. But remember that to choose one is to let the other go. Which one you choose you will endow with beauty and reality, because the choice depends on which you value more. The spark of beauty or the veil of ugliness, the real world or the world of guilt and fear, truth or illusion, freedom or slavery – it is all the same. For you can never choose except between God and the ego. Thought systems are but true or false, and all their attributes come simply from what they are (T-17.III.9:1-6).

**(11:1) We make the choice for Heaven as we wake, and spend five minutes making sure that we have made the one decision that is sane.**

You do not make the choice for Heaven as you wake by opening your eyes and saying: "I love you Jesus; be with me all day." There is nothing wrong in doing that if you are a little child, but you will not grow into spiritual adulthood that way, and Jesus' goal for his younger siblings is that they outgrow their need for him.

> Every good teacher hopes to give his students so much of his own learning that they will one day no longer need him This is the one true goal of the

> teacher.... I will teach with you and live with you if you will think with me, but my goal will always be to absolve you finally from the need for a teacher (T-415:1-2; 6:3).

A meaningful choice for Heaven as you awake is to ask Jesus' help to remember, as often as you can, that the world is a classroom and you want him, as your teacher, to show you that your response to what is outside comes from a decision you made inside. This makes you a happy learner, whether or not you think you learn the lessons, for if you keep in mind this is a classroom, you will learn. Otherwise you might as well just stay in bed. Whether or not the lessons of your relationships are painful, you will be glad, because of the goal you accepted for them. Thus, our one sane decision, reflecting our decision for Heaven, lies in choosing the teacher who will lead us there. Any other decision makes no sense and is insane.

**(11:2) We recognize we make a conscious choice between what has existence and what has nothing but an appearance of the truth.**

Here Jesus uses *existence as* a synonym for *being.* In the text he makes a clear distinction between the two; the former relating to the ego, the latter denoting truth and spirit (T-4.VII.4-5), but the meter of this sentence called for a three-syllable word. The point is that we make a conscious choice about the reflection of true existence (or being) – choosing the teacher who will lead us to our reality as Christ. We thus choose Jesus, who undoes our illusory self of specialness.

**(11:3-4) Its pseudo-being, brought to what is real, is flimsy and transparent in the light. It holds no terror now, for what was made enormous, vengeful, pitiless with hate, demands obscurity for fear to be invested there.**

In order for me to be upset or anxious about anything in this world, I must forget the source of my pain – the meaning here of *obscurity.* What establishes the monstrosity of the ego thought system, gargantuan in scope and filled with power to bring pleasure or pain, is my unawareness that it is held in place by the flimsiest of threads: my choosing to believe in illusion. The following passage, contrasting the ego's fear with the power of the forgiven relationship, cleverly illustrates the above statement with a grateful nod to Peter Sellers' "The Mouse That Roared":

> How weak is fear; how little and how meaningless. How insignificant before the quiet strength of those whom love has joined! This is your "enemy," – a frightened mouse that would attack the universe. How likely is it that it will succeed? Can it be difficult to disregard its feeble squeaks that tell of its omnipotence, and would drown out the hymn of praise to its Creator that every heart throughout the universe forever sings as one? Which is the stronger? Is it this tiny mouse or everything that God created? You and your brother are not joined together by this mouse, but by the Will of God. And can a mouse betray whom God has joined? (T-22.V.4)

To know the "mouse's" weakness, we need first to see its pseudo-being for what it is. The light of our teacher's love enables us to see the light shining beyond the flimsy veils of fear.

**(11:5) Now it is recognized as but a foolish, trivial mistake.**

This recognition occurs when you let your new teacher instruct you in understanding that your perceptions are simply shadows of "a foolish, trivial mistake." This cannot be done when you have an investment in preserving your identity as you have established it. You need to see the unhappiness such investment has brought you. Recall that Jesus is a learning theorist, teaching us to condition ourselves to associate pain with the ego, and joy with him Thus we need to be aware that preserving our specialness will not make us happy, but choosing his love will.

**(12:1) Before we close our eyes in sleep tonight, we reaffirm the choice that we have made each hour in between.**

Jesus is asking us to practice more than once in the morning and again at night. We need to remind ourselves as often as we can throughout the day of our new teacher, who will help us decide for God.

**(12:2-6) And now we give the last five minutes of our waking day to the decision with which we awoke. As every hour passed, we have declared our choice again, in a brief quiet time devoted to maintaining sanity. And finally, we close the day with this, acknowledging we chose but what we want:**

***Heaven is the decision I must make. I make it now, and will not change my mind, because it is the only thing I want***

If you are sincere about wanting Heaven, you must be equally sincere about choosing the means that will take you there – the forgiveness lessons our daily lives afford us when we choose the Holy Spirit. If you are serious about *A Course in Miracles* and this lesson's theme of choosing Heaven, you must be serious about taking the road that will lead you there. Thus you will strive to remind yourself of your purpose upon awakening, throughout the day, and again before you close your eyes at night: seeing your life as a classroom with a Teacher Who will instruct you as to its proper meaning, reflecting back to you a decision the mind made for the ego, a decision you now joyfully correct. Your decision for Heaven becomes the means for giving you the only joy you want – awakening from the ego's dream and returning home.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 139**
**I will accept Atonement for myself.**

This lesson extends the previous lesson's theme of decision. The context of the teaching here is quite familiar to us by now: We were confronted by a decision between the ego and the Holy Spirit, and chose to identify with the concept of a separated self over the memory of our Identity as Christ. When we chose the ego's individuality over the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle that the separation never happened, we identified with a false self, establishing the need for Atonement, or correction for our mistaken choice. In accepting the Atonement for ourselves, the ultimate goal of *A Course in Miracles,* we remember our Self. Another major theme in our symphonic workbook, therefore, is our Identity as God's unseparated Son.

**(1:1) Here is the end of choice.**

When we accept the Atonement for ourselves, realizing that the Holy Spirit speaks truth and the ego lies, we have reached the end of choice. We have regained the power of our minds, knowing clearly that this decision-making ability has nothing to do with the body's brain. By irrevocably choosing truth, the need for choice is over because the mistake has been undone. The miracle's purpose is thus fulfilled as we return to the decision-making part of our minds, the origin of the dream that we now undo:

> The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is. It teaches you there is a choice of dreams while you are still asleep, depending on the purpose of your dreaming. Do you wish for dreams of healing, or for dreams of death? ...
>
> The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions. No one is afraid of them when he perceives he made them up. The fear was held in place because he did not see that he was author of the dream, and not a figure in the dream (T-28.II.4:2-4; 7:1-4).

Once the choice between dreams of healing and dreams of death is clear, our dreaming ends.

**(1:2-6) For here we come to a decision to accept ourselves as God created us. And what is choice except uncertainty of what we are? There is no doubt that is not rooted here. There is no question but reflects this one. There is no conflict that does not entail the single, simple question, "What am I?"**

Near the end of the workbook is Jesus' beautiful answer to the question, "What am I?" (W-pII.14). The ego's answer is its response to the tiny, mad idea: I am a separated son, self-created rather than God- created. The Holy Spirit's reply is the Atonement: our Self remains unchanged as Christ. The close of "The Christ in You" summarizes the shift from doubt to certainty, from the ego to Christ:

> There must be doubt before there can be conflict. And every doubt must be about yourself. Christ has no doubt, and from His certainty His quiet comes. He will exchange His certainty for all your doubts, if you agree that He is One with you, and that this Oneness is endless, timeless, and within your grasp because

> your hands are His.... His quietness becomes your certainty. And where is doubt when certainty has come? (T-24.V.9:1-4,6)

**(2:1) Yet who could ask this question except one who has refused to recognize himself?**

This question can arise only within a split mind, a major theme of this part of the lesson. Once we choose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, we make the split mind real, having brought uncertainty to replace the Certainty of God. Thus our daily process vacillates between the doubt of uncertainty and the certainty of Self.

**(2:2-4) Only refusal to accept yourself could make the question seem to be sincere. The only thing that can be surely known by any living thing is what it is. From this one point of certainty, it looks on other things as certain as itself.**

This is a commentary on the *principle: projection makes perception.* We first look within our minds and choose the ego or the Holy Spirit. What we choose we make real, and what we make real in our minds is projected or extended. If it is the ego's thought system of the false self, we project its thought system of sin and specialness and see it all around us, defining ourselves as bodies that are the shadows of the mind's original thought of separation. If, on the other hand, we choose the Holy Spirit and accept His Atonement, the love inherent in that thought becomes our reality, and we look out on the ego's world and realize everything is a defense against that love, which is now freed in our healed minds to extend throughout the Sonship.

Since all people know within Who they are, when they doubt their Identity they must already have chosen the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, because, as we will see presently, choosing the Holy Spirit leaves no doubt, but only certainty. Thus if I raise a question, it is but a statement masquerading as a question. As all questions come from self- doubt, they implicitly mean I do not know, for I decided against knowledge. In other words, my underlying question – "What am I?" – to which I seek an answer, is in fact a statement reflecting my wrong-minded decision. My right mind, again – the Holy Spirit's dwelling place – knows who I am. Thus my "question" is an invitation to someone to explain who I am and how I got here. Thus is my questioning born of self-doubt, as we see in this penetrating passage from "The Quiet Answer" that explains how all questions come from the need to affirm the ego – "a form of propaganda for itself":

> All questions asked within this world are but a way of looking, not a question asked.... The world asks but one question. It is this: "Of these illusions, which of them *is* true?".... Whatever form the question takes, its purpose is the same. It asks but to establish sin is real, and answers in the form of preference.... A pseudo-question has no answer. It dictates the answer even as it asks. Thus is all questioning within the world a form of propaganda for itself (T-27.IV.4:1, 4-5,8-9; 5:1-3).

**(3:1) Uncertainty about what you must be is self-deception on a scale so vast, its magnitude can hardly be conceived.**

This thought is present in other places in *A Course in Miracles,* where Jesus says, in effect, that we have no idea of the magnitude of our one error. For example:

> You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see. You do not realize the magnitude of that one error [of substituting illusion for truth]. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge (T-18.I.5:1-3).

When we are not sure of who we are, we have already deceived ourselves. Choosing the ego makes us uncertain, thus any uncertainty reveals we have chosen against the truth.

**(3:2) To be alive and not to know yourself is to believe that you are really dead.**

To be alive is to be with the Holy Spirit, for choosing Him is to choose the memory of life itself. When we choose the ego, however, we have chosen death and thus believe we are sinful for having rejected life. In our ignorance we think we exist, yet the truth is that we never left God's Life and remain at one with Him. In the madness of our dreams, however, we believe we are alive as bodies, but this is truly death, even as they successfully masquerade as life.

**(3:3) For what is life except to be yourself, and what but you can be alive instead?**

This is the real *you* of which Jesus speaks, and *life* applies only when I know who I am, the Self of which my Teacher reminds me. Therefore the decision against the Holy Spirit, once again, is the decision to be someone I am not, at which point I no longer have *being* and must be dead. The reader may recall the following from "The Laws of Chaos," which clarifies, beyond any doubt, the true meaning of life:

> There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. Yet both are judgments on what is not life, equal in their inaccuracy and lack of meaning. Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere (T-23.II.19:1-6).

Nothing the ego can do can ever change truth to illusion, or bring life to death. We remain as God created us—the Son of Life—our sleep of death notwithstanding:

> Your will is His life, which He has given to you. Even in time you cannot live apart from Him. Sleep is not death. What He created can sleep, but cannot die Immortality is His Will for His Son, and His Son's will for himself. God's Son cannot will death for himself because his Father is life, and His Son is like Him. Creation is your will *because it* is His (T-11.I.9:5-11).

**(3:4-7) Who is the doubter? What is it he doubts? Whom does he question? Who can answer him?**

*Who is the doubter?* The one who has chosen to be in the wrong mind. *What is it he doubts?* Who he is. *Whom does he question?* The other part of his mind. *Who can*

*answer him?* The only real answer comes from himself, except he has denied who he is. Therefore he can never hear the answer, for it will be his own voice – the wrong-minded ego – to which he listens. This line of thought is elaborated as we continue:

**(4:1) He merely states that he is not himself, and therefore, being something else, becomes a questioner of what that something is.**

The ones who doubt think they are this something else – the body, home of the thought system of separation. Now they wonder "what that something is." Our greatest brains have addressed this and similar questions: Who am I? How did I get here? What is the purpose of my existence? How did the world originate? Whether the question is asked from the point of view of theology, philosophy, psychology, biology, chemistry, or astrophysics is irrelevant, because it is a false question. When you choose to be with the Holy Spirit, you no longer question – you know. Your question, again, is really the ego saying I am not who I am, and seek instead to understand the false self I have become.

**(4:2-3) Yet he could never be alive at all unless he knew the answer. If he asks as if he does not know, it merely shows he does not want to be the thing he is.**

This describes the split mind, for there remains a part of us that knows the answer. As Jesus explains in many places, you cannot deny something unless you first know it:

> You denied Him because you loved Him, knowing that if you recognized your love for Him, you could not deny Him. Your denial of Him therefore means that you love Him, and that you know He loves you. Remember that what you deny you must have once known (T-10.V.6:3-5).

My choice for the ego is against the Holy Spirit, for there is a part of me that knows what He teaches. Yet I choose the ego because I prefer individuality to my natural state of oneness, the Son as God created him. It is thus never a question of an inability to know, but simply a refusal.

**(4:4) He has accepted it because he lives; has judged against it and denied its worth, and has decided that he does not know the only certainty by which he lives.**

My right mind has accepted who I am because life is there. Remember, if the Holy Spirit is the memory of God, He is also the memory of Life. If that memory is in my mind there must be a part of me that shares that thought. When Jesus says "He has accepted it because he lives," he speaks of the right mind. There is also the wrong mind that has judged against life, accepting the ego's judgment for who we are. We see thus again a description of the split mind: the wrong and right minds, and, by implication, the decision maker who chooses between them.

**(5:1) Thus he becomes uncertain of his life, for what it is has been denied by him.**

Life, my true Identity, is present in my mind. Even though I have turned away and forgotten it, my Self remains. In my amnesia, however, uncertainty and doubt arise, for which I accept no responsibility.

**(5:2) It is for this denial that you need Atonement.**

This is another central statement. Atonement undoes the denial that is the ego. In the text Jesus tells us our task is to *"deny the denial of truth"* (T-12.11.1:5); the Atonement is the first "deny," which erases the ego's "denial of truth." Because we chose wrongly and denied who we are, we need the Atonement's correction to undo the mistaken choice. As Jesus teaches:

> "Atoning" means "undoing." The undoing of fear is an essential part of the Atonement value of miracles (T-1.I.26:2-3).

And from the manual for teachers:

> Atonement means correction, or the undoing of errors (M-18.4:6).

We have denied our inherent oneness as God's Son and the unity of His Kingdom. By affirming that the separation never happened and Heaven remains perfectly united, the Atonement undoes the ego and its thought system:

> The Atonement is the guarantee of the safety of the Kingdom, and the union of the Sonship is its protection. The ego cannot prevail against the Kingdom because the Sonship is united. In the presence of those who hear the Holy Spirit's Call to be as one, the ego fades away and is undone (T-5.IV.1:9-11).

**(5:3-7) Your denial made no change in what you are. But you have split your mind into what knows and does not know the truth. You are yourself. There is no doubt of this. And yet you doubt it.**

The truth is we are as God created us. Even though we attempted to deny the truth, nothing happened: "not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). The Holy Spirit's presence in our minds is the assurance of that fact. Moreover, if the Atonement is in our minds, there is a part of us that has already identified with it. Since we denied what we established as truth, our minds are split. That is why there is perennial conflict in our minds, and perennial conflict in the world. We are continually at war with ourselves, a conflict designed by the ego to protect itself against our choosing the quiet memory of God's Love, the enemy of individuality:

> The memory of God comes to the quiet mind. It cannot come where there is conflict, for a mind at war against itself remembers not eternal gentleness. The means of war are not the means of peace, and what the warlike would remember is not love. War is impossible unless belief in victory is cherished. Conflict within you must imply that you believe the ego has the power to be victorious. Why else would you identify with it? (T-23.I.1:1-6)

How could we not doubt ourselves – a Self of peace – when we are in a continual

state of war?

**(5:8) But you do not ask what part of you can really doubt yourself.**

What doubts myself is the wrong mind, the part that does not know the truth, as described in the previous sentence. I do not question my wrong mind, because that implicitly means I have a right mind. I question none of this, but accept that I do not know who I am, and thus seek for answers external to myself. This validates my existence as a separated person, which is why, again, Jesus calls the ego's questions "propaganda for itself."

**(5:9) It cannot really be a part of you that asks this question.**

The real part of me – the *you* – knows, so that part never asks the question. In other words, it can only be the false self that asks. When you experience Jesus' love and peace, you have no questions. Indeed at that point you *become* the answer, as he is. Your asking a question, then, means you do not believe you are who you really are.

**(5:10) For it asks of one who knows the answer.**

My wrong mind asks of the right mind, which means my wrong mind believes it is separate from it. If I ask you a question, I do not experience you as one with me, but as someone separate who is perhaps wiser than I, and therefore has the answer I lack. The fact that part of me asks the other part who I am says that the wrong mind is separate from the right mind. Therefore, if my right mind is who I am, the wrong mind cannot be my self. These cleverly argued passages are designed to help break our identification with the ego, enabling us to choose the right-minded self as our identity.

**(5:11) Were it part of you, then certainty would be impossible.**

If the wrong mind - the part that does not know the truth - were who I am, how could I ever be certain of anything? The wrong mind is uncertainty; the right mind is certainty. The right mind, as the reflection of oneness, teaches us there could be nothing real outside itself. Thus, if the wrong mind has become part of who I really am, the uncertain wrong mind means *I* am uncertain, not to mention illusory. Again, Jesus uses this ingeniously reasoned argument to help us realize that the person we think we are is not who we truly are. As long as we doubt, are uncertain, and have questions about anything, we are affirming that we are not who we are.

This also means, in the long run, that when we continually ask Jesus for help and answers to questions, we affirm our separation from him. We all indeed begin as little children seeking help from our elder brother, yet as long as we wish this inequality to last, we will never realize we are like him. Near the end of the journey – when we have reached spiritual maturity – we understand there is no one to ask, because, like Jesus, we *are* the answer. Needless to say, this *we* is not the personal or specific self with which we identify, but the we that is one with all.

To review, asking a question implicitly reinforces your split mind, and therefore reflects a self you are not. This does not mean you should feel guilty about asking questions, but only that you need to recognize these are steppingstones toward the ultimate goal of realizing the Son of God is one. In that experience of oneness there is

no question, because you have become the answer. This is what Jesus means in discussing the experience that answers all questions:

> A universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary. It is this experience toward which the course is directed.... It is merely the ego that questions because it is only the ego that doubts. The course merely gives another answer, once a question has been raised....
>
> The ego will demand many answers that this course does not give. It does not recognize as questions the mere form of a question to which an answer is impossible.... Yet there is no answer; only an experience. Seek only this, and do not let theology delay you (C-in.2:5-6; 3:4-5; 4:1-2, 4-5).

**(6:1) Atonement remedies the strange idea that it is possible to doubt yourself, and be unsure of what you really are.**

The ego tells us that doubt and uncertainty are the reality here, and as school children we are indeed encouraged to ask questions. In fact, throughout *A Course in Miracles* Jesus speaks to us as little children, encouraging us to ask him questions. Yet the truth remains that being uncertain or in a questioning state denies our true Self. The Atonement undoes denial, as we have seen, removing the veil that hid the truth of the perfect certainty of our Identity as Christ.

**(6:2-4) This is the depth of madness. Yet it is the universal question of the world. What does this mean except the world is mad?**

Believing that reality is uncertainty and confusion, giving rise to a perennial state of questioning, is truly the depth of madness. Asking questions reflects a dualistic orientation, while non-dualistic oneness admits of no questions and no answers. This oneness is our reality, and Jesus is again letting us know the extent of the dualistic world's insanity. This leads to the insane conviction we cannot know our self without asking another for the answer to "the universal question of the world": What am I?

**(6:5) Why share its madness in the sad belief that what is universal here is true?**

While Helen was taking down *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus said to her: "Tell Bill that fifty million Frenchmen can be wrong."* The fact that fifty million or six billion people believe something does not make it true. One thought of madness is the same as a billion thoughts of madness, for madness remains mad. This uncompromising non-dualism is what makes *A Course in Miracles* so radical, for it establishes that all perception is a lie, since its innate dualism belies the truth of the oneness of knowledge:

> God's laws do not obtain directly to a world perception rules, for such a world could not have been created by the Mind to which perception has no meaning.
>
> Perception rests on choosing; knowledge does not. Knowledge has but one law because it has but one Creator (T-25.111.2:1; 3:1-2).

**(7:1-2) Nothing the world believes is true. It is a place whose purpose is to be a home where those who claim they do not know themselves can come to question what it is they are.**

"Nothing the world believes is true" because the world is based upon an illusory, insane thought. This is another unequivocal statement to which you should pay careful attention, and then observe how you want to compromise its truth. All people question "what it is they are," yet the only way they could know the answer is to release the thoughts that are part of this world: separation, judgment, specialness, and sickness. What remains is the certainty of the Atonement that reminds them of their Identity. Thus the world serves a different purpose when they choose the holy instant's forgiveness, the means for remembering their Self:

> There is another purpose in the world that error made, because it has another Maker Who can reconcile its goal with His Creator's purpose. In His perception of the world, nothing is seen but justifies forgiveness and the sight of perfect sinlessness. Nothing arises but is met with instant and complete forgiveness. Nothing remains an instant, to obscure the sinlessness that shines unchanged, beyond the pitiful attempts of specialness to put it out of mind, where it must be, and light the body up instead of it (T-25.III.5:1-4).

Thus does the world become a classroom in which we undo what the ego taught, choosing instead to learn from a different Teacher:

> The ego made the world as it perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the reinterpreter of what the ego made, sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home (T-5.III.11:1).

**(7:3) And they will come again until the time Atonement is accepted, and they learn it is impossible to doubt yourself, and not to be aware of what you are.**

This sentence would be clearer if we added *impossible* to the final clause: "and they learn it is impossible to doubt yourself, and *impossible* not to be aware of what you are." In other words, the ego tells us it is not only possible, but is a certainty we do not know who we are. The Atonement tells us simply it is impossible *not* to know our Self, because that is reality. The memory of who we are is within us; we have merely defended against it. Yet it patiently waits our choosing, as we return again and again until we make the final choice:

> Here, with the journey's end before you, you *see* its purpose. And it is here you choose whether to look upon it or wander on, only to return and make the choice again (T-19. IV-D.10:7-8).

**(8:1) Only acceptance can be asked of you, for what you are is certain.**

We are not asked to become who we are; we are asked simply to accept it. There is a significant difference between these two statements. When we let go of the interferences, as we are continually asked to do, we shall inevitably remember who we are. The text tells us:

The ego analyzes; the Holy Spirit accepts (T-11.V.13:1).

Thus Jesus asks us but to accept the truth about ourselves. Neither understanding nor analysis is needed; merely our simple acceptance.

**(8:2-3) It is set forever in the holy Mind of God, and in your own. It is so far beyond all doubt and question that to ask what it must be is all the proof you need to show that you believe the contradiction that you know not what you cannot fail to know.**

When you doubt and question, you affirm your split mind. Indeed, you actually affirm more than that, for you deny that you have a right mind, aware only of the wrong-minded self that transmutes into a brain and body. Moreover, when we question, we affirm that reality is not reality, for we believe that what we have substituted for it – our thought system and identity – can be understood and explained. Yet, again, since our Identity is set forever in the Mind of God, which is our own, it need only be accepted through choosing against the false identity we had heretofore made real for ourselves.

**(8:4) Is this a question, or a statement which denies itself in statement?**

This is the same point we discussed above. All questions are really statements that say the separation is real, to which I now attest through my "question."

**(8:5) Let us not allow our holy minds to occupy themselves with senseless musings such as this.**

Jesus asks us not to try to make sense of a thought system that cannot be understood, nor explain what is inconceivable. This also means we should not try to understand truth, which is beyond our capacities as egos. This favorite theme of *A Course in Miracles* recurs in all three books; for example, these passages regarding the ego and knowledge respectively:

> That is all the world of the ego is. Nothing. It has no meaning. It does not exist. Do not try to understand it because, if you do, you are believing that it can be understood and is therefore capable of being appreciated and loved. That would justify its existence, which cannot be justified. You cannot make the meaningless meaningful. This can only be an insane attempt (T-7.VI.11:4-11).
>
> This course will lead to knowledge, but knowledge itself is still beyond the scope of our curriculum. Nor is there any need for us to try to speak of what must forever lie beyond words. We need remember only that whoever attains the real world, beyond which learning cannot go, will go beyond it, but in a different way. Where learning ends there God begins, for learning ends before Him Who is complete where He begins, and where there *is* no end. It is not for us to dwell on what cannot be attained. There is too much to learn. The readiness for knowledge still must be attained (T-18.IX.11).

Thus Jesus encourages us to accept the truth, without attempting to understand it.

**(9:1) We have a mission here.**

Mission is not anything external. It is the acceptance of the Atonement, the correction in our minds when we choose the right teacher. A major temptation for students of *A Course in Miracles* is to translate its non-specific message of forgiveness into specific and special missions. Therefore it is helpful to keep this oft-quoted and important line in awareness:

> This is a course in cause and not effect (T-21. VII.7:8).

*Cause* refers to the mind, the changing of which constitutes our mission of forgiveness. *Effect* refers to the body or behavior, which is not our concern at all. Remember, too, that we are asked only to choose the miracle, leaving its extension through us to the Holy Spirit (T-16.11.1:3-6).

**(9:2-3) We did not come to reinforce the madness that we once believed in. Let us not forget the goal that we accepted.**

Part of our minds accepted the goal of awakening from the dream, which we seek to deny by making this world real and believing there is something special for us here. Such specialness is one aspect of the madness to which Jesus refers.

**(9:4) It is more than just our happiness alone we came to gain.**

The theme of oneness makes its appearance again. As the earlier lesson says: "When I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pI.137). It cannot be just *my* happiness I want to gain here. If I am to be truly happy, it is everyone's happiness I must desire; if I am to remember my identity as God's holy Son, it must include everyone's holiness:

> You may still think that holiness is impossible to understand, because you cannot see how it can be extended to include everyone. And you have been told that it must include everyone to *be* holy (T-16.11.1:1-2).

**(9:5-7) What we accept as what we are proclaims what everyone must be, along with us. Fail not your brothers, or you fail yourself. Look lovingly on them, that they may know that they are part of you, and you of them.**

When I accept Atonement for myself, the love and peace in my mind automatically extends to everyone's mind, because God's Son is one. I then become his reminder, just as Jesus was mine, of the choice he asks all of us to make. This love and peace says you can make the same choice I did, for I am not healed alone – my healing is the Sonship's. In this lovely Easter passage, Jesus summarizes the wonderful gifts forgiveness offers us and our brothers in his name:

> Easter is not the celebration of the *cost* of sin, but of its *end.* If you see glimpses of the face of Christ behind the veil, looking between the snow-white petals of the lilies you have received and given as your gift, you will behold your brother's face and recognize it. I was a stranger and you took me in, not knowing

> who I was. Yet for your gift of lilies you will know. In your forgiveness of this stranger, alien to you and yet your ancient Friend, lies his release and your redemption with him. The time of Easter is a time of joy, and not of mourning. Look on your risen Friend, and celebrate his holiness along with me. For Easter is the time of your salvation, along with mine (T-20.I.4).

**(10:1) This does Atonement teach, and demonstrates the Oneness of God's Son is unassailed by his belief he knows not what he is.**

The Atonement teaches that whatever we think has happened had no effect – the Oneness of God's Son was totally unaffected by our thoughts of judgment, attack, and specialness. Acceptance of that happy fact is the only true meaning of joy in this world.

**(10:2-11:3) Today accept Atonement, not to change reality, but merely to accept the truth about yourself, and go your way rejoicing in the endless Love of God. It is but this that we are asked to do. It is but this that we will do today.**
**Five minutes in the morning and at night we will devote to dedicate our minds to our assignment for today. We start with this review of what our mission is:**

> ***I will accept Atonement for myself;***
> ***For I remain as God created me.***

Once again, Jesus is not speaking about anything external. Nothing in *A Course in Miracles* should be taken as' a guide for what you should do behaviorally. It is always and only a guide about what you should think, or even more to the point, which teacher you should choose. Since there is no body and no world, why would Jesus give prescriptions for behavior? Our mission is simply to change our minds, to accept the Atonement for ourselves. Thus do we accept the truth, remembering that we remain as God created us.

**(11:4) We have not lost the knowledge that God gave to us when He created us like Him.**

As Jesus tells us in the text, losing something does not mean it is gone forever; it simply means we forgot where to look:

> You have not usurped the power of God, but you *have lost* it. Fortunately, to lose something does not mean that it has gone. It merely means that you do not remember where it is. Its existence does not depend on your ability to identify it, or even to place it. It is possible to look on reality without judgment and merely know that it is there (T-3.VI.9:2-6).

Thus the memory of God may be lost, but it has remained in our minds. We merely looked in the wrong place by searching outside ourselves – the ego's maxim: *seek but do not find.* This lesson, the workbook, *A Course in Miracles* itself – are all designed to train us to look within to find what the ego has hidden: the memory of the Self that God created one with Him.

**(11:5-12:1) We can remember it for everyone, for in creation are all minds as one. And in our memory is the recall how dear our brothers are to us in truth, how much a part of us is every mind, how faithful they have really been to us, and how our Father's Love contains them all.**

**In thanks for all creation, in the Name of its Creator and His Oneness with all aspects of creation, we repeat our dedication to our cause today each hour, as we lay aside all thoughts that would distract us from our holy aim.**

This cause is paramount in *A Course in Miracles.* If I am truly to remember who I am, if I am sincere about taking Jesus' hand that I return home, I must lay aside all ego thoughts that would deter me from achieving this goal. Jesus cannot do this for me, for I must set down these thoughts by choosing against my original decision to oppose the Love of God. Thus, as we go through our day, the focus should always be on the ways in which we try to distract ourselves, not to mention attack these loving thoughts that are present in our minds. We need realize we attack them because we fear their implication: in the presence of the love of Jesus, our special self would be gone. Our judgments and attacks thus protect us from losing this self with which we identify and to which we cling.

Note, too, another reiteration of the theme of oneness. Since all minds are one in creation, so must that oneness exist in our right-minded forgiveness as well. *All* our brothers are dear to us, for they are part of us in the universal Oneness of God's Son.

**(12:2-3) For several minutes let your mind be cleared of all the foolish cobwebs which the world would weave around the holy Son of God. And learn the fragile nature of the chains that seem to keep the knowledge of yourself apart from your awareness, as you say...**

The "fragile nature of the chains" is the ego thought system. A thought system of sin, hate, suffering, and death does not seem fragile, but powerful. Only when we step back and look at it with the eyes of Jesus can we see it as it truly is – a flimsy and powerless veil. When we look through the ego's judgmental eyes, the thought system of sin seems terrifyingly strong, but being outside the dream with Jesus, looking back at it, we realize sin had no effect. Within the dream it appears to be the opposite; yet outside it the dream's nothingness is easily recognized. The following passage well illustrates the crucial difference between the ego's and Jesus' perception of sin, between illusion and truth:

> It can indeed be said the ego made its world on sin. Only in such a world could everything be upside down. This is the strange illusion that makes the clouds of guilt seem heavy and impenetrable. The solidness that this world's foundation seems to have is found in this. For sin has changed creation from an idea of God to an ideal the ego wants; a world it rules, made up of bodies, mindless and capable of complete corruption and decay. If this is a mistake, it can be undone easily by truth. Any mistake can be corrected, if truth be left to judge it (T-19.II.6:1-7).

That is why having a relationship with the Holy Spirit or with Jesus is central to the practice of *A Course in Miracles.* Without Them it would be impossible to look without judgment at what the ego is doing.

We close the lesson by saying:

**(12:4)** ***I will accept Atonement for myself, For I remain as God created me.***

It is helpful to keep in mind that if you are serious about learning this course, you must realize that the creation of God is one. Therefore, any thoughts that separate you from anyone else constitute a consciously chosen attempt to deny your Identity. If you think your happiness or pain come from outside, you are denying the principle of the Atonement, which means you do not want to remember it. This is not a sin, but a correctable mistake once you know you made it. Therefore, you need to become increasingly vigilant for when your special thoughts and actions attack the Oneness of God's Son. The idea is not that you feel guilty over your specialness, but that you become aware of it. Jesus' purpose is to help us do just that, for it is in looking at the ego that we learn to accept the Atonement for ourselves, remembering the glorious thought that throughout the ego's insanity we have remained as God created us.

* See *Absence from Felicity,* p. 234.

make it (T-5.II.9:1-3, 6-7).

**(8:4-5) It is as near to us as our own thoughts; so close it is impossible to lose. We need but seek it and it must be found.**

We saw this idea in the previous lesson: My identity is here; I need only accept it. Healing is here; I need only accept it. *Seeking* in the world ensures healing will not be *found;* looking within guarantees it will – thus the simplicity of salvation and healing.

**(9:1-2) We will not be misled today by what appears to us as sick. We go beyond appearances today and reach the source of healing, from which nothing is exempt.**

Once more, Jesus is not saying we should deny our physical senses. However, we should not be misled into thinking they tell the truth. Keep in mind that the body is nothing more or less than a projection of the mind's thought of separation. Thus "we will not be misled." Unlike Plato's prisoners, we will allow ourselves to be taught to go beyond appearances to the truth.

**(9:3-5) We will succeed to the extent to which we realize that there can never be a meaningful distinction made between what is untrue and equally**

Such counsel would be most cruel. "Healing as Release from Fear" (T-2.IV), cited often in this book, makes it clear Jesus is not offering such counsel. He asks us only to deinvest our magical amulets, charms, and medicines from healing belief. Gently his love leads us through the maze of magic to the heart of miracles, through *the forms* of illusion to the *content* of truth's reflection. Thus do we lay aside the ego's purpose for our magic, not necessarily the magic itself.

**(10:2-4) We will be still and listen for the Voice of healing, which will cure all Ms as one, restoring saneness to the Son of God. No voice but this can cure. Today we hear a single Voice which speaks to us of truth, where all illusions end, and peace returns to the eternal, quiet home of God.**

In the split mind there are indeed two teachers – one will hurt and One will help. Thus Jesus pleads with you to choose the Holy Spirit. If you truly wish to be happy and peaceful, you will let Him be your Teacher and Healer. Again, He leads you through the illusion of appearances to the truth, if that is your desire.

**(11:1) We waken hearing Him, and let Him speak to us five minutes as the day begins, and end the day by listening again five minutes more before we go to sleep.**

Waking in the morning to think of the daily lesson and the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, reflects my wish to have the day be a classroom, not a place where my needs may or may not be met, where wonderful or terrible things might happen. If my day is a classroom, it makes no sense to choose a teacher of lies, but perfect sense to choose One Who will teach the truth. That thought orients my day, as Jesus instructs us in the "Rules for Decision":

> The proper set, adopted consciously each time you wake, will put you well ahead (T-30.I.1:5).

When you become upset, remind yourself this is merely part of your classroom, a curriculum the ego chose to hurt you. With your new Teacher, however, the situation can teach a different lesson. Learning forgiveness requires ongoing vigilance, the meaning of the Holy Spirit's third lesson: "Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom" (T-6.V-C). Watch your mind throughout the day for attack thoughts, and if your day is to be a classroom, you will go to your Teacher for help to look at this differently, learning why you are angry, judgmental, and sick. The answer is your fear of His Love, having used the external as an excuse to keep away from Him:

> An idol cannot take the place of God. Let Him remind you of His Love for you, and do not seek to drown His Voice in chants of deep despair to idols of yourself (T-29.VII.10:4-5).

This process of choosing truth over idols constitutes our need to practice throughout the day, as these workbook lessons gently guide us to do.

**(11:2) Our only preparation is to let our interfering thoughts be laid aside, not separately, but all of them as one.**

The theme of looking returns, this time focusing on our interfering thoughts. The statement is written in the passive form, but the Holy Spirit will lay aside our ego thoughts only when we bring them to Him. The problem is choosing them, and our preparation consists of becoming aware of our decision. Thoughts of judgment and pain are not what they appear, for they are part of the ego's defensive strategy to protect our individuality and keep love away. We must learn that all illusions and defenses are the same, as we read:

**(11:3-6) They are the same. We have no need to make them different, and thus delay the time when we can hear our Father speak to us. We hear Him now. We come to Him today.**

This does not mean you will literally hear the Voice of God Himself. The Voice we experience expresses His Love in symbolic form. When we release the "interfering thoughts," the *content* of His Love is all that remains, experienced in a *form* we can accept and understand.

**(12:1-3) With nothing in our hands to which we cling, with lifted hearts and listening minds we pray:**

***Only salvation can be said to cure. Speak to us, Father, that we may be healed.***

My task is simply to empty my mind, heart, and hands of ego thoughts that interfere with hearing the Holy Spirit. I no longer try to define the problem as something external, for this establishes the solution as something external as well – a form of magic. Turning away from the ego's strategy of concealment and camouflage, I bring the problem to the mind's mistaken choice, as I hear my Father's gentle Voice proclaiming I am healed.

**(12:4) And we will feel salvation cover us with soft protection, and with peace so deep that no illusion can disturb our minds, nor offer proof to us that it is real.**

The beginning of Helen's lovely poem "Awake in Stillness," already familiar to us, expresses this same sentiment, almost word for word:

> Peace cover you, within without the same,
> In shining silence and in peace so deep
> No dream of sin and evil can come near
> Your quiet mind.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 73)

As we empty our minds of thoughts of specialness, we no longer are tempted to see the world as proof the ego is real, or to use sickness or any problem as proof we were right and God wrong. Salvation's peace becomes our only cure and thought. Its peace has become our own.

**(12:5-6) This will we learn today. And we will say our prayer for healing hourly, and take a minute as the hour strikes, to hear the answer to our prayer be given us as we attend in silence and in joy.**

"Attending in silence" means I set aside my ego's raucous shrieking, the thought that says I am right – both problem and solution are found in the world. Silencing those thoughts allows the real thought of healing to return to my awareness.

**(12:7-8) This is the day when healing comes to us. This is the day when separation ends, and we remember Who we really are.**

This harks back to the previous lesson's theme of remembering our Identity. All sickness, concern, and seeking help in the world are attempts to reinforce that we do not know our Identity. When we no longer listen to the ego and realize both problem and answer are in the mind, the memory of Who we really are dawns on our unfettered minds, as we joyfully greet the union of self with Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 141**
**REVIEW IV Introduction**

As this fourth review looks back to the preceding twenty lessons and to the ones that follow, I would like to briefly review the Course's thought system, specifically the ego's plan, since this will come up in our discussion of this review.

Reality is Heaven and the perfect Oneness of God and His Son. When the tiny, mad idea of being separate from God seemed to arise in the Son's mind, his decision maker had to choose between the ego's and the Holy Spirit's interpretation of it. He chose the ego because he had already become enamored of his individuality, autonomy, and specialness. Once separation was chosen, the Holy Spirit's thought system of Atonement vanished from the Son's awareness.

The ego – the Son's desire for his separate self – developed a plan to ensure that the Son of God would never change his wrong decision, knowing full well that if he chose against his individuality, it would disappear. Thus the ego carried out its brilliantly conceived strategy to have the Son become mindless, for how can he change a mind he does not know he has? This strategy has two tiers of defenses. The first is the ego's myth of sin, guilt, and fear, which establishes that the separation really did happen: *sin,* because the Son of God had to kill his Father in order to acquire his individual existence; *guilt* over his perceived actions; and *fear* of the wrathful retribution of a God Who rises from the grave to pursue him. The Son's mind becomes a battleground on which, if he remains, he will certainly be destroyed. This first tier of defense, therefore, is the thought system of sin and death, which gives rise to the second tier – the world and body. The purpose of the world, and specifically the body as the source of pleasure or pain, is to guarantee that the Son remains firmly identified with his body. He thus forgets he has a mind, ensuring the ego's survival. In an insane nutshell, that is the ego thought system.

The Holy Spirit's "plan" undoes the ego's defenses by showing the Son of God that what he sees outside is simply a projection of what he has made real inside – the belief he is separate from everyone else, establishing the body as the witness *par excellence* for this separation. The reflection of Heaven's Oneness is that you and I share a common goal and interest. Whatever our bodies do to, or for each other has no effect on the fact that within the split mind we share the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, as well as the memory of Christ. In a sane nutshell, that is the Holy Spirit's thought system of forgiveness, correcting the ego's belief in separation.

We begin now with the fourth review. One of the advantages of these reviews, highlighted in their introductions, is they remind us that forgiveness is a process: learning *A Course in Miracles* in general, and practicing the workbook specifically. In the Introduction, Jesus speaks of the workbook as divided into two parts; the first focuses on undoing the ego's thought system, preparing us for the second part that deals with acquiring true perception. At the beginning of the Introduction to this review, Jesus looks forward to Part II, while the previous lessons and the immediately subsequent ones share the purpose of undoing the ego, allowing us to choose the Holy Spirit. Seeing through His eyes is vision or true perception, which is not possible as long as we hold on to the ego's two-tiered layer of defenses. Our focus, therefore, is always on undoing these defenses as the prerequisite for vision and awakening from the dream.

**(1) Now we review again, this time aware we are preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied. Today we will begin to concentrate on readiness for what will follow next. Such is our aim for this review, and for the lessons following. Thus, we review the recent lessons and their central thoughts**

**so will He join with you who are complete as you unite with Him, and He with you.**

This is another lovely expression of our Oneness as Christ, at one within Itself and at one with Its Source. The biblical phrase "Lord of Hosts" symbolizes the Godhead: God and Christ. It is interesting to note that in this review Jesus is asking us to focus primarily on our Oneness with God. Elsewhere his emphasis has been on realizing our oneness with each other, through forgiveness, as the step towards remembering our Oneness in Heaven.

The procedure for this review is that we first become aware of our ego's interfering thoughts, asking Jesus' help to look at them. As their darkness disappears in his light, what remains are the thoughts we hold with God. Jesus now presents us with the specific instructions for the ten review days to follow, two lessons per day:

**(7:1-5) After your preparation, merely read each of the two ideas assigned to you to be reviewed that day. Then close your eyes, and say them slowly to yourself. There is no hurry now, for you are using time for its intended purpose. Let each word shine with the meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice. Let each idea which you review that day give you the gift that He has laid in it for you to have of Him.**

As we lay aside our investment in the ego's "interfering thoughts" – the raucous shrieking that prevents us from hearing God's Voice – the meaning of His words shines through our happy minds. Each one symbolizes the end of darkness, as we bring our thoughts of guilt and judgment to His forgiving light. Thus will each practice period be one of joy, reflecting our eternal joy when the Holy Spirit's words to us become the Word of God, and we are home.

**(7:6-8:2) And we will use no format for our practicing but this:**
**Each hour of the day, bring to your mind the thought with which the day began, and spend a quiet moment with it. Then repeat the two ideas you practice for the day unhurriedly, with time enough to see the gifts that they contain for you, and let them be received where they were meant to be.**

Jesus is asking us to unify our days around these two thoughts, so that our gifts of separation and specialness can be transformed by forgiveness into the gifts of love he holds out to us. He has always held them in our minds, but when we vacated them, these loving gifts awaited our return. As part of our meditative practicing, let us again read Jesus' loving words to us from the text, which express the same gifts his review offers us:

> How can you who are so holy suffer? All your past except its beauty is gone, and nothing is left but a blessing. I have saved all your kindnesses and every loving thought you ever had. I have purified them of the errors that hid their light, and kept them for you in their own perfect radiance. They are beyond destruction and beyond guilt. They came from the Holy Spirit within you, and we know what God creates is eternal. You can indeed depart in peace because I have loved you as I loved myself. You go with my blessing and for my blessing. Hold it and share it, that it may always be ours. I place the peace of God in your heart and in your hands, to hold and share. The heart is pure to hold it, and the

> hands are strong to give it. We cannot lose. My judgment is as strong as the wisdom of God, in Whose Heart and Hands we have our being. His quiet children are His blessed Sons. The Thoughts of God are with you (T-5.IV.8).

**(9) We add no other thoughts, but let these be the messages they are. We need no more than this to give us happiness and rest, and endless quiet, perfect certainty, and all our Father wills that we receive as the inheritance we have of Him. Each day of practicing, as we review, we close as we began, repeating first the thought that made the day a special time of blessing and of happiness for us; and through our faithfulness restored the world from darkness to the light, from grief to joy, from pain to peace, from sin to holiness.**

Jesus' goal for us, once again, is to have each of our days be framed by a thought of forgiveness, beginning and ending the same, with each moment between them filled with the same thought, to which we bring our fear, guilt, and pain, that they may be gently replaced by joy, peace, and healing. I am reminded of the image of the arch – later transmuted into a rainbow – that D.H. Lawrence immortalized in his magnificent novel, *The Rainbow.* After Tom and Lydia heal their unsteady marital relationship, Lawrence describes the protective love within which their daughter Anna can now grow, her life framed by the two pillars of love and strength represented by her parents:

> Anna's soul was put at peace between them. She looked from one to the other, and she saw them established to her safety, and she was free. She played between the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud in confidence, having the assurance on her right hand and the assurance on her left. She was no longer called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens. And she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between.*

Jesus thus asks us to see our days as framed by the pillars of forgiveness and love, allowing its quiet strength and gentle protection to nourish our experience and sustain our learning, as we move "from darkness to the light, from grief to joy, from pain to peace, from sin to holiness."

**(10) God offers thanks to you who practice thus the keeping of His Word. And as you give your mind to the ideas for the day again before you sleep, His gratitude surrounds you in the peace wherein He wills you be forever, and are learning now to claim again as your inheritance.**

What nicer way to end these instructions, in preparation for our ten-day review period, than to quote this lovely passage that reminds us of God's Love and gratitude, as we open our minds and hearts to receive His gift of Wholeness, the gift of our Self:

> God offers thanks to the holy host who would receive Him, and lets Him enter and abide where He would be. And by your welcome does He welcome you into Himself, for what is contained in you who welcome Him is returned to Him. And we but celebrate His Wholeness as we welcome Him into ourselves. Those who receive the Father are one with Him, being host to Him Who created them.

> And by allowing Him to enter, the remembrance of the Father enters with Him, and with Him they remember the only relationship they ever had, and ever want to have (T-15.XI.9).
> * Wordsworth Classics edition, p. 79

## REVIEW IV

### Introduction

W-rIV.in.1. Now we review again, this time aware we are preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied. 2 Today we will begin to concentrate on readiness for what will follow next. 3 Such is our aim for this review, and for the lessons following. 4 Thus, we review the recent lessons and their central thoughts in such a way as will facilitate the readiness that we would now achieve.
W-rIV.in.2. There is a central theme that unifies each step in the review we undertake, which can be simply stated in these words:

*2 My mind holds only what I think with God.*

3 That is a fact, and represents the truth of What you are and What your Father is. 4 It is this thought by which the Father gave creation to the Son, establishing the Son as co-creator with Himself. 5 It is this thought that fully guarantees salvation to the Son. 6 For in his mind no thoughts can dwell but those his Father shares. 7 Lack of forgiveness blocks this thought from his awareness. 8 Yet it is forever true.
W-rIV.in.3. Let us begin our preparation with some understanding of the many forms in which the lack of true forgiveness may be carefully concealed. 2 Because they are illusions, they are not perceived to be but what they are; defenses that protect your unforgiving thoughts from being seen and recognized. 3 Their purpose is to show you something else, and hold correction off through self-deceptions made to take its place.
W-rIV.in.4. And yet, your mind holds only what you think with God. 2 Your self-deceptions cannot take the place of truth. 3 No more than can a child who throws a stick into the ocean change the coming and the going of the tides, the warming of the water by the sun, the silver of the moon on it by night. 4 So do we start each practice period in this review with readying our minds to understand the lessons that we read, and see the meaning that they offer us.
W-rIV.in.5. Begin each day with time devoted to the preparation of your mind to learn what each idea you will review that day can offer you in freedom and in peace. 2 Open your mind, and clear it of all thoughts that would deceive, and let this thought alone engage it fully, and remove the rest:

*3 My mind holds only what I think with God.*

4 Five minutes with this thought will be enough to set the day along the lines which God appointed, and to place His Mind in charge of all the thoughts you will receive that day.
W-rIV.in.6. They will not come from you alone, for they will all be shared with Him. 2 And so each one will bring the message of His Love to you, returning messages of yours to Him. 3 So will communion with the Lord of Hosts be yours, as He Himself has willed it be. 4 And as His Own completion joins with Him, so will He join with you who are complete as you unite with Him, and He with you.

W-rIV.in.7. After your preparation, merely read each of the two ideas assigned to you to be reviewed that day. 2 Then close your eyes, and say them slowly to yourself. 3 There is no hurry now, for you are using time for its intended purpose. 4 Let each word shine with the meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice. 5 Let each idea which you review that day give you the gift that He has laid in it for you to have of Him. 6 And we will use no format for our practicing but this:

W-rIV.in.8. Each hour of the day, bring to your mind the thought with which the day began, and spend a quiet moment with it. 2 Then repeat the two ideas you practice for the day unhurriedly, with time enough to see the gifts that they contain for you, and let them be received where they were meant to be.

W-rIV.in.9. We add no other thoughts, but let these be the messages they are. 2 We need no more than this to give us happiness and rest, and endless quiet, perfect certainty, and all our Father wills that we receive as the inheritance we have of Him. 3 Each day of practicing, as we review, we close as we began, repeating first the thought that made the day a special time of blessing and of happiness for us; and through our faithfulness restored the world from darkness to the light, from grief to joy, from pain to peace, from sin to holiness.

W-rIV.in.10. God offers thanks to you who practice thus the keeping of His Word. 2 And as you give your mind to the ideas for the day again before you sleep, His gratitude surrounds you in the peace wherein He wills you be forever, and are learning now to claim again as your inheritance.

## LESSON 141.

### My mind holds only what I think with God

**(1)** (121) **Forgiveness is the key to happiness.**

**(2)** (122) **Forgiveness offers everything I want.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 142**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (123) **I thank my Father for His gifts to me.**

**(2)** (124) **Let me remember I am one with God.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 143**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (125) **In quiet I receive God's Word today.**

**(2)** (126) **All that I give is given to myself.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 144**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (127) **There is no love but God's.**

**(2)** (128) **The world I see holds nothing that I want.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 145**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (129) **Beyond this world there is a world I want.**

**(2)** (130) **It is impossible to see two worlds.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 146**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (131) **No one can fail who seeks to reach the truth.**

**(2)** (132) **I loose the world from all I thought it was.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 147**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (133) **I will not value what is valueless.**

**(2)** (134) **Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 148**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (135) **If I defend myself I am attacked.**

**(2)** (136) **Sickness is a defense against the truth.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 149**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (137) **When I am healed I am not healed alone.**

**(2)** (138) **Heaven is the decision I must make.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 150**

**My mind holds only what I think with God.**

**(1)** (139) **I will accept Atonement for myself.**

**(2)** (140) **Only salvation can be said to cure.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 151**
**All things are echoes of the Voice for God.**

This lesson highlights two themes that are vital to an understanding of the ego's thought system: the role of judgment and the importance of the body. The idea "All things are echoes of the Voice for God" continues the review statement: "My mind holds only what I think with God." Our fear is that if we look on everything in this world – the ego's dream – through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, we will see differently: no attack, need, or gratification, but only expressions of love or calls for love (T-14.X.7:1-2). That vision induces fear because we would no longer be special or unique, having learned that the body has no effect and thus is nothing. As we are no longer separate individuals, everything we believed about ourselves and others was wrong, and we abandon belief in our perceptions by realizing everything here reflects the mind's thought of separation, which defends against the truth of today's lesson.

**(1:1-3) No one can judge on partial evidence. That is not judgment. It is merely an opinion based on ignorance and doubt.**

The point is that we continually judge on partial evidence, which is why we are always wrong. What is expressed here and throughout the first part of the lesson is expanded in a passage from the manual we looked at before (M-10.2-4). In lieu of repeating it, I will simply extract some relevant statements:

> It is necessary for the teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge, but that he cannot. In giving up judgment, he is merely giving up what he did not have.... In order to judge anything rightly, one would have to be fully aware of an inconceivably wide range of things; past, present and to come. One would have to recognize in advance all the effects of his judgments on everyone and everything involved in them in any way (M-10.2:1-2; 3:3-4).

**(1:4) Its seeming certainty is but a cloak for the uncertainty it would conceal.**

Jesus refers to the seeming certainty of our perceptions, and even more to the point, the seeming certainty of our interpretation of what goes on in the world. As long as we are so certain we are right, we must be wrong. Our stubborn insistence is the tip-off, and reflects the ego dynamic of reaction formation, first formulated by Freud a century ago, who described how people act out the opposite of what they unconsciously believe, and gave an extreme yet instructive example in *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death,* written in the midst of World War I. This is followed by a more general statement from his 1924 paper *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety:*

> So powerful a prohibition can only be directed against an equally powerful impulse. What no human soul desires stands in no need of prohibition; it is excluded automatically. The very emphasis laid on the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" makes it certain that we spring from an endless series of generations of murderers, who had the lust for killing in their blood, as, perhaps, we ourselves have today (XIV,296).
>
> Conflicts of this kind due to ambivalence are very frequent and they can have another typical outcome, in which one of the two conflicting feelings (usually

> that of affection) becomes enormously intensified and the other vanishes. The exaggerated degree and compulsive character of the affection alone betray the fact that it is not the only one present but is continually on the alert to keep the opposite feeling under suppression, and enable us to postulate the operation of a process which we call repression by means of *reaction formation ...* (XX,102).

Moreover, based on Freud's insight, Jung frequently maintained that religious fanatics were cloaking their own lack of faith; otherwise they would not affirm theirs with such dogmatic tenacity and tenacious dogmatism. Sons of God in their right minds would never demonstrate such insistence on being right. Their awareness of truth would simply *be.*

The decision for the ego's thought system is the beginning of uncertainty or doubt, because, as we have seen before, that decision automatically entails doubting our Identity:

> The ego ... raised the first question that was ever asked, but one it can never answer. That question, "What are you?" was the beginning of doubt (T-6.IV.2:6-7).

The reality of God's Son is spirit and has nothing to do with the body. Once I choose the ego's individuality I deny Who I am, which automatically engenders doubt and uncertainty. This is defended with the absolute certitude that I am right. This self-concept, born of self-doubt, we teach to ourselves and others:

> Teaching but reinforces what you believe about yourself. Its fundamental purpose is to diminish self-doubt. This does not mean that the self you are trying to protect is real. But it does mean that the self you think is real is what you teach (M-in.3:7-10).

Thus, again, our implicit uncertainty is cloaked by our explicit certainty. This inevitably sets up the need to defend the illusory self we are attempting to be, as we now read:

**(1:5) It needs irrational defense because it is irrational.**

The body and world are the irrational defenses that defend against the irrational uncertainty in our minds. This is the second line of defense that "protects" us from the first: the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. Once these defenses are set up we "forget" we made them. Thus it is that we become our defenses—the body, made to defend against our guilt, becomes our self: irrational guilt giving rise to the irrational body.

**(1:6) And its defense seems strong, convincing, and without a doubt because of all the doubting underneath.**

We see again an expression of reaction formation: our uncertainty and fear lead us to the arrogant certainty we know the truth. Such presumed arrogance – hubris to the ancient Greeks – defends against the terror within that says we do not know anything, especially our self. Because so much doubt exists within our minds, we have to make up

a world that seems so certain, and a body, governed by a brain, that interprets sensory input from the world and proclaims: "Yes, this world is not only real, but makes sense. And if it does not make sense to you, in my brilliance I will explain it to you." People attempt this with *A Course in Miracles* as well. Trying to make sense of it *from their point of view,* itself a defense against their own uncertainty and doubt, they dogmatically and defensively protest their certainty by recourse to mistaken statements about the Course's teachings.

Now to the body:

**(2:1-3) You do not seem to doubt the world you see. You do not really question what is shown you through the body's eyes. Nor do you ask why you believe it, even though you learned a long while since your senses do deceive.**

Everyone has had the experience of realizing their senses have lied. We learned that in high school, for example, when we were taught in geometry class that parallel lines do not meet, even though our visual experience tells us otherwise. We have looked at the horizon, the seeming meeting place of sky and water, knowing that is not the case. Then there are the fearful childhood experiences of believing that nocturnal noises of leaves rustling in the wind, or branches hitting against an outer wall are threatening intruders or even monsters. These indicate perception cannot be relied upon, and yet we maintain our senses bring us the truth, even though, following the ego's dictates, they were made to lie, as we have seen:

> Let not your eyes behold a dream; your ears bear witness to illusion. They were made to look upon a world that is not there; to hear the voices that can make no sound.... For eyes and ears are senses without sense, and what they see and hear they but report. It is not they that hear and see, but you, who put together every jagged piece, each senseless scrap and shred of evidence, and make a witness to the world you want (T-28.V.5:3-4, 6-7).

**(2:4) That you believe them to the last detail which they report is even stranger, when you pause to recollect how frequently they have been faulty witnesses indeed!**

This applies not only to our physical perceptions, but to our interpretations of situations when we were so sure we were right, only to realize later we were mistaken. We recall again a previously quoted passage from the manual:

> Remember how many times you thought you knew all the "facts" you needed for judgment, and how wrong you were! Is there anyone who has not had this experience? Would you know how many times you merely thought you were right, without ever realizing you were wrong? (M-10.4:1-3)

**(2:5) Why would you trust them so implicitly?**

This is the same question Jesus asks of us in the text:

> Ask not this transient stranger [the ego], "What am I?" He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know. Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer

> that you would adjust. This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth, becomes your guide. To it you turn to ask the meaning of the universe. And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, "How shall I look upon the Son of God?"
>
> Does one ask judgment of what is totally bereft of judgment? And if you have, would you believe the answer, and adjust to it as if it were the truth? (T-20.III.7:5-8:2)

**(2:6) Why but because of underlying doubt, which you would hide with show of certainty?**

The answer to the previous question comes, again, through understanding reaction formation. We believe the body because it fulfills the ego's strategy of preserving our separated identity by making us mindless; i.e., bodies living in a non-mindful world. This culminates in our absolute certainty that reality is physical and external. The purpose of this pseudo-certainty is to conceal the terror lurking in our minds, an uncertainty born of the original choice to replace the Certainty of God with the ego's doubt.

**(3) How can you judge? Your judgment rests upon the witness that your senses offer you. Yet witness never falser was than this. But how else do you judge the world you see? You place pathetic faith in what your eyes and ears report. You think your fingers touch reality, and close upon the truth. This is awareness that you understand, and think more real than what is witnessed to by the eternal Voice for God Himself.**

This important theme is reiterated throughout *A Course in Miracles.* Jesus is not speaking symbolically when he says we are not bodies. He means it literally, and expresses it again in the next lesson as well. We continually rely on our bodies and brains to interpret what we think to be reality and truth, *and we are always wrong.* Humility is going to Jesus, saying: "Thank God I am wrong and you are right." We are mistaken about everything, even in thinking we know what this course is teaching. We meditated on the meaning of its words through our need to make real the body's individuality and specialness. This identification with our special self drowns out "the eternal Voice for God," as we have seen many times before:

> What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to....
>
> You can defend your specialness, but never will you hear the Voice for God beside it (T-24.II.4:3-4; 5:1).

**(4:1-3) Can this be judgment? You have often been urged to refrain from judging, not because it is a right to be withheld from you. You cannot judge.**

We have already read other passages where Jesus teaches about our inability to judge. Here is another, from the text:

> Judge not because you cannot, not because you are a miserable sinner too (T-25.VIII.13:3).

We should not judge because it is bad or sinful. *We cannot judge.* Our judgments come always from the ego's thought system that is based on the need to preserve our individuality, proving God wrong and us right. No valid judgment can ever be made on that basis, since its origin rests on illusion and *ideas leave not their source.*

**(4:4) You merely can believe the ego's judgments, all of which are false.**

We are not free to establish reality, but we are free within our dream to dictate what that reality is, as we have seen many times before:

> Peace is a natural heritage of spirit. Everyone is free to refuse to accept his inheritance, but he is not free to establish what his inheritance is (T-3.VI.10:1-2).

**(4:5) It** [the ego] **guides your senses carefully, to prove how weak you are; how helpless and afraid, how apprehensive of just punishment, how black with sin, how wretched in your guilt.**

The ego thought system is here summarily stated in one sentence: sin, guilt, and fear of punishment. The body's purpose is to prove the reality of this unholy trinity. However, its reality is not in my mind but in the body, caused by people and agents outside me. Thus is the ego's thought system a reality within the world's dream, with nothing to do with my mind's decision, for it relates only to the body – mine or someone else's. This sentence also implies that the body's purpose is to make pain real. Consider the elaborate physical/psychological sensory mechanisms our bodies possess, which reflect their underlying purpose. The ego made the body to feel pain, and we respond by interpreting it as proof that sin, guilt, and fear are alive and well, having taken up their permanent abode in the body.

**(5:1) This thing it speaks of, and would yet defend, it tells you is yourself.**

Elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles* Jesus tells us this self is a parody or travesty of the Self that God created. Recall:

> What is this parody of God's creation that takes the place of yours? (T-24.VII.1:11)

> Such is the travesty on God's creation (T-24. VII.10:9).

Believing the body to be our selves, we unconsciously feel guilt over the Self we think we destroyed in order to survive. Thus the body symbolizes our sin, which we desperately seek to project onto others, necessitating the need to defend ourselves against their sinful attacks on us. Lesson 153 will elaborate on this vicious cycle of *attack-defense.*

**(5:2-4) And you believe that this is so with stubborn certainty. Yet**

**underneath remains the hidden doubt that what it shows you as reality with such conviction it does not believe. It is itself alone that it condemns.**

Here again Jesus reveals our arrogant stubbornness in believing we are right. Underneath, however, the guilty finger points to our minds, where exist the fear, uncertainty, and doubt we defend against by making a world in which we are certain we know the sinners. Even if I think I am the worst of all, there remain my parents or other agents I can blame for my wretched state. Thus there is a part of us that truly knows we are frauds – concealed by reaction formation – and that everything we believe is not true.

> **(5:5-6:1) It is within itself it sees the guilt. It is its own despair it sees in you. Hear not its voice.**

Jesus' familiar plea throughout *A Course in Miracles* is that we listen to his voice instead of the ego's:

> Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1).

Yet before I can do what he says, I first must recognize the ego's voice. That is why Jesus devotes so much of his course to helping us understand the defensive system of specialness. I cannot choose against something I do not know is there.

**(6:2-4) The witnesses it sends to prove to you its evil is your own are false, and speak with certainty of what they do not know. Your faith in them is blind because you would not share the doubts their lord can not completely vanquish. You believe to doubt his vassals is to doubt yourself.**

The "vassals," the ego's slaves, are our bodies and their sensory experience. We do not doubt them because the ego tells us to doubt what we perceive outside thrusts us back on what we believe is real inside – the mind the ego has told us is the home of the terror from which we flee. Remember, sin, guilt, and fear were made as the first level of defense, which causes us to fear our minds. We next make a world, body, and brain to hide from what we are so afraid of within. We thus place our faith in the body because we are terrified of returning to the mind, and what we put our faith in we believe to be true. Thus does our sense of self shift from the mind to the body, which becomes the vassal to its lord of guilt and fear.

**(7:1) Yet you must learn to doubt their evidence will clear the way to recognize yourself, and let the Voice for God alone be Judge of what is worthy of your own belief.**

We need *A Course in Miracles* so we can learn from Jesus that we can be saved only by doubting our sensory evidence, understanding we are not a body, and recognizing that the world's thought systems are based on perpetuating the ego's individuality and specialness. We need learn that to doubt the ego and its world is salvation. The ego tells us that to doubt it means we will be destroyed by the horror within the mind, and has convinced us the only thing we can do about the horror is to

use the world and body to defend against it.

To practice his course, Jesus tells us we need the willingness to question our every value (T-24.in.2:1), to come to him and say: "My only source of happiness lies in humbly recognizing you are the one who understands and is right." His understanding has nothing to do with the world, but helps me realize everything here is a defense. To return to the manual for teachers, we read this exhortation to come to the only One Who can judge for us. Turning to Him (or Jesus) is the only means for attaining the peace we desire:

> There is Someone with you Whose judgment is perfect.... Therefore lay judgment down, not with regret but with a sigh of gratitude. Now are you free of a burden so great that you could merely stagger and fall down beneath it.... Now can the teacher of God rise up unburdened, and walk lightly on.... His sense of care is gone, for he has none. He has given it away, along with judgment. He gave himself to Him Whose judgment he has chosen now to trust, instead of his own (M-10.4:7; 5:1-2, 5, 7-9).

Finally we come to realize the wisdom of these words, happily and often repeated:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

**(7:2-4) He** [the Holy Spirit] **will not tell you that your brother should be judged by what your eyes behold in him, nor what his body's mouth says to your ears, nor what your fingers' touch reports of him. He passes by such idle witnesses, which merely bear false witness to God's Son. He recognizes only what God loves, and in the holy light of what He sees do all the ego's dreams of what you are vanish before the splendor He beholds.**

In order to behold that splendor in ourselves and in others, we must first let go of the interferences to it. We need to see our investment in believing what the ego tells us, and that reality has nothing to do with the body and brain. We seek different witnesses now: symbols of forgiveness instead of sin, love instead of hate, healing instead of pain, life instead of death:

> God's Witness sees no witnesses against the body. Neither does He harken to the witnesses by other names that speak in other ways for its reality. He knows it is not real.... And for each witness to the body's death He sends a witness to your life in Him Who knows no death. Each miracle He brings is witness that the body is not real. Its pains and pleasures does He heal alike, for all sin's witnesses do His replace.... As fear is witness unto death, so is the miracle the witness unto life.... The dying live, the dead arise, and pain has vanished. Yet a miracle speaks not but for itself, but what it represents....
>
> Love, too, has symbols in a world of sin. The miracle forgives because it stands for what is past forgiveness and is true.... And truth will be revealed to you who chose to let love's symbols take the place of sin (T-27.VI.4:1-3, 7-9; 5:7, 9-10; 6:1-2; 8:6).

By calling on the Holy Spirit's witnesses and not the ego's, we are able to move beyond our perception of differences and separate interests – inherent in the body's perception – to the vision of unity and shared purpose – inherent in the mind of God's one Son.

**(8:1) Let Him be Judge of what you are, for He has certainty in which there is no doubt, because it rests on Certainty so great that doubt is meaningless before Its face.**

The Holy Spirit reflects that Certainty of God. When we chose against it, we became uncertain by definition. Thus began doubt, the source of all fear. Recall this lovely passage that closes "The Christ in You," expressing the certainty that ends our doubt:

> There must be doubt before there can be conflict. And every doubt must be about yourself. Christ has no doubt, and from His certainty His quiet comes. He will exchange His certainty for all your doubts, if you agree that He is One with you, and that this Oneness is endless, timeless, and within your grasp because your hands are His. He is within you, yet He walks beside you and before, leading the way that He must go to find Himself complete. His quietness becomes your certainty. And where is doubt when certainty has come? (T-24.V.9)

**(8:2-4) Christ cannot doubt Himself. The Voice for God can only honor Him, rejoicing in His perfect, everlasting sinlessness. Whom He has judged can only laugh at guilt, unwilling now to play with toys of sin; unheeding of the body's witnesses before the rapture of Christ's holy face.**

The more we turn to the Holy Spirit for help, the less seriously we will take this world and what happens here. Thus, reflecting His Love, we will become increasingly loving and available to others. It does not mean, as we know, that we turn our backs on our or other people's suffering, but simply that we look at suffering differently, not giving the ego's defenses power to destroy love's reality in our minds. Thus do the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of forgiveness replace the ego's nightmares of guilt and death. And we can smile:

> Rest in the Holy Spirit, and allow His gentle dreams to take the place of those you dreamed in terror and in fear of death. He brings forgiving dreams, in which the choice is not who is the murderer and who shall be the victim. In the dreams He brings there is no murder and there is no death. The dream of guilt is fading from your sight, although your eyes are closed. A smile has come to lighten up your sleeping face. The sleep is peaceful now, for these are happy dreams (T-27.VII.14:3-8).

**(9:1) And thus He judges you.**

The Holy Spirit does not see the illusion, nor recognize as truth what we have made real for ourselves: the thought of sin or the body. Thus do we receive His loving judgment:

*Holy are you, eternal, free and whole, at peace forever in the Heart of God. Where is the world, and where is sorrow now?* (M-15.1:11-12)

**(9:2-7) Accept His Word for what you are, for He bears witness to your beautiful creation, and the Mind Whose Thought created your reality. What can the body mean to Him Who knows the glory of the Father and the Son? What whispers of the ego can He hear? What could convince Him that your sins are real? Let Him be Judge as well of everything that seems to happen to you in this world. His lessons will enable you to bridge the gap between illusions and the truth.**

We need the willingness to come to Him and say: "I am upset because I am attracted to my specialness, but know I am looking at it wrong because I see the source of pleasure and pain in my body, and not from my mind's decision." Expressed in this paragraph, therefore, is that the Holy Spirit is not concerned with the body, nor with what we believe to be our problems here. He exists in the mind and sees only the mind, being beyond the defenses of sin, guilt, fear, and the body. Thus He is not deceived by the ego's two-tiered defenses that camouflage the mind. Going to Him for help means we have the little willingness to suspend identification with the physical/psychological self we call by name. It is the same willingness to let the Holy Spirit reinterpret the body and its purpose: communication and communion instead of separation and attack:

> Remember that the Holy Spirit interprets the body only as a means of communication. Being the Communication Link between God and His separated Sons, the Holy Spirit interprets everything you have made in the light of what He is. The ego separates through the body. The Holy Spirit reaches through it to others. You do not perceive your brothers as the Holy Spirit does, because you do not regard bodies solely as a means of joining minds and uniting them with yours and mine....
>
> If you use the body for attack, it is harmful to you. If you use it only to reach the minds of those who believe they are bodies, and teach them *through* the body that this is not so, you will understand the power of the mind that is in you.... In the service of uniting it [the body] becomes a beautiful lesson in communion, which has value until communion *is....* The Holy Spirit does not see the body as you do, because He knows the only reality of anything is the service it renders God on behalf of the function He gives it (T-8.VII.2:1-5; 3:1-2,4,6).

By our joining with the Holy Spirit's reinterpretation of the body's purpose, it becomes the means for awakening from the dream, the bridge between illusions and the truth, the means for remembering our communion with Christ, as Christ.

**(10:1) He will remove all faith that you have placed in pain, disaster, suffering and loss.**

Implicit here is that the Holy Spirit removes our faith in pain and disaster once we give Him our investment in them. He cannot take them if we still hold on. A miracle is not magic. We cannot say to Jesus: "We love you dearly and are upset. Please take away the pain." If we loved him dearly, we would not be choosing pain to defend against that love. Therefore, he removes the defenses when we bring them to him.

**(10:2-3) He gives you vision which can look beyond these grim appearances, and can behold the gentle face of Christ in all of them. You will no longer doubt that only good can come to you who are beloved of God, for He will judge all happenings, and teach the single lesson that they all contain.**

We are not asked to deny what our body's eyes see, but *are* asked to step out of the dream and look with Jesus on its contents. Above the battleground with him beside us, everything looks different, and we now see the world as nothing but a dream. What we thought gave us salvation or brought us pain, we now understand was part of the same illusion. Thus is

> the door held open for the face of Christ to shine upon the one who asks, in innocence, to see beyond the veil of old ideas and ancient concepts held so long and dear against the vision of the Christ in you (T-31.VII.13:7).

Looking past the appearance of sin – "old ideas and ancient concepts" – we behold truth's reflection of forgiveness shining from our brothers and ourself. How beautiful the world then becomes!

**(11:1) He will select the elements in them which represent the truth, and disregard those aspects which reflect but idle dreams.**

Again, the Holy Spirit does not do this magically. He judges for us only when we invite Him to share His perception of the world, rather than asking Him to share ours and then fix it for us. We thus do not bring truth to illusion, but illusion to truth, thus looking differently on our brothers, as this lovely passage suggests:

> Dream softly of your sinless brother, who unites with you in holy innocence. And from this dream the Lord of Heaven will Himself awaken His beloved Son. Dream of your brother's kindnesses instead of dwelling in your dreams on his mistakes. Select his thoughtfulness to dream about instead of counting up the hurts he gave. Forgive him his illusions, and give thanks to him for all the helpfulness he gave. And do not brush aside his many gifts because he is not perfect in your dreams (T-27.VII.15:1-6).

Our forgiveness "represent[s] the truth," while our grievances "reflect but idle dreams."

**(11:2) And He will reinterpret all you see, and all occurrences, each circumstance, and every happening that seems to touch on you in any way from His one frame of reference, wholly unified and sure.**

The Holy Spirit does not change the dream. He changes how we look at the dream. We then see all situations as opportunities for learning we have a mind that has chosen this thought system of separation, and therefore a mind that can change it.

**(11:3) And you will see the love beyond the hate, the constancy in change, the pure in sin, and only Heaven's blessing on the world.**

This is the now-familiar judgment of the Holy Spirit: behavior is perceived as calling for love or expressing it. This is not to say that things here are real, but that they reflect a decision in the mind to be either with the ego – my behavior is the shadow of my wrong choice, thus calling for help – or the Holy Spirit – my behavior reflects His Love, the constancy of Heaven's blessing on the Son's pure innocence.

**(12:1-2) Such is your resurrection, for your life is not a part of anything you see. It stands beyond the body and the world, past every witness for unholiness, within the Holy, holy as Itself.**

This lesson was taken down near the end of Lent, shortly before Easter; thus the reference to resurrection. The "life" Jesus refers to is the true Self beyond the ego's second line of defense – the world – and its first line – the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. Despite our wanderings into the ego's far country of dreams, we remain

> at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality (T-10.I.2:1).

The Holy Spirit is the memory of that home, and forgiveness the means He uses to awaken us from the dream of death, the Course's definition of resurrection (M-28.1:1-4).

**(12:3-4) In everyone and everything His Voice would speak to you of nothing but your Self and your Creator, Who is one with Him. So will you see the holy face of Christ in everything, and hear in everything no sound except the echo of God's Voice.**

This is not about physical perception. To see the holy face of Christ means we see our brother's innocence, because we realize the sins which we accuse him of are projections of the sins we accuse ourselves of – all illusory. Thus we look past the ego's ugliness of hate to the loveliness of forgiveness' face, hearing beyond the ego's murderous shrieks to the gentle echo of God's Voice. How joyous is the newly born vision that greets our eyes!

> Think of the loveliness that you will see, who walk with Him! And think how beautiful will you and your brother look to the other! How happy you will be to be together, after such a long and lonely journey where you walked alone. The gates of Heaven, open now for you, will you now open to the sorrowful. And none who looks upon the Christ in you but will rejoice. How beautiful the sight you saw beyond the veil, which you will bring to light the tired eyes of those as weary now as once you were. How thankful will they be to see you come among them, offering Christ's forgiveness to dispel their faith in sin (T-22.IV.4).

Jesus turns next to the practice periods for this lesson:

**(13:1-2) We practice wordlessly today, except at the beginning of the time we spend with God. We introduce these times with but a single, slow repeating of the thought with which the day begins.**

This means I become aware of how much I want to see all things as echoes of the voice of *my* god – the voice of separation and specialness – yet a perception for which I do not want to be responsible. We therefore first need to see everything we perceive as proving we are right and Jesus wrong. This mistaken perception, once in awareness, can be brought to his healing presence. Such is the purpose of this and every practice period. Note the lack of emphasis on specific words to guide our quiet times. This de-emphasis will increase as we continue the workbook's one-year training program.

**(13:3) And then we watch our thoughts, appealing silently to Him Who sees the elements of truth in them.**

The element of truth in my wanting to be separate is that I chose this not because I was sinful, but because I feared God's non-specific Love, still present in my mind even though I moved against it. Thus my thoughts call for help and do not express sin. Note, too, the return of the theme of mind-watching, the core of these workbook exercises.

**(13:4) Let Him evaluate each thought that comes to mind, remove the elements of dreams, and give them back again as clean ideas that do not contradict the Will of God.**

The Holy Spirit will evaluate my thoughts only if I give them to Him – my role in forgiveness. I must be aware of these thoughts of specialness so He can help me look at them differently. I thus have let go of my investment in the ego, which makes it disappear. What remains is the right-minded reflection of the Atonement. This idea is reminiscent of Jesus' plea to be honest with him, the prerequisite for taking his hand that he may lead us to the Kingdom, which we both *have* and *are:*

> Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other. If you will really try to do this, you have taken the first step toward preparing your mind for the Holy One to enter. We will prepare for this together.... How long will you deny Him His Kingdom? (T-4.111.8)

**(14) Give Him your thoughts, and He will give them back as miracles which joyously proclaim the wholeness and the happiness God wills His Son, as proof of His eternal Love. And as each thought is thus transformed, it takes on healing power from the Mind which saw the truth in it, and failed to be deceived by what was falsely added. All the threads of fantasy are gone. And what remains is unified into a perfect Thought that offers its perfection everywhere.**

My job is to acknowledge that what I have judged to be essential for my happiness is merely a thread of fantasy. I need realize I was simply deceived by what my ego told me was reality. Yet I must be aware of my identification with it and the body that reflects its thought system. Only then can it be replaced by the "perfect Thought that offers its perfection everywhere" – the mind of God's unified Son. We quoted earlier from the first stanza of Helen's poem, "The Second Chance." Here is part of the second stanza, depicting the miracle of Jesus' love, symbolized by the star we receive in

exchange for our thoughts of hate:

> I hugged it [hate] tight and hid it in my heart,
> And still I held it from His Love apart.
> Until one day my eyes met His, and then
> My fingers opened and my heart. And when
> I looked away a star was in my hand;
> Another in my heart.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 45)

**(15:1-2) Spend fifteen minutes thus when you awake, and gladly give another fifteen more before you go to sleep. Your ministry begins as all your thoughts are purified.**

As we will see in a subsequent lesson (W-pI.154), our ministry has nothing to do with the external, but simply with accepting the Atonement for ourselves. What else could it be, as it is only the mind of God's Son that needs healing? It is that mind to which we minister as' we seek to purify it of our thoughts of sin.

**(15:3-5) So are you taught to teach the Son of God the holy lesson of his sanctity. No one can fail to listen, when you hear the Voice for God give honor to God's Son. And everyone will share the thoughts with you which He has re-translated in your mind.**

Here again we see the theme that God's Son is one: "When I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pI.137). When I choose the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, I choose against the separation. In that holy instant I *am* God's Son, who is one. How, then, could we fail to hear the Holy Spirit's Voice proclaim Christ's sanctity as ours?

**(16) Such is your Eastertide. And so you lay the gift of snow-white lilies on the world, replacing witnesses to sin and death. Through your transfiguration is the world redeemed, and joyfully released from guilt. Now do we lift our resurrected minds in gladness and in gratitude to Him Who has restored our sanity to us.**

Lilies are *A Course in Miracles'* lovely symbol of forgiveness. When I choose against guilt and for innocence, I choose for everyone – the mind of God's Son is one. Our gift of lilies thus undoes the crucifixion of separation, and restores to our redeemed and resurrected minds the awareness of our Identity as one Son. This Easter passage beautifully parallels this thought:

> This is the way [innocence born of forgiveness] to Heaven and to the peace of Easter, in which we join in glad awareness that the Son of God is risen from the past, and has awakened to the present. Now is he free, unlimited in his communion with all that is within him. Now are the lilies of his innocence untouched by guilt, and perfectly protected from the cold chill of fear and withering blight of sin alike....
>
> Here is your savior and your friend, released from crucifixion through your vision, and free to lead you now where he would be.... And gladly will you and

> your brother walk the way of innocence together, singing as you behold the open door of Heaven and recognize the home that called to you (T-20.II.10:1-3; 11:1,3).

**(17) And we will hourly remember Him Who is salvation and deliverance. As we give thanks, the world unites with us and happily accepts our holy thoughts, which Heaven has corrected and made pure. Now has our ministry begun at last, to carry round the world the joyous news that truth has no illusions, and the peace of God, through us, belongs to everyone.**

We see again that the world is one with us, and as we accept this message in our minds, it is accepted for the world as well:

> Look upon your Redeemer [the Holy Spirit], and behold what He would show you in your brother, and let not sin arise again to blind your eyes. For sin would keep you separate from him, but your Redeemer would have you look upon your brother as yourself. Your relationship is now a temple of healing; a place where all the weary ones can come and rest. Here is the rest that waits for all, after the journey. And it is brought nearer to all by your relationship (T-19.III.11).

This is the experience that awaits the release of judgment by our choosing the vision of forgiveness. Our voice now echoes the Voice that unites God's Son, the identity we happily remember as we join our brothers in giving thanks to Jesus, who brought us to this holy place of resurrection. We gratefully remember him each minute today as we decide against judgment and for the truth.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 152**

**The power of decision is my own.**

This lesson continues the discussion of the role of the body and world in the ego's strategy of protecting its identity, making even more explicit the connection between mind and body. The bottom line is that everything you perceive comes from the mind's decision. This thought, "The power of decision is my own," is the ego's overriding fear. The fact that your mind has all power means the world in and of itself has none. Because you and you alone have the power to change how you feel and think, you are no longer

> at the mercy of things beyond you, forces you cannot control, and thoughts that come to you against your will (T-19.IV-D.7:4).

The power to be happy and peaceful therefore rests not with the world, but with your decision. The lesson also expresses the non-dualistic reality of Heaven.

**(1:1-4) No one can suffer loss unless it be his own decision. No one suffers pain except his choice elects this state for him. No one can grieve nor fear nor think him sick unless these are the outcomes that he wants. And no one dies without his own consent.**

In the third obstacle to peace, *the attraction of death,* Jesus says virtually the same thing:

> No one can die unless he chooses death. What seems to be the fear of death is really its attraction. Guilt, too, is feared and fearful. Yet it could have no hold at all except on those who are attracted to it and seek it out. And so it is with death (T-19.IV-C.1:4-8).

Without using the word *mind,* Jesus teaches that everything we experience here comes from the mind's decision. This is not specific, such as I choose to live or die, or be in this relationship or another. The ultimate decision – the only one that is important – is what we made as one Son in the original instant, and one we make over and over again: the decision to turn away from the Holy Spirit, declaring the Atonement principle to be a lie and the ego the only true teacher. From that one choice come all loss and pain, and the illusion the world has something to offer. The mind's decision to take the ego's lies as the truth establishes not only that we are right about the separation, but someone else is responsible for it. Pointing an accusing finger outside ourselves is the purpose of all pain and suffering, even unto death. Yet accepting the Atonement means we have ceased to identify with the ego, stepped outside the dream with Jesus, and come to recognize that everything here occurred in the one insane moment we chose to believe we were right and God wrong. And so we chose again.

**(1:5) Nothing occurs but represents your wish, and nothing is omitted that you choose.**

My wish is to be an autonomous individual, separate from the unity of Heaven. If it is my dream, everything that occurs is what I have put there; the decision based on my ego's need to exist and escape responsibility for what it chose.

**(1:6-8) Here is your world, complete in all details. Here is its whole reality for you. And it is only here salvation is.**

This is the mind and its wishes; specifically, the decision maker that chooses to be right rather than happy. The problem is in the mind, as is the world, because *ideas leave not their source.* Yet the mind is also where we find the correction, because Jesus is there.

**(2:1-2) You may believe that this position is extreme, and too inclusive to be true. Yet can truth have exceptions?**

Jesus speaks of the non-dualistic premise on which *A Course in Miracles* rests, to be developed further in the lesson. You are totally misreading this course if you think there is anything real in the world or body. There is no compromise here. If you think this position is too extreme, he says, consider: "can truth have exceptions?" If truth is God, Who is perfect unity, what is outside His Oneness cannot be of Him and therefore cannot be real. Anything we believe is real comes from the mind's wish to be right, saying I want to exist and the world to witness to that reality.

**(2:3) If you have the gift of everything, can loss be real?**

The "gift of everything" is the love Jesus holds for us. When we believe loss is possible, however, we say we do not have everything, a belief that comes from the secret wish to be in a state of scarcity and deprivation, for which someone or something else is responsible. Thus is our separation from God kept intact, but without our being accountable. The following passage from the text describes this process of using attack (i.e., projection) to blame others for the emptiness and loss we believe is our natural state:

> Attack could never promote attack unless you perceived it as a means of depriving you of something you want. Yet you cannot lose anything unless you do not value it, and therefore do not want it. This makes you feel deprived of it, and by projecting your own rejection you then believe that others are taking it from you. You must be fearful if you believe that your brother is attacking you to tear the Kingdom of Heaven from you. This is the ultimate basis for all the ego's projection (T-7.VII.8).

**(2:4-7) Can pain be part of peace, or grief of joy? Can fear and sickness enter in a mind where love and perfect holiness abide? Truth must be all-inclusive, if it be the truth at all. Accept no opposites and no exceptions, for to do so is to contradict the truth entirely.**

Jesus tells us once again his is an all-or-nothing course, and we should not compromise reality by trying to make anything in this world real. The best we can say is that something here serves the Holy Spirit's purpose of being a classroom in which we learn to remember reality. Therefore, as long as we believe there is pain or its absence, we make duality and illusion real. As long as we believe there is joy but we are not joyous, we say this world is real and Heaven is not. Read this clear expression of the un-

compromising nature of reality – only truth is true:

> It must be so that either God is mad, or is this world a place of madness. Not one Thought of His makes any sense at all within this world. And nothing that the world believes as true has any meaning in His Mind at all. What makes no sense and has no meaning is insanity. And what is madness cannot be the truth. If one belief so deeply valued here were true, then every Thought God ever had is an illusion. And if but one Thought of His is true, then all beliefs the world gives any meaning to are false, and make no sense at all. This is the choice you make. Do not attempt to see it differently, nor twist it into something it is not. For only this decision can you make (T-25.VII.3:2-11).

Jesus continues the same thought:

**(3:1-4) Salvation is the recognition that the truth is true, and nothing else is true. This you have heard before, but may not yet accept both parts of it. Without the first, the second has no meaning. But without the second, is the first no longer true.**

We want to have a little bit of Heaven in hell, and so will say: Truth is true, God is Love, and Heaven is wonderful, *but* this world is also true, as are our experiences here. Something of our bodies is vital, and something of our experience is real. Do not take that away from us! Thus speaks the ego, but Jesus tells us that if the first part of his statement is true – "truth is true" – the second part must be true as well – "nothing else is true." There cannot be an opposite to the truth. To say that truth is true is to say that anything outside Oneness is an illusion. That is why we are told we cannot have a little bit of hell in Heaven, or a little bit of Heaven in hell:

> You cannot give up Heaven partially. You cannot be a little bit in hell. The Word of God [the Atonement] has no exceptions. It is this that makes it holy and beyond the world (M-13.7:3-6).

> ... special areas of hell in Heaven are inconceivable (M-22.1:4).

**(3:5-8) Truth cannot have an opposite. This can not be too often said and thought about. For if what is not true is true as well as what is true, then part of truth is false. And truth has lost its meaning.**

What makes these words meaningful is thinking about what we do with the world. If anything here is true, then part of truth must be false. Truth is all-inclusive, being one, and there is nothing outside its unity. To say it another way, the world of perception (form) is not the opposite of knowledge. At best it *reflects* the truth of knowledge, but in and of itself it is illusory, since *"what is all-encompassing can have no opposite"* (T-in.1: 8):

> The very real difference between perception and knowledge becomes quite apparent if you consider this: There is nothing partial about knowledge. Every aspect is whole, and therefore no aspect is separate.... Perception, at its loftiest, is never complete. Even the perception of the Holy Spirit, as perfect as

> perception can be, is without meaning in Heaven. Perception can reach everywhere under His guidance, for the vision of Christ beholds everything in light. Yet no perception, however holy, will last forever (T-13.VIII.2:1-2, 5-8).

**(3:9) Nothing but the truth is true, and what is false is false.**

Though this theme is repeated continually throughout the text, workbook, and manual, one cannot live in this world with such understanding. Therefore, *A Course in Miracles* teaches us to reflect that truth here through forgiveness. We are thus not asked to deny our experiences, but to deny what we think they are. Everything here is symbolic, and it is our choice whether it symbolize the ego's thought system of specialness, or the Holy Spirit's correction that sees all things as classrooms. It is the simple choice between illusion and truth, wherein lies the essence of salvation:

> Salvation lies in the simple fact that illusions are not fearful because they are not true. They but seem to be fearful to the extent to which you fail to recognize them for what they are; and you will fail to do this to the extent to which you *want* them to be true. And to the same extent you are denying truth, and so are failing to make the simple choice between truth and illusion; God and fantasy. Remember this, and you will have no difficulty in perceiving the decision as just what it is, and nothing more (T-16.V.14).

Jesus thus clarifies that the problem is not its form. The fact that we *want* the problem *is* the problem, for our desire establishes the ego as real.

**(4:1-2) This is the simplest of distinctions, yet the most obscure. But not because it is a difficult distinction to perceive.**

Jesus is saying it is not really difficult to comprehend that what is true is true, and what is false is false. In fact, in the beginning of the last chapter of the text, he asks what could be easier to learn than this simple truth about the truth. He is not fooled by our protestations that we cannot learn what is so very simple and so very obvious:

> How simple is salvation! All it says is what was never true is not true now, and never will be. The impossible has not occurred, and can have no effects. And that is all. Can this be hard to learn by anyone who wants it to be true? Only unwillingness to learn it could make such an easy lesson difficult. How hard is it to see that what is false can not be true, and what is true can not be false? You can no longer say that you perceive no differences in false and true. You have been told exactly how to tell one from the other, and just what to do if you become confused. Why, then, do you persist in learning not such simple things? (T-31.I.1)

Note one more time Jesus' continual return to the problem of motivation: What makes the lesson's simplicity so difficult to understand is the unwillingness to give up our false self.

**(4:3) It is concealed behind a vast array of choices that do not appear to be entirely your own.**

In other words, the world exists outside my mind and I am not responsible for it, being a victim, not of my mind's choices but of external happenings. This, once again, is the essence of our decision making: the truth of the oneness of the Sonship – the Love of Christ – or the illusion of separate interests:

> The core of the separation illusion lies simply in the fantasy of destruction of love's meaning [the special relationship]. And unless love's meaning is restored to you, you cannot know yourself who share its meaning. Separation is only the decision *not* to know yourself. This whole thought system is a carefully contrived learning experience, designed to lead away from truth and into fantasy. Yet for every learning that would hurt you, God offers you correction and complete escape from all its consequences.
>
> The decision whether or not to listen to this course and follow it is but the choice between truth and illusion. For here is truth, separated from illusion and not confused with it at all. How simple does this choice become when it is perceived as only what it is. For only fantasies make confusion in choosing possible, and they are totally unreal (T-16.V.15-16).

Yet it is these very complex fantasies of specialness that conceal the simplicity of the problem and its solution – the power of our minds to choose:

> In this world the only remaining freedom is the freedom of choice; always between two choices or two voices (C-1.7:1).

**(4:4) And thus the truth appears to have some aspects that belie consistency, but do not seem to be but contradictions introduced by you.**

An example of the inconsistency of truth is to think that God, abiding in the Heaven of perfect love, is in this world as well, even though it is anything but a loving place. Most religions are impelled to walk the impossible tightrope of explaining how a world filled with suffering, hatred, and death can coexist with the all-loving God Who supposedly created it. Thus does truth appear to be inconsistent, as in Jesus' comment after presenting us with a portrait of the suffering inherent in the body's life. We shall return to that portrait below, but here are Jesus' words about the incongruity of believing a loving God could create attack and death:

> If this were the real world, God *would* be cruel. For no Father could subject His children to this as the price of salvation and *be* loving. *Love does not kill to save.* If it did, attack would be salvation, and this is the ego's interpretation, not God's (T-13.in.3:1-4).

We do not realize that this inconsistency and contradiction is introduced by us. It was not God's Word that wrote the Bible, but the minds of people whose ambivalence and conflict found creative expression in the biblical stories, culminating in a theology that makes no sense. Jesus asks us not to blame the inconsistency on God or truth, for it is ours, made out of the magical attempt to allow a little bit of Heaven to exist in hell. He explains further, in the context of the Christian view of the crucifixion, that this theology is inconceivable:

> The crucifixion did not establish the Atonement; the resurrection did. Many sincere Christians have misunderstood this.... If the crucifixion is seen from an upside-down point of view, it does appear as if God permitted and even encouraged one of His Sons to suffer because he was good. This particularly unfortunate interpretation, which arose out of projection, has led many people to be bitterly afraid of God. Such anti-religious concepts enter into many religions. Yet the real Christian should pause and ask, "How could this be?"... Persecution frequently results in an attempt to "justify" the terrible misperception that God Himself persecuted His Own Son on behalf of salvation. The very words are meaningless.... Can you believe our Father really thinks this way? It is so essential that all such thinking be dispelled that we must be sure that nothing of this kind remains in your mind. I was not "punished" because *you* were bad. The wholly benign lesson the Atonement teaches is lost if it is tainted with this kind of distortion in any form (T-311:2-3, 5-8; 2:4-5, 8-11).

Jesus now makes a strong statement of why God could have nothing to do with this world. I have already discussed how students of *A Course in Miracles* frequently try to change Jesus' meaning when he says that God did not create "the world you see," taking it to mean that God *did* create the world, but not the pain and suffering *we* have made real. However, this is *not* what Jesus means at all, as we now see. His point is that God did not create a world in which we believe we can see. In other words, He did not create a perceptual or dualistic world of form in which there is a subject and object. We read:

**(5) As God created you, you must remain unchangeable, with transitory states by definition false. And that includes all shifts in feeling, alterations in conditions of the body and the mind; in all awareness and in all response. This is the all-inclusiveness which sets the truth apart from falsehood, and the false kept separate from the truth, as what it is.**

This is the giveaway: everything in the world changes, which helps us understand why God could not be involved with it. If Heaven's reality is unchangeable, this world is its exact opposite. It is not only the physical body that changes – from birth, through what we call life, to death, followed by various stages in the "afterlife" – but our emotional states change as well – our moods, thoughts, and feelings are in constant flux. All these are but illusions designed by the ego to conceal the changeless truth of reality:

> Appearances deceive, but can be changed. Reality is changeless. It does not deceive at all, and if you fail to see beyond appearances you *are* deceived. For everything you see will change, and yet you thought it real before, and now you think it real again. Reality is thus reduced to form, and capable of change. Reality is changeless. It is this that makes it real, and keeps it separate from all appearances. It must transcend all form to be itself. It cannot change (T-30.VIII.1).

**(6:1) Is it not strange that you believe to think you made the world you see is arrogance?**

People would say in false humility: How can I have made this world? It is too intricate and complicated. However, think of the strange worlds we make up every night

in dreams, many of which are strange and exotic, painful or pleasurable, simple or complicated. Yet they are illusory, no different from the dreams that constitute the physical universe:

> Dreams show you that you have the power to make a world as you would have it be, and that because you want it you see it. And while you see it you do not doubt that it is real. Yet here is a world, clearly within your mind, that seems to be outside.... You seem to waken, and the dream is gone. Yet what you fail to recognize is that what caused the dream has not gone with it. Your wish to make another world that is not real remains with you. And what you seem to waken to is but another form of this same world you see in dreams. All your time is spent in dreaming. Your sleeping and your waking dreams have different forms, and that is all. Their content is the same. They are your protest against reality, and your fixed and insane idea that you can change it (T-18.II. 5:1-3, 8-15).

Thus it *is* arrogance to believe we made the world, an arrogance born of the belief we are more powerful than God and can indeed make a world the opposite to His. True humility recognizes – and happily so! – the impossibility of such madness.

**(6:2-3) God made it not. Of this you can be sure.**

To restate this important point, it is not that God did not make the world you see, in terms of your interpretation of it. He did not make a world in which perception – the world of form – is truth, nor did He make a world in which things change, as we have already seen:

> The world you see is an illusion of a world. God did not create it, for what He creates must be eternal as Himself. Yet there is nothing in the world you see that will endure forever. Some things will last in time a little while longer than others. But the time will come when all things visible will have an end (C-4.1).

**(6:4-7) What can He know of the ephemeral, the sinful and the guilty, the afraid, the suffering and lonely, and the mind that lives within a body that must die? You but accuse Him of insanity, to think He made a world where such things seem to have reality. He is not mad. Yet only madness makes a world like this.**

As mentioned above, Jesus describes the separated world of the ego—a world of guilt, made by guilt:

> The acceptance of guilt into the mind of God's Son was the beginning of the separation, as the acceptance of the Atonement is its end. The world you see is the delusional system of those made mad by guilt. Look carefully at this world, and you will realize that this is so. For this world is the symbol of punishment, and all the laws that seem to govern it are the laws of death. Children are born into it through pain and in pain. Their growth is attended by suffering, and they learn of sorrow and separation and death. Their minds seem to be trapped in their brain, and its powers to decline if their bodies are hurt. They seem to love, yet they desert and are deserted. They appear to lose what they love, perhaps the most insane belief of all. And their bodies wither and gasp and are laid in the ground,

and are no more. Not one of them but has thought that God is cruel (T-13. in.2).

Recall Jesus' next comment that "if this were the real world, God *would* be cruel" (T-13.in.3: 1). In this passage from the workbook he tells us that if this were the real world, God *would* be mad. The theme of God's madness is discussed in "The Rock of Salvation," in the context of the ego's insane premise that one must lose for another to win, the basis for its world of guilt and punishment:

> The whole belief that someone loses but reflects the underlying tenet God must be insane. For in this world it seems that one must gain *because* another lost. If this were true, then God is mad indeed! But what is this belief except a form of the more basic tenet, "Sin is real, and rules the world"? For every little gain must someone lose, and pay exact amount in blood and suffering. For otherwise would evil triumph, and destruction be the total cost of any gain at all. You who believe that God is mad, look carefully at this, and understand that it must be either God or this must be insane, but hardly both (T-25.VII.11).

Thus we return to the fundamental principle of *one or the other:* life or death, love or sin, God's madness or ours.

As you work with the Course, it is essential that you not bring God, the Holy Spirit, or anything spiritual into the world or body. Indeed, as we have seen, the body was made specifically to conceal the spiritual that is beyond the world. The only "spiritual" thing here is seeing the world as a classroom in which we learn, from the Teacher *in our minds,* that the world is illusory. That is its only purpose, for there is nothing inherently spiritual about the material.

**(7:1) To think that God made chaos, contradicts His Will, invented opposites to truth, and suffers death to triumph over life; all this is arrogance.**

Jesus gently points his finger of truth in our direction, and asks that we follow it. The insane chaos and cruelty of our world is not God's doing, nor some mysterious expression of His Will. It comes solely from our insane decision for the ego, thus making ourselves right and God wrong. Moreover, as Jesus explains to us in "The Laws of Chaos," we force God to think what we think. Recall this incisive and disturbing passage:

> The arrogance on which the laws of chaos stand could not be more apparent than emerges here. Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. It is not seen as even necessary that He be asked about the truth of what has been established for His belief. His Son can tell Him this, and He has but the choice whether to take his word for it or be mistaken. This leads directly to the *third* preposterous belief that seems to make chaos eternal. For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it (T-23.II.6).

We made sin real, and then made a God Who believes it, vengefully calling for our punishment. Furthermore, we made a world to attack God and then brought Him into it, demanding He fix it. We then go still further and say God made this world in His infinite wisdom, the mystery of which we cannot begin to fathom. Jesus, however, asks

us to leave God out of this mess of madness altogether, which our arrogance uses to assert we are right (and therefore sane) and God is wrong (and therefore insane). It is time, Jesus says, for the shift to humility:

**(7:2-5) Humility would see at once these things are not of Him. And can you see what God created not? To think you can is merely to believe you can perceive what God willed not to be. And what could be more arrogant than this?**

Our belief is that we *can* see what God did not create. The problem is not just that we see pain and disease, but that we believe we *see, think,* and *feel.* Our perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are part of the same illusion. Equating arrogance with littleness, and humility with magnitude, Jesus asks us not to let the world detract from awareness of our true glory:

Be not content with littleness. But be sure you understand what littleness is, and why you could never be content with it. Littleness is the offering you give yourself. You offer this in place of magnitude, and you accept it. Everything in this world is little because it is a world made out of littleness, in the strange belief that littleness can content you. When you strive for anything in this world in the belief that it will bring you peace, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory. Littleness and glory are the choices open to your striving and your vigilance. You will always choose one at the expense of the other (T-15.III.1).

**(8:1) Let us today be truly humble, and accept what we have made as what it is.**

We need to realize that we made this world to exclude God from our lives. That is what Jesus means later in the workbook, as we have seen before, when he tells us that

> the world was meant to be a place where God could enter not, and where His Son could be apart from Him (W-pII.3.2:4).

Jesus thus asks us to see the world for what it is: the ego's second line of defense that is the shadow of the underlying thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, which itself is a defense against remembering Who we are. Humility says I made all this to prove I am right, but thank God I am wrong – about the world, and its thought system of pain and death. As Jesus asks us:

> Think you the Will of God is powerless? Is this humility? You do not see what this belief has done. You see yourself as vulnerable, frail and easily destroyed, and at the mercy of countless attackers more powerful than you (T-22.VI.10:3-6).

This is not humility, but madness. How can God's Son be weak? Indeed, all power in Heaven and earth is given unto us through the mind's power to choose, which Jesus holds out to us as our own:

> My mind will always be like yours, because we were created as equals. It was only my decision that gave me all power in Heaven and earth. My only gift to

> you is to help you make the same decision. This decision is the choice to share it, because the decision itself *is* the decision to share. It is made by giving, and is therefore the one choice that resembles true creation. I am your model for decision. By deciding for God I showed you that this decision can be made, and that you can make it (T-5.II.9).

And so he reminds us again:

**(8:2) The power of decision is our own.**

*I* made the world, *I* am the dreamer of the dream, and therefore *I* can choose to change with whom and what I am dreaming. It is *I* who ultimately choose to change from dreaming to awakening to reality, thus fulfilling the function of the miracle. It all depends on what I want – peace or conflict, happiness or pain, forgiveness or guilt:

> Nothing at all has happened but that you have put yourself to sleep, and dreamed a dream in which you were an alien to yourself, and but a part of someone else's dream. The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is. It teaches you there is a choice of dreams while you are still asleep, depending on the purpose of your dreaming. Do you wish for dreams of healing, or for dreams of death? A dream is like a memory in that it pictures what you wanted shown to you (T-28.II.4).

**(8:3-5) Decide but to accept your rightful place as co-creator of the universe, and all you think you made will disappear. What rises to awareness then will be all that there ever was, eternally as it is now. And it will take the place of self-deceptions made but to usurp the altar to the Father and the Son.**

Jesus is not speaking of the physical universe. Sometimes he does use the word *universe* to mean the cosmos, the *physical* universe, but other times, as in this passage, he refers to the universe of *spirit.* He thus says: "Decide against your ego, and for me and the Atonement principle. This will restore to awareness your Identity as God created you, the Christ Who co-creates Heaven with Him":

> God extends outward beyond limits and beyond time, and you who are co-creator with Him extend His Kingdom forever and beyond limit. Eternity is the indelible stamp of creation. The eternal are in peace and joy forever (T-7.I.5:4-6).

Once we decide for God and our Self, all we think we made – the thought system of separation and the world that mirrors it – will disappear, and the peace and joy of creation will be ours forever. As we choose to accept the Holy Spirit's correction for the ego, the memory of God dawns but an instant before disappearing into What it was the memory of; the reflection of holiness becomes the reflected, shining on the altar that is the One Mind of God and Christ:

> ... holiness is not a reflection, but rather the actual condition of what was but reflected to them here. God is no image, and His creations, as part of Him, hold Him in them in truth. They do not merely reflect truth, for they *are* truth (T-14.IX.8:5-7).

The remainder of the lesson is devoted to the practice periods:

**(9:1-3) Today we practice true humility, abandoning the false pretense by which the ego seeks to prove it arrogant. Only the ego can be arrogant. But truth is humble in acknowledging its mightiness, its changelessness and its eternal wholeness, all-encompassing, God's perfect gift to His beloved Son.**

Our humility, once again, says to Jesus: "You are right and I am wrong, for which I am eternally grateful. Nothing can make me happier than to know I was wrong about everything."

**(9:4) We lay aside the arrogance which says that we are sinners, guilty and afraid, ashamed of what we are; and lift our hearts in true humility instead to Him Who has created us immaculate, like to Himself in power and in love.**

As the text says, we are "humble before Him, and yet great *in* Him" (T-15.IV.3:1). Our humility acknowledges that God is the Creator and we the created. At that moment we realize we share in His magnitude and power, the answer to all prayer:

> To use the power God has given you as He would have it used is natural. It is not arrogant to be as He created you, nor to make use of what He gave to answer all His Son's mistakes and set him free. But it is arrogant to lay aside the power that He gave, and choose a little senseless wish instead of what He wills. The gift of God to you is limitless. There is no circumstance it cannot answer, and no problem which is not resolved within its gracious light (T-26.VII.18).

Only the ego's arrogant voice of littleness would state otherwise.

**(10:1-3) The power of decision is our own. And we accept of Him that which we are, and humbly recognize the Son of God. To recognize God's Son implies as well that all self-concepts have been laid aside, and recognized as false.**

You can underline the word *all,* for Jesus' system of thought is all inclusive: *"all* self-concepts have been laid aside, and recognized as false." This recalls the passage I quoted earlier:

> To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning (T-24.in.2:1-2).

*Every* value must be questioned. You begin with questioning the values you hold in the world, such as specialness, and end by questioning the ultimate value: your individual existence. All self-concepts are meant to uphold this value in awareness. That is why Jesus states:

> The concept of the self has always been the great preoccupation of the world. And everyone believes that he must find the answer to the riddle of himself. Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts. It does

not concern itself with content of the mind, but with the simple statement that it thinks (T-31.V.14:1-4).

With our self-concepts gone, What we truly are will tell us of Itself (T-3 1.V.17:9).

**(10:4) Their arrogance has been perceived.**

This is the arrogance of thinking I understand what makes me and others tick, what makes me happy and unhappy, what is holy and unholy, and what will bring me home to God – all this is but the ego's arrogance, which we look at through the vision of truth and humility:

**(10:5) And in humility the radiance of God's Son, his gentleness, his perfect sinlessness, his Father's Love, his right to Heaven and release from hell, are joyously accepted as our own.**

Thus we set aside the ego's gifts of hell, and accept Heaven's gifts in their place.

**(11:1) Now do we join in glad acknowledgment that lies are false, and only truth is true.**

We no longer fight this statement, for we no longer wish to bring Heaven down to earth, mixing truth with illusion.

**(11:2-4) We think of truth alone as we arise, and spend five minutes practicing its ways, encouraging our frightened minds with this:**

***The power of decision is my own. This day I will accept myself as what my Father's Will created me to be.***

When we wake in the morning "we think of truth alone." On a practical level this means we think of truth's reflection, because "truth alone" means I am not even here. Reflecting truth means I gladly awake to a full day of lessons, wherein I learn with a Teacher Who will instruct me to the extent I bring to Him my experiences. He will help me understand their meaning; specifically, that I had carefully structured my day to prove I was right and God wrong, and that I exist as an individual but with someone else held responsible. The Holy Spirit helps me realize I made this up as a defense against my mind's thought system of guilt, which was made to defend against remembering the love that is my eternal reality. My day thus becomes a happy one – regardless of the circumstances awaiting me – because of the lessons I can learn. I need not be aware of non-dualistic truth, but simply aware of the Holy Spirit's reflection of that truth: shared instead of separate interests. That is my Father's Will for me in the dream, the means of remembering His Will for me in Heaven.

**(11:5) Then will we wait in silence, giving up all self-deceptions ...**

Here we see again that waiting in silence for God to speak to me, or for Jesus' love to embrace me, means absolutely nothing as long as *my* thoughts seek to take His place. I must look at the self- deceptions of my life and thought system. Only then can I

experience His Love, the Presence of truth that shines away the ego's lies.

**(11:5-6) ... as we humbly ask our Self that He reveal Himself to us. And He Who never left will come again to our awareness, grateful to restore His home to God, as it was meant to be.**

The Holy Spirit is here equated with Christ, our true Self. He comes to us to the extent we lay aside our illusions, which we do to the extent we no longer want them, preferring truth instead.

**(12) In patience wait for Him throughout the day, and hourly invite Him with the words with which the day began, concluding it with this same invitation to your Self. God's Voice will answer, for He speaks for you and for your Father. He will substitute the peace of God for all your frantic thoughts, the truth of God for self-deceptions, and God's Son for your illusions of yourself.**

Again, the only way we can have God's peace and truth, and remember Who we are as His Son, is to bring to our Teacher the frantic thoughts, self-deceptions, and illusions we had about ourselves and others. We decide at last to see the reflection of Heaven's Oneness – "the truth of God" – in everyone we see, as we learn the true meaning of the miracle:

> This is the miracle of creation; *that it is one forever.* Every miracle you offer to the Son of God is but the true perception of one aspect of the whole. Though every aspect *is* the whole, you cannot know this until you see that every aspect is the same, perceived in the same light and therefore one. Everyone seen without the past thus brings you nearer to the end of time by bringing healed and healing sight into the darkness, and enabling the world to see. For light must come into the darkened world to make Christ's vision possible even here. Help Him to give His gift of light to all who think they wander in the darkness, and let Him gather them into His quiet sight that makes them one (T-13.VIII.5).

We thus find true happiness by bringing the darkness of our illusions to the light of truth in our minds. We have regained the power to choose, and now decide for God's one Son as we embrace him in all we meet, without exception.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 153**

**In my defenselessness my safety lies.**

In order to understand this lesson, it is essential to recall the ego's strategy, so I again begin with a brief review. The ego's purpose for its two-tiered defense is to ensure that the Son of God never changes his mind in deciding he made a mistake in choosing against the Holy Spirit. The core of this strategy is rendering the Son mindless, accomplished by the ego concocting an impossibly insane tale of sin and punishment. The ego tells the Son he has sinned against God and deserves to be punished because of his sin. The only way he can escape his inevitable fate is to make a world and body replete with problems with which he must deal. The Son becomes so preoccupied he does not deal with the terrifying "reality" in the mind of his sin and God's wrath. Thus the ego first makes up a problem in the mind – the wrath of God – and then the world as a maladaptive defense against the nonexistent problem.

In addition, the ego causes the Son of God to take his perceived sin against God – the attack thought he has rendered unconscious – and project it so he now perceives sin all around him, but not within. Thus the Son believes he has to defend himself against everyone else's sinful attacks, having forgotten that the attack he perceives in others is a projection of the attack thought in his mind. In the text, Jesus talks about two levels of dreams: the secret dream of sin and punishment, the ego's first tier of defense; and the world's dream, in which our sins are seen in others (T-27.VIII.11:6-12:2), necessitating defense against perceived attacks. The main idea, however, which we will see described in more detail below, is that the ego's thought system of attack and defense is made up.

**(1) You who feel threatened by this changing world, its twists of fortune and its bitter jests, its brief relationships and all the "gifts" it merely lends to take away again; attend this lesson well. The world provides no safety. It is rooted in attack, and all its "gifts" of seeming safety are illusory deceptions. It attacks, and then attacks again. No peace of mind is possible where danger threatens thus.**

Here we have another description of the nature of the world. There is no safety here, for the world is rooted in attack, of which everything here is a shadow. In Part II of the workbook we read: "The world was made as an attack on God" (W-pII.3.2:1), since it is a projection of the ontological attack. The core of that thought is that if I am to exist as an individual, God must be destroyed. Since I believe I exist, God's destruction is the inevitable result, making attack and sin real. This is so horrifying a thought that all we can do is deny its presence in our minds, project it, and see this murderous impulse all around us. The reader may recall this succinct expression of the world guilt has wrought in our insane minds:

> The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find (T-31.I.7:4-8).

These, then, are the ego's "gifts" of specialness. Once we perceive attack around us and forget its source, we feel justified in defending against it – the root of our defensiveness and the heart of this lesson. This same thought is found in the discussion of "the face of innocence" (T-31.V.4-5): I am justified in being angry, and therefore

justified in defending myself. If I do not, the world's hostility will destroy me. My perceptions seem so real I never question the true origin of the hostility. My body tells me it is outside me, and so it is. We know the body's purpose is to witness to sin in everyone else, but not in ourselves, and so my anger witnesses to the belief I have gotten away with murder, literally. *You* are the sinner, and therefore *you* will be punished instead of me. The *Psychotherapy* pamphlet, which we shall examine throughout our discussion, highlights the importance of shifting our desire for anger to forgiveness:

> Its [psychotherapy's] whole function, in the end, is to help the patient deal with one fundamental error; the belief that anger brings him something he really wants, and that by justifying attack he is protecting himself. To whatever extent he comes to realize that this is an error, to that extent is he truly saved (P-2.in.1:5-6).

It is the therapist's task, as we shall see later, to exemplify this shift for the patient.

**(2:1-2) The world gives rise but to defensiveness. For threat brings anger, anger makes attack seem reasonable, honestly provoked, and righteous in the name of self-defense.**

This is, again, the concept of "the face of innocence." I perceive threat outside me, which does not come from me, and so I feel justified in being angry and defending myself. My counter attack is reasonable, in other words, and I am right in attacking others because they attacked first. Jesus explains this in a now-familiar passage from "Self-Concept versus Self":

> This [the face of innocence] aspect can grow angry, for the world is wicked and unable to provide the love and shelter innocence deserves. And so this face is often wet with tears at the injustices the world accords to those who would be generous and good. This aspect never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse (T-31.V.3).

**(2:3-6) Yet is defensiveness a double threat. For it attests to weakness, and sets up a system of defense that cannot work. Now are the weak still further undermined, for there is treachery without and still a greater treachery within. The mind is now confused, and knows not where to turn to find escape from its imaginings.**

The ego tells us our minds are weak because God will destroy us, and our only protection is to project the thought system of guilt and make a world and body. Yet the body is even weaker than the mind. You have only to touch it and it can fall, look funny at it and it is devastated, while the smallest of microorganisms is enough to destroy what seems to be this powerful and majestic body. To think of the body as safe and secure, as the ego had convinced us, is a joke. The key point is that the ego says the body will protect us against the mind's weakness of sin; namely, God will vengefully destroy us. Yet the defense itself breeds further fear, for its inherent weakness invites self-perceptions of vulnerability and attack.

Jesus asks us indirectly – and more directly elsewhere – to step back with him to

look at the world's insanity and, even more specifically, the insanity of believing we are bodies, subject to the whims and viciousness of other bodies. Again, we need realize that what we perceive and experience in our bodies is a projection of what we believe is inside. In another context, the Rosicrucians teach: "As above, so below." We can modify that in *A Course in Miracles* and say: "As within, so without." What is within our minds – a thought system of weakness: sin, guilt, and fear – becomes the outside world. Believing in the cloak of specialness, we say the world and body are wonderful, describing them as holy or sources of pleasure. Yet the body is no different from the mind, because it was made to conceal the mind's ego thoughts and *ideas leave not their source.* We accuse ourselves of treachery against God, betraying His Love by saying it was not enough. We then project our guilt, no longer seeing treachery within, but all around us.

Thus we gained nothing by following the ego's strategy. Sin, guilt, and fear are still alive and well, but rather than being experienced within the mind, we see them within the body – ours and others. However, the thoughts and feelings are the same, and so there seems to be no escape: the mind has failed us as a place of safety; so, too, has the body. The following passage nicely summarizes the dilemma we all face, having listened to the ego's voice:

> The body is the ego's home by its own election.... Here is where the mind becomes actually dazed. Being told by the ego that it is really part of the body and that the body is its protector, the mind is also told that the body cannot protect it. Therefore, the mind asks, "Where can I go for protection?" to which the ego replies, "Turn to me." The mind, and not without cause, reminds the ego that it has itself insisted that it is identified with the body, so there is no point in turning to *it* for protection. The ego has no real answer to this because there is none, but it does have a typical solution. It obliterates the question from the mind's awareness. Once out of awareness the question can and does produce uneasiness, but it cannot be answered because it cannot be asked (T-4.V.4:1, 5-11).

The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to restore the question to our awareness so we can hear a different Answer. The ego's response to this right- minded threat is to hold us still further in its cycle of attack-defense, now described:

**(3) It is as if a circle held it** [the mind] **fast, wherein another circle bound it and another one in that, until escape no longer can be hoped for nor obtained. Attack, defense; defense, attack, become the circles of the hours and the days that bind the mind in heavy bands of steel with iron overlaid, returning but to start again. There seems to be no break nor ending in the ever-tightening grip of the imprisonment upon the mind.**

The ego tells me I can escape the devastation of my mind by making a world. Yet there is no real safety here, as we all know from first-hand experience. This is one of the clearest statements in *A Course in Miracles* of the attack-defense cycle, which begins with my believing I attacked God to ensure my individuality. The ego continues its tale by telling me I deserve to be punished because of my sin against God, and need to project that thought and make a world in which I reenact the ego maxim of *one or the other.* If I am to exist, someone must suffer and pay the price; if I am to win, someone must lose –

the core of the ego's thought system, and thus the world's. It is impossible to survive physically without cannibalizing something perceived to be outside, whether you breathe in air or eat food, obvious necessities for the maintenance of life here. It is impossible to exist – physically and psychologically – without it being at someone or something else's expense. This cannot be avoided. Once we believe we live in a body, we are bound to this cycle of attack and defense, defense and attack. Another passage from the text illustrates the ego's use of attack, the body playing a central role in this insane, though highly successful strategy of neutralizing the mind's power to choose against it:

> The ego cannot hear the Holy Spirit, but it does believe that part of the mind [the decision maker] that made it is against it. It interprets this as a justification for attacking its maker. It believes that the best defense is attack, and wants *you* to believe it. Unless you do believe it you will not side with it, and the ego feels badly in need of allies, though not of brothers. Perceiving something alien to itself in your mind, the ego turns to the body as its ally, because the body is *not* part of you. This makes the body the ego's friend....
>
> The ego uses the body to conspire against your mind, and because the ego realizes that its "enemy" can end them both merely by recognizing they are not part of you, they join in the attack together. This is perhaps the strangest perception of all, if you consider what it really involves. The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which *is* real, that the mind is the ego's learning device; and further, that the body is more real than the mind is. No one in his right mind could possibly believe this, and no one in his right mind does believe it (T-6.IV.4:1-6; 5).

In this way the Son is convinced he is a mindless body. Moreover, he is a body under attack by other bodies, separate from himself. Such attack can be met only by the defense of counter-attack. Thus is born the attack-defense cycle, the principle by which our special relationships come into existence, and under which they thrive.

**(4) Defenses are the costliest of all the prices which the ego would exact. In them lies madness in a form so grim that hope of sanity seems but to be an idle dream, beyond the possible. The sense of threat the world encourages is so much deeper, and so far beyond the frenzy and intensity of which you can conceive, that you have no idea of all the devastation it has wrought.**

Throughout *A Course in Miracles,* in many different ways, Jesus teaches us how we do not understand the cost to us of our decisions for attack and defense. One such form is his discussion of our inability to differentiate joy from pain:

> The Holy Spirit will direct you only so as to avoid pain. Surely no one would object to this goal if he recognized it. The problem is not whether what the Holy Spirit says is true, but whether you want to listen to what He says. You no more recognize what is painful than you know what is joyful, and are, in fact, very apt to confuse the two. The Holy Spirit's main function is to teach you to tell them apart. What is joyful to you is painful to the ego, and as long as you are in doubt about what you are, you will be confused about joy and pain (T-7.X.3:1-6).

As terrible, painful, and filled with deception our lives may be, the situation is

nothing compared to the devastation we constantly choose to make real in our minds. The problem is we are convinced our problems are external, in the body; therefore we are convinced salvation is external, in the body. The ego's purpose, once again, is to root our awareness outside our minds, so we would never go within and make the choice for strength instead of weakness, joy instead of pain. Once having chosen weakness, paradoxically coming from the insane belief we destroyed strength, guilt demands we see others as perpetrators of such perfidy. Now seen as guilty, others deserve our justified punishment: their attack justifies our own in self-defense.

**(5:1-2) You are its slave. You know not what you do, in fear of it.**

We are slaves of threat and fear. The threat of God's vengeance is what drove us out of our minds originally, and fear continues to motivate us in our daily lives. The threat of losing our identity, specialness, and self-importance drives us to adopt the ego's strategy of mindlessness, leading inevitably to the twin cycles of guilt-attack and attack-defense. In reaction to this fear of the mind, we make the world, live in it, and continually reinforce its seeming reality through these two vicious cycles. The following passage exposes the ego's strategy of defense, leading us to become slaves to its fear:

> The ego is always alert to threat, and the part of your mind into which the ego was accepted is very anxious to preserve its reason, as it sees it. It does not realize that it is totally insane. And you must realize just what this means if you would be restored to sanity. The insane protect their thought systems, but they do so insanely. And all their defenses are as insane as what they are supposed to protect. The separation has nothing in it, no part, no "reason," and no attribute that is not insane. And its "protection" is part of it, as insane as the whole. The special relationship, which is its chief defense, must therefore be insane (T-17.IV.5).

We continue with an explanation of why defenses do not work. Made to defend against the mind's fear, their presence reinforces the thought that there is indeed something to be afraid of. Moreover, since all defenses are forms of attack, coming from the original attack thought of separation, they invite counter-attack, thereby engendering even more fear. Thus, the very fear defenses are meant to protect us from, merely becomes strengthened. Fear begets fear, just as hate begets hate:

> It is essential to realize that all defenses *do* what they would defend. The underlying basis for their effectiveness is that they offer what they defend. What they defend is placed in them for safe-keeping, and as they operate they bring it to you. Every defense operates by giving gifts, and the gift is always a miniature of the thought system the defense protects, set in a golden frame (T-17.IV.7:1-4).

This frame is the special relationship, to which we shall return in a later discussion. Suffice it to understand now, it is the mind's fear of God's vengeance that is hidden in the ego's wall of defense, "protecting" us from this divine threat. However, again, the defense merely reinforces our fear, driving us further into the ego's web, breeding still more fear.

**(5:3-4) You do not understand how much you have been made to sacrifice,**

**who feel its iron grip upon your heart. You do not realize what you have done to sabotage the holy peace of God by your defensiveness.**

Jesus wants us to understand how much we have given up to secure our individuality. We have sacrificed our Identity as Christ, and therefore our happiness, peace, and joy. We have thrown away the perfect Oneness of our Self, and in its place erected an idol of specialness: a world of fear and threat, of separation in which everyone loses and no one wins. The opening of Chapter 26 elaborates on this important theme of the body's role in maintaining the attack thought of separation, first from God, and then our brothers:

> In the "dynamics" of attack is sacrifice a key idea. It is the pivot upon which all compromise, all desperate attempts to strike a bargain, and all conflicts achieve a seeming balance. It is the symbol of the central theme that *somebody must lose.* Its focus on the body is apparent, for it is always an attempt to limit loss. The body is itself a sacrifice; a giving up of power in the name of saving just a little for yourself. To see a brother in another body, separate from yours, is the expression of a wish to see a little part of him and sacrifice the rest ... And while you see your brother as a body, apart from you and separate in his cell, you are demanding sacrifice of him and you. What greater sacrifice could be demanded than that God's Son perceive himself without his Father? And his Father be without His Son? Yet every sacrifice demands that They be separate and without the other. The memory of God must be denied if any sacrifice is asked of anyone (T-26.I.1:1-6; 4:2-6).

But the good news is:

> You can lose sight of oneness, but can not make sacrifice of its reality. Nor can you lose what you would sacrifice, nor keep the Holy Spirit from His task of showing you that it has not been lost (6:1-2).

**(5:5) For you behold the Son of God as but a victim to attack by fantasies, by dreams, and by illusions he has made; yet helpless in their presence, needful only of defense by still more fantasies, and dreams by which illusions of his safety comfort him.**

Having listened to the ego, we end up believing we destroyed our Identity as Christ, substituting the separate self the ego says is the Son of God. We defend against perceived threats until our only awareness is of ourselves in the world, the victimized hero of our dream, and the victimizing villain in someone else's. We are victims of what others do to us, as they feel we have done to them. The ego convinces us – what drove us originally to make the world – to fear being victimized by God's wrathful retribution. This insane belief is made up, of course, as is everything we believe about the world, body, and salvation. They all serve the purpose of justifying our attack thoughts, the anger that dutifully serves the ego's need to make sin real, but seen in another who deserves our wrath. Thus is the peace of Heaven denied, and Christ crucified still again:

> Returning anger, in whatever form, will drop the heavy curtain once again, and the belief that peace cannot exist will certainly return. War is again accepted

> as the one reality. Now must you once again lay down your sword, although you do not recognize that you have picked it up again. But you will learn, as you remember even faintly now what happiness was yours without it, that you must have taken it again as your defense. Stop for a moment now and think of this: Is conflict what you want, or is God's peace the better choice? Which gives you more? A tranquil mind is not a little gift. Would you not rather live than choose to die? (M-20.4:2-9)

As always, Jesus asks us to understand the consequences of our decision for the ego and obeying its dictates of guilt, attack, and defense: Do we wish to be happy or miserable, live or die, awaken from the dream or remain asleep. The choice is ours, and *A Course in Miracles* helps us to see it clearly, so we can choose to return home.

We turn now to the defenselessness that is just beyond the ego's system of defenses:

**(6:1) Defenselessness is strength.**

*Defenselessness,* as used in *A Course in Miracles,* has nothing to do with behavior. It does not mean that if a stranger breaks into your home with a knife and threatens you, that you simply stand there and do nothing, or that you allow your loved ones to be hurt or killed. Jesus is speaking of the mind's attitude, never the body's behavior. Defenselessness, therefore, is a thought system rooted in our decision for the Holy Spirit, our true strength. At that point we do not need a defense, which is needed only to protect our individual self. Sin, guilt, and fear are the initial defenses the ego uses, and the world completes its defense. However, when we choose the Holy Spirit, we choose against the separation and for our Oneness as Christ. There is no longer anything to defend, for we have reached the core of defenselessness. The following "little" poem of Helen's, "Song to My Self," nicely depicts the basis of this defenseless state:

> I cannot be replaced. I am unique
> In God's creation. I am held so dear
> By Him that it is madness to believe
> That I could suffer pain or loss or fear.
> Holy am I; in sinlessness complete,
> In wisdom infinite, in love secure,
> In patience perfect, and in faithfulness
> Beyond all thought of sin, and wholly pure.
> Who could conceive of suffering for me?
> Surely the mind that thought it is insane.
> I never left my Father's house. What need
> Have I to journey back to Him again?
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 38)

As we continue, we will see that true defenselessness simply means choosing the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, for He reminds us of our Self.

**(6:2) It testifies to recognition of the Christ in you.**

Being defenseless and living in the world without thoughts of fear, attack, or threat, reflects the decision maker's having chosen the Holy Spirit, the memory of Who we are as Christ. Thus we become a manifestation of what it means to make the right choice. In the aforementioned pamphlet on Psychotherapy, Jesus explains this dynamic in the context of psychotherapy. Indeed, the therapist's defenselessness becomes the core of the healing process:

> A madman will defend his own illusions because in them he sees his own salvation. Thus, he will attack the one who tries to save him from them, believing that he is attacking him. This curious circle of attack-defense is one of the most difficult problems with which the psychotherapist must deal. In fact, this is his central task; the core of psychotherapy. The therapist is seen as one who is attacking the patient's most cherished possession; his picture of himself. And since this picture has become the patient's security as he perceives it, the therapist cannot but be seen as a real source of danger, to be attacked and even killed.
>
> The psychotherapist, then, has a tremendous responsibility. He must meet attack without attack, and therefore without defense. It is his task to demonstrate that defenses are not necessary, and that defenselessness is strength. This must be his teaching, if his lesson is to be that sanity is safe. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the insane believe that sanity is threat. This is the corollary of the "original sin"; the belief that guilt is real and fully justified. It is therefore the psychotherapist's function to teach that guilt, being unreal, cannot be justified. But neither is it safe. And thus it must remain unwanted as well as unreal (P-2.IV.9, 10).

By witnessing to the nothingness of the ego's thought system of guilt, attack, and defense, the therapist demonstrates the existence of the right mind, modeling the result of having chosen against the ego's wrong-minded thought system. This reinforces the patient's ability to make the same choice, testifying to the recognition of the Christ in him.

**(6:3) Perhaps you will recall the text maintains that choice is always made between Christ's strength and your own weakness, seen apart from Him.**

When we choose the Holy Spirit we are choosing the strength of Christ. When we choose the ego we are choosing weakness. The reader no doubt recalls this important passage near the end of the text, to which the above statement refers:

> You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. And what you choose is what you think is real. Simply by never using weakness to direct your actions, you have given it no power. And the light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you do. For you have brought your weakness unto Him, and He has given you His strength instead (T-31.VIII.2:3-7).

Remember, the ego never wants us to remember we have a mind that dreams the dream, and can thus exercise its power to correct the mistake of having chosen weakness over strength.

**(6:4) Defenselessness can never be attacked, because it recognizes strength so great attack is folly, or a silly game a tired child might play, when he becomes too sleepy to remember what he wants.**

Jesus relegates this world and its thought system of separation to "a silly game a tired child might play." This does not mean that when you have chosen the Holy Spirit people may not attack you behaviorally, but that you will not perceive it as such, realizing its folly as you remember to laugh at the "tiny, mad idea" (T-27.VIII.6:2). Again, nothing in *A Course in Miracles* should ever be construed behaviorally. Its focus is only on which thought system or teacher we choose. This is difficult because we still see ourselves as bodies on the battleground, rather than minds existing beyond the ego's thought system. While we sleep and forget the awakening our sane mind truly wants, we dream of devastation and pain; dreams that appear most real to the mind of the dreamer:

> It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause. Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest (T-27.VIII.8:4-7).

One of the most difficult challenges confronting students of *A Course in Miracles is* to meet attack without attack, as we saw described in the passage from *Psychotherapy.* Such defenselessness is only possible, once again, when one is no longer exclusively identified with the body. It is the Course's purpose to help us shift from a wrong-minded body identification to a right-minded one. Only by seeing one's experiences as a classroom in which the meaning of forgiveness – the shift from the ego to the Holy Spirit – can be learned, does defenselessness become a meaningful and relevant goal. Stated another way, forgiveness is possible only when we remember we are the dreamer and not the dream figure. This is the meaning of the following statement from the text:

> For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream (T-27.VI11.10:5-6).

Once aware of the nature of the dream, it does seem to us as "a silly game a tired child might play," and one we no longer choose to participate in.

**(7:1-2) Defensiveness is weakness. It proclaims you have denied the Christ and come to fear His Father's anger.**

When we deny Who we are as Christ, we believe we have sinned. Guilt inevitably follows and we expect God's punishment. Who would not feel weak when confronted by the awesome power of a wrathful, vengeful God?

**(7:3-4) What can save you now from your delusion of an angry god, whose fearful image you believe you see at work in all the evils of the world? What but illusions could defend you now, when it is but illusions that you fight?**

The ego tells us there is an angry god in our minds, and the world is our

protection. Remember: *As within, so without.* The so-called sin and evil in our minds is what we have made the world to be nothing more or less. When we ask Jesus for help to look through his eyes, the world is not transformed. We simply recognize that its dream of fear is nothing. Made in hate to attack God, it remains what it is. However, our attitude toward the world changes, for now we laugh at its simple folly. The world's *cause* – the mad belief in sin – never happened; and so sin's effect – suffering and death – never happened either. Thus we smile gently as we say again:

> Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest.
>
> In gentle laughter does the Holy Spirit perceive the cause, and looks not to effects (T-27.VIII.8:5-9:1).

How, then, can fighting illusions be taken seriously?

**(8:1) We will not play such childish games today.**

How many students read this and say to Jesus: "How much do you want to bet?" The childish game of specialness, attack, and fear is hardly a game to us, and we are not going to give it up without a fight. Our very existence depends on these dreams of pain and death.

**(8:2) For our true purpose is to save the world, and we would not exchange for foolishness the endless joy our function offers us.**

This prefigures the next lesson, "I am among the ministers of God" (W-pI.154). Jesus refers here to our right minds, in which "we would not exchange for foolishness the endless joy our function [forgiveness] offers us." Thus the ego devised its plan to keep us insane: the bodily state of mindlessness protects our wrong-minded guilt, which protects our right-minded forgiveness.

**(8:3) We would not let our happiness slip by because a fragment of a senseless dream happened to cross our minds, and we mistook the figures in it for the Son of God; its tiny instant for eternity.**

"A fragment of a senseless dream [that] happened to cross our minds" is the tiny, mad idea, which in truth never happened at all. Rather than laughing, we took it seriously and affirmed our identity as figures in the dream. Made to be highly vulnerable, these figures of victimization justify perceptions of attack and defense. Why, Jesus continually asks, would we choose this tiny instant of fear and hate, defense and attack, over the joy of returning to our eternal home?

**(9) We look past dreams today, and recognize that we need no defense because we are created unassailable, without all thought or wish or dream in which attack has any meaning. Now we cannot fear, for we have left all fearful thoughts behind. And in defenselessness we stand secure, serenely certain of our safety now, sure of salvation; sure we will fulfill our chosen purpose, as our ministry extends its holy blessing through the world.**

This does not mean everything in your day will go smoothly. However, regardless of what happens externally, you will be peaceful because you have chosen Jesus as your teacher and companion. Thus you have chosen the memory of Who you are as Christ, Whose strength will uphold you as you go through your day. That is the simple and gentle foundation for defenselessness, as we read in this lovely description of the sixth characteristic of God's teachers:

> God's teachers have learned how to be simple. They have no dreams that need defense against the truth. They do not try to make themselves. Their joy comes from their understanding Who created them. And does what God created need defense? No one can become an advanced teacher of God until he fully understands that defenses are but foolish guardians of mad illusions. The more grotesque the dream, the fiercer and more powerful its defenses seem to be. Yet when the teacher of God finally agrees to look past them, he finds that nothing was there. Slowly at first he lets himself be undeceived. But he learns faster as his trust increases. It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down. It is safety. It is peace. It is joy. And it is God (M-4.VI.1).

Who would not, in their right minds, want this instead of the misery of living under the yoke of the twin cycles: guilt-attack and attack-defense. These lessons help us return to sanity and accept the Atonement for ourselves. Learning this acceptance is our ministry, as the following lesson will discuss. The so-called holy, sacred, and important things we believe we are to do are irrelevant. Always try to remember that *A Course in Miracles* is only about shifting our thought system: from guilt to holiness, hate to forgiveness, defensiveness to defenselessness.

**(10) Be still a moment, and in silence think how holy is your purpose, how secure you rest, untouchable within its light. God's ministers have chosen that the truth be with them. Who is holier than they? Who could be surer that his happiness is fully guaranteed? And who could be more mightily protected? What defense could possibly be needed by the ones who are among the chosen ones of God, by His election and their own as well?**

We know we are chosen by God when we choose Him. Needless to say, this has nothing to do with God. Since we chose against Him, we are the ones to correct the mistake by now choosing for Him. Thus we find our peace, for in the mind's stillness, no longer besieged by the thunder of guilt and attack, the quiet choice against defensiveness emerges with crystal clarity.

**(11:1) It is the function of God's ministers to help their brothers choose as they have done.**

This is what we do as a minister or teacher of God, to use the term from the manual for teachers. By our peace and love – not necessarily by our words – we remind others of our right-minded choice, which says, in effect: Because I made that choice and God's Son is one, you can do likewise. Indeed, if I have chosen correctly, you have already done so. In this sense, then, we have become like Jesus – his manifestation, as he is the Holy Spirit's – for when he arose from the dream of death, we were with him:

You are His manifestation in this world. Your brother [Jesus] calls to you to be His Voice along with him. Alone he cannot be the Helper of God's Son for he alone is functionless. But joined with you he is the shining Savior of the world, Whose part in its redemption you have made complete. He offers thanks to you as well as him for you arose with him when he began to save the world (C-6.5:1-5).

Our "ministry" is to grow up and become like Jesus, the symbol of the mind's choice to be defenseless instead of defensive. The reader may recall Helen's inspiring poem, "A Jesus Prayer," in which we pray to Jesus that we become like him:

> A child, a man and then a spirit...

The poem closes with this prayer:

> A perfect picture of what I can be
> You show to me, that I might help renew
> Your brothers' failing sight. As they look up
> Let them not look on me, but only You.
> *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 82, 83)

**(11:2) God has elected all, but few have come to realize His Will is but *their* own.**

This is a reference to the Course's correction of the well-known gospel verse: "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 20:16). In the text, Jesus says: "All are called but few choose to listen" (T-3.IV.7:12). In other words, God has "called" (or "elected") *all* His children, because we are part of Him. However, since in our madness we believe we left Him, choosing against His Love, we now must choose for Him, realizing His Will is our own.

**(11:3-5) And while you fail to teach what you have learned, salvation waits and darkness holds the world in grim imprisonment. Nor will you learn that light has come to you, and your escape has been accomplished. For you will not see the light, until you offer it to all your brothers.**

This is the heart of the next lesson, so I will not discuss it in depth here. Suffice it to say that we will never know the light is in us as long as we cling to the darkness of the ego's thought system. We reflect that light instead of the ego's shadowy world when we no longer see our brothers as separate from us.

**(11:6-12:2) As they take it from your hands, so will you recognize it as your own.**

**Salvation can be thought of as a game that happy children play. It was designed by One Who loves His children, and Who would replace their fearful toys with joyous games, which teach them that the game of fear is gone.**

The happy game is forgiveness – still an illusion, but unlike the illusory games of the ego – the purpose of which is murder, suffering, and death – the Holy Spirit's games undo all guilt, hate, and pain. Thus do His joyous games of forgiveness replace the ego's

fearful games of judgment, accomplished by looking with Jesus at the circumstances that bring pain and anxiety, and then beyond them to the truth. The following passage elaborates on the evocative imagery of harmless toys to denote the ego's thought system:

> The wearying, dissatisfying gods you made are blown-up children's toys.... The gap that is not there is filled with toys in countless forms.... each one ...never was the thing you thought.... But *you* are not endangered.... Yet *is* he [a child] at the mercy of his toys? And *can* they represent a threat to him? ... All illusions ... are but toys, my child, so do not grieve for them. Their dancing never brought you joy. But neither were they things to frighten you, nor make you safe if they obeyed your rules. They must be neither cherished nor attacked [i.e., special love or hate relationships], but merely looked upon as children's toys without a single meaning of their own. See one in them and you will see them all. See none in them and they will touch you not (T-30.IV.2:1; 3:1-3, 5, 9-10; 4:3, 6-10).

Seeing our special relationships as children's toys is the way to convert them from nightmarish games to happy ones. Thus we learn to smile at our silliness in having given these toys power to disrupt our peace and distort the unified vision of God's Son.

**(12:3-5) His game instructs in happiness because there is no loser. Everyone who plays must win, and in his winning is the gain to everyone ensured. The game of fear is gladly laid aside, when children come to see the benefits salvation brings.**

Thus is undone the core of the ego system: *one or the other* – if I live, someone must die; if I win, someone must lose. The reverse is true as well: if another lives or wins, I die or have lost. The Holy Spirit's game undoes the ego by teaching that in truth no one loses and everyone wins. Thus, if you are involved in a situation in which there is loss – in thought, not necessarily in behavior – realize that you must have chosen the ego as your teacher.

The only requirement for shifting teachers, then, is the willingness to ask for help in seeing beyond another's ego to the call for help that is buried, as it is buried in us. With Jesus, we look beyond the seeming darkness to the light shining in us as one, for such the light is: *one.* Asking for this help ensures we shall receive it, as it can only be the memory of light that impels us to ask for it. Buried in our minds as protection for the ego, the light can yet be seen in another when we forgive our projection – the darkness from which we sought to hide by seeing it outside in our special idols, the ego's toys of sin. This wonderful passage summarizes the essence of the shift from the projected darkness of separate interests to the light of shared ones:

> Little child, the light is there. You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. Who has need of toys but children? They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.... [The child] fears his thoughts and gives them to the toys instead. And their reality becomes his own, because they seem to save him from his thoughts. Yet do they keep his

thoughts alive and real, but seen outside himself, where they can turn against him for his treachery to them. He thinks he needs them that he may escape his thoughts, because he thinks the thoughts are real. And so he makes of anything a toy, to make his world remain outside himself, and play that he is but a part of it.

Jesus continues the passage by appealing to us, in language borrowed from the famous statement of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 13:11), to give up the ego's childish, judgmental dreams of separate interests for the joyous dreams of the real world, seen through eyes that perceive only love or calls for it – the shared interest of salvation:

> There is a time when childhood should be passed and gone forever. Seek not to retain the toys of children. Put them all away, for you have need of them no more. The dream of judgment is a children's game .... [in which] bad things seem to happen, and he [the child] is afraid of all the chaos in a world he thinks is governed by the laws he made. Yet is the real world unaffected by the world he thinks is real....
>
> The real world still is but a dream. Except the figures have been changed. They are not seen as idols which betray. It is a dream in which no one is used to substitute for something else, nor interposed between the thoughts the mind conceives and what it sees. No one is used for something he is not, for childish things have all been put away. And what was once a dream of judgment now has changed into a dream where all is joy, because that is the purpose that it has. Only forgiving dreams can enter here, for time is almost over. And the forms that enter in the dream are now perceived as brothers, not in judgment, but in love (T-29.IX.4:3-8; 5:5-9; 6:1-4, 7-8; 7).

**(13:1-2) You who have played that you are lost to hope, abandoned by your Father, left alone in terror in a fearful world made mad by sin and guilt; be happy now. That game is over.**

The problem is that the core of that game remains our individual identity. Thus, if you respond to these words by saying: "Isn't that wonderful!" you probably have not really understood them. The game that is over is not just one of pain – sin, guilt, and fear – but a game of specialness and self-importance. That game *is* over, but you will not choose to have it so as long as you cling to your special self. The reader may recall that the phrase "a fearful world made mad by sin and guilt" is borrowed from the penetrating passage from the text that exposes the true nature of the world. That passage begins:

> The world you see is the delusional system of those made mad by guilt (T-13.in.2:2).

**(13:3) Now a quiet time has come, in which we put away the toys of guilt, and lock our quaint and childish thoughts of sin forever from the pure and holy minds of Heaven's children and the Son of God.**

Who would ever refer to sin as "quaint and childish thoughts"? Only one who looks at it from outside the dream, as Jesus does in *A Course in Miracles.* From that perspective, sin is indeed quaint and childish. The world and the thought system that made it are horrifying only when you are within it, for then you believe you destroyed

Heaven and your very existence is built on God's grave. These are hardly quaint and childish thoughts. Therefore, whenever you are tempted to make an aspect of your daily life terrible, pause and think that if you ask Jesus for help, you will realize this is indeed quaint and childish. Watch then to see your resentment at having what you feel to be so important – special love or special hate – reduced to Jesus' phrase. However, to the extent we can choose the purity and holiness of our Identity as Christ, one of Heaven's children, to that extent will we allow Jesus to speak to us of our quaint and childish thoughts of specialness and salvation.

**(14:1-5) We pause but for a moment more, to play our final, happy game upon this earth. And then we go to take our rightful place where truth abides and games are meaningless. So is the story ended. Let this day bring the last chapter closer to the world, that everyone may learn the tale he reads of terrifying destiny, defeat of all his hopes, his pitiful defense against a vengeance he can not escape, is but his own deluded fantasy. God's ministers have come to waken him from the dark dreams this story has evoked in his confused, bewildered memory of this distorted tale.**

The happy games, again, are those of forgiveness, and the final game is the attainment of the real world. Both the games of sin and forgiveness are meaningless in Heaven, the happy news being that the ego was simply a silly and unreal thought. Only in deluded minds did this thought appear real, yet it had no effect upon reality. Thus do we walk unscathed midst the insanity of the ego's viciousness, as a dream of innocence gently comes to waken God's Son:

> Walk you in glory, with your head held high, and fear no evil. The innocent are safe because they share their innocence. Nothing they see is harmful, for their awareness of the truth releases everything from the illusion of harmfulness. And what seemed harmful now stands shining in their innocence, released from sin and fear and happily returned to love (T-23.in.3:1-4).

Incidentally, poetry lovers may notice the alliteration of the letter *d* in the last two sentences of the workbook passage.

**(14:6) God's Son can smile at last, on learning that it is not true.**

Realize that when you say this not true, you are saying more than that the pain of your and others' lives is not true. You assert that your very life is not true, for you have properly identified it as a figure in the dream.

From here to end of the lesson Jesus provides closing instructions:

**(15) Today we practice in a form we will maintain for quite a while. We will begin each day by giving our attention to the daily thought as long as possible. Five minutes now becomes the least we give to preparation for a day in which salvation is the only goal we have. Ten would be better; fifteen better still. And as distraction ceases to arise to turn us from our purpose, we will find that half an hour is too short a time to spend with God. Nor will we willingly give less at night, in gratitude and joy.**

Jesus definitely ups the ante here, saying that a "half an hour is too short a time to spend with God." In other words, we should have reached a point in our study and practice of *A Course in Miracles* where all we would want is to be in the presence of God's Love. The attraction of love for love (T-12.VIII) would now far eclipse the attraction of guilt for guilt, and so each day's lesson becomes a lesson of joy. If it is not, we at least understand why, and know to Whom to go for help to change our minds.

**(16) Each hour adds to our increasing peace, as we remember to be faithful to the Will we share with God. At times, perhaps, a minute, even less, will be the most that we can offer as the hour strikes. Sometimes we will forget. At other times the business of the world will close on us, and we will be unable to withdraw a little while, and turn our thoughts to God.**

Again, Jesus is holding up the ideal that if we are really serious about his course, we would choose God's Love over everything this world offers. Yet he also tells us he knows love terrifies us, and so "sometimes we will forget." Forgetting, of course, is not something that happens because we are busily occupied with something else, but because we choose against the Holy Spirit's memory of Love. At that point we "forget," and so in telling us the ideal, Jesus is also reminding us of our temptation to forget so we would not feel guilty about our fear.

**(17) Yet when we can, we will observe our trust as ministers of God, in hourly remembrance of our mission and His Love. And we will quietly sit by and wait on Him and listen to His Voice, and learn what He would have us do the hour that is yet to come; while thanking Him for all the gifts He gave us in the one gone by.**

Our function is not to save the world by giving gifts of love. Rather, we are asked to quietly sit by, meaning we choose against the ego's noise – its gifts of guilt and judgment, attack and defense. In the quiet we hear the non-judgmental Voice of peace, for we have set aside the need to attack as the means of defending our self. His is the Voice of love, which our specific minds translate into specific responses that we often experience as being told what to do or say. Yet in truth, "what He would have us do" is simply to remain with Him instead of the ego. From the quiet center, His Love gently guides our thoughts, words, and deeds, extending the previous hour into the next. Thus our ministry—the fruits of forgiveness and example of defenselessness:

> Yet there will always be this place of rest to which you can return. And you will be more aware of this quiet center of the storm than all its raging activity. This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent. For from this center will you be directed how to use the body sinlessly. It is this center, from which the body is absent, that will keep it so in your awareness of it (T-18.VII.8).

**(18:1-3) In time, with practice, you will never to cease to think of Him, and hear His loving Voice guiding your footsteps into quiet ways, where you will walk in true defenselessness. For you will know that Heaven goes with you. Nor would you keep your mind away from Him a moment, even though your time is spent in offering salvation to the world.**

Guided by the love in your mind to be busy with things in the world, you still do not forget you are God's Son, and therefore do not forget your Father's Love. You are thus able to walk the earth, attentive to what happens in the world *of form,* but at the same time not losing sight of the mind's *content* of Jesus' love. "God is my life and yours," Jesus says in the text (T-11.IV.6:7), and this shared life on earth reflects our one life in Heaven.

**(18:4-19:2) Think you He will not make this possible, for you who chose to carry out His plan for the salvation of the world and yours?**
**Today our theme is our defenselessness. We clothe ourselves in it, as we prepare to meet the day.**

The way "we clothe ourselves in it" is by choosing the right teacher to set out the clothing we will wear today. We do nothing fancy, but simply realize we want Jesus as our teacher. Simple.

**(19:3-6) We rise up strong in Christ, and let our weakness disappear, as we remember that His strength abides in us. We will remind ourselves that He remains beside us through the day, and never leaves our weakness unsupported by His strength. We call upon His strength each time we feel the threat of our defenses undermine our certainty of purpose. We will pause a moment, as He tells us, "I am here."**

Christ's strength is meaningless to us unless we choose it, for weakness disappears only when we choose against the ego. That is why sentence 5 is important: "We call upon His strength each time we feel the threat of our defenses undermine our certainty of purpose." Calling on Jesus for help must therefore be done in the context of our decision for the ego. We recognize our feelings of specialness – anger, sickness, fear, or depression – and say: "We chose the ego's weakness out of fear of God's Love, but no longer wish to pay the heavy price of pain." Thus does choosing Jesus as our teacher become meaningful and effective.

The belief that Christ's strength annihilates our identity keeps us identified with weakness. The ego warns that to give up the "joys" of specialness is to sacrifice our self. Jesus, on the other hand, teaches that these "joys" are but the toys of children, reinforcing belief in a body that is a shadow of the ego's thought system of death. Who would choose these when the memory of God is but an instant away, and the joy of love is ours instead of the pain of guilt?

> God's teachers can have no regret on giving up the pleasures of the world. Is it a sacrifice to give up pain? Does an adult resent the giving up of children's toys? Does one whose vision has already glimpsed the face of Christ look back with longing on a slaughter house? No one who has escaped the world and all its ills looks back on it with condemnation. Yet he must rejoice that he is free of all the sacrifice its values would demand of him. To them he sacrifices all his peace. To them he sacrifices all his freedom. And to possess them must he sacrifice his hope of Heaven and remembrance of his Father's Love. Who in his sane mind chooses nothing as a substitute for everything? (M-13.4)

## Lesson 153

**(20:1) Your practicing will now begin to take the earnestness of love, to help you keep your mind from wandering from its intent.**

Jesus lets us know how tempted we will be to wander from the truth when we become afraid. He reminds us of this frequently, and it is indeed a comfort for we need no longer pretend we think of God 100% of the time. If that were so we would not need the workbook, and we certainly would not be here in a body, living in the slaughter house the ego calls our home.

**(20:2) Be not afraid nor timid.**

Do not be afraid of this course and its kind and gentle teacher. Do not be afraid of love, nor of losing a made-up identity, let alone one that makes you unhappy. Above all, do not be afraid of returning home to a Father Whose Love can only welcome the Son who never left.

**(20:3-7) There can be no doubt that you will reach your final goal. The ministers of God can never fail, because the love and strength and peace that shine from them to all their brothers come from Him. These are His gifts to you. Defenselessness is all you need to give Him in return. You lay aside but what was never real, to look on Christ and see His sinlessness.**

Our function is to lay aside the defensiveness that was never real, thus choosing the strength, sinlessness, and defenselessness of Christ. That is why the outcome is as certain as God (T-2.III.3:10). The epilogue to the clarification of terms begins with this inspiring and comforting thought, providing us with a lovely end to a lovely lesson:

> Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when hope like this is his? Illusions of despair may seem to come, but learn how not to be deceived by them. Behind each one there is reality and there is God. Why would you wait for this and trade it for illusions, when His Love is but an instant farther on the road where all illusions end? The end *is* sure and guaranteed by God. Who stands before a lifeless image when a step away the Holy of the Holies opens up an ancient door that leads beyond the world? (C-ep.1)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 154**
**I am among the ministers of God.**

The word *ministers is* not used very often in *A Course in Miracles* – in fact it is not found at all in the text or manual – and the central discussion of that concept is found here and in the preceding lesson. Again, by *ministers of God* Jesus means *teachers of God* – a phrase reserved for the manual for teachers – whose function is to accept the Atonement for themselves. In that sense the lesson parallels "The Special Function" (T-25.VI).

**(1:1-3) Let us today be neither arrogant nor falsely humble. We have gone beyond such foolishness. We cannot judge ourselves, nor need we do so.**

The foolishness to which Jesus refers is the ego's arrogance that says it is right and God is wrong. Whenever I judge myself I express guilt, which affirms I have done a terrible thing and *am* a terrible thing: having betrayed God's Love by destroying Heaven's Oneness, I am a despicable person – an insane judgment of an insane thought.

**(1:4) These are but attempts to hold decision off, and to delay commitment to our function.**

Judging ourselves is the ego's way of keeping the mind's decision away from us. We then judge our bodies, immediately followed by judging those of others. If we have identified with our bodies and negative judgments of ourselves, or believe we are wonderful and everyone else is despicable, we hide our minds. Unaware of the mind, therefore, we cannot change it, and so delay fulfilling our mind-changing function of forgiveness.

**(1:5-7) It is not our part to judge our worth, nor can we know what role is best for us; what we can do within a larger plan we cannot see in its entirety. Our part is cast in Heaven, not in hell. And what we think is weakness can be strength; what we believe to be our strength is often arrogance.**

This parallels the following, where Jesus tells us we have no basis for personal evaluation:

> ... you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat. Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success (T-18.V.1:5-6).

In other words, there is no way we can understand where we are on our journey, nor where anyone else is either. Our judgments are based upon very limited data, interpreted from the past and oriented around our specialness. Thus we cannot know how forgiveness heals *all* problems, since we do not recognize that both problem and answer are in the mind. This leads Jesus to state the following about the impossibility of understanding truth from the perspective of illusions (i.e., the past), asking us not to judge, but to bring all judgments to him:

> Think you that you can bring truth to fantasy, and learn what truth means

> from the perspective of illusions? Truth *has* no meaning in illusion. The frame of reference for its meaning must be itself. When you try to bring truth to illusions, you are trying to make illusions real, and keep them by justifying your belief in them (T-17.I.5:1-4).

The reader may recall the lessons' early emphasis on how the past distorts our present.

**(2:1) Whatever your appointed role may be, it was selected by the Voice for God, Whose function is to speak for you as well.**

Before continuing, let me interject a few words about the language of *A Course in Miracles, as* I have done from time to time in this commentary. A lesson like this can blend in very nicely with the ego's arrogance of specialness: *I* have an appointed role in God's plan; the Holy Spirit has appointed *me* to do His special and very important work. Almost invariably, this arrogance takes the form of things I am to do or say – obviously involving the body and its behavior. Such a mistake easily happens when sentences are taken out of context and the metaphysics of the Course forgotten. As I frequently say, when you learn and practice *A Course in Miracles,* never let its non-dualistic metaphysics get too far away from you. If you do, you will fail to recognize Jesus is talking to you on the only level you can understand and accept, and will therefore think he speaks literal truth to you. However, if you remember that everything is an illusion, including the "happy game" of forgiveness Jesus described in the previous lesson, you will realize he speaks metaphorically. Indeed, he must speak that way, which is why he states the following, from the familiar Introduction to the clarification of terms:

> This course remains within the ego framework, where it is needed. It is not concerned with what is beyond all error because it is planned only to set the direction towards it. Therefore it uses words, which are symbolic, and cannot express what lies beyond symbols. *...*
>
> *The course is simple.* It has one function and one goal. Only in that does it remain wholly consistent because only that can *be* consistent (C-in.3:1-3, 8-10).

Over and over Jesus tells us we are to forgive others, that the "ark of peace is entered two by two" (T-20.IV.6:5). Yet he is not speaking of something one body does with another body, which would make absolutely no sense in this Course. *He speaks only of the undoing of a thought system of "one or the other"* The ego says you get to Heaven at someone else's expense. Jesus says you cannot get to Heaven at someone else's expense because that person is you: the Son of God is one. We experience this teaching on a bodily level because we believe we are bodies. However, it is essential, again, to understand that Jesus is talking to us on the level with which we identify. It would be senseless for him to do otherwise. Thus, as we have already seen, his course uses the language of duality – the condition in which we think we live. A "oneness joined as one" – a non-dualistic statement – is meaningless to us:

> All this takes note of time and place as if they were discrete, for while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a Oneness joined as One is meaningless. It is apparent that a mind so split could never be the Teacher of a Oneness which unites all things within Itself. And so What is within this mind, and

> does unite all things together, must be its Teacher. Yet must It use the language that this mind can understand, in the condition in which it thinks it is. And It must use all learning to transfer illusions to the truth, taking all false ideas of what you are, and leading you beyond them to the truth that *is* beyond them (T-251.7:1-5).

When Jesus talks about being a minister of God, therefore, he does not refer to a sacred mission the Holy Spirit has appointed for you – *and only you* – to fulfill. He means practicing the lessons of forgiveness; and since the curriculum is highly individualized – as we are told at the end of the manual (M-29.2:6) – everyone's lessons differ in form, though their content is the same. Thus, since we have individual bodies born into individual families, relating to other individual bodies, the non-specific content of forgiveness must be practiced in specific ways. I mentioned earlier "The Special Function," which Jesus explains how our special function is to forgive our special relationships. Remember as you go through this lesson that Jesus is addressing the *content*, shared by our one mind, though its expression in *form* obviously differs for each of us.

**(2:2) Seeing your strengths exactly as they are, and equally aware of where they can be best applied, for what, to whom and when. He chooses and accepts your part for you.**

In the early chapters in the text, Jesus repeatedly says – originally meant for Helen, but applicable to al of us – and I paraphrase:

> Do not choose the miracle; let me choose it for you. Your task is simply to accept my help in getting the ego out of the way. What then remains is my love, which will guide you in whatever is most helpful to you and others. The form of that help is not your concern, for you are needed only to bring your illusions to my truth, which will do the rest.

On the level of our experience, we believe Jesus tells us to do things. Yet, again, when we understand the Course's underlying metaphysics, we will not fall into the trap of spiritual specialness, believing Heaven's wondrous voice comes down to tell us specifically what we should do with our lives. Our experience may report such guidance, because we think we are special, but the reality remains that the celestial Voice is non-specific or abstract – It only loves. The unconscious mind takes non-specific love and translates it into specific forms we are able to accept. The brain then interprets that experience as Jesus telling us to do such and such. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with that experience, but we should not build a theology on it, nor believe that is what *A Course in Miracles* actually teaches. Jesus describes this process in the clarification of terms, but in the dualistic language homo sapiens can understand:

> God knows what His Son needs before he asks. He is not at all concerned with form, but having given the content it is His Will that it be understood. And that suffices. The form adapts itself to need; the content is unchanging, as eternal as its Creator (C-3.3:2-5).

In other words, we supply the *form,* God's Love supplies the *content.*

**(2:3-4) He does not work without your own consent. But He is not deceived in what you are, and listens only to His Voice in you.**

The Holy Spirit is totally unaffected by our ego's dreams. His presence reminds us of Who we are as Christ, despite the shabby and illusory self-images we made to take His place.

**(3:1) It is through His ability to hear one Voice which is His Own that you become aware at last there is one Voice in you.**

We find here still one more reflection of the important theme of oneness: We are one with God, Christ is One within Himself. We are one with the Holy Spirit and with everyone. There is no separation and specificity, yet we experience it because oneness is terrifying. Thus the experience of *two* voices is illusory as well. How can what does not exist have a voice? Only in dreams of separation can that be true, and the Holy Spirit speaks to us from outside the dream.

**(3:2-3) And that one Voice appoints your function, and relays it to you, giving you the strength to understand it, do what it entails, and to succeed in everything you do that is related to it. God has joined His Son in this, and thus His Son becomes His messenger of unity with Him.**

The Holy Spirit's message of unity reflects Heaven's single message of love. As long as we believe we are separate, however, the message of unified love will be experienced by us in specific ways. Yet a relationship is holy not by what one specific person does with another, but because we join with the Voice of Holiness – a Voice of Oneness – in our minds.

**(4) It is this joining, through the Voice for God, of Father and of Son, that sets apart salvation from the world. It is this Voice which speaks of laws the world does not obey; *which* promises salvation from all sin, with guilt abolished in the mind that God created sinless. Now this mind becomes aware again of Who created it, and of His lasting union with itself. So is its Self the one reality in which its will and that of God are joined.**

Salvation has nothing to do with the world, nor with special or individual bodies. It consists solely of joining with its Voice in our minds, through choosing against the ego. Thus forgiveness undoes our specific mistakes, undoing the one mistake of separation and restoring to awareness our Identity as Christ, at One with His Creator and Source.

**(5) A messenger is not the one who writes the message he delivers. Nor does he question the right of him who does, nor ask why he has chosen those who will receive the message that he brings. It is enough that he accept it, give it to the ones for whom it is intended, and fulfill his role in its delivery. If he determines what the messages should be, or what their purpose is, or where they should be carried, he is failing to perform his proper part as bringer of the Word.**

Jesus teaches that being a minister or messenger of God is the same as a worldly messenger. We do not question, but simply do what we are asked, which is to

deliver a message from A to B. We do not steam open the envelope and read the message, changing it if we do not like what it says, for this would place us in the arrogant position of presuming to know better than the writer of the message. Ostensibly, this position is based on *form,* but the real problem would be with the *content.* That is why our function is be the bearer of the message's *content* of forgiveness, without questioning its Source, of Whom we understand nothing:

> It is not the function of God's teachers to evaluate the outcome of their gifts. It is merely their function to give them. Once they have done that they have also given the outcome, for that is part of the gift. No one can give if he is concerned with the result of giving. That is a limitation on the giving itself, and neither the giver nor the receiver would have the gift.... It is the relinquishing of all concern about the gift that makes it truly given.... And it is the Holy Spirit in the mind of the giver Who gives the gift to him.... What concern, then, can a teacher of God have about what becomes of his gifts? Given by God to God, who in this holy exchange can receive less than everything? (M-6.3:1-5; 4:1, 4, 11-12)

As a messenger, therefore, we are asked simply to deliver the message, and nothing else.

Incidentally, almost always in *A Course in Miracles, Word* means some aspect of the Atonement – forgiveness, salvation, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus now explains the difference between being a messenger in the world and a messenger of God:

**(6:1-2) There is one major difference in the role of Heaven's messengers, which sets them off from those the world appoints. The messages that they deliver are intended first for them.**

The only message we are to bring to the world is that the separation never happened: the Love of God remains what it is, forever unassailed by the ego's thought system. However, I cannot deliver that message unless I have first accepted it, because we are talking about *content,* not *form.* It is not words that bring the message, however brilliant they may be, but the love with which I deliver it. Yet I cannot have love without accepting the Atonement. Therefore, if I am really serious about wanting to be of help in the world, I need not worry about it nor to whom I should be helpful. My concern is only about being helpful to myself, which means asking Jesus to help me correct my misperceptions and misthoughts, realizing I was wrong and he was right. Once the ego is out of the way, his love flows through me, and any word I say or thing I do is inevitably filled with that love.

The challenge is to be sure we have done our part to get rid of specialness, which is most insidious and subtle. That is why the bottom line in being a minister or teacher of God, a worker of miracles, is to accept the Atonement for ourselves. By denying the reality of guilt in our minds, we look beyond the ego's darkness, allowing Heaven's light—the message of the Atonement – to shine through us unimpeded.

**(6:3-4) And it is only as they can accept them for themselves that they become able to bring them further, and to give them everywhere that they were meant to be. Like earthly messengers, they did not write the messages they bear, but they become their first receivers in the truest sense, receiving to prepare**

**themselves to give.**

If I really want to be an ambassador of Jesus in this world, I must first accept his love for myself. I do that by becoming aware of how much I do *not* want it, for love threatens my specialness and individuality. That is why Jesus urges us to be faithful to him and his teachings, in a line we have seen before:

> Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you (T-11.VI.7:3-4).

**(7) An earthly messenger fulfills his role by giving all his messages away. The messengers of God perform their part by their acceptance of His messages as for themselves, and show they understand the messages by giving them away. They choose no roles that are not given them by His authority. And so they gain by every message that they give away.**

We revisit this core theme in the Course – *giving and receiving are the same.* If I want to receive God's Love, I have to give it. If I want to know I am forgiven, I have to forgive, which means realizing that all people share the same need and purpose. However different we are, however different our religious or spiritual paths, we nonetheless share the one need of awakening from the ego's dream and returning home. That is the only message I need receive for myself, and the only message I can give. It is the heart of the curriculum:

> A teacher of God is anyone who chooses to be one. His qualifications consist solely in this; somehow, somewhere he has made a deliberate choice in which he did not see his interests as apart from someone else's. Once he has done that, his road is established and his direction is sure.... He has become a bringer of salvation. He has become a teacher of God (M-1.1:1-3, 7-8).

In other words, I learn what I teach, and I teach what I learn. Such is the Holy Spirit's plan for our salvation:

> In the teaching-learning situation, each one learns that giving and receiving are the same. ... Those who would learn the same course share one interest and one goal. And thus he who was the learner becomes a teacher of God himself, for he has made the one decision that gave his teacher to him. He has seen in another person the same interests as his own (M-2.5:5, 7-9).

We give to the world what we have accepted for ourselves. Thus does separation give way to oneness, as our practice of separate interests disappears into the light of shared inclusivity.

**(8) Would you receive the messages of God? For thus do you become His messenger. You are appointed now. And yet you wait to give the messages you have received. And so you do not know that they are yours, and do not recognize them. No one can receive and understand he has received until he gives. For in the giving is his own acceptance of what he received.**

If you want to teach this course on forgiveness, you need to learn it. That is the meaning of: "And yet you wait to give the messages you have received. And so you do not know that they are yours, and do not recognize them." Teaching *A Course in Miracles* has nothing to do with spouting its metaphysics, or preaching its message. The Course is taught by saying to someone in your mind and your heart: "Your sins are forgiven, for you and I are not separate." Yet there is no way you can teach that message without exemplifying it through giving up investment in judgment. Thus one of the key themes in the Course is developing a relationship with the Holy Spirit. Joining with the Thought of love that comes from outside the dream is the only way to learn your dream had no effect. You thus remember your Self, and from that memory Its Love is freely given, for it has been totally received. And so Jesus defines true generosity:

> The term generosity has special meaning to the teacher of God. It is not the usual meaning of the word.... To the world, generosity means "giving away" in the sense of "giving up." To the teachers of God, it means giving away in order to keep.... The teacher of God is generous out of Self interest. This does not refer, however, to the self of which the world speaks. The teacher of God does not want anything he cannot give away, because he realizes it would be valueless to him by definition.... But he does want to keep for himself all things that are of God, and therefore for His Son. These are the things that belong to him These he can give away in true generosity, protecting them forever for himself (M-4.VII.1:1-2, 4-5; 2:1-3, 10-12).

**(9) You who are now the messenger of God, receive His messages. For that is part of your appointed role. God has not failed to offer what you need, nor has it been left unaccepted. Yet another part of your appointed task is yet to be accomplished. He Who has received for you the messages of God would have them be received by you as well. For thus do you identify with Him and claim your own.**

Jesus is telling you here that if you have come this far, you have probably spoken to people about this and influenced them, but have not yet fulfilled your role or function: "Yet another part of your appointed task is yet to be accomplished." There is still work for you to do: to be ever vigilant for the ego and its specialness, asking Jesus to help you look at them through his gently forgiving eyes, so you do not judge others or yourself.

"The Reward of Teaching" contains a relevant passage that was originally meant for Helen. Jesus' scribe was a most helpful teacher, therapist, and friend, whose wise counsel benefitted many. However, she was never able to profit – at least not to any observable extent – from what she taught, or who taught through her. I asked her one day, after sitting in one of her informal counseling sessions: "Did you listen to what you said?" I knew she had not – she never did – but I was making this same point; i.e., how much happier she would be if she were able to take her own advice. Here is what Jesus said to her, in words that are obviously for us all:

> You may have taught well, and yet you may not have learned how to accept the comfort of your teaching. If you will consider what you have taught, and how alien it is to what you thought you knew, you will be compelled to realize that your Teacher came from beyond your thought system.... For certainly what He has taught, and what you have taught through Him, have nothing in common

with what you taught before He came. And the results have been to bring peace where there was pain, and suffering has disappeared to be replaced by joy.

You may have taught freedom, but you have not learned how to be free.... You could never have taught freedom unless you did believe in it. And it must be that what you taught came from yourself. Yet this Self you clearly do not know, and do not recognize It even though It functions. What functions must be there.... This is a course in how to know yourself. You have taught what you are, but have not let what you are teach you.... Yet within you is everything you taught (T-16.III.1:2-3, 6-2:1; 3:4-7; 4:1-2, 4).

**(10:1-2) It is this joining that we undertake to recognize today. We will not seek to keep our minds apart from Him Who speaks for us, for it is but our voice we hear as we attend Him.**

Jesus does not mean our ego's voice, which speaks for attack, specialness, and the principle of *one or the other,* but the Holy Spirit's Voice in our right minds with which we now join, having foresworn the ego. His Voice speaks for forgiveness, healing, and the principle that "salvation is a collaborative venture" (T-4.VI.8:2).

**(10:3) He alone can speak to us and for us, joining in one Voice the getting and the giving of God's Word; the giving and receiving of His Will.**

Getting and giving, giving and receiving, are all one, just as there is only one Voice. The Voice that speaks within my mind is the same Voice that speaks within yours. Because we believe we are separated and different, however, we experience the Voice differently. It is called variously Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Buddha, God, etc., yet it remains the single Voice of love and wisdom. Talk of discarnate entities, higher and lower beings, and other and sundry phenomena are all part of the dream of separation. There can in truth be only one Voice, for there is only *one* truth. The forms of help are many; the Help is one:

> Helpers are given you in many forms, although upon the altar they are one. Beyond each one there is a Thought of God, and this will never change. But they have names which differ for a time, for time needs symbols, being itself unreal. Their names are legion, but we will not go beyond the names the course itself employs. God does not help because He knows no need. But He creates all Helpers of His Son while he believes his fantasies are true. Thank God for them for they will lead you home (C-5.1:3-9).

**(11:1) We practice giving Him what He would have, that we may recognize His gifts to us.**

*A Course in Miracles* is replete with passages that describe the gifts of forgiveness that is ours for the giving, whether the object is the Holy Spirit, as it is here, or our brothers. Indeed, the principle of accepting forgiveness by offering it goes to the heart of the Course's message. Here is a representative and beautiful passage from the end of the Obstacles to Peace:

> Behold your Friend, the Christ Who stands beside you. How holy and how

> beautiful He is! You thought He sinned because you cast the veil of sin upon Him to hide His loveliness. Yet still He holds forgiveness out to you, to share His Holiness.... This is your brother, crucified by sin and waiting for release from pain. Would you not offer him forgiveness, when only he can offer it to you? For his redemption he will give you yours, as surely as God created every living thing and loves it. And he will give it truly, for it will be both offered and received. There is no grace of Heaven that you cannot offer to your brother, and receive from your most holy Friend. Let him withhold it not, for by receiving it you offer it to him. And he will receive of you what you received of him. Redemption has been given you to give your brother, and thus receive it. Whom you forgive is free, and what you give you share (T-19.IV-D.14:1-4; 15:1-9).

What follows is a beautiful series of sentences – appearing in other places in *A Course in Miracles* as well, albeit with a different Subject* – describing how the Holy Spirit needs the dream figure to express His message from outside the dream:

**(11:2-5) He needs our voice that He may speak through us. He needs our hands to hold His messages, and carry them to those whom He appoints. He needs our feet to bring us where He wills, that those who wait in misery may be at last delivered. And he needs our will united with His Own, that we may be the true receivers of the gifts He gives.**

Since we made the body as a symbol of attack, it can serve a different function if given to the Holy Spirit. In and of itself the body is nothing – neither holy nor unholy – yet the world that was made as an attack on God can become a classroom in which we learn that attack has no effect. The body – which was made to limit love (T-18.VIII.1:2) as proof that the ego's special love is right and God's Love wrong—can now express a different message. This has nothing to do with behavior, but with reflecting our choice for a different teacher. When we choose the non-specific love of Jesus, the non-specific is translated into the specific – i.e., the body.

Love does not have a voice, since it is soundless, but its right-minded reflection can indeed be heard through us. Just as the abstract thought of love in Helen's mind needed her body – specifically her hands – to take down *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus likewise needs us to reflect his love in the world; not because the world is real, but because we need his symbols of love to correct the ego's symbols of hate. Lesson 184 will expand on this theme.

**(12:1) Let us but learn this lesson for today: We will not recognize what we receive until we give it.**

If you want to know *A Course in Miracles is* true, Jesus' love a reality, and you are one with God, you must give up your investment in the principle of *one or the other.* If you want to know *giving and receiving are the same* and there is no losing or winning – despite the fourth law of chaos (T-23.II.9-11) – you must practice throughout the day to be aware of how often you choose *one or the other* as your reigning principle. When you want your judgments and specialness to be true, you know you have chosen the ego's thought system as your own. Therefore, the way to make the wonderful thoughts in this lesson true for you is to see how much you do *not* want to learn this lesson. Realize, then, the tremendous cost of basing your life on the principle of *one or the other,* for it

will not bring you peace, but as much pain as it brings to all who follow the ego. Renouncing this principle in favor of the Holy Spirit's *giving and receiving are the same* is the key to finding the happiness you seek.

**(12:2-3) You have heard this said a hundred ways, a hundred times, and yet belief is lacking still. But this is sure; until belief is given it, you will receive a thousand miracles and then receive a thousand more, but will not know that God Himself has left no gift beyond what you already have; nor has denied the tiniest of blessings to His Son.**

You will not know God's Love unless you become its reflection within the dream, brought about by being vigilant for the ego's shadows. These emanate from thoughts of sin and guilt, which say that the principle of *one or the other* established your reality and continues to sustain it: I exist and someone else pays the price of my sin. Again, you must realize the terrible cost of holding on to this thought system – forgetting the gift God has given you, the gift you both *have* and *are,* and which you share with all your brothers:

> The gift of life is yours to give, because it was given you. You are unaware of your gift because you do not give it.... Therefore, you are not extending the gift you both *have* and *are,* and so you do not know your being.... Give only honor to the Sons of the living God, and count yourself among them gladly.
>
> Only honor is a fitting gift for those whom God Himself created worthy of honor, and whom He honors. Give them the appreciation God accords them always, because they are His beloved Sons in whom He is well pleased. You cannot be apart from them because you are not apart from Him. Rest in His Love and protect your rest by loving. But love everything He created, of which you are a part, or you cannot learn of His peace and accept His gift for yourself and as yourself. You cannot know your own perfection until you have honored all those who were created like you (T-7.VII.5:1-2, 4, 8; 6).

**(12:4-13:2) What can this mean to you, until you have identified with Him and with His Own?**

**Our lesson for today is stated thus:**

***I am among the ministers of God, and I am grateful that I have the means by which to recognize that I am free.***

The means are my special relationships, and I now ask Jesus' help without telling him what that help should be. I thus look with him at my investment in specialness, allowing his love to guide me in shifting my perceptions of others as separate from me, to his vision of the inherent unity of God's Son – on earth as He is in Heaven.

**(14) The world recedes as we light up our minds, and realize these holy words are true. They are the message sent to us today from our Creator. Now we demonstrate how they have changed our minds about ourselves, and what our function is. For as we prove that we accept no will we do not share, our many gifts from our Creator will spring to our sight and leap into our hands, and we will recognize what we received.**

**Lesson 154**

This closing paragraph looks forward to Lesson 155, as this lesson extended the previous one. It beautifully summarizes the Course's central message that we demonstrate its truth to our brothers – the ego has no power over God's Son, whose peace and love forever remain as God gave them, changeless and eternal:

> Your mission is very simple. You are asked to live so as to demonstrate that you are not an ego ... (T-4.VI.6:2-3).

> When you accepted truth as the goal for your relationship, you became a giver of peace as surely as your Father gave peace to you.... Your purpose has not changed, and will not change, for you accepted what can never change. And nothing that it needs to be forever changeless can you now withhold from it. Your release is certain. Give as you have received. And demonstrate that you have risen far beyond any situation that could hold you back, and keep you separate from Him Whose Call you answered (T-17.VIII.6:1, 3-7).

Therefore, once we realize the ego's wishes are no longer ours, God's gifts, born of our forgiveness, will leap into awareness. A song of gratitude flows through our hearts, in thanksgiving for what we have received. Jesus gives words to this song in "The Gifts of God:"

> Father, we thank You for these gifts that we have found together. Here we are redeemed. For it is here we joined, and from this place of holy joining we will come to You because we recognize the gifts You gave and would have nothing else. Each hand that finds its way to mine will take Your gifts from me, and as we look together on the place whereon I laid your worthless gifts for you, we will see nothing but the gifts of God reflected in the shining round our heads.... The gifts of fear, the dream of death, are done. And we give thanks. And we give thanks, Amen *(The Gifts of God,* p. 119).

* See my *Glossary-Index for* ***A COURSE IN MIRACLES,*** p. 38 (body/instrument of salvation), for a complete list of references.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 155**
**I will step back and let Him lead the way.**

With this lesson we continue the theme of being God's ministers or teachers. Indeed, in these next few lessons Jesus teaches us what it means to be living in this world as a teacher of God, really meaning an *advanced* teacher. In the manual he describes three levels of teachers. The *basic teacher* – all of us – is the object of the Course's message. People who have learned its lessons become *advanced teachers.* Even though the term itself is used infrequently, it is cited enough to let us know when Jesus is referring to them. The characteristics of God's teachers described in the manual (M-4) are applicable to this advanced group. Likewise, in these current lessons he speaks of someone who has already advanced far along on the path. The third level is *Teachers of teachers* (M-26.2:2). Like Jesus, these are in the real world, and are not our concern here. This is therefore an important lesson, for it helps us realize Jesus' goal for us. This does not entail a behavioral shift. In fact, advanced teachers of God look like everyone else, but people will recognize there is something different about them: a peace and quiet joy that comes only from a peaceful and joyful mind.

**(1:1) There is a way of living in the world that is not here, although it seems to be.**

Though they have not yet accepted the Atonement, advanced teachers of God have learned that they are not really here, for they know the world is a dream, and those they relate to are only dream figures. Their reality is thus outside the dream, although they *appear* to be here. Recall these lines from the text:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it? (T-20.VIII.7:3-7)

Those in the real world—the advanced teachers of God – do not.

**(1:2-4) You do not change appearance, though you smile more frequently. Your forehead is serene; your eyes are quiet. And the ones who walk the world as you do recognize their own.**

It is clear Jesus is not speaking of behavioral change, but an inner one. Smiling more frequently is borne of the recognition there is nothing here to be taken seriously, because the world is an illusion. Only God is serious, and all else are but illusory defenses against His reality. This awareness enables teachers of God to be in this world and not have their peace affected by what goes on around them, yet the ones who share that awareness recognize who they are.

**(1:5) Yet those who have not yet perceived the way will recognize you also, and believe that you are like them, as you were before.**

People who have not reached that advanced state will recognize you as one of them. In time they will come to realize there is something different about you, but that

can happen only to the extent of their willingness to perceive themselves differently. The key principle here – as it is throughout *A Course in Miracles* – is *projection makes perception.* What we have made real in our minds is what we make real outside them. When the ego's veil in the mind parts, we allow Jesus' love to shine, and thus we recognize the same love shining in the minds of others.

You do not change your behavior to make yourself look spiritual, or perform in ways you think are in line with the Course's teachings. Rather, you focus on changing your teacher. Jesus' peace, resulting from your shift to him, helps you smile more frequently.

**(2:1-2) The world is an illusion. Those who choose to come to it are seeking for a place where they can be illusions, and avoid their own reality.**

This is one of the Course's core metaphysical ideas, and it recurs over and over. Those who come to this world do so because they flee from love's presence in their minds, and therefore want to establish a separate self as their reality. Being in the world helps us avoid our reality as minds, and reinforces our illusory self as bodies.

**(2:3) Yet when they find their own reality is even here, then they step back and let it lead the way.**

Reality is obviously not here but in the mind, and we will come to realize love is within, regardless of outer events. We thus step back from illusions and walk toward the truth. Throughout the lesson Jesus refers to the decision-making part of the mind recognizing its mistake and choosing against the ego and for the Holy Spirit, reflecting the theme of bringing illusion to truth, rather than truth to illusion. We shall return to this theme presently.

**(2:4-6) What other choice is really theirs to make? To let illusions walk ahead of truth is madness. But to let illusion sink behind the truth and let the truth stand forth as what it is, is merely sanity.**

Jesus tells us there is no real choice to make here, because one choice is madness and the other illusion – our only real choice is for sanity. We can almost hear him saying to us: "To choose the ego over me is the silliest thing you can do, because your ego is always wrong and will never make you happy. On the other hand, I will always make you happy for I am right." This choice is available to us all the time, even when the world is so distracting and the body's needs so pressing. This is the thought behind the following passage near the end of the text, urging us to set aside our darkened thoughts of specialness and sin, and allow the light- filled truth of Christ to be our companion. Thus do the insane illusions of specialness "sink behind" the sane truth of forgiveness:

> Be very still an instant. Come without all thought of what you ever learned before, and put aside all images you made. The old will fall away before the new without your opposition or intent.... Forgive your brother all appearances, that are but ancient lessons you have taught yourself about the sinfulness in you.... Thus it is a way you go together, not alone.... next to you is One Who holds the light before you, so that every step is made in certainty and sureness of the road. A

> blindfold can indeed obscure your sight, but cannot make the way itself grow dark. And He Who travels with you *has* the light (T-31.11.8:1-3; 9:1, 6; 11:7-9).

**(3:1-2) This is the simple choice we make today. The mad illusion will remain awhile in evidence, for those to look upon who chose to come, and have not yet rejoiced to find they were mistaken in their choice.**

Jesus lets us know forgiveness is a process, not something that occurs at the spiritual snap of a finger. It is a shift from seeing the ego as important and the Holy Spirit as virtually non-existent, to making the Holy Spirit's teaching important and the ego unbelievable. The world does not disappear because our eyes see words telling us the world is an illusion. Their truth must first be integrated, which walking Jesus' gentle path of forgiveness happily brings about.

**(3:3-4) They cannot learn directly from the truth, because they have denied that it is so. And so they need a Teacher Who perceives their madness, but Who still can look beyond illusion to the simple truth in them.**

This expresses the theme – central to *A Course in Miracles* – that truth can never be known here because the world was literally made to protect us from truth. However, we can become increasingly aware of truth's reflection, of which forgiveness is the most prominent example. In this spirit, Jesus says to us: "I am not asking you to give up your bodily identification, but only helping you realize your body should become less and less important to you; both as a symbol of pain and pleasure, damnation and salvation." He therefore calls us to represent his reflection of truth in the world of illusion. As he states in the manual for teachers:

> If you would be heard by those who suffer, you must speak their language. If you would be a savior, you must understand what needs to be escaped (M-26.4:3-4).

One of Jesus' goals is to have his students teach as they learn, thereby becoming the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, just as he was (C-6.5:1-2). In greater touch with the truth than before, these ministers of God are able to demonstrate to those still walking in madness that there is another pathway they can journey on. Having learned from their teacher, they perceive their brothers' illusions yet look beyond them to the truth.

In the next paragraph Jesus describes three different ways of living in the world. Let us review them before continuing:

The *first* is to see the world and flesh as evil. This makes sex and money bad, for example – indeed, it makes all pleasure bad – and such a view cannot but give rise to the sacrifice and asceticism so common to most of the world's spiritualities and religions. Bodies were made by the ego to experience pleasure, as well as pain, and so by advocating denial of the evil flesh, these pathways to God inevitably breed resentment on some level for what has been given up. Therefore, by invariably making the sinful body real, the sin of separation is made real as well. Giving up bodily pleasure simply reinforces the underlying sinful thought, which unabatedly continues its displacement onto the body.

The *second* alternative goes to the other extreme of libertinism. Here, the world is seen as a wonderful place, the source of all happiness and pleasure. Inevitably,

however, the adherents of this approach will feel deprived at some point, because worldly pleasures can never be counted on totally, nor always be as people would like them to be. To take a simple example: if you believe you can be happy only when the day is bright and sunny, a cold and rainy day will make you feel deprived of the happiness that would have been yours if the weather had been beautiful. Thus when you value the world as a source of pleasure or salvation, you set yourself up for deprivation. If, on the other hand, you see the world as a source of pain that has to be avoided, you set yourself up for sacrifice. Suffering and pain cannot be escaped here, and therefore our happiness must be sacrificed. Thus, regardless of experiencing pleasure or pain, the underlying thought of sin is "allowed" to hide behind its projection, and our self-concept of littleness is reinforced. Recall Jesus' words to us in the "Obstacles to Peace":

> The body does appear to be the symbol of sin while you believe that it can get you what you want. While you believe that it can give you pleasure, you will also believe that it can bring you pain. To think you could be satisfied and happy with so little is to hurt yourself, and to limit the happiness that you would have calls upon pain to fill your meager store and make your life complete (T-19.IV-A.17:10-12).

Moreover, by making the body the object of both pleasure and pain, teaching us there is a difference between them, the ego skillfully enables us to maintain our individual existence, now believed to be corporeal. The body's inherent nothingness is thus concealed behind its capacity to "feel" sensations, be they deemed positive or negative:

> It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and not find pain. It is essential that this relationship be understood, for it is one the ego sees as proof of sin.... the inevitable result of equating yourself with the body, which is the invitation to pain.... Why should the body be anything to you? Certainly what it is made of is not precious. And just as certainly it has no feeling. It transmits to you the feelings that you want.... All of the feeling with which they are invested is given by the sender and the receiver.... Hear not its madness, and believe not the impossible is true. Forget not that the ego has dedicated the body to the goal of sin.... Its sad disciples chant the body's praise continually, in solemn celebration of the ego's rule (T-19.IV-B.12:1-2, 4; 14:1-4, 7; 16:1-3).

Like the ancient, wise Greeks, Jesus advocates a *third* choice, the middle path of moderation. However, he is not talking about behavior. He is teaching us instead the attitude of not making the body or world into something important or serious. We live in the body because it is a classroom; and what is serious are the lessons that lead us back to God. Bodies in and of themselves are not good or evil, sinless or sinful; the mind's purpose alone establishes their worth:

> The body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil; neither joy nor pain. It is a means, and not an end. It has no purpose of itself, but only what is given to it. The body will seem to be whatever is the means for reaching the goal that you assign to it. Only the mind can set a purpose, and only the mind can see the means for its accomplishment, and justify its use (T-19.IV-B.10:4-8).

We now read about these three alternatives:

**(4:1) If truth demanded they give up the world, it would appear to them as if it asked the sacrifice of something that is real.**

This is the *first* alternative, the ascetic path encouraged by many religions: God asks that you sacrifice, and if you truly love Him you will give up your attraction to worldly things to gain your reward in the hereafter. Jesus comments below on the asceticism of "fighting against sin." Characteristically, he does not attack, judge, or repudiate it, but simply points out that the path is the long way round, for it makes the error real. In other words, fighting against sin keeps the mind's thought alive and well. Eventually, the way back from the "hated and despised" body to the mind is found. However, the more direct approach of forgiveness saves us time and we suffer less in the dream. Here are Jesus' words, originally meant for Helen in a specific message:

> Many have spent a lifetime in preparation, and have indeed achieved their instants of success. This course does not attempt to teach more than they learned in time, but it does aim at saving time. You may be attempting to follow a very long road to the goal you have accepted. It is extremely difficult to reach Atonement by fighting against sin. Enormous effort is expended in the attempt to make holy what is hated and despised. Nor is a lifetime of contemplation and long periods of meditation aimed at detachment from the body necessary. All such attempts will ultimately succeed because of their purpose. Yet the means are tedious and very time consuming, for all of them look to the future for release from a state of present unworthiness and inadequacy (T-18.VII.4:4-11).

**(4:2) Many have chosen to renounce the world while still believing its reality.**

As was implied in our above discussion, if you renounce something you must believe it is real; otherwise you would not go to the trouble of renouncing it. It is interesting to observe how many students of *A Course in Miracles* make the same mistake of thinking that enjoying things in this world is bad, for pleasure goes against the Course. In a phrase, they forget how to be normal. Jesus is *not* saying you should renounce the world. He says simply that over time the world and its offerings should become less and less important to you. You do not give up anything, for the world of pleasure and pain slides away by itself as you give up the ego. You may recall Jesus' exhortation:

> Give up the world! But not to sacrifice. You never wanted it. What happiness have you sought here that did not bring you pain? What moment of content has not been bought at fearful price in coins of suffering? Joy has no cost. It is your sacred right, and what you pay for is not happiness. Be speeded on your way by honesty, and let not your experiences here deceive in retrospect. They were not free from bitter cost and joyless consequence (T-30.V.9:4-12).

But those who believe in the body enough to despise it will pay a terrible price:

**(4:3) And they have suffered from a sense of loss, and have not been**

**released accordingly.**

This relates to Jesus' comment in the text: "I do not call for martyrs but for teachers" (T-6.I.16:3). Martyrs sacrifice, and the ultimate martyrdom is sacrificing one's life. In a refutation of the theology of martyrdom, Jesus exposes the root cause of sacrificing one's life for a greater cause: My innocent suffering, even unto death, proves that you – the victimizer – are the condemned sinner deserving punishment from God, Whose vengeful hands I have escaped:

> The world's escape from condemnation is a need which those within the world are joined in sharing. Yet they do not recognize their common need. For each one thinks that if he does his part, the condemnation of the world will rest on him. And it is this that he perceives to *be* his part in its deliverance [from sin]. Vengeance must have a focus. Otherwise is the avenger's knife in his own hand, and pointed to himself. And he must see it in another's hand, if he would be a victim of attack he did not choose. And thus he suffers from the wounds a knife he does not hold has made upon himself (T-27.VII.4:2-9).

We shall repeatedly return to this theme of projected hatred – the core of the ego's system of *one or the other.* It is no less than the purpose of the world: I willingly suffer now so others will suffer throughout eternity. Thus is my guilt escaped, and someone else pay the price for my sin.

Now the *second* ego alternative*: libertinism,* or the pursuit of pleasure:

**(4:4) Others have chosen nothing but the world, and they have suffered from a sense of loss still deeper, which they did not understand.**

The "sense of loss still deeper, which they did not understand," occurs when they have thrown away God's Love. They have looked for love, salvation, and happiness in the world without realizing that by focusing on the world and body they have barricaded themselves against the only presence of love, salvation, and happiness there is: the Holy Spirit's Presence in their minds. This trenchant commentary from the text makes the point:

> Whenever you attempt to reach a goal in which the body's betterment is cast as major beneficiary, you try to bring about your death. For you believe that you can suffer lack, and lack *is* death. To sacrifice is to give up, and thus to be without and to have suffered loss. And by this giving up is life renounced. Seek not outside yourself. The search implies you are not whole within and fear to look upon your devastation, but prefer to seek outside yourself for what you are (T-29.VII.4).

Jesus now presents his path, the *third* alternative:

**(5:1-2) Between these paths there is another road that leads away from loss of every kind, for sacrifice and deprivation both are quickly left behind. This is the way appointed for you now.**

On this road you regard the body as neutral – a classroom – not an object of

pleasure or pain. The purpose you give the body and world is what gives them meaning, for in and of themselves they have none. Jesus' gentle guidance shifts our purpose from nothingness to everything, despair to joy, failure to success:

> Let us forget the purpose of the world the past has given it. For otherwise, the future will be like the past, and but a series of depressing dreams, in which all idols fail you, one by one, and you see death and disappointment everywhere.
>
> To change all this, and open up a road of hope and of release in what appeared to be an endless circle of despair, you need but to decide you do not know the purpose of the world (T-29.VII.7:1-8:1).

This refers to the little willingness to admit happily we were wrong and Jesus right, and opens the door through which we walk with him the quiet and gentle path:

**(5:3) You walk this path as others walk, nor do you seem to be distinct from them, although you are indeed.**

This is probably the most important characteristic of advanced teachers of God. They look like everyone else in dress, speech, and food preferences, nor do they act differently. The difference is they are not by themselves, for everything they seem to be doing, feeling, and thinking flows from their relationship with the Holy Spirit. There is no need to call special attention to themselves, for the love beyond all specialness is not only within them; it *is* them. Thus they "smile more frequently."

**(5:4) Thus can you serve them while you serve yourself, and set their footsteps on the way that God has opened up to you, and them through you.**

This, then, is our function as a minister or teacher of God. However, the teaching we do, the way we point to, has nothing to do with words or behavior, which but reflect the love that emanates from who we are within. By reflecting that love to others, we reinforce its presence in ourselves – Jesus' plan to save the Sonship from itself, for its Self:

> God has not many Sons, but only One.... It is for him the Holy Spirit speaks, and tells you idols have no purpose here.... If Heaven is within, why would you seek for idols that would make of Heaven less, to give you more than God bestowed upon your brother and on you, as one with Him? God gave you all there is. And to be sure you could not lose it, did He also give the same to every living thing as well. And thus is every living thing a part of you, as of Himself (T-29.VIII.9:1, 4, 6-9).

**(6:1-2) Illusion still appears to cling to you, that you may reach them. Yet it has stepped back.**

Advanced teachers of God are fully present to others, yet, again, they look like everyone else. They are in the illusion, but it has no power over them: "Yet it has stepped back." Advanced teachers have thus chosen Jesus as their model, not the ego, and become the symbol of truth and the guide to reaching it. To slightly alter a lovely line from later in the workbook:

> He the End we seek, and He the Means by which we go to Him (W-pII.302.2:3).

Because we know Jesus is with us, the world's idols have no hold on us. Now we can appear with them as they are no longer our own, and thus we walk with Jesus and our brothers the way that leads through specialness to love.

**(6:3) And it is not illusion that they hear you speak of, nor illusion that you bring their eyes to look on and their minds to grasp.**

Even though others may see you as part of the illusory world, they nonetheless feel something else from you: a love and peace they know is not from here. Even if they identify that love with you, its gentle call will lift them beyond the form to the mind's universal content. Your kind and loving presence reminds them that as you made the right choice, they can as well.

**(6:4) Nor can the truth, which walks ahead of you, speak to them through illusions, for the road leads past illusion now, while on the way you call to them, that they may follow you.**

Within the illusion of time, advanced teachers are ahead of others, for they have become reflections of a truth that does not speak directly, and this allows others to experience it in a form they can relate to, accept, and understand. Jesus is explicit that truth is not known here, for God has nothing to do with a non-existent world. Only truth's reflection is manifest in the world, through God's teachers, as this passage explains:

> God indeed can be reached directly, for there is no distance between Him and His Son. His awareness is in everyone's memory, and His Word is written on everyone's heart. Yet this awareness and this memory can arise across the threshold of recognition only where all barriers to truth have been removed. In how many is this the case? Here, then, is the role of God's teachers.... Sometimes a teacher of God may have a brief experience of direct union with God. In this world, it is almost impossible that this endure.... If God were reached directly in sustained awareness, the body would not be long maintained. Those who have laid the body down merely to extend their helpfulness to those remaining behind are few indeed. And they need helpers who are still in bondage and still asleep, so that by their awakening can God's Voice be heard (M-26.1:1-5; 3:1-2, 8-10).

As we help others we help ourselves; as we help ourselves we help others – the mind of God's Son is one.

**(7:1) All roads will lead to this one in the end.**

This road of forgiveness leads beyond the ego's thought system of separation, specialness, and death to the truth that is just beyond. At some point we throw up our hands in despair and say: There *must* be a better road (T-2.III.3:6).

**(7:2-3) For sacrifice and deprivation are paths that lead nowhere, choices for defeat, and aims that will remain impossible. All this steps back as truth comes forth in you, to lead your brothers from the ways of death, and set them on the way to happiness.**

To repeat, Jesus is not talking about behavior, but a change in mind brought about by our recognition that the ego's guidance leads nowhere. These poor choices "step back" in the sense we move beyond them, having realized the truth about illusions and freeing ourselves to make the choice for truth – shared interests, in which no one loses but all win:

> Real choice is no illusion. But the world has none to offer. All its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death. There is no choice in its alternatives.... Be not deceived by all the different names its roads are given. They have but one end.... for there is no choice among them. All of them will lead to death....
>
> The learning that the world can offer but one choice, no matter what its form may be, is the beginning of acceptance that there is a real alternative instead.... This course attempts to teach no more than that the power of decision cannot lie in choosing different forms of what is still the same illusion and the same mistake. All choices in the world depend on this; you choose between your brother and yourself, and you will gain as much as he will lose, and what you lose is what is given him. How utterly opposed to truth is this, when all the lesson's purpose is to teach that what your brother loses *you* have lost, and what he gains is what is given *you* (T-31.IV.2:1-4,7-8,10-11; 6:1; 8:3-5).

**(7:4-5) Their suffering is but illusion. Yet they need a guide to lead them out of it, for they mistake illusion for the truth.**

Those teachers who are more in touch with the Holy Spirit than others become His spokespeople to the world. Again, however, they do not accentuate their difference from everyone else, but their sameness, in the sense that the choice they made is open to all. Rather than these relatively ego-free people becoming objects of spiritual specialness, they become the means for its end. Thus Jesus is emphatic at the beginning of the text about his inherent equality with us, despite the obvious differences that exist in time:

> Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted. It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. There is nothing about me that you cannot attain. I have nothing that does not come from God. The difference between us now is that I have nothing else. This leaves me in a state which is only potential in you (T-1.II.3:5-13).

**(8:1-4) Such is salvation's call, and nothing more. It asks that you accept the truth, and let it go before you, lighting up the path of ransom from illusion. It is not a ransom with a price. There is no cost, but only gain.**

This lesson came within the Easter season, though after Easter Sunday, and refers to the traditional Christian belief Jesus gave his life as ransom for us (e.g., Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). The ego says if you want to be saved, you have to give up or ransom something; some sacrifice or payment to God. In truth, all that is "sacrificed" is a thought system that never made you happy, never worked, and never even existed. Salvation's call is only that we accept the truth and let illusion go. There can be no price for salvation for it undoes what never was, and how can there be a cost for the joy that salvation from illusion brings, and which is ours?

> Joy has no cost. It is your sacred right, and what you pay for is not happiness (T-30.V.9:9-10).

Jesus makes the same point in addressing psychotherapists on the issue of payment:

> The right to live is something no one need fight for. It is promised him, and guaranteed by God. Therefore it is a right the therapist and patient share alike. If their relationship is to be holy, whatever one needs is given by the other; whatever one lacks the other supplies.... There is no cost to either. But thanks are due to both, for the release from long imprisonment and doubt. Who would not be grateful for such a gift? Yet who could possibly imagine that it could be bought? (P-3.III.4:1-4, 7-10)

**(8:5-7) Illusion can but seem to hold in chains the holy Son of God. It is but from illusions he is saved. As they step back, he finds himself again.**

It is only the ego's dream that binds, for there is nothing here with power to chain us. We are not held in bondage by our bodies – neither problem nor answer – for they serve the purpose either of the ego or the Holy Spirit, and we are imprisoned only by the mind's having chosen the wrong teacher. We are merely saved from the illusion that the teacher we chose is the correct one. Thus we are not saved from sin, but from our belief in sin.

As illusions step back – which means the decision-making mind turns away from the ego and toward the Holy Spirit – we find who we are. This cannot occur through anything we do in the world, and is the meaning of the familiar passage from "Self-Concept versus Self" – when we step away from our illusory self-concepts the truth finds us, which is really closer to the truth than saying we find ourselves:

> Where concepts of the self have been laid by is truth revealed exactly as it is. When every concept has been raised to doubt and question, and been recognized as made on no assumptions that would stand the light, then is the truth left free to enter in its sanctuary, clean and free of guilt. There is no statement that the world is more afraid to hear than this:
>
> *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.*
>
> *Yet* in this learning is salvation born. And What you are will tell you of Itself

(T-31.V.17:4-9).

**(9:1-2) Walk safely now, yet carefully, because this path is new to you. And you may find that you are tempted still to walk ahead of truth, and let illusions be your guide.**

Jesus is telling us we are not walking safely when we walk with the ego, because we then walk with guilt. Since guilt demands punishment, we feel vulnerable and susceptible to instant destruction at any moment. Our only real safety, therefore, is to change thought systems so that we may walk happily in innocence. Recall this comforting passage:

> Walk you in glory, with your head held high, and fear no evil. The innocent are safe because they share their innocence. Nothing they see is harmful, for their awareness of the truth releases everything from the illusion of harmfulness. And what seemed harmful now stands shining in their innocence, released from sin and fear and happily returned to love (T-23.in.3:1-4).

The idea that this path is new to us is important, and I would like to discuss it briefly here. In addition to what we find in the workbook, there are many places where Jesus lets us know how new we are to all this; for example: "You are very new in the ways of salvation" (T-17.V.9:1). We are like children. In fact, there are places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus refers to us as babies or infants who cannot even understand the language spoken around them, as in this passage, the context of which is the holy relationship – the path that is new to us:

> Of all the messages you have received and failed to understand, this course alone is open to your understanding and can be understood. This is *your* language. You do not understand it yet only because your whole communication is like a baby's. The sounds a baby makes and what he hears are highly unreliable, meaning different things to him at different times. Neither the sounds he hears nor sights he sees are stable yet.... Yet a holy relationship, so recently reborn itself from an unholy relationship, and yet more ancient than the old illusion it has replaced, is like a baby now in its rebirth. Still in this infant is your vision returned to you, and he will speak the language you can understand (T-22.I.6:1-5; 7:2-3).

Jesus tells us we should not think in our arrogance we have mastered *A Course in Miracles* so near the beginning of our study and practice. The temptation to return to the ego's thought system is very strong. Near the end of "What Is Death?" in the manual comes this important line:

> Teacher of God, your one assignment could be stated thus: Accept no compromise in which death plays a part (M-27.7:1).

It is instructive for our purposes to re-phrase this to say: "Accept no compromise in which *duality* plays a part." The meanings are the same. Death is the end product of the thought system of duality that says there is me and there is God, and I co-exist with Him as a separate and independent entity. We can think of this attempt at dualistic

compromise when reading: "And you may find you are tempted still to walk ahead of truth, and let illusions be your guide."

As you begin to progress on the path and get an inkling of what *A Course in Miracles* is teaching, your ego will become terrified. The part of you that has identified with specialness is not willing to let it go. The thought remains: "If I continue on this path I will disappear." Thus the ego jumps in and offers a compromise: "The Course does not really mean it this way. Yes, the body is an illusion, *but....* Yes, the world is an illusion, *but...."* It is at this point you start to make the dualistic body real, and begin to think, for example, that forgiveness means forgiving *someone else,* and that a holy relationship exists between *two separate people* – the opposite to what Jesus teaches in his course. To be sure, many paths do, but not his, which focuses only on the mind of its students. Recall the important line: "This is a course in cause *[mind]* and not *effect [behavior]"* (T-21.VII.7:8).

This, then, is a good example of the temptation to which Jesus refers – to make duality reality. The ego would try to "have its cake and eat it, too" by convincing you that you have remained faithful to Jesus and his teachings, but all you have really done is brought the truth of *A Course in Miracles* to the illusion of your thought system. Rather than stepping back from illusion – salvation of the body and world is real – you integrate truth with illusion, which means truth ceases to be the truth. Interestingly, in the paragraph from the manual to which I referred above (M-27.7), Jesus addresses the same issue he is discussing here: putting illusions ahead of truth. In the text we find the following passage, expressing the error of bringing truth to illusion, along with its tragic consequences of deepening our belief in the reality of dreams:

> You who have spent your life in bringing truth to illusion, reality to fantasy, have walked the way of dreams. For you have gone from waking to sleeping, and on and on to a yet deeper sleep. Each dream has led to other dreams, and every fantasy that seemed to bring a light into the darkness but made the darkness deeper (T-18.III.1:1-3).

**(9:3-4) Your holy brothers have been given you, to follow in your footsteps as you walk with certainty of purpose to the truth. It goes before you now, that they may see something with which they can identify; something they understand to lead the way.**

Again – through teaching others, we ourselves learn. That is the Holy Spirit's "plan" for our salvation and the salvation of the world – the forgiveness of God's Son:

> The sinless give as they received. See, then, the power of sinlessness within your brother, and share with him the power of the release from sin you offered him. To each who walks this earth in seeming solitude is a savior given, whose special function here is to release him, and so to free himself And each one finds his savior when he is ready to look upon the face of Christ, and see Him sinless (T-20.IV.5:1-3,6).

Therefore, you do not teach others they are bodies, nor do you lead them to deny their bodies. Rather, through the love and peace you demonstrate, you help them understand the truth is within the mind, not outside it. Thus, you want to be ever vigilant that you are not bringing truth into illusion. If you compromise the metaphysics of the

Course, you will lose the treasure of true forgiveness it offers you, as Jesus states:

**(10:1) Yet at the journey's ending there will be no gap, no distance between truth and you.**

As the journey proceeds, there *is* a gap. You have a sense of walking toward something—even an advanced teacher of God is still aware of being separate – the ultimate goal of realizing there is nothing but the Oneness of God and Christ. At the very end, however, in the real world, you are aware that you stand with everyone else outside the dream of separation. Regardless of what people believe occurs within the dream, you know their reality is the oneness that remains outside it. Nonetheless, the "journey's ending" is still beyond us, its grandeur of love's unity but dimly reflected in our beginning steps toward the truth. Yet how lovely the journey becomes as we proceed!

> Nor could all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene and the enormous opening vistas that rise to meet one as the journey continues, be foretold from the outset. Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds, fall short indeed of all that wait when the pathway ceases and time ends with it (M-19.2:6-7).

**(10:2) And all illusions walking in the way you travelled will be gone from you as well, with nothing left to keep the truth apart from God's completion, holy as Himself.**

Another major theme: The completion of God is His Son. Thus Jesus states in the text – metaphorically speaking – that God is incomplete without us:

> God's meaning is incomplete without you, and you are incomplete without your creations (T-9. VI.7:7).

> ...your completion is God's, Whose only need is to have you be complete. For your completion makes you His in your awareness. And here it is that you experience yourself as you were created, and as you are (T-15.VII.14:8-10).

Within the dream we believe we separated from God, and so now part of God appears to be missing, thus rendering Him incomplete. As we practice forgiveness, however, the illusions of separation fall away until nothing is left but our Self, the completion of God.

**(10:3-6) Step back in faith and let truth lead the way. You know not where you go. But One Who knows goes with you. Let Him lead you with the rest.**

The Holy Spirit leads us through the world – now become a classroom – to the reality just beyond. Our task is to bring our illusions to His truth, not the other way around, which would make Him, salvation, and truth part of the world. We are part of God as He is in Heaven; God is not part of us in this world of bodies.

**(11:1) When dreams are over, time has closed the door on all the things that pass and miracles are purposeless, the holy Son of God will make no journeys.**

In the text Jesus says of the journey that it is "without distance to a goal that has never changed" (T-8.VI.9:7). At the journey's end we recognize there has been no journey. What never was but disappears back into nothingness. Our journey through time, thus,

> seems to go in one direction, but when you reach its end it will roll up like a long carpet spread along the past behind you, and will disappear.... The Holy Spirit stands at the end of time, where you must be because He is with you. He has already undone everything unworthy of the Son of God, for such was His mission, given Him by God. And what God gives has always been (T-13.I.3:5; 4:4-6).

**(11:2-4) There will be no wish to be illusion rather than the truth. And we step forth toward this, as we progress along the way that truth points out to us. This is our final journey, which we make for everyone.**

We make it *for* everyone because we *are* everyone. As we progress in the dream of fragmented entities, we become a beacon of light that shines out to everyone, asserting that the same choice we made for shared interests, others can make, too. Thus our journey that began separately, concludes with the recognition of the Son's completion; as we journey home together, the light of our union replaces the darkness of our separateness:

> There is a light that this world cannot give. Yet you can give it, as it was given you. And as you give it, it shines forth to call you from the world and follow it. For this light will attract you as nothing in this world can do. And you will lay aside the world and find another. This other world is bright with love which you have given it. And here will everything remind you of your Father and His holy Son. Light is unlimited, and spreads across this world in quiet joy. All those you brought with you will shine on you, and you will shine on them in gratitude because they brought you here. Your light will join with theirs in power so compelling, that it will draw the others out of darkness as you look on them (T-13.VI.11).

**(11:5-6) We must not lose our way. For as truth goes before us, so it goes before our brothers who will follow us.**

Jesus again lets you know how tempting it is for you to lose your way, which means compromising the truth. That is why we say: "Accept no compromise in which duality plays a part." Do not deny your dualistic experiences, but do not make them into something they are not. Recognize you are led along a specific pathway that takes you through the daily experiences of your life. The ultimate goal, however, is to move beyond them to the truth.

**(12:1-3) We walk to God. Pause and reflect on this. Could any way be holier, or more deserving of your effort, of your love and of your full intent?**

Jesus asks you to consider why you would devote yourself to a pathway that will

not lead you home, nor to true happiness. He is not demanding you follow him, but only pointing out you will not be happy if you do not. You therefore need to be vigilant for how often you say: "I do not want to walk to God, but want God to walk with me on my road. I want *A Course in Miracles* to support me in living more happily here in the dream." To the extent you delude yourself, you will believe this course is actually helping you reach your goal. You will inevitably misread passages, taking them out of context to say exactly what you want them to say. Remember, your right mind wants to walk with *A Course in Miracles;* the wrong mind wants it to walk with you.

**(12:4-7) What way could give you more than everything, or offer less and still content the holy Son of God? We walk to God. The truth that walks before us now is one with Him, and leads us to where He has always been. What way but this could be a path that you would choose instead?**

Truth does not lead us to where *we* have always been, but to where *God* has always been, and our true Self with Him. Again, Jesus appeals to us to make the only choice that will make us happy.

**(13:1-2) Your feet are safely set upon the road that leads the world to God. Look not to ways that seem to lead you elsewhere.**

We must all decide for ourselves how we have chosen ways that lead to a place other than Heaven. Most students of *A Course in Miracles* would not think they are doing that; but the ego's most subtle trick is to take spiritual ideas that make the world real, and then, seductively, have us believe we are saying the right words that will lead us home. However, we will not be heading to God, but going more deeply into the ego's world of specialness. Try to see how you may be subtly choosing ways that will lead you nowhere, remembering that nothing in a dualistic world, including "messages" from the Holy Spirit, is real. At best, the world can reflect truth, and it is truth alone we ultimately want. The idols of specialness are the great deceivers, and so Jesus cautions us:

> Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind. They have the power to supply your lacks, and add the value that you do not have. No one believes in idols who has not enslaved himself to littleness and loss. And thus must seek beyond his little self for strength to raise his head, and stand apart from all the misery the world reflects. This is the penalty for looking not within for certainty and quiet calm that liberates you from the world, and lets you stand apart, in quiet and in peace (T-29.VIII.2).

Jesus repeatedly implores us to keep our feet steady on his gentle path of forgiveness, for such is the only way we shall transcend our little self and, through the quiet calm, come to remember the glorious Self that God created as His one Son, our true Identity.

**(13:3-7) Dreams are not a worthy guide for you who are God's Son. Forget not He has placed His Hand in yours, and given you your brothers in His trust that you are worthy of His trust in you. He cannot be deceived. His trust has made your**

**pathway certain and your goal secure. You will not fail your brothers nor your Self.**

As Jesus tells us in the text – twice, in fact: "The outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10; T-4.II.5:8). The problem is that we do not believe him, which is why he never tires of comforting us. Recall these beautiful lines that begin the Epilogue to the clarification of terms:

> Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when hope like this is his? Illusions of despair may seem to come, but learn how not to be deceived by them. Behind each one there is reality and there is God. Why would you wait for this and trade it for illusions, when His Love is but an instant farther on the road where all illusions end? The end *is* sure and guaranteed by God (C-ep.1:1-10).

**(14) And now He asks but that you think of Him a while each day, that He may speak to you and tell you of His Love, reminding you how great His trust; how limitless His Love. In your Name and His Own, which are the same, we practice gladly with this thought today:**

> ***I will step back and let Him lead the way,***
> ***For I would walk along the road to Him.***

The way to practice this throughout the day is be aware of how much you do not do this, how much you want to bring God to your level so He walks *your* path, rather than your walking *His.* Walking the path of *A Course in Miracles,* again, means simply being vigilant for how you try to make real the dualistic world of sin and specialness. By practicing such vigilance you "step back and let Him lead the way." And God's Love is but an instant longer down the certain road that leads to Him.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 156**
**I walk with God in perfect holiness.**

This is a wonderful lesson, reminding us we have a right mind. Many lessons do not focus on our vigilance against the ego, but focus instead – as this and the next one do – on Who we are as God's Son. These inspiring lessons, thus, help remind us of the truth within us, and with Whom we walk toward that truth.

**(1:1-2) Today's idea but states the simple truth that makes the thought of sin impossible. It promises there is no cause for guilt, and being causeless it does not exist.**

If "I walk with God in perfect holiness" I am not separate from Him, and thus there can be no sin. Sin gives rise to guilt, which causes the fear that leads to the making of the world as a defense. All such insanity can disappear in an instant—a central theme in *A Course in Miracles* and the basis of forgiveness: *If a thought has no effect, it cannot be a cause. If it is not a cause, it cannot exist.* The only way the sin of separation can be real is if it has effects. Therefore, being with God means there is no separation and sin has no effect. It thus does not exist and the Son of God is forever guiltless – no sin, no guilt. Teaching this is the miracle's role, as the following passage explains:

> What *you* remember never was. It came from causelessness which you confused with cause. It can deserve but laughter, when you learn you have remembered consequences that were causeless and could never be effects. The miracle reminds you of a Cause forever present, perfectly untouched by time and interference. Never changed from what It is. And you are Its Effect, as changeless and as perfect as Itself (T-28.I.9:1-6).

I, the Effect of God, have never left Him, the Cause that is my Source. This expression of the Atonement principle leads us to the next sentences:

**(1:3-5) It follows surely from the basic thought so often mentioned in the text; ideas leave not their source. If this be true, how can you be apart from God? How could you walk the world alone and separate from your Source?**

We have studied this principle many times already. If *ideas leave not their source,* and I am an idea in the Mind of God, I have never left my Source, which means everything the ego has taught is wrong. Yet Jesus teaches me the truth, stated similarly in the text:

> Cause and effect are one, not separate. God wills you learn what always has been true: that He created you as part of Him, and this must still be true because ideas leave not their source. Such is creation's law.... And to believe ideas can leave their source is to invite illusions to be true, without success. For never will success be possible in trying to deceive the Son of God (T-26.VII.13:1-3, 5-6).

However, if I do walk alone, separate from God and everyone else, I affirm this lesson is not the truth and that I walk with the ego in perfect unholiness. The guilt over my sinful separation proves this unholy state to be real.

**(2:1) We are not inconsistent in the thoughts that we present in our curriculum.**

Here, as in many other places, Jesus states his course is logically consistent within itself. The following are two examples from the text:

> Being so simple and direct, this course has nothing in it that is not consistent (T-20. VII.1:3).

> This course will be believed entirely or not at all. For it is wholly true or wholly false, and cannot be but partially believed (T-22.II.7:4-5).

This is an integrated curriculum, and so it is important not to let the metaphysics get too far from you. The world is literally an illusion, and observe – without guilt – how you compromise this simple truth. Jesus' loving presence in your mind makes this lack of judgment possible.

**(2:2-3) Truth must be true throughout, if it be true. It cannot contradict itself, nor be in parts uncertain and in others sure.**

Truth cannot be true in this circumstance, but not in others; Jesus cannot be present in this specific situation, but not in others. If truth and Jesus are present, they are present all the time because they are in our minds. Speaking of his course, Jesus encourages us to make the decision for truth and truth alone, abandoning our prior identification with illusion:

> I have stated that the basic concepts referred to in this course are not matters of degree. Certain fundamental concepts cannot be understood in terms of opposites. It is impossible to conceive of light and darkness or everything and nothing as joint possibilities. They are all true or all false. It is essential that you realize your thinking will be erratic until a firm commitment to one or the other is made (T-3.II.1:1-5).

**(2:4-9) You cannot walk the world apart from God, because you could not be without Him. He is what your life is. Where you are He is. There is one life. That life you share with Him. Nothing can be apart from Him and live.**

Since everything in the world is apart from God, and was made to be apart from Him, nothing here lives. That is what Jesus means when he says: "There is no life outside of Heaven" (T-23.11.19:1). We will see this developed later in Lesson 167, "There is one life, and that I share with God" (W-pI.167). The ideas here look ahead to that lesson, which continues the examination of the principle *ideas leave not their source* – if we have not left our Source, how can we be apart from Him?

> You can not escape from what you are. For God is merciful, and did not let His Son abandon Him. For what He is be thankful, for in that is your escape from madness and from death. Nowhere but where He is can you be found (T-31.IV.11:3-6).

One of Helen's love poems to Jesus, appropriately called "Love Song," movingly expresses her love for her Lord, as it does ours, echoing our love for our Creator and Source. Here are the opening and closing verses:

> My Lord, my Love, my Life, I live in you.
> There is no life apart from what you are.
> I breathe your words, I rest upon your arms.
> My sight is hallowed by your single star.
>
> Forgetting you is to forget myself,
> Why I have come and where it is I go.
> My Lord, my Love, my Life, let me forget
> All things except the loveliness you know.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 53)

**(3) Yet where He is, there must be holiness as well as life. No attribute of His remains unshared by everything that lives. What lives is holy as Himself, because what shares His life is part of Holiness, and could no more be sinful than the sun could choose to be of ice; the sea elect to be apart from water, or the grass to grow with roots suspended in the air.**

Jesus is not talking about life as a body, but spirit: our true Identity as Christ. This Identity is totally at one with God, and so all that is God's must be shared with His Son:

> God extends outward beyond limits and beyond time, and you who are co-creator with Him extend His Kingdom forever and beyond limit.... To think like God is to share His certainty of what you are, and to create like Him is to share the perfect Love He shares with you (T-7.I.5:4; 6:1).

Regarding the last phrase of the paragraph, there is now a kind of grass that does grow with its roots in the air, but the meaning here is clear nonetheless: we cannot stop being Who we are, despite our feverish dreams of separation. What is unnatural can never occur; what is unreal cannot be; what is of God alone is – our Father could never be without His Son.

**(4:1) There is a light in you which cannot die; whose presence is so holy that the world is sanctified because of you.**

That light is not in you as a physical/psychological self, but in the right mind, represented by the Holy Spirit.

**(4:2-4) All things that live bring gifts to you, and offer them in gratitude and gladness at your feet. The scent of flowers is their gift to you. The waves bow down before you, and the trees extend their arms to shield you from the heat, and lay their leaves before you on the ground that you may walk in softness, while the wind sinks to a whisper round your holy head.**

Jesus is writing as a poet, his words obviously not intended to be taken literally,

but as a beautiful metaphoric rendering of what the world will be when we realize we are not of it – a place of loving gratitude for the light we have brought to the Sonship still believing in darkness. A similar sentiment of thanks is expressed in this lovely passage from "For They Have Come":

> Around you angels hover lovingly, to keep away all darkened thoughts of sin, and keep the light where it has entered in. Your footprints lighten up the world, for where you walk forgiveness gladly goes with you. No one on earth but offers thanks to one who has restored his home, and sheltered him from bitter winter and the freezing cold. And shall the Lord of Heaven and His Son give less in gratitude for so much more? (T-26.IX.7)

Incidentally, the workbook passage is a specific reference to things Jesus had said to Helen. Early in the scribing he compared her to a shaft of pure light, before whom even the angels bowed.* Obviously, that shaft of pure light is all of us as well, for Jesus does not share our guilt-ridden self-image:

> ... Christ is the Son of God, Who lives in His Creator and shines with His glory. Christ is the extension of the Love and the loveliness of God, as perfect as His Creator and at peace with Him.
>
> Blessed is the Son of God whose radiance is of his Father, and whose glory he wills to share as his Father shares it with him.... Peace be unto you who rest in God, and in whom the whole Sonship rests (T-11.IV.7:4-8:1, 4).

**(5:1) The light in you is what the universe longs to behold.**

Everyone suffers, and the illusion of pleasure defends against the pain of believing we do not belong here, and do not even know where we belong. Yet the light has not left us, and is the spark of our true Self, the Great Rays the text speaks of so often. Within the dream we can know the spark, leading us beyond the dream to our home, "the light ... the universe longs to behold":

> The power of one mind can shine into another, because all the lamps of God were lit by the same spark. It is everywhere and it is eternal.
>
> In many only the spark remains, for the Great Rays are obscured. Yet God has kept the spark alive so that the Rays can never be completely forgotten.... the spark is still as pure as the Great Light, because it is the remaining call of creation. Put all your faith in it, and God Himself will answer you (T-10.IV.7:5-8:1-2, 6-7).

Others will see that light in you to the extent you let go of your illusions, allowing Jesus to be your teacher and guide. To that extent the light will shine in your mind, and everyone else's will know it as well, experiencing it as a call that says to them: "You can make the same choice I did." Everyone yearns to see this light, which is not physical or external, but the reminder of Who we are as Christ, the home of the Great Rays. The reason people are drawn to *A Course in Miracles,* regardless of what they may do with it afterwards, is that they sense the presence of light shining through its words. This is what calls to people, even to those who do not understand it. They feel a presence that is not of this world, and therein lies their hope.

**(5:2-4) All living things are still before you, for they recognize Who walks with you. The light you carry is their own. And thus they see in you their holiness, saluting you as savior and as God.**

The phrase "all living things," used sporadically in *A Course in Miracles,* refers to what *we* identify as living things. Christ, the only truly "living thing," does not look to you. Jesus thus speaks of what we consider to be alive here, those with whom we relate. In fact, however, they are but expressions of a thought of separation and hopelessness, still yearning to be proven wrong. Needless to say at this point, Jesus does not refer to anything external, but to the light of Christ shining in every seemingly separated fragment of the Sonship.

**(5:5) Accept their reverence, for it is due to Holiness Itself, which walks with you, transforming in Its gentle light all things unto Its likeness and Its purity.**

When people express gratitude, you should not take it personally and turn it into a cult of specialness, but neither should you reject it out of false humility. The gratitude should be accepted because it is not meant for you personally, but for the hope you have given: the love and light they experience in you shines in them as well, despite their darkened thoughts of sin and guilt.

**(6:1-2) This is the way salvation works. As you step back, the light in you steps forward and encompasses the world.**

We saw this in the previous lesson, "I will step back and let Him lead the way." Stepping back from the ego means we no longer identify with its thought system of separation, but with the light of Atonement that shines in our minds. Since minds are joined, the light shines in everyone. This is not an external light that encompasses the world – the world after all is only a thought – but the mind, heretofore filled with the ego's darkness and now ablaze with truth's light, shining through our forgiveness:

> And from this light will the Great Rays extend back into darkness and forward unto God, to shine away the past and so make room for His eternal Presence, in which everything is radiant in the light (T-18.III.8:7).

**(6:3) It heralds not the end of sin in punishment and death.**

Traditional Christianity has always taught the opposite: sin will end when the evil doers are punished and everyone dies, with the blessed ones resurrected into eternal life with God. Jesus teaches us, however, that sin will quietly fade away into the oblivion of its unreality as we learn to smile at it:

**(6:4-5) In lightness and in laughter is sin gone, because its quaint absurdity is seen. It is a foolish thought, a silly dream, not frightening, ridiculous perhaps, but who would waste an instant in approach to God Himself for such a senseless whim?**

The world will end with a smile, as we saw in the manual for teachers—in

lightness and laughter:

> The world will end in joy, because it is a place of sorrow. When joy has come, the purpose of the world has gone. The world will end in peace, because it is a place of war. When peace has come, what is the purpose of the world? The world will end in laughter, because it is a place of tears (M-14.5:1-5).

Sin will end this way as well. In other words, we do nothing with sin other than choose against it. It then disappears, because it was held in place only by our belief in it.

When we step back and understand our world rests on the belief that sin and separation are real, we realize that Jesus is telling us not to take anything here seriously. This does not mean we turn our backs on the world – it is a classroom in which we yet must learn – nor does it mean denying it or making believe we are not bodies. Jesus simply says: "Do not let anything in this world come between you and me. If it does, it is not because of the thing itself, but your fear of losing your individuality through my love. That unfounded fear is what caused you to accept the world in place of me." The bottom line is the seriousness with which we originally greeted the "tiny, mad idea" (T-27.VIII.6:2-3). Instead, we are asked to laugh with Jesus:

> Together, we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time (T-27.VIII.6:4-5).

However, sin's "quaint absurdity" is hardly a cause for a lighthearted smile when we are immersed in its dream of pain and guilt, suffering and death:

> It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause (T-27.VIII.8:4).

Yet, when we step with Jesus outside the dream of sin, we perceive its silliness, for our forgiveness has allowed us to remember our Cause, in Whose Presence the sin that is the dream's cause merely disappears:

> Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest (8:5-7).

**(7:1-3) Yet you have wasted many, many years on just this foolish thought. The past is gone, with all its fantasies. They keep you bound no longer.**

The world can bind us only to the extent we choose to let it have that power. When the mind withdraws the power, the world and body lose all ability to imprison us. This is the healing role of the miracle – releasing us from a sinful past that never happened in reality; and thus its painful effects are gone as well. Recall:

> This world was over long ago. The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a little while. The miracle but shows the past is gone, and what has truly gone has no effects. Remembering a cause can but produce illusions of its presence, not effects.
>
> All the effects of guilt are here no more. For guilt is over. In its passing

went its consequences, left without a cause (T-2811:6-2:3).

**(7:4-5) The approach to God is near. And in the little interval of doubt that still remains, you may perhaps lose sight of your Companion, and mistake Him for the senseless, ancient dream that now is past.**

As we start our journey by taking Jesus' hand, we become afraid, and as a defense we seek to resurrect a past of pain, guilt, and specialness that is no longer there. Moreover, we seek to pretend we are here when we truly are not, the ego's basic fear. We intuit that following *A Course in Miracles as* it is written, and as Jesus is guiding us, means we will lose our physical and psychological self. This is the ultimate loss that induces dread and makes the Love of God so threatening, as we have already read:

> You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. You are afraid it would sweep you away from yourself and make you little.... You think you have made a world God would destroy; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you *would.* Therefore, you have used the world to cover your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. *And it is this that frightens you* (T-13.III.4).

To ensure that the ego's inevitable scenario does not happen, we bring Jesus into the dream to reinforce its reality and our own. That is why he reminds us in *The Gifts of God* that he is "not a dream that comes in mockery" (p. 121).

**(8:1-2) "Who walks with me?" This question should be asked a thousand times a day, till certainty has ended doubting and established peace.**

In other words, be aware when you have chosen the ego's specialness as companion instead of the Holy Spirit's Love. The purpose of the workbook is to facilitate this awareness.

**(8:3-6) Today let doubting cease. God speaks for you in answering your question with these words:**

***I walk with God in perfect holiness. I light the world, I light my mind and all the minds which God created one with me.***

The challenge is recognizing that walking with the ego will never bring you what you want, but walking with your Creator will. Helen's poem "My Father's House," written on Christmas Eve, beautifully summarizes this beautiful lesson, knitting together its various themes:

> Hallowed my name. I am a Son of God
> Who walks in stillness. I hold out my hand,
> And from my fingertips the quiet goes
> Around the world to still all living things,

And cover them in holiness. Their rest
Is joined in mine, for I am one with them.
There is no pain my stillness cannot heal,
Because it comes from God. There is no grief
That does not turn to laughter when I come.
I do not come alone. There walks with me
The Light that Heaven looks on as itself.
I am a Son of God. My name is His.
My Father's house is where my stillness is.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 59)

* See my *Absence from Felicity,* p. 17.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 157**

**Into His Presence would I enter now.**

This lesson, as does the previous one, reflects our right minds and helps us realize the truth toward which we are walking. The focus is not on what is in our wrong minds, but on the vision of forgiveness, thus returning us to a major theme of the earlier lessons.

**(1) This is a day of silence and of trust. It is a special time of promise in your calendar of days. It is a time Heaven has set apart to shine upon, and cast a timeless light upon this day, when echoes of eternity are heard. This day is holy, for it ushers in a new experience; a different kind of feeling and awareness. You have spent long days and nights in celebrating death. Today you learn to feel the joy of life.**

Jesus says to us: "I am trying to help you remember the truth that is within you, a truth of happiness and peace. It will lead to an experience that will reflect Who you are as Christ. Is it not time to set aside the pain of having chosen death? Today let us choose life." The means to achieve this end is forgiveness: the daily opportunities our days provide to ask Jesus' help to see beyond unholiness – ours and our brother's – to the holy Christ that unites us as one Son. Jesus movingly gives us a sense of the wondrous gifts he offers when we let him see for us. This beautiful vision echoes the beauty of eternity:

> When you have looked on what seemed terrifying, and seen it change to sights of loveliness and peace; when you have looked on scenes of violence and death, and watched them change to quiet views of gardens under open skies, with clear, life-giving water running happily beside them in dancing brooks that never waste away; who need persuade you to accept the gift of vision? And after vision, who is there who could refuse what must come after? Think but an instant just on this; you can behold the holiness God gave His Son. And never need you think that there is something else for you to see (T-20.VIII.11).

**(2:1-2) This is another crucial turning point in the curriculum. We add a new dimension now; a fresh experience that sheds a light on all that we have learned already, and prepares us for what we have yet to learn.**

Here, again, Jesus reminds us of what we have learned and how far we have come – preparation for where he will yet lead us. He has taught us – looking back over the earlier workbook lessons – that the world is an illusion, with no difference between our perceptions and thoughts, and that there is another Teacher we can choose Who will gradually lead us from the body to the mind. Jesus begins with our outer experiences, his purpose being to show us these are but shadows or reflections of the mind's decisions. He therefore teaches whence we have come and where he is leading us. We need only continue to hold his hand, as together we traverse the pathway of forgiveness.

**(2:3-4) It brings us to the door where learning ceases, and we catch a glimpse of what lies past the highest reaches it can possibly attain. It leaves us here an instant, and we go beyond it, sure of our direction and our only goal.**

**Lesson 157**

The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to bring us to what the text refers to as "the gate of Heaven" – the real world. At that point all learning ceases, followed by the experience of love. Jesus explains, and in the next lesson as well, that the experience of God's Love, the Oneness that is our Self, is beyond what we can learn. However, we can be taught to remove the interferences to that experience. These lessons, therefore, are a one-year training program that helps us unlearn what the ego has taught. The unlearning is accomplished by forgiveness, which leads us through the world of past hatreds to the real world - Heaven's gate – and then beyond to love:

> Forgive the past and let it go, for it *is* gone. You stand no longer on the ground that lies between the worlds. You have gone on, and reached the world that lies at Heaven's gate. There is no hindrance to the Will of God, nor any need that you repeat again a journey that was over long ago. Look gently on your brother, and behold the world in which perception of your hate has been transformed into a world of love (T-26.V.14).

In effect, Jesus says to us: "Why would you choose to remain in a world of hate when I offer you my world of love? My brother, choose again." This is reiterated in "The Gifts of God":

> "Choose once again" is still your only hope. Darkness cannot conceal the gifts of God unless you want it so. In peace I come, and urge you now to make an end to time and step into eternity with me.... hold my hand as you return because we come together. Now the hosts of Heaven come with us, to sweep away all vestiges of dreams and every thought that rests on nothingness. How dear are you to God, Who asks but that you walk with me and bring His light into a sickened world, which fear has drained of love and life and hope *(The Gifts of God,* p. 117).

**(3:1) Today it will be given you to feel a touch of Heaven, though you will return to paths of learning.**

Again, Jesus tells us he knows this is a process. Yet is the time hastened if we seek to do the lessons properly and diligently work through this year of workbook exercises. The experience of love's truth will come to the extent we let our egos go, if only for an instant. That does not mean our journey is over or our learning complete, but the "touch of Heaven" is a sign that Jesus is leading us to reality, already present within us.

**(3:2-3) Yet you have come far enough along the way to alter time sufficiently to rise above its laws, and walk into eternity a while. This you will learn to do increasingly, as every lesson, faithfully rehearsed, brings you more swiftly to this holy place and leaves you, for a moment, to your Self.**

Jesus re-emphasizes our need to faithfully rehearse these lessons, meaning we need to practice them over and over. When you rehearse lines in a play, you repeat them until they have been mastered. Jesus is asking us to do the same with the lines in his Atonement play. This does not mean rotely repeating the day's idea, but repetition in the sense of continually bringing our mistakes to his correction, allowing him thus to

bring us home.

**(4) He will direct your practicing today, for what you ask for now is what He wills. And having joined your will with His this day, what you are asking must be given you. Nothing is needed but today's idea to light your mind, and let it rest in still anticipation and in quiet joy, wherein you quickly leave the world behind.**

We see in this paragraph a further development of the themes of the last two lessons. "Nothing is needed but today's idea" because Jesus requires nothing from us except choosing to be in Christ's presence rather than the ego's. I learn not only that I made a mistake in choosing the latter as my teacher, but that I have another Teacher I can choose. Here, by the way, Jesus' words speak of Christ in this role, although it is really the Holy Spirit Who teaches.

**(5:1) From this day forth, your ministry takes on a genuine devotion, and a glow that travels from your fingertips to those you touch, and blesses those you look upon.**

Please do not take this literally, otherwise you will look foolish touching people with your holy finger, or turning off lights so people will see you glow. These are symbols, and clearly not to be taken as literal truth. Since Jesus is so clear that the body is an illusion, why would he tell you your fingertips ought to glow? I mention this only because there are those who might be tempted to take these words literally. It is our *minds* that "glow" – with the forgiving light of Christ that embraces the Sonship in our devotion to the truth that shines in us as one.

**(5:2-3) A vision reaches everyone you meet, and everyone you think of, or who thinks of you. For your experience today will so transform your mind that it becomes the touchstone for the holy Thoughts of God.**

We return to the core teaching of *A Course in Miracles:* not *one or the other,* but *all or nothing.* Either the vision of Christ touches all God's Sons, or it touches none of them, including us. Recall this wonderful statement from the text's final vision:

> To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VIII.8:4-7).

Earlier in the text Jesus makes the same point, speaking of the holy relationship as a herald of eternity that proclaims love's unity:

> Each herald of eternity sings of the end of sin and fear. Each speaks in time of what is far beyond it. Two voices raised together call to the hearts of everyone, to let them beat as one. And in that single heartbeat is the unity of love proclaimed and given welcome. Peace to your holy relationship, which has the power to hold the unity of the Son of God together. You give to your brother for everyone, and in your gift is everyone made glad (T-20.V.2:1-6).

Happily we learn Jesus' lesson of "together, or not at all" (T-19.IV-D.12:8): the vision that transforms our mind and the mind of the Sonship through the thought of total forgiveness, reflecting God's Thought of total love.

**(6:1) Your body will be sanctified today, its only purpose being now to bring the vision of what you experience this day to light the world.**

Obviously it is not the body that is sanctified. Jesus' point is unmistakable: *purpose* makes the body holy, for in itself it is nothing, neither holy nor unholy. The mind serves either the ego's unholy purpose of reinforcing the sin of separation, or the Holy Spirit's holy purpose of undoing that choice and correcting the ego's mistakes through forgiveness. Because we believe we are bodies, however, this lesson must be translated by the mind into a form we can accept and understand. Again, the *content* is holy, not the *form.* The following passage from the text contrasts these two purposes of the mind – judgment or vision, sin or sinlessness:

> The body *is* the means by which the ego tries to make the unholy relationship seem real.... the *purpose* here is sin.... And if you see the body, you have chosen judgment and not vision. For vision, like relationships, has no order. You either see or not.
>
> Who sees a brother's body has laid a judgment on him, and sees him not. He does not really see him as sinful; he does not see him at all. In the darkness of sin he is invisible.... And here, in darkness, is your brother's reality imagined as a body, in unholy relationships with other bodies, serving the cause of sin an instant before he dies.
>
> There is indeed a difference between this vain imagining and vision. The difference lies not in them, but in their purpose. Both are but means, each one appropriate to the end for which it is employed.... Judgment you taught yourself; vision is learned from Him Who would undo your teaching. His vision cannot see the body because it cannot look on sin. And thus it leads you to reality (T-20.VII.5:1, 3, 7-9; 6:1-3, 7; 7:1-3; 8:4-6).

Jesus does not mean for us to deny what our eyes report to us. Rather, not seeing the body means not seeing through the ego's purpose of judgment and sin – separate interests – but the Holy Spirit's purpose of forgiveness – shared interests.

**(6:2-3) We cannot give experience like this directly. Yet it leaves a vision in our eyes which we can offer everyone, that he may come the sooner to the same experience in which the world is quietly forgot, and Heaven is remembered for a while.**

Again, it is the learning which can be given and understood; the experience comes when the process is complete. The world is quietly forgot through forgetting the thought system that made it, which means choosing against the ego. We learn that Jesus was right: "salvation is a collaborative venture" (T-4.VI.8:2) and not won at someone else's expense, as the ego insists. Thus we learn to let go of judgment and choose vision, as Jesus instructs us:

> Salvation is the Holy Spirit's goal. The means is vision. For what the seeing look upon *is* sinless. No one who loves can judge, and what he sees is free of condemnation. And what he sees he did not make, for it was given him to see, as was the vision that made his seeing possible (T-20.VII.9:4-8).

**(7:1) As this experience increases and all goals but this become of little worth, the world to which you will return becomes a little closer to the end of time; a little more like Heaven in its ways; a little nearer its deliverance.**

Again, it is not that the world is transformed into Heaven. How can nothing be transformed? Other spiritual paths talk of the transformation of the world, and the Bible speaks of a New Jerusalem on earth (Revelation 3:12, 21:2). This, however, is not Jesus' meaning. What is transformed is our thought system, which means the purpose of the world is changed. The above sentence clearly implies that Jesus is speaking of a process: "As this experience *increases* and all goals but this *become* of little worth." Jesus does not say they become totally worthless, at least not yet. The worth and value we give to the world and our experiences here will decrease over time as we learn not to value what is valueless (W-pI.133). Jesus discusses this in the third stage in the development of trust:

> Through this [giving up the valueless], he learns that where he anticipated grief, he finds a happy lightheartedness instead; where he thought something was asked of him, he finds a gift bestowed on him (M-4.I-A.5:8).

Step by step we are led through the forgiven world to Heaven's gate, beyond which learning cannot go – but we can.

**(7:2-4) And you who bring it light will come to see the light more sure; the vision more distinct. The time will come when you will not return in the same form in which you now appear, for you will have no need of it. Yet now it has a purpose, and will serve it well.**

When the purpose of forgiveness is fulfilled and we enter the real world, we shall have no further need of the body as a classroom, having remembered we are God's Son. Our next appearance in the body would thus be different, for our mind had changed. Before that happy day occurs, however, being in the body serves the holy purpose of learning forgiveness, as well as being an example for others to learn the same. Such is the purpose of the holy relationship – joining with Jesus as we join with our brothers, sharing the light with each other and the world:

> In your relationship you have joined with me in bringing Heaven to the Son of God, who hid in darkness. You have been willing to bring the darkness to light, and this willingness has given strength to everyone who would remain in darkness. Those who would see *will* see. And they will join with me in carrying their light into the darkness, when the darkness in them is offered to the light, and is removed forever.... You who are now the bringer of salvation have the function of bringing light to darkness. The darkness in you has been brought to light. Carry it back to darkness, from the holy instant to which you brought it (T-18.III.6:1-4; 7:1-3).

This workbook passage also makes specific reference to what Jesus occasionally told Helen: the next time she came she would be different; meaning she would be in the real world.*

**(8:1) Today we will embark upon a course you have not dreamed of.**

This sentence can be understand literally and figuratively. We have not dreamed of it, because our guilt does not allow us to believe return to Heaven is possible; but we also have not dreamed of it because reality is beyond all dreams. The ego's dreams lead us further and further away from God, while the Holy Spirit's happy dreams happily lead us back.

**(8:2) But the Holy One, the Giver of the happy dreams of life, Translator of perception into truth, the holy Guide to Heaven given you, has dreamed for you this journey which you make and start today, with the experience this day holds out to you to be your own.**

The Holy Spirit translates our experiences within the perceptual world by shifting their purpose from the ego's, which roots us still further in the dream, to His, which helps us awaken from the dream through His vision of forgiveness:

> Vision is the means by which the Holy Spirit translates your nightmares into happy dreams; your wild hallucinations that show you all the fearful outcomes of imagined sin into the calm and reassuring sights with which He would replace them. These gentle sights and sounds are looked on happily, and heard with joy. They are His substitutes for all the terrifying sights and screaming sounds the ego's purpose brought to your horrified awareness. They step away from sin, reminding you that it is not reality which frightens you, and that the errors which you made can be corrected (T-20.V111.10:4-7).

Now comes the beautiful closing:

**(9) Into Christ's Presence will we enter now, serenely unaware of everything except His shining face and perfect Love. The vision of His face will stay with you, but there will be an instant which transcends all vision, even this, the holiest. This you will never teach, for you attained it not through learning. Yet the vision speaks of your rememberance of what you knew that instant, and will surely know again.**

In this inspiring passage Jesus tells you it is possible to have an experience in which your identity will transform, enabling you to leave the ego's world entirely. You will come back because you still have not totally let your ego go. Yet the Holy Spirit will translate your vision into experience here, which can then reach others. This has nothing to do with words or behavior, but with the non-ego presence of your mind. While not able to teach God's Love and Oneness, you can teach guilt's undoing – your lack of judgment toward yourself and others undoes the interferences to remembering the experience of unity. Therefore, you teach undoing of illusion, not the simple truth, which merely returns to your awareness when you return to it.

Let me mention that it is not a typographical error to have *rememberance* spelled

with an added *e.* The extra syllable is needed for the meter (remember this is written in iambic pentameter), an example of poetic license.

* See my *Absence from Felicity,* p. 476.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 158**
**Today I learn to give as I receive.**

The next two lessons, Lessons 158 and 159, share a similar theme: giving and receiving are the same, a principle equated with vision. You may recall that Lesson 108, "To give and to receive are one in truth," also spoke of the parallel between giving-receiving and vision. An important theme in *A Course in Miracles,* to which Jesus repeatedly refers, is that giving equals receiving because of the oneness of love. Since the basis of truth is the non-dualistic reality of Heaven's Oneness, anything the Father gives, the Son must receive; anything the Son gives, he also receives: love is One.

In this world, oneness is reflected as: if I want to know I am forgiven, I must forgive. Likewise, if I give guilt to someone, the guilt in my own mind is reinforced. Therefore, giving and receiving are one, not only for the Holy Spirit – reflecting Heaven's Oneness – but also for the ego. The mind of God's Son is one, and the external world and body are simply shadows of the thought of guilt. Thus, when we speak of giving and receiving, we mean that we give only to ourselves because there is no one else.

**(1:1-3) What has been given you? The knowledge that you are a mind, in Mind and purely mind, sinless forever, wholly unafraid, because you were created out of love. Nor have you left your Source, remaining as you were created.**

Jesus again refers to the principle *ideas leave not their source.* The idea of God's Son, Christ, has never left His Source in God. Here is another statement of the Oneness of Heaven:

> God created His Sons by extending His Thought, and retaining the extensions of His Thought in His Mind. All His Thoughts are thus perfectly united within themselves and with each other (T-6.1I.8:1-2).

**(1:4-5) This was given you as knowledge which you cannot lose. It was given as well to every living thing, for by that knowledge only does it live.**

In commenting on Lesson 156, I discussed that Jesus' use of the term *living thing* (W-pI.156.5:2) denoted life from our perspective. Here, however, it is used to denote our Identity as spirit, which alone is alive, since nothing outside Heaven lives. Knowledge of this truth is given everyone, as we are all part of Christ's Oneness. It is impossible His loving knowledge be absent from us, yet the ego's thought system teaches otherwise – ideas do leave their source and therefore God's Son can leave his Source in Heaven. Thus love is shattered and truth's oneness gone, destroyed by the sin the ego made real, as it did the projected world:

> Sin is belief attack can be projected outside the mind where the belief arose. Here is the firm conviction that ideas can leave their source made real and meaningful. And from this error does the world of sin and sacrifice arise. This world is an attempt to prove your innocence, while cherishing attack. Its failure lies in that you still feel guilty, though without understanding why. Effects are seen as separate from their source, and seem to be beyond you to control or to prevent. What is thus kept apart can never join (T-26.VII.12:2-8).

That is the bad news. The good news is that our belief does not establish reality:

*ideas do **not** leave their source;* the Son never left his Father.

**(2:1-2) You have received all this. No one who walks the world but has received it.**

We all have the illusion we are here in bodies. Yet the memory of oneness is present in our minds through the Holy Spirit. We have received this gift because God's Love has given it to us. Remember, these terms are not meant dualistically: God is not a separated entity Who gives to His Son, another separated entity. We have seen that Jesus uses dualistic words because he speaks to an audience that does not know of oneness. However, these words should be taken as symbols that reflect the non-dualistic unity of God and Christ.

**(2:3) It is not this knowledge which you give, for that is what creation gave.**

What we give in the dream is the forgiveness that reflects Heaven's Love. True love – i.e., without ambivalence – is impossible in this world, as we read in the text:

> You project onto the ego the decision to separate, and this conflicts with the love you feel for the ego because you made it. No love in this world is without this ambivalence, and since no ego has experienced love without ambivalence the concept is beyond its understanding (T-4.III.4:5-6).

Therefore, we reflect Heaven's peace, so we may remember the Father's Love:

> Reflect the peace of Heaven here, and bring this world to Heaven. For the reflection of truth draws everyone to truth, and as they enter into it they leave all reflections behind.
>
> In Heaven reality is shared and not reflected. By sharing its reflection here, its truth becomes the only perception the Son of God accepts. And thus, remembrance of his Father dawns on him, and he can no longer be satisfied with anything but his own reality (T-14.X.1:6-2:3).

**(2:4-7) All this cannot be learned. What, then, are you to learn to give today? Our lesson yesterday evoked a theme found early in the text. Experience cannot be shared directly, in the way that vision can.**

Jesus distinguishes between non-dualistic truth, which has no place in this world, and its reflection, otherwise known as vision. The distinction is between what God gave us – His knowledge and Love – and what we give here, a reminder of that love, which *A Course in Miracles* teaches us to remember. We are not taught *what* we remember – the Love of God – but *how* to remember – forgiveness. Thus we read from the text:

> As nothingness cannot be pictured, so there is no symbol for totality. Reality is ultimately known without a form, unpictured and unseen. Forgiveness is not yet a power known as wholly free of limits. Yet it sets no limits you have chosen to impose. Forgiveness is the means by which the truth is represented temporarily. It lets the Holy Spirit make exchange of pictures possible, until the time when aids are meaningless and learning done (T-27.III.5:1-6).

What follows is an important passage, in which Jesus in effect takes a brief detour to speak with us about the metaphysics of time. We could actually spend many pages on this subject, but since I have covered it elsewhere,* I will only briefly review it here. Keep in mind that Jesus is referring to the total unreality of time itself, as well as our personal experience of linear time:

**(2:8-9) The revelation that the Father and the Son are one will come in time to every mind. Yet is that time determined by the mind itself, not taught.**

The part of the mind that determines when we will remember that the Father and the Son are One is the decision maker, which is outside time. We are taught to undo the interferences to our awareness of this memory, but cannot be taught what lies beyond them. Accepting the Atonement for ourselves – the separation never happened – reveals the oneness of Father and Son. Since all of time occurred in the ontological instant – which in truth never happened at all (M-2.2:6-8) – the experience of undoing that instant occurred as well. What has *not* happened yet is the atemporal decision maker's choosing to re- experience the undoing.

Imagine a video-tape library with an almost infinite number of video tapes containing different aspects of the ego's thought system, as well as an almost infinite number of video tapes reflecting the correction of this thought system. Each ego video tape is a shadow of guilt, while the Holy Spirit's videos reflect the undoing of guilt through forgiveness. When Jesus says below that "the script is written" (4:3), think of these libraries as the script, with the decision maker choosing which library it will access.

One video tape in the Holy Spirit's library represents the acceptance of the Atonement, and it is up to us when we choose to identify with its truth. *A Course in Miracles* helps us save the time it would take to realize this is the only choice that will make us happy. Saving time, you may recall, is the miracle's purpose:

> The miracle minimizes the need for time.... The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years.... The miracle shortens time by collapsing it, thus eliminating certain intervals within it (T-1.II.6:1, 7, 9).

**(3:1-3) The time is set already. It appears to be quite arbitrary. Yet there is no step along the road that anyone takes but by chance.**

In other words, nothing is accidental. The video tape of when we will choose to accept the Atonement for ourselves is already in the mind's library, as indeed are all the wrong-minded and right-minded ones:

> God gave His Teacher to replace the one you made, not to conflict with it. And what He would replace has been replaced. Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. And so is all time past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. What God gave answer to is answered and is gone (T-26.V.3).

This does not mean, as discussed many times before, that God ordains our particular script or chooses for us. It is *our* planning and *our* choice, made either with the ego or the Holy Spirit.

**(3:4) It has already been taken by him, although he has not yet embarked on it.**

The first part of this sentence reflects the idea all this has already happened and is over. Recall: "This world was over long ago" (T-28.I.1:6). Acceptance of that truth is the step already taken by us, and "although he has not yet embarked on it" means we are still choosing to remain asleep, dreaming we are here, as this familiar sentence reminds us:

> You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality (T-10.I.2:1).

**(3:5-7) For time but seems to go in one direction. We but undertake a journey that is over. Yet it seems to have a future still unknown to us.**

We experience time as linear, wherein there is a past, present, and future in which we move along what we believe to be a spiritual path that will take us home. This passage is telling us – as so many others do – that this journey is already over. In fact, *there is no journey.* Again, however, as long as we have the illusion of being here, we have the illusion that time and space are real, as are sin and guilt. Thus every once in a while Jesus needs to remind us this is all unreal, as he does in the following passage using the metaphor of a carpet:

> You are not guiltless in time, but in eternity. You have "sinned" in the past, but there is no past. Always has no direction. Time seems to go in one direction, but when you reach its end it will roll up like a long carpet spread along the past behind you, and will disappear. As long as you believe the Son of God is guilty you will walk along this carpet, believing that it leads to death. And the journey will seem long and cruel and senseless, for so it is (T-13.I.3:2-7).

We all walk this carpet of time, not realizing our lives are illusory: going from nowhere, through nowhere, to nowhere. How could the journey *not* seem "long and cruel and senseless"?

**(4:1) Time is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go as if by magic.**

The world of time and space is but another part of the ego's strategy to convince us the separation from God is real, and ultimately that the problem is outside us in the world and not within our minds. The above line is reminiscent of these familiar ones from the text:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly

unreal? (T-20.VIII.7:3-5)

**(4:2-3) Yet there is a plan behind appearances that does not change. The script is written.**

The plan is the Atonement. Again, "the script is written" means the ego's thought system has already occurred, along with the Holy Spirit's correction. In truth, to state it one more time, we are outside time and space, observing events on the world's battleground of bodies.

**(4:4) When experience will come to end your doubting has been set.**

The video tape of our choosing to accept the Atonement is already there – it "has been set" – and awaits our choosing to re-experience it, as we now see:

**(4:5) For we but see the journey from the point at which it ended, looking back on it, imagining we make it once again; reviewing mentally what has gone by.**

Imagine us sitting in a movie theater watching the story of our lives unfold before our eyes, forgetting we are in the audience. This is not dissimilar from our identifying psychologically with the characters in an actual movie, wherein we lose all sense of temporal reality and forget we are merely watching the make believe. Indeed, we are no longer *watching* the characters, we have *become* the characters. Otherwise we would not laugh or cry, be anxious, depressed, or excited during the movie. The difference, however, is that when the film ends we come back to our senses. In the movie we call our lives, on the other hand, we never come back. A passage like this, therefore, helps us realize we are observing what has already happened. One can thus say that when our decision makers sit in the theater with Jesus, they become observers.

Now we return to vision:

**(5:1-3) A teacher does not give experience, because he did not learn it. It revealed itself to him at its appointed time. But vision is his gift.**

The writing here makes it sound as if God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus revealed it to us. In truth, love is always with us. *We* are the ones who choose whether or not to remember it, who choose "the appointed time" in which we recall who we are as children of love. The experience naturally follows that decision, yet it is one we cannot give to anyone. Other spiritual systems and teachers may tell you they give you an experience of God's Love, but not *A Course in Miracles.* "All" we can do is remind people that the choice we made in that holy instant is the choice they can make as well. This is the meaning of vision, which we give through forgiveness. Once the ego thought system of separation is undone through this all-inclusive vision of forgiveness, we are restored to the innate awareness of our Self, the Love God gave in our creation.

**(5:4-6) This he can give directly, for Christ's knowledge is not lost, because He has a vision He can give to anyone who asks. The Father's Will and His are joined in knowledge. Yet there is a vision which the Holy Spirit sees because the Mind of Christ beholds it too.**

In this lesson, as in the previous one, Jesus identifies Christ with the Holy Spirit, an identification based on function. In terms of the Course's theology, Christ is in Heaven and does not know about this world; thus Jesus uses the term *Christ* loosely. He elsewhere speaks of the *face of Christ,* the Course's symbol of forgiveness, even though in truth Christ does not have a face. Here, *Christ's vision* is the same as the perception of the Holy Spirit, and Christ shares His dualistic function, described in *A Course in Miracles* as if He had one foot in Heaven (knowledge) and another in the dream (perception) (e.g., T-6.11.7). Thus, vision undoes the perception of sin and separation that never was. In this passage from the text, Jesus discusses *vision* in the context of being the result of putting our *faith* in the Holy Spirit, leading to the *belief* in the truth of His message:

> Faith and belief and vision are the means by which the goal of holiness is reached. Through them the Holy Spirit leads you to the real world, and away from all illusions where your faith was laid. This is His direction; the only one He ever sees. And when you wander, He reminds you there is but one. His faith and His belief and vision are all for you. And when you have accepted them completely instead of yours, you will have need of them no longer. For faith and vision and belief are meaningful only before the state of certainty is reached. In Heaven they are unknown. Yet Heaven is reached through them (T-21.III.4).

**(6:1) Here is the joining of the world of doubt and shadows made with the intangible.**

The "intangible" is the Holy Spirit, or the principle of the Atonement that is outside the dream, to which we bring the wrong-minded thought system of the ego's "world of doubt and shadows." The result is the real world, beautifully described in the text:

> This world of light, this circle of brightness is the real world, where guilt meets with forgiveness. Here the world outside is seen anew, without the shadow of guilt upon it. Here are you forgiven, for here you have forgiven everyone. Here is the new perception, where everything is bright and shining with innocence, washed in the waters of forgiveness, and cleansed of every evil thought you laid upon it. Here there is no attack upon the Son of God, and you are welcome (T-18.IX.9:1-5).

**(6:2) Here is a quiet place within the world made holy by forgiveness and by love.**

Here is found perception's correction and the ego's undoing:

> Forgiveness brings no little miracles to lay before the gate of Heaven. Here the Son of God Himself comes to receive each gift that brings him nearer to his home. Not one is lost, and none is cherished more than any other. Each reminds him of his Father's Love as surely as the rest. And each one teaches him that what he feared he loves the most (T-26.IV.4:1-5).

**(6:3-7) Here are all contradictions reconciled, for here the journey ends.**

## Lesson 158

**Experience – unlearned, untaught, unseen – is merely there. This is beyond our goal, for it transcends what needs to be accomplished. Our concern is with Christ's vision. This we can attain.**

The journey ends at the real world or Heaven's gate, beyond which is not the Course's goal, for love has no counterpart in the perceptual world. The world's undoing is the sole focus of forgiveness, whose other name is Christ's vision, reflecting the Atonement thought that God's Son is not separate from His Source. I am thus not asked to experience you as one with me, but to begin learning that you and I share the same need, purpose, and goal. Vision teaches that you and I are not different in any way but the superficial. The seeming differences that keep us separate from each other exist only on the level of form, part of the ego's plan to convince us that separation is reality and unity is illusion. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, is to teach us we all share the need to learn forgiveness. If reality is the unity of God and Christ, perception of differences must be part of the ego's illusion. Anything that helps us realize we are one in purpose reflects the non-dualistic truth of our oneness in Heaven.

**(7:1-2) Christ's vision has one law. It does not look upon a body, and mistake it for the Son whom God created.**

This does not mean we are asked to deny the body, but to deny the ego's interpretation of the body – indulging specialness as a way of keeping us separate. Recall this passage:

> Salvation does not ask that you behold the spirit and perceive the body not. It merely asks that this should be your choice. For you can see the body without help, but do not understand how to behold a world apart from it. It is your world salvation will undo, and let you see another world your eyes could never find (T-31.VI.3:1-4).

I thus look at the body, but do not give it the power I had given it in the past. I do not see the body as the source of my pleasure or pain, but as a mere expression of thought. Therefore, if I see your body as an expression of guilt or sin, it is because I projected that thought from my mind onto you. Again, this can be taught, and the experience of love that is beyond vision simply appears when the interferences to its remembrance are gone.

**(7:3) It beholds a light beyond the body; an idea beyond what can be touched, a purity undimmed by errors, pitiful mistakes, and fearful thoughts of guilt from dreams of sin.**

The problem is that in the original instant we chose the ego's interpretation of the tiny, mad idea over the Holy Spirit's. Similarly, the problem within the dream of our lives is our choosing the ego's interpretation of the body, inevitably leading us to believe it will give us what we need – special hate, in which I scapegoat others to maintain my innocence and their guilt; or special love, in which I use another to fill a need God could not fill. Either way, the body symbolizes sin, and therefore deserves attack. Yet when we look through Jesus's eyes, we look beyond the *form* of sin's seemingly solid darkness to the *content* of the light's call:

> If you but recognized how little stands between you and your awareness of your union with your brother! Be not deceived by the illusions it presents of size and thickness, weight, solidity and firmness of foundation. Yes, to the body's eyes it looks like an enormous solid body, immovable as is a mountain. Yet within you is a Force that no illusions can resist. This body only seems to be immovable; this Force is irresistible in truth. What, then, must happen when they come together? Can the illusion of immovability be long defended from what is quietly passed through and gone beyond? (T-22.V.5)

Again, we are not asked to deny our bodies, but to see them as classrooms in which we choose the teacher who will help us learn that what we experience outside comes from the decision we made within.

**(7:4-5) It sees no separation. And it looks on everyone, on every circumstance, all happenings and all events, without the slightest fading of the light it sees.**

Christ's vision helps us realize we do not have separate interests – our needs are not met at another's expense. It is crucial to understand – as we saw in sentence 2 – that this does not mean that with Christ's vision we do not see a world and body. Our eyes continue to see them, but now through the "eyes" of a different Teacher. Instead of choosing the ego's interpretation of the world we see – always a form of specialness – we choose the Holy Spirit's, which sees us all as walking a common path to a common goal. Whether the path differs in form is irrelevant. We *all* are here because we believed the ego's lies, and we *all* desperately want to be proven wrong. The following passage, written at New Year's, is Jesus' prayer for us to make a new beginning – from separation to oneness:

> This is the time in which a new year will soon be born from the time of Christ.... Say, then, to your brother:
>
> *I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself.*
> *I know that you will be released, unless I want to use you to imprison myself.*
> *In the name of my freedom I choose your release, because I recognize that we will be released together. ...*
>
> Make this year different by making it all the same. And let all your relationships be made holy for you (T-15.XI.10:1, 4-7; 8:11-12).

**(8:1) This can be taught; and must be taught by all who would achieve it.**

We return to the lesson's theme: "I learn to give as I receive." If you want to learn the lesson of forgiveness, you need to demonstrate it. Whenever you hold grievances, become upset, or think salvation comes from outside, you but state you do not want to learn, for you do not want to experience the lesson's implications. To learn forgiveness means to understand that your specialness and individuality are not only not what you thought; they are not anything at all. This you would teach by example, and the equality

of teaching and learning is a major theme:

> A good teacher clarifies his own ideas and strengthens them by teaching them. Teacher and pupil are alike in the learning process. They are in the same order of learning, and unless they share their lessons conviction will be lacking (T-4.I.1-3).

> The role of teaching and learning is actually reversed in the thinking of the world.... The course.... emphasizes that to teach *is* to learn, so that teacher and learner are the same....
>
> To teach is to demonstrate.... From your demonstration others learn, and so do you.... You cannot give to someone else, but only to yourself, and this you learn through teaching (M-in.1:1,5; 2:1,3,6).

It is important to know that your thoughts of specialness are not the real problem, which rests with the mind's decision not to learn Jesus' lessons – to be right and he wrong. You prove this by judging the world to be a terrible place in which terrible things happen, or a wonderful place in which wonderful things happen. However, these are but opposites sides of the same ego coin, as we saw in Lesson 155.

**(8:2) It requires but the recognition that the world can not give anything that faintly can compare with this in value; nor set up a goal that does not merely disappear when this has been perceived.**

In other words, you realize that nothing in this world will make you happier than Christ's vision. This is not meant to be an abstract principle, but one to be experienced specifically in your daily life. Sharing Christ's vision means not to see your needs as separate from anyone else's. Strive to be aware of the subtle forms of special love and hate in which you try to defend against learning that principle, attempting to prove you are right and *A Course in Miracles* is wrong.

**(8:3-4) And this you give today: See no one as a body. Greet him as the Son of God he is, acknowledging that he is one with you in holiness.**

Jesus does not mean literally not to see the body, as we have already discussed. It is the ego's interpretation of the body as sinful he wants us not to see, by teaching us to see through his eyes instead:

> Your brother's sinlessness is given you in shining light, to look on with the Holy Spirit's vision and to rejoice in along with Him. For peace will come to all who ask for it with real desire and sincerity of purpose, shared with the Holy Spirit and at one with Him on what salvation is. Be willing, then, to see your brother sinless, that Christ may rise before your vision and give you joy. And place no value on your brother's body, which holds him to illusions of what he is (T-20.VI11.3:1-4).

The next paragraph extends the first principle of miracles: *there is no order of difficulty among them.* All problems are the same, because they come from one thought. The reader may recall our discussion of Lessons 79 and 80, in which Jesus emphasizes there is but one problem – separation – and one solution – Atonement:

**(9:1-3) Thus are his sins forgiven him, for Christ has vision that has power to overlook them all. In His forgiveness are they gone. Unseen by One they merely disappear, because a vision of the holiness that lies beyond them comes to take their place.**

This does not mean the physical world necessarily disappears, but that you cease to identify with the ego's thought system of separation – sin, guilt, and fear – and thus the world that arose from it will no longer be your experience. In that holy instant of right-minded decision the body does not exist. Physical eyes will continue to see it, but the "you" that sees will no longer be there, for you have stepped outside the dream. Your reality has become the love of Jesus and not anything of the world. All problems thus disappear because they came from the belief in separation. If you rejoin God through the Holy Spirit, the sin of separation is gone. Therefore, if you define problems as separation, and in the holy instant you are not separate, there can be no problems and no sin. In that instant the world is healed as well.

**(9:4-6) It matters not what form they took, nor how enormous they appeared to be, nor who seemed to be hurt by them. They are no more. And all effects they seemed to have are gone with them, undone and never to be done.**

The form of the problem, the form of ecstasy or pain, does not matter. The instant you step outside the dream, the form is gone. The principle is simple, as reason now explains:

> Reason will tell you that the form of error is not what makes it a mistake. If what the form conceals is a mistake, the form cannot prevent correction. The body's eyes see only form. They cannot see beyond what they were made to see. And they were made to look on error and not see past it. Theirs is indeed a strange perception, for they can see only illusions, unable to look beyond the granite block of sin, and stopping at the outside form of nothing. To this distorted form of vision the outside of everything, the wall that stands between you and the truth, is wholly true. Yet how can sight that stops at nothingness, as if it were a solid wall, see truly? It is held back by form, having been made to guarantee that nothing else but form will be perceived (T-22.III.5).

Within the dream of form, pleasure and pain are quite real. When you are outside it, however, the body literally does not exist, which Christ's vision helps us to understand. Achieving that state completely is the real world, unlike in the holy instants where our minds still fluctuate, and fear of forgiveness drives us back to the ego's unholy instants of sin.

**(10) Thus do you learn to give as you receive. And thus Christ's vision looks on you as well. This lesson is not difficult to learn, if you remember in your brother you but see yourself. If he be lost in sin, so must you be; if you see light in him, your sins have been forgiven by yourself. Each brother whom you meet today provides another chance to let Christ's vision shine on you, and offer you the peace of God.**

The bottom line is so incredibly simple it is astonishing how often we forget. If we could truly be aware that every judgment we make and hold against someone is a judgment against ourselves, keeping us outside the Kingdom, we would never judge. Yet amnesia is a major weapon of the ego, and so we forget we are one, and that – literally – the way we see, experience, and react to another reflects a choice we make for ourselves. Again, if we recognized that each and every time we become upset – major or minor – we reflect a decision to keep ourselves separate from love, we would not attack. Thus we need a course and teacher to explain that we continually judge because it is precisely love that we fear – in its presence our specialness and uniqueness are gone, as is our separate existence.

It is essential I be aware of the connection between how I experience people and myself, and its underlying effect. When I choose to see another as different from me, I am seeking to prove I am right and God is wrong. I do not care how miserable I am, because my misery itself will demonstrate even further that someone did this to me. Throughout the day, therefore, I need pay careful attention to how I respond to people and circumstances, and then see how these responses offer the opportunity of re-membering the mind's decision I forgot. That is why it is helpful to see the world as a classroom, and to develop a relationship with Jesus. His teaching reminds me that my experience with you directly reflects what I have experienced with him. If I feel one with you – no barrier exists between us – I know that no barrier exists between me and him. On the other hand, when I see differences between us – your body has what I want or hate – I know I hold a thought that says I am separate from Jesus, and therefore separate from God.

**(11:1-2) It matters not when revelation comes, for that is not of time. Yet time has still one gift to give, in which true knowledge is reflected in a way so accurate its image shares its unseen holiness; its likeness shines with its immortal love.**

Jesus is saying we need not worry about God, or pay attention to Heaven, love or truth. Instead, we should focus on our experiences within the dream. By making its thought system real, we give the ego a gift. However, with Jesus as our teacher, we give ourselves the gift of realizing this world is not a prison, but a loving classroom that will gently lead us home. He instructs us similarly – not to focus on reality – at the end of the ten characteristics of God's teachers:

> You may have noticed that the list of attributes of God's teachers does not include things that are the Son of God's inheritance. Terms like love, sinlessness, perfection, knowledge and eternal truth do not appear in this context. They would be most inappropriate here. What God has given is so far beyond our curriculum that learning but disappears in its presence (M-4.X.3:1-4).

Thus, in effect, Jesus says to us: "Instead of the truth, focus on the world you made to keep love out. Now it is your classroom of forgiveness, in which you learn to accept the immortal love that is God's gift to you."

**(11:3-4) We practice seeing with the eyes of Christ today. And by the holy gifts we give, Christ's vision looks upon ourselves as well.**

The purpose of each day is to be mindful of our desire for vision, and to practice the lesson when we are tempted to forget. We close with the last two stanzas of Helen's lovely poem, "The Quiet Dream," a beautiful portrait of Christ's vision, the gift of peace Jesus offers to return us to our Father's Love:

> There is a light that shines upon this world,
> And judges it as Christ would have it judged.
> There is no condemnation on it. He
> Beholds it sinless, in the light that shines
> From His Own face. His vision looks upon
> The sure reflection of His Father's Love;
> The picture calling up His memory.
> What can remain of evil in the world
> Christ's vision looks upon? And what could still
> Appear to me as fearful, with the light
> Of His perfection on it? What could teach
> Me sorrow has a cause, or death is real?
> Help me forgive the world. The peace You give
> In my forgiveness will be given me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 65)

* *A Vast Illusion: Time According to A Course in Miracles;* "From Time to Timelessness" (audio tape); "The Time Machine" (audio, video tape).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 159**
**I give the miracles I have received.**

Extending the previous lesson, Jesus teaches the unity of giving and receiving, and how it reflects Christ's vision. We shall also speak further about the real world.

**(1:1-2) No one can give what he has not received. To give a thing requires first you have it in your own possession.**

If I have received guilt from my ego, the law of projection dictates that I must also give it. If I have accepted the Holy Spirit's Love, this – or its reflection – is what I must likewise give, through extension. Whether we are considering love or guilt, it is still true I must have it before I can give it; and if I give it, I must also receive it.

**(1:3-6) Here the laws of Heaven and world agree. But here they also separate. The world believes that to possess a thing, it must be kept. Salvation teaches otherwise.**

Giving and receiving are not the same in the world. Remember the *fourth law of chaos* - you have what you have taken (T-23.II.9:1-4). If I have taken it from you, you do not have it. The truth, however, is that if I have taken it from you – an attack – I am reinforcing the original attack on myself. Thus, the ego's giving and receiving are based on separation, while the Holy Spirit's are based on the principle of the Atonement.

**(1:7-8) To give is how to recognize you have received. It is the proof that what you have is yours.**

To recognize what I have chosen for myself – the ego's fear or the Holy Spirit's Love – I need to be aware of what I give to others. If I give conflict or guilt, that is what I received in my mind, through my choice. If I am gentle, kind, and forgiving, that is what I have chosen and received. The following passage nicely illustrates this fact of *projection making perception:*

> Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God. If you behold disaster and catastrophe, you tried to crucify him. If you see holiness and hope, you joined the Will of God to set him free. There is no choice that lies between these two decisions. And you will see the witness to the choice you made, and learn from this to recognize which one you chose. The world you see but shows you how much joy you have allowed yourself to see in you, and to accept as yours. And, if this *is* its meaning, then the power to give it joy must lie within you (T-21.in.2).

Thus, what we receive – damnation or forgiveness, disaster or joy – rests within our mind's power to choose. Jesus continues this important principle:

**(2) You understand that you are healed when you give healing. You accept forgiveness as accomplished in yourself when you forgive. You recognize your brother as yourself, and thus do you perceive that you are whole. There is no miracle you cannot give, for all are given you. Receive them now by opening the**

**storehouse of your mind where they are laid, and giving them away.**

The source of all miracles is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our minds. We open His storehouse to receive miracles by changing our wrong decision, gratefully acknowledging to Jesus that he is right and we are wrong – about everything. Indeed, we have come to recognize and accept that "Forgiveness *is* the key to happiness" (W-pI.121), and that the way to remember God is "to perceive the healing of your bother as the healing of yourself..." (T-12.11.2:9).

**(3:1-2) Christ's vision is a miracle. It comes from far beyond itself, for it reflects eternal love and the rebirth of love which never dies, but has been kept obscure.**

The thought of eternal love is already present in our minds, through the Holy Spirit. It but awaits our choosing the miracle of forgiveness, Heaven's reflection on earth.

**(3:3) Christ's vision pictures Heaven, for it sees a world so like to Heaven that what God created perfect can be mirrored there.**

Jesus speaks here of the real world. It is not Heaven but its minor, in which we have accepted the Atonement for ourselves and are outside the dream, realizing that everything happening in the world, and in the mind that made the world, is illusory. We learn this gently and gradually, as we are taught to exchange our nightmares of judgment and sorrow for the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of peace and love:

> You will first dream of peace, and then awaken to it. Your first exchange of what you made for what you want is the exchange of nightmares for the happy dreams of love. In these lie your true perceptions, for the Holy Spirit corrects the world of dreams, where all perception is.... Love waits on welcome, not on time, and the real world is but your welcome of what always was. Therefore the call of joy is in it, and your glad response is your awakening to what you have not lost (T-13.VII.9:1-3, 7-8).

**(3:4-5) The darkened glass the world presents can show but twisted images in broken parts. The real world pictures heaven's innocence.**

The fragmentation that constitutes our world comes from the mind's separation thoughts of sin and guilt. Since in the real world we are outside these thoughts, our experience is that we are all part of the light that is God's one Son, regardless of the ego's dream of darkness. The reference here is to St. Paul's famous passage:

> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The biblical passage is also referred to in the text, for example:

> Your mind is filled with schemes to save the face of your ego, and you do not seek the face of Christ. The glass in which the ego seeks to see its face is dark indeed. How can it maintain the trick of its existence except with mirrors? But

where you look to find yourself is up to you (T-4.IV.1:5-8).

The ego's darkened glass of separation is illuminated through recognizing our shared interests, reflecting the Oneness of Christ.

**(4:1-3) Christ's vision is the miracle in which all miracles are born. It is their source, remaining with each miracle you give, and yet remaining yours. It is the bond by which the giver and receiver are united in extension here on earth, as they are one in Heaven.**

When we give the miracle, Heaven's love on earth, we reinforce the fact that love is already within us. Our being "united in extension here on earth" means we share with everyone vision's single purpose of forgiveness, the reflection of God's one Will. As we read in one of Helen's "little" poems, "The Christ Thought":

> Hold to the Thought the Christ has placed in you.
> This was the Thought which came with you, and gives
> Your coming all the purpose that it has.
> You have no function but to find this Thought,
> To recognize it and to see it as
> Your chosen wish, while wishes still prevail,
> And the reflection of the Will of God,
> Which also is your will. Till that is known,
> Accept Christ's Thought, and let it be your own.
> (*The Gifts of God,* p. 19)

This Thought finds its meaning in the world through the miracle of giving and receiving.

**(4:4-6) Christ beholds no sin in anyone. And in His sight the sinless are as one. Their holiness was given by His Father and Himself.**

The sinless are as one because they share a single purpose. They are not literally one, but the statement "Christ beholds no sin in anyone" expresses the correction of the ego thought system that sees sin in everyone, including ourselves. Whenever you are tempted to blame anyone for anything, to see someone as enemy or savior, it is because you have made sin real, either in the other or yourself. Realize that making sin real comes from your decision – not from an inherent evil or sinfulness, but from your fear of being in the presence of God's Love. You want to practice, therefore, becoming aware how often during the day you express such fear, which will allow you to choose again. Again, blaming others is not a sin, but a mistake that will not bring you what you want. Recall Jesus' comforting words:

> Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken (T-10.V.6:1).

**(5:1) Christ's vision is the bridge between the worlds.**

This is the bridge between the ego's world of separation and the real world.

Christ's vision – our daily practice of forgiveness – enables us to shift identification from a dream figure whose only concern is being happy here, to a self happily outside the dream. The process is facilitated by the shift from seeking gratification through special relationships to seeing them as instruments of forgiveness. This shift in perspective is the bridge that will take us Home:

> The bridge itself is nothing more than a transition in the perspective of reality. On this side, everything you see is grossly distorted and completely out of perspective. What is little and insignificant is magnified, and what is strong and powerful cut down to littleness.... This frame of reference is built around the special relationship. Without this illusion there could be no meaning you would still seek here (T-16.VI. 7:1-3, 6-7).

**(5:2-4) And in its power can you safely trust to carry you from this world into one made holy by forgiveness. Things which seem quite solid here are merely shadows there; transparent, faintly seen, at times forgot, and never able to obscure the light that shines beyond them. Holiness has been restored to vision, and the blind can see.**

In the real world you realize everything here is a shadow of an inherently unreal thought. In this world, however, things seem solid, the body quite substantial as a source of pain or pleasure. Yet, when outside the dream, the world and everyone in it are seen for what they are: mere figures in a dream of separation. Thus are all our judgmental thoughts no longer justified, and the light of forgiveness come to illuminate our brothers and ourselves:

> And now the blind can see, for that same song they sing in honor of their Creator gives praise to them as well. The blindness that they made will not withstand the memory of this song. And they will look upon the vision of the Son of God, remembering who he is they sing of. What is a miracle but this remembering? And who is there in whom this memory lies not? The light in one awakens it in all. And when you see it in your brother, you *are* remembering for everyone (T-21.I.10).

This passage is senseless as long as we think we are reading these words with our eyes, and understanding them with our brains. As long as that is our bodily experience – which it almost always is – these words will ultimately be meaningless to us. Their meaning is established, however, by the realization we can learn not to take things as seriously as before. As we continue to practice *A Course in Miracles,* what used to bother us will do so less and less. What had heretofore seemed so vital and important to our happiness will diminish over time. All this we can learn, and this will lead us closer to the experience that helps us realize all this is literally a dream. And we will see! And we will see at last!

**(6:1-2) This is the Holy Spirit's single gift; the treasure house to which you can appeal with perfect certainty for all the things that can contribute to your happiness. All are laid here already.**

The gift of Christ's vision is the recognition that nothing here will make us truly

happy. In learning this our true happiness is found.

**(6:3-5) All can be received but for the asking. Here the door is never locked, and no one is denied his least request or his most urgent need. There is no sickness not already healed, no lack unsatisfied, no need unmet within this golden treasury of Christ.**

There is no problem in the world or body that cannot be solved by our choosing a different teacher and stepping with him out of the dream. This is the basis of salvation, within which is "Christ's golden treasury":

> Count, then, the silver miracles and golden dreams of happiness as all the treasures you would keep within the storehouse of the world.... The dream of healing in forgiveness lies, and gently shows you that you never sinned. The miracle would leave no proof of guilt to bring you witness to what never was. And in your storehouse it will make a place of welcome for your Father and your Self. The door is open, that all those may come who would no longer starve, and would enjoy the feast of plenty set before them there. And they will meet with your invited Guests the miracle has asked to come to you (T-28.III.7:1; 8:4-8).

**(7) Here does the world remember what was lost when it was made. For here it is repaired, made new again, but in a different light. What was to be the home of sin becomes the center of redemption and the hearth of mercy, where the suffering are healed and welcome. No one will be turned away from this new home, where his salvation waits. No one is stranger to him. No one asks for anything of him except the gift of his acceptance of his welcoming.**

When we go to Jesus in our right minds – outside the dream of sin and suffering – what we just read will become real to us. In that holy instant all problems are solved and no person turned away, for no one is a stranger. In the experience of Christ's vision we are perceived and understood as one, as this previously quoted passage so beautifully reminds us:

> Where sin once was perceived will rise a world that will become an altar to the truth, and you will join the lights of Heaven there, and sing their song of gratitude and praise. And as they come to you to be complete, so will you go with them. For no one hears the song of Heaven and remains without a voice that adds its power to the song, and makes it sweeter still. And each one joins the singing at the altar that was raised within the tiny spot that sin proclaimed to be its own. And what was tiny then has soared into a magnitude of song in which the universe has joined with but a single voice (T-26.IV.5).

**(8:1-3) Christ's vision is the holy ground in which the lilies of forgiveness set their roots. This is their home. They can be brought from here back to the world, but they can never grow in its unnourishing and shallow soil.**

Forgiveness has its home in Christ's vision, which sees no differences where there are none. Thus, when you are tempted to see differences and make them significant, you do not want to be forgiven, for you know if you are, you will no longer

know who you are. Your fear of such forgetting continually drives you back to your "friends": grievances, anxiety, and despair. Yet, after choosing a holy instant and experiencing yourself back in the body, the specialness that used to satisfy no longer does. You realize *your* forgiveness was really *forgiveness-to-destroy* (S-2.11), for true forgiveness, based on Christ's vision, sees only shared purpose. The seeming reality of the ego, which thrived in the "nourishing and shallow soil" of unforgiveness, has been undone, for the specialness of differences has been forgiven.

**(8:4-6) They need the light and warmth and kindly care Christ's charity provides. They need the love with which He looks on them. And they become His messengers, who give as they received.**

Thus, the lilies of forgiveness – the subject here – have their basis in love's presence in our minds. If we do not return to that presence, with Jesus as our teacher and guide, everything we do will be fraught with specialness and separation. The issue is always which teacher we choose, and Jesus' love provides us with the soil that nourishes forgiveness.

**(9:1) Take from His storehouse, that its treasures may increase.**

Jesus again urges us to come to where he is: the right mind that contains the treasure. Thus it makes no sense – except to the ego – to bring Jesus into the world, where his treasure is not. If we truly want happiness and fulfillment in our lives, we must go to their source – to bring illusion to the truth, not truth to the illusion. When we then return to the illusion, we do so differently. It is essential to understand that if we sincerely want to forgive, to see our brother differently in order to remember we never left God, we have no choice but to go to the treasure house of miracles in our minds, away from the wrong-minded guilt and fear.

**(9:2-4) His lilies do not leave their home when they are carried back into the world. Their roots remain. They do not leave their source, but carry its beneficence with them, and turn the world into a garden like the one they came from, and to which they go again with added fragrance.**

Jesus stresses this idea in Lesson 184. We strive to return to the light, where we remember the truth and our real teacher. When we then go back to the world's darkness, we are inevitably different, for our perspective is now the light and love of Jesus. Everything we see here reflects his presence, and we are asked to bring our brothers with us as we return to the garden of forgiveness, the mind's source of the dream:

> Go out and find them, for they bring your Self with them. And lead them gently to your quiet garden, and receive their blessing there. So will it grow and stretch across the desert, leaving no lonely little kingdoms locked away from love, and leaving you inside. And you will recognize yourself, and see your little garden gently transformed into the Kingdom of Heaven, with all the Love of its Creator shining upon it (T-18.VIII.10).

Thus, if we are upset, angry, or in any way involved with specialness, we need but turn to the source in the mind – the decision maker's having chosen the ego – and

choose again. At that point, whatever we address here will be seen differently. The world does not disappear, but its importance recedes as we walk into our garden of lilies, with Jesus and all our brothers:

> In peace I come, and urge you now to make an end to time and step into eternity with me. There will not be a change that eyes can see, nor will you disappear from things of time. But you will hold my hand as you return because we come together *(The Gifts of God,* p. 117).

**(9:5-7) Now are they twice blessed. The messages they brought from Christ have been delivered, and returned to them. And they return them gladly unto Him.**

The double blessing is that both you and I will be blessed – I give the miracles I received. When I see you through the eyes of Jesus, you are reminded of the right-minded choice you can make, even as that choice is reinforced in me.

**(10:1-4) Behold the store of miracles set out for you to give. Are you not worth the gift, when God appointed it be given you? Judge not God's Son, but follow in the way He has established. Christ has dreamed the dream of a forgiven world.**

Jesus is letting us know once again that the miracle, too, is an illusion. Its world is not reality but the reflection of truth: Christ's dream of forgiveness.

**(10:5) It is His gift, whereby a sweet transition can be made from death to life; from hopelessness to hope.**

Jesus is referring to the bridge between the ego's world and the real world:

> Forgiveness ... [is] a way in which the unknowing can bridge the gap between their perception and the truth. They cannot go directly from perception to knowledge because they do not think it is their will to do so.... the unity that it [forgiveness] reflects becomes His Will. It is the only thing still in the world in part, and yet the bridge to Heaven (C-3.2:1-2; 5:2-3).

**(10:6-8) Let us an instant dream with Him. His dream awakens us to truth. His vision gives the means for a return to our unlost and everlasting sanctity in God.**

We are asked to be mindful of how we perceive others, for this offers us a mirror that reveals how we first perceived ourselves. If I judge you, it is because I first judged myself; but since I am unaware of my self-condemnation, I need the world to be my classroom with Jesus as my teacher. He helps me recognize that you and I are not different, because we have never left the Oneness of God. This Oneness is now reflected in my forgiveness, which undoes the belief in the separation. Thus are we all healed as one, returned to our shared awareness of God's Will. Let us together pray these lovely words from *Psychotherapy,* as the lesson closes:

> Let us stand silently before God's Will, and do what it has chosen that we

do. There is one way alone by which we come to where all dreams began. And it is there that we will lay them down, to come away in peace forever. Hear a brother call for help and answer him. It will be God to Whom you answer, for you called on Him. There is no other way to hear His Voice. There is no other way to seek His Son. There is no other way to find your Self. Holy is healing, for the Son of God returns to Heaven through its kind embrace. For healing tells him, in the Voice for God, that all his sins have been forgiven him (P-2.V.8).

Lesson 160

I am at home. Fear is the stranger here.

Our theme now shifts, as this lesson focuses on the mind's power to choose whether we will make our home in the ego's thought system of fear, or the Holy Spirit's thought system of love.

(1) Fear is a stranger to the ways of love. Iden tify with fear, and you will be a stranger to your self. And thus you are unknown to you. What is your Self remains an alien to the part of you which thinks that it is real, but different from yourself. Who could be sane in such a ci rcum stance? Who but a madman could believe he is what he is not, and judge against himself?

We have seen – earlier in the workbook and in the text – similar discussion of the ego's attempts to confuse us about our identity. This is a representative passage that addresses our having welcomed fear into the mind instead of light, and the painful price we pay as a result:

> Fear and grief are your guests, and they go with you and abide with you on the way. But the dark journey is not the way of God's Son. Walk in light and do not see the dark companions, for they are not fit companions for the Son of God, who was created of light and in light. The Great Light always surrounds you and shines out from you. How can you see the dark companions in a light such as this? If you see them, it is only because you are denying the light. But deny them instead, for the light is here and the way is clear (T-11.III.4:4-10).

When the decision-making Son of God chooses the ego over the Holy Spirit, he automatically makes himself a stranger to Christ. At that point the Self becomes an alien, and the ego's thought system welcomed in Its place, symbolized here by fear. When I welcome the real stranger into my mind, it becomes my identity – the home of sin, guilt, and fear. Who I truly am – spirit – becomes the alien stranger. Thus I have become insane, believing I am who I am not; and who I am not, I now believe I am. It is a true identity crisis.

(2:1) There is a stranger in our midst, who comes from an idea so foreign to the tr uth he speaks a different language, looks upon a world truth does not know, and understands what truth regards as senseless.

You may recall that "Sin as an Adjustment" discusses this idea of a stranger whom we have brought into the mind's home:

> Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his insanity. There is a stranger in him, who wandered carelessly into the home of truth and who will wander off.... Ask not this transient stranger, "What am I?" He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know.... And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, "How shall I look upon the Son of God?" (T-20.III.7:1-2, 5, 10).

In the context of that discussion, the stranger is the thought system of the ego. Here, it is fear.

In the workbook passage, Jesus reflects the uncompromising nature of reality. Truth and love do not know of fear. In other words, God does not know about the illusion because it is outside His Mind and therefore does not exist. The "idea so foreign to the truth" is the separation from God; the truth is the Atonement principle that the separation never happened. Thus the ego speaks a language alien to the Holy Spirit's truth. Neither can understand the other, as this passage on guiltlessness and guilt expresses:

> The guiltless and the guilty are totally incapable of understanding one another. Each perceives the other as like himself, making both unable to communicate, because each sees the other unlike the way he sees himself. God can communicate only to the Holy Spirit in your mind, because only He shares the knowledge of what you are with God. And only the Holy Spirit can answer God for you, for only He knows what God is. Everything else that you have placed within your mind cannot exist, for what is not in communication with the Mind of God has never been. Communication with God is life. Nothing without it is at all (T-14.IV.10).

(2:2-4) Stranger yet [note the word play on stranger], he does not recognize to whom he comes, and yet maintains his home belongs to him, while he is alien now who is at home. And yet, how easy it would be to say, "This is my home. Here I belong, and will not leave because a madman says I must."

We have forgotten who we are and have thus made ourselves homeless. We abandoned our true home and abdicated our reality, adopting instead a home that is not really ours. In fact, it is not there at all. It is important to know we made this choice not just once, but continually, choosing littleness over magnitude. We are already familiar with Jesus telling us we ask not for too much, but for far too little:

> What is the Will of God? He wills His Son have everything. And this He guaranteed when He created him as everything.... Here does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little. He would sacrifice his own identity with everything, to find a little treasure of his own. And this he cannot do without a sense of isolation, loss and loneliness. This is the treasure he has sought to find. And he could only be afraid of it. Is fear a treasure? Can uncertainty be what you want? Or is it a mistake about your will, and what you really are? (T-26.VII.11:1-3,7-14)

The little we ask for is some relief from fear, without realizing we should really ask for its total elimination. Yet the ego tells us that if there is no fear there is no I, because our bodily identity comes from fear, born of the need to escape the wrath of God in our minds. In this world, therefore, we are creatures of fear, and Jesus often tells us this is the origin and content of dreams—his symbol for the separated state. Here are three representative examples:

> For every dream is but a dream of fear, no matter what the form it seems to take. The fear is seen within, without, or both. Or it can be disguised in pleasant form. But never is it absent from the dream, for fear is the material of dreams, from which they all are made. Their form can change, but they cannot be made of something else (T-29.IV.2:2-6).

> The new dreams will lose their temporary appeal and turn to dreams of fear, which is the content of all dreams (P-3.II.6:6).

> Fear is the one emotion of the world. Its forms are many – call them what you will but it is one in content.... There are no scraps of dreams. Each one contains the whole of fear, the opposite of love, the hell that hides the memory of God, the crucifixion of His holy Son (The Gifts of God, pp. 115, 116).

If there is no fear, again, I do not exist. In the state of fear, therefore, love and my Self are the stranger, as is my teacher Jesus. I choose instead the one who teaches that my fear is justified, giving the world's madness the power to rob me of my home: the peace of God.

(3:1) What reason is there for not saying this?

Jesus thus asks: "Why would you not say your home is the right mind? Because the ego screams its raucous insanity does not mean you have to listen to it."

(3:2-3) What could the reason be except that you had asked this stranger in to take your place, and let you be a stranger to yourself? No one would let himself be dispossessed so need lessly, unless he thought there were another home more suited to his tastes.

This paragraph tells me the problem. I believe this world and body give me what I want, as does the ego's thought system that indulges my specialness, keeping my identity safe. It may not always be a happy identity, to say the very least, but there is a part of me that jumps for joy because of it, saying: "Isn't this wonderful? I exist! The more I suffer, the more I can hold others responsible for it. I can't lose!" It is important to understand this dynamic. We would not banish love, throw Jesus away, and embrace fear unless we believed the ego gave us something more suited to our taste: the preservation of our individuality – the ego's true home.

(4:1-2) Who is the stranger? Is it fear or you who are unsuited to the home which God pro vided for His Son?

"Who is the stranger?" – repeated like a musical leitmotif in the lesson. Love or fear? The right answer, of course, is fear, but we all believe that love is the stranger, because we banished it. Jesus' message to us, however, is that fear is unsuited to the home God gave us. We, as children of Love, belong with Him and with the Holy Spirit as our Teacher.

(4:3) Is fear His Own, created in His likeness?

This is taken from Genesis:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Genesis 1:26).

Jesus tells us that what is truly created in the image and likeness of God is love,

not fear.

(4:4-8) Is it fear that love completes, and is com pleted by? There is no h ome can shelter love and fear. They cannot coexist. If you are real, then fear must be illusion. And if fear is real, then you do not exist at all.

We repeatedly see this Level One statement: God or illusion, love or fear – with no in between. Love does not know of fear, nor does God know of the illusion of separation. The Course's metaphysical foundation is one or the other, exemplified in this syllogism based on the famous statement from John's first epistle - "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18):

> All aspects of fear are untrue because they do not exist at the creative level, and therefore do not exist at all. To whatever extent you are willing to submit your beliefs to this test, to that extent are your perceptions corrected. In sorting out the false from the true, the miracle proceeds along these lines:
>
> Perfect love casts out fear.
> If fear exists,
> Then there is not perfect love.
>
> But:
>
> Only perfect love exists.
> If there is fear,
> It produces a state that does not exist
> (T-1.VI.5: 1-8).

(5:1-3) How simply, then, the question is re solved. Who fears has but denied himself and said, "I am the stranger here. And so I leave my home to one more like me than myself, and give him all I thought belonged to me. "

I have thrown away my true Self for an identity of fear, thus becoming a child of separation instead of Oneness, abandoning my true home and giving it to a stranger.

(5:4) Now is he exiled of necessity, not knowing who he is, uncertain of all things but this; that he is not himself, and that his home has been de nied to him.

At some point we realize this world is not our home, but we have forgotten that we abandoned our real home. Moreover, we have projected all responsibility, believing our home has been denied us: "Someone did it to me." Thus the world was made, and then its source forgotten. The next lesson teaches that we made a world of specifics so there could be someone outside we could blame and hate: "Yes, I am not at home; yes, I am an orphan ... but it is not my fault!"

(6:1-3) What does he search for now? What can he find? A stranger to himself can find no home wherever he may look, for he has made return impossible.

This the real meaning of specialness: we search in vain for our home, desperately seeking love and happiness in the world, but never finding them.

> The ego is certain that love is dangerous, and this is always its central teaching. It never puts it this way; on the contrary, everyone who believes that the ego is salvation seems to be intensely engaged in the search for love. Yet the ego, though encouraging the search for love very actively, makes one proviso; do not find it. Its dictates, then, can be summed up simply as: "Seek and do not find."... The search the ego undertakes is therefore bound to be defeated. And since it also teaches that it is your identification, its guidance leads you to a journey which must end in perceived self- defeat. For the ego cannot love, and in its frantic search for love it is seeking what it is afraid to find.... Follow its teaching, then, and you will search for love, but will not recognize it (T-12.IV.1:1-4; 2:1-3; 3:5).

My return is impossible because I look in the wrong place. Once I turn my back on the Holy Spirit I am caught in the ego's wrong-minded body. I look there for what will make me happy and bring me peace; for spiritual, holy, and religious things to save me. Yet I will never find them in this world, because they exist only in my right mind—my home away from home.

(6:4-5) His way is lost, except a miracle will search him out and show him that he is no stranger now. The miracle will come.

Despite our having thrown away the right mind, it remains within. At some point we realize we made a mistake and understand why we are not happy. We then return to our minds and choose the Holy Spirit's miracle and find our Love:

> The Holy Spirit offers you another promise, and one that will lead to joy. For His promise is always, "Seek and you will find," and under His guidance you cannot be defeated. His is the journey to accomplishment, and the goal He sets before you He will give you (T-12. IV.4:4-6).

(6:6-8) For in his home his Self remains. It asked no stranger in, and took no alien thought to be Itself. And It will call Its Own unto Itself in rec ognition of what is Its Own.

This is the memory of Who we are as Christ, held for us by the Holy Spirit. Christ does not know about fear, the stranger, but we do. Thus our decision maker reverses its wrong decision and identifies now with this memory of our home, as we have seen in this familiar statement:

> You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality. Is it your decision to do so? (T-10.I.2:1-2)

(7:1-2) Who is the stranger? Is he not the one your Self calls not?

My true Self – another symbol for the Holy Spirit's Voice – does not call to my ego, nor to a fear of which It knows nothing. It merely shines in our minds like a

lighthouse beacon.

(7:3) You are unable now to recognize this stranger in your midst, for you have given him your rightful place.

I do not know that fear is the stranger, but know I exist as an individual body – afraid and upset, guilty and alone. I do not realize this has been my choice, for I believe fear is my reality and home. We have seen the passage describing how the ego makes it almost impossible to recognize truth's presence in our minds, expressed in the context of specialness and the Holy Spirit. Here it is again in its more complete form, paralleling our earlier discussion of the inability of truth and illusion to communicate with each other:

> You are not special. If you think you are, and would defend your specialness against the truth of what you really are, how can you know the truth? What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you.
>
> You can defend your specialness, but never will you hear the Voice for God beside it. They speak a different language and they fall on different ears. To every special one a different message, and one with different meaning, is the truth. Yet how can truth be different to each one? The special messages the special hear convince them they are different and apart; each in his special sins and "safe" from love, which does not see his specialness at all. Christ's vision is their "enemy," for it sees not what they would look upon, and it would show them that the specialness they think they see is an illusion (T-24.II.4-5).

(7:4-9) Yet is your Self as certain of Its Own as God is of His Son. He cannot be confused about creation. He is sure of what belongs to Him. No stranger can be interposed between His knowl edge and His Son 's reality. He does not know of strangers. He is certain of His Son.

Recall the oft-quoted and lovely words from the text: "not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). The separation had no effect upon truth, and God does not know of the ego, nor its thought system of fear. He simply is; and as His Son, we are one in His Being. Note how often Jesus returns to this important theme of God's perfect Love knowing nothing about the imperfect ego and its separation.

(8:1-3) God's certainty suffices. Whom He knows to be His Son belongs where He ha s set His Son forever. He has answered you who ask, "Who is the stranger? "

The problem is that we have not asked this question, and the purpose of A Course in Miracles is to have us ask it. When we do, we at least recognize there is something we do not know here, for we had been so positive we were right. We may not have liked fear or guilt, but we believed they were true. To raise the right question means asking who the stranger is – love or fear. Thus we recognize there is a choice.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 161**
**Give me your blessing, holy Son of God.**

This is an important lesson because of its integration of our two levels: the Course's abstract metaphysics with specific applications to our daily lives. It is thus particularly deserving of our thoughtful attention and study.

**(1:1) Today we practice differently, and take a stand against our anger, that our fears may disappear and offer room to love.**

Jesus begins by speaking to us on the level of our special relationships. As we know, the term itself never appears in the workbook or manual, yet whenever Jesus talks about forgiveness or anger, he refers to our specialness. The exercise in the second part of the lesson expresses the principle that the way I see you mirrors the way I see me: If I attack you, I attack myself; if I see you as a Son of God, I reflect my first having seen the Son in myself. With anger or unforgiveness out of the way, we have made room for the love that waited patiently behind the veils of specialness for our return to it.

**(1:2) Here is salvation in the simple words in which we practice with today's idea.**

I am saved from the awesome burden of my guilt as I learn to see the Christ in someone else. Over and over Jesus reminds us how very simple is his plan for salvation. Recall again these oft-quoted words:

> How simple is salvation! All it says is what was never true is not true now, and never will be. The impossible has not occurred, and can have no effects. And that is all (T-31.I.1:1-4).

What is true is forgiveness, the belief in shared interests; what is false is attack, the belief in separate interests. What could be simpler?

**(1:3) Here is the answer to temptation which can never fail to welcome in the Christ where fear and anger had prevailed before.**

Remember Jesus' definition of temptation as seeing someone as a body:

> Be vigilant against temptation, then, remembering that it is but a wish, insane and meaningless, to make yourself a thing that you are not. And think as well upon the thing that you would be instead. It is a thing of madness, pain and death; a thing of treachery and black despair, of failing dreams and no remaining hope except to die, and end the dream of fear. *This* is temptation; nothing more than this (T-31.VII.14:1-4).

> Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel. It sets the limits on what he can do; its power is the only strength he has; his grasp cannot exceed its tiny reach (T-31.VIII.1:1-3).

In this lesson, as always, Jesus is not suggesting we deny our physical perception of the body, but only the ego's interpretation of it, which always entails attack: I perceive you attacking me, or as one I am justified in attacking in self-defense. Yet, seeing you blessing me because I bless myself is my response to the temptation of believing in the ego's special purpose for all relationships. Restated, the blessing reflects our unity, because we share the need to escape from our shared ego. The ego continually tempts us to see what is not there – i.e., sin – and to not see what is truly there – the Son's blessing on himself.

**(1:4-5) Here is Atonement made complete, the world passed safely by and Heaven now restored. Here is the answer of the Voice for God.**

Jesus tells us the answer to all our problems lies in forgiveness. In this lesson, therefore, we see another way in which he emphasizes his course's basic theme: Forgiveness – the principle of the Atonement – undoes the block to our remembering Heaven's truth.

The tone of the lesson now shifts, and Jesus speaks to us from the perspective of Level One: the abstract natural state of reality contrasted with the specific unnatural state of illusion.

**(2:1-2) Complete abstraction is the natural condition of the mind. But part of it is now unnatural.**

The mind's natural condition is the Mind of Christ. The unnatural is the part of us that believes the separation has actually occurred, and that we exist in the world as bodies. The following passage from the text, partially familiar, describes these natural and unnatural states – abstract being and specific or concrete existence:

> ... the mind is naturally abstract. Part of the mind becomes concrete, however, when it splits. The concrete part believes in the ego, because the ego depends on the concrete. The ego is the part of the mind that believes your existence is defined by separation.... Creation and communication are synonymous.... communication is perfectly abstract, since its quality is universal in application....
>
> Existence as well as being rests on communication. Existence, however, is specific in how, what and with whom communication is judged to be worth undertaking. Being is completely without these distinctions.... Divine Abstraction takes joy in sharing. That is what creation means. "How," "what" and "to whom" are irrelevant, because real creation gives everything, since it can create only like itself (T-4.VII.1:2-5; 3:6, 9; 4:1-3; 5:4-6).

**(2:3-4) It does not look on everything as one. It sees instead but fragments of the whole, for only thus could it invent the partial world you see.**

The part of our minds that has identified with the ego does not see everyone or everything as one; it sees all things as part of a larger fragmentation. It cannot help this perception as it itself is a fragment. Since *projection makes perception,* the ego simply perceives what it is: a fragment of the whole. The following passage from the text cogently describes the substitute of specialness for love, fragmentation for wholeness:

> To substitute is to accept instead.... To substitute is to choose between, renouncing one aspect of the Sonship in favor of the other. For this special purpose, one is judged more valuable and the other is replaced by him. The relationship in which the substitution occurred is thus fragmented, and its purpose split accordingly. To fragment is to exclude, and substitution is the strongest defense the ego has for separation (T-18.I.1:1, 3-6).

You may recall Jesus' pun of the word *partial* in Lesson 127 (3:4). He repeats it here, and will do so yet again. *Partial* means both that we see the world *in part* – in parts or fragments – and through the *biased* view of the ego. The ego's purpose for the world is to establish our innocence at another's expense. Thus its insane view of the universe is perforce a fragmenting one.

**(2:5-3:1) The purpose of all seeing is to show you what you wish to see. All hearing but brings to your mind the sounds it wants to hear.**
**Thus were specifics made.**

We are provided with the rationale for the ego's making the physical universe: to project the guilt in the Son's mind over the belief he separated from God. At that pre-projection stage, guilt was abstract; not as love is, but in the sense of nonspecificity – not being localized in anyone or anything – because as yet there were no bodies. However, in a world of specifics we can now freely project this unconscious guilt onto everyone and everything around us, believing that the source of our distress lies in a specific body, rather than in the mind's decision to identify with the ego. Thus "the purpose of all seeing [and all senses]" – the purpose of the body – is to return to the mind the witnesses that prove the separation from God is a fact.

This is an important passage in an important lesson, for it illustrates what makes *A Course in Miracles* different from virtually all other spiritual paths. It teaches not only that the world is an illusion, but gives the specific motivation for our having made it: to see the cause of separation outside our minds. The ego's primary motivation is to keep the separation it believes it stole from God, but not to be responsible for it; a goal effectively served by projection. Therefore, we need a specific world for there to be specific people outside me onto whom I can project responsibility for my sinfulness. Thus: I believe I am here; I believe I am separated; I believe my body is real ... *but I am not responsible* – someone else is.

We can thus understand why the ego made our sensory organs: to prove there is a world outside us that is responsible, not only for our physical existence but for the suffering we undergo. Once the world was made, we nonetheless had to deal with our specific experiences here. It is this level of personal experience to which the rest of the third paragraph, and actually the entire lesson is devoted. Jesus is therefore not asking us to indulge in abstract metaphysical speculation as we live our daily lives in a body. Since we believe we are here, Jesus treats us as if we are here. That is why the language of *A Course in Miracles* takes the form it does, as we have observed many times before. He asks us to apply the metaphysics to the very specific circumstances in which we find ourselves, however illusory they may be; to have our relationships be made holy by the Holy Spirit, which then reflects the Oneness of Heaven. In the following, Jesus gently reminds us that substitution has no effect on reality, and fragmentation cannot change the unity that God created:

> Where the ego perceives one person as a replacement for another, the Holy Spirit sees them joined and indivisible. He does not judge between them, knowing they are one. Being united, they are one because they are the same. Substitution is clearly a process in which they are perceived as different. One would unite; the other separate. Nothing can come between what God has joined and what the Holy Spirit sees as one (T-18.I.2:2-7).

**(3:2-4) And now it is specifics we must use in practicing. We give them to the Holy Spirit, that He may employ them for a purpose which is different from the one we gave to them. Yet He can use but what we made, to teach us from a different point of view, so we can see a different use in everything.**

Recall this line from "The Special Function":

> Such is the Holy Spirit's kind perception of specialness; His use of what you made, to heal instead of harm (T-25.VI.4:1).

We made relationships so that through attacking others we could escape responsibility for our sin. This purpose makes our relationships special. Yet when we ask the Holy Spirit for help, they become classrooms for learning we were merely mistaken:

> All that you made can serve salvation easily and well. The Son of God can make no choice the Holy Spirit cannot employ on his behalf, and not against himself. Only in darkness does your specialness appear to be attack. In light, you see it as your special function in the plan to save the Son of God from all attack, and let him understand that he is safe, as he has always been, and will remain in time and eternity alike (T-25.V1.7:4-7).

Another important principle is stated here, to be repeated in a later lesson: we – the dreamers of the dream – wrote the script for everything we experience in our lives. The Holy Spirit does not send people to us, nor provide us with relationships. Thus He does not remove them, for He is simply a presence in our minds, offering a different way of looking at what we made. Relationships we made to kill, now become in His loving perception instruments of healing; not because the body heals, but because our right minds use the body and its relationships as opportunities for learning a different lesson. The function of our relationships thus shifts, as this lovely passage expresses:

> You have been called, together with your brother, to the most holy function this world contains. It is the only one that has no limits, and reaches out to every broken fragment of the Sonship with healing and uniting comfort. This is offered you, in your holy relationship. Accept it here, and you will give as you have accepted. The peace of God is given you with the glowing purpose in which you join with your brother. The holy light that brought you and him together must extend, as you accepted it (T-18.I.13).

**(4:1-3) One brother is all brothers. Every mind contains all minds, for every mind is one. Such is the truth.**

**Lesson 161**

Jesus returns to the metaphysical principle of his course: the oneness of the Sonship. This truth is reflected in our recognition that the separated aspects of God's one Son share a common mind, as we read in this passage about learning from the Holy Spirit:

> And it is thus the power of your learning will be proved to you by all the many different witnesses it finds. Your brother first among them will be seen, but thousands stand behind him, and beyond each one of them there are a thousand more. Each one may seem to have a problem that is different from the rest. Yet they are solved together. And their common answer shows the questions could not have been separate (T-27.V.10:3-7).

To forgive one person is to forgive all: the one is found in the many, and the many is the one.

We read now another of Jesus' statements that there is no way we can understand his words:

**(4:4-5) Yet do these thoughts make clear the meaning of creation? Do these words bring perfect clarity with them to you?**

Everyone lies who says they do. There is no way a specific individual can understand abstract and non-specific oneness. Jesus lets us know he does not expect such understanding. Recall his similar statement in the text:

> ... while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a Oneness joined as One is meaningless (T-25.I.7:1).

We shall return to the complete passage presently. Jesus continues:

**(4:6-8) What can they seem to be but empty sounds; pretty, perhaps, correct in sentiment, yet fundamentally not understood nor understandable. The mind that taught itself to think specifically can no longer grasp abstraction in the sense that it is all-encompassing. We need to see a little, that we learn a lot.**

In this clear statement, Jesus says: "I know you cannot understand when I speak of reality, so I will not dwell on it. Nor will I speak to you about love. However, I will speak of undoing the specific purpose of separation you gave your relationships, and help you change it to healing."

Our need is "to see a little," not everything. Jesus is not asking us to understand truth, but only to allow our gaze to remain rooted on our specific relationships and situations, but with a different teacher from whom we will learn a lot. Thus he repeatedly tells us that to forgive one person totally – seeing a little – is to have forgiven the ego and let it go. This lesson, therefore, is a plea that we pay careful attention to the specifics of our lives, inviting Jesus to help us understand the metaphysical abstractions he teaches elsewhere. He does not need us to master the metaphysics, but to understand it well enough to recognize that our goal is to learn from the One Who teaches us to reflect Divine Abstraction in the world of specifics. In a central passage, deserving of repeated quotations, Jesus describes how *he* has done this in *A Course in Miracles:*

> Since you believe that you are separate, Heaven presents itself to you as separate, too. Not that it is in truth, but that the link that has been given you to join the truth may reach to you through what you understand. Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth. Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding, in the part of you that shares His Father's Will. The Holy Spirit links the other part – the tiny, mad desire to be separate, different and special – to the Christ, to make the oneness clear to what is really one. In this world this is not understood, but can be taught....
>
> All this [forgiveness] takes note of time and place as if they were discrete, for while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a Oneness joined as One is meaningless. It is apparent that a mind so split could never be the Teacher of a Oneness which unites all things within Itself. And so What is within this mind, and does unite all things together, must be its Teacher. Yet must It use the language that this mind can understand, in the condition in which it thinks it is. And It must use all learning to transfer illusions to the truth, taking all false ideas of what you are, and leading you beyond them to the truth that *is* beyond them (T-25.I.5; 7:1-5).

Thus does Jesus use the "little" language of separation to lead us to the magnitude of truth.

**(5:1) It seems to be the body that we feel limits our freedom, makes us suffer, and at last puts out our life.**

It is the mind's wrong-minded decision maker that limits our happiness, brings us pain, and gives the illusion of life at birth, and life's end at death.

**(5:2) Yet bodies are but symbols for a concrete form of fear.**

Fear, as well as guilt, are non-concrete or nonspecific, for they are not localized in specific people or situations. The mind's abstract fear tells us God will punish us for our sin against Him, and this is what is projected onto the concrete fragments of our illusory world. Thus do the illusory guilt and fear in our minds metamorphose into guilty and fearful bodies.

**(5:3) Fear without symbols calls for no response, for symbols can stand for the meaningless.**

Needless to say, I *want* a response. I want to take my unconscious fear, project it, and say I am not responsible for the unhappiness and terror I feel; someone else is. Yet since there is no someone else, I have to invent one as an object of my projection. I thus write into my script one who becomes a concrete symbol of the sin, guilt, and fear I do not want to look at in myself.

**(5:4-5) Love needs no symbols, being true. But fear attaches to specifics, being false.**

Love does not have to be projected into symbols, because it is one. However, fear does, as the magical way to avoid responsibility for sin and God's wrathful punishment. I need only find the guilty ones in my life, point an accusing finger at them and tell God they are the ones who should be punished, not me: "Thus were specifics made." I cannot escape my punishment, the ego tells me, unless there are specific people for me to scapegoat. However, it is only the ego that seeks such subterfuge. Love, being true and beyond all symbols, simply is, and we remember its abstract being as we make room for it through forgiveness, letting go of all investment in the specifics of specialness and guilt:

> An empty space that is not seen as filled, an unused interval of time not seen as spent and fully occupied, become a silent invitation to the truth to enter, and to make itself at home.... For what you leave as vacant God will fill, and where He is there must the truth abide.... For this there are no symbols. Nothing points beyond the truth, for what can stand for more than everything? ... there is no symbol for totality. Reality is ultimately known without a form, unpictured and unseen.... Forgiveness vanishes and symbols fade, and nothing that the eyes have ever seen or ears have heard remains to be perceived. A power wholly limitless has come, not to destroy, but to receive its own.... Give welcome to the power beyond forgiveness, and beyond the world of symbols and of limitations. He would merely be, and so He merely is (T-27.III.4:1, 3, 5-6; 5:1-2; 7:1-2, 8-9).

**(6:1-2) Bodies attack, but minds do not. This thought is surely reminiscent of our text, where it is often emphasized.**

Here is another of those places in *A Course in Miracles* that could drive you to drink! Jesus says here that bodies attack and minds do not; but elsewhere he teaches that bodies do not attack and minds do. And there are still other places where he says that minds cannot attack at all. Let us examine some of these references, since they highlight not only Jesus' thoughts about the mind and the body, but also provide still another example of his flexible use of language.

Each of these three levels of statements is true in the context of the point Jesus is making. In this workbook passage he emphasizes our need for the body, for it allows us to attack another's. The justification for our attack is that we are the face of innocence; others attacked us first. Thus we need the body to carry out the ego's strategy of subterfuge. Our obvious experience, therefore, is that bodies attack, and can be attacked. Indeed, our world is built upon such a *kill or be killed* mentality. In discussing the crucifixion, for example, Jesus states:

> Assault can ultimately be made only on the body. There is little doubt that one body can assault another, and can even destroy it (T-6.I.4:1-2).

The ego, again, has made the body so that it could attack:

> Attack is always physical. When attack in any form enters your mind you are equating yourself with a body, since this is the ego's interpretation of the body (T-8.VII.1:1-2).

> Attitudes toward the body are attitudes toward attack.... To the ego the

> body is to attack *with.* Equating you with the body, it teaches that *you are* to attack with (T-8.VIII.1:1, 5-6).

Yet the body simply exists as the mind's pawn. Our hate, born of guilt over our perceived sin, is hidden – through projection – in someone else's body. Thus it is not the body that attacks but the mind, because *ideas leave not their source.* Bodies then symbolize the original attack thought, which is that I want to exist, even at God's expense – I will destroy Heaven so I can live. However, in order not to suffer the repercussions of that horrifyingly sinful thought, I project it onto a specific body, which I then believe attacks me, and so I am justified in counterattacking. Jesus wants us to understand this so we can do something about the problem:

> That is why you must realize that your hatred is in your mind and not outside it before you can get rid of it.... If you will recognize that all the attack you perceive is in your own mind and nowhere else, you will at last have placed its source, and where it begins it must end (T-12.III.7:10; 10:1).

> The purpose of attack is in the mind, and its effects are felt but where it is. Nor is the mind limited; so must it be that harmful purpose hurts the mind as one (T-24.IV.3:5-6).

> If the body is brought under the purpose of the mind, it becomes whole because the mind's purpose is one. Attack can only be an assumed purpose of the body, because apart from the mind the body has no purpose at all (T-8. VII.13:5-6).

The source of the body's attack is therefore the attack thought in the mind, and this thought – born in sin – is unreal. The root attack, from which has evolved all attacks the world has ever witnessed, and will yet witness, has never occurred. Therefore, attack has never been; only in dreams, which are patently not true. The third level – that minds do not attack at all – is a statement of the Atonement, which is that the attack thought never happened in the first place:

> Mind cannot attack, but it can make fantasies and direct the body to act them out.... the mind is clearly delusional. It cannot attack, but it maintains it can, and uses what it does to hurt the body to prove it can. The mind cannot attack, but it can deceive itself.... Would you not welcome and support the shift from fantasies of vengeance to release from them? Your perception of the body can clearly be sick, but project not this upon the body. For your wish to make destructive what cannot destroy can have no real effect at all. What God created is only what He would have it be, being His Will. You cannot make His Will destructive. You can make fantasies in which your will conflicts with His, but that is all (T-18.VI.3:5; 4:1-3; 5:2-7).

There is another way to look at the body, and this is Jesus' message. It can serve a right-minded purpose just as easily as a wrong-minded one. Under the Holy Spirit's kind and gentle tutelage, the body represents the shared purpose that reflects Heaven's unity. Thus does the symbol of attack become the symbol of forgiveness, "a beautiful lesson in communion ... until communion *is":*

> The Holy Spirit has given you love's messengers to send instead of those you trained through fear. They are as eager to return to you what they hold dear as are the others. If you send them forth, they will see only the blameless and the beautiful, the gentle and the kind. They will be as careful to let no little act of charity, no tiny expression of forgiveness, no little breath of love escape their notice. And they will return with all the happy things they found, to share them lovingly with you (T-19.IV-A.11:1-2; 12:3-7; 14:1-5).

**(7:5) Fear is insatiable, consuming everything its eyes behold, seeing itself in everything, compelled to turn upon itself and to destroy.**

The above passage on the ego's vicious dogs of fear, trained to search out evil-doers and devour them in obedience to their master's dictates, is a suitable image here. As Jesus emphasizes elsewhere, the ego's goal is murder, and it cares not whom it kills. For example:

> Attack in any form is equally destructive. Its purpose does not change. Its sole intent is murder... (T-23.III.1:3-5).

> Under the dusty edge of its distorted world the ego would lay the Son of God, slain by its orders, proof in his decay that God Himself is powerless before the ego's might, unable to protect the life that He created against the ego's savage wish to kill (T-19.IV-C.8:1).

We are attracted to death because it proves that sin and separation are real, and God is dead. Yet while I think I am killing you and the evil ones in my life, in the end it is my own death the ego desires, and my hatred of you is matched only by my hatred of myself. Here is another graphic passage where Jesus makes this point:

> What can specialness delight in but to kill? What does it seek for but the sight of death? Where does it lead but to destruction? Yet think not that it looked upon your brother first, nor hated him before it hated you. The sin its eyes behold in him and love to look upon it saw in you, and looks on still with joy. Yet is it joy

The specific body I see outside me is a split-off part of my own unconscious fear and hatred, which I do not want to see. I choose instead to see them in another, believing the murderer residing in me is in someone else, threatening to attack. This is projection: what we see mirrors what we first made real in our minds – the "sin" of separating from God. Rather than confront the guilt over our desire to throw away Heaven's Love, thereby destroying God, we deny its presence in our minds and get rid of it through projection, as this following passage from the text describes:

> Attack could never promote attack unless you perceived it as a means of depriving you of something you want. Yet you cannot lose anything unless you do not value it, and therefore do not want it. This makes you feel deprived of it, and by projecting your own rejection you then believe that others are taking it from you. You must be fearful if you believe that your brother is attacking you to tear the Kingdom of Heaven from you. This is the ultimate basis for all the ego's projection.... Projecting its insane belief that you have been treacherous to your Creator, it believes that your brothers, who are as incapable of this as you are, are out to take God from you. Whenever a brother attacks another, that *is* what he believes. Projection always sees your wishes in others. If you choose to separate yourself from God, that is what you will think others are doing to you (T-7.VII.8; 9:2-5).

**(8:3-4) Mistake not the intensity of rage projected fear must spawn. It shrieks in wrath, and claws the air in frantic hope it can reach to its maker and devour him.**

Jesus often uses this form of expression. He will say, for example: Pretend not I did not say this; *I did.* Pretend not the thought system in your mind is good; *it is not.* The ego's viciousness is illusory, but you will not recognize this until you look at it with me, realizing what you believe you are, and what you believe you have made around you. We are quite familiar with this important and comforting passage about looking with Jesus at our egos:

> No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready. Let us be very calm in doing this, for we are merely looking honestly for truth. The "dynamics" of the ego will be our lesson for a while, for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth (T-11.V.1).

Jesus thus would say to us: "Do not mistake the intensity of this hatred and vicious murderousness within, which you then see in everyone else. Say instead to your brother: 'I have hated you because I wished to see you as my maker instead of me. I did not believe I came from my own thought, but from the world that made me what I am.' This is the face of innocence described in "Self-Concept versus Self":

I am the thing you made of me, and as you look on me, you stand condemned because of what I am (T-31.V.5:3).

We continue speaking to our projected enemy: "Therefore, you had become my maker and molder of my self, and you deserved destruction as satisfaction for my justified wrath. However, I now change my perception, and see you and me differently."

Jesus now points to the travesty we made of the Self that God created:

**(9:1-2) This do the body's eyes behold in one whom Heaven cherishes, the angels love and God created perfect. This is his reality.**

Jesus no longer speaks of the body or the individual self, but the glorious and majestic Self of Christ we share. That is what we have pushed away, preferring instead an individual ego – the self of hatred rather than the Self of Love. We need to look at the specific ways in which we exemplify the ego's self-concept throughout the day, and bring them to the truth of our perfect Self, cherished by Heaven. Recall this early poem of Helen's, "Song to My Self," which sings of this innocent Self, shared by all and beloved by the angels:

> I cannot be replaced.
> I am unique In God's creation. I am held so dear
> By Him that it is madness to believe
> That I could suffer pain or loss or fear.
> Holy am I; in sinlessness complete,
> In wisdom infinite, in love secure,
> In patience perfect, and in faithfulness
> Beyond all thought of sin, and wholly pure.
> Who could conceive of suffering for me?
> Surely the mind that thought it is insane.
> I never left my Father's house. What need
> Have I to journey back to Him again?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 38)

Jesus asks us to accept this new image of ourselves, and so he continues:

**(9:3) And in Christ's vision is his loveliness reflected in a form so holy and so beautiful that you could scarce refrain from kneeling at his feet.**

This does not mean we are to kneel at someone's feet in awe or worship, which is a metaphor to express the holiness and reverence for the Christ that is not in this other person as such, but in the minds of all of us as one Son. This is another example of a statement that is not meant to be taken literally, but as poetry, wherein we move beyond the lovely words to their meaning.

**(9:4) Yet you will take his hand instead, for you are like him in the sight that sees him thus.**

Again, the light of Christ does not shine in us as specific persons, for it shines in all the seemingly separated aspects of the one Self.

**(9:5-9) Attack on him is enemy to you, for you will not perceive that in his hands is your salvation. Ask him but for this, and he will give it to you. Ask him not to symbolize your fear. Would you request that love destroy itself? Or would you have it be revealed to you and set you free?**

This is the central point I mentioned at the beginning of the lesson – the heart of *A Course in Miracles:* The way I see you is a reflection or shadow of the way I see myself. You may recall the wonderful passage at the end of "The Dreamer of the Dream," one that is always lovely to read, a true inspiration for the journey we take with our brothers:

> Dream softly of your sinless brother, who unites with you in holy innocence. And from this dream the Lord of Heaven will Himself awaken His beloved Son. Dream of your brother's kindnesses instead of dwelling in your dreams on his mistakes. Select his thoughtfulness to dream about instead of counting up the hurts he gave. Forgive him his illusions, and give thanks to him for all the helpfulness he gave. And do not brush aside his many gifts because he is not perfect in your dreams.... Let all your brother's gifts be seen in light of charity and kindness offered you. And let no pain disturb your dream of deep appreciation for his gifts to you (T-27.VII.15:1-6; 16:3-4).

As you go through your day, pay careful attention to the way you perceive others. This will reveal which teacher you have chosen. If you find yourself indulging in specialness, becoming bored, depressed, or critical of others, it is only because you first chose to see yourself as hateful. Rather than accept responsibility for that choice, you projected it and saw the hate in someone else. Yet when you understand that you see in this other person a projection of what you see in yourself, your ego reaction becomes a reminder that you made the wrong choice. This allows you to return to the mind where the mistake was made and choose again. It is thus not the other you forgive, but yourself for having chosen wrongly. Thus we use our bodies, not to witness to another's sin but to our shared sinlessness:

> Your function is to show your brother sin can have no cause. How futile must it be to see yourself a picture of the proof that what your function is can never be! The Holy Spirit's picture changes not the body into something it is not. It only takes away from it all signs of accusation and of blamefulness....
>
> Into this empty space, from which the goal of sin has been removed, is Heaven free to be remembered. Here its peace can come, and perfect healing take the place of death. The body can become a sign of life, a promise of redemption, and a breath of immortality to those grown sick of breathing in the fetid scent of death. Let it have healing as its purpose. Then will it send forth the message it received, and by its health and loveliness proclaim the truth and value that it represents (T-27.I.9:1-4; 10:1-5).

**(10:1) Today we practice in a form we have attempted earlier.**

The most prominent example of this familiar form came in Lesson 121. Being asked to take a specific person and look at him or her differently gives us an opportunity to look differently at ourselves. Since I believe I am a specific person, I have to learn

forgiveness in the context of a specific relationship.

**(10:2) Your readiness is closer now, and you will come today nearer Christ's vision.**

Jesus reflects to us our progress, although the journey is not complete. Since we have come this far, however, Jesus assumes we have learned enough that we will no longer try to justify our misperceptions, thus making room for the vision of Christ to replace the perception of hate.

**(10:3) If you are intent on reaching it, you will succeed today.**

Jesus returns to the theme of motivation. You have to really *want* to see yourself differently. Therefore, when you judge, or when you are angry, critical, upset, or involved in any form of specialness, try to understand that these responses reflect an underlying decision to remain *not* as God created you – you want to remain as something separate and apart, cherishing your individuality and choosing to make someone else responsible for it.

**(10:4-7) And once you have succeeded, you will not be willing to accept the witnesses your body's eyes call forth. What you will see will sing to you of ancient melodies you will remember. You are not forgot in Heaven. Would you not remember it?**

Once we have taken Christ's vision as our own, which means we have let Jesus be our teacher instead of the ego, the body's eyes will still see what they see, but our healed minds will provide a different interpretation. Rather than witnessing to the ego's thought system of separation and specialness, our "eyes" will witness to the Atonement's truth that the separation from God never happened. Thus you and I are not separate from each other, nor different; only in appearances do we appear to be so. As we accept the truth of Christ's vision, our eyes *and* ears open, and we hear the forgotten and now familiar song of love and unity:

> Listen,—perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar, like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything particular. But you remember, from just this little part, how lovely was the song, how wonderful the setting where you heard it, and how you loved those who were there and listened with you.
>
> The notes are nothing. Yet you have kept them with you, not for themselves, but as a soft reminder of what would make you weep if you remembered how dear it was to you. You could remember, yet you are afraid, believing you would lose the world you learned since then. And yet you know that nothing in the world you learned is half so dear as this. Listen, and see if you remember an ancient song you knew so long ago and held more dear than any melody you taught yourself to cherish since (T-21.I.6-7).

**(11:1) Select one brother, symbol of the rest, and ask salvation of him.**

This does not mean literally walking up to someone on the street, asking him to save you. Jesus refers to the process in the mind that is born of the thought that says you and I are not different, for we are brothers and sisters in the same Christ. This recognition arises from the understanding we are brothers and sisters in the same ego as well. Accepting our shared insanity of separation is thus the precursor for remembering our shared sanity of unity.

**(11:2-5) See him first as clearly as you can, in that same form to which you are accustomed. See his face, his hands and feet, his clothing. Watch him smile, and see familiar gestures which he makes so frequently. Then think of this: What you are seeing now conceals from you the sight of one who can forgive you all your sins; whose sacred hands can take away the nails which pierce your own, and lift the crown of thorns which you have placed upon your bleeding head.**

I do not do anything different with my eyes, and do not deny what they see. I do something different with my mind, for I now have the willingness to say I have been wrong in how I have been seeing and relating, and there is Someone Who can teach me to look differently at my relationships. It is therefore not that this person's body is sacred and has the power to forgive me – another's body has no more power than mine. Yet in the context of my relationship with this body I learn we are not bodies, and since we are joined in the same mind we can be taught by the same Teacher. The crucifixion references here reflect similar sentiments expressed in a passage from the text, written at Eastertime:

> You have the vision now to look past all illusions. It has been given you to see no thorns, no strangers and no obstacles to peace. The fear of God is nothing to you now. Who is afraid to look upon illusions, knowing his savior stands beside him9 With him, your vision has become the greatest power for the undoing of illusion that God Himself could give. For what God gave the Holy Spirit, you have received. The Son of God looks unto you for his release. For you have asked for and been given the strength to look upon this final obstacle, and see no thorns nor nails to crucify the Son of God, and crown him king of death (T-20.II.7).

By removing from you the thorns of sin and nails of guilt, I have removed them from myself. We are healed together and as one, for such we are.

**(11:6-8) Ask this of him, that he may set you free:**

***Give me your blessing, holy Son of God. I would behold you with the eyes of Christ, and see my perfect sinlessness in you.***

This does not literally mean you say these words to someone – it is the thought inside you that speaks. To behold you with the eyes of Christ means I see that your seeming sins have no power to deny me the peace of God. What I have labeled as sins I now see as mistakes that mirror my own. I do not deny what your body may have done, any more than I deny what my body may have done. I deny, to say it one more time, the ego's interpretation of the body's actions. This thus addresses a shift in the mind that says: "Thank God I am wrong and Jesus is right. The Son of God has not sinned, for his

mistakes have had no effect upon his reality."

**(12:1-3) And He will answer Whom you called upon. For He will hear the Voice for God in you, and answer in your own. Behold him now, whom you have seen as merely flesh and bone, and recognize that Christ has come to you.**

I realize your body was a costume that sought to hide the Christ in you, just as my body did: to hide the guilt that hides the Christ. I realize now we have done the same thing for the same reason, yet His Love unites us both in Its Presence, as It has always done. Recall the inspirational opening of "For They Have Come":

> Think but how holy you must be from whom the Voice for God calls lovingly unto your brother, that you may awake in him the Voice that answers to your call! And think how holy he must be when in him sleeps your own salvation, with his freedom joined! However much you wish he be condemned, God is in him (T-26.IX.1:1-3).

Indeed, God is in both of us, the happy awareness of which forgiveness gently brings to us.

**(12:4-5) Today's idea is your safe escape from anger and from fear. Be sure you use it instantly, should you be tempted to attack a brother and perceive in him the symbol of your fear.**

Jesus again urges us at the end of the lesson to pay careful attention to his teachings; and to practice, practice, practice throughout the day. Be attentive to your anger, fear, depression, and pain. Realize you are using this other person as a symbol of the fear you do not want to let go of in yourself. When you are thus able to ask Jesus for help, here is the happy result:

**(12:6) And you will see him suddenly transformed from enemy to savior; from the devil into Christ.**

The way I perceive you is the way I perceive myself – enemy or savior, devil or Christ. The lesson's lovely close is mirrored in this equally lovely passage from the text:

> Here is your savior and your friend, released from crucifixion through your vision, and free to lead you now where he would be. He will not leave you, nor forsake the savior in his pain. And gladly will you and your brother walk the way of innocence together, singing as you behold the open door of Heaven and recognize the home that called to you. Give joyously to your brother the freedom and the strength to lead you there. And come before his holy altar where the strength and freedom wait, to offer and receive the bright awareness that leads you home. The lamp is lit in you for your brother. And by the hands that gave it to him shall you be led past fear to love (T-20.11.11).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 162**
**I am as God created me.**

You will recall we have done this lesson twice before: Lessons 94 and 110. Moreover, "I am as God created me" becomes the subject of the sixth review lesson, and is repeated throughout the workbook, text, and manual. This obviously important statement expresses the Atonement principle, a reminder there is indeed another thought system in our minds besides the ego. In general, therefore, we can say that the purpose of the workbook – the mind-training aspect of *A Course in Miracles'* curriculum – is to help us understand we have a mind that is split into the thought systems of hate and murder, and forgiveness and love, and that we can choose between them. A lesson like this is a lovely reminder of the truth that is present in our minds.

**(1:1) This single thought, held firmly in the mind, would save the world.**

This thought saves the world because it represents the acceptance of the Atonement. It undoes the ego premise that is the world's foundation: I am *not* as God created me. To choose Jesus as our teacher is to choose this lesson as the truth, rather than the ego's distorted version. Once that thought is gone, the world must be gone as well – *ideas leave not their source* – for the world cannot be sustained if the mind's underlying thought is God.

**(1:2-3) From time to time we will repeat it, as we reach another stage in learning. It will mean far more to you as you advance.**

Jesus is letting us know that learning *A Course in Miracles* is a process, and the workbook is an integral part of it.

**(1:4-6) These words are sacred, for they are the words God gave in answer to the world you made. By them it disappears, and all things seen within its misty clouds and vaporous illusions vanish as these words are spoken. For they come from God.**

God, of course, did not literally give us words, for He cannot answer to something that never happened. Like so many others, this statement is to be understood symbolically. This important point needs underscoring, since not taking the Course's metaphoric form into account can lead to serious misunderstanding and misapplication. Recall, therefore, these important words about the role of words in our practice:

> Strictly speaking, words play no part at all in healing.... God does not understand words, for they were made by separated minds to keep them in the illusion of separation. Words can be helpful, particularly for the beginner, in helping concentration and facilitating the exclusion, or at least the control, of extraneous thoughts. Let us not forget, however, that words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality (M-21.1:1, 7-10).

We thus need to use words – some expression of the Atonement principle – but only to help us reach beyond the illusion of separation to the truth.

Remember, when we believed we fell asleep and the ego's dream began, we took with us into our sleep the memory of God's perfect Love. That memory is the Holy Spirit

and His Atonement principle, which links us back to the Heaven we never truly left. In the presence of this principle and the Holy Spirit's light, the darkened illusions of the ego's thought system disappear. The illusory world must disappear as well, as we read in a passage describing the gentle disappearance of the world after the real world has been attained:

> When you perceive the real world, you will recognize that you did not believe it [that only reality is true]. Yet the swiftness with which your new and only real perception will be translated into knowledge will leave you but an instant to realize that this alone is true. And then everything you made will be forgotten; the good and the bad, the false and the true. For as Heaven and earth become one, even the real world will vanish from your sight. The end of the world is not its destruction, but its translation into Heaven (T-11.VIII.1:4-8).

**(2:1-2) Here is the Word by which the Son became his Father's happiness, His Love and His completion. Here creation is proclaimed, and honored as it is.**

In the text, the Word of creation is described like this, as you may recall:

> In his [the Son's] creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me" (T-28.VI.6:4-5).

God's promise ensures we have never left our Father's house. Never having separated from Him, we remain at one with our Creator and Source. Helen's poem "My Father's House" captures the spirit of this Word. It deserves a second reading:

> Hallowed my name. I am a Son of God
> Who walks in stillness. I hold out my hand,
> And from my fingertips the quiet goes
> Around the world to still all living things,
> And cover them in holiness. Their rest
> Is joined in mine, for I am one with them.
> There is no pain my stillness cannot heal,
> Because it comes from God. There is no grief
> That does not turn to laughter when I come.
> I do not come alone. There walks with me
> The Light that Heaven looks on as itself.
> I am a Son of God. My name is His.
> My Father's house is where my stillness is.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 59)

**(2:3-6) There is no dream these words will not dispel; no thought of sin and no illusion which the dream contains that will not fade away before their might. They are the trumpet of awakening that sounds around the world. The dead awake in answer to its call. And those who live and hear this sound will never look on death.**

"There is no dream these words will not dispel" because *there is no order of*

*difficulty in miracles.* Every problem, dream, and aspect of our lives comes from that single thought that says the separation is real. The Atonement thought – "I am as God created me" – undoes this, and therefore undoes all the seeming effects of that ego thought as well. Incidentally, the "trumpet of awakening" is a reference to St. Paul's famous passage in Corinthians, also immortalized in Handel's *Messiah:*

> ... for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:52).

This trumpet, then, is the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego's dream of death, the awakening that is the Course's definition of *resurrection.* If the ego system is untrue and I remain as God created **me,** everything that has ever followed from that ego thought is undone – including death. The opening lines of "What Is the Resurrection" nicely expresses its meaning:

> Very simply, the resurrection is the overcoming or surmounting of death. It is a reawakening or a rebirth; a change of mind about the meaning of the world. It is the acceptance of the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the world's purpose; the acceptance of the Atonement for oneself. It is the end of dreams of misery, and the glad awareness of the Holy Spirit's final dream (M-28.1:1-4).

Incidentally, the words "There is ... no thought of sin and no illusion which the dream contains that will not fade away before their might" is reminiscent of the lovely opening line of Helen's already familiar poem "Awake in Stillness":

> Peace cover you, within without the same,
> In shining silence and in peace so deep
> No dream of sin and evil come near
> Your quiet mind.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 73)

**(3:1) Holy indeed is he who makes these words his own; arising with them in his mind, recalling them throughout the day, at night bringing them with him as he goes to sleep.**

Since we are all holy as children of God, Jesus' meaning is that we have become aware of our holiness when we remember these words for today. Jesus again is urging us to dedicate our entire day, as much as possible, to learning his course by consistently practicing its teachings.

**(3:2-3) His dreams are happy and his rest secure, his safety certain and his body healed, because he sleeps and wakens with the truth before him always. He will save the world, because he gives the world what he receives each time he practices the words of truth.**

Giving and receiving are the same, as we well know by now. I give words of truth that say you and I are not separate, which then reinforces it in myself. Thus I receive the truth I have given. God created us as one, and that is the truth we want to reflect in our relationships. As we do so, we enter into the Holy Spirit's happy dreams, the culmination

of which is the real world, the happiest of all dreams, for – paradoxically – it is beyond them:

> The real world still is but a dream. Except the figures have been changed. They are not seen as idols which betray. It is a dream in which no one is used to substitute for something else, nor interposed between the thoughts the mind conceives and what it sees. No one is used for something he is not, for childish things have all been put away. And what was once a dream of judgment now has changed into a dream where all is joy, because that is the purpose that it has. Only forgiving dreams can enter here, for time is almost over. And the forms that enter in the dream are now perceived as brothers, not in judgment, but in love (T-29.IX.7).

**(4:1-2) Today we practice simply. For the words we use are mighty, and they need no thoughts beyond themselves to change the mind of him who uses them.**

We are talking about a change of mind, not anything external, and nothing else is needed but that change.

**(4:3) So wholly is it changed that it is now the treasury in which God places all His gifts and all His Love, to be distributed to all the world, increased in giving; kept complete because its sharing is unlimited.**

This "treasury" is our right minds, the home of the Holy Spirit and His Atonement principle. When we choose to let our specialness go, we choose to identify with this right-minded Presence that allows us to receive God's wonderful gifts, which, like the Holy Spirit, are always present in our minds. However, having wandered away from them, we must wander back to receive the treasure hod gave us in our creation:

> God wants only His Son because His Son is His only treasure.... There is no other gift that is eternal, and therefore there is no other gift that is true.... What God has willed for you *is* yours. He has given His Will to His treasure, whose treasure it is. Your heart lies where your treasure is, as His does. You who are beloved of God are wholly blessed (T-8.VI.5:1, 8; 10:1-4).

**(4:4) And thus you learn to think with God.**

You "think with God" when you reflect His Thought of perfect Oneness. This means we undo our investment in separation and specialness. Above all, we undo our investment in being right. Recall Jesus' statement: "And God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7). Naturally, God does not think the way we do. In fact, He does not think at all. We think in terms of battle: winners and losers, good and evil – *one or the other.* God's Thought, however, is non-dualistic, since there is nothing but Oneness. As I learn to let Christ's vision be my eyes, I inevitably reflect God's Thought, thus thinking with Him.

**(4:5-5:3) Christ's vision has restored your sight by salvaging your mind.**
**We honor you today. Yours is the right to perfect holiness you now accept. With this acceptance is salvation brought to everyone, for who could cherish sin when holiness like this has blessed the world?**

We see still again a reflection of the important theme of oneness. "Salvation is brought to everyone" because there is only one mind. In the holy instant, in which I finally accept the Atonement for myself, I know the mind of God's Son is one. Thus is the world healed, as it is "saved" from the belief in separation.

**(5:4) Who could despair when perfect joy is yours, available to all as remedy for grief and misery, all sense of loss, and for complete escape from sin and guilt?**

When your mind is healed, all minds are healed: "When I am healed I am not healed alone" (W-pI.137). This makes no sense from the perspective of individual bodies. However, when you detach from this world and return to the place of peace in your mind, you realize God's Son is one, and thoughts of pain, misery, and death disappear. If they still seem real to you – we will see that theme later in Lesson 193 – it is because you have chosen to make the ego right and God wrong, which means you have chosen to keep yourself in misery, thereby – in your mind – keeping everyone else in misery as well. Early in the text Jesus explains how our distress *need not be,* for its cause is our wrong decision, which is easily undone through forgiveness. Change our minds, and despair yields to joy. Here are excerpts from that discussion:

> I have said that you cannot change your mind by changing your behavior, but I have also said, and many times, that you *can* change your mind. When your mood tells you that you have chosen wrongly, and this is so whenever you are not joyous, then *know this need not be....*
>
> When you are sad, *know this need not be.* Depression comes from a sense of being deprived of something you want and do not have. Remember that you are deprived of nothing except by your own decisions, and then decide otherwise.
>
> When you are anxious, realize that anxiety comes from the capriciousness of the ego, and *know this need not be.* You can be as vigilant against the ego's dictates as for them.
>
> When you feel guilty, remember that the ego has indeed violated the laws of God, but *you* have not.... While you feel guilty your ego is in command, because only the ego can experience guilt. *This need not be.*
>
> Watch your mind for the temptations of the ego, and do not be deceived by it. It offers you nothing. When you have given up this voluntary dis-spiriting, you will see how your mind can focus and rise above fatigue and heal. Yet you are not sufficiently vigilant against the demands of the ego to disengage yourself. *This need not be* (T-4.IV.2:1-2; 3-4; 5:1, 5-6; 6).

**(6) And who would not be brother to you now; you, his redeemer and his savior. Who could fail to welcome you into his heart with loving invitation, eager to unite with one like him in holiness? You are as God created you. These words dispel the night, and darkness is no more. The light is come today to bless the world. For you have recognized the Son of God, and in that recognition is the world's.**

Everyone now is brother to you, because gone are perceptions of individuality and separation. The world is nothing but the projection of the thought of the separated

Son of God, and when that thought is healed and you remember God's Son is one, the world is healed as well. Therefore, as you go through your day, be particularly attentive to when you make the darkness real – separation, conflict, judgment, pain, and specialness. At that point say: "I have chosen night instead of day, darkness instead of light. I have chosen to forget that God's Son has never left his Source, and that I *am* God's Son. If I choose to retain my anger and specialness, it is because I prefer to be the ego's son instead of God's. Yet how silly to deny myself and my brothers the peace that is our true inheritance!" Only a madman would seek to exclude himself from the circle of Atonement, within which Jesus has blessed his brothers in his peace:

> Peace, then, be unto everyone who becomes a teacher of peace. For peace is the acknowledgment of perfect purity, from which no one is excluded. Within its holy circle is everyone whom God created as His Son. Joy is its unifying attribute, with no one left outside to suffer guilt alone. The power of God draws everyone to its safe embrace of love and union. Stand quietly within this circle, and attract all tortured minds to join with you in the safety of its peace and holiness. Abide with me within it, as a teacher of Atonement, not of guilt.... Come gladly to the holy circle, and look out in peace on all who think they are outside. Cast no one out, for here is what he seeks along with you. Come, let us join him in the holy place of peace which is for all of us, united as one within the Cause of peace (T-14.V.8; 11:7-9).
>
> Thus do we joyously remember that as one Son, we *are* as God created us.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 163**
**There is no death. The Son of God is free.**

This lesson parallels the section near the end of the manual, "What Is Death?," which teaches, as does Lesson 167, that death symbolizes the totality of the ego thought system: "Death is the central dream from which all illusions stem" (M-27.1:1). From the ego's point of view, death provides the certain proof it is right. It says I have separated from God, which makes me a sinner. Overwhelmed by guilt for destroying Heaven, **I** believe God is justified in punishing me for my sin, rising from His grave to exact His vengeance. Thus the body's death is the ego's most powerful witness of all: "I told you I was right and the Holy Spirit wrong, because I, the ego, have power over life." God created life, but cannot destroy it; yet I, the ego, can make life and also end it. Death, then, becomes the most convincing argument in the ego's arsenal – certainly within the world of specifics – that the ego's thought system of separation is true and the Holy Spirit's thought system of Atonement is a lie.

**(1) Death is a thought that takes on many forms, often unrecognized. It may appear as sadness, fear, anxiety or doubt; as anger, faithlessness and lack of trust; concern for bodies, envy, and all forms in which the wish to be as you are not may come to tempt you. All such thoughts are but reflections of the worshipping of death as savior and as giver of release.**

Whenever you are anxious or sad, concerned with specialness of any kind, and see yourself as a body – you make death real. Any of these specific forms reflects your belief that the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear is real, with death its ultimate and inevitable effect. The same thought is found in "The Picture of Crucifixion," where Jesus says sickness is "but a 'little' death; a form of vengeance not yet total" (T-2714:8). Here, that thought is extended by including anxiety, fear, and envy as little forms of death. All express the underlying thought of separation, which *is* death.

**(2:1) Embodiment of fear, the host of sin, god of the guilty and the lord of all illusions and deceptions, does the thought of death seem mighty.**

Sin, guilt, and fear are thus summarized as the embodiment of the thought system of separation, the culmination of which is the "mighty thought of death."

**(2:2-4) For it seems to hold all living things within its withered hand; all hopes and wishes in its blighting grasp; all goals perceived but in its sightless eyes. The frail, the helpless and the sick bow down before its image, thinking it alone is real, inevitable, worthy of their trust. For it alone will surely come.**

The evocative imagery in this passage is wonderful. Everyone knows the statement: Nothing is certain in this world but death and taxes. Death proves beyond a shadow of a doubt the ego is right and God is wrong; we are right and Jesus is wrong. Death means the body lived, which also makes real the underlying thought of separation. Therefore we share a tremendous investment in the body, and society makes our seeming births and deaths into powerful symbols, calling for celebration and commemoration in almost everyone's life – all of which serves to make the body real in our experience.

It is important to understand that this is why the world focuses on the body, and

most specifically on death. To be sure, there are many other bodily specifics on which the world lays emphasis, but none has the power over us that death does, for it seems to be the period (or exclamation point!) that ends our life. Whether or not you believe in an afterlife, you still believe something happens – the *body dies.* If you believe the mind, spirit, or soul live on after death, you maintain the body's reality. Yet, the mind does not live on after death, because never having been *in* the body, how could it be *after* it? In other words, the mind is totally unaffected by its seeming birth into a body, or its seeming end in physical death. It would thus be helpful as you study this lesson to consider the many ways in which your daily life reflects the belief in death's reality.

**(3:1-2) All things but death are seen to be unsure, too quickly lost however hard to gain, uncertain in their outcome, apt to fail the hopes they once engendered, and to leave the taste of dust and ashes in their wake, in place of aspirations and of dreams. But death is counted on.**

Nothing here is certain except death. For example, special love is unsure—you love someone one minute and hate them the next; or you love someone, and before you know it the person has left you or has died. Yet you can always depend on death. This means you can always depend on the ego, which maintains you cannot depend on the Holy Spirit, Jesus, God, or even *A Course in Miracles.* Everything dies, even things we consider to be permanent, such as mountains. Over many millennia they will crumble, deteriorate, and eventually disappear. Because all things in the world die, you know God had nothing to do with it.

There is, however, another kind of death. This, too is certain, if we allow the Holy Spirit to be our guide through the ego's "circle of fear" (T-18.IX. 3:7-4:1):

> This is what death should be; a quiet choice, made joyfully and with a sense of peace ....
>
> We call it death, but it is liberty. It does not come in forms that seem to be thrust down in pain upon unwilling flesh, but as a gentle welcome to release. If there has been true healing, this can be the form in which death comes when it is time to rest a while from labor gladly done and gladly ended. Now we go in peace to freer air and gentler climate, where it is not hard to see the gifts we gave were saved for us (S-3.II.2:1; 3:1-4).

**(3:3-4) For it will come with certain footsteps when the time has come for its arrival. It will never fail to take all life as hostage to itself.**

Remember death is not an entity, but only a projected thought of the ego. Indeed, we could substitute the word *ego* for everything said here about death, because you can always count on it to guarantee our separated existence: if we exist, the living God is a lie, for only the ego's divinity could be true.

**(4:1-2) Would you bow down to idols such as this? Here is the strength and might of God Himself perceived within an idol made of dust.**

An *idol* can be defined as a physical replica of, or substitute for God – in other words, the ego and, specifically, the body. The body is the expression in form of the ego's god, made to be the substitute for the God Who is beyond all form. To believe in

the reality of death is to believe that God is weak and capable of being destroyed; for if death were real, the separation from God must be real as well, and thus He is dead, slain by the triumphant ego. Our insanity is demonstrated by the fact we have believed such insanity:

> Under the dusty edge of its distorted world the ego would lay the Son of God, slain by its orders, proof in his decay that God Himself is powerless before the ego's might, unable to protect the life that He created against the ego's savage wish to kill. My brother, child of our Father, this is a *dream* of death. There is no funeral, no dark altars, no grim commandments nor twisted rituals of condemnation to which the body leads you. Ask not release of *it.* But free it from the merciless and unrelenting orders you laid upon it, and forgive it what you ordered it to do. In its exaltation you commanded it to die, for only death could conquer life. And what but insanity could look upon the defeat of God, and think it real? (T-19.IV-C.8)

The worshipping of death in all its forms – some subtle, some obvious – is the worshipping of the ego, reflecting the statement that I exist at God's expense. Moreover, I delight in my sin, and will never return what I stole. To go back to Lesson 161, I make up a world of specific bodies that I can blame and hold responsible for what I secretly believe I have done.

**(4:3-4) Here is the opposite of God proclaimed as lord of all creation, stronger than God's Will for life, the endlessness of love and Heaven's perfect, changeless constancy. Here is the Will of Father and of Son defeated finally, and laid to rest beneath the headstone death has placed upon the body of the holy Son of God.**

Death says love does not last, Heaven is not perfect, and – certainly – it has changed. God not only has an opposite, but His opposite is true while He is not. The Will of Father and Son is Their perfect Oneness. Death, however, affirms the reality of the separated body, embodying the thought of separation. Thus the will of the ego's deity is separation, and the body and its death bear witness to the ego's truth that the Will of God has been defeated. This is the idol at whose clay feet we bow down, in worship of its insane belief system:

> An idol is established by belief, and when it is withdrawn the idol "dies." This is the anti- Christ; the strange idea there is a power past omnipotence, a place beyond the infinite, a time transcending the eternal. Here the world of idols has been set by the idea this power and place and time are given form, and shape the world where the impossible has happened. Here the deathless come to die, the all-encompassing to suffer loss, the timeless to be made the slaves of time. Here does the changeless change; the peace of God, forever given to all living things, give way to chaos. And the Son of God, as perfect, sinless and as loving as his Father, come to hate a little while; to suffer pain and finally to die (T-29.VIII.6).

**(5) Unholy in defeat, he has become what death would have him be. His epitaph, which death itself has written, gives no name to him, for he has passed to**

**dust. It says but this: "Here lies a witness God is dead." And this it writes again and still again, while all the while its worshippers agree, and kneeling down with foreheads to the ground, they whisper fearfully that it is so.**

Jesus uses the imagery of prayer to make the point we all pray to the ego's god – its idol of death – in the same way we have worshipped the gods of sickness and specialness. He asks us to be aware that this is what we are doing. Thus, whenever you indulge any form of specialness, try to catch yourself and say: "Here lies a witness God is dead." In my special worship of the body – in hate or love – I state that God is dead and I rule in His place. I rule even in death and defeat, because even then I find proof I have lived and the separation is a fact, as is the thought system that arose from it:

> From the ego came sin and guilt and death, in opposition to life and innocence, and to the Will of God Himself. Where can such opposition lie but in the sick minds of the insane, dedicated to madness and set against the peace of Heaven? ... And what is the black-draped body they would bury? A body which they dedicated to death, a symbol of corruption, a sacrifice to sin, offered to sin to feed upon and keep itself alive; a thing condemned, damned by its maker and lamented by every mourner who looks upon it as himself.... The arrogance of sin, the pride of guilt, the sepulchre of separation, all are part of your unrecognized dedication to death. The glitter of guilt you laid upon the body would kill it. For what the ego loves, it kills for its obedience (T-19.IV-C.3:1-2; 4:1-2, 5-7).

**(6:1) It is impossible to worship death in any form, and still select a few you would not cherish and would yet avoid, while still believing in the rest.**

There is no hierarchy of illusions, which undoes the first law of chaos (T-23.II.2:3) that would have us think we can mix truth and illusion, Heaven and hell. Thus we believe in the ego here, and in God on "the other side"; we believe in truth and love in some places, but not in all. Yet everything is of a piece. You cannot exclude a part of the ego thought system any more than you can exclude a part of the Holy Spirit's. Both are complete in and of themselves; one is illusory; the other true. Make one part true, and you have made it all true. Life and death cannot coexist, which is what the ego thought system does: I have destroyed God, which makes death real; but now I exist, which makes life real. We thus believe in the world's reality of life and death, both of which are seen as true. Jesus teaches us it is not like that. Since truth is total, it *cannot* be like that. His argument continues:

**(6:2-5) For death is total. Either all things die, or else they live and cannot die. No compromise is possible. For here again we see an obvious position, which we must accept if we be sane; what contradicts one thought entirely can not be true, unless its opposite is proven false.**

Again, if life is true, death must be false in all its forms; if death is true, life must be false in all its forms – another Level One statement: *one or the other.* The ego, as we have seen, would have us compromise by life and death coexisting, as we see in the biblical religions, which is why we speak of them as dualistic: Spirit and flesh are real, as are Heaven and hell, God and the world, love and hate. When you understand Jesus' teachings and begin to apply them, it is evident that none of this is true: If God is real,

nothing here is real; if God is false, everything here is true, what the ego has us believe. Two passages in the manual cogently express *A Course in Miracles'* uncompromising non-dualistic stance:

> Life has no opposite, for it is God. Life and death seem to be opposites because you have decided death ends life. Forgive the world, and you will understand that everything that God created cannot have an end, and nothing He did not create is real. In this one sentence is our course explained. In this one sentence is our practicing given its one direction. And in this one sentence is the Holy Spirit's whole curriculum specified exactly as it is (M-20.5:5-10).

> If death is real for anything, there is no life. Death denies life. But if there is reality in life, death is denied. No compromise in this is possible. There is either a god of fear or One of Love. The world attempts a thousand compromises, and will attempt a thousand more. Not one can be acceptable to God's teachers, because not one could be acceptable to God. He did not make death because He did not make fear. Both are equally meaningless to Him.... Teacher of God, your one assignment could be stated thus: Accept no compromise in which death plays a part (M-27.4:2-10; 7:1).

The last part of the workbook passage can be confusing. "What contradicts one thought entirely" refers to the thought of death that would seem to contradict the thought of life. As the previous sentences make clear, this is a *one-or-the-other* situation. The thought of death cannot be true unless it can be proven that its opposite – life – is false. In other words, death seems to have the power to contradict life, but this is impossible because life is eternal. The only way the thought of death could be true is if it were proven life is not real; namely, that God has been killed. That leads us then into paragraph 7:

**(7:1-2) The idea of the death of God is so preposterous that even the insane have difficulty in believing it. For it implies that God was once alive and somehow perished; killed, apparently, by those who did not want Him to survive.**

This means all of us. The fact we believe we are bodies says we do not want God to survive – in His presence our separate self does not exist. Moreover, in our arrogance we believe we were the ones who accomplished His murder. Since that makes us more powerful than God, the ego easily convinces us that we, in fact, are God. This arrogant insanity becomes the basis of our special relationships:

> The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning (T-16.V.12:4).

That is the bad news. The good news is that all this is pure fantasy. It *did* not happen because it *could* not happen:

> Would you want this to be possible, even apart from its evident impossibility? If it were possible, you would have made yourself helpless. God is

> not angry. He merely could not let this happen. You cannot change His Mind. No rituals that you have set up in which the dance of death delights you can bring death to the eternal. Nor can your chosen substitute for the Wholeness of God have any influence at all upon it (T-16.V.12:5-11).

**(7:3-4) Their stronger will could triumph over His, and so eternal life gave way to death. And with the Father died the Son as well.**

Again, if we believe we are bodies, we believe we no longer live, and thus actively choose our own death. Moreover, if we believe the body is real, which death witnesses to, we say the Son of God has died along with his Father. That is why it is important as we practice *A Course in Miracles* not to mix up its teachings with other thought systems. There is nothing about the body that is redeemable, holy, or salvific, for it is the embodiment of death and the ego's thought system. It can be used to teach us we are not bodies, but that has to do only with the mind's change of purpose, not the body itself.

**(8:1-3) Death's worshippers may be afraid. And yet, can thoughts like these be fearful? If they saw that it is only this which they believe, they would be instantly released.**

Everyone in this world is afraid, and ultimately we all fear dying because we think our life will be gone. Yet Jesus asks: "How can an illusion possibly frighten you?" We only believe an illusion is true; we have not made it true. Calling upon the Holy Spirit's forgiveness brings about this shift from fantasy to reality, illusion to truth, and death to eternal life:

> And yet a shadow cannot kill. What is a shadow to the living? They but walk past and it is gone. But what of those whose dedication is not to live; the black-draped "sinners," the ego's mournful chorus, plodding so heavily away from life, dragging their chains and marching in the slow procession that honors their grim master, lord of death? Touch any one of them with the gentle hands of forgiveness, and watch the chains fall away, along with yours. See him throw aside the black robe he was wearing to his funeral, and hear him laugh at death. The sentence sin would lay upon him he can escape through your forgiveness. This is no arrogance. It is the Will of God. What is impossible to you who chose His Will as yours? What is death to you? Your dedication is not to death, nor to its master. When you accepted the Holy Spirit's purpose in place of the ego's you renounced death, exchanging it for life. We know that an idea leaves not its source. And death is the result of the thought we call the ego, as surely as life is the result of the Thought of God (T-19.IV-C.2).

**(8:4) And you will show them this today.**

This is our mission, which has nothing to do with the external. By the peace and life we accept as our reality, we call to others to make the same choice we made. That is the purpose while being here: to teach the sinlessness we would learn; to learn the forgiveness we would teach. Thus do our defenseless bodies serve a holy purpose – the demonstration of our brother's innocence as a Son of God:

> Now in the hands made gentle by His touch, the Holy Spirit lays a picture of a different you. It is a picture of a body still, for what you really are cannot be seen nor pictured. Yet this one has not been used for purpose of attack, and therefore never suffered pain at all. It witnesses to the eternal truth that you cannot be hurt, and points beyond itself to both your innocence and his. Show this unto your brother, who will see that every scar is healed, and every tear is wiped away in laughter and in love. And he will look on his forgiveness there, and with healed eyes will look beyond it to the innocence that he beholds in you. Here is the proof that he has never sinned; that nothing which his madness bid him do was ever done, or ever had effects of any kind. That no reproach he laid upon his heart was ever justified, and no attack can ever touch him with the poisoned and relentless sting of fear (T-27.I.5).

**(8:5) There is no death, and we renounce it now in every form, for their salvation and our own as well.**

Jesus is referring to all he enumerated at the beginning of the lesson. All these *need not be.*

**(8:6-9) God made not death. Whatever form it takes must therefore be illusion. This the stand we take today. And it is given us to look past death, and see the life beyond.**

To "look past death" is not to deny that bodies die in this world. We do not deny the death our eyes see, but deny the ego's interpretation of this death. Jesus is asking us to choose his eyes through which we will see instead of the ego's; his vision instead of our judgment. Thus will we understand that God did not make death because He did not make the body, and thus all bodily forms are illusory because they are not of God. In other words, we rescind the promise we made to the ego always to adhere to its thought system of death:

> Swear not to die, you holy Son of God! You make a bargain that you cannot keep. The Son of Life cannot be killed. He is immortal as his Father. What he is cannot be changed. He is the only thing in all the universe that must be one (T-29.VI.2:1-6).

The closing prayer that follows is the first occurrence of this form in the workbook. It is a precursor to Part II, in which each lesson contains a prayer from us to God our Father. This, then, is a preview of the loveliness still to come:

**(9:1-2)** ***Our Father, bless our eyes today. We are Your messengers, and we would look upon the glorious reflection of Your Love which shines in everything.***

We practice this exercise of reflecting the Oneness of God's Love by not seeing anyone's interest as separate from our own. If I blame you, I am only blaming me. It cannot be my interest is served at your expense.

The next sentence is a reference to the famous statement from St. Paul, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28):

**(9:3-8)** ***We live and move in You alone. We are not separate from Your eternal life. There is no death, for death is not Your WilL And we abide where You have placed us, in the life we share with You and with all living things, to be like You and part of You forever. We accept Your Thoughts as ours, and our will is one with Yours eternally. Amen.***

Again, we reflect the truth of this lovely prayer by not seeing another's interests as separate from our own – the basis for forgiveness. It is the meaning of asking the Holy Spirit's help to shift our perceptions from death and its variations to His happy reflections of life.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 164**
**Now are we one with Him Who is our Source.**

The lesson's main theme is vision, which reappears throughout the workbook and *A Course in Miracles* itself. The focus here is on helping us exchange our way of looking at the world – judgment and separate interests – for the vision of Christ – forgiveness and shared interests.

**(1:1-3) What time but now can truth be recognized? The present is the only time there is. And so today, this instant, now, we come to look upon what is forever there; not in our sight, but in the eyes of Christ.**

Our sight embraces some form of the ego's interpretation of the tiny, mad idea – sin, guilt, fear, attack, death – while Christ's vision is its undoing. Thus, our focus is on a different way of seeing, which shifts from judgment to vision in the holy instant, "the only time there is":

> Be willing, for an instant, to leave your altars free of what you placed upon them, and what is really there you cannot fail to see. The holy instant is not an instant of creation, but of recognition. For recognition comes of vision and suspended judgment. Then only it is possible to look within and see what must be there, plainly in sight, and wholly independent of inference and judgment (T-21.11.8:1-4).

**(1:4-6) He looks past time, and sees eternity as represented there. He hears the sounds the senseless, busy world engenders, yet He hears them faintly. For beyond them all He hears the song of Heaven, and the Voice for God more clear, more meaningful, more near.**

This is an important series of statements. Through the eyes of Christ we still see the world of separate bodies, but without our former emphasis on keeping our separate identity, but holding someone else responsible for it. That is the point of "The Attraction of Guilt" (T-19.IV-A.i), wherein we are attracted to seeing guilt in others so we do not have to recognize its source in ourselves. Thus when we look through Jesus' eyes we see what our physical eyes see, but our understanding is quite different: we see shared interests, not separate ones; we "hear the sounds of the senseless busy world," but "hear them faintly." If you took a college course in psychology, you may recall learning about figure and ground in perception – the background against which we perceive specific figures. Here, the ego's figure – its focus – is perceiving attack; while the Holy Spirit's perception of love or calls for love recedes into the background. Now we are taught to focus on the call for love, and our physical sight becomes the background for this new perception. Stated another way, we change our purpose from attacking sin to forgiving mistakes, and our perceptions shift accordingly:

> The Holy Spirit has a use for all the means for sin by which you sought to find it. But as He uses them they lead away from sin, because His purpose lies in the opposite direction. He sees the means you use, but not the purpose for which you made them. He would not take them from you, for He sees their value as a means for what He wills for you. You made perception that you might choose among your brothers, and seek for sin with them. The Holy Spirit sees perception

as a means to teach you that the vision of a holy relationship is all you *want* to see (T-21.III.6:1-6).

Again, we are not asked to deny what we see, feel, or think. We simply give them a different interpretation. This means we do not evaluate our sensory perceptions through the ego's need to find guilt and then attack it, but rather see through Jesus' kind vision of forgiveness.

**(2:1-3) The world fades easily away before His sight. Its sounds grow dim. A melody from far beyond the world increasingly is more and more distinct; an ancient call to which He gives an ancient answer.**

These words reflect the process aspect of forgiveness: "the world fades away" – it does not disappear; the "sounds grow dim" – they do not evanesce into nothingness. It is important to recognize this is a process, so you do not deny your experiences and reflect what, paraphrasing Freud's "flight into health," we may call the "flight into spirituality." Remember Helen's poem "Transformation," and these lines that so aptly reflect the shift in perspective that is the precursor to the world's gentle fading away:

> The trivial
> Enlarge in magnitude, while what seemed large
> Resumes the littleness that is its due.
> The dim grow bright, and what was bright before
> Flickers and fades and finally is gone.

What remains is the melody we have yearned to hear since before time seemed to be:

> Eyes that were blind begin to see, and ears
> Long deaf to melody begin to hear.
> Into the sudden stillness is reborn
> The ancient singing of creation's song,
> Long silenced but remembered.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 64)

**(2:4-5) You will recognize them both, for they are but your answer to your Father's Call to you. Christ answers for you, echoing your Self, using your voice to give His glad consent; accepting your deliverance for you.**

Recall that in *A Course in Miracles* – especially in lessons like this – Jesus talks about Christ, but really means the Holy Spirit. Strictly speaking, Christ is in Heaven and has nothing to do with this world, just as God has nothing to do with it. In these passages, however, *Christ* is used synonymously with *the Holy Spirit,* the memory in our right minds that recalls to us our Identity. That is the meaning of "Christ answers for you, echoing your Self." We but speak to our Self, remembering it *is* our Self; we but call to our Self, remembering it *is* our Call.

**(3:1) How holy is your practicing today, as Christ gives you His sight and hears for you, and answers in your name the Call He hears!**

We still see and hear, but with a different Teacher guiding us. Thus, with different eyes and ears, we see a new perception and hear an ancient Voice.

**(3:2) How quiet is the time you give to spend with Him, beyond the world.**

Jesus refers to the holy instant. All this, of course, occurs within the context of the workbook's one-year training program, the purpose of which is to have us spend more and more time – even in the midst of our busy days – remembering the thought of correction in our minds. Our quietness, "in which the dream is done" ("The Quiet Dream," *The Gifts of God,* p. 65), allows forgiveness of our sins to be accepted, as we now read:

**(3:3) How easily are all your seeming sins forgot, and all your sorrows unremembered.**

Our seeming sins are "forgotten and unremembered" when we remember that what we have perceived and made real in the world reflects the ego's need to root us in the body and not the mind. With Jesus as our teacher we have come to understand that our "seeming sins," the cause of pain and suffering, have resulted from the mind's wrong choice.

**(3:4) On this day is grief laid by, for sights and sounds that come from nearer than the world are clear to you who will today accept the gifts He gives.**

The "sights and sounds" – Christ's interpretation – are "nearer than the world" because they are in our minds, where we are, too. Remember that the world seems to exist outside our minds, but has never left its source within, the locus of our identity: the memory of Who we are as Christ, or the ego's separated self. Therefore, once we choose Jesus as our teacher, Christ's "sights and sounds" become our own. Having thus returned to the mind – the home of Christ's vision – His sight becomes nearer to us than the projections we placed outside it.

**(4:1-4) There is a silence into which the world can not intrude. There is an ancient peace you carry in your heart and have not lost. There is a sense of holiness in you the thought of sin has never touched. All this today you will remember.**

This first sentence is reminiscent of a line in Helen's poem "Conversion":

> There is a silence into which God's Word
> Has poured an ancient meaning, and is still.
> *(The Gifts of God,* 61)

"All this" – silence, peace, and holiness – abides in our right minds. It is remembered when we recognize that our experiences in the world come from within. If it is pain, its source is in the wrong mind and becomes a clarion call: return to the mind where we chose falsely, and choose again. Thus will we remember the "ancient meaning" of Atonement – God's Word held in safekeeping by the Holy Spirit, patiently awaiting our return.

**(4:5) Faithfulness in practicing today will bring rewards so great and so completely different from all things you sought before, that you will know that here your treasure is, and here your rest.**

Our treasure and rest are not found in the world, but in our right minds where we remember Jesus' love and practice his lessons of forgiveness. Is not the treasure he holds out for us, he asks, worth the price of losing our guilt, judgment, and pain?

**(5:1-2) This is the day when vain imaginings part like a curtain, to reveal what lies beyond them. Now is what is really there made visible, while all the shadows which appeared to hide it merely sink away.**

This is the shift in figure and ground. What seemed to have been so real and tangible before is reduced to a mere, disappearing shadow, occurring when we choose Jesus' light as the source of our vision instead of the ego's darkness. The veil of guilt and hate lifts, revealing love's gentle light in the faithful practice of forgiveness:

> Together we will disappear into the Presence beyond the veil, not to be lost but found; not to be seen but known. And knowing, nothing in the plan God has established for salvation will be left undone (T-19.IV-D.19:1-2).

God's plan is forgiveness, the doorway that leads us past the shadows to the light.

**(5:3) Now is the balance righted, and the scale of judgment left to Him Who judges true.**

Figure and ground are now in proper perspective. The world is a classroom – the background – in which we learn the lessons of forgiveness – the foreground. The Holy Spirit's judgment is that people either express love or call for it:

> There is but one interpretation of motivation that makes any sense. And because it is the Holy Spirit's judgment it requires no effort at all on your part. Every loving thought is true. Everything else is an appeal for healing and help, regardless of the form it takes (T-12.I.3:1-4).

**(5:4) And in His judgment will a world unfold in perfect innocence before your eyes.**

The process of forgiveness ends in the real world, which vision – the Holy Spirit's judgment or God's justice – gently unfolds for us:

> God's Judgment is His justice.... a Judgment wholly lacking in condemnation; an evaluation based entirely on love .... God's justice points to Heaven just because it is entirely impartial. It accepts all evidence that is brought before it, omitting nothing and assessing nothing as separate and apart from all the rest. From this one standpoint does it judge, and this alone. Here all attack and condemnation becomes meaningless and indefensible. Perception rests, the

> mind is still, and light returns again. Vision is now restored. What had been lost has now been found. The peace of God descends on all the world, and we can see. And we can see! (M-19.4:6-7; 5:5-13)

Who but a madman would choose a world of guilt, hate, and judgment, when vision's world of peace, love, and justice – "His judgment" – remains within, patiently awaiting our sane decision? Continually, Jesus asks us to bring our insanity of separation to his sane vision of communion; a world of death that softly yields to love's kind reflection of eternal life.

**(5:5-6:2) Now will you see it with the eyes of Christ. Now is its transformation clear to you.**
**Brother, this day is sacred to the world. Your vision, given you from far beyond all things within the world, looks back on them in a new light.**

Still once again, we are not asked to deny our experiences in this world, but merely to look at them in a new light; not to deny our bodies, nor those of others. Indeed, we are asked to deny nothing that we experience or feel here. Recall:

> The body is merely part of your experience in the physical world.... it is almost impossible to deny its existence in this world. Those who do so are engaging in a particularly unworthy form of denial (T-2.IV.3:8, 10-11).

We are simply asked to give the body a different interpretation. Remember that the problem was not the tiny, mad idea of separation, but choosing the ego's interpretation of it. Similarly, the problem is not our special relationships, but the ego's interpretation of them – guilt, attack, and judgment. To Jesus, relationships become the classroom in which we learn his lessons of forgiveness and return home. The following passage on the savior's vision summarizes this sacred perception of innocence, washed clean of all judgment:

> The savior's vision is as innocent of what your brother is as it is free of any judgment made upon yourself. It sees no past in anyone at all. And thus it serves a wholly open mind, unclouded by old concepts, and prepared to look on only what the present holds. It cannot judge because it does not know. And recognizing this, it merely asks, "What is the meaning of what I behold?" Then is the answer given. And the door held open for the face of Christ to shine upon the one who asks, in innocence, to see beyond the veil of old ideas and ancient concepts held so long and dear against the vision of the Christ in you (T-31.VII.13).

**(6:3-4) And what you see becomes the healing and salvation of the world. The valuable and valueless are both perceived and recognized for what they are.**

This is an individual expression of what Jesus refers to as the Last or Final Judgment that we collectively make as one Son. Here he refers to our personal judgment of the ego's thought system and all its effects, recognizing them as *valueless;* and of the Holy Spirit's thought system and all its effects, recognizing them as *valuable.* To say it in another way, we accept with gratitude that what is valueless reflects our

arrogant attempt at being right, and the valuable is humbly realizing we were wrong. Such recognition of the sinlessness of God's Son is our acceptance of God's final judgment:

> One day each one will welcome it, and on that very day it will be given him. He will hear his sinlessness proclaimed around and around the world, setting it free as God's fmal Judgment on him is received. This is the Judgment in which salvation lies. This is the Judgment that will set him free. This is the Judgment in which all things are freed with him (M-15.1:5-9).

**(6:5) And what is worthy of your love receives your love, while nothing to be feared remains.**

"What is worthy of your love" is the Son of God—both the Son we are and the Son that is everyone else, without exception. Fear inevitably disappears in the presence of God's *one* Son.

**(7:1) We will not judge today.**

Again, *A Course in Miracles* is not against judgment, because Jesus continually speaks of the Holy Spirit's judgment. He is pointing to our judgments of condemnation, which express the ego's perpetual need for separation, yet making someone else responsible for it: the judgment of separate interests – *one or the other.*

**(7:2) We will receive but what is given us from judgment made beyond the world.**

This is the Holy Spirit's judgment, placed in the right mind. Since His judgment is not in the wrong mind, it does not exist here, which is why Jesus speaks of "judgment made beyond the world." Such judgment – i.e., vision – is not found in form, for it is but a thought. We put our thought of judgment in our minds to replace God's Thought, His Word that reminds us that the separation is a dream. Our choosing to remember enables us to receive what we have already been given.

**(7:3) Our practicing today becomes our gift of thankfulness for our release from blindness and from misery.**

The key phrase here is "gift of thankfulness" – our gratefully realizing we were wrong about everything we have perceived, thought about, and believed we understood.

**(7:4) All that we see will but increase our joy, because its holiness reflects our own.**

Even if your physical eyes perceive disaster, your joy will increase because you will not let the ego judge it by dividing perception into victims and victimizers. You will realize that everyone involved in the situation – a happy or unhappy one – is a brother in Christ calling for the same love you are. Remembering this truth will increase your joy, because you will realize that nothing can come between you and the Love of God.

**(7:5) We stand forgiven in the sight of Christ, with all the world forgiven in our own.**

That is because the mind of God's Son is one. If I am healed, everyone is healed with me. Another of Helen's "little" poems, "Quietness," tells of the quiet power of forgiveness:

> The world knows not of quiet....
> Yet quietness comes over it at last.
> For when forgiveness comes, its certain gift
> Is stillness, in which all the world is hushed;
> A silence where the littleness of sin
> Shrinks into nothingness before the Love
> Forgiveness represents. And in His Name
> Is everyone acknowledged as the same.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 15)

**(7:6-8:2) We bless the world, as we behold it in the light in which our Savior** [Christ] **looks on us, and offer it the freedom given us through His forgiving vision, not our own.**

**Open the curtain in your practicing by merely letting go all things you think you want. Your trifling treasures put away, and leave a clean and open space within your mind where Christ can come, and offer you the treasure of salvation.**

If we truly want to be happy and have Christ's vision be our own, we have to release the ego. This is a course in undoing, for we cannot have vision until we are first aware of how the ego has viewed everything. Help in accomplishing this is the only meaningful request we can make of Jesus. Otherwise, we merely reinforce the dream. Thus we put away our trifling treasures – the different aspects of specialness – leaving an open mind in which God's Love can be remembered, the space "where sin has left":

> And in the space that sin left vacant do they join as one, in gladness recognizing what is part of them has not been kept apart and separate.
>
> The holy place on which you stand is but the space that sin has left. And here you see the face of Christ, arising in its place. Who could behold the face of Christ and not recall His Father as He really is? Who could fear love, and stand upon the ground where sin has left a place for Heaven's altar to rise and tower far above the world, and reach beyond the universe to touch the Heart of all creation? What is Heaven but a song of gratitude and love and praise by everything created to the Source of its creation? The holiest of altars is set where once sin was believed to be. And here does every light of Heaven come, to be rekindled and increased in joy. For here is what was lost restored to them, and all their radiance made whole again (T-26.IV.2:6-3:8).

Could anyone in his or her right mind *not* choose this treasure of salvation instead of the ego's trifling treasures of sin? Jesus never tires of presenting the contrast between these two offerings, patiently awaiting our decision for his truth and our happiness.

**(8:3) He has need of your most holy mind to save the world.**

As always, Jesus is not referring to the external, and certainly is not talking of anyone's specialness. Since the mind of God's Son is one, Christ needs everyone's mind, which is one mind. Recall the answer to the question posed by the manual for teachers, "How many teachers of God are needed to save the world?":

> The answer to this question is – one. One wholly perfect teacher, whose learning is complete, suffices. This one, sanctified and redeemed, becomes the Self Who is the Son of God ... His perception of himself is based upon God's Judgment, not his own. Thus does he share God's Will, and bring His Thoughts to still deluded minds. He is forever one, because he is as God created him Thus does the son of man become the Son of God. It is not really a change; it is a change of mind. Nothing external alters, but everything internal now reflects only the Love of God (M-12.1:1-3, 7-9; 2:1-3).

Christ – the true Son of God – cannot save the world; only our changed mind has that power.

**(8:4-5) Is not this purpose worthy to be yours? Is not Christ's vision worthy to be sought above the world's unsatisfying goals?**

Once again Jesus appeals to us on purely selfish grounds, saying: "You will be happy if you take my purpose and look through my eyes instead of yours. Why would you choose against your own salvation and peace?"

**(9:1) Let not today slip by without the gifts it holds for you receiving your consent and your acceptance.**

Jesus cannot impose this on us; we have to choose it. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is to* have us realize our mistaken choice, and that what we have chosen has not brought us peace. We may have thought we were right, but it never made us happy.

**(9:2) We can change the world, if you acknowledge them.**

It cannot be said often enough that Jesus does not mean the external world. Remember, the world is nothing but the mind's projected thought. When the mind is healed, the world is healed accordingly. Thus we do not speak of healing anything external – *there is no external.*

**(9:3-5) You may not see the value your acceptance gives the world. But this you surely want; you can exchange all suffering for joy this very day. Practice in earnest, and the gift is yours.**

One more time Jesus appeals to our selfishness, saying: "You do not have to understand the metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles,* nor how one mind is all minds, one brother all brothers. You need understand only that your way of living has brought you pain. If you ask my help, your suffering will turn to joy." Yet this is hardly easy. We need practice each and every moment during the day – "in earnest" – when tempted to place our gifts before his.

**(9:6-8) Would God deceive you? Can His promise fail? Can you withhold so little, when His Hand holds out complete salvation to His Son?**

The "so little" we withhold is the ego, which we think is monstrous. When we no longer withhold it from Jesus' love, we realize that for "so little" we have received "complete salvation." As Jesus says of his course:

> This course requires almost nothing of you. It is impossible to imagine one that asks so little, or could offer more (T-20.VII.1:7-8).

Thus our anger, suffering, and hopes are nothing. Understanding this allows us to begin the process of choosing the everything of Heaven's joy, as we read in the following passage from the text that closes our discussion of this lesson. Jesus encourages us to cross the bridge of completion to the real world, in which the memory of God's Love is restored to our awareness, and we remember we are one with Him Who is our Source:

> The new perspective you will gain from crossing over will be the understanding of where Heaven *is.* From this side, it seems to be outside and across the bridge. Yet as you cross to join it, it will join with you and become one with you. And you will think, in glad astonishment, that for all this you gave up *nothing!* The joy of Heaven, which has no limit, is increased with each light that returns to take its rightful place within it. Wait no longer, for the Love of God and *you.* And may the holy instant speed you on the way, as it will surely do if you but let it come to you (T-16.VI.11).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 165**
**Let not my mind deny the Thought of God.**

*Thought* is used in *A Course in Miracles as* a synonym for God, as well as our Identity as Christ. We could therefore say we are a Thought in the Mind of God, His Thought having created us as Thought. Thus in this lesson we are asked not to deny God our Source, nor to deny our Identity as His Son.

**(1) What makes this world seem real except your own denial of the truth that lies beyond? What but your thoughts of misery and death obscure the perfect happiness and the eternal life your Father wills for you? And what could hide what cannot be concealed except illusion? What could keep from you what you already have except your choice to see it not, denying it is there?**

Jesus puts all responsibility on us, for it is our choice to deny the truth of Who we are. We choose the lies of the ego because to choose truth means the end of our individuality and specialness. All we really do, however, is defend against something that is not real. Thus Jesus says: "And what could hide what cannot be concealed except illusion?" You cannot truly hide the truth because truth *is. Yet* because we think we can, Jesus needs to teach us the thought of separation from God is illusory, as are the defenses we employ as protection: the mind's sin, guilt, and fear, and the physical world. Their purpose is to deny the truth, thereby seemingly protecting our self. The following passage from "The Cloud of Guilt" exposes guilt's purpose of concealing the sin that does not exist, thereby blinding us to the truth of the Atonement:

> Guilt makes you blind, for while you see one spot of guilt within you, you will not see the light. And by projecting it the world seems dark, and shrouded in your guilt. You throw a dark veil over it, and cannot see it because you cannot look within. You are afraid of what you would see there, but it is not there. *The thing you fear is gone.* If you would look within you would see only the Atonement, shining in quiet and in peace upon the altar to your Father (T-13.IX.7).

The truth that guilt would conceal is this expression of the Atonement principle:

**(2:1-5) The Thought of God created you. It left you not, nor have you ever been apart from it an instant. It belongs to you. By it you live. It is your Source of life, holding you one with it, and everything is one with you because it left you not.**

*Ideas leave not their source* – thus we are a Thought in the Mind of God: one in Him and one in Christ. Everyone and everything that appears to be separate from us is an illusion, with the purpose of obscuring the truth of our inherent oneness as God's Thought:

> The Thought God holds of you is like a star, unchangeable in an eternal sky.... still and white and lovely will it shine through all eternity. There was no time it was not there; no instant when its light grew dimmer or less perfect ever was (T-30.III.8:4, 6-7).

Jesus continues his reassuring reminders:

## Lesson 165

**(2:6-7) The Thought of God protects you, cares for you, makes soft your resting place and smooth your way, lighting your mind with happiness and love. Eternity and everlasting life shine in your mind, because the Thought of God has left you not, and still abides with you.**

This sounds at first like a comforting message, much like what most of us have grown up with – God's Love surrounds us and protects us from all harm. But that is not its meaning. Rather, Jesus speaks of the Atonement – we have never left God – that protects us by reminding us what we think is real is not; what we think brings pain and suffering does not exist. God's Thought is thus our protection, happiness, and rest because it is the truth – we never left our home in God, but only dream that our worldly exile is real (T-10.I.2:1). However, if we remain with the ideal of a child enfolded in our Father's comforting arms, we will *always* remain a child and never grow up spiritually. We need to move beyond the words to their content: the Thought of God protects us because – once we choose against the ego's idols of specialness, choosing instead God's loving Thought—its light shines away the darkness of illusions. In that choice we find our safety, as Jesus' inspiring message continues:

> Beyond all idols is the Thought God holds of you. Completely unaffected by the turmoil and the terror of the world, the dreams of birth and death that here are dreamed, the myriad of forms that fear can take; quite undisturbed, the Thought God holds of you remains exactly as it always was. Surrounded by a stillness so complete no sound of battle comes remotely near, it rests in certainty and perfect peace. Here is your one reality kept safe, completely unaware of all the world that worships idols, and that knows not God. In perfect sureness of its changelessness and of its rest in its eternal home, the Thought God holds of you has never left the Mind of its Creator Whom it knows, as its Creator knows that it is there (T-30.III.10).

**(3:1) Who would deny his safety and his peace, his joy, his healing and his peace of mind, his quiet rest, his calm awakening, if he but recognized where they abide?**

They abide in the right mind, not the world. Again, our real safety – peace, joy, and healing – rests not within a loving God's Arms, comforting our physical and psychological bodies, but in the right mind's awaiting our right decision. There *is* no safety in a world of bodies. Indeed, we are safe precisely because our identity is not physical – thoughts of guilt are dangerous only to bodies (T-21.VIII.1:1-2) – which forgiveness reminds us by undoing our guilt, without which there is no fear of punishment. This allows us to remember our oneness with our Source, for we no longer see our brother as separate from us. Now we rest as one within the Holy Spirit's ark of safety, to which we are led by His reinterpretation of the body's purpose from hate to forgiveness, separation to unity, imprisonment to freedom:

> What is the sense in seeking to be safe in what was made [i.e., the body] for danger and for fear? Why burden it with further locks and chains and heavy anchors, when its weakness lies, not in itself, but in the frailty of the little gap of nothingness whereon it stands? What can be safe that rests upon a shadow? Would you build your home upon what will collapse beneath a feather's weight?

> Your home is built upon your brother's health, upon his happiness, his sinlessness, and everything his Father promised him. No secret promise you have made instead has shaken the Foundation of his home. The winds will blow upon it and the rain will beat against it, but with no effect. The world will wash away and yet this house will stand forever, for its strength lies not within itself alone. It is an ark of safety, resting on God's promise that His Son is safe forever in Himself. What gap can interpose itself between the safety of this shelter and its Source? From here the body can be seen as what it is, and neither less nor more in worth than the extent to which it can be used to liberate God's Son unto his home. And with this holy purpose is it made a home of holiness a little while, because it shares your Father's Will with you (T-28.VII.6-7).

The thought of forgiveness thus replaces thoughts of guilt and attack, and what remains is the Thought of God, our true Self.

**(3:2-3) Would he not instantly prepare to go where they are found, abandoning all else as worthless in comparison with them? And having found them, would he not make sure they stay with him, and he remain with them?**

The problem is we are not aware of this. The ego's strategy has us believe we are in this world, abiding in a body, with no memory – indeed, no desire to remember – that our self is a thought in the mind. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to have us realize, above all, that everything occurs in the mind – not in the brain, body, or world. Thus, Jesus tells us that once we become aware that true happiness lies in the mind, nothing will stop us from going there. Yet we have to be convinced this is so. We still think joy and salvation are found externally, and as long as we do, we will never go to the right mind, where the decision maker can correct its mistake and choose the Love of God instead of the ego's shabby substitute.

**(4:1-2) Deny not Heaven. It is yours today, but for the asking.**

"Deny not Heaven" by pretending it is in the world, and do not turn from the memory in your mind that calls you home. Yet you must want Heaven, for Jesus cannot give it to you. You have to ask his help to realize you have been wrong about everything, and that your specialness has never brought you happiness. You need to learn that to be with him is what alone will give you what you want. This is why, you may recall, Jesus says he needs us as much as we need him (T-8.V.6:10). He cannot help us unless we ask.

**(4:3) Nor need you perceive how great the gift, how changed your mind will be before it comes to you.**

Similar to what we saw in the last lesson, Jesus is not saying we have to understand the immensity of this gift, nor be aware of the majesty of Heaven and our glorious Identity as God's Thought. We need only know we are unhappy here and want to return home. We do not know the way, but Someone within us does. Yet our inner Guide directs us only to the extent we ask His help – not for specific things, but for recognizing our misery and learning that guilt is its cause. Only then do we happily learn His lessons of forgiveness that will take us home:

> The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery *is* happiness (T-14.II.1:1-3).

**(4:4-7) Ask to receive, and it is given you. Conviction lies within it. Till you welcome it as yours, uncertainty remains. Yet God is fair.**

You will be convinced the words of this course are true because they work; otherwise they remain empty. Thus you will be happy and peaceful when you follow its teachings and let go of guilt and judgment, and, above all, the arrogance of thinking you know what is happening in your life. The process, as we have repeatedly discussed, is to bring your uncertainty to Jesus' certainty. This allows his gentle love to heal, for by bringing your gift of arrogance to his gift of peace, you come to receive it.

The phrase "God is fair" means that truth does not leave you because you chose against it; God does not punish you because you ran away from home. Since the *you is* all of us, God's Love embraces us all in His "fairness," for we are alike in illusion as well as in truth.

**(4:8) Sureness is not required to receive what only your acceptance can bestow.**

Once again, God does not demand you be certain of the truth. All He asks, through the Holy Spirit, is that you be aware you are not happy, and that your lack of happiness comes from your mistaken choice. This statement from the workbook, by the way, is similar to ones in the text and manual, which teach that readiness does not mean mastery:

> Readiness is only the prerequisite for accomplishment. The two should not be confused. As soon as a state of readiness occurs, there is usually some degree of desire to accomplish, but it is by no means necessarily undivided. The state does not imply more than a potential for a change of mind.... You may think this implies that an enormous amount of time is necessary between readiness and mastery, but let me remind you that time and space are under my control (T-2.VII.7:2-5, 9).

Readiness, as the text notes, is not mastery (M-4.IX.1:10).

Thus you can be ready to learn forgiveness without having totally accepted its certainty

**(5:1) Ask with desire.**

Jesus is asking that you really mean this, as he says later in the workbook:

> To say these words [I want the peace of God] is nothing. But to mean these words is everything (W-pI.185.1:1-2).

You are helped to desire His help by realizing you are wrong about what makes you happy or upset. How simple and easy! And yet how difficult when our arrogance stands in the way!

**(5:2-5) You need not be sure that you request the only thing you want. But when you have received, you will be sure you have the treasure you have always sought. What would you then exchange for it? What would induce you now to let it fade away from your ecstatic vision?**

You need not be certain of what you ask for, but need only a little willingness to be shown you are wrong and Jesus is right. When you begin to accept the gift of God's Thought, and realize how good it feels to let go of grievances against yourself and others, you will be much less likely to judge. Yet you must first learn that happiness and peace come only when you let go of judgment, not when you embrace it or seek to justify its attacks. Once you have your "ecstatic vision," nothing here could ever seduce you away from it. Recall:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

**(5:6) For this sight proves that you have exchanged your blindness for the seeing eyes of Christ; your mind has come to lay aside denial, and accept the Thought of God as your inheritance.**

When we as one Son chose the ego over the Holy Spirit, we denied the Thought of God. We continued to deny, ending up in this world of fragmentation and judgment. We then denied we made the world along with the figures in our dream, not to mention denying that our thoughts cause our pain and suffering. Such denial has allowed us to put on the face of innocence and blame everyone else for our miserable condition.

To make the point again, Jesus appeals to our selfish motives by saying we will feel better if we do what he says. However, this does not mean doing it simply because he says so. We listen to him because our pain will lessen. Yet this has to be proven to us, because we do not accept we could be happy without the ego's gifts of judgment and specialness.

**(6:1-4) Now is all doubting past, the journey's end made certain, and salvation given you. Now is Christ's power in your mind, to heal as you were healed. For now you are among the saviors of the world. Your destiny lies there and nowhere else.**

Our destiny lies in the mind's decision maker that chooses the right instead of the wrong mind, Christ's strength instead of the ego's weakness. In that right-minded choice for strength, the certainty of Christ becomes our own, as we have already seen:

> There must be doubt before there can be conflict. And every doubt must be about yourself. Christ has no doubt, and from His certainty His quiet comes. He will exchange His certainty for all your doubts, if you agree that He is One with you, and that this Oneness is endless, timeless, and within your grasp because your hands are His. He is within you, yet He walks beside you and before, leading

> the way that He must go to find Himself complete. His quietness becomes your certainty. And where is doubt when certainty has come? (T-24.V.9)

**(6:5) Would God consent to let His Son remain forever starved by his denial of the nourishment he needs to live?**

Love's answer is always present in our minds. Despite the fact that we have run away from it, barricading ourselves against it by making the world as a defense, God's Love is still present, totally unaffected by the insanity we have made of it.

**(6:6) Abundance dwells in him, and deprivation cannot cut him off from God's sustaining Love and from his home.**

The abundance of which Jesus speaks is the memory in our right minds of Who we are as God's Son. The illusion is that by depriving ourselves of God's Love we are in a state of scarcity. However, the truth remains that by depriving ourselves of His Love, we are without *awareness* of it, but the Love is still there. We return to It through forgiveness, which restores to our awareness the Thought we both *have* and *are:*

> In your own mind, though denied by the ego, is the declaration of your release. *God has given you everything.* This one fact means the ego does not exist, and this makes it profoundly afraid. In the ego's language, "to have" and "to be" are different, but they are identical to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows that you both *have* everything and *are* everything. Any distinction in this respect is meaningful only when the idea of "getting," which implies a lack, has already been accepted. That is why we make no distinction between *having* the Kingdom of God and *being* the Kingdom of God (T-4.III.9).

**(7:1-2) Practice today in hope. For hope indeed is justified.**

The ego tells me my situation is hopeless. My ego is so immense, my bodily identification so enormous, there is no way I can let them go and be at peace. We reach these discouraging conclusions only because we look for a way out within the world. When we choose a holy instant, however, and step from the world to the mind, everything looks different – the perceptual reversal of figure and ground. We realize the world is only a shadow that serves as a classroom in which we learn that reality is in our minds, rather than the reverse – God is a non-existent shadow and reality is the world. How hopeless a perception that is!

**(7:3-6) Your doubts are meaningless, for God is certain. And the Thought of Him is never absent. Sureness must abide within you who are host to Him. This course removes all doubts which you have interposed between Him and your certainty of Him.**

This is an explicit statement of the Course's purpose: not to have us learn about God or His Love, but to remove the interferences – the illusions and doubts – we have placed between ourselves and Him. This familiar thought is reiterated throughout *A Course in Miracles,* and begins the text:

> The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance (T-in.1:6-7; italics omitted).

**(8) We count on God, and not upon ourselves, to give us certainty. And in His Name we practice as His Word directs we do. His sureness lies beyond our every doubt. His Love remains beyond our every fear. The Thought of Him is still beyond all dreams and in our minds, according to His Will.**

To know this certainty, we need the willingness to choose a different Teacher and hear His Word, to step back and look at our lives as parts of a dream we are still dreaming, beyond which is our Identity as the Thought God created one with Him, no longer denied but happily accepted. This certainty of the truth is expressed in Helen's poem, "His Certainty," and we read its encouraging words as conclusion to this lesson:

> I come in doubt. I do not yet believe
> Your promises. My own uncertainty
> Seems to be more apparent than my faith
> In What You have ordained Your Son must be,
> And how Your memory returns to him.
> My steps are hesitant, my trust is weak,
> My sense of purpose falters. I forget
> My goal because of images I seek,
> And wander in illusions. Yet the end
> Of wandering is certain in Your Mind;
> What You would have me seek, that will I find.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 32)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 166**
**I am entrusted with the gifts of God.**

This lesson is one of the more important ones in the workbook, as Jesus articulates why we have such difficulty accepting his gifts. In this sense, it is a wonderful summary of one of the major emphases of *A Course in Miracles:* helping us contrast, and eventually choose between two identities: the ego's special self we cherish and our true Self as Christ, to which forgiveness gently leads us. One can also see a parallel to "The Gifts of God," the prose poem Helen took down that contrasts the ego's gifts with God's.

**(1:1-4) All things are given you. God's trust in you is limitless. He knows His Son. He gives without exception, holding nothing back that can contribute to your happiness.**

We have seen how God is sometimes treated as a member of homo sapiens, depicted as a loving Father Who gives us everything. This symbol reflects the abstract, non-specific Presence we cannot understand. The content behind the form is our one-ness with God, and therefore everything God is we are as well. This refers to our Christ Self, however, not the individual self with which we identity. Thus His Love and creative ability are ours; and we remain perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48), filled with the creative abundance of spirit:

> To extend is a fundamental aspect of God which He gave to His Son. In the creation, God extended Himself to His creations and imbued them with the same loving Will to create. You have not only been fully created, but have also been created perfect (T-2.I.1:1-3).

**(1:5) And yet, unless your will is one with His, His gifts are not received.**

As long as we separate from God's Love and Self, seeing ourselves as part of a separate, individual will, we will not realize God's gifts are ours. They are there, but they cannot be received because we fled from them.

**(1:6) But what would make you think there is another will than His?**

It is the ego that makes us think this, reflecting our ongoing wish to be separated.

**(2:1-3) Here is the paradox that underlies the making of the world. This world is not the Will of God, and so it is not real. Yet those who think it real must still believe there is another will, and one that leads to opposite effects from those He wills.**

If you believe both in God and your bodily identity, you must conclude there are two wills, reflecting a dualistic spirituality: the Will of God and the will of the ego. Moreover, there is God's Will and my own, which can act either in opposition to, or in consonance with Him, as I choose. But – I have a will that is mine. That is the heart of Martin Buber's I-Thou theology, inherent in which is the belief we have a will that can choose to place itself in harmony with the Creator. Still, it is not one with Him, thus perpetuating the I-Thou distinction.

**(2:4-5) Impossible indeed; but every mind that looks upon the world and judges it as certain, solid, trustworthy and true believes in two creators; or in one, himself alone. But never in one God.**

Either there are two wills – mine and God's – or, if I am an atheist, there is only my will and the will of another – a person, the universe, or some other force. However, we never believe in one true God. If we did, we would deny not only the physical universe, but our identity within the universe as well. This is the paradox faced by every student of *A Course in Miracles.* We read this book as individuals – a body's eyes that see words on a page, and a brain that interprets them. At the same time, what we read tells us we are not here at all and that all things physical are illusory. Therefore we typically treat the paradox as the ego always does: split it off, and then forget it is there so it does not have to be dealt with.

This lesson, like many other passages in the Course, forces us to pay attention to the paradox we do not want to face. Somewhere in our minds, however, we know if we looked at it, it would disappear. The fear is that not only would the paradox disappear, but so would our identity. To ensure against this possibility we make up a self, insanely believing we are the authors of our reality, leaving our true Creator outside this self. Yet:

You can perceive yourself as self-creating, but you cannot do more than believe it. You cannot make it true.... the belief that you can is the foundation stone in your thought system, and all your defenses are used to attack ideas that might bring it to light. You still believe you are an image of your own making (T-3.VII.4:6-7, 9-10).

**(3:1) The gifts of God are not acceptable to anyone who holds such strange beliefs.**

No one is happy here, and no one can be happy here for happiness is found only in Heaven. Thus, to be outside Heaven is to be outside our happiness. We shall see presently that happiness in this world comes from realizing we are *not* of this world. As long as we believe we are here and there is hope of happiness here, we will not be able to accept God's gifts. Truth and illusion cannot co-exist.

**(3:2-3) He must believe that to accept God's gifts, however evident they may become, however urgently he may be called to claim them as his own, is to be pressed to treachery against himself. He must deny their presence, contradict the truth, and suffer to preserve the world he made.**

This is the heart of the problem. If I believe in God's reality and the truth of Jesus' words, I deny the foundation of my existence—the treachery against myself. When we chose the ego we knew that choosing the Holy Spirit meant the end of individual existence. Listening to the ego's separation means I exist, whereas the Holy Spirit's Atonement leads me to disappear into the Heart of God, ending my life. In order to preserve my identity, therefore, I must deny truth's presence and God's gifts. I then gladly suffer my guilt, which proves I am right and God is wrong, since the Atonement says there can be no guilt. Thus my suffering, causing others to identify with it, convincingly proclaims what I am saying is true and the Atonement false. The following passage from the text describes the insanity of the ego's religion, in which guilt is seen as sacred and guiltlessness deemed blasphemous to the ego's god:

> Much of the ego's strange behavior is directly attributable to its definition of guilt. To the ego, *the guiltless are guilty.* Those who do not attack are its "enemies" because, by not valuing its interpretation of salvation, they are in an excellent position to let it go.... When it was confronted with the real guiltlessness of God's Son it did attempt to kill him, and the reason it gave was that guiltlessness is blasphemous to God. To the ego, the *ego* is God, and guiltlessness must be interpreted as the final guilt that fully justifies murder (T-13.11.4:1-3; 6:2-3).

**(4:1-3) Here is the only home he thinks he knows. Here is the only safety he believes that he can find. Without the world he made is he an outcast; homeless and afraid.**

Recall Lesson 160, "I am at home. Fear is the stranger here." We think our safety rests in the body, and in the security of the specialness we have judged will make us happy. We believe not to be here physically renders us homeless, and therefore are terrified of getting sick and dying, because then we would be no more. This insanity drives us to adjust to this insane world, desperately trying to convince ourselves of its reality and it one day making us safe. Jesus asks us to look honestly with him at this strange world of hate and death, which we made to escape from an even stranger world of sin and guilt:

> A simple question yet remains, and needs an answer. Do you like what you have made? – a world of murder and attack, through which you thread your timid way through constant dangers, alone and frightened, hoping at most that death will wait a little longer before it overtakes you and you disappear. *You made this up.* It is a picture of what you think you are; of how you see yourself.... All these are but the fearful thoughts of those who would adjust themselves to a world made fearful by their adjustments. And they look out in sorrow from what is sad within, and see the sadness there.... Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his insanity (T-20.III.4:1-4, 6-7; 7:1).

**(4:4) He does not realize that it is here he is afraid indeed, and homeless, too; an outcast wandering so far from home, so long away, he does not realize he has forgotten where he came from, where he goes, and even who he really is.**

My insistence that I am in this world reinforces the fear that says God will get me unless I hide in it, which is its purpose. The fear I experience in the body is thus a shadow of my mind's fear, the state of everyone in this world. We exist as bodies to remain far away from home, so far in fact we have forgotten it. We have even forgotten Who we are, choosing the ego's substitute identity of specialness instead.

**(5:1) Yet in his lonely, senseless wanderings, God's gifts go with him, all unknown to him.**

These gifts are buried in the mind, covered with our wrong-minded guilt, and covered still further by the body's pain and suffering. The body thus conceals the mind's guilt, which in turn conceals God's gifts in our right minds. This previously quoted

passage from the text powerfully conveys insanity's purpose for the world—hiding the Love that is the source of all fear:

> You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness.... You think you have made a world God would destroy; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you *would.* Therefore, you have used the world to cover your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. *And it is this that frightens you* (T-13.111.4:1,3-5).

**(5:2-5) He cannot lose them. But he will not look at what is given him. He wanders on, aware of the futility he sees about him everywhere, perceiving how his little lot but dwindles, as he goes ahead to nowhere. Still he wanders on in misery and poverty, alone though God is with him, and a treasure his so great that everything the world contains is valueless before its magnitude.**

Jesus describes the plight of everyone here. The treasure of God's Love is with us and still we wander on, aware that nothing here works and everything will die – yet we do not change our thinking. We seek to change things in the world, but by not addressing the cause in the mind, we ensure that nothing will change. Thus we hopelessly continue to seek for hope in the world:

> All its [the world's] roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death. There is no choice in its alternatives. Seek not escape from problems here. The world was made that problems could not *be* escaped. Be not deceived by all the different names its roads are given. They have but one end.... All of them will lead to death (T-31.IV.2:3-8, 11).

**(6:1) He seems a sorry figure, weary, worn, in threadbare clothing, and with feet that bleed a little from the rocky road he walks.**

The "sorry figure" is all of us who believe the body is our identity, and its inevitable breakdown and disintegration is expressed in the image of "threadbare clothing." Jesus does not want us to feel guilt, but he does want us to understand that this *is* the state of bodily life, the false self he elsewhere describes as a "travesty" or "mockery" of Who we are as spirit. All those who seek to find happiness and pleasure in this world will never find it. They may have it momentarily, but it will not last. This is not a course in how to be happy here, for its purpose is to make us happy by realizing we are *not* here. Only such realization will lead to happiness and joy. Without it we but settle for specialness instead of real love.

The line I am going to read now is repeated almost identically in Lesson 182 (2:1):

**(6:2) No one but has identified with him, for everyone who comes here has pursued the path he follows, and has felt defeat and hopelessness as he is feeling them.**

Think of how many people work with *A Course in Miracles* and still pretend they

do not identify with this figure. They will say they are happy, joyous, and filled with peace, yet if they truly were, they would not be here but in Heaven. It is imperative as you work with this course to recognize you cannot return home unless you first see the home you made for what it is. Thus you must realize how bitterly unhappy you are here, identified as a body, before you can meaningfully make a choice and ask with desire for help, as we saw in the previous lesson. Jesus is telling us *everyone* here has identified with this figure, and *everyone* has hopelessly followed the same path of defeat, because *everyone* dies. Once again, this path of misery cannot be chosen against until we first realize what it is. That is why, as we have seen, the Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery *is* happiness. This has so confused you that you have undertaken to learn to do what you can never do, believing that unless you learn it you will not be happy (T-14.II.1:1-4).

**(6:3) Yet is he really tragic, when you see that he is following the way he chose, and need but realize Who walks with him and open up his treasures to be free?**

Jesus is telling us not to feel sorry for the victim, for how can someone's tragic circumstances be tragic if the person chose it? Not to understand this is to fall into the trap of false empathy that Jesus warns us about in the text (T-16.I). People's lives are not tragic, for they are their dreams. Therefore, whom can I blame for a life filled with tragedy and pain? Not my parents, the world, or God. It is my dream and I am its dreamer, following the way my mind has chosen. It is this choice that is tragic, not the form it has taken – my choosing to be the innocent victim and another the sinful victimizer whom God will punish instead of me. To be happy, however, I need only realize that the Love of God, through the Holy Spirit, walks with me all the time – not in form or body, but in my mind.

**(7:1) This is your chosen self, the one you made as a replacement for reality.**

Jesus places the burden solely on us, making it clear he can help us only if we truly ask him, which we refuse to do as long as we cherish this "tragic" self, and, above all, our justified grievance that someone else did this to us. Our special relationships – the substitutes for Heaven's Love – thus become the focus of the Holy Spirit's correction:

> To substitute is to accept instead. If you would but consider exactly what this entails, you would perceive at once how much at variance this is with the goal the Holy Spirit has given you, and would accomplish for you. To substitute is to choose between, renouncing one aspect of the Sonship in favor of the other.... The Holy Spirit never uses substitutes. Where the ego perceives one person as a replacement for another, the Holy Spirit sees them joined and indivisible. He does not judge between them, knowing they are one (T-18.I.1:1-3; 2:1-3).

**(7:2) This is the self you savagely defend against all reason, every evidence, and all the witnesses with proof to show this is not you.**

*Reason, evidence,* and *the witnesses* are represented by this course, or those who carry within them the light of Christ we could see instead of the ego's darkness. Thus Jesus reminds us of the stories told about him, he who "would be only brother to the world" (C-5.5:7):

> Many thought I was attacking them, even though it was apparent I was not. An insane learner learns strange lessons. What you must recognize is that when you do not share a thought system, you are weakening it. Those who believe in it therefore perceive this as an attack on them. This is because everyone identifies himself with his thought system, and every thought system centers on what you believe you are (T-6.V-B.1:5-9).

Our egos demand we attack all those who represent out guiltlessness. The absence of guilt means the absence of sin, which means the separation never occurred and there is no individual self. Therefore, attack on innocence is a requirement if our guilty selves are to survive, and thus Jesus had to be destroyed.

**(7:3) You heed them not.**

We pay no attention, but savagely defend our self against anything that would threaten it. That is what most people tend to do with this course, somehow maneuvering to bring it into their individual dreams so it ends up saying what they want it to say, in order to promote their happiness within the dream. They thus ignore and deny all witnesses – *A Course in Miracles'* own words – that would show them they are wrong.

**(7:4) You go on your appointed way, with eyes cast down lest you might catch a glimpse of truth, and be released from self-deception and set free.**

Helen's poem "Stranger on the Road"* expresses this idea that we do not want to see Jesus and accept who he is, for to do so means our thought system is false. We thus do not look at his awakened or resurrected self, as Helen so poignantly expresses:

> The road is long. I will not lift my eyes,
> For fear has gripped my heart, and fear I know—
> The shield that keeps me safe from rising hope;
> The friend that keeps You stranger still to me....
>
> You said You would return, and I believed
> Too long already. Now my eyes are sealed
> Against the slender thread of hope that cuts
> Into my calm despair. O let me go!
>
> Your Word surrounds You like a golden light,
> And I can scarcely see the road we walk
> Because my eyes are veiled. Disturb me not,
> I beg of You. I would not see You now.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 103,104)

It is tempting, again, to avoid what Jesus really says. We want to twist his words

to mean we can find happiness and salvation in the world and body. Many spiritualities do in fact teach this; this one does not. Its purpose is not to make us happy here, but to have us realize our unhappiness in order to find true happiness in the mind. Our deeply seated fear is that because *A Course in Miracles* is right, we must be wrong about everything, especially the figure we see each morning in our bathroom mirror. The truth is we are not the person we think we are, as Helen's poem also reflects:

> Your Voice reminds me of an ancient song
> My lips begin to sing, although I hoped
> It was forgotten.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 104)

**(8:1-2) You cower fearfully lest you should feel Christ's touch upon your shoulder, and perceive His gentle hand directing you to look upon your gifts. How could you then proclaim your poverty in exile?**

If I accept Christ's gifts, how can I justifiably say I am a poor, innocent victim? Yet that is exactly why I was born – so I could say with full justification I am this victim. Thus it is that the true touch of Christ upon me – the reflection of reality – becomes a great threat. Recall these lines from Helen's "Awake in Stillness" that fill our egos with dread:

> The Son of God
> Has come to join you now. His shining hand
> Is on your shoulder.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 73)

Part of us weeps for joy at this touch, while another cringes in the darkness of guilt and attack, seeking to hide this shining hand of forgiveness from our awareness.

**(8:3) He would make you laugh at this perception of yourself.**

The Holy Spirit is not mocking or ridiculing us, but trying to help us realize the absurdity of our illusory self-concepts of sin, guilt, and hate. The following passage summarizes the Holy Spirit's role of helping us look at our belief in sin, the *cause* of our suffering, which is sin's *effect.* Learning to laugh at the silliness of believing we could separate from God, no less attack Him, is all salvation needs to be accomplished, as we read one more time:

> In gentle laughter does the Holy Spirit perceive the cause, and looks not to effects. How else could He correct your error, who have overlooked the cause entirely? He bids you bring each terrible effect to Him that you may look together on its foolish cause and laugh with Him a while. *You* judge effects, but *He* has judged their cause. And by His judgment are effects removed. Perhaps you come in tears. But hear Him say, "My brother, holy Son of God, behold your idle dream, in which this could occur." And you will leave the holy instant with your laughter and your brother's joined with His (T-27.VIII.9).

**(8:4) Where is self-pity then?**

If I laugh at myself, how can I feel self-pity? Yet there is not a person who does

not identify with this self-indulgent dynamic of feeling sorry for oneself.

**(8:5) And what becomes of all the tragedy you sought to make for him whom God intended only joy?**

The "him" is God's Son, and in the gentle laughter of the Holy Spirit all pain and suffering are gone. Within the dream, however, this world is tragic indeed, for horrible things do happen here. Yet joining with Christ's vision in the holy instant, looking back on the dream's "heavy consequences," we smile at the belief that this thought system of sin – a "trifling cause" – could ever have taken the place of God's Love. Happiness lies in understanding that happy fact:

> It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause. Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest (T-27.VIII.8:4-7).

**(9) Your ancient fear has come upon you now, and justice has caught up with you at last. Christ's hand has touched your shoulder, and you feel that you are not alone. You even think the miserable self you thought was you may not be your Identity. Perhaps God's Word is truer than your own. Perhaps His gifts to you are real. Perhaps He has not wholly been outwitted by your plan to keep His Son in deep oblivion, and go the way you chose without your Self.**

At some point we realize the jig is up – there must be another way – and entertain the thought that perhaps we were wrong and Jesus right, as Helen did near the end of her poem:

> Lord, did You really keep Your lovely Word?
> Was I mistaken? Did You rise again?
> And was it I who failed, instead of You?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 104)

This realization comes in the instant we are aware of the terror – the "ancient fear" – that arises: If I am not this self, who am I? The Christ I truly am is not the person I think.

**(10:1-2) God's Will does not oppose. It merely is.**

Everything here opposes, because this is a dualistic world in which only opposites exist – good and bad, we's and they's. God's Will does not oppose because it cannot oppose. It merely is. Only perfect Oneness is real, and how can Oneness oppose Itself?

> How does one overcome illusions? Surely not by force or anger, nor by opposing them in any way. Merely by letting reason tell you that they contradict reality. They go against what must be true. The opposition comes from them, and not reality. Reality opposes nothing. What merely is needs no defense, and offers none (T-22.V.1:1-7).

**(10:3-4) It is not God you have imprisoned in your plan to lose your Self. He does not know about a plan so alien to His Will.**

You have done nothing to God, but only to yourself. The opposition in your mind and in this world is made up. The worst part of all for the ego is that God knows nothing of the ego's plan and strategy. How could He know of what is unreal? Thus the Course says of spirit:

> Nothing can reach spirit from the ego, and nothing can reach the ego from spirit (T-4.I.2:6).
>
> Spirit in its knowledge is unaware of the ego (T-4.II.8:6).
>
> The ego and the spirit do not know each other (T-4.VI.4: 1).

**(10:5-6) There was a need He did not understand, to which He gave an Answer. That is all.**

This reference to the creation of the Holy Spirit is meant metaphorically. As we have seen before, Jesus speaks to us on the dualistic level of our understanding:

> He [God] would have you replace the ego's belief in littleness with His Own exalted Answer to what you are, so that you can cease to question it and know it for what it is (T-9.VIII.11:9).
>
> The Holy Spirit is described throughout the course as giving us the answer to the separation and bringing the plan of the Atonement to us, establishing our particular part in it and showing us exactly what it is (C-6.2:1).

Yet, strictly speaking, God cannot give an answer. How can what never happened be answered? The Holy Spirit is an illusion, a symbol of the thought of Atonement, itself an illusion for it corrects what never was. Thus Jesus explains in the clarification of terms:

> His is the Voice for God, and has therefore taken form. This form is not His reality, which God alone knows along with Christ, His real Son, Who is part of Him (C-6.1:4-5).

And after the ego's dream of death is done:

> ...the Voice is gone, no longer to take form but to return to the eternal formlessness of God (C-6.5:8).

**(10:7) And you who have this Answer given you have need no more of anything but this.**

Jesus pleads with us not to choose the ego's gifts, because they will not give us what we want; only his gifts will. Recall this moving passage from "The Gifts of God":

**Lesson 166**

The gifts of God are in my hands, to give to anyone who would exchange the world for Heaven. You need only call my name and ask me to accept the gift of pain from willing hands that would be laid in mine, with thorns laid down and nails long thrown away as one by one the sorry gifts of earth are joyously relinquished. In my hands is everything you want and need and hoped to find among the shabby toys of earth. I take them all from you and they are gone. And shining in the place where once they stood there is a gateway to another world through which we enter in the Name of God *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 118-19).

**(11:1) Now do we live, for now we cannot die.**

Do not take this sentence out of context and have it mean you are immortal. You are eternal as Christ, God's Son, but not as a body. Thus Jesus is not teaching that the body does not die, but that you cannot die because you are *not* a body, and bodies have never lived. These lines from the text should be familiar by now:

> Swear not to die, you holy Son of God! You make a bargain that you cannot keep. The Son of Life cannot be killed. He is immortal as his Father (T-29.VI.2:1-4).

Jesus could just as easily have said: "Swear not to live!" as the body's life and death are opposite sides of the same illusion of separation.

**(11:2) The wish for death is answered, and the sight that looked upon it now has been replaced by vision which perceives that you are not what you pretend to be.**

We finally realize through Christ's vision that we are not the self we thought we were.

**(11:3) One walks with you Who gently answers all your fears with this one merciful reply, "It is not so."**

Thus we hate Jesus and his course for they do not argue with us, but are gentle reminders that everything we think is not true. As I quoted earlier: "And God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7). The source of our difficulty with *A Course in Miracles* is that it brooks no compromise, as we see in this infuriatingly simple statement: "It is not so." In the following passage, with which we are already acquainted, Jesus teaches us to expect trouble from our frightened egos when we choose to walk with him and identify with his defenseless negation of all we hold dear:

> When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you.... Whenever fear intrudes anywhere along the road to peace, it is because the ego has attempted to join the journey with us and cannot do so. Sensing defeat and angered by it, the ego regards itself as rejected and becomes retaliative. You are invulnerable to its retaliation because I am with you. On this journey you have chosen me as your companion *instead* of the ego (T-8.V.4:1-2; 5:5-8).

**(11:4) He points to all the gifts you have each time the thought of poverty oppresses you, and speaks of His Companionship when you perceive yourself as lonely and afraid.**

Yet another summary of the process of *A Course in Miracles:* the thought of poverty oppresses, makes us unhappy, and brings us pain, and thus we say there must be another way of looking at it, asking Jesus' help as we do. He reminds us that things are not as they appear to be: "Your pain," he says, "does not come from outside, but from your mind's fearful decision to oppose me because I represent the truth, in the presence of which your false self would disappear." That is the background of his gentle words: "It is not so." Again, the process begins with looking at our wretched impoverishment, for which we hold someone else responsible.

The above line, incidentally, echoes Jesus' beautiful plea to us at the end of the text:

> Deny me not the little gift I ask, when in exchange I lay before your feet the peace of God, and power to bring this peace to everyone who wanders in the world uncertain, lonely, and in constant fear (T-31.VIII.7:1).

**(12:1-2) Yet he reminds you still of one thing more you had forgotten. For His touch on you has made you like Himself.**

The "one thing more" he reminds us of is that the Son of God is one—what I give to you I give to myself. Here is his reminder:

**(12:3-7) The gifts you have are not for you alone. What He has come to offer you, you now must learn to give. This is the lesson that His giving holds, for He has saved you from the solitude you sought to make in which to hide from God. He has reminded you of all the gifts that God has given you. He speaks as well of what becomes your will when you accept these gifts, and recognize they are your own.**

Jesus shifts his focus to the principle of shared interests as he reminds us God's gifts are not our own, but everyone's. Remember, the ego is held in place by the belief our interests are separate – *one or the other:* my happiness comes at your expense. Yet if I punish you by projecting my guilt, I give that same "gift" to myself. However, if I truly want to know God's Love, I must realize it is not mine and mine alone. If I withhold it from you, I withhold it from me. What we share with others – guilt or forgiveness – is strengthened in ourselves:

> If you share an idea, however, you do not lessen it. All of it is still yours although all of it has been given away. Further, if the one to whom you give it accepts it as his, he reinforces it in your mind and thus increases it (T-5.I.1:11-13).

**(13:1) The gifts are yours, entrusted to your care, to give to all who chose the lonely road you have escaped.**

**Lesson 166**

In the holy instant I am sane, realizing I made a wrong choice that I undo by choosing the Holy Spirit as my Teacher. When I am more sane than those around me, my responsibility is to reflect to them my choice for vision – not by my words or actions, but by identifying with the loving and peaceful Presence that abides within me. Thus Jesus gently reminds us in this previously quoted excerpt from his final vision:

> My brothers in salvation, do not fail to hear my voice and listen to my words. I ask for nothing but your own release. There is no place for hell within a world whose loveliness can yet be so intense and so inclusive it is but a step from there to Heaven. To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you (T-31.VIII.8).

**(13:2-4) They do not understand they but pursue their wishes. It is you who teach them now. For you have learned of Christ there is another way for them to walk.**

They do not understand their suffering comes from a decision. Just as "no one dies without his own consent," no one suffers without his own consent. By being sane, my peace is unaffected by the pain-filled dreams of others, reminding them that my choice for sanity is theirs to make as well, and thus accept responsibility as dreamers of their dreams. This does not mean we refuse help to those in distress, but it is offered without the holier-than-thou attitude that says you are worse off than I, and in my goodness I deign to assist you. In our minds, we see no differences between ourselves and another, and we help because that is the nature of love. Here, again, is how Jesus describes our function of teaching others what it means to walk with Christ:

> To them [the sick] God's teachers come, to represent another choice which they had forgotten. The simple presence of a teacher of God is a reminder. His thoughts ask for the right to question what the patient has accepted as true. As God's messengers, His teachers are the symbols of salvation. They ask the patient for forgiveness for God's Son in his own Name. They stand for the Alternative. With God's Word in their minds they come in benediction, not to heal the sick but to remind them of the remedy God has already given them. It is not their hands that heal. It is not their voice that speaks the Word of God. They merely give what has been given them. Very gently they call to their brothers to turn away from death: "Behold, you Son of God, what life can offer you. Would you choose sickness in place of this?" (M-5.III.2).

**(13:5) Teach them by showing them the happiness that comes to those who feel the touch of Christ, and recognize God's gifts.**

Happiness could be defined as looking at the world and knowing you are not of it – the recognition that truth is in your mind and not in the external. The peace you feel and people experience in you becomes the teacher that says to others they can have the peace you now enjoy.

**(13:6) Let sorrow not tempt you to be unfaithful to your trust.**

Do not let someone else's sorrow or your own tempt you to believe this world is real, and that pain and suffering come from the body rather than the mind's decision. We can certainly benefit from another look at these two incisive passages on sickness, which urge us not to support another's dreams of separation, but reinforce instead the reflected oneness that undoes the dream:

> No mind is sick until another mind agrees that they are separate. And thus it is their joint decision to be sick. If you withhold agreement and accept the part you play in making sickness real, the other mind cannot project its guilt without your aid in letting it perceive itself as separate and apart from you. Thus is the body not perceived as sick by both your minds from separate points of view. Uniting with a brother's mind prevents the cause of sickness and perceived effects. Healing is the effect of minds that join, as sickness comes from minds that separate (T-28.III.2).

> Accepting the Atonement for yourself means not to give support to someone's dream of sickness and of death. It means that you share not his wish to separate, and let him turn illusions on himself. Nor do you wish that they be turned, instead, on you. Thus have they no effects. And you are free of dreams of pain because you let him be (T-28.IV.1:1-5).

**(14:1-4) Your sighs will now betray the hopes of those who look to you for their release. Your tears are theirs. If you are sick, you but withhold their healing. What you fear but teaches them their fears are justified.**

Jesus is not laying a guilt trip on us. Read this as you would a wonderful epic poem, where you relate to the words' feeling and content, not their literal meaning. Jesus is not saying your mistaken thoughts – tears, sighs, and illness – will hold people in hell, but it will *in your mind.* You are not responsible for the choices of others, any more than Jesus was. Note this early statement from the text:

> When you project this [loyalty to the ego] to others you imprison them, but only to the extent to which you reinforce errors they have already made. This makes them vulnerable to the distortions of others, since their own perception of themselves is distorted. The miracle worker can only bless them, and this undoes their distortions and frees them from prison (T-1.III.5:9-11).

We merely reinforce a decision already made. The choice is ours whether to choose for ourselves, thereby holding out the reminder for our brother. The content underlying this teaching is the unity of God's Son. If I suffer, my mind says I am separate from God, and therefore I believe everyone else is separate as well. The moment I am healed – have taken Jesus' hand and experienced his love – I realize all are one in that love. Thus I teach the loving correction I wish to learn, and I learn it as I teach it. That is the healing property of the miracle, as we read:

> Once you accept this [the Atonement], your mind can only heal. By denying your mind any destructive potential and reinstating its purely constructive

> powers, you place yourself in a position to undo the level confusion of others. The message you then give to them is the truth that their minds are similarly constructive, and their miscreations cannot hurt them. By affirming this you release the mind from over- evaluating its own learning device, and restore the mind to its true position as the learner (T-2.V.5:3-6).
>
> If you perceive truly you are cancelling out misperceptions in yourself and in others simultaneously. Because you see them as they are, you offer them your acceptance of their truth so they can accept it for themselves. This is the healing that the miracle induces (T-3.II.6:5-7).

To repeat, Jesus is not seeking to impose guilt because you are in your wrong mind. If you believe your ego hurts others, you are reinforcing their wrong choice. Yet you are not responsible for it. However, you do tell them: "You are an ego and you are right; I am an ego and I am right, too." Such insanity can only hurt the Sonship as one.

**(14:5-6) Your hand becomes the giver of Christ's touch; your change of mind becomes the proof that who accepts God's gifts can never suffer anything. You are entrusted with the world's release from pain.**

I am "entrusted with the world's release from pain" because the world exists in my mind. When my mind is healed and I have chosen against the ego's pain and for God's joy, in that joyful instant the world becomes one. As we have seen again and again, the mind of God's Son is one, and *ideas leave not their source.*

**(15:1-2) Betray it not. Become the living proof of what Christ's touch can offer everyone.**

In the text Jesus asks us to witness to others – "the living proof" – what his gentle touch can offer us. We have already quoted the third and fourth lines, but here is its fuller context, imploring us to give up our weapons of judgment – "nails and thorns" – for only then can we remember our Identity, as we are redeemed as God's one Son:

> You will not find peace until you have removed the nails from the hands of God's Son, and taken the last thorn from his forehead. The Love of God surrounds His Son whom the god of crucifixion condemns. Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you. For the undoing of the crucifixion of God's Son is the work of the redemption, in which everyone has a part of equal value (T-11.VI.7:1-5).

Thus Jesus asks: Become the living proof of the effects of choosing Christ's vision. Through the peace that comes, you become a teacher of peace.

**(15:3-8) God has entrusted all His gifts to you. Be witness in your happiness to how transformed the mind becomes which chooses to accept His gifts, and feel the touch of Christ. Such is your mission now For God entrusts the giving of His gifts to all who have received them. He has shared His joy with you. And now you go to share it with the world.**

This is not a call to go out and preach the gospel to the pagans. You share God's joy with the world by your awareness that you are not the figure in the dream. People may experience you this way, but in the holy instant you know your reality is outside it. The gifts of God's Love, with which you have been entrusted, can now be shared with all who still believe themselves unworthy of such a gift. As we "go out," we think again with gratitude of Jesus' inspiring conclusion to the manual for teachers, a suitable close to this inspiring lesson:

> In confidence I place you in His Hands, and I give thanks for you that this is so.
>
> And now in all your doings be you blessed.
> God turns to you for help to save the world.
> Teacher of God, His thanks He offers you,
> And all the world stands silent in the grace
> You bring from Him. You are the Son He loves,
> And it is given you to be the means
> Through which His Voice is heard around the world,
> To close all things of time; to end the sight
> Of all things visible; and to undo
> All things that change. Through you is ushered in
> A world unseen, unheard, yet truly there.
> Holy are you, and in your light the world
> Reflects your holiness, for you are not
> Alone and friendless. I give thanks for you,
> And join your efforts on behalf of God,
> Knowing they are on my behalf as well,
> And for all those who walk to God with me.
> AMEN
> (M-29.7:11-8:8)

* *The Gifts of God,* pp. 103-105. See my workshop on this poem, published as a two-tape audio set entitled "Forgiving Jesus: `Stranger on the Road'."

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 167**
**There is one life, and that I share with God.**

This lesson extends the theme we covered in Lesson 163, "There is no death. The Son of God is free." Here, too, Jesus talks about death and contrasts it with life, and in so doing reinforces his teaching on the contrast between mind and body. Note, too, the use of the word *mind.* In *A Course in Miracles, mind* is almost always capitalized when it refers to the Minds of God and Christ, and not capitalized when it refers to the split mind of the separated Son. This lesson, however, is an exception to that rule: *mind* is lowercase throughout, at times Jesus referring to mind as spirit, and other times as split. It was impossible to capitalize it because of the structure of the discussion, as we will see. Thus, *mind* is kept lowercase in the same *way spirit is,* which is capitalized only when it refers to the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, spirit – the essence of our Identity as Christ – is lowercase.

**(1:1-4) There are not different kinds of life, for life is like the truth. It does not have degrees. It is the one condition in which all that God created share. Like all His Thoughts, it has no opposite.**

This corrects our thoughts about life, wherein we believe there are different forms in what is commonly referred to as the great chain of being – from the single-celled amoeba to complex mammals. In addition, there are the categories of life and nonlife, such as animals and minerals. Jesus emphasizes there is no hierarchy in illusions: there is life and non-life, with no in-between degrees, as we read again in this all-important paragraph:

> There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. Yet both are judgments on what is not life, equal in their inaccuracy and lack of meaning. Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere. Outside of Heaven, only the conflict of illusion stands; senseless, impossible and beyond all reason, and yet perceived as an eternal barrier to Heaven. Illusions are but forms. Their content is never true (T-23.II.19).

**(1:5) There is no death because what God created shares His life.**

Life has no opposite. As Jesus tells us at the beginning of the text: "The opposite of love is fear; but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite" (T-in.1:8, italics omitted). Therefore fear does not exist. In this world we think death is the opposite of life, but since life as perfect oneness is all there is, there is nothing outside this oneness:

> For if He be the sum of everything, then what is not in Him does not exist, and His completion is its nothingness (T-29.II.10:3).

Whatever in this world appears to be alive or not alive is equally illusory, which is why *A Course in Miracles* is non-dualistic. Light and dark, spirit and matter, life and death do not co-exist. There is but one reality, one truth, one life.

**(1:6-7) There is no death because an opposite to God does not exist. There is no death because the Father and the Son are one.**

This is another rendering of the Course's non- dualism. Anything beyond the perfect Oneness of God and Christ does not exist. Likewise in the text:

> There is no death because the living share the function their Creator gave to them. Life's function cannot be to die. It must be life's extension, that it be as one forever and forever, without end (T-29.VI.4:9-11).

**(2:1-3) In this world, there appears to be a state that is life's opposite. You call it death. Yet we have learned that the idea of death takes many forms.**

The key word is *appears:* It appears as if there is an opposite to life, because in this world of bodies death is a real phenomenon. Jesus repeats the statement with which he began Lesson 163: "Death is a thought that takes on many forms . . . ."

**(2:4-7) It is the one idea which underlies all feelings that are not supremely happy. It is the alarm to which you give response of any kind that is not perfect joy. All sorrow, loss, anxiety and suffering and pain, even a little sigh of weariness, a slight discomfort or the merest frown, acknowledge death. And thus deny you live.**

Anything in this world is an illusion, and shares the ego belief in *one or the other:* in order for me to exist, God must be destroyed. What reflects our individual experience is this idea that has not left its source. Thus Jesus says later in the workbook: "the world was made as an attack on God" (W-pII.3.2:1). This expresses the all-or-nothing thinking we saw earlier when he told us that "a slight twinge of annoyance is nothing but a veil drawn across intense fury" (W-pI.21.2:5), or that "two [illusions] are as meaningless as one or as a thousand" (T-23.I.3:8). In the manual he asks:

> Is it harder to dispel the belief of the insane in a larger hallucination as opposed to a smaller one? Will he agree more quickly to the unreality of a louder voice he hears than to that of a softer one? Will he dismiss more easily a whispered demand to kill than a shout? And do the number of pitchforks the devils he sees carrying affect their credibility in his perception? His mind has categorized them all as real, and so they are all real to him. When he realizes they are all illusions they will disappear (M-8.5:2-7).

Therefore, anything reflecting our existence as a personality living in a body is part of the illusory thought system of separation. That part of the ego's system – our experience as a body – does not die because it does not live.

**(3:1) You think that death is of the body.**

Indeed, we think sickness, hunger, and special relationships are of the body, as well as death. Since we believe we are bodies, we believe every experience, problem, and solution is of the body as well. Moreover, as Jesus reminds us in the text:

> Can you who see yourself within a body know yourself as an idea? Everything you recognize you identify with externals, something outside itself (T-

18.VIII.1:5-6).

**(3:2-5) Yet it is but an idea, irrelevant to what is seen as physical. A thought is in the mind. It can be then applied as mind directs it. But its origin is where it must be changed if change occurs.**

Death is a thought – Jesus uses *idea* and *thought* interchangeably – as are sickness, pain, worldly happiness, and specialness. They come from the thought of separation, which is why Jesus is unequivocal throughout *A Course in Miracles* that the problem is not in the world or body, but in the mind that believed what the ego taught was true. It is the thought that says I prefer to be right rather than happy. The above statement – "A thought is in the mind. It can then be applied as mind directs it, but its origin is where it must be changed if change occurs" – reminds us of this key and familiar sentence:

> Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world (T-21.in.1:7).

The problem is never outside, but in the mind's decision maker choosing the wrong teacher.

**(3:6-7) Ideas leave not their source. The emphasis this course has placed on that idea is due to its centrality in our attempts to change your mind about yourself.**

We are well acquainted with this teaching, and Jesus lets us know that *ideas leave not their source* is crucial to understanding the thought system of his course. Indeed, you cannot understand a miracle or forgiveness, nor apply them, without the principle that the *idea* of a world, body, or external problem, has never left its *source,* which is in the mind. *Cause* and *effect, source* and *idea,* are unified and remain one and the same. The difference is that *idea-effect* seems to be outside *mind-cause.* Jesus, however, is quite explicit that death does not happen to the body, nor is caused by anything external. It is merely an idea in the mind:

> We know that an idea leaves not its source. And death is the result of the thought we call the ego, as surely as life is the result of the Thought of God (T-19.IV-C.2:14-15).

The core of that thought, once again, is that God must die so I can live.

**(3:8) It is the reason you can heal.**

You can heal because *ideas leave not their source:* If you change your mind's belief in separation, you undo the sickness. Remember that sickness does not consist of physical or psychological symptoms, but lies in the mind's mistaken choice. Change the decision and sickness is gone; *effect* no longer exists once its *cause* has been removed.

**(3:9-11) It is the cause of healing. It is why you cannot die. Its truth established you as one with God.**

Recall that when Jesus says "you cannot die," he does not mean we live in an immortal bodily state. We cannot die because life was created by God as spirit. Anything not of spirit does not live, and therefore cannot die. The truth of *ideas leave not their source* established us as one with God: He is the Source, and we the idea in His Mind that never left Him – another statement of the Atonement principle. Returning to the just-quoted third obstacle to peace, "The Attraction of Death," we find Jesus making the same point related to death: it is a thought that has never left its source in the mind, having nothing to do with the body.

**(4:1) Death is the thought that you are separate from your Creator.**

The ego says that separation is life. This is our individual reality, originating in the separation from God that gave us our world, our specialness, and our death.

**(4:2) It is the belief conditions change, emotions alternate because of causes you cannot control, you did not make, and you can never change**

In other words, I am happy one minute because my special partners are nice to me, and unhappy the next because they are not; happy one minute because I get what I want, and unhappy the next because I do not. Our emotions go up and down like a roller coaster, and because we are quick to blame the source of our discomfort, anxiety, and pain on something outside, they are not due to a decision we make. In fact, our world is built on the need to identify the external causes of our upset. That is why Jesus says in Lesson 5: "I am never upset for the reason I think." To attribute our emotional state to "causes you cannot control, you did not make, and you can never change" is the heart of the ego's face of innocence: I was so happy until this person said this to me, or I saw today's stock market closing; my misery is not my doing – something external impinged on me and changed my peaceful state of mind.

**(4:3) It is the fixed belief ideas can leave their source, and take on qualities the source does not contain, becoming different from their own origin, apart from it in kind as well as distance, time and form.**

The ego has masterfully made up the world to introduce a seeming chasm between *cause* and *effect:* the mind's wrong choice and our distress. The cause in the mind seems light years from the perceived problem, and is thus unknown to us. We then attack the seeming cause of the problem, both of which are seen outside the mind. Yet, all our problems stem from the illusory belief that ideas *do* leave their source. Thus the real reason I am upset is that I chose the ego over the Holy Spirit, thereby making real the tiny, mad idea, as well as sin, guilt, fear, and death. That sinful decision is the true cause of my distress, the source I project to see the sin in another. This allows me to deny that my fear comes from the mind, but comes instead from this terrible person with power to withhold love and inflict pain. Thus has sin, rooted in my mind's mistaken choice, left its source to be perceived now in someone else, leaving me the innocent victim as the suffering effect of that person's sin.

The ego's thought system therefore rests on the principle *ideas **do** leave their source* – the Son of God has left his Father and become an independent self – as the Holy Spirit's rests on *ideas leave **not** their source* – we are an idea in the Mind of God

and have never left Him. The ego's thought system of guilt and attack evolved from its thought of separation, just as the Holy Spirit's thought system of forgiveness evolved from His thought of Atonement, the reflected thought of our oneness that never left its Source:

> God created His Sons by extending His Thought, and retaining the extensions of His Thought in His Mind. All His Thoughts are thus perfectly united within themselves and with each other (T-6.II.8:1-2).

> ... every idea begins in the mind of the thinker. Therefore, what extends from the mind is still in it, and from *what* it extends it knows itself.... Your Godlike mind can never be defiled (T-6.III.1:1-2, 6).

**(5:1) Death cannot come from life.**

As we will see in paragraph 7, the opposite of life is life, not death; another way of saying that God did not create death. This statement directly contradicts the third chapter of Genesis, which states that God made death as punishment for Adam and Eve's sin. Jesus teaches us instead that death is made by the ego, not by the God Who alone is life.

**(5:2-4) Ideas remain united to their source. They can extend all that their source contains. In that, they can go far beyond themselves.**

Recall Jesus' words to Helen about being too tolerant of her mind wandering (T-2.VI.4:6). The thoughts of guilt indeed seem to wander from their source in the mind, far beyond themselves, even appearing to exist outside the mind through projection. Yet these illusory thoughts go nowhere, always remaining within the illusory mind that is their source, at the same time that the loving thoughts of the Holy Spirit remain within their right-minded source:

> Every loving thought held in any part of the Sonship belongs to every part. It is shared *because* it is loving. Sharing is God's way of creating, and also yours. The ego can keep you in exile from the Kingdom, but in the Kingdom itself it has no power. Ideas of the spirit do not leave the mind that thinks them, nor can they conflict with each other.... You can share only the thoughts that are of God and that He keeps for you. And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven (T-5.IV.3:1-5,8-9).

**(5:5) But they can not give birth to what was never given them.**

What "was never given them" was life or truth. Thus, ideas can leave their source within the dream, and can, for example, make a cosmos that appears separated from its source – but that does not make it so. Life remains a memory in our right minds – held there by the Holy Spirit – that has never changed despite our insane wanderings into the world.

> Truth and illusion have no connection. This will remain forever true, however much you seek to connect them.... The result of an idea is never separate from its source. The idea of separation produced the body and remains

connected to it, making it sick because of the mind's identification with it (T-19.I.7:1-2, 6-7).

**(5:6) As they are made, so will their making be.**

As a false idea is made by the ego's false separation, so will it make a false idea. The ego is a false idea about God's Son, which then makes a false idea – the world – as a home for the Son's false identity, projected into a body.

**(5:6-8) As they are made so will their making be. As they were born, so will they then give birth. And where they come from, there will they return.**

They will return whence they came because *ideas leave not their source.* The ego cannot give birth to the life that was never given it. Life extends only to life, as does spirit, and illusions project only to illusions. In other words, life creates life, illusions make illusions—with no interface between them. Again, this is what establishes *A Course in Miracles as* a non-dualistic system. God has nothing to do with a world He does not know, because it is outside His Mind. If the world were truly His opposite, it would be real.

**(6:1) The mind can think it sleeps, but that is all.**

We can think we are separate from God and inhabit a body in a world that is real, but we cannot establish reality, as Jesus reminds us, if we would but listen:

> Your task is not to make reality. It is here without your making, but not without you. You who have tried to throw yourself away and valued God so little, hear me speak for Him and for yourself (T-14.IV.8:1-3).

**(6:2) It cannot change what is its waking state.**

Recall that we "are at home in God, dreaming of exile, but perfectly capable of awakening to reality" (T-10.I.2:1). Thus we never left our Creator's Mind and remain awake in Him, though we think we sleep and dream of a self in opposition to God:

> Let us look closer at the whole illusion that what you made has power to enslave its maker. This is the same belief that caused the separation. It is the meaningless idea that thoughts can leave the thinker's mind, be different from it and in opposition to it.... And here we see again another form of the same fundamental illusion we have seen many times before. Only if it were possible the Son of God could leave his Father's Mind, make himself different and oppose His Will, would it be possible that the self he made, and all it made, should be his master (T-22.II.9:1-3, 5-6).

**(6:3) It cannot make a body, nor abide within a body.**

Within the dream the mind makes a body and convinces itself the body is real, as we indeed do each night when we dream. Yet dreams remain dreams, whether our bodies are asleep or awake, and their illusory content cannot establish reality. Thus the

mind cannot abide within a body that does not exist. If anything, it is the body that abides within the mind because the thought of separation could never leave itself. The body embodies that thought, now perceived in form, but since *ideas leave not their source,* there can be no body outside the mind:

> Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them. Ideas are of the mind. What is projected out, and seems to be external to the mind, is not outside at all, but an effect of what is in, and has not left its source (T-26.VII.4:7-9).

**(6:4) What is alien to the mind does not exist, because it has no source.**

The body has the ego as its source, but this is no real source. Thus the body, as well as the world and death, is alien to the mind, which here is equated with spirit.

**(6:5) For mind creates all things that are, and cannot give them attributes it lacks, nor change its own eternal, mindful state.**

Jesus again speaks of spirit when he says "mind," reflecting the Holy Spirit's Word of Atonement that He shared with us at the beginning: "You only think you left God, but nothing has changed – 'not one note in Heaven's song was missed' [T-26.V.5:4]." Remember the first line of paragraph 6: "The mind can think it sleeps, but that is all"; and these lines from the text:

> ...to believe ideas can leave their source is to invite illusions to be true, without success. For never will success be possible in trying to deceive the Son of God (T-26.VII.13:5-6).

**(6:6) It cannot make the physical.**

The mind as spirit cannot make the physical. The sleeping mind can – in dreams. Indeed, in its dreams it makes up all kinds of fanciful figures: macrocosmically, the physical universe; microcosmically, our individual lives. Jesus telling us that mind/spirit cannot make the physical is another way of reminding us that God did not create this world, as he does here:

> The Bible says, "The Word (or thought) was made flesh." Strictly speaking this is impossible, since it seems to involve the translation of one order of reality into another. Different orders of reality merely appear to exist, just as different orders of miracles do. Thought cannot be made into flesh except by belief, since thought is not physical (T-8.VII.7:1-4).

**(6:7) What seems to die is but the sign of mind asleep.**

The body seems to die, but this symbolizes the sleeping mind, having nothing whatsoever to do with the true mind, or spirit:

> What you have given "life" is not alive, and symbolizes but your wish to be alive apart from life, alive in death, with death perceived as life, and living, death

(T-29.II.6:2).

**(7:1) The opposite of life can only be another form of life.**

Jesus speaks of the real world. Implied here, yet explained elsewhere, is that forgiveness is not truth but part of the illusion. However, as a "happy fiction" (C-3.2:1) it reflects truth and does not oppose it. Indeed, anything of the right mind is not literally true, because it remains outside the Mind of God. Yet forgiveness symbolizes truth in a form we can accept and understand, and therefore does not oppose it. Recall the following passage in which Jesus explains how, once we remove our investment in the ego's thought system of illusions, the Holy Spirit's forgiveness – truth's reflection – is allowed to be its substitute, until we are able to accept the reality beyond reflection:

> An empty space that is not seen as filled, an unused interval of time not seen as spent and fully occupied, become a silent invitation to the truth to enter, and to make itself at home.... For what you leave as vacant God will fill, and where He is there must the truth abide.... For this there are no symbols. Nothing points beyond the truth, for what can stand for more than everything? Yet true undoing must be kind. And so the first replacement for your picture is another picture of another kind.
>
> As nothingness cannot be pictured, so there is no symbol for totality. Reality is ultimately known without a form, unpictured and unseen. ... Forgiveness is the means by which the truth is represented temporarily. It lets the Holy Spirit make exchange of pictures possible, until the time when aids are meaningless and learning done (T-27.III.4:1, 3, 5-8; 5:1-2,5-6).

**(7:2) As such, it can be reconciled with what created it, because it is not opposite in truth.**

The real world, or forgiveness, is not truth's opposite, for it reflects the truth. Later, Jesus says that "forgiveness is an earthly form of love" (W-pI.186.14:2). It is not love, but expresses it within the dream because it comes from love's presence and therefore can be reconciled with it. When Jesus discusses the relationship between true perception ("true vision") and knowledge, he makes the same point:

> True vision is the natural perception of spiritual sight, but it is still a correction rather than a fact. Spiritual sight is symbolic, and therefore not a device for knowing. It is, however, a means of right perception, which brings it into the proper domain of the miracle (T-3.III.4:1-3).

True perception is not knowledge, yet being part of the illusion, it corrects the ego's false perceptions. Once these separating perceptions are undone, the true perception of shared interests quickly blends into knowledge, where it disappears. Recall this lovely passage:

> And now God's *knowledge,* changeless, certain, pure and wholly understandable, enters its kingdom. Gone is perception, false and true alike. Gone is forgiveness, for its task is done. And gone are bodies in the blazing light upon the altar to the Son of God. God knows it is His Own, as it is his. And here

They join, for here the face of Christ has shone away time's final instant, and now is the last perception of the world without a purpose and without a cause (C-4.7:1-6).

**(7:3) Its form may change; it may appear to be what it is not.**

When in the real world, you may appear to be in the body – life's form may change – yet you know you are not there. Love has been reflected in what appears to be you in the world, which reminds others of the truth in them.

**(7:4) Yet mind is mind, awake or sleeping.**

You can see why *mind* cannot be capitalized here, for the term is used in two ways – as split mind and spirit/mind.

**(7:5) It is not its opposite in anything created, nor in what it seems to make when it believes it sleeps.**

Mind as spirit is life and creates life – truth creating truth. It creates itself since *ideas leave not their source:* what is itself can have no opposite. However, when the mind sleeps it makes illusions – an illusion making the illusion of a world. That, too, has no opposite – *ideas leave not their source.* The illusory mind does not make life; its "life" is but a cruel mockery of the life God created as His Son. Here again we see the Course's *one-or-the-other* non-dualism. You have life or death, truth or illusion, with no meeting place between them. Perfect oneness can have no opposite.

**(8:1-2) God creates only mind awake. He does not sleep, and His creations cannot share what He gives not, nor make conditions which He does not share with them.**

These conditions are the separation, which is expressed in what we call physical life. God does not sleep, and since we are an idea in His Mind, we do not sleep either. Within the illusion we are free to believe we do, yet in truth we have never left our Source.

**(8:3) The thought of death is not the opposite to thoughts of life.**

If death were the opposite of life, it would be real. Again, *A Course in Miracles* is not a dualistic system. The opposite of life is life; the opposite of love is love. This is the basis for knowing that nothing in the physical universe is real. Recalling again the Introduction, we read:

> The opposite of love is fear, but what is all- encompassing can have no opposite.
>
> This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:
>
> Nothing real can be threatened.
>
> Nothing unreal exists.
>
> Herein lies the peace of God (T-in.1:8-2:4; italics, boldface omitted).

**(8:4) Forever unopposed by opposites of any kind, the Thoughts of God remain forever changeless, with the power to extend forever changelessly, but yet within themselves, for they are everywhere.**

This is a poetic rendering of the principle that the Godhead – God and Christ (or the Thoughts of God) – is One. It extends forever, but not in time and space. Thus Father and Son never leave themselves - *ideas leave not their source.* From the wonderful section "Beyond all Idols" you will recognize the beautiful parallels with the above passage:

> Nothing that God knows not exists. And what He knows exists forever, changelessly. For thoughts endure as long as does the mind that thought of them. And in the Mind of God there is no ending, nor a time in which His Thoughts were absent or could suffer change. Thoughts are not born and cannot die. They share the attributes of their creator, nor have they a separate life apart from his. The thoughts you think are in your mind, as you are in the Mind which thought of you. And so there are no separate parts in what exists within God's Mind. It is forever One, eternally united and at peace (T-30.III.6).

> He has not left His Thoughts! But you forgot His Presence and remembered not His Love.... Yet has He never left His Thoughts to die, without their Source forever in themselves.... He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in Their Oneness Both are kept complete (T-31.IV.6, 9:1-2, 6; 10:2-3).

**(9:1) What seems to be the opposite of life is merely sleeping.**

What seems to be the opposite of life is death. Recall that death is not of the body, but a thought in the mind asleep, dreaming of exile. Yet all the while God and His Son remain awake, beyond all dreams of separation and death.

**(9:2) When the mind elects to be what it is not, and to assume an alien power which it does not have, a foreign state it cannot enter, or a false condition not within its Source, it merely seems to go to sleep a while.**

In electing to be what it is not, the mind says: I am not a Son of God, but the ego's son. Its bluster to the contrary, the ego lacks the power to destroy Heaven and make up its own world, in which it enters the foreign state of the body. All this rests on the false condition, not within our Source, of the separation. Yet all that happened is we simply fell asleep, and you can see how far this metaphysical teaching is from our personal experience.

**(9:3) It dreams of time; an interval in which what seems to happen never has occurred, the changes wrought are substanceless, and all events are nowhere.**

So much, therefore, for this impressive world in which we think we live; this wonderful body we think we inhabit; and the important thoughts and feelings we believe we think and feel, not to mention the things we cherish. All are nothing: "The changes

wrought" – the seeming change from our Heavenly state – have no substance, "and all events are nowhere." Speaking of the separation, Jesus says in the manual for teachers:

> In time this happened very long ago. In reality it never happened at all (M-2.2:7-8).

That is why seeking to explain the ego and its world is fruitless, for we but try to explain what does not exist. Since the separation never happened, the sleeping mind merely dreams of a world, yet cannot make it real.

It is helpful to recall passages like this when you are caught up in the self-importance of specialness, or the magnitude of problems, concerns, and anxieties wherein it is tempting to think that if a certain outcome does not occur, something terrible will happen. When you are so sure you are right, and know what is best for you or anyone else, re-read this passage and it will put your life back in proper perspective.

**(9:4) When the mind awakes, it but continues as it always was.**

Again, "not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). Nothing happened.

**(10:1) Let us today be children of the truth, and not deny our holy heritage.**

Jesus is appealing to the mind's decision maker to choose truth instead of illusion, our inheritance as God's Son instead of the ego's illusory gifts of specialness.

**(10:2-3) Our life is not as we imagine it. Who changes life because he shuts his eyes, or makes himself what he is not because he sleeps, and sees in dreams an opposite to what he is?**

This is a direct reference to our sleeping dreams. We fall asleep at night identified with our bodies and their laws, and yet dream of incredulous things that happen to them. Upon awakening, however, our pre-sleep identity has not changed, and this is Jesus' point. What happens in the world of bodies – no matter how important it seems – has no effect on reality. When our eyes open at last – the ultimate purpose of forgiveness – the dream disappears. This incisive passage from the text highlights the inherent sameness of our sleeping and waking dreams:

> Dreams .... are the best example you could have of how perception can be utilized to substitute illusions for truth. You do not take them seriously on awaking because the fact that reality is so outrageously violated in them becomes apparent.... Dreams show you that you have the power to make a world as you would have it be, and that because you want it you see it. And while you see it you do not doubt that it is real.... You seem to waken, and the dream is gone.... And what you seem to waken to is but another form of this same world you see in dreams. All your time is spent in dreaming. Your sleeping and your waking dreams have different forms, and that is all. Their content is the same (T-18.II.2:1-3; 5:1-2, 8, 11-14).

**(10:4) We will not ask for death in any form today.**

Jesus has already told us the different forms: a frown, being upset, a little sigh of weariness, anxiety, judgment, anger, sickness. As always, he asks us in these lessons to make another choice: forgiveness instead of attack, truth instead of illusion, life instead of death.

**(10:5) Nor will we let imagined opposites to life abide even an instant where the Thought of life eternal has been set by God Himself.**

This Thought is in our right minds, held out for us by the Holy Spirit to choose instead of the ego's thought of death. Jesus urges us, when we are tempted to make the thought of separation real, to remember this is simply the ego's attempt to change the eternal truth about ourselves – making our bodies and special needs so important that we once again forget who we are as God's creation: the Thought of life eternal.

**(11) His holy home we strive to keep today as He established it, and wills it be forever and forever. He is Lord of what we think today. And in His Thoughts, which have no opposite, we understand there is one life, and that we share with Him, with all creation, with their thoughts as well, whom He created in a unity of life that cannot separate in death and leave the Source of life from where it came.**

Our holy home is the unity of life, which we share with the Lord of Life. This paragraph is yet another lovely expression of the Oneness of God's Creation.

**(12:1) We share one life because we have one Source, a Source from which perfection comes to us, remaining always in the holy minds which He created perfect.**

Perfection is not found in the world, but is reflected in our right minds. Thus we are asked to develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit or Jesus, for They are our reminders, the means by which we remember – through forgiveness – the mind's perfection as spirit. The aim of *A Course in Miracles* is not to make the world perfect, but to restore this perfection to our awareness.

**(12:2) As we were, so are we now and will forever be.**

If you were raised Catholic, you might remember this verse reflected in the liturgy. It is from the anonymous Letter to the Hebrews, formerly attributed to St. Paul: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (13:8). This famous line reminds us that our Identity as Christ remains as it always has been.

**(12:3) A sleeping mind must waken, as it sees its own perfection mirroring the Lord of life so perfectly it fades into what is reflected there.**

In "The Two Pictures," Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit's picture (the holy instant) as one of light, set in a temporal, gently disappearing frame that does not oppose life, for it is its expression within the dream. It allows us, when we choose the Holy Spirit as our only Teacher, to be led to the real world. We last there but an instant, as God takes the last step, restoring us to the oneness of creation we never left:

> The picture of light, in clear-cut and unmistakable contrast, is transformed into what lies beyond the picture. As you look on this, you realize that it is not a picture, but a reality. This is no figured representation of a thought system, but the Thought itself. What it represents is there. The frame fades gently and God rises to your remembrance, offering you the whole of creation in exchange for your little picture, wholly without value and entirely deprived of meaning (T-17.IV.15).

**(12:4-5) And now it is no more a mere reflection. It becomes the thing reflected, and the light which makes reflection possible.**

In the real world we reflect the Son's holiness. When God takes the last step and we disappear into His Heart, we remember His Son as he truly is and become one with his light. You may recall "The Reflection of Holiness" from the text, where Jesus expresses the same thought in the context of our seeing all healing as the same, for all problems are the same:

> Those who have learned to offer only healing, because of the reflection of holiness in them, are ready at last for Heaven. There, holiness is not a reflection, but rather the actual condition of what was but reflected to them here. God is no image, and His creations, as part of Him, hold Him in them in truth. They do not merely reflect truth, for they *are* truth (T-14.IX.8:4-7).

**(12:6-7) No vision now is needed. For the wakened mind is one that knows its Source, its Self, its Holiness.**

If the reality of God's Son is One, our true nature, when you are tempted throughout the day to see someone as separate, you are doing everything Jesus asks you *not* to do in this lesson. You have made death and the ego thought system real, saying ideas can leave their source. However, the truth remains: We are *one* Son, *one* idea in the Mind of *one* God, our *one* Source. Thus when you see someone as different from you – expressions of special hate or love – you see God's Son as fragmented: ideas have left their source. Therefore, to apply this lesson throughout the day, you need identify the subtle ways in which you try to deny its truth, making the thought system of death real. Asking Jesus' help ensures that the memory of this truth will one day be restored to you, as you at last waken to the "mind that knows its Source, its Self, its Holiness."

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 168**
**Your grace is given me. I claim it now.**

This lesson and the one to follow discuss grace differently from other discussions in *A Course in Miracles.* In the first chapter of the text, for example, Jesus talks about spirit as being in a state of grace (T-1.III.5:4), the equivalent of the Love of God. Here, and more so in the next lesson, he talks about grace as an *aspect* of this Love within the illusion. It is not Heaven, but the closest we can come to it on earth. We therefore see another example of the Course's inconsistent use of words – the *form* – though the teaching – the *content* – remains the same.

**(1:1-2) God speaks to us. Shall we not speak to Him?**

The word *speak* is not meant literally. God does not have a mouth with which to speak, nor ears to hear our words in return. Jesus' point is that God is always within us. We may believe we left Him, but He has not gone. His Love through the Holy Spirit – His Voice within the dream – speaks to us by His very Presence in our minds, even though we have wandered away. Therefore, in saying "Shall we not speak to Him?" Jesus urges us to return to the place in the mind where we chose to wander, choose again, and thus place ourselves in the Presence of God, as he explains in the text:

> Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace (T-5.VII.6:5).

**(1:3-5) He is not distant. He makes no attempt to hide from us. We try to hide from Him, and suffer from deception.**

The deception is not only that we *can* hide from Him, but that we in fact *do.* The world and body, then, become instruments of this deceptive thinking that we can distance ourselves from God. But if *ideas leave not their source,* even though we experience ourselves as bodies we have never left our place in the Mind of God. The principle of the Atonement is thus the answer to these delusional and deceptive thoughts.

**(1:6) He remains entirely accessible.**

The goal of *A Course in Miracles* is that we realize that the Love of God is "entirely accessible" to us, for It is within and patiently awaits our choosing It.

**(1:7-8) He loves His Son. There is no certainty but this, yet this suffices.**

We need only remember that God loves us, which means undoing the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear – the foundation of its world – the end product of which is the belief God is angry and no longer loves us. The truth of the Atonement, however, is that His Love has never changed, and so everything the ego has taught is false. Therefore, its thought system need not be fought against; merely looked at with a gentle smile. In the certainty of the Holy Spirit's happy truth, the ego's hate dissolves into its own nothingness.

**(1:9-11) He will love His Son forever. When his mind remains asleep, He loves him still. And when his mind awakes, He loves him with a never-changing**

**Love.**

Even though our sleep is accompanied by darkened dreams of sin, fear, and hate, nothing has changed the light, as Jesus reassures us in discussing the impotence of the ego's anti-Christ:

> All forms of anti-Christ oppose the Christ. And fall before His face like a dark veil that seems to shut you off from Him, alone in darkness. Yet the light is there. A cloud does not put out the sun. No more a veil can banish what it seems to separate, nor darken by one whit the light itself (T-29.VIII.3:5-9).

**(2:1-2) If you but knew the meaning of His Love, hope and despair would be impossible. For hope would be forever satisfied; despair of any kind unthinkable.**

In this world it is impossible to know the meaning of God's Love. However, as we will see shortly, we can learn the means whereby we will remember that Love, recognizing that in Its Presence despair is unthinkable. Thus when we are despairing, lonely, sad, or hopeless, it is not the result of the world outside, but of the belief we separated from the Love of God. Recall these inspiring words from the Epilogue to the clarification of terms:

> No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when hope like this is his? Illusions of despair may seem to come, but learn how not to be deceived by them. Behind each one there is reality and there is God. Why would you wait for this and trade it for illusions, when His Love is but an instant farther on the road where all illusions end? (C-ep.1:4-9)

**(2:3-6) His grace His answer is to all despair, for in it lies remembrance of His Love. Would He not gladly give the means by which His Will is recognized? His grace is yours by your acknowledgment. And memory of Him awakens in the mind that asks the means of Him whereby its sleep is done.**

The traditional understanding of grace is that God dispenses it when and where He chooses. Thus it is not constant – the good receive His grace and the bad do not. Jesus would have us understand instead that God's grace is *fully* present in *everyone, all* the time. Since we have chosen against it, we must choose its abundant fullness instead of the ego's scarcity and deprivation. Undoing the ego's perceptions of separation and lack through forgiveness allows the memory of our inherent sameness and oneness to dawn upon our minds. Where is despair when love's truth has returned, and where are dreams of hate when we remember the Love we believed we left, but which never left us?

**(3:1-2) Today we ask of God the gift He has most carefully preserved within our hearts, waiting to be acknowledged. This the gift by which God leans to us and lifts us up, taking salvation's final step Himself.**

Elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus refers to this as God's "last step."

**(3:3) All steps but this we learn, instructed by His Voice.**

The Holy Spirit, and specifically this course, help us climb the ladder home, step by step, as we deepen our experience of forgiveness. This we can learn until the ego is undone. At that point the ladder disappears and God "leans to us and lifts us up." Needless to say, the image of the ladder is a metaphoric description of a process that is illusory, since we never left Heaven.

**(3:4-6) But finally He comes Himself, and takes us in His Arms and sweeps away the cobwebs of our sleep. His gift of grace is more than just an answer. It restores all memories the sleeping mind forgot; all certainty of what Love's meaning is.**

Jesus is not speaking of specific memories, but the memory of Who we are as Christ. As we fulfill our purpose of forgiveness, fear's cobwebs fall from our eyes, and vision – the reflection of God's grace – allows us to see only love or calls for love. As we awaken, this reflection disappears into what it reflected: the certainty of Love's meaning. But first we need to forgive:

> Not yet is Heaven quite remembered, for the purpose of forgiveness still remains. Yet everyone is certain he will go beyond forgiveness, and he but remains until it is made perfect in himself.... And fear has dropped away, because he is united in his purpose with himself.... For thus is he made ready for the step in which is all forgiveness left behind.
>
> The final step is God's, because it is but God Who could create a perfect Son and share His Fatherhood with him (T-30.V.3:1-2, 4, 7; 4:1).

**(4:1-2) God loves His Son. Request Him now to give the means by which this world will disappear, and vision first will come, with knowledge but an instant later.**

The world will disappear in this last step. Our job is to take the little steps God asks us to take to Him (W-pi. 193.13:7). These are the daily opportunities of forgiveness, in which we are mindful of when we choose against Jesus' love and for the indulgence of our specialness. Our steps taken, God completes the journey without distance as the world fades. To return to Helen's poem, "The Star Form," we read its lovely conclusion:

> Then the stillness comes
> In which there is no form, no sound, no dream.
> There was a cross, but it has disappeared.
> There was a world, but there is only God.
> *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 66-67)

**(4:3-5) For in grace you see a light that covers all the world in love, and watch fear disappear from every face as hearts rise up and claim the light as theirs. What now remains that Heaven be delayed an instant longer? What is still undone when your forgiveness rests on everything?**

When you have forgiven totally, the world is gone because it existed only within

the unforgiven mind that believed in separation. When our minds are healed, the Sonship is healed as well, for its mind is one. Thus the world disappears. It may not appear that way, for within the dream figures may still choose to remain asleep. Yet in the healed mind everything is gone. The world, first transformed into the real world – "the world in love" – gently falls away "as hearts rise up and claim the light as theirs." The dream of crucifixion is done, the cross has disappeared, and resurrection greets the world in joy:

> God's teachers have the goal of wakening the minds of those asleep, and seeing there the vision of Christ's face to take the place of what they dream. The thought of murder is replaced with blessing. Judgment is laid by, and given Him Whose function judgment is. And in His Final Judgment is restored the truth about the holy Son of God. He is redeemed, for he has heard God's Word and understood its meaning. He is free because he let God's Voice proclaim the truth. And all he sought before to crucify are resurrected with him, by his side, as he prepares with them to meet his God (M-28.6:3-9).

**(5:1) It is a new and holy day today, for we receive what has been given us.**

Jesus assumes we have made the right choice by claiming the grace that has already been given us through the Holy Spirit. We had chosen against it, taking the ego as our teacher instead, but now we change our minds. This excerpt from Helen's "The Shining Instant" expresses the new and holy instant from which this day of forgiveness is born, culminating in the ending of the world's dream:

> Cherish this instant. All of time is set
> Within its boundaries....
>
> In unencumbered space
> Open your arms to let all conflict cease,
> And call to quiet those in every place
> Who wait for freedom. You would not betray
> Their agony and patience, when their cries
> Fade into silence here. For Christ will stay
> Until the faint and final echo dies
> And stillness claims the world. And then He takes
> It in His hand and waits an instant more,
> And time is over. Even now He makes
> Your way to Him. This instant is the door
> To that in which the world will disappear
> In Him, as He will vanish into One
> Who will remain forever. In this clear
> And shining instant all of time is done.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 74)

**(5:2-3) Our faith lies in the Giver, not our own acceptance. We acknowledge our mistakes, but He to Whom all error is unknown is yet the One Who answers our mistakes by giving us the means to lay them down, and rise to Him in gratitude and love.**

God is the One of Whom Jesus speaks, and through the Holy Spirit He has given us forgiveness, the undoing of the ego's dream of death. It is accomplished once we joyfully and gratefully say we were mistaken, and Jesus alone was right.

**(6:1) And He descends to meet us, as we come to Him.**

Once again, Jesus employs metaphors and symbols. "We come to Him" through forgiveness, and as we get closer we begin to experience God's Love until our individual identity fades and we disappear forever into His Heart. In reality, only *we* have "come," since only *we* had "left." God simply is, and does nothing.

**(6:2-4) For what He has prepared for us He gives and we receive. Such is His Will, because He loves His Son. To Him we pray today, returning but the word He gave to us through His Own Voice, His Word, His Love:**

"His Own Voice" is the Holy Spirit, and "His Word" is the Atonement, or, specifically, the words of this course.

**(6:5-9)** ***Your grace is given me. I claim it now Father, I come to You. And You will come to me who ask. I am the Son You love.***

In terms of these symbols, again, God does not "come to us" until we first come to Him. It is not that He establishes conditions or makes demands, but that since we left, we need to return. Thus we come to experience the Love that has lovingly awaited us.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 169**
**By grace I live. By grace I am released.**

Continuing the theme of the previous lesson, Jesus begins with grace:

**(1:1) Grace is an aspect of the Love of God which is most like the state prevailing in the unity of truth.**

Reflecting God's Love, grace is its aspect in the dream and, like its sister forgiveness, does not oppose its source. In other words, grace is love's natural state once the separation seemed to occur – the Son's memory that allows him to choose his Father instead of the ego:

> Grace is the natural state of every Son of God. When he is not in a state of grace, he is out of his natural environment and does not function well. Everything he does becomes a strain, because he was not created for the environment that he has made (T-7.XI.2:1-3).

**(1:2) It is the world's most lofty aspiration, for it leads beyond the world entirely.**

We first experience the grace of God and then enter into the real world. At that point God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself, as the dream disappears that was the world.

**(1:3) It is past learning, yet the goal of learning, for grace cannot come until the mind prepares itself for true acceptance.**

We cannot experience God's Love within the dream until we prepare ourselves for it, which we do by recognizing – gladly and gratefully – that we were wrong. We realize our only goal is the dream's undoing, not solidifying our experience within it. We no longer wish to make our dream lives happier or more peaceful, but rather to use our experiences as vehicles for awakening from the dream.

**(1:4) Grace becomes inevitable instantly in those who have prepared a table where it can be gently laid and willingly received; an altar clean and holy for the gift.**

The table/altar is the mind, which we have sullied with the ego's guilty and hateful thoughts. Defending against the ego, we make a world and body that seem to root its thoughts in matter so they can never be undone. In saying we have to clean the altar and prepare a table, Jesus thus encourages us to return to the decision-making part of our minds and ask him for help. This help comes – his love beside us – in looking on what we made and asserted to be true, realizing with a gentle smile we were mistaken about everything, with no exceptions. In this sense, it is Jesus who ultimately makes the altar clean, but he cannot do so until we ask his help. The following passage from the text plays on the word *grace,* as Jesus invites us to his table of communion, made clean by the holy relationship that welcomes his presence, along with our brothers:

> Love, too, would set a feast before you, on a table covered with a spotless

> cloth, set in a quiet garden where no sound but singing and a softly joyous whispering is ever heard. This is a feast that honors your holy relationship, and at which everyone is welcomed as an honored guest. And in a holy instant grace is said by everyone together, as they join in gentleness before the table of communion. And I will join you there, as long ago I promised and promise still. For in your new relationship am I made welcome. And where I am made welcome, there I am (T-19.IV-A.16).

Helen's moving poem, "Dedication for an Altar," likewise expresses this process of forgiveness, joining with our brother who is also ourselves.

> Temples are where God's holy altars are,
> And He has placed an altar in each Son
> Whom He created. Let us worship here
> In thankfulness that what He gives to one
> He gives to all, and never takes away.
> For what He wills has been forever done.
>
> Temples are where a brother comes to pray
> And rest a while. Whoever he may be,
> He brings with him a lighted lamp to show
> My Savior's face is there for me to see
> Upon the altar, and remember God.
> My brother, come and worship here with me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 93)

**(2:1) Grace is acceptance of the Love of God within a world of seeming hate and fear.**

Jesus informs us this is a world of hate and fear, not joy and peace. Yet it is a "seeming" world because it is not real. However, you need to be careful not to skip steps. Because Jesus says the world is an illusion does not mean you do not pay attention to what happens here. The world is indeed an illusion, but you would not be reading these words if you did not believe in its reality. Therefore, do not deny your feelings or what your eyes see, but do ask for help in interpreting them differently. Such reinterpretation is the essence of forgiveness, which removes the projected guilt that spawns the hate and fear, which in turn belies the love within our minds. The Holy Spirit holds this love – grace – until we are ready to choose it, and when we are willing to see our brothers sinless we are ready to receive His grace. The following passage echoes the message of Helen's previously quoted poem:

> Grace is not given to a body, but to a mind. And the mind that receives it looks instantly beyond the body, and sees the holy place where it was healed. There is the altar where the grace was given, in which it stands. Do you, then, offer grace and blessing to your brother, for you stand at the same altar where grace was laid for both of you.... In the holy instant, you and your brother stand before the altar God has raised unto Himself and both of you (T-19.I.13:1-4; 14:1).

**(2:2) By grace alone the hate and fear are gone, for grace presents a state**

**so opposite to everything the world contains, that those whose minds are lighted by the gift of grace can not believe the world of fear is real.**

Again, you cannot claim grace until you prepare for it. It is the answer to the ego, for in the state of grace the world of hate and fear disappears as God's Love is reflected in the real world. Yet it is not grace for which you ask, but for help in attaining its holy state by looking differently at your relationships and world, as we now read:

**(3:1-3) Grace is not learned. The final step must go beyond all learning. Grace is not the goal this course aspires to attain.**

We are taught to forgive, and grace then comes. We thus learn to forgive, experience grace – the real world – as God takes the last step. The reader may recall these two statements that reflect the Course's goal of peace, attained through forgiveness:

> Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is. This is the prerequisite for knowledge only because those who are in conflict are not peaceful, and peace is the condition of knowledge because it is the condition of the Kingdom. Knowledge can be restored only when you meet its conditions (T-8.I.1:1-4).

> Forget not that the motivation for this course is the attainment and the keeping of the state of peace. Given this state the mind is quiet, and the condition in which God is remembered is attained (T-24.in.1:1-2).

**(3:4-5) Yet we prepare for grace in that an open mind can hear the Call to waken. It is not shut tight against God's Voice.**

When we originally chose against the Holy Spirit, we shut out His truth, absolutely certain we were right. This led to our current certainty about our problems and all we must do to defend against them. Thus an open mind begins by saying: "I do not understand anything, nor do I know who I am. But thank God there is Someone within me who does know, Whose Love will teach me to remember my Identity and forget the bitter illusion I made of myself and the world." What student of *A Course in Miracles* can forget these oft-quoted lines?

> *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.*
> Yet in this learning is salvation born. And What you are will tell you of Itself (T-31.V.17:7-9).

Open-mindedness is the final characteristic of God's advanced teachers, and is related to lack of judgment, the prototypical judgment being we were right and God's Voice wrong:

> Open-mindedness comes with lack of judgment. As judgment shuts the mind against God's Teacher, so open-mindedness invites Him to come in. As condemnation judges the Son of God as evil, so open-mindedness permits him to

be judged by the Voice for God on His behalf (M-4.X.1:2-4).

**(3:6) It has become aware that there are things it does not know, and thus is ready to accept a state completely different from experience with which it is familiarly at home.**

That experience is specialness, conflict, judgment, and sickness. Yet we need only a little willingness to be aware we do not know everything, which is all Jesus requires to "enter" our minds and correct our mistaken thoughts.

**(4:1) We have perhaps appeared to contradict our statement that the revelation of the Father and the Son as one has been already set.**

This refers to Lesson 158, where Jesus tells us the time of revelation is set, and will emphasize below our need to choose it. As in other places in *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus lets us know it is possible to use his words in seemingly contradictory ways. However, he now explains it is not a contradiction when we understand the different levels on which he speaks:

**(4:2) But we have also said the mind determines when that time will be, and has determined it.**

There is a part of our minds that has already accepted the Atonement. *When* we choose to accept that acceptance is our choice. "Salvation's script" is written, as we will see presently, and so we choose – outside time and space – when to re-experience the choice that has already been made. A popular Christian statement contains that same paradox: salvation is here, but is not yet; salvation is here because Jesus is present among us, but is not yet because we still have not chosen him. Using video tapes as an analogy, we can understand that there is a video tape where Father and Son are experienced as one – the acceptance of the Atonement. This video tape is in our mind's library as a memory. Again, *when* we choose to replay it is up to us. Thus Jesus does not speak in contradictions: Atonement is here, but is not yet.

**(4:3) And yet we urge you to bear witness to the Word of God to hasten the experience of truth, and speed its advent into every mind that recognizes truth's effects on you.**

Once again Jesus tells us: "The world is over and never really happened, yet you believe you are asleep within the dream. Why continue to delay the happiness of awakening; why wait for Heaven?" (W-pI.188)

The next paragraph is important both as a statement of the non-dualistic Oneness of God, and for Jesus telling us we can in no way understand it:

> **(5:1-5) Oneness is simply the idea God is. And in His Being, He encompasses all things. No mind holds anything but Him. We say "God is," and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless. There are no lips to speak them, and no part of mind sufficiently distinct to feel that it is now aware of something not itself.**

There is no separated consciousness in Heaven, such that the Son, distinct from the Father, experiences himself in relationship to God, any more than God, distinct from His Son, experiences Himself in relationship to His creation. God and Christ are not two distinct beings in Heaven. They are One. Jesus uses these dualistic words to symbolize the non-dualistic reality of God's Love. Recall this passage on the Trinity:

> Since you believe that you are separate, Heaven presents itself to you as separate, too. Not that it is in truth, but that the link that has been given you to join the truth may reach to you through what you understand. Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth. Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding, in the part of you that shares His Father's Will. The Holy Spirit links the other part – the tiny, mad desire to be separate, different and special – to the Christ, to make the oneness clear to what is really one. In this world this is not understood, but can be taught (T-25.I.5).

There is no way we can understand this "Oneness joined as One" (T-25.I.7:1), and so Jesus speaks of the Godhead in traditional trinitarian language. However, he does want us to understand that this is a mere set of symbols that are "twice removed from reality" (M-21.1:10), and therefore not reality. Nonetheless, these symbols serve the useful purpose of moving us past the experience of duality – right-mindedness correcting wrong-mindedness – to the non-dualistic truth of Heaven's (and our) living Oneness.

> **(5:6-6:1) It has united with its Source. And like its Source Itself, it merely is. We cannot speak nor write nor even think of this at all.**

Jesus says to us – and will say again in this lesson – that he will not discuss this truth because we could not understand it. Therefore he speaks of what we can learn – how to awaken from the dream of duality – and uses symbols of a reality it is not necessary for us to understand:

> You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing. Salvation is easy just *because* it asks nothing you cannot give right now (T-18.IV.7:5-7).

We need but learn to forgive, and the love forgiveness reflects will "show up" of itself. Then we shall know.

**(6:2) It comes to every mind when total recognition that its will is God's has been completely given and received completely.**

When we realize that giving and receiving are the same, and we have accepted the everything God has given, we experience His grace. Thus we are in the real world, after which, again, the world disappears and we are back in the Oneness that "comes to every mind."

**(6:3) It returns the mind into the endless present, where the past and future**

**cannot be conceived.**

There is no past or future, only God's eternal Love. Returning to Helen's "The Shining Instant" we read of timelessness, "the endless present":

> Cherish this instant. All of time is set
> Within its boundaries. The past but led
> To this appointed time. The future yet
> Remains unborn, and like a word unsaid
> Is soundless. Seek instead the endless place
> Of timelessness.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 74)

**(6:4-7) It lies beyond salvation; past all thought of time, forgiveness and the holy face of Christ. The Son of God has merely disappeared into his Father, as his Father has in him. The world has never been at all. Eternity remains a constant state.**

Before we complete our lessons in forgiveness and remember perfect Oneness, we learn to experience its reflection by not seeing others with interests separate from our own. When this single principle of salvation is understood and generalized to all relationships, the world of separation disappears, God takes the last step and we disappear into Him as He disappears into us – one Son, one Father, one Self. In the text, Jesus exhorts us to share his vision of the Sonship's unity:

> Let us unite in bringing blessing to the world of sin and death. For what can save each one of us can save us all. There is no difference among the Sons of God....
>
> Your ancient Name belongs to everyone, as theirs to you.... A miracle can make no change at all. But it can make what always has been true be recognized by those who know it not; and by this little gift of truth but let to be itself, the Son of God allowed to be himself, and all creation freed to call upon the Name of God as One (T-26.VII.19:3-5; 20:1, 4-5).

**(7:1) This is beyond experience we try to hasten.**

"This" refers to everything Jesus discussed in the above paragraph. The experience Jesus would hasten is the attainment of the real world, which completes the process of forgiveness. What is beyond this experience – reality and eternity – he cannot speak of to us.

**(7:2) Yet forgiveness, taught and learned, brings with it the experiences which bear witness that the time the mind itself determined to abandon all but this is now at hand.**

Forgiveness constitutes the steps Jesus asks us to take until we attain the real world and, again, choose to view the video tape in which we remember the unity of Father and Son – our goal of accepting the Atonement. The total oneness of reality, when God takes the last step, is beyond what *A Course in Miracles* would teach.

**(7:3) We do not hasten it, in that what you will offer was concealed from Him Who teaches what forgiveness means.**

We do not hasten that time, insofar as we know that we shall one day offer our Teacher of forgiveness what we had concealed from Him – the acceptance of the Atonement. Our special self that seeks to withhold from the Holy Spirit the spots of darkness that keep us from the truth still fears that final step, reflecting the need to retain our individuality and defenses, which will be discussed in the next lesson. Jesus asks us to be patient with ourselves, for he is not coercing us to do what we still fear. You might recall these comforting lines in the text:

> Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality. Time is kind, and if you use it on behalf of reality, it will keep gentle pace with you in your transition (T-16.VI.8:1-2).

Jesus does not push us to accept what we fear. That is how we know he is Jesus.

**(8:1) All learning was already in His Mind, accomplished and complete.**

The acceptance of the Atonement has already happened, fully present in our minds through the Holy Spirit. The problem is that we have not yet chosen to accept it. However, when we do, it is there – again: salvation is here, but not yet.

**(8:2) He recognized all that time holds, and gave it to all minds that each one might determine, from a point where time was ended, when it is released to revelation and eternity.**

This lesson is a companion to Lesson 158, as we have seen from the references to that lesson. You may remember that Jesus spoke of the script being already written – the ego's and the Holy Spirit's correction – and therefore we simply review mentally what has already occurred; replaying old video tapes. *When* we accept the acceptance-of-the-Atonement tape is our choice. As Jesus tells us in the Introduction to the text:

> Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time (T-in.1:4-5 ; italics omitted).

That is what Jesus refers to here: the decision maker outside time and space that elects to choose its identification – the ego or the Holy Spirit, both of whose thought systems, again, are complete and completed. Such an understanding allows us to keep a right-minded perspective as we go through our daily classrooms of special relationships. Knowing the script is over helps us not to take events quite as seriously as we once did. Jesus continues in the same vein:

**(8:3) We have repeated several times before that you but make a journey that is done.**

The journey home is "a journey without distance to a goal that has never

changed" (T-8.VI.9:7). We will see in a moment, again, that there is no way we can understand this – a major theme of the lesson. It is important, however, that we at least recognize what it is we do not understand, and recognize, too, that what we think we understand makes no sense. That is the beginning of humility, allowing us to set out on the "journey that is done."

**(9:1) For oneness must be here.**

Oneness cannot be compromised or lost. The ego tells us, though, that in order to achieve our separated existence Oneness was destroyed. In our dreams, we have in fact wandered into the far country of individuality, but the Oneness of the Godhead – God at one with Christ – has never changed. Recall this beautiful opening to *The Song of Prayer:*

> Prayer is the greatest gift with which God blessed His Son at his creation. It was then what it is to become; the single voice Creator and creation share; the song the Son sings to the Father, Who returns the thanks it offers Him unto the Son. Endless the harmony, and endless, too, the joyous concord of the Love They give forever to Each Other.... The Love They share is what all prayer will be throughout eternity, when time is done. For such it was before time seemed to be.... What God created one must recognize its oneness, and rejoice that what illusions seemed to separate is one forever in the Mind of God (S-1.in.1:1-3,7-8; 2:3).

What never happened has not happened. Thus is our guilt and fear unfounded, requiring no defense. Recognition of this happy fact is the core of forgiveness.

**(9:2) Whatever time the mind has set for revelation is entirely irrelevant to what must be a constant state, forever as it always was; forever to remain as it is now.**

Eternity is always present, and totally unaffected by the dream of time—a few minutes or a few billion years makes no difference to an illusion:

> What is a hundred or a thousand years to Them [God and Christ], or tens of thousands? When They come, time's purpose is fulfilled. What never was passes to nothingness when They have come (T-26.IX.4:1-3).

Thus, whatever time the mind has set is irrelevant, for our choosing to remember oneness must be illusory, as we never left it. These ideas should be a great solace, since they tell us that despite the pained discomfort of our lives, they remain part of a dream. Jesus does not demand we accept this now, telling us only that we will feel better if we do – but there is no hurry. Indeed, anytime we experience Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or even God pressuring us, we know for certain this is our ego. Passages like this make it clear that the time it takes to choose the truth is unimportant. Therefore, why would They make a big deal about what is irrelevant? The urgency we might feel comes from *our* pain and discomfort – the ego's need to make the illusion real.

**(9:3) We merely take the part assigned long since, and fully recognized as**

**perfectly fulfilled by Him Who wrote salvation's script in His Creator's Name, and in the Name of His Creator's Son.**

In "The Little Hindrance," Jesus talks about "the tiny tick of time" – the ontological instant when the separation seemed to occur – that contains all the mistakes that resulted from that tiny tick. Indeed, the complete hologram of time and space is found in that original instant, which includes as well the correction and all the forms of forgiveness that resulted from it – the ego's ancient script and its undoing by salvation's correction script:

> Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. And so is all time past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. What God gave answer to is answered and is gone (T-26.V.3:3-7).

These scripts are "the part assigned long since." It is not that God or the Holy Spirit assigned these parts. It is we who made the mistake of establishing a special relationship with God, and then fragmenting it into the special relationships of our personal lives. The Atonement's correction thought is present in our minds as well, and its salvation script undoes the ego's insane version of the truth. We simply accept a classroom *we* established, and now choose a different Teacher to instruct us. Once again, no one forces us to learn. Jesus hopes only to convince us of our misery, which will remain as long as we delay learning his forgiveness – our assigned part in salvation's script.

**(10:1) There is no need to further clarify what no one in the world can understand.**

We find another example of Jesus dropping metaphysical nuggets in our laps, and then saying we can never understand them; there being no way a separated mind could comprehend the illusion of time, let alone timeless reality. Yet we can understand – what he is about to tell us – how to forgive and choose differently within the dream. Teaching us to do this is *A Course in Miracles'* only purpose and goal.

**(10:2) When revelation of your oneness comes, it will be known and fully understood.**

Until then, however, you will not know oneness, and certainly will not understand it. Yet, all that is required is our willingness to be taught. Thus Jesus returns to his central theme of forgiveness and our "work" of forgiving our special relationships:

**(10:3-4) Now we have work to do, for those in time can speak of things beyond, and listen to words which explain what is to come is past already. Yet what meaning can the words convey to those who count the hours still, and rise and work and go to sleep by them?**

That includes all of us, for we inhabit a world of space, governed by time: we get

tired at certain times, hungry at others; we mark the body's developmental stages by clearly demarcated temporal periods. Indeed, everything here is governed by the clock. Whether we like it or not, that *is* how the world and body are set up, and how the universe continues to exist. Therefore, as long as we identify with the body, how could we ever understand time's non-linear and illusory nature?

**(11:1) Suffice it, then, that you have work to do to play your part.**

It is not important to understand the metaphysics, but it is important to learn the lessons that are based on this metaphysics, for that is how we return home.

**(11:2) The ending must remain obscure to you until your part is done.**

That is why *A Course in Miracles* is not about love, God, or Heaven – They are the Ending, which remains obscure to us – but about undoing guilt through forgiveness, well within our learning grasp.

**(11:3-4) It does not matter. For your part is still what all the rest depends on.**

A later lesson is entitled "Salvation of the world depends on me" (W-pI.186), understood when we remember we are God's one Son. Jesus does not mean that we as special individuals are responsible for the world's salvation, which exists only within the one mind of the Son. We believe we are separated fragments, but when our minds are healed we recognize our inherent unity, and realize the physical universe is only a projection of the separation thought. This realization comprises our function in the Atonement, our part in its "plan" to save the world.

**(11:5) As you take the role assigned to you, salvation comes a little nearer each uncertain heart that does not beat as yet in tune with God.**

This becomes an important theme in the rest of the lesson, as it has been throughout the workbook and *A Course in Miracles* itself. When our minds are healed in the holy instant, we become a beacon of light that shines in the mind of the Sonship, reminding the other seeming fragments they can choose as we did. These are the uncertain hearts that sing discordant notes and beat distant rhythms that are not in harmony with God.

**(12:1) Forgiveness is the central theme that runs throughout salvation, holding all its parts in meaningful relationships, the course it runs directed and its outcome sure.**

Forgiveness thus unifies our experience – without it, nothing here makes sense; with it, the world is transformed into a classroom in which we learn the lessons of eternal life. Our specialness – made to hate, kill, and die – has become the source of our awakening to love:

> The specialness he chose to hurt himself did God appoint to be the means for his salvation, from the very instant that the choice was made. His special sin was made his special grace. His special hate became his special love.

> The Holy Spirit needs your special function, that His may be fulfilled.... This is the function given you for your brother. Take it gently, then, from your brother's hand, and let salvation be perfectly fulfilled in you. Do this *one* thing, that everything be given you (T-25.VI.6:6-7:1, 8-10).

The "everything" given us is grace:

**(12:2) And now we ask for grace, the final gift salvation can bestow.**

We have seen that grace comes after we learn our lessons; the last remnant of experience within the dream, filled with love's reflection. Our kind forgiveness of others and ourselves allows this final gift of vision's grace to come to us and to the Sonship:

> The grace of God rests gently on forgiving eyes, and everything they look on speaks of Him to the beholder. He can see no evil; nothing in the world to fear, and no one who is different from himself. And as he loves them, so he looks upon himself with love and gentleness. He would no more condemn himself for his mistakes than damn another. He is not an arbiter of vengeance, nor a punisher of sin. The kindness of his sight rests on himself with all the tenderness it offers others. For he would only heal and only bless. And being in accord with what God wills, he has the power to heal and bless all those he looks on with the grace of God upon his sight (T-25.VI.1).

**(12:3) Experience that grace provides will end in time, for grace foreshadows Heaven, yet does not replace the thought of time but for a little while.**

Grace does not end the world, but it leads to the "little while" of the holy instant, foreshadowing Heaven.

**(13:1-2) The interval suffices. It is here that miracles are laid; to be returned by you from holy instants you receive, through grace in your experience, to all who see the light that lingers in your face.**

This idea is explained in more detail in Lesson 184. Our function – even within our experience in a temporal, spatial world – is to go to the quiet place in our minds where Jesus is. Filled with his peace, we shift our attention to the world, now seen from a new perspective. Light radiates from this right-minded holy instant, and even though some may not embrace it, they cannot fail to respond to what is perceived as something new and different in us.

**(13:3) What is the face of Christ but his who went a moment into timelessness, and brought a clear reflection of the unity he felt an instant back to bless the world?**

"The face of Christ" symbolizes the innocence of God's Son. We are asked in *A Course in Miracles* to live *in* the world, but realize we are not *of* it. The challenge of being a student of this course is to de-emphasize what seems to be important and valuable here, and emphasize what is truly valuable: the forgiving Presence in our minds of the Holy Spirit. Thus we are able to be fully present to others, but in a different way. Instead

of being a shadow of hate, separation, and attack, we reflect love's timeless peace. We are thus asked, along with our brother, to illuminate the darkened world with the shining light of Christ's forgiveness and Love:

> And so you and your brother stand, here in this holy place, before the veil of sin that hangs between you and the face of Christ. Let it be lifted! Raise it together with your brother, for it is but a veil that stands between you.... Think what will happen after. The Love of Christ will light your face, and shine from it into a darkened world that needs the light. And from this holy place He will return with you, not leaving it nor you. You will become His messenger, returning Him unto Himself (T-22.IV.3:1-3, 6-9).

**(13:4) How could you finally attain to it forever, while a part of you remains outside, unknowing, unawakened, and in need of you as witness to the truth?**

Jesus asks us to consider how we could return home while identifying with a split-off part of our minds, manifesting as a body. The "you" to which he appeals – "in need of you as witness to the truth" – is the mind's decision maker that has joined with the Holy Spirit, and which is reflected in our worldly presence. However, there is no way we could return to a formless place of timelessness as long as our identification is with a body rooted in space and time.

**(14:1-2) Be grateful to return, as you were glad to go an instant, and accept the gifts that grace provided you. You carry them back to yourself.**

Beware of an attitude of spiritual selfishness, where you care only about your wonderful experiences of Jesus' presence, which you would want to keep to yourself. If you do, it was not his presence you experienced. To be real, his non-exclusive love must be extended, and this is Jesus' point here – our self is the self of God's one Son.

You should therefore be grateful to be in the world, because you will have learned you are not in the separated world of specialness and bodies. You will thus no longer hate being here, because your body will serve a different purpose – reminding your brothers and sisters they made a mistake, and can return home by simply changing their minds. This in turn reinforces the same change in yourself, based on an attitudinal shift of identifying less with your bodily self and more with the Thought of God's Love you truly are. This shift does not happen overnight, but your experience in the world begins to change. Rather than feeling imprisoned in the body, you see the world as a classroom in which you become a reflection and extension of your Teacher, at the same time learning from Him. This is the focus of the application of *A Course in Miracles* in general, and these lessons specifically.

**(14:3) And revelation stands not far behind.**

This reflects the aforementioned formula in *A Course in Miracles:* You see the face of Christ in your brother and remember God. As we learn to see another's true face of innocence, we see it in ourselves. Thus the ego's thought system is undone, allowing God to take the last step as we remember His Love. That is the meaning of "revelation stands not far behind." As Jesus says in the text:

**Lesson 169**

> The face of Christ is looked upon before the Father is remembered. For He must be unremembered till His Son has reached beyond forgiveness to the Love of God. Yet is the Love of Christ accepted first. And then will come the knowledge They are one (T-30.V.7:5-7).

**(14:4-6) Its coming is ensured. We ask for grace, and for experience that comes from grace. We welcome the release it offers everyone.**

The experience does not offer release just to me. If I am truly released, which means I am freed from the thought system of separation, everyone must be released as well, because God's Son is one. Once again, this cannot be understood from a fragmented perspective, such as we have here, but only when we suspend our belief in separation and realize the nature of truth's wholeness.

**(14:7-9) We do not ask for the unaskable. We do not look beyond what grace can give. For this we can give in the grace that has been given us.**

We give the grace because we have accepted it within ourselves, and have not skipped the steps of forgiveness that lead us home.

**(15) Our learning goal today does not exceed this prayer. Yet in the world, what could be more than what we ask this day of Him Who gives the grace we ask, as it was given Him?**

***By grace I live. By grace I am released.***
***By grace I give. By grace I will release.***

Giving and receiving are the same, and we ask but for what is already present in us. Therefore, we ask for help to accept the means enabling us to accept the truth that is here. The means of attaining such acceptance is forgiveness, the purpose of this and every lesson Jesus would have us learn and teach.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 170**
**There is no cruelty in God and none in me.**

This is another important lesson, where Jesus returns to a discussion of the ego strategy that culminates in its arsenal of defenses. The lesson is thus similar to what we discussed before in Lessons 135, 136, and 153 – "If I defend myself I am attacked," "Sickness is a defense against the truth," "In my defenselessness my safety lies" – which expose the ego's use of defenses to maintain its existence. We shall briefly review some key concepts by way of an introduction.

When we originally chose the ego over God's Love, separation over Atonement, we made a decision for individuality instead of unity. The ego feared we would recognize our mistake and reverse the decision, causing it to disappear into its own nothingness. To prevent this from happening, the ego devised a two-tiered strategy – a double shield – leading to the state of mindlessness. This ensured that, without awareness of the mind, we could never change it. The ego's first shield is sin, guilt, and fear, within which we are miserable sinners whose guilt deserves punishment, and thus we fear the wrathful God Who would destroy us. This necessitates a second shield of the world and body, wherein the ego's thought system is projected into the world, establishing our bodies as innocent victims of the sins of others. In effect, these sinners are the authority figures – those we perceive with power over us – we meet throughout our lives as symbols of God's vengeance, stealing from us the most precious possession of all: our special self. If we are not careful, the ego cautions us, God will swoop down and smash our defenses, leaving us vulnerable to His brutal and vindictive punishment.

Expressed in the language of the lesson, the ego accuses us first of being cruel because we destroyed God. We split this off and project it, and thus God becomes the cruel one. As we will see in our discussion, this is the model for the biblical deity, who is often perceived as acting in capriciously cruel ways. It goes without saying that this has nothing to do with the true Creator, but with the projection of what we first believed was our own vicious cruelty. This archetype of the ego's God splits into billions of fragments, leaving everyone in this world perceived as directly or potentially cruel; the former are our special hates, the latter our special loves.

**(1:1-3) No one attacks without intent to hurt. This can have no exception. When you think that you attack in self-defense, you mean that to be cruel is protection; you are safe because of cruelty.**

Jesus thus exposes the myth of the face of innocence, typically expressed as: I had no choice but to attack, for you attacked first, or threatened to do so, and if I do not defend myself you will attack me, my loved ones, my country, or the groups with which I identify. Yet this is not innocent, but attack with "intent to hurt," and therefore cruel. We say, in effect, that what protects us from the world's villains is cruelty. Recall *Hamlet,* where the prince says to his mother: "I must be cruel only to be kind" (III, iv). However, you cannot be kind if you are cruel. To think you can is to listen to the ego's rationale, a classic expression of which is a parent telling a child: "This hurts me more than it hurts you" (T-3 .I.2:7). Thus Jesus brings to our scrutiny the ego's thought system of attack and defense, the heart of which is separation – I would not defend myself unless I first perceived you as separate from me. Thus I know I am in my ego, for the truth of God and His Son is perfect Oneness, in which there is no separation and therefore no attack. It is irrelevant whether I perceive you as attacking me, or vice versa, for either way I have identified with the thought system of separation, fragmentation, and attack.

We thus protect our identity with cruelty and attack, reflecting the original moment when we believed the only way we could protect our newly acquired individuality was to attack God's perfect Oneness and destroy His Love. Since that is the origin of the ego's thought system, and *ideas leave not their source,* we *are* the idea of that source: attack to protect separation. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that our behavior is based on attack and defense, which we seek to camouflage by invoking our survival needs: We attack, destroy, and cannibalize other living organisms so we can live, defending these actions by claiming we have no choice. We have to be cruel to the cow, cod, or carrot. If not, we will die.

The archetypal thought underlying existence, therefore, is that if I do not destroy God, seize His power, and usurp His role, I will not survive. Since my survival comes first, I am justified in what I do. That is what every "living thing," encased in a body, lives out in this world. It is the heart of the dream, the core of which is fear of our death and loss of self:

> For every dream is but a dream of fear, no matter what the form it seems to take. The fear is seen within, without, or both. Or it can be disguised in pleasant form. But never is it absent from the dream, for fear is the material of dreams, from which they all are made. Their form can change, but they cannot be made of something else (T-29.IV.2:2-6).

To repeat: With fear comes the thought that if I do not do something, I will be destroyed. Therefore, I am justified in attacking others, which Jesus tells us not to defend or call by pretty names: attack is attack is attack, and is always cruel – an attempt to place our needs over someone else's, and then justifying our actions by invoking the face of innocence.

**(1:4-5) You mean that you believe to hurt another brings you freedom. And you mean that to attack is to exchange the state in which you are for something better, safer, more secure from dangerous invasion and from fear.**

My belief is that I will be free from the imprisonment of the world if I attack someone else. I thus justify attack by claiming my purpose is not to hurt another, but to preserve my self. This justification goes to the heart of every country's foreign policy – past, present, and future: we are justified in defending ourselves against other nations because if we do not, we will be overrun. Nation states operate that way because they are comprised of individuals who operate that way. The thought system of the ego is one, whether you speak of a paramecium or a government. It is helpful to consider how our daily lives exemplify this, for we are in a perpetual state of fear, lack, and deprivation, believing that by cannibalizing another – special hate or special love – we will be better off: safer and happier. And yet we are mistaken:

> What you project you disown, and therefore do not believe is yours. You are excluding yourself by the very judgment that you are different from the one on whom you project. Since you have also judged against what you project, you continue to attack it because you continue to keep it separated. By doing this unconsciously, you try to keep the fact that you attacked yourself out of awareness, and thus imagine that you have made yourself safe (T-6.II.2).

We now see how this ego strategy reinforces the thought system of fear we are trying to undo:

**(2:1-3) How thoroughly insane is the idea that to defend from fear is to attack! For here is fear begot and fed with blood, to make it grow and swell and rage. And thus is fear protected, not escaped.**

The ego tells us the way to escape from the mind's fear is to project it, making up a world in which sin is seen externally. In projecting, however, we have accomplished only the exchange of internal for external fear, thus gaining nothing. Since the ego has caused us to forget the mind from which we have split, we have no recollection that living in bodily fear – physically and psychologically – is a defense against the fear within. We are only aware of the fear-laden vulnerability we experience as bodies. If we could remember that projection is the ego's solution for the mind's fear, we would know this world makes no sense for we have accomplished nothing by making it. Again, the ego causes us to forget its strategy so we have no awareness that what we do is a maladaptive and ineffective defense against a problem that is never resolved. In fact, the problem is so cleverly protected by projection that we do not escape its underlying and illusory premise of separation and punishment:

> Yet projection will always hurt you. It reinforces your belief in your own split mind, and its only purpose is to keep the separation going. It is solely a device of the ego to make you feel different from your brothers and separated from them.... Projection and attack are inevitably related, because projection is always a means of justifying attack. Anger without projection is impossible. The ego uses projection only to destroy your perception of both yourself and your brothers. The process begins by excluding something that exists in you but which you do not want, and leads directly to excluding you from your brothers (T-6.II.3:1-3, 5-8).

Thus our inner fear that God will destroy us – born of our belief in sin – is lived out external to our minds in the body. We are born in a state of fear, and if an infant is not fed and taken care of shortly after birth, it becomes panic-stricken and dies. The body is set up from what we call life's beginning to life's end to engender fear, leading us to evolve maladaptive defenses, none of which works. Recall the line from the text: "defenses *do* what they would defend" (T-17.IV.7:1). The purpose of defenses is to protect us from our fear, but they merely reinforce it. This establishes a vicious circle, but with no memory of the problem's origin, there is no way we can resolve it. This is why no one's body is truly healed, and no problem in the world is truly resolved: no one goes to the source of the problem—the mind's decision to be on its own. Thus guilt over our attack inevitably breeds the fear that others will attack us, inevitably requiring the defense of counter-attack. And on and on it goes, as we have already seen:

> ...those who project are vigilant for their own safety. They are afraid that their projections will return and hurt them. Believing they have blotted their projections from their own minds, they also believe their projections are trying to creep back in. Since the projections have not left their minds, they are forced to engage in constant activity in order not to recognize this (T-7.VIII.3 :9-12).

**(2:4-6) Today we learn a lesson which can save you more delay and**

**needless misery than you can possibly imagine. It is this:**

***You make what you defend against, and by your own defense against it is it real and inescapable.***

The very fact that I defend against fear affirms its reality, otherwise I would not need the defense. Yet the defense does not protect me from fear, as discussed above, but simply reinforces its memory. Now strengthened in my mind, fear requires the defense of special relationships, which, in turn, make me fearful. Around and around I go.

**(2:7)** ***Lay down your arms, and only then do you perceive it*** [fear] ***false.***

Jesus calls for an attitude of defenselessness: "Lay down your arms." He does not speak of changing behavior, but attitude: the shift from believing survival comes at someone else's expense, to understanding that shared interests alone will protect us. This shift from defensiveness to defenselessness results from examining the ego's underlying premises, which make no sense and do not work. Recall the sixth characteristic of an advanced teacher of God:

> ... defenses are but foolish guardians of mad illusions. The more grotesque the dream, the fiercer and more powerful its defenses seem to be. Yet when the teacher of God finally agrees to look past them, he finds that nothing was there.... It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down. It is safety. It is peace. It is joy. And it is God (M-4.VI.1:6-8, 11-15).

**(3) It seems to be the enemy without that you attack. Yet your defense sets up an enemy within; an alien thought at war with you, depriving you of peace, splitting your mind into two camps which seem wholly irreconcilable. For love now has an "enemy" an opposite; and fear, the alien, now needs your defense against the threat of what you really are.**

The word *enemy* is in quotes because love cannot have one – projection cannot establish what is real. In the next few paragraphs Jesus describes projection without using the word, explaining how a loving God becomes an image of vengeance and cruelty—the ego's shift of its attributes to Another. This distortion of love reverses the mind's camps, with the characteristics of innocence and safety invested in the ego, and hate and fear in love. Thus the ego tells the Son: "Come with me and I will protect you, for I am your hope, security, and life. Go with God and you will be destroyed, for love is to be feared." Love has thus been made into the ego, and our "enemy" become our friend.

Jesus is telling us that it *seems* there is an external enemy: our special love or hate objects. Yet all we do is reinforce the split within our minds between God and the ego. Outside I see sin and innocence, with me being the innocent victim and you the sinner. However, this is but the projection of the inner split, wherein I perceive myself as the innocent Son about to be destroyed by the cruel and vengeful Father.

The very fact that I made the defense real – the world and body – tells me there is a danger in my mind that demands protection. That is the meaning of: "your defense sets up an enemy within" – the "two camps" – what appear to be love and fear. Within the wrong mind what is called love is not love at all, but an image of cruelty, while the

loving memory of the true God rests safely in the right mind, waiting for us to choose it. Yet neither this love nor cruelty is what we see, for we perceive cruelty *outside* – in another – leaving us as the innocents who want only to love. Our projection indeed makes our perception:

> You see what you expect, and you expect what you invite. Your perception is the result of your invitation, coming to you as you sent for it.... Two ways of looking at the world are in your mind, and your perception will reflect the guidance you have chosen.... Remember always that you see what you seek, for what you seek you will find. The ego finds what it seeks, and only that.... As you look in, you choose the guide for seeing. And then you look out and behold his witnesses. This is why you find what you seek. What you want in yourself you will make manifest, and you will accept it from the world because you put it there by wanting it. When you think you are projecting what you do not want, it is still because you *do* want it.... The mind then sees a divided world outside itself, but not within (T-12.VII.5:1-2, 6; 6:3-4; 7:2-6, 8).

Thus do you keep the guilt you secretly want, but pretend it is in another. Your ego has won again: you preserve your separated self, but someone else pays the price for it, as you strive to

> punish sins you think are yours in someone else. And thus does he become your victim, not your brother, different from you in that he is more guilty, thus in need of your correction, as the one more innocent than he (T-27.II.11:3-4).

**(4:1) If you consider carefully the means by which your fancied self-defense proceeds on its imagined way, you will perceive the premises on which the idea stands.**

Our defensive system of guilt and hate is not real but fancied and imagined. This includes the physical universe and our bodily identification within that universe. Jesus reminds us this is made up, as we recall from this important passage:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it? (T-20.VIII.7:3-7)

The first of these premises is what we saw in Lesson 167:

**(4:2) First, it is obvious ideas must leave their source, for it is you who make attack, and must have first conceived of it.**

The Son believes the ego's story he has separated from God: "You are an idea in the Mind of God, and guess what? You have separated from your Source and now exist outside Him." That is the first attack, perpetrated by us – not God – who have identified with the separated Son of God. Early in the text Jesus summarizes "what actually occurred in the separation, or the 'detour into fear' (T-2.I.2:1) – when ideas seemed to

leave their source:

> First, you believe that what God created can be changed by your own mind.
>
> Second, you believe that what is perfect can be rendered imperfect or lacking.
>
> Third, you believe that you can distort the creations of God, including yourself.
>
> Fourth, you believe that you can create yourself, and that the direction of your own creation is up to you (T-2.I.1:9-12).

**(4:3) Yet you attack outside yourself, and separate your mind from him who is to be attacked, with perfect faith the split you made is real.**

As the ego begins to evolve its defensive strategy, it takes the mind's sin – our self-accusation of attacking God – splits it off so now there are two seeming figures in the mind: the innocent Son and the sinful, cruel Father. We have "perfect faith" the split is real, because we have no awareness of what we have done. The cruel world to which the ego has taken us has become the reality, for once we projected our sin onto a punishing God, we forget the sin of cruelty originated in ourselves, aware only that cruelty is outside us in a wrathful deity. Insanely, we think our safety and security lies in believing this. To recap, love's characteristics have been stolen by the ego and taken up residence in the innocent self I now believe is me, all the while my sin has been split off and seen in this projected figure of cruelty.

**(5:1-2) Next, are the attributes of love bestowed upon its "enemy." For fear becomes your safety and protector of your peace, to which you turn for solace and escape from doubts about your strength, and hope of rest in dreamless quiet.**

Taking the ego's lies as truth, we turn to specialness for safety and solace. When we are upset, we do not go for help or comfort to the love of Jesus, but to the world of idols. For example, we make the Course's words holy and seek comfort there, without moving beyond them to their meaning. We will see in a later lesson Jesus' thoughts on words; for now let us mention that their importance lies only in where they lead us. However, if we fear the meaning of his words, we will use them as substitutes – idols – for the process of forgiveness they symbolize:

> Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind (T-29.VIII.2:1-3).

Therefore, apply these lines when you are in need of comfort, watching the temptation to run to your specialness instead, having listened to the ego's counsel that escape from anxiety and fear comes from itself, and not the love that will destroy you. It is essential to apply these abstract teachings in very specific ways; otherwise the idols of specialness will remain.

And now the other side:

**(5:3) And as love is shorn of what belongs to it and it alone, love is endowed with attributes of fear.**

Love is our true security for it is our true Identity. As this Self is shorn from love, however, the selfishness and cruelty intrinsic to the ego's dream of separation find their home in love, which thus ends up endowed with the attributes of fear.

**(5:4-6) For love would ask you lay down all defense as merely foolish. And your arms indeed would crumble into dust. For such they are.**

Thus we are afraid of Jesus and his love. In his presence we would lay down our defenses, setting aside identification with the physical universe as our home, and the body as our self. In order to protect ourselves from this end to our existence, the ego says: "I am your friend, the Holy Spirit is your enemy." Now are the ego's attributes seen in love: the danger is not guilt, but love, and true safety is found in fear. Recall this important passage from the text that describes our incredible and insane fear of love:

> You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. You are afraid it would sweep you away from yourself and make you little, because you believe that magnitude lies in defiance, and that attack is grandeur. You think you have made a world God would destroy; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you *would.* Therefore, you have used the world to cover your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. *And it is this that frightens you* (T-13.III.4).

**(6:1) With love as enemy, must cruelty become a god.**

This is because cruelty keeps love away. Again, I justify my attack on love by saying that if I do not, I will be destroyed. I cannot be intimate with anyone, let alone forgive, for to do so surely means losing my individual and special self, and so I keep others apart from me through attack. Thus cruelty becomes my god, as this telling passage describes:

> Then would God's Will be split in two, and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His Love at last to vengeance's heels (T-26.VII.7:4-5).

**(6:2) And gods demand that those who worship them obey their dictates, and refuse to question them.**

Note the important statement: "refuse to question them." The ego ensures we will never question it by having a veil of amnesia fall over our minds the instant we take its hand. As a result, we forget the ego's strategy. If we knew that the physical universe and our births into it were literally a thought that said, "This is what keeps God's Love away

from me," no one would pay attention to this world. And as long as this thought is hidden, we will never realize that the meaning of being in a body is to limit love, and thus limit us. Recall these important lines:

> For the body *is* a limit on love. The belief in limited love was its origin, and it was made to limit the unlimited. Think not that this is merely allegorical, for it was made to limit *you* (T-18.VIII.1:2-4).

Stated another way, the body's purpose is to attack God and deny His Love. Unaware of this, we seek for love here, sincerely believing we will find it. However, Jesus parts the veils that hide the ego's strategy so we can see clearly and choose against it. Indeed, the ego marshals all its forces against our acquiring such vision, invoking the fear of God to dissuade our joining Jesus on his path of forgiveness, as we read in this passage depicting one form this strange god takes – sickness:

> The rituals of the god of sickness are strange and very demanding.... Allegiance to the denial of God is the ego's religion. The god of sickness obviously demands the denial of health, because health is in direct opposition to its own survival.... Blasphemy .... means that you are willing not to know yourself in order to be sick. This is the offering your god demands because, having made him out of your insanity, he is an insane idea. He has many forms, but although he may seem to be many different things he is but one idea; - the denial of God (T-10.V.1:1; 3:1-2, 5-8).

**(6:3) Harsh punishment is meted out relentlessly to those who ask if the demands are sensible or even sane.**

This is when the ego becomes vicious. If we begin identifying with the Holy Spirit's thought system, we question whether the ego's demands of cruelty are really "sensible or even sane." The ego's warning, though, rises to the surface: "If you listen to this course and question me, you will soon sacrifice your identity." At that moment terror strikes our hearts at the "harsh punishment [to be] meted out." We fear losing our self and flee to the ego for comfort. If pain is a defense against the Love of God – as we will see in Lesson 190 – it becomes our friend, and we worship its cruelty as our god. Whether I inflict pain on you or myself is irrelevant. Either way, I keep love away from me – the ego's goal.

**(6:4) It is their enemies who are unreasonable and insane, while they are always merciful and just.**

We think the ego's enemies are insane, which includes Jesus and his course. They are unreasonable, demanding, and make no sense, and we were much better off before we ever laid eyes on him and his books. Almost all students know whereof I speak. If you do not, the chances are there is something missing in your practice of the Course, for the fear of losing your special identity would inevitably cause you to question the truth of these words and their teacher. Therefore, you want to be aware of this ego ploy so that if and when it begins you can step back and say: "Ah, this is exactly what my ego would do." When you begin to doubt the sanity and reasonableness of *A Course in Miracles* and place your thought system above it, you know there is something very

wrong, which should help you recognize the depths of your insanity.

**(7:1) Today we look upon this cruel god dispassionately.**

Learning to look at the ego's cruel idol of specialness we made as substitute for truth is the meaning of forgiveness. Yet we must look "dispassionately" at this thought system, which means without emotion, judgment, or guilt, as these two passage describe:

> You must look upon your illusions and not keep them hidden, because they do not rest on their own foundation. In concealment they appear to do so, and thus they seem to be self- sustained. This is the fundamental illusion on which the others rest (T-13.III.6:1-3).

> Be not afraid to look upon the special hate relationship, for freedom lies in looking at it. It would be impossible not to know the meaning of love, except for this. For the special love relationship, in which the meaning of love is hidden, is undertaken solely to offset the hate, but not to let it go. Your salvation will rise clearly before your open eyes as you look on this.... It is essential to bring it into sight, and to make no attempt to hide it (T-16.IV.1:1-4, 7).

Thus in this single workbook sentence you find a lovely summary of the process: You look at the ego's cruelty with dispassion – *without judgment.*

**(7:2) And we note that though his lips are smeared with blood, and fire seems to flame from him, he is but made of stone.**

Think of the wrathful ego as a statue, which you cannot do without releasing investment in seeing cruelty outside you. Realize this statue is a projected image of an illusory image in your mind, and if the mind's image is made up, the projected object must be made up, too.

**(7:3-5) He can do nothing. We need not defy his power. He has none.**

This is why you need not attack an enemy, for when you do, you make it real and give it a power it does not have. Love, therefore, does not oppose; it simply accepts the truth, as we read:

> How does one overcome illusions? Surely not by force or anger, nor by opposing them in any way. Merely by letting reason tell you that they contradict reality. They go against what must be true. The opposition comes from them, and not reality. Reality opposes nothing. What merely is needs no defense, and offers none (T-22.V.1:1-7).

> Power cannot oppose. For opposition would weaken it, and weakened power is a contradiction in ideas.... Power is unopposed, to be itself. No weakness can intrude on it without changing it into something it is not (T-27.III. 1:1-2, 5-6).

**(7:6) And those who see in him their safety have no guardian, no strength to call upon in danger, and no mighty warrior to fight for them.**

Placing your trust, hope, and safety in an idol is to place them in nothing, because nothing outside can help you in any way. Apply this specifically to your special relationships, otherwise *A Course in Miracles* will have no meaning for you. Watch yourself defend against God's Love with the insanity of specialness, and look upon your worship of its idols without judgment.

**(8:1) This moment can be terrible.**

Jesus refers to the moment when you realize the enemy is not outside, but within. Even when you look on the inner enemy without judgment and it disappears, that moment is still terrible, for at the very beginning we fled the terror of losing our separated self. When we let go of the ego's second tier of defense, acknowledging the outside enemy is really within, the ego takes out the heavy artillery, saying: "You are right, the problem is not outside but within, and now you have found the source of God's wrath, *and He has found you!"* Yet if you can remain with Jesus and look at the first tier, you will realize that the image of guilt and punishment is as illusory as the external enemy. Remember, the second image defends against the first; the former being the sinful enemy that is another, the latter your guilt over your sin against God. Both are made up, for both are designed to keep you from returning to the mind's decision maker and seeing the mistake you can now correct. In the correct choice – made once and for all – the individual self disappears. Thus this moment can indeed be terrible.

**(8:2) But it can also be the time of your release from abject slavery.**

I no longer need be a slave to the ego tyrant, for in truth it has no power. I was enslaved only by the power of my mind, which I now use to change teachers. Thus do the chains disappear and I am free.

**(8:3) You make a choice, standing before this idol, seeing him exactly as he is.**

*A Course in Miracles* helps us return to the point where we chose wrongly, look without fear or guilt, and affirm our mistake was only silly – not evil or sinful. Jesus occasionally uses the imagery of toys when he speaks of sin – a game children play. We are all children playing with the sin we believe is devastating, but in truth is nothing. Here are some representative and somewhat familiar passages:

> Little child .... You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. Who has need of toys but children? They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.... There is a time when childhood should be passed and gone forever. Seek not to retain the toys of children. Put them all away, for you have need of them no more (T-29.IX.4:3-8; 6:1-3).

> The wearying, dissatisfying gods you made are blown-up children's toys.... They are but toys, my child, so do not grieve for them. Their dancing never brought you joy. But neither were they things to frighten you, nor make you safe if they obeyed your rules. They must be neither cherished nor attacked, but merely looked upon as children's toys without a single meaning of their own. See one in them and you will see them all. See none in them and they will touch you not.... Look calmly at its [the illusion of attack's] toys, and understand that they are idols which but dance to vain desires. Give them not your worship, for they are not there.... [God's Son's] one mistake is that he thinks them real. What can the power of illusions do? (T-30.IV.2:1; 4:6-11; 5:9-10, 14-15)

The rest of the lesson consists of a direct reference to the fourth obstacle to peace – the fear of God – where Jesus speaks of our standing before the final veil, deciding whether to pass through or wander off, only to return:

> Here, with the journey's end before you, you *see* its purpose. And it is here you choose whether to look upon it or wander on, only to return and make the choice again (T-19.IV-D.10:7-8).

The remaining sentences of the paragraph are the lead-in to the discussion of the final obstacle:

**(8:4) Will you restore to love what you have sought to wrest from it and lay before this mindless piece of stone?**

In other words, let us return to God and the Holy Spirit the minds that are rightfully Theirs. They are the home of our peace, safety, and security, which can never be found in an idol. Note the word *wrest,* which is used sparingly in *A Course in Miracles,* but evocatively captures the essence of the ego's fierce thievery. Here are two examples from passages that depict the violence of specialness in seeking to take for itself the truth that is God's:

> So fearful has the truth become to you that unless it is weak and little, and unworthy of value, you would not dare to look upon it. You think it safer to endow the little self you made with power you wrested from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless (T-16.V.11:2-3).

> What is this precious thing, this priceless pearl, this hidden secret treasure, to be wrested in righteous wrath from this most treacherous and cunning enemy? (T-23.II.11:2)

**(8:5-7) Or will you make another idol to replace it? For the god of cruelty takes many forms. Another can be found.**

What typically happens with students of *A Course in Miracles* is that they forgive, and for a brief moment feel peaceful and happy. Then the fear sets in: "If I do not have my special relationship, what will be left but the Love of God, and there is no individuality in that!" At that point we quickly rush to make another special idol, investing cruelty in yet

another form. Jesus asks for our mindfulness as we study and practice his material, so that we not be blind-sided by the ego.

**(9:1-3) Yet do not think that fear is the escape from fear. Let us remember what the text has stressed about the obstacles to peace. The final one, the hardest to believe is nothing, and a seeming obstacle with the appearance of a solid block, impenetrable, fearful and beyond surmounting, is the fear of God Himself.**

This is the thought that set the ego's thought system in motion, and led to the physical universe. The ego's strategy is to convince us we are sinful because we destroyed God, Who will somehow rise from the dead and destroy us. That is the seeming origin of our fear of God. The ego does not tell us that *its* fear is of God's Oneness, for within Its Love all separation disappears. Thus the ego makes up its tale of sin, guilt, and fear, leading inevitably to the fear of God's punishment. Once this becomes our reality, we need the world of specialness as defense. The world thus rests on the premise that the fear of God is an ontological reality, and punishment is due our sinful self. Here are some excerpts from the fourth obstacle to peace, describing the ego's use of this fear to defend against our remembering God's Love:

> What would you feel and think if death held no attraction for you? Very simply, you would remember your Father.... And as this memory rises in your mind, peace must still surmount a final obstacle, after which is salvation completed, and the Son of God entirely restored to sanity.... The fourth obstacle to be surmounted hangs like a heavy veil before the face of Christ.... This is the darkest veil, upheld by the belief in death and protected by its attraction. The dedication to death and to its sovereignty is but the solemn vow, the promise made in secret to the ego never to lift this veil, not to approach it, nor even to suspect that it is there. This is the secret bargain made with the ego to keep what lies beyond the veil forever blotted out and unremembered. Here is your promise never to allow union to call you out of separation; the great amnesia in which the memory of God seems quite forgotten; the cleavage of your Self from you... (T-19.IV-D.1:2-3, 5; 2:1; 3:1-4).

**(9:4-5) Here is the basic premise which enthrones the thought of fear as god. For fear is loved by those who worship it, and love appears to be invested now with cruelty.**

Although very difficult, we need to realize that when we are in a state of anxiety and pain, it is because we are worshipping anxiety and pain. Remember, it is our dream, and we would choose it only because it keeps us from something we deem to be even worse: the loss of self. We all gladly suffer our experiences in order to keep our individual and special self intact, and then naturally – or unnaturally – seek to blame someone else for our pain and suffering.

**(10:1-3) Where does the totally insane belief in gods of vengeance come from? Love has not confused its attributes with those of fear. Yet must the worshippers of fear perceive their own confusion in fear's "enemy"; its cruelty as now a part of love.**

This insane belief has not come from God, Whose Love is simply itself, with nothing beyond It. Therefore, our insane belief in gods of vengeance comes from the belief in our own sinfulness and cruelty, having projected onto God what we believe to be our own reality.

**(10:4-6) And what becomes more fearful than the Heart of Love Itself? The blood appears to be upon His Lips; the fire comes from Him. And He is terrible above all else, cruel beyond conception, striking down all who acknowledge Him to be their God.**

The Letter to the Hebrews says it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). This is what all people believe who think they exist, for their own perceived cruelty cannot but be projected onto another, even God Himself.

**(11:1-2) The choice you make today is certain. For you look for the last time upon this bit of carven stone you made, and call it god no longer.**

We are at the point when we can make the right choice with the right Teacher, the same place we were at the end of Chapter 19 with the fourth obstacle to peace – able finally look upon this cornerstone of the ego's thought system without wandering off. The central idea is that we *look* at it – *for the last time.*

**(11:3-6) You have reached this place before, but you have chosen that this cruel god remain with you in still another form. And so the fear of God returned with you. This time you leave it there. And you return to a new world, unburdened by its weight; beheld not in its sightless eyes, but in the vision that your choice restored to you.**

In the past we have wandered off rather than pass through the final veil, refusing to accept that the world and body are defenses against losing our individuality, defenses we still have chosen to retain. Jesus now places us at the point in the journey where we realize that our last defense against this recognition is no longer worth it to us. Only the true God will suffice. Thus when we truly realize our mistake and let Jesus be our teacher, we look upon this world differently for his eyes become our own. We do not see terror, cruelty, or fear; only silly mistakes with no power to hold us back from the light. We are in the real world, the transformation of prayer from process to song. And we give thanks, as does our Creator:

> Prayer is a ladder reaching up to Heaven. At the top there is a transformation much like your own, for prayer is part of you. The things of earth are left behind, all unremembered. There is no asking, for there is no lack. Identity in Christ is fully recognized as set forever, beyond all change and incorruptible. The light no longer flickers, and will never go out. Now, without needs of any kind, and clad forever in the pure sinlessness that is the gift of God to you, His Son, prayer can again become what it was meant to be. For now it rises as a song of thanks to your Creator, sung without words, or thoughts, or vain desires, unneedful now of anything at all. So it extends, as it was meant to do. And for this giving God Himself gives thanks (S-1.II.7).

**(12) Now do your eyes belong to Christ, and He looks through them. Now your voice belongs to God and echoes His. And now your heart remains at peace forever. You have chosen Him in place of idols, and your attributes, given by your Creator, are restored to you at last. The Call for God is heard and answered. Now has fear made way for love, as God Himself replaces cruelty.**

We have reversed what happened before. Love has its own, and fear has become what it always was: a silly thought with no power to keep us from the truth.

The lesson closes with a lovely prayer, in a form we saw earlier and which foreshadows the prayers of Part II:

**(13:1-2)** ***Father, we are like You. No cruelty abides in us, for there is none in You.***

We are like Him, for we share the attributes of love, not fear. If we perceive ourselves or others as cruel, we are saying God is cruel, too – *ideas leave not their source.* However, if we realize that people's seeming cruelty is their call for love, and love is at the *core – ideas leave not their source* – we affirm that God is Love as well. Thus we joyously pray again these inspiring words of healing from *Psychotherapy,* which mark the end of sin and thus the end of pain and cruelty:

> Let us stand silently before God's Will, and do what it has chosen that we do. There is one way alone by which we come to where all dreams began. And it is there that we will lay them down, to come away in peace forever. Hear a brother call for help and answer him. It will be God to Whom you answer, for you called on Him. There is no other way to hear His Voice. There is no other way to seek His Son. There is no other way to find your Self. Holy is healing, for the Son of God returns to Heaven through its kind embrace. For healing tells him, in the Voice for God, that all his sins have been forgiven him (P-2.V.8).

**(13:3-7)** ***Your peace is ours. And we bless the world with what we have received from You alone. We choose again, and make our choice for all our brothers, knowing they are one with us. We bring them Your salvation as we have received it now And we give thanks for them who render us complete.***

We will see in Lesson 195 – "Love is the way I walk in gratitude" – that Jesus asks us to thank all living things, in gratitude for the opportunity of realizing we are part of the one Son, appearances of separation to the contrary. Jesus thus encourages us:

> Your gratitude to your brother is the only gift I want. I will bring it to God for you, knowing that to know your brother *is* to know God. If you are grateful to your brother, you are grateful to God for what He created. Through your gratitude you come to know your brother, and one moment of real recognition makes everyone your brother because each of them is of your Father (T-4.VI.7:2-5).

Key here is the word *everyone,* reflecting the oneness of the Sonship, at one with its Creator and Source. For God to be God, Christ to be Christ – no one can be excluded from Their perfect Oneness.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 170**
**(13:8)** ***In them we see Your glory, and in them we find our peace.***

Our brothers are one with us, as we are one with God. Glory, peace, love are one, for spirit can have no divisions within itself.

**(13:9-11)** ***Holy are we because Your Holiness has set us free. And we give thanks. Amen.***

The answer for the ego's cruelty is seeing its role in our lives as a defense that does not work. Most of all, I want to remember the love that has no opposites. If I am sincere in this desire – God as Love and I as Its child – I must be willing to see love or the call for love in everyone, for the Holiness of God is in His Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 171**
**REVIEW V**

## Introduction

The Introduction to this fifth Review is a particularly beautiful one, being one of the very few places in the workbook where Jesus speaks directly to us in the first person. Let me start with something obvious, but bears stating nonetheless: Jesus takes his reviews quite seriously, as we see not only here, but throughout the workbook. Inherent in this attitude is his expectation that we take the workbook just as seriously. Here he discusses – as well as in other places we will examine later – our weak dedication, and how we need to work on strengthening it. He asks us to take seriously the meaning underlying the workbook lessons, wanting us to recognize our investment in the ego thought system, how stalwart we are in maintaining it, and how unhappy it makes us. Our seriousness is expressed in spending as much time as possible throughout the day considering how often we choose against him and his forgiveness, and for the ego's specialness. In what follows, therefore, Jesus reaffirms how resolute he wants us to be, because only then would we find happiness. He thus asks us to recognize our unhappiness, which specifically comes from maintaining we are right and he is wrong. Try to keep that in mind as we go through this lovely Introduction.

**(1:1-2) We now review again. This time we are ready to give more effort and more time to what we undertake.**

We see in this statement that Jesus wants us to spend time – quality time, not just clock hours – in thinking about his teachings. Indeed, our very salvation depends on it.

**(1:3) We recognize we are preparing for another phase of understanding.**

A prevailing metaphor of this Introduction – as indeed it is throughout *A Course in Miracles* – is a journey, reflecting the process of our learning. The year we spend on the workbook is a journey in and of itself, and Jesus is telling us now that we are ready for the next stage, "another phase of understanding." What characterizes these stages is our commitment to learn to be as steadfast as we can throughout the day in applying these lessons, and, above all, to be vigilant for our mind wandering.

**(1:4-5) We would take this step completely, that we may go on again more certain, more sincere, with faith upheld more surely. Our footsteps have not been unwavering, and doubts have made us walk uncertainly and slowly on the road this course sets forth.**

Jesus is telling us once again that he knows we have been wavering and unsteady in our learning. He therefore urges us to be aware of it and forgive ourselves – certainly not indulge our doubts any more than we have to – and continually strive to be clearer about the distinction between his thought system and ours.

**(1:6) But now we hasten on, for we approach a greater certainty, a firmer purpose and a surer goal.**

This is an indicator of our progress on the journey: not so much the extent to

which we still have ego attacks, but the extent to which we try to justify them.

Jesus presents us now with this lovely prayer, which he says to God on our behalf. Its content – in view of the fact that God does nothing in the world – is our having a child's humility, recognizing how much we have to learn, and how much we need the guidance of an elder brother.

**(2:1-2)** ***Steady our feet, our Father. Let our doubts be quiet and our holy minds be still, and speak to us.***

The essential point is that we silence the ego. The purpose of our relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit is to help us quiet our minds, so we would hear God's Voice speak to us.

**(2:3)** ***We have no words to give to You.***

That is the problem. When we ask for help, we ask in *our* words. We are the ones who define our problems, demands, and needs, thus putting words and answers in Jesus' mouth. Jesus addressed this issue directly to Helen in a 1977 message, a year after the Course' publication. He cautioned her about using *her* words to frame a question, asking instead that she trust in the Answer beyond all words – God's limitless Love:

> Any specific question involves a large number of assumptions which inevitably limit the answer. A specific question is actually a decision about the kind of answer that is acceptable. The purpose of words is to limit, and by limiting, to make a vast area of experience more manageable. But that means more manageable by *you.* For many aspects of living in this world that is necessary. But not for asking. God does not use words, and does not answer in words. He can only "speak" to the Christ in you, Who translates His Answer into whatever language you can understand and accept *(Absence from Felicity,* pp. 445, 446).

Thus we are to come before God in the silence of humility and trust.

**(2:4-3:4)** ***We would but listen to Your Word, and make it ours. Lead our practicing as does a father lead a little child along a way he does not understand. Yet does he follow, sure that he is safe because his father leads the way for him.***

***So do we bring our practicing to You. And if we stumble, You will raise us up. If we forget the way, we count upon Your sure remembering. We wander off, but You will not forget to call us back.***

Jesus acknowledges we will make mistakes and stumble along our way, forgetting it as we choose the ego as our teacher. However, he does not want us to feel guilty about our fear, but instead recognize our mistake and go to the Holy Spirit for help. Essential to our progress is the humility of realizing we do not know, but that Someone does. We do not even know what to ask, let alone the nature of our problems, yet all we need be aware of is that we are wrong and Someone within us is right. Guilt over our "sinful" choice prevents us from letting our thought system go. Thus Jesus urges us in the text to look at the thought of separation through the eyes of vision and not judgment:

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> Call it not sin but madness, for such it was and so it still remains. Invest it not with guilt, for guilt implies it was accomplished in reality. And above all, *be not afraid of it* (T-18.I.6:7-9).

**(3:5-6)** ***Quicken our footsteps now, that we may walk more certainly and quickly unto You. And we accept the Word You offer us to unify our practicing, as we review the thoughts that You have given us.***

Unification of my practicing comes through recognizing all problems are the same. My one problem is believing I am better off being separate from God and from Jesus. Consequently, I have one solution: recognizing I was wrong in accepting the premise of separation as true.

**(4:1-3) This is the thought which should precede the thoughts that we review. Each one but clarifies some aspect of this thought, or helps it be more meaningful, more personal and true, and more descriptive of the holy Self we share and now prepare to know again:**

***God is but Love, and therefore so am I.***

If "God is but Love, and therefore so am I," there is no place within me – as we saw in Lesson 170 with regard to cruelty – for judgment, pain, or separation in any form. In this ten-day review, Jesus asks us to weigh the differences between God's thought system of Love and ours of hate, realizing that one will make us happy and the other continue our misery. We are to think carefully about each title of the twenty lessons in the context of "God is but Love, and therefore so am I," which means any ego thought of myself or another is illusory. This echoes the following thought that directly follows our above quotation. Jesus asks us to bring the darkness of our twisted illusions to the truth of God's Love:

> When you seem to see some twisted form of the original error rising to frighten you, say only, "God is not fear, but Love," and it will disappear. The truth will save you (T-18.I.7:1-2).

**(4:4-5) This Self alone knows Love. This Self alone is perfectly consistent in Its Thoughts; knows Its Creator, understands Itself, is perfect in Its knowledge and Its Love, and never changes from Its constant state of union with Its Father and Itself.**

This Self is Christ, our true Identity as part of God's Love.

**(5:1-3) And it is this that waits to meet us at the journey's ending. Every step we take brings us a little nearer. This review will shorten time immeasurably, if we keep in mind that this remains our goal, and as we practice it is this to which we are approaching.**

Again, we are on a journey, and our goal – not yet attained – is remembering Who we are as God's one Son. We should be grateful for these workbook lessons, as well as the daily lessons offered by our special relationships: the means Jesus uses to take us – step by step – closer to our goal. To repeat, he wants us to be as serious as

we can about our daily practice of the workbook.

**(5:4) Let us raise our hearts from dust to life, as we remember this is promised us, and that this course was sent to open up the path of light to us, and teach us, step by step, how to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost.**

We see again that Jesus conceives of his course as a step-by-step process. We do not vault from the ego's thought system into the Arms of God, but must pay careful attention to our ego thoughts throughout the day, asking for help to look at them differently. We thus "raise our hearts from dust to life," from the ego's thought of death to the Holy Spirit's thought of life, in which we regain the memory of our true Self. This gradual process is reflected in the Course's metaphor of the ladder that we climb with Jesus, retracing the ego's mad descent from oneness to specialness:

> What waits in perfect certainty beyond salvation is not our concern. For you have barely started to allow your first, uncertain steps to be directed up the ladder separation led you down. The miracle alone is your concern at present. Here is where we must begin. And having started, will the way be made serene and simple in the rising up to waking and the ending of the dream (T-28.III.1:1-5).

We come now to where Jesus speaks to us directly and personally. This passage reflects his presence in the real world outside the dream. In this healed state we recognize we are beyond the dream of separation, aware our identity is not separated or fragmented but is God's one Son. We remain aware of what is within the dream, but know our reality is outside it. Here, then, is Jesus, our beloved elder brother:

**(6:1-2) I take the journey with you. For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome.**

Jesus is in our minds, and the journey he takes with us is through the wrong to the right mind, and then beyond. When in a state of doubt and fear we need only call on his help, which means returning to the place of choice in our minds, where we look at what we believe is causing us to be afraid, uncertain, and upset. With his love beside us we release these ego thoughts. We have already looked at the passage where Jesus specifically discusses our journey with him. Here is what precedes it, a joyful expression of the Oneness of God and His one Son:

> God's Oneness and ours are not separate, because His Oneness encompasses ours. To join with me is to restore His power to you because we are sharing it. I offer you only the recognition of His power in you, but in that lies all truth. As we unite, we unite with Him. Glory be to the union of God and His holy Sons! All glory lies in Them *because* They are united. The miracles we do bear witness to the Will of the Father for His Son, and to our joy in uniting with His Will for us (T-8.V.3).

**(6:3) We walk together.**

The central theme of this Introduction is that we do this with Jesus: "We walk

together." The following is also familiar to us, expressing how we find truth by looking at illusions, *together:*

> We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready. Let us be very calm in doing this, for we are merely looking honestly for truth (T-11.V.1:3-4).

**(6:4) I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning.**

Again, Jesus is outside the dream, aware of what is within it, but not a part of it – thus the importance of not making his body real. He appeared to us in physical form because there was no other way the world could perceive him. Recall these lines:

> Can you who see yourself within a body know yourself as an idea? Everything you recognize you identify with externals, something outside itself. You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize (T-18.VIII.1:5-7).

**(6:5-6) Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. God's Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me.**

As long as we believe we are separated and not part of God's one Son, we believe he has been crucified, including Jesus. It is only when we understand this is a dream that we realize there has been no crucifixion. Jesus pleads with us to step with him outside the dream – above the battleground of hate and murder – and look down and see only figures in a dream, not reality. Since we are the dream's dreamers, we can make another choice. It is apparent throughout *A Course in Miracles* that we cannot do this without Jesus' help, nor can he help us without our invitation. In this sense "salvation is a collaborative venture" (T-4.VI.8:2).

**(7:1) My resurrection comes again each time I lead a brother safely to the place at which the journey ends and is forgot.**

This place is the decision maker, the part of our minds where the journey began when we chose the ego and fell down its ladder of separation. Thus the journey retraces the steps that lead to the choice point – where the journey began with a mistaken choice, and where it ends with the corrected one. Jesus guides us back to where we chose wrongly, teaching us that such a choice has made us unhappy, and that choosing him now will bring us unspeakable joy. His resurrection – defined as awakening from the dream of death – comes again when we take his hand and complete the journey.

**(7:2-3) I am renewed each time a brother learns there is a way from misery and pain. I am reborn each time a brother's mind turns to the light in him and looks for me.**

I have quoted Jesus' words: "Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did

not die by demonstrating that I live in you" (T-11.VI.7:3-4). When we teach he did not die by demonstrating we can make the same choice for God's Love he made, his resurrection is renewed and he is reborn. This has nothing to do with Jesus, but simply means that we, too, choose to awaken from the dream of death. We shall return to this important theme of rebirth in Lesson 182.

**(7:4) I have forgotten no one.**

In Lesson 160 we read: "Not one does Christ forget" (W-pI.160.10:1). Jesus forgets no one because we are all – *together* – part of Christ: God's one Son. Recall the opening lines of Helen's "The Gifts of Christmas":

> Christ passes no one by. By this you know
> He is God's Son. You recognize His touch
> In universal gentleness.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 95)

**(7:5) Help me now to lead you back to where the journey was begun, to make another choice with me.**

This is an explicit statement of the core of Jesus' teaching: he cannot help us unless we ask for it. Saying "Help me now" means: "Please join with me in your mind, and do not bring me into the world of specifics, for this will mire you further in illusion. Come to me 'where the journey was begun,' and let me help you make the right choice at last." This is reiterated in the text:

> Be very firm with yourself in this, and keep yourself fully aware that the undoing process, which does not come from you, is nevertheless within you because God placed it there. Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace (T-5.VII.6:4-5).

**(8:1) Release me as you practice once again the thoughts I brought to you from Him Who sees your bitter need, and knows the answer God has given Him.**

The "Him" is the Holy Spirit, Who in terms of function as our inner Teacher is interchangeable with Jesus. There are not, of course, two voices in our minds, but two symbols expressing the same, non-specific Presence of God's Love. Jesus' plea that we release him is the same plea he makes to us in the text, when he says he needs us to forgive him:

> Let me be to you the symbol of the end of guilt, and look upon your brother as you would look on me. Forgive me all the sins you think the Son of God committed. And in the light of your forgiveness he will remember who he is, and forget what never was. I ask for your forgiveness.... I am within your holy relationship, yet you would imprison me behind the obstacles you raise to freedom, and bar my way to you. Yet it is not possible to keep away One Who is there already. And in Him it *is* possible that our communion, where we are joined already, will be the focus of the new perception that will bring light to all the world,

contained in you (T-19.IV-B.6:1-4; 8:3-5).

It is not that Jesus is imprisoned by our choosing the ego. In our minds, however, we will not recognize him as the symbol of God's perfect Son unless we forgive him, which occurs when we forgive everyone else. Therefore, Jesus *is* imprisoned as long as we imprison a single person, because – this cannot be said too often – *God's Son is one.* What I do to you I do to me, Jesus, and God – *ideas leave not their source.* The ego is one package, and there is no differentiation within its thought system of separation, guilt, and hate.

**(8:2-4) Together we review these thoughts. Together we devote our time and effort to them. And together we will teach them to our brothers.**

We have three "togethers" in three sentences, as this is a journey we take with Jesus. When we attempt it without him, we are not taking it at all, for this course cannot be completed without his help. If you do not want it, you need to look at what he symbolizes to you that you continually exclude him. On another level, when we try to do things by ourselves, we re-enact the ontological instant when we told God in no uncertain terms: "I can do things by myself *without You.* I can have a self and world *without You.* I can exist very nicely *without You."*

**(8:5-7) God would not have Heaven incomplete. It waits for you, as I do. I am incomplete without your part in me.**

Obviously, it is not that God would not want Heaven incomplete; His Oneness ensures that Heaven can never be incomplete. And Jesus is not suffering because we stumble around in the hologram of time and space. This statement simply reflects the truth that God's Son is one, and if in our delusional minds we keep ourselves incomplete, we must then see Him as incomplete, too, or somehow having to deal with it. Several passages in the text make the same point of God's metaphoric incompleteness:

> Whenever you question your value, say:
> *God Himself is incomplete without me.*

> Remember this when the ego speaks, and you will not hear it. The truth about you is so lofty that nothing unworthy of God is worthy of you.... You do not want anything else. Return your part to Him, and He will give you all of Himself in exchange for the return of what belongs to Him and renders Him complete (T-9. VII.8:1-4, 6-7).

> God is incomplete without you because His grandeur is total, and you cannot be missing from it (T-9.VIII.9:8).

> Without you there would be a lack in God, a Heaven incomplete, a Son without a Father. There could be no universe and no reality. For what God wills is whole, and part of Him because His Will is One. Nothing alive that is not part of Him, and nothing is but is alive in Him (T-24.VI.2:1-4).

**(8:8) And as I am made whole we go together to our ancient home, prepared for us before time was and kept unchanged by time, immaculate and safe, as it will be at last when time is done.**

This is our home in Heaven as our Self. The underlying content, more than familiar by now, is that we are one, including Jesus. In time he is the elder brother who helps us, but when we return home we disappear together into the Heart of God as one Son. Recall this all-important passage, which ends over two thousand years of specialness:

> Awe should be reserved for revelation, to which it is perfectly and correctly applicable. ... Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted. It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. There is nothing about me that you cannot attain. I have nothing that does not come from God. The difference between us now is that I have nothing else. This leaves me in a state which is only potential in you (T-1.II.3:1, 5-13).

One of the purposes Jesus holds for his course is that we claim our potential and erase all perceptions of differences between him and us – God's Son is always and forever one.

**(9:1) Let this review be then your gift to me.**

Jesus says: "Demonstrate your love for me by paying careful attention to the words I give you. Do not pay lip service to what *A Course in Miracles* says, or to our relationship. If you truly love me and want to return to God, be attentive to these lessons and follow the review periods as faithfully as you can."

**(9:2-3) For this alone I need; that you will hear the words I speak, and give them to the world. You are my voice, my eyes, my feet, my hands through which I save the world.**

If Jesus needs our voice, eyes, feet, and hands, the body cannot be sinful. Indeed, since the body is neutral (W-pII.294), it can serve the holy purpose of forgiveness by undoing the ego's unholy purpose of keeping specialness alive and well. These lines also express Jesus' abstract and non-specific presence, for his love – a reflection of God's Love – needs specific form so we may understand and accept it. Helen's scribing of specific words – encapsulating an abstract, non-specific love – expressed this same need. None of this, though, should be taken to mean he needs us literally to go out and preach *A Course in Miracles* to the world. This would go directly against everything he is teaching. However, he does want us to demonstrate in bodily *form* the forgiveness *content* of his message. Thus he needs our eyes, feet, hands, and voice.

**(9:4-9) The Self from which I call to you is but your own. To Him we go together. Take your brother's hand, for this is not a way we walk alone. In him I**

**walk with you, and you with me. Our Father wills His Son be one with Him. What lives but must not then be one with you?**

These lines affirm the Oneness of creation and its Oneness with God. That is why it is imperative you not exclude another from the Sonship, and when you do, that you be aware you are not excluding anyone but yourself. Because God's Son is one, what you do to someone else you do to yourself, as this passage on justice expresses:

> Unless you think that all your brothers have an equal right to miracles with you, you will not claim your right to them because you were unjust to one with equal rights. Seek to deny and you will feel denied. Seek to deprive, and you have been deprived. A miracle can never be received because another could receive it not. Only forgiveness offers miracles. And pardon must be just to everyone (T-25.IX.8).

**(10:1) Let this review become a time in which we share a new experience for you, yet one as old as time and older still.**

Jesus speaks of peace, the herald of love.

**(10:2) Hallowed your Name.**

This phrase is taken from the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9). However, it is not God's Name alone that is hallowed. Our Name is equally as holy, as we will see in Lessons 183 and 184, because the Name of God and His creation is the same: Oneness cannot be differentiated.

**(10:3-8) Your glory undefiled forever. And your wholeness now complete, as God established it. You are His Son, completing His extension in your own. We practice but an ancient truth we knew before illusion seemed to claim the world. And we remind the world that it is free of all illusions every time we say:**
***God is but Love, and therefore so am I.***

We remind the world not by our words, but by changing our minds. The "ancient truth" we reflect is the truth of the Atonement: the separation from Love never happened. By rejoining our minds with the Holy Spirit we rejoin our Self – the completion of God's Son – forever leaving behind the illusion of the ego's separated and "complete" self:

> To everyone Heaven is completion. There can be no disagreement on this, because both the ego and the Holy Spirit accept it. They are, however, in complete disagreement on what completion is, and how it is accomplished. The Holy Spirit knows that completion lies first in union, and then in the extension of union. To the ego completion lies in triumph, and in the extension of the "victory" even to the final triumph over God. In this it sees the ultimate freedom of the self, for nothing would remain to interfere with the ego. This is its idea of Heaven. And therefore union, which is a condition in which the ego cannot interfere, must be hell (T-16.V.5).

**(11:1-3) With this we start each day of our review. With this we start and end**

**each period of practice time. And with this thought we sleep, to waken once again with these same words upon our lips, to greet another day.**

This is a plea from Jesus to make these review lessons the center point of your day and night. He would like you to be aware of how tempted you will be to substitute other gods – the ego's idols of specialness. Underlying these words is his message: "What could be more important than remembering Who you are as God's Son, and learning the means that will return you to Him? Be aware of how you resist this learning by forgetting my words." He echoes this instruction at the now familiar end of the manual for teachers:

> If you have made it a habit to ask for help when and where you can, you can be confident that wisdom will be given you when you need it. Prepare for this each morning, remember God when you can throughout the day, ask the Holy Spirit's help when it is feasible to do so, and thank Him for His guidance at night (M-29.5:8-9).

**(11:4) No thought that we review but we surround with it, and use the thoughts to hold it up before our minds, and keep it clear in our remembrance throughout the day.**

This is the idea of figure and ground, of which we spoke earlier. What is most important to you is the thought: "I am God's Son, and therefore I am a Son of Love." Keeping that thought uppermost in your mind ensures that everything in your day serves as background, rather than being center stage. Once again, try to note how quickly you reverse this perspective, and have these workbook thoughts recede in awareness and your specialness needs move to the forefront of your mind – but look at this ego investment without judgment or guilt.

**(11:5) And thus, when we have finished this review, we will have recognized the words we speak are true.**

Practicing this will teach us the truth of Jesus' words. Recall the close of the Introduction to the workbook:

> Some of the ideas the workbook presents you will find hard to believe, and others may seem to be quite startling. This does not matter. You are merely asked to apply the ideas as you are directed to do. You are not asked to judge them at all. You are asked only to use them. It is their use that will give them meaning to you, and will show you that they are true.
>
> Remember only this; you need not believe the ideas, you need not accept them, and you need not even welcome them. Some of them you may actively resist. None of this will matter, or decrease their efficacy. But do not allow yourself to make exceptions in applying the ideas the workbook contains, and whatever your reactions to the ideas may be, use them. Nothing more than that is required (W-in.8-9).

**(12:1) Yet are the words but aids, and to be used, except at the beginning and the end of practice periods, but to recall the mind, as needed, to its purpose.**

The mind's purpose is to choose again, which specifically means to forgive. The words themselves are not holy, but what they symbolize *is:* the memory that we can make another choice – the heart of *A Course in Miracles.* To choose again is thus our purpose, and the words but the means to help us achieve it. When students do the workbook, they often become so involved in ritual and a literal understanding that they forget that the words in and of themselves are meaningless. To reiterate this crucial point: the words only *represent* what is meaningful, and are intended to teach us we have two minds – wrong and right – and a decision maker that can choose between them. That is the purpose of every word in this course – to remind us we have made a faulty choice and now can make a better one (T-31.VIII.3:1). *A Course in Miracles* itself provides the model and guide for how we are to use words, as we see in the following passage from the manual:

> Is the teacher of God, then, to avoid the use of words in his teaching? No, indeed! There are many who must be reached through words, being as yet unable to hear in silence. The teacher of God must, however, learn to use words in a new way. Gradually, he learns how to let his words be chosen for him by ceasing to decide for himself what he will say. This process is merely a special case of the lesson in the workbook that says, "I will step back and let Him lead the way." The teacher of God accepts the words which are offered him, and gives as he receives. He does not control the direction of his speaking. He listens and hears and speaks (M-21.4).

**(12:2) We place faith in the experience that comes from practice, not the means we use.**

Our faith, again, is not in the words – they are only symbols – but in the experience that comes when the words are used to remind us of our mistaken choice. This experience is peace, happiness, and joy, and the absence of pain, conflict, and fear. It is the experience we trust, not the words themselves. Unfortunately, many students use the words and never go beyond them, meaning they do not really change their minds. That is why *A Course in Miracles* emphasizes the importance of the *content,* not the *form,* and why Jesus tells us not to ask for specifics, for they embrace the form. He reminds us it is the content we want: the experience of God's Love through him that will bring us home. Specifics, in a sense, is like a carrot he uses to attract us, so we will come to realize he is a better teacher than the ego. Without his counsel, however, we would be forever trapped in the form, forgetting it is but a means to our desired end.

**(12:3-4) We wait for the experience, and recognize that it is only here conviction lies. We use the words, and try and try again to go beyond them to their meaning, which is far beyond their sound.**

A most explicit statement indeed! You must remember there is a crucial difference between words and meaning, symbol and source, as Jesus tells us in "The Obstacles to Peace":

> Remember, then, that neither sign nor symbol should be confused with source, for they must stand for something other than themselves. Their meaning

cannot lie in them, but must be sought in what they represent (T-19.IV-C.11:2-3).

Again, words are symbols, as is *A Course in Miracles* itself. It is its source we want: the Love of God. The Course's symbols represent the meaning of our relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, which bring us to this Love. As Jesus teaches us, the Holy Spirit's Voice is an illusion, to disappear when its purpose is fulfilled, as we have already seen:

> His is the Voice for God, and has therefore taken form. This form is not His reality, which God alone knows along with Christ, His real Son, Who is part of Him (C-6.1:4-5).

Therefore, when students place undue emphasis on hearing a voice, they are talking of hearing an illusion. They forget that since we are *all* puppets, we are *all* channeling – all the time – for we can only hear an inner voice. The only issue is whether we choose to hear the hate-filled voice of the ego, or the forgiving Voice of the Holy Spirit. Simply "going within" and listening is no guarantee we are hearing the Voice for God. Only giving up judgment assures us of that.

**(12:5-6) The sound grows dim and disappears, as we approach the Source of meaning. It is Here that we find rest.**

In *The Song of Prayer,* Jesus talks about the journey of forgiveness that leads beyond the sounds of the world into the silence of formlessness – the Source of meaning:

> Forgiveness is the call to sanity, for who but the insane would look on sin when he could see the face of Christ instead? This is the choice you make; the simplest one, and yet the only one that you *can* make. God calls on you to save His Son from death by offering Christ's Love to him. This is your need, and God holds out this gift to you. As He would give, so must you give as well. And thus is prayer restored to formlessness, beyond all limits into timelessness, with nothing of the past to hold it back from re-uniting with the ceaseless song that all creation sings unto its God (S-2.I.8).

Only in the return home is found our purpose. Only in God is our rest secure. Only in the silence do we hear the Song, and know it is our Self.

## Lesson 171
## REVIEW V

### Introduction

W-rV.in.1. We now review again. 2 This time we are ready to give more effort and more time to what we undertake. 3 We recognize we are preparing for another phase of understanding. 4 We would take this step completely, that we may go on again more certain, more sincere, with faith upheld more surely. 5 Our footsteps have not been unwavering, and doubts have made us walk uncertainly and slowly on the road this course sets forth. 6 But now we hasten on, for we approach a greater certainty, a firmer purpose and a surer goal.

W-rV.in.2. *Steady our feet, our Father. 2 Let our doubts be quiet and our holy minds be still, and speak to us. 3 We have no words to give to You. 4 We would but listen to Your Word, and make it ours. 5 Lead our practicing as does a father lead a little child along a way he does not understand. 6 Yet does he follow, sure that he is safe because his father leads the way for him.*
W-rV.in.3. *So do we bring our practicing to You. 2 And if we stumble, You will raise us up. 3 If we forget the way, we count upon Your sure remembering. 4 We wander off, but You will not forget to call us back. 5 Quicken our footsteps now, that we may walk more certainly and quickly unto You. 6 And we accept the Word You offer us to unify our practicing, as we review the thoughts that You have given us.*

W-rV.in.4. This is the thought which should precede the thoughts that we review. 2 Each one but clarifies some aspect of this thought, or helps it be more meaningful, more personal and true, and more descriptive of the holy Self we share and now prepare to know again:

*3 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.*

4 This Self alone knows Love. 5 This Self alone is perfectly consistent in Its Thoughts; knows Its Creator, understands Itself, is perfect in Its knowledge and Its Love, and never changes from Its constant state of union with Its Father and Itself.
W-rV.in.5. And it is this that waits to meet us at the journey's ending. 2 Every step we take brings us a little nearer. 3 This review will shorten time immeasurably, if we keep in mind that this remains our goal, and as we practice it is this to which we are approaching. 4 Let us raise our hearts from dust to life, as we remember this is promised us, and that this course was sent to open up the path of light to us, and teach us, step by step, how to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost.
W-rV.in.6. I take the journey with you. 2 For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome. 3 We walk together. 4 I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning. 5 Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. 6 God's Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me.
W-rV.in.7. My resurrection comes again each time I lead a brother safely to the place at which the journey ends and is forgot. 2 I am renewed each time a brother learns there is a way from misery and pain. 3 I am reborn each time a brother's mind turns to the light in

him and looks for me. 4 I have forgotten no one. 5 Help me now to lead you back to where the journey was begun, to make another choice with me.
W-rV.in.8. Release me as you practice once again the thoughts I brought to you from Him Who sees your bitter need, and knows the answer God has given Him. 2 Together we review these thoughts. 3 Together we devote our time and effort to them. 4 And together we will teach them to our brothers. 5 God would not have Heaven incomplete. 6 It waits for you, as I do. 7 I am incomplete without your part in me. 8 And as I am made whole we go together to our ancient home, prepared for us before time was and kept unchanged by time, immaculate and safe, as it will be at last when time is done.
W-rV.in.9. Let this review be then your gift to me. 2 For this alone I need; that you will hear the words I speak, and give them to the world. 3 You are my voice, my eyes, my feet, my hands through which I save the world. 4 The Self from which I call to you is but your own. 5 To Him we go together. 6 Take your brother's hand, for this is not a way we walk alone. 7 In him I walk with you, and you with me. 8 Our Father wills His Son be one with Him. 9 What lives but must not then be one with you?
W-rV.in.10. Let this review become a time in which we share a new experience for you, yet one as old as time and older still. 2 Hallowed your Name. 3 Your glory undefiled forever. 4 And your wholeness now complete, as God established it. 5 You are His Son, completing His extension in your own. 6 We practice but an ancient truth we knew before illusion seemed to claim the world. 7 And we remind the world that it is free of all illusions every time we say:

*8 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.*

W-rV.in.11. With this we start each day of our review. 2 With this we start and end each period of practice time. 3 And with this thought we sleep, to waken once again with these same words upon our lips, to greet another day. 4 No thought that we review but we surround with it, and use the thoughts to hold it up before our minds, and keep it clear in our rememberance throughout the day. 5 And thus, when we have finished this review, we will have recognized the words we speak are true.
W-rV.in.12. Yet are the words but aids, and to be used, except at the beginning and the end of practice periods, but to recall the mind, as needed, to its purpose. 2 We place faith in the experience that comes from practice, not the means we use. 3 We wait for the experience, and recognize that it is only here conviction lies. 4 We use the words, and try and try again to go beyond them to their meaning, which is far beyond their sound. 5 The sound grows dim and disappears, as we approach the Source of meaning. 6 It is Here that we find rest.

## LESSON 171.

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (151) **All things are echoes of the Voice for God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (152) **The power of decision is my own.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 172**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (153) **In my defenselessness my safety lies.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (154) **I am among the ministers of God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 173**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (155) **I will step back and let Him lead the way.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (156) **I walk with God in perfect holiness.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 174**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (157) **Into His Presence would I enter now.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (158) **Today I learn to give as I receive.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 175**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (159) **I give the miracles I have received.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (160) **I am at home. 2 Fear is the stranger here.**
**3 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 176**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (161) **Give me your blessing, holy Son of God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (162) **I am as God created me.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 177**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (163) **There is no death. 2 The Son of God is free.**
**3 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (164) **Now are we one with Him Who is our Source.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 178**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (165) **Let not my mind deny the Thought of God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (166) **I am entrusted with the gifts of God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 179**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (167) **There is one life, and that I share with God.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (168) **Your grace is given me. 2 I claim it now.**
**3 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 180**

**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(1)** (169) **By grace I live. 2 By grace I am released.**
**3 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

**(2)** (170) **There is no cruelty in God and none in me.**
**2 God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 181**
**Introduction to Lessons 181-200**

This is the only place in the workbook where Jesus provides a special introduction to a series of lessons. These are the final twenty lessons in Part I, which, as you recall from the Introduction to the workbook, has as its purpose the undoing of false perception. Part II focuses on the acquisition of true perception. Jesus reaffirms this for us here in his brief introduction.

**(1:1) Our next few lessons make a special point of firming up your willingness to make your weak commitment strong; your scattered goals blend into one intent.**

Jesus tells us unequivocally: "I know that you forget, and are unwilling and afraid. The purpose of these lines is not to make you feel guilty, but to help you realize just how frightened you are, so that you will ask my help in letting go of the fear."

**(1:2) You are not asked for total dedication all the time as yet.**

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief upon reading these words. Jesus is not asking something you are still too afraid to accept, but he does want you to recognize your unwillingness to make a total dedication. It is imperative to understand how much you do not want to think of God twenty-four hours each day, or continually to take Jesus' hand. You may do so a few minutes here and there when it suits you, but you must recognize how much you want help on your terms, not his. The purpose of Jesus' words is not to impose guilt, but to say simply to us: "Understand your dedication to maintaining your ego, and how fearful you are of my love. If you are not aware of this fear, you will be unable to ask my help to let it go." His words are meant to comfort us in that he does not ask for complete dedication, just a little willingness:

> It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more. Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask, or you will add the ego to Him and confuse the two. He asks but little. It is He Who adds the greatness and the might.... It is your realization that you need do so little that enables Him to give so much (T-181V.1:5-8, 10).

**(1:3) But you are asked to practice now in order to attain the sense of peace such unified commitment will bestow, if only intermittently.**

Jesus wants us to understand that when we do turn to him and practice these lessons, we will feel better. As with any reinforcement theorist, he wants us to understand that we will learn more through rewards than through punishment. His love says to us: "The reward will be your sense of peace when you turn to me for help. Whether or not you get the specific thing you want is irrelevant; you will be happy simply by having asked me to help you. Feeling better will thus reinforce your asking, as will the recognition of the part of you that resists." He comments further in the text on his program of rewards and punishment:

> You have very little trust in me as yet, but it will increase as you turn more and more often to me instead of to your ego for guidance. The results will

> convince you increasingly that this choice is the only sane one you can make. No one who learns from experience that one choice brings peace and joy while another brings chaos and disaster needs additional convincing. Learning through rewards is more effective than learning through pain, because pain is an ego illusion, and can never induce more than a temporary effect. The rewards of God, however, are immediately recognized as eternal. Since this recognition is made by you [i.e., the decision maker] and not the ego, the recognition itself establishes that you and your ego cannot be identical (T-4.VI.3:1-6).

**(1:4) It is experiencing this that makes it sure that you will give your total willingness to following the way the course sets forth.**

Jesus is not saying we should choose him all the time, but he is saying: "Please give me a chance, and you will see that I am a much better teacher— wiser, gentler, and more loving – than you have ever been." Recall our oft-quoted line:

> Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught (T-12.V.8:3; T-281.7:1).

**(2:1) Our lessons now are geared specifically to widening horizons, and direct approaches to the special blocks that keep your vision narrow, and too limited to let you see the value of our goal.**

Jesus reaffirms his words in the Introduction to the text: the purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is not to *teach* us about love, but to help us remove the blocks to the awareness of its presence (T-in.1:6-7). He tells us, therefore, that his is not a course in love, but in undoing the specialness that stands in the way of remembering love. As these blocks are undone through forgiveness, the love within our minds is able to extend, embracing more and more of the Sonship we had sought to exclude. The process is one of generalization or transfer of training, and the reader may remember this passage from the Introduction to the workbook – the Course's pedagogical goal:

> The only general rules to be observed throughout, then, are: First, that the exercises be practiced with great specificity, as will be indicated. This will help you to generalize the ideas involved to every situation in which you find yourself, and to everyone and everything in it. Second, be sure that you do not decide for yourself that there are some people, situations or things to which the ideas are inapplicable. This will interfere with transfer of training. The very nature of true perception is that it has no limits. It is the opposite of the way you see now.
>
> The overall aim of the exercises is to increase your ability to extend the ideas you will be practicing to include everything (W-in. 6:1-7:1).

**(2:2) We are attempting now to lift these blocks, however briefly.**

We are not going to lift these blocks totally, Jesus is saying, because we are still much too fearful of losing our identity. But he wants us to experience how good it feels when we release our specialness and investment in being right. These two familiar passages are helpful reminders of his gentle and non-threatening guidance:

**Lesson 181**

> Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality. Time is kind, and if you use it on behalf of reality, it will keep gentle pace with you in your transition (T-16. VI.8:1-2).
>
> Nothing more fearful than an idle dream has terrified God's Son, and made him think that he has lost his innocence, denied his Father, and made war upon himself. So fearful is the dream, so seeming real, he could not waken to reality without the sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear, unless a gentler dream preceded his awaking, and allowed his calmer mind to welcome, not to fear, the Voice that calls with love to waken him; a gentler dream, in which his suffering was healed and where his brother was his friend. God willed he waken gently and with joy, and gave him means to waken without fear (T-27.VII.13:3-5).

Note the emphasis on *gentle* in this process of awakening. This fourth characteristic of God's advanced teachers (M-4.IV) expresses the loving kindness of our teacher, and an example of how he wants us to be with each other.

**(2:3-4) Words alone can not convey the sense of liberation which their lifting brings. But the experience of freedom and of peace that comes as you give up your tight control of what you see speaks for itself.**

These words mean nothing if you do not put them into practice. It is not enough to go through the workbook repeating lessons and words. You need to apply the daily teaching whenever you are tempted to forget. Again, when you apply these words to your daily life, and with Jesus' help release your investment in specialness, you will feel better. Jesus expressed this same thought to us early in the text in the context of letting go of judgment. Frequently calling to mind the following, as we have done in this book, will hasten the experience of freedom and peace:

> You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment (T-3.VI.3:1).

To say I am glad to be wrong is the same as saying I am glad to have given up control of my life, including the attempt to control others. This includes attempting to control Jesus by telling him what I need, as he explained to Helen when she asked him for specific help. He responded that she was seeking to make the unmanageable manageable, and turn the experience of his non-specific love into something specific she could then handle without fear.* When we experience the peace that comes from letting the ego go, it will become far more difficult to hold on to judgments and the need to control the future.

**(2:5) Your motivation will be so intensified that words become of little consequence.**

Jesus wants us to want to learn *A Course in Miracles.* Any teacher knows that pupils will never learn unless they are motivated to do so, thus Jesus tells us we will feel better if we practice his lessons. Lesson 181, which follows, particularly stresses this theme of motivation. The problem is that we are not convinced that following Jesus will make us happy. Indeed, we think just the opposite – our ego's specialness will work for

us, and we are so convinced of this that switching to Jesus as our teacher takes convincing. We are reluctant to admit we have made a mess of our lives, and desperately want to believe we have done a great job. If we had, though, our awareness would be of Heaven, not the world.

**(2:6) You will be sure of what you want, and what is valueless.**

At the beginning of the paragraph Jesus spoke of the value of his goal, in contrast with the valuelessness of ours. He makes this distinction throughout the workbook, specifically in Lesson 133, "I will not value what is valueless." In fact, the thrust of *A Course in Miracles is* to teach the valuelessness of the ego thought system and the value of his, which is evident by the peace it brings. This important theme is also discussed in the manual for teachers, where Jesus describes the first three stages in the development of trust in terms of learning the valueless nature of the world, and the value inherent in learning the lessons of forgiveness. Here are his comments on the second stage, "a period of sorting out":

> This [stage] is always somewhat difficult because, having learned that the changes in his life are always helpful, he must now decide all things on the basis of whether they increase the helpfulness or hamper it. He will find that many, if not most of the things he valued before will merely hinder his ability to transfer what he has learned to new situations as they arise. Because he has valued what is really valueless, he will not generalize the lesson for fear of loss and sacrifice. It takes great learning to understand that all things, events, encounters and circumstances are helpful. It is only to the extent to which they are helpful that any degree of reality should be accorded them in this world of illusion. The word "value" can apply to nothing else (M-4.I-A.4:2-7).

**(3:1) And so we start our journey beyond words by concentrating first on what impedes your progress still.**

Jesus returns to the primary focus of *A Course in Miracles:* undoing the ego, the process which brings us home. It is as if we were a heavy and earthbound balloon, our purpose being to make the balloon rise. Thus we need to remove – through forgiveness – the weight of specialness that roots us to the ground and impedes our progress on the journey.

**(3:2) Experience of what exists beyond defensiveness remains beyond achievement while it is denied.**

As long as you fear love and deny its presence, how can you possibly achieve it? As long as you defend against love, how can you possibly return to it? As long as you are afraid of Jesus, how can you possibly take his hand and awaken from the ego's dream? Therefore, he asks us to be aware of these impediments so he may help us pass through them.

**(3:3-6) It may be there but you cannot accept its presence. So now we attempt to go past all defenses for a little while each day. No more than this is asked, because no more than this is needed. It will be enough to guarantee the**

**rest will come.**

God's Love is already present in your mind, but you still fear It. Thus you do not jump from your nightmares into His Arms, but proceed step by step, slowly and gently, as you learn to forgive. When unwilling to let go of a grievance, it is not because you are attracted to it *per se,* but fear where releasing it will lead you. Your ego understands if you continue to forgive and let go of the past, you will disappear into the Heart of God. Fearing this prevents you from taking these little steps of forgiveness. However, as you do, you will feel so much better you will be impelled to go further on your journey. Yet will you proceed with patience, respecting your fear and trusting the One Who walks with you, for you know the outcome is certain:

> Those who are certain of the outcome can afford to wait, and wait without anxiety. Patience is natural to the teacher of God. All he sees is certain outcome, at a time perhaps unknown to him as yet, but not in doubt (M-4.VIII.1:1-3).

We are ready to proceed to the next twenty lessons, the last series before Part II.

* See my *Absence from Felicity,* pp. 445-46.

## LESSON 181
## I trust my brothers, who are one with me.

Let me begin by stating that this does not mean you should trust your brother's ego. For example, it would be foolish to invite a kleptomaniac into your home and then leave, not lock your house at night in a high crime area, or your car when you park in the middle of a large city. I recall a situation when a friend of mine, a long-time student of *A Course in Miracles, came* to me with a problem. He had been in a business arrangement with a fellow Course student, and it had become obvious that his partner had been stealing from him. In speaking to me of this, my friend tried valiantly to look at the situation "spiritually" and speak of it only in non-judgmental terms, but it was obvious his hurt and anger were getting the best of him I finally said to him: "Look – in the eyes of Heaven this person is a Son of God; in the eyes of the world he is a crook. It is not helpful to deny the worldly facts."

As will be clear as we proceed, we put our trust in the sinlessness of Christ, not what we perceive to be another's sins. We trust that the perceived sin cannot affect the peace of God within us, and that the egos of others have no more power to keep them away from Heaven than ours does. Jesus discusses this in "The Correction of Error," where he says that our brother may indeed be wrong, but that he is nonetheless right because of Who he is. Correction – by which Jesus means *content,* not *form* - need always be done with the Holy Spirit, which ensures the absence of judgment and condemnation, even when correcting behavior:

> To the ego it is kind and right and good to point out errors and "correct" them. This makes perfect sense to the ego, which is unaware of what errors are and what correction is. Errors are of the ego, and correction of errors lies in the relinquishment of the ego. When you correct a brother, you are telling him that he is wrong. He may be making no sense at the time, and it is certain that, if he is speaking from the ego, he will not be making sense. But your task is still to tell him he is right. You do not tell him this verbally, if he is speaking foolishly. He needs correction at another level, because his error is at another level. He is still right, because he is a Son of God. His ego is always wrong, no matter what it says or does (T-9.III.2).

Therefore, Jesus is not saying to trust that people are always loving, but only to trust that beyond the ego's darkness the light of Christ still shines – in everyone. We will return to this important teaching as we go through this lesson.

Motivation is another key theme here. What enables us to trust that the light of Christ shines in our brother is understanding that this is the only way we will remember the light shines in us as well. Remember that Jesus appeals to our selfish motives, saying: "Do what I teach because it will make you feel better. You will not feel good insisting you are an ego, nor insisting the world and body are your home. You will find peace only when you realize this world is not where you belong, and your body not your identity." Forgiveness teaches us this truth about ourselves, and is the motivation for putting into practice this and all lessons in the workbook.

**(1:1) Trusting your brothers is essential to establishing and holding up your faith in your ability to transcend doubt and lack of sure conviction in yourself.**

**Lesson 181**

If I am to transcend doubt and remember who I am as God's Son, I must learn to trust my brother. It is through forgiving him that I will remember I am one with God, for I am only forgiving a split-offpart of myself. Recall that Jesus teaches us the way to remember God:

> ...God cannot be remembered alone. *This is what you have forgotten.* To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember (T-1211.2:7-10).

**(1:2-4) When you attack a brother, you proclaim that he is limited by what you have perceived in him. You do not look beyond his errors. Rather, they are magnified, becoming blocks to your awareness of the Self that lies beyond your own mistakes, and past his seeming sins as well as yours.**

This is the underlying motivation for why we do not forgive: I do not want to be aware of my Self, preferring the one I have. Even if I think I hate it, it is my self, and I do not want to cease to exist. My ego has taught that if I am to keep the memory of Christ away from me, all I need do is keep you away from me, because Christ is one. Thus by keeping you separate through attack and judgment, my ego's special identity is safe and I need never worry about disappearing into the Heart of God. My ego therefore cruises around in the hope of finding someone who is wrong; even if there is an honest mistake, I quickly turn it into a sin. This means I want you to betray and abandon me, hurt and steal from me, do one unconscionable thing after another – all proving we are separate and I the innocent victim of your sin. At that point the memory of Who I am recedes far into the distance – again, the motivation for cherishing the attack, sickness, and specialness that validate my ego identity, for which someone and something else are responsible and will be held accountable. This is the meaning of these succinct yet powerful statements:

> If you can be hurt by anything, you see a picture of your secret wishes. Nothing more than this. And in your suffering of any kind you see your own concealed desire to kill (T-31.V. 15:8-10).

Yet Jesus teaches that our attack thoughts will not make us happy; and if we but let them go and trust that the light of Christ shines in another as it shines in us, we will feel better, learning this happy truth by looking beyond the projections of our sins. In the end, we will come to realize we are forgiving an illusion we first made real in the mind, and then in someone else. However, we will not reach this point until we first pay careful attention to the grievances we hold against others – our work begins there.

**(2:1-3) Perception has a focus. It is this that gives consistency to what you see. Change but this focus, and what you behold will change accordingly.**

What we perceive outside has a specific focus and purpose, assigned to it by the mind. This works both for the right and wrong minds. The consistency in my wrong-minded seeing is that I perceive sin all around, but not in me. If I do see sin in me, it is in my body or personality – caused by someone else – not in my mind. My right-minded vision, on the other hand, consistently sees expressions of love or calls for it. Therefore,

what we perceive without is a direct result of what we have perceived within, and we perceive it because we have chosen to:

> Perception does not seem to be a means. And it is this that makes it hard to grasp the whole extent to which it must depend on what you see it for. Perception seems to teach you what you see. Yet it but witnesses to what you taught. It is the outward picture of a wish; an image that you wanted to be true (T-24.VII. 8:6-10).

> This is in accord with perception's fundamental law: You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there. Perception has no other law than this. The rest but stems from this, to hold it up and offer it support (T-25.III.I:3-5).

When I change from my wrong-minded teacher to the right-minded one, I perceive another's sins as my mistakes, since we are one in the illusory mistake of separation. Jesus thus speaks to us about a change in focus, which comes from our change in teachers.

**(2:4) Your vision now will shift, to give support to the intent which has replaced the one you held before.**

The intent I held before was finding sins in someone else – an outside problem that was not my doing. This allowed me to be upset, not because I chose to be separate from God or Jesus, but because of what someone else had done. I realize that this does not make me happy – there is another way of looking at everything – as I have chosen Jesus as my teacher. Sharing his vision, I look at the same situation as before, but understand it differently, realizing that everything is my classroom in which I learn from him that pain is in my mind. Therefore I can do something about it.

**(2:5) Remove your focus on your brother's sins, and you experience the peace that comes from faith in sinlessness.**

What motivates me to forgive and look differently on the world around me is my peace. Why else would I choose to go against the special self I believe I am, which identity I cherish, except to recognize the pain it brings and the peace it costs? The following passage on the value of the holy relationship – seeing our brother sinless – amplifies this important point:

> Do you not want to know your own Identity? Would you not happily exchange your doubts for certainty? Would you not willingly be free of misery, and learn again of joy? Your holy relationship offers all this to you.... who would but see your brother sinless.... Your brother's sinlessness is given you in shining light, to look on with the Holy Spirit's vision and to rejoice in along with Him. For peace will come to all who ask for it with real desire and sincerity of purpose, shared with the Holy Spirit and at one with Him on what salvation is. Be willing, then, to see your brother sinless, that Christ may rise before your vision and give you joy (T-20.VIII.2:1-4, 8; 3:1-3).

**(2:6-8) This faith receives its only sure support from what you see in others past their sins. For their mistakes, if focused on, are witnesses to sins in you. And you will not transcend their sight and see the sinlessness that lies beyond.**

I am learning that what I see in you is a reminder of what I have first seen in myself – the main theme of *A Course in Miracles.* If I see you as a miserable sinner, it is because I do not want to acknowledge sin in myself. If I see your sins as simply mistakes and calls for love, I realize it is my call as well. Thus there is no blame, without which the ego thought system disappears, for blame is what sustains it and keeps it strong. Recall this important passage of the inherent sameness of blame and self-blame:

> If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them. That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere. Lay it to yourself and you cannot know yourself, for only the ego blames at all. Self-blame is therefore ego identification, and as much an ego defense as blaming others. *You cannot enter God's Presence if you attack His Son* (T-11.IV.5:1-6).

**(3:1) Therefore, in practicing today, we first let all such little focuses give way to our great need to let our sinlessness become apparent.**

Our emphasis should be on these "little focuses": the ego's need to see sin as real. These attack thoughts are what I need to release, for when I do, I become aware of the sinlessness underneath, heretofore protected by the hate.

**(3:2) We instruct our minds that it is this we seek, and only this, for just a little while.**

You do not have to do this for eternity, nor all the time – only for a little while. Remember what Jesus said in the Introduction to these current lessons: you need do this only for a short time each day. He does not ask for "total dedication"; however, be aware of your practice and why it makes you feel better, as well as the silliness in not continuing to practice more frequently, especially knowing how happy it makes you to let go of grievances.

**(3:3-6) We do not care about our future goals. And what we saw an instant previous has no concern for us within this interval of time wherein we practice changing our intent. We seek for innocence and nothing else. We seek for it with no concern but now.**

This is the holy instant, the lesson's theme. The ego uses time to make the sins of the past real, setting up fear of future punishment. When I accuse you of sin, I make *my* sinful past real and seek to escape punishment for what I have done. In the holy instant, however, we step outside time to the atemporal dimension that is the Holy Spirit's dwelling place. We do not see the past, nor fear the future, but experience only the present. In that "herald of eternity" (T-20.V), everyone looks different, for there is no past, future, or body; only an experience of His Love and peace – the innocence in which no judgment of sin exists in you or me:

> The holy instant is the Holy Spirit's most useful learning device for teaching you love's meaning. For its purpose is to suspend judgment entirely. Judgment always rests on the past, for past experience is the basis on which you judge.... In the holy instant no one is special, for your personal needs intrude on no one to make your brothers seem different. Without the values from the past, you would see them all the same and like yourself. Nor would you see any separation between yourself and them. In the holy instant, you see in each relationship what it will be when you perceive only the present (T-15.V.1:1-3; 8:2-5).

Almost everyone has fallen prey to what Jesus is about to describe:

**(4) A major hazard to success has been involvement with your past and future goals. You have been quite preoccupied with how extremely different the goals this course is advocating are from those you held before. And you have also been dismayed by the depressing and restricting thought that, even if you should succeed, you will inevitably lose your way again.**

Many people lament: "I will never learn this course. How can I ever lose my monstrous ego? for brief moments, perhaps, but then it returns – in spades!" However, all they really do is make the ego real, telling Jesus to his face he is wrong and they are right, and his course does not work. "Maybe it works for everyone else," they might say, "but it certainly does not work for me." Perhaps they have moved beyond accusing other people, but it makes no difference whether they hate them or themselves. It is important, therefore, that they recognize what they do with the Course: the stubborn insistence it does not work; Jesus is wrong and they are right. This key ego concept is the foundation of the world we made: proving God wrong and preferring to be right rather than happy (T-29.VII.1:9).

**(5:1) How could this matter?**

In the holy instant you realize the ego's silliness. When you say you cannot learn *A Course in Miracles* because it is too difficult, you state that the ego is alive and well, and that time is real: "Maybe I can learn *A Course in Miracles,* but certainly not in this life for there is not enough time to undo my guilt." Once these thoughts are entertained, you know you have identified with the ego, because its thought system of separation always manifests as time. The holy instant, however, is outside time, wherein you step back and look with Jesus at how monstrous your ego appeared to be, realizing from your new vantage point it is truly nothing. To be sure, the ego can indeed seem gargantuan to us here. Yet within the holy instant it is nothing but a dream thought, with no reality beyond it. Then watch your resistance to stepping outside the dream, detaching from problems, concerns, and special attachments indeed, from all bodily experience. However, looking at our self with Jesus we can say: "This is what the dream figure I call myself is doing," and as an observer of this figure, you cannot *be* this figure.

**(5:1-4) How could this matter? For the past is gone; the future but imagined. These concerns are but defenses against present change of focus in perception. Nothing more.**

Again, be aware that your concern with failure – whether it is another's or your

own – defends against the holy instant in which your ego identity would disappear. Our fear takes the form: Who would I be without my problems, grievances, or illness? Who would I be without all that has defined me from my past? Stated another way, who would I be without a spatial-temporal self, defined by a sinful past, present guilt, and a future fearfully fraught with punishment? This repeated passage elaborates on this fear, in the context of the ego's belief in hell:

> How bleak and despairing is the ego's use of time! And how terrifying! For underneath its fanatical insistence that the past and future be the same is hidden a far more insidious threat to peace. The ego does not advertise its fmal threat, for it would have its worshippers still believe that it can offer them escape. But the belief in guilt must lead to the belief in hell, and always does. The only way in which the ego allows the fear of hell to be experienced is to bring hell here, but always as a foretaste of the future. For no one who considers himself as deserving of hell can believe that punishment will end in peace.... There is no escape from fear in the ego's use of time. For time, according to its teaching, is nothing but a teaching device for compounding guilt until it becomes all-encompassing, demanding vengeance forever (T-15.I.6; 7:6-7).

Yet the Holy Spirit can undo this pair of unholy trinities – sin-guilt-fear, past-present-future – if we but choose the holy instant: "the present change of focus in perception":

> The Holy Spirit would undo all of this *now.* Fear is not of the present, but only of the past and future, which do not exist. There is no fear in the present when each instant stands clear and separated from the past, without its shadow reaching out into the future. Each instant is a clean, untarnished birth, in which the Son of God emerges from the past into the present. And the present extends forever. It is so beautiful and so clean and free of guilt that nothing but happiness is there. No darkness is remembered, and immortality and joy are now (T-15.I.8).

**(5:5-7) We lay these pointless limitations by a little while. We do not look to past beliefs, and what we will believe will not intrude upon us now. We enter in the time of practicing with one intent; to look upon the sinlessness within.**

We are asked to lay them down only for "a little while," not forever and ever, and when we enter into the holy instant, we are happily able to see the sinlessness within.

**(6:1) We recognize that we have lost this goal if anger blocks our way in any form.**

In "What Is the Peace of God?" (M-20), Jesus explains that the surest way to get rid of peace is to become angry, which is precisely why we do become angry. Anger does not well up within us, unbidden. It is a response we actively choose in order to keep the threat of God's peace away from us:

> God's peace can never come where anger is, for anger must deny that peace exists. Who sees anger as justified in any way or any circumstance proclaims that peace is meaningless, and must believe that it cannot exist. In this

condition, peace cannot be found (M-20.3:3-5).

**(6:2) And if a brother's sins occur to us, our narrowed focus will restrict our sight, and turn our eyes upon our own mistakes, which we will magnify and call our "sins."**

When we shift to the ego's narrow focus, we see only sin as real, and ultimately we see it in ourselves, because it is "exactly the same thing." The following preceded the important passage we quoted above on the shared dynamic of blame and self-blame:

> The beginning phases of this reversal are often quite painful, for as blame is withdrawn from without, there is a strong tendency to harbor it within. It is difficult at first to realize that this is exactly the same thing, for there is no distinction between within and without (T-11.IV.4:5-6).

**(6:3-5) So, for a little while, without regard to past or future, should such blocks arise we will transcend them with instructions to our minds to change their focus, as we say:**

***It is not this that I would look upon.***
***I trust my brothers, who are one with me.***

My focus is not on trusting you because you are such a good person, but on realizing that by shifting my perception of you, I reflect a perceptual shift in me. I therefore recognize the other way of looking, which happily occurs when I take Jesus' hand and enter into a holy instant.

**(7:1-2) And we will also use this thought to keep us safe throughout the day. We do not seek for long-range goals.**

As Jesus has been saying, you do not need to think about returning to Heaven. You focus only on shifting your perception for brief moments during the day. We take small steps, choosing daily the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of forgiveness that guide us gently home.

**(7:3) As each obstruction seems to block the vision of our sinlessness, we seek but for surcease an instant from the misery the focus upon sin will bring, and uncorrected will remain.**

*A Course in Miracles* emphasizes being aware of the obstructions – seeing someone, even Jesus, as separate from us – and remembering that specialness will not make us happy. Asking Jesus' help will, however, as we look with him at our blocks to vision. Recall:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV. 6:1-2).

**(8:1-2) Nor do we ask for fantasies. For what we seek to look upon is really**

**there.**

The idea is not to see halos around others, or to bathe them in light – you need not make up stories. Be aware only of how intent you are to prove Jesus wrong by making someone else responsible for your unhappiness. Try not to think "holy" thoughts, or impose a vision of holiness upon yourself or another. Instead, let Jesus guide you through the clouds of obstruction within your mind, gently leading you beyond them to the peace that is really there.

**(8:3-6) And as our focus goes beyond mistakes, we will behold a wholly sinless world. When seeing this is all we want to see, when this is all we seek for in the name of true perception, are the eyes of Christ inevitably ours. And the Love He feels for us becomes our own as well. This will become the only thing we see reflected in the world and in ourselves.**

The real world – "a wholly sinless world" – is not a physical place, but the mind's total shift from fear to love, attained when the holy instant becomes our only instant. As we slowly allow Jesus to be our eyes, we see glimpses of it; only glimpses, because we are still too fearful. Yet we are learning that the sin we see in another reflects the sin we perceive in ourselves. Recognizing that all questions regarding sin are the same leads us to the Holy Spirit's true perception:

> For each one [question] asks if you are willing to exchange the world of sin for what the Holy Spirit sees, since it is this the world of sin denies. And therefore those who look on sin are seeing the denial of the real world. Yet... your desire to see the real world... becomes the only one you have (T-21.VII.11:2-4).

**(9:1) The world which once proclaimed our sins becomes the proof that we are sinless.**

The world becomes a classroom, reminding us of Who we really are. In the real world our perception is governed solely by the gentle light we have chosen as our reality, as is sweetly captured in Helen's early poem, "The Real World":

> Where stars are formless but their light remains,
> And shines forever; where the sun has lost
> Its burning heat, and yet it still retains
> A gentle and eternal glow that keeps
> All things in peace and softness, and the rays
> From every living thing reach out to find
> All other living things, and on from them
> To their Creator; where, when petals fall
> And leaves decay, the scent and color of
> The flowers come, preserved forever fresh
> And lovely, and the song of birds remains
> Although their wings are still; here everyone
> Will come to rest, his journey almost done,
> And hears God's Voice acknowledging His Son.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 9)

**(9:2-5) And our love for everyone we look upon attests to our remembrance of the holy Self which knows no sin, and never could conceive of anything without Its sinlessness. We seek for this remembrance as we turn our minds to practicing today. We look neither ahead nor backwards. We look straight into the present.**

I do not hold to past sins or a dreaded future, for the holy instant has transcended time. My focus remains the love of Jesus, for that alone is important to me. From his love I look out on a world that appears transformed. My eyes see as they did before, but my experience has changed. Another of Helen's early poems, "The Inner Light," depicts our perception of love's radiant light as we look past time to the eternal present:

> The time will come when time is meaningless,
> And place is nowhere. All our concepts wait
> But their appointed ending. They uphold
> A dream with no dimensions. At the gate
> Of Heaven are they merely laid aside,
> Before the blazing of the light within.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 23)

**(9:6-8) And we give our trust to the experience we ask for now. Our sinlessness is but the WM of God. This instant is our willing one with His.**

When we join with Jesus in the holy instant we reflect our oneness with God, and this experience of peace and freedom from anxiety comes when we release our grievances: the essence of our relationship with him.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 182**
**I will be still an instant and go home.**

Lesson 182 is a companion to the previous lesson, as both share the theme of the holy instant. The contexts, though, are quite different. We could subtitle Lesson 181 "I will be still an instant and forgive," because its focus is on letting go of grievances. In Lesson 182 the context is broader, with Jesus speaking of awakening from the dream and returning home. Incidentally, we find still another example of Jesus' liberal use of words—the holy instant is seen in Lesson 181 as a steppingstone on the journey, while in Lesson 182 it marks the journey's end.

This lovely lesson is in two parts, the first centering on the world not being our home, and the more poetic second focusing on the Child within Who leads us home.

**(1:1-2) This world you seem to live in is not home to you. And somewhere in your mind you know that this is true.**

Jesus speaks of everyone's experience in the world, whether conscious or not. The goal of *A Course in Miracles* could never be for us to be happy here – a figure in the dream – for its purpose is to guide us along the path that awakens us from the dream, coming to understand that nothing here is of value because there is nothing here. In these opening paragraphs, therefore, Jesus addresses us who believe we exist in a body, knowing somewhere inside we do not belong here. Our anxiety and terror come from this. We do not know how or where to return, but do recognize at least that the physical world is not home to us. Despair is the unhappy consequence of being reduced, as we will see, to making the best of what is already the miserable situation of life in the body.

**(1:3-6) A memory of home keeps haunting you, as if there were a place that called you to return, although you do not recognize the voice, nor what it is the voice reminds you of. Yet still you feel an alien here, from somewhere all unknown. Nothing so definite that you could say with certainty you are an exile here. Just a persistent feeling, sometimes not more than a tiny throb, at other times hardly remembered, actively dismissed, but surely to return to mind again.**

From time to time we sense a nagging thought that something is very wrong with our lives, and it has nothing to do with the person we call ourselves. It is a sense of "wrongness" much larger than what our little self can conceive; a feeling we took the wrong turn and ended up in the world. We do not know where the mistake was made, or what to do about it. Yet a memory of home keeps haunting us, as Jesus so poignantly describes to us in this familiar passage from "The Forgotten Song":

> Listen,—perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar, like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything particular. But you remember, from just this little part, how lovely was the song, how wonderful the setting where you heard it, and how you loved those who were there and listened with you (T-21.I.6).

**(2:1) No one but knows whereof we speak.**

This is an important line because many students of *A Course in Miracles* would say they do not know of what Jesus speaks, claiming they are happy and everything is wonderful here. Yet Jesus tells us: "Somewhere inside, you know what I am saying is true. Do not pretend otherwise, because if you continue to pretend you are happy here, or there is even hope of happiness here, I can never lead you home because you will think you *are* home. You would even try to drag me to your home believing I can make it better for you. Yet my desire is to lead you from this world to where you came from." After discussing the five laws of chaos (T-23.11), Jesus makes the same assertion – you may pretend these laws are alien to you, but they are your own:

> You would maintain, and think it true, that you do not believe these senseless laws, nor act upon them. And when you look at what they say, they cannot be believed. Brother, you *do* believe them (T-232.18:1-3).

By virtue of our individual identity, we already reflect our belief in the ego thought system of separation, along with unconscious feelings of guilt, terror, and pain.

**(2:2) Yet some try to put by their suffering in games they play to occupy their time, and keep their sadness from them.**

This refers to anyone indulging in special relationships. Recall that the terms *special relationship* and *specialness* never appear in the workbook, though they are Jesus' constant point of reference in discussing the ego's dynamics of guilt and hate. We try to hide the pain of our guilt in games of specialness in which we pretend there is someone and something outside us that can bring us love and happiness, and even salvation:

> To believe that *special* relationships, with *special love,* can offer you salvation is the belief that separation is salvation (T-15.V.3:3).

Yet specialness will never work:

> So it is that, in all your seeking for love... you find not love. It is impossible to deny what love is and still recognize it (T-15.XI.6:1-3).

Next come those we refer to as blissninnies:

**(2:3) Others will deny that they are sad, and do not recognize their tears at all.**

To the blissninny the world is perfect, and Jesus loves us so much he sent this course so we could be happy here with him. This group is among the most difficult for Jesus to help, because they do not believe they need it. Remember, the help we truly need lies in realizing this world is a dream and learning why we made it up. This enables us to forgive ourselves for having done so, helping us to awaken and return to the Source we never truly left.

**(2:4) Still others will maintain that what we speak of is illusion, not to be**

**considered more than but a dream.**

In addition to the general population that would believe this, many students of *A Course in Miracles* would say Jesus does not truly mean these words; for example, he does not mean God did not create the world, but that God did not create pain, cancer, or airplane crashes. However, Jesus is making it clear in this lesson that he means exactly what he says. This world is not our home *at all.* To pretend it is, or to try to improve it but reinforces the ego's strategy of keeping us mindlessly focused on the illusory and external world.

**(2:5) Yet who, in simple honesty, without defensiveness and self-deception, would deny he understands the words we speak?**

Again, Jesus tells us that somewhere inside we know his words are true. This truth attracted people to *A Course in Miracles* in the first place, whether they fully understood it or not, realizing there was something here unlike anything they had ever seen. Then the fear set in, however, and they became terrified of that truth, often attempting to compromise its purity to make it more palatable and less threatening. Yet, there is that deeper part within that knows Jesus speaks the truth. Borrowing a principle used in another context, we would not need to deny what the Course says if we did not first recognize its truth. Denial is always predicated on first making something real, and then pretending it is not there. This is dissociation, the ego dynamic of splitting off what it finds unacceptable, and then forgetting it:

> Unless you first know something you cannot dissociate it. Knowledge must precede dissociation, so that dissociation is nothing more than a decision to forget (T-10.II.1:1-2).

Once again *A Course in Miracles'* words are clear, and our need to twist around their meaning comes from the fear of their truth, which would tell us we are not the person we think.

**(3:1) We speak today for everyone who walks this world, for he is not at home.**

You can see that Jesus allows for no exceptions. Incidentally, when he says "everyone who walks this world," he speaks of those who believe they are here, not someone like himself who only *appeared* to be here. He thus addresses all who identify with their bodies, believing they walk this world – good and bad alike.

**(3:2) He goes uncertainly about in endless search, seeking in darkness what he cannot find; not recognizing what it is he seeks.**

Of all the biblical quotations in *A Course in Miracles,* the "seek and you shall find" verse from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:7b,8b) is the most frequently cited. We always search here, the underlying purpose of which is that we will never find. While we think we seek for happiness and peace, we look in the wrong place – outside our minds – rather than in the only place where peace can be found: the decision maker's power to choose it. Here is a previously quoted example of "seeking and finding," pointing to the

true source of our frustration:

> The ego is certain that love is dangerous, and this is always its central teaching. It never puts it this way; on the contrary, everyone who believes that the ego is salvation seems to be intensely engaged in the search for love. Yet the ego, though encouraging the search for love very actively, makes one proviso; do not find it. Its dictates, then, can be summed up simply as: "Seek and do *not* find."... For the ego cannot love, and in its frantic search for love it is seeking what it is afraid to find. The search is inevitable because the ego is part of your mind.... For it is your mind that believes in it and gives existence to it. Yet it is also your mind that has the power to deny the ego's existence, and you will surely do so when you realize exactly what the journey is on which the ego sets you (T-12.I'V.1:1-4; 2:3-6).

**(3:3-5) A thousand homes he makes, yet none contents his restless mind. He does not understand he builds in vain. The home he seeks can not be made by him.**

The "thousand homes" represent the different forms taken by specialness – a relationship, substance, or object – which we believe would make us comfortable and secure. Yet the real home we seek was not made by us, and can never be found in the body's home of death. Note this parallel passage from the text:

> The lingering illusion will impel him to seek out a thousand idols, and to seek beyond them for a thousand more. And each will fail him, all excepting one; for he will die, and does not understand the idol that he seeks *is* but his death. Its form appears to be outside himself (T-29.VII.3:1-3).

**(3:6-4:1-2) There is no substitute for Heaven. All he ever made was hell. Perhaps you think it is your childhood home that you would find again. The childhood of your body, and its place of shelter, are a memory now so distorted that you merely hold a picture of a past that never happened.**

Jesus refers to those who idealize their past. Many people fantasize that their childhood was wonderful, but then something happened to cause their current misery. However, Jesus tells us our childhood was not where happiness could be found. We romanticize the past so we can prove how badly people treat us in the present, which justifies our rage. Most people though, if they were honest, would remember that things were not all that wonderful in their childhoods.

This ends the first part of the lesson, and the second half centers on the Child within. Since *Child* is capitalized, Christ is clearly meant, and seeing Him this way represents the beginnings of our spiritual journey. Needless to say, Christ is not a child – He does not grow old or change, and certainly is not a body. In fact, there are many places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus uses the image of infants. Thus, we are "very new in the ways of salvation" (T-17.V.9:1); he later speaks of the "infancy of salvation" (T-19.1V-C.9:3; 10:4), and says further: "Here is the babe of Bethlehem reborn" (T-19. IV-C.10:8). When we shift from a special to a holy relationship, it is as if we were beginning again as a child. Here is another passage, equating forgiveness with the newly born – the gentle Savior who makes His home in us as a Child:

> Until forgiveness is complete, the world does have a purpose. It becomes the home in which forgiveness is born, and where it grows and becomes stronger and more all-embracing. Here is it nourished, for here it is needed. A gentle Savior, born where sin was made and guilt seemed real. Here is His home, for here there is need of Him indeed (M-14.2:1-5).

**(4:3-6) Yet there is a Child in you Who seeks His Father's house, and knows that He is alien here. This childhood is eternal, with an innocence that will endure forever. Where this Child shall go is holy ground. It is His Holiness that lights up Heaven, and that brings to earth the pure reflection of the light above, wherein are earth and Heaven joined as one.**

This is another reference to the real world, the reflection of Heaven's truth in the dream of separation. It is an illusion, and yet the real world remains as close as you can get within the dream. When you are in it – "the pure reflection of the light above" – you are outside the dream of hate, sin, and guilt, but are still aware of it. At that point you – like Jesus – become truth's reflection. Again, a part of us has always known we do not belong here, for our minds hold the memory of our Identity. The problem is we have become so frightened of remembering, that we buried this Self beneath layers of guilt and specialness. Helen's poem, "The Hope of Christmas," presents the Child's role in ushering in the real world of hope and light – "the earth made new and shining in the hope/Of love and pardon":

> Christ is not born but neither does He die,
> And yet He is reborn in everyone.
> The rising and the birth are one in Him,
> For it is in the advent of God's Son
> The light of resurrection is begun.
>
> Heaven needs no nativity. And yet
> The Son of Heaven needs the world to be
> His birthplace, for the world is overcome
> Because a Child is born. And it is He
> Who brings God's promise of eternity.
>
> It is His birth that ends the dream of death,
> For in Him death is brought to life. Behold
> The earth made new and shining in the hope
> Of love and pardon. Now God's Arms enfold
> The hearts that shivered in the winter's cold.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 98)

**(5) It is this Child in you your Father knows as His Own Son. It is this Child Who knows His Father. He desires to go home so deeply, so unceasingly, His voice cries unto you to let Him rest a while. He does not ask for more than just a few instants of respite; just an interval in which He can return to breathe again the holy air that fills His Father's house. You are His home as well. He will return. But give Him just a little time to be Himself, within the peace that is His home, resting**

**in silence and in peace and love.**

This is the holy instant, Jesus telling us we are not being asked to leap from hell into Heaven. We take small steps, which is why Christ appears to us as a Child and we can realize forgiveness is a process. Jesus explains that since we are that Child, a part of us is miserably unhappy and suffocating to death. This is the part to which he appeals. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, is to have us become so uncomfortable with the disparity between our self and Self, Whose memory is in our minds, that we will be motivated to say there must be another way of perceiving the world. Prompting us to choose Jesus as our teacher, therefore, is the growing disquiet of how we experience our lives. Without such discomfort there would be no motivation to change, because we would not believe we need a teacher. Jesus' purpose is not to have us suffer, but to become aware that we are *already* suffering. Thus will we be motivated at last to seek the way home, with the teacher who knows the way.

**(6:1) This Child needs your protection.**

Constant work and vigilance is needed if we are going to undo the ego's thought system. We find this same idea expressed in the third lesson of the Holy Spirit – "Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom" – that we be watchful for our egos, thus "protecting" what we are:

> He [the Holy Spirit] sorts out the true from the false in your mind, and teaches you to judge every thought you allow to enter it in the light of what God put there. Whatever is in accord with this light He retains, to strengthen the Kingdom in you. What is partly in accord with it He accepts and purifies. But what is out of accord entirely He rejects by judging against. This is how He keeps the Kingdom perfectly consistent and perfectly unified.... Yet a real sense of being cannot be yours while you are doubtful of what you are. This is why vigilance is essential. Doubts about being must not enter your mind, or you cannot know what you are with certainty. Certainty is of God for you. Vigilance is not necessary for truth, but it is necessary against illusions (T-6.V-C.1:2-6; 8:5-9).

**(6:2-3) He is far from home. He is so little that He seems so easily shut out, His tiny voice so readily obscured, His call for help almost unheard amid the grating sounds and harsh and rasping noises of the world.**

The reason for there being a world filled with such cacophony is to prevent our hearing the Child's "tiny voice," the still small voice of the Holy Spirit that calls us back to the mind's decision maker to choose again. We have seen before this explicit statement of the role played by the ego's harsh sounds of specialness:

> What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you (T-24.II.4:3-6).

**(6:4-6) Yet does He know that in you still abides His sure protection. You will fail Him not. He will go home, and you along with Him.**

As you read through this wonderful lesson, be aware that the Child is not an external being. *The Child is you.* Thus, as Jesus says: "He will go home, and you along with Him." It must be that way because you and the Child are one. This is not an alien entity in your mind calling to you—however divine He might be. We are all that divine Being, yet we also made Him an alien, causing ourselves to be aliens as well. In other words, we call to the one Self for help—not an individual self or consciousness— as He calls to us.

**(7:1) This Child is your defenselessness; your strength.**

You do not have to seek for strength outside yourself; nor be defensive in the face of what you perceive to be people's attacks. The very presence of the Child – the truth of your Self – ensures that illusions have no power over you.

**(7:2-5) He trusts in you. He came because He knew you would not fail. He whispers of His home unceasingly to you. For He would bring you back with Him, that He Himself might stay, and not return again where He does not belong, and where He lives an outcast in a world of alien thoughts.**

In the end, we are the outcasts in a world of alien thoughts. We are the Christ Child, except we have decided we are something other. We again look to one of Helen's poems – "The Resurrection and the Life" – for added expression of the newly born life of the Child within, the symbolism borrowed from Christmas and Easter. Here are the second and seventh stanzas:

> So still the birth you did not understand
> Who came to you. Before your frightened eyes
> The Lord of light and life appears to fail
> His promises of Heaven's grace, and dies
> Forever on a cross. Nor can you see
> The Child of hope Who in a manger lies.
>
> See not an ending where beginning is,
> Nor dark in sunlight. You who came to mourn,
> Remember now the ancient song of birth,
> And lay aside the signs of grieving worn
> By childless mothers. Lift your heart to Him,
> For once again to you a Child is born.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 100, 101)

This Child of hope, reborn in the holy instant, is the reflected Presence of our Self, calling to us to return from the darkened world of death to the light-filled world of eternal life.

**(7:6-7) His patience has no limits. He will wait until you hear His gentle**

**Voice within you, calling you to let Him go in peace, along with you, to where He is at home and you with Him.**

We saw this idea expressed at the end of paragraph 6. "His patience has no limits" because there is no time. The eighth characteristic of God's teachers, patience is born of the idea that linear time is an illusion (M-4.VIII). No one, therefore, rushes us to return home. All that impels our decision to return is awareness of our discomfort here.

**(8:1) When you are still an instant, when the world recedes from you, when valueless ideas cease to have value in your restless mind, then will you hear His Voice.**

Jesus again returns to the contrast between the valueless and valuable, and our need to recognize the difference. Discomfort, pain, and anxiety come when we have made valuable the valueless, including our individual self. The good news, however, is that another choice is available in our minds, patiently awaiting our corrected decision.

**(8:2-3) So poignantly He calls to you that you will not resist Him longer. In that instant He will take you to His home, and you will stay with Him in perfect stillness, silent and at peace, beyond all words, untouched by fear and doubt, sublimely certain that you are at home.**

As we saw in the Introduction to the fifth review, our purpose is to move beyond the words – the *form* – to the *content* of love. The holy instant brings us there.

**(9) Rest with Him frequently today. For He was willing to become a little Child that you might learn of Him how strong is he who comes without defenses, offering only love's messages to those who think he is their enemy. He holds the might of Heaven in His hand and calls them friend, and gives His strength to them, that they may see He would be Friend to them. He asks that they protect Him, for His home is far away, and He will not return to it alone.**

We return to the theme we have explored many times: our function to remind others that the choice we made for the Holy Spirit – in this case for the Christ Child – is the choice they can make. Needless to say, the term *others* includes *all* special love and hate partners. The following passage on the holy instant emphasizes this all-inclusive aspect of forgiveness, the source of our strength, for it mirrors the strength of Christ:

> The holy instant is truly the time of Christ. For in this liberating instant, no guilt is laid upon the Son of God, and his unlimited power is thus restored to him.... When you are willing to accept our [yours and Jesus'] relationship as real, guilt will hold no attraction for you. For in our union you will accept all of our brothers. The gift of union is the only gift that I was born to give. Give it to me, that you may have it. The time of Christ is the time appointed for the gift of freedom, offered to everyone. And by your acceptance of it, you offer it to everyone (T-15.X.2:1-2; 3:2-7).

**(10:1) Christ is reborn as but a little Child each time a wanderer would leave his home.**

Each time we choose against our relationship with Jesus and wander into the ego's world, we embark on a journey. We first journeyed down the ladder into hell, and now begin the journey home. This is the meaning of Christ's rebirth as a little Child.

**(10:2) For he must learn that what he would protect is but this Child, Who comes defenseless and Who is protected by defenselessness.**

It is not the ego's thought system – its child – we must protect, but the true Child. This harks back to the earlier lessons on defenses – Lessons 135 and 153. Helen's poem with its Marian symbolism, "Mother of the World," reflects the loving protection given to the Child within:

> Peace is a woman, mother to the world,
> Whom God has sent to lay a gentle hand
> Across a thousand children's fevered brows.
> In its cool certainty there is no fear,
> And from her breasts there comes a quietness
> For them to lean against and to be still.
>
> She brings a message to their frightened hearts
> From Him Who sent her. Listen now to her
> Who is your mother in your Father's Name:
> "Do not attend the voices of the world.
> Do not attempt to crucify again
> My first-born Son, and brother still to you."
>
> Heaven is in her eyes, because she looked
> Upon this Son who was the first. And now
> She looks to you to find him once again.
> Do not deny the mother of the world
> The only thing she ever wants to see,
> For it is all you ever want to find.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 84)

**(10:3-4) Go home with Him from time to time today. You are as much an alien here as He.**

The ultimate reason for this is that the Child and I are the same. However, as long as I identify with my individual, personal self, the experience of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, or Christ will be as Someone separate from me, with Whom I have to join. It is only at the end that I come to realize I but join with my Self. Jesus' plea to us is that throughout the day we learn which child we are choosing: the ego's or God's.

**(11:1) Take time today to lay aside your shield which profits nothing, and lay down the spear and sword you raised against an enemy without existence.**

Even though this is poetic language, Jesus is unequivocally teaching us there is no world here, for everything is an illusion, "without existence." As with Don Quixote, we

but tilt at windmills, fighting against non-existent enemies, believing an army is poised to attack us. Yet it is all made up, and so the shield we are asked to lay aside – the ego's plan of defenses – and the spear and sword – our specific need to attack in self-defense – are needless and profit us nothing.

**(11:2-5) Christ has called you friend and brother. He has even come to ask your help in letting Him go home today, completed and completely. He has come as does a little child, who must beseech his father for protection and for love. He rules the universe, and yet He asks unceasingly that you return with Him, and take illusions as your gods no more.**

In the following passage from the text, Jesus beseeches us to accept his teaching and welcome him not into the illusory manger of littleness, but to the true grandeur of our holiness:

> I would but teach you what is yours, so that together we can replace the shabby littleness that binds the host of God to guilt and weakness with the glad awareness of the glory that is in him. My birth in you is your awakening to grandeur. Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness, where holiness abides in perfect peace. My Kingdom is not of this world because it is in you. And you are of your Father. Let us join in honoring you, who must remain forever beyond littleness (T-15.III.9:4-9).

Incidentally, the reference here is to the universe of spirit. However, elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles* the word *universe* is used to denote the physical cosmos.

**(12:1-2) You have not lost your innocence. It is for this you yearn.**

You may recall a line from the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet: "And who could weep but for his innocence?" (P-2.IV.1:7). All our sadness and tears come because we feel we have thrown away our innocence, and will never get it back. It is for that innocence we yearn, as we yearn to be proven wrong about the ego, knowing how miserable it has made us. Believing we were right about the sin of separation was the beginning of guilt, and only in realizing our mistake can we accept that the innocence of Christ has not gone, but has patiently waited for us in the certainty of our return.

**(12:3-7) This is your heart's desire. This is the voice you hear, and this the call which cannot be denied. The holy Child remains with you. His home is yours. Today He gives you His defenselessness, and you accept it in exchange for all the toys of battle you have made.**

Our innocence, again, is what we truly desire, not the offerings of the world. Everything we have engaged in here is simply "toys of battle," the home of defensiveness and war – the core of the ego's insane dreams:

> How would an army act in dreams? Any way at all. It could be seen attacking anyone with anything. Dreams have no reason in them. A flower turns into a poisoned spear, a child becomes a giant and a mouse roars like a lion. And love is turned to hate as easily. This is no army, but a madhouse. What seems to

be a planned attack is bedlam (T-21.VII.3:7-14).

**(12:8-9) And now the way is open, and the journey has an end in sight at last. Be still an instant and go home with Him, and be at peace a while.**

Once we have released our toys of hate, the way to love is open. Jesus pleads with us to think of this little Child as we go through our day, not as an alien being but as the Self we yearn to join, unite with, and to be. Yet, it remains a Self that frightens us. Joining with Jesus and our brothers in the holy instants of forgiveness brings the journey's end ever closer, with peace our increasingly happy companion as fear is gently replaced by love.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 183**
**I call upon God's Name and on my own.**

**(1:1-2) God's Name is holy, but no holier than yours. To call upon His Name is but to call upon your own.**

In many religions the Name (or Names) of God is regarded as sacred. In Judaism, for example, God's Name – *Yahweh* – is identified with His Being, and so it would be blasphemous for Jews to call their God by name, let alone pronounce it, since this presumes a form of equality with the Creator. This separation between God and man is thus considered sacrosanct, symbolized by the skullcap worn by Jewish men. Here, however, Jesus turns this idea around, telling us not only is it not blasphemous to call upon God's Name, but it is the only holy thing we can do: God's Name is ours, for We share one Self – the Source, we the Effect. Since *ideas leave not their source,* we remain one in Him, for two separate beings would be inconceivable in Heaven's perfect Oneness. This corrects the ego's declaration we are separate from our Source, the core of its thought system of individuality. Thus the Holy Spirit's correction: "You are not separate from God, Whose Name is yours, for you share one Being and one reality."

**(1:3-4) A father gives his son his name, and thus identifies the son with him. His brothers share his name, and thus are they united in a bond to which they turn for their identity.**

Jesus uses the nuclear family as a symbol of the family of God.

**(1:5) Your Father's Name reminds you who you are, even within a world that does not know; even though you have not remembered it.**

In Heaven we do not remember God's Name – we *are* God's Name. Jesus thus speaks of a correction within the illusion: the self that has forgotten God needs a thought system from outside the dream to remind it of Who it is.

**(2:1) God's Name can not be heard without response, nor said without an echo in the mind that calls you to remember.**

We will see as we go through this lesson that Jesus is not talking about magical incantations, ritualistic formulas, or empty prayers, but the process of choosing the Holy Spirit's thought system of forgiveness. By calling upon God's Name – the meaning of choosing the Holy Spirit – we detach ourselves from the ego's thoughts of hatred, sickness, and judgment. Speaking in the third person in the manual, Jesus discusses calling on *his* name:

> The name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol. But it stands for love that is not of this world. It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the gods to which you pray. It becomes the shining symbol for the Word of God, so close to what it stands for that the little space between the two is lost, the moment that the name is called to mind (M-23.4:1-4).

**(2:2) Say His Name, and you invite the angels to surround the ground on which you stand, and sing to you as they spread out their wings to keep you safe,**

**and shelter you from every worldly thought that would intrude upon your holiness.**

To be clear, Jesus is not talking of literal angels: winged celestial beings who protect us as they do the little heroes in Humperdink's opera, *Hansel and Gretel.* In *A Course in Miracles,* angels symbolize the right mind's loving thoughts, which when we choose to have them be our reality, "protect" us from the ego's thought system. It is not that we need an outside agent to guard us, for if that were the case, God would have to believe our illusions were true and harmful to us, therefore requiring protection. These symbols help us realize our protection comes from making the right choice. Recall this brief passage that speaks of angels of forgiveness:

> Around you angels hover lovingly, to keep away all darkened thoughts of sin, and keep the light where it has entered in. Your footprints lighten up the world, for where you walk forgiveness gladly goes with you (T-26.IX.7:1-2).

Another of Helen's little poems, "They Wait," depicts the loving patience of angels:

> I did not know Your Voice. And what I heard
> I did not understand. There was a Word
> In which was everything. Yet all I found
> In its immensity was but the sound
> Of meaningless contention. I passed by
> A thousand waiting angels. And as I
> Rushed along vain detours I did not see
> The hosts of holiness surrounding me.
> Yet I will certainly return. For You
> Have promised that whatever I may do,
> Angels and holy hosts will wait; the Word
> Will hover over me till it is heard.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 33)

**(3:1) Repeat God's Name, and all the world responds by laying down illusions.**

"All the world responds" because there is only one world in the mind of God's one Son. When I identify God's Name as my own, I remember I am that Son. In that holy instant I am outside the dream, and the world of separation is healed and undone.

**(3:2) Every dream the world holds dear has suddenly gone by, and where it seemed to stand you find a star; a miracle of grace.**

In the Course, a star symbolizes Christ or our right-minded remembrance of Him. Near the end of Chapter 15 are these lines we know so well: "The sign of Christmas is a star, a light in darkness" (T-15.XI.2:1). It is a reminder that the light of truth can still be reflected in a world of darkness. Recall this second stanza from Helen's "The Second Chance," which beautifully utilizes the symbol of the star to signify the end of hate and the remembrance of love:

**Lesson 183**

The eyes of Christ looked steadily on me
As if my secret hate He did not see.
I hugged it tight and hid it in my heart,
And still I held it from His Love apart.
Until one day my eyes met His, and then
My fingers opened and my heart. And when
I looked away a star was in my hand;
Another in my heart. I listened, and
His voice said silently to me, "Now go
And hate no more." And I said, "Be it so."
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 45)

**(3:3-4) The sick arise, healed of their sickly thoughts. The blind can see; the deaf can hear.**

This passage is taken from the famous statements from Isaiah (26:19; 35:5-6), which were then used in the New Testament as signs of the coming of the Kingdom (Matthew 10:1,8a; 11:5). In *A Course in Miracles,* however, Jesus does not mean this literally in terms of the end of physical symptoms, but as the end of the illusory thought system we made, which gave rise to the illusion of illness. Thus he says at the beginning of the text:

> Miracles enable you to heal the sick and raise the dead because you made sickness and death yourself, and can therefore abolish both. *You are a* miracle, capable of creating in the likeness of your Creator. Everything else is your own nightmare, and does not exist. Only the creations of light are real (T-1.I.24).

This lovely close to "The Forgotten Song" depicts the end of blindness and restoration to our awareness of the vision of God's unseparated Son:

> And now the blind can see, for that same song they sing in honor of their Creator gives praise to them as well. The blindness that they made will not withstand the memory of this song. And they will look upon the vision of the Son of God, remembering who he is they sing of. What is a miracle but this remembering? And who is there in whom this memory lies not? The light in one awakens it in all. And when you see it in your brother, you *are* remembering for everyone (T-21.I.10).

**(3:5) The sorrowful cast off their mourning, and the tears of pain are dried as happy laughter comes to bless the world.**

We will return to this theme of laughter, which also has biblical referents:

> He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces (Isaiah 25:8).

> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Revelation 21:4).

These are the happy tears of forgiveness that undo the pain of our guilt and fear, and we gently laugh as they pass away.

**(4:1) Repeat the Name of God, and little names have lost their meaning.**

The "little names," as we will see in the next lesson, are our special relationships. These recede into the nothingness they always were when we realize it is God's Love alone we have wanted, and which was always there. Who could sanely maintain that anything here compares to the peace and joy that comes when we remember we are wrong and God is right?

**(4:2) No temptation but becomes a nameless and unwanted thing before God's Name.**

Everything that would tempt us in this world will simply disappear, for if it loses its name, it loses its identity. A primary way of granting reality to things here is to name them, another important theme to be developed in the next lesson. Temptation is the belief we are a body, the "nameless and unwanted thing" we have chosen to replace the glorious Self that God created. We are already familiar with these two relevant passages:

> Be vigilant against temptation, then, remembering that it is but a wish, insane and meaningless, to make yourself a thing that you are not. And think as well upon the thing that you would be instead. It is a thing of madness, pain and death; a thing of treachery and black despair, of failing dreams and no remaining hope except to die, and end the dream of fear. This is temptation; nothing more than this (T-31.VII.14:1-4).

> Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel. It sets the limits on what he can do; its power is the only strength he has; his grasp cannot exceed its tiny reach (T-31.VIII.1:1-3).

**(4:3-5) Repeat His Name, and see how easily you will forget the names of all the gods you valued. They have lost the name of god you gave them. They become anonymous and valueless to you, although before you let the Name of God replace their little names, you stood before them worshipfully naming them as gods.**

Bringing our names to the Name of God involves awareness that our specialness brings pain, not happiness. This awareness motivates us to turn to the true source of happiness: the Atonement thought in our minds. Jesus holds this correction out to us, saying: "Turn away from the valueless and let me teach you the valuelessness of every worldly thing. Turn instead to what alone has value: standing outside the dream with me and looking at the `little names' of the ego's idols of specialness." Thus he teaches in the text:

> All idols of this world were made to keep the truth within from being known to you, and to maintain allegiance to the dream that you must find what is outside yourself to be complete and happy. It is vain to worship idols in the hope of peace. God dwells within, and your completion lies in Him. No idol takes His place. Look not to idols. Do not seek outside yourself (T-29.VII.6).

**(5:1-2) Repeat the Name of God, and call upon your Self, Whose Name is His. Repeat His Name, and all the tiny, nameless things on earth slip into right perspective.**

The "right perspective" is seeing the world as a classroom. I am not asked to let everything go, but simply to shift my perspective – the figure-ground shift we spoke of earlier. Making that shift means that the world is no longer something I desire or wish to avoid, but a classroom in which I choose a different teacher, who will help me more properly perceive "the little things of God," as Helen's "little" poem of the same name tenderly expresses – the childlike vision that comes when we set aside the "tiny, nameless things [of separation] on earth":

> Gardens are filled with little things of God
> That sing and twitter in a tiny voice,
> And flash from blade to blade across the grass.
> They shine with morning and they glow at night,
> And through the daylight wind and hum and turn,
> Wheeling among the flowers as they live
> Their little lives, and then they disappear.
> Yet when they enter in eternity,
> They will be part of God along with me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 14)

**(5:3-4) Those who call upon the Name of God can not mistake the nameless for the Name, nor sin for grace, nor bodies for the holy Son of God. And should you join a brother as you sit with him in silence, and repeat God's Name along with him within your quiet mind, you have established there an altar which reaches to God Himself and to His Son.**

To make this point again, Jesus does not refer to mantras or empty rituals. When you are with someone, do not call out God's Name – you do not even know the Name! Jesus' meaning is that when you become aware of the need to indulge your specialness and worship at its altar, go to your mind and ask for help to look at this person differently. This is the meaning of repeating God's Name. If you miss this meaning, the workbook will become a simpleminded series of exercises, inevitably disappointing you when the results you were expecting are not forthcoming. "Calling upon God's Name" symbolizes the correction for the names of specialness you have chosen. The "altar" of which Jesus speaks – as he does throughout *A Course in Miracles* – is in our minds. It had previously dripped with blood because we chose the ego as our guide, but now is strewn with lilies of forgiveness – the altar of grace to which we bring the nameless to the Name, the body to the mind:

> Grace is not given to a body, but to a mind. And the mind that receives it

> looks instantly beyond the body, and sees the holy place where it was healed. There is the altar where the grace was given, in which it stands. Do you, then, offer grace and blessing to your brother, for you stand at the same altar where grace was laid for both of you. And be you healed by grace together, that you may heal through faith (T-19.I.13).

**(6:1-4) Practice but this today; repeat God's Name slowly again and still again. Become oblivious to every name but His. Hear nothing else. Let all your thoughts become anchored on this.**

We can see that Jesus uses "repeat God's Name" as a composer would a musical phrase. Here it becomes the means for his asking us to bring our thoughts of specialness to the Name, thus releasing them.

**(6:5-6) No other word we use except at the beginning, when we say today's idea but once. And then God's Name becomes our only thought, our only word, the only thing that occupies our minds, the only wish we have, the only sound with any meaning, and the only Name of everything that we desire to see; of everything that we would call our own.**

If my name is God's, there is no room for personal identity or the specific names I call everyone and everything else. Again, Jesus is not referring to a name itself, but the thought system of separation, and the correction for the wrong-mindedness with which we have identified. Realizing I am one with God means I am united with the Sonship, for I have come to understand the divisiveness of my previous way of thinking and perceiving.

**(7:1) Thus do we give an invitation which can never be refused.**

We invite God in. He cannot refuse because He is within our minds. However, the invitation is really to ourselves, which also cannot be refused because we are in God's Mind.

**(7:2-5) And God will come, and answer it Himself. Think not He hears the little prayers of those who call on Him with names of idols cherished by the world. They cannot reach Him thus. He cannot hear requests that He be not Himself, or that His Son receive another name than His.**

This paragraph deserves some discussion. It is significant in that it highlights the different levels on which Jesus speaks to us in *A Course in Miracles.* Not understanding these levels inevitably results in misinterpretation and distortion of his teachings, and then just as surely in their misapplication. Jesus explicitly states that God does not hear our "little prayers." Elsewhere he states that God does not understand words, as they were made to keep us separate from Him (M-21.1:7). Yet Part II of the workbook consist of prayers from us to God the Father. Jesus is not being inconsistent, however, nor is he trying to confuse us. He simply teaches on different levels, commensurate with our different levels of learning. The Foundation publishes many books and tapes that address this theme, so I will discuss it only briefly here.*

The correction for the misunderstandings of prayer is found in *The Song of*

*Prayer,* one reason for its scribing. At the beginning of "True Prayer" (S-1.I.2), Jesus mentions that sometimes he tells us there is only one problem and one answer, and other times many problems and many answers; and, moreover, that the Holy Spirit will provide the specific answers we need. He then explains this is not contradictory in prayer, meaning that when we think of the journey home as a *process* of climbing a ladder, we will understand he speaks to us differently – on the ladder's different rungs – at different times. His statements, therefore, are not contradictory, because his purpose remains the same: helping us ascend the ladder and return home. To the extent we identify with the body – the lower rungs of the ladder – we will believe we are specific persons with specific needs, and therefore we will believe that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit answer specific requests. Because that is what we believe, some passages reflect the language of this bodily – i.e., specific – identification. However, if that is all you believe and so do not progress up the ladder, your asking becomes "asking-to-destroy." As Jesus explains:

> To ask for the specific is much the same thing as to look on sin and then forgive it (S-1.I.4:2).

It is therefore not wrong or sinful to ask for specifics, but it does indicate you are on the ladder's lower rungs, along with most everyone else.

*A Course in Miracles* is not written for spiritual giants, but for students who are at the bottom of the ladder and thus still identified with the ego's world and body. The point of these passages in the workbook, as well as many others, is to have us understand that Jesus leads us up the ladder. As we gradually make our ascent, we come to realize that to ask for specifics roots us at the bottom, instead of helping us make our way to the top. Yet we need to begin. Thus the workbook—aimed at students who are at the outset of their work with the Course – states that you should ask the Holy Spirit for specific things. Recall the earlier lesson where – incredibly – Jesus says to ask our Father to tell us what to do (Lesson 71), while here in Lesson 183 he tells us God does not hear our little prayers. The beauty of *A Course in Miracles* is that Jesus meets us where we think we are. Yet his love is such that he does not want us to remain there. We need to take his hand and ask him for the specific things we want, as Helen did; but to remember, as he reminded his scribe, that if we continue this way indefinitely it will hurt us. Helen's acceptance of this was the stimulus for the corrective teaching found in the pamphlet. Jesus told her – as I described in *Absence from Felicity* (pp. 441-55) – you have not been wrong in your asking, but we can do better. He continued by saying there would be a series of lessons that would present the "better" asking. This series of lessons evolved into the pamphlet.

Thus it is not wrong to ask Jesus for specifics. In fact it would be silly not to, if that is your need. Indeed, everyone's need at the beginning is for specifics, and it would only be arrogant to think one is beyond it. As long as you look in the mirror and see someone looking back, you need to ask for specific help. However, the point of this passage is that you learn not to be content with the ego's littleness when you can have everything; not to be content with a few crumbs to momentarily satisfy your hunger, when you can have the whole banquet and never go hungry again:

> Here [in the world] does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little (T-26.VII.11:7).

Again, saying not to call upon Jesus for specifics is not meant to impose guilt when you do, nor to have you deny your experiences. Its purpose is to have you realize how much *A Course in Miracles* offers. See yourself as a little child, gently and lovingly led up the ladder by your elder brother so you can return home – recall the preceding lesson that talked about Christ appearing as a little Child. Little children need specific things from their parents. However, they need to grow up. If you are always asking for specifics, you reflect the self-image of a child who needs an elder brother *all the time.* There is no question that the image of Jesus (or a comparable symbol) as a guide is essential for anyone on the spiritual path. If, however, you remain a *little* sibling, you will never awaken. Jesus tells us so often that we are the same, and asking for specifics negates that sameness, affirming instead: "You and I are different. Please never leave me for I need you always." He *will* never leave you, but you will never leave your earthly home, either.

Once again, do not feel guilty because you ask for specifics, yet realize this is only the journey's beginning. If you are truly serious about awakening from the world's dream, you need to move beyond the littleness of childhood to maturity, so you will no longer need Jesus as a teacher (T-4.I.6:3). You will then realize you are the spiritual adult he is – in fact, the *same* Adult, as is everyone else. The purpose of this and the following lesson, therefore, is to have us realize – as I said at the beginning – that we and God are one. To state it one more time, to continually ask God for the little specific things is to see a difference and *only* a difference, thus reinforcing the ego's thought system of differentiation. The goal of our work with the Course is to have Jesus lead us to the happy realization we are one, for the separation from our Source never happened in reality.

**(8:1-2) Repeat God's Name, and you acknowledge Him as sole Creator of reality. And you acknowledge also that His Son is part of Him, creating in His Name.**

Here once again is the idea we are part of God, not separate from Him. Yet when you ask Him or the Holy Spirit for specific help, you affirm your separation. Jesus reminds us we are one with our Source, "creating in His Name." Recall this passage from the text:

> Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth. Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding, in the part of you that shares His Father's Will (T-25.I.5:3-4).

This understanding, however, cannot come to us as little children, far away from home, but only to adults, when we awaken from the dream and realize our Identity as Christ.

**(8:3-5) Sit silently, and let His Name become the all-encompassing idea that holds your mind completely. Let all thoughts be still except this one. And to all other thoughts respond with this, and see God's Name replace the thousand little names you gave your thoughts, not realizing that there is one Name for all there is, and all that there will be.**

It is our function to silence the ego; Jesus cannot do this for us. Calling upon

God's Name is the right- minded correction for our wrong-minded thinking. However, we cannot correct wrong-minded thoughts unless we first realize we have them. That is why, to make the point still one more time, this is not a course on love, truth, and reality, but on undoing guilt, fear, and specialness through choosing Jesus in the silence of the holy instant, bringing our little thoughts of hate to his single thought of love:

> Then let us wait an instant and be still, forgetting everything we thought we heard; remembering how much we do not know.... Be still and listen. Think not ancient thoughts.... Come without all thought of what you ever learned before, and put aside all images you made. The old will fall away before the new without your opposition or intent.... Nothing will hurt you in this holy place, to which you come to listen silently and learn the truth of what you really want. No more than this will you be asked to learn. But as you hear it, you will understand you need but come away without the thoughts you did not want, and that were never true (T-31.II.6:4; 7:2-3; 8:2-3, 6-8).

**(9:1-3) Today you can achieve a state in which you will experience the gift of grace. You can escape all bondage of the world, and give the world the same release you found. You can remember what the world forgot, and offer it your own remembering.**

What the world has forgotten we can now remember: the peace-filled love we offer others by its very presence in us. This theme of forgetting the ego and remembering God – through forgiveness – is reminiscent of these passages from the text:

> You have forgotten Him [God], but the Holy Spirit understands that your forgetting must be translated into a way of remembering (T-7. IV.4:4).

> Forgiving dreams are kind to everyone who figures in the dream. And so they bring the dreamer full release from dreams of fear. He does not fear his judgment for he has judged no one.... And all the while he is remembering what he forgot, when judgment seemed to be the way to save him from its penalty (T-29.IX.10:3-6).

**(9:4-5) You can accept today the part you play in its salvation, and your own as well. And both can be accomplished perfectly.**

Our part, of course, is forgiveness.

**(10:1-2) Turn to the Name of God for your release, and it is given you. No prayer but this is necessary, for it holds them all within it.**

This is the point we discussed above regarding *The Song of Prayer,* similar to the following familiar statement in the text:

> Prayer is a way of asking for something.... But the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly

> meaningless. The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have (T-3.V.6:1, 3-5).

In the pamphlet, Jesus cites the famous passage from the Sermon on the Mount: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God... and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33):

> In true prayer you hear only the song. All the rest is merely added. You have sought first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else has indeed been given you (S-1.I.3:4-6).

If you are focused on specifics, you will never pay attention to the non-specific love you truly want. Identifying with the song of love instead of its specific parts, your needs will be answered, and need not be asked for. How can you have a need when you have identified with the Love of God? All specific requests, little questions, and pressing needs disappear into the experience of Jesus' love, the reflection of Heaven. Recall this important passage:

> The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need. To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it. Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands. There they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no Love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him? Can this be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration? God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this (S-1.I.4).

Turning to the Name of God means turning to Jesus as its symbol. We have seen Jesus' discussion of what it means to call upon the name of Jesus Christ (M-23.4). He makes the same point here of symbolizing the love that is not of this world. Calling on his name is not a mantra or formula for success, but it does call upon a thought system that reflects God's Love, the complete opposite of everything this world offers.

Jesus continues:

**(10:3) Words are insignificant, and all requests unneeded when God's Son calls on his Father's Name.**

To recap, when you start out on the journey, asking for specifics is important as a way of reinforcing your relationship with Jesus. Remain at this stage, however, and you will not progress to learn the totality of his right-minded thought system. You may experience receiving specific help for specific questions, yet there is always the danger of not returning to Heaven's abstract love. Therefore, use the specific request as the beginning of the journey, but do not stop there.

**(10:4-6) His Father's Thoughts become his own. He makes his claim to all his Father gave, is giving still, and will forever give. He calls on Him to let all things he thought he made be nameless now, and in their place the holy Name of God becomes his judgment of their worthlessness.**

**Lesson 183**

All things we thought were real have become nameless, which means they no longer are important to us. But do not take this literally. For example, Jesus does not mean we should forget the names of our family members or friends. He refers to a shift in perspective, wherein the things of the world no longer matter for we have recognized their inherent valuelessness. As this perspective increasingly shifts, not only will worldly things have lost their value, we will realize they were simply figures in a dream. We thus look on our special idols and realize their worthlessness. This can be done only from a perspective born outside the dream, above the ego's battleground. Otherwise we remain in denial and prone to projection, seeking to make others responsible for our personal sense of worthlessness.

**(11) All little things are silent. Little sounds are soundless now. The little things of earth have disappeared. The universe consists of nothing but the Son of God, who calls upon his Father. And his Father's Voice gives answer in his Father's holy Name. In this eternal, still relationship, in which communication far transcends all words, and yet exceeds in depth and height whatever words could possibly convey, is peace eternal. In our Father's Name, we would experience this peace today. And in His Name, it shall be given us.**

When we choose Jesus as our teacher we call upon God's Name, and in that holy instant the "little things" are quiet – life's specifics cease to demand, and thus are stilled. They have not disappeared from awareness, but the value and importance we placed upon them have gone.

We close with another of Helen's little poems. "The Mirrors of Christ" sweetly depicts the perceptual shift we have described, which takes us from turbulence to peace, the bitter past to the quiet present, the names of illusions to the eternal Name we share with God:

A breeze comes by. A little lake jumps up,
Sparkles a shining instant and is still.
A brook skips down the hillside, and is held
Within the cup the joining mountains fill.
A pond is ruffled for an instant as
A storm upsets its smoothness, and returns
To its accustomed quietness. The sea
Dives deeply downward swirling, and upturns
To catch the moon. So all things come to peace,
Away from turbulence and from the past,
United in salvation, to become
The silent mirrors of Christ's face at last.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 22)

* Tape albums: "Duality as Metaphor *in A Course in Miracles,"* "Jesus: Symbol and Reality"; book: *The Message of A COURSE IN MIRACLES,* Vol. Two: *Few Choose to Listen.*

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 184**

**The Name of God is my inheritance.**

This is the second lesson that deals specifically with God's Name and, to recall our discussion of Lesson 183, the term *Name of God* is not to be taken literally – as is stated at the conclusion of the lesson, "God has no name." The phrase is used only as correction for the ego's wrong-minded thinking, specifically for the belief in separation: the ego's name of sin, attack, punishment, and death. Thus *the Name of God is* a symbol that reminds us of our oneness as God's Son, and the Oneness of Christ with God. The lesson's major theme, therefore, is how calling upon God's Name helps us remember that the world of separation is illusory, made up to deny the reality of God's perfect unity. Depicted here, therefore, is the dichotomy of duality and non-duality, perception and knowledge, separation and oneness – all reflecting the split from God.

The first part of the lesson speaks of the ego's belief that it indeed pulled off the impossible: the separation from God the Creator.

**(1:1-4) You live by symbols. You have made up names for everything you see. Each one becomes a separate entity, identified by its own name. By this you carve it out of unity.**

God's Son is perfect oneness, but we believe we have shattered its perfection, resulting in billions of fragments of the original Sonship. Each fragment is an illusion, whether of homo sapiens or any member of the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms. Everything that seems to have shape and form, that can be discretely recognized as separate from something else is part of the ego's distortion of the unified Sonship. Remember, when Jesus refers to the Son of God, he is not talking about human beings. God's Son is a Thought in the Mind of God and, in his separated state, a thought in the split mind that transcends the specific forms – animate or inanimate – that we identify and give names to. Recall this prayer of Jesus in the text:

> I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son. Your Holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them. And they are joined because what is in one is in them all. How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part (T-28.IV.9).

**(1:5-6) By this you designate its special attributes, and set it off from other things by emphasizing space surrounding it. This space you lay between all things to which you give a different name; all happenings in terms of place and time; all bodies which are greeted by a name.**

This is a wonderful description of the perceptual world. To make this point again, when Jesus tells us that God did not create the world, he means it literally. He did not create a perceptual, separated world in which there are individual differences – indeed in which there is individuality of any kind. Since God does not recognize individuals, He does not know our separated self that exists outside His Mind, which means this self is not real. Be sure you do not confuse the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* with those of other spiritual paths, which do make the physical universe part of the divine.

**(2:1) This space you see as setting off all things from one another is the means by which the world's perception is achieved.**

This holds for right-minded as well as wrong-minded perception. The very fact you can perceive – recognizing an object or person as discrete from another – tells you this world is a dream, and not the world of oneness God created as His Son's home.

**(2:2) You see something where nothing is, and see as well nothing where there is unity; a space between all things, between all things and you.**

All we see is a projection of our illusory thoughts, thus seeing "something where nothing is," yet thinking there exist outside us actual things – aspects of the separated and fragmented Son. At the same time, we see nothing where there is the true unity of God's Son. These two passages express this illusory nature of the separated world, yet one that seems so real to us:

> Yet in this cloud bank [of guilt] it is easy to see a whole world rising. A solid mountain range, a lake, a city, all rise in your imagination, and from the clouds the messengers of your perception return to you, assuring you that it is there. Figures stand out and move about, actions seem real, and forms appear and shift from loveliness to the grotesque. And back and forth they go, as long as you would play the game of children's make-believe (T-18.IX.7:1-4).

> The world you see does not exist, because the place where you perceive it is not real. The gap [of separation] is carefully concealed in fog, and misty pictures rise to cover it with vague uncertain forms and changing shapes, forever unsubstantial and unsure. Yet in the gap is nothing (T-28.V.7:2-4).

**(2:3-4) Thus do you think that you have given life in separation. By this split you think you are established as a unity which functions with an independent will.**

The body's purpose is to bring messages that speak of the world's reality, reflecting our belief in the reality of the ego's thought of separation. Because we think we see a phenomenal world we think it to be true, and therefore we believe there is life here. Yet we need always to recall the passage that tells us that anything outside of perfect unity not only has no life, but does not exist, despite our ingenious efforts to make the non-living live and breathe:

> Can you paint rosy lips upon a skeleton, dress it in loveliness, pet it and pamper it, and make it live? And can you be content with an illusion that you are living?
>
> There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion.... Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere. Outside of Heaven, only the conflict of illusion stands; senseless, impossible and beyond all reason, and yet perceived as an eternal barrier to Heaven. Illusions are but forms. Their content is never true (T-23.11.18:8-19:3,6-9).

**(3:1-2) What are these names by which the world becomes a series of discrete events, of things ununified, of bodies kept apart and holding bits of mind as separate awarenesses? You gave these names to them, establishing perception as you wished to have perception be.**

Our wish is to establish the separation as real, but also to establish that we are not responsible for it, being the innocent victims of what the world has done to us. We have seen this idea expressed many times before, and this already partially quoted passage cogently expresses perception's purpose of making our hidden wish come true:

> It is essential it be kept in mind that all perception still is upside down until its purpose has been understood.... Perception seems to teach you what you see. Yet it but witnesses to what you taught. It is the outward picture of a wish; an image that you wanted to be true (T-24. VII.8:5, 8-10).

**(3:3-4) The nameless things were given names, and thus reality was given them as well. For what is named is given meaning and will then be seen as meaningful; a cause of true effect, with consequence inherent in itself.**

As we had discussed in the previous lesson, these things are nameless because they do not exist, and thus we realize their unimportance and valuelessness. The names we give them are part of the same illusion. In this passage, Jesus teaches that once we think the world is real and have given names to its forms – meaning we think we understand their nature – they seem to be causative. For example, people's bodies seem to affect us; toxins and viruses seem to make us ill. They are a cause with true effect, the ego tells us, which is our suffering. Yet the effect is an illusion because its cause is illusion, and the "consequence inherent in itself" is never separate from its cause. Since there is nothing outside us in the world, nothing here can be a cause, and therefore can have no effects—what we experience is thus made up. However, the ego maintains its illusory thought system by convincing us of the opposite: what we feel is due to something outside us. This important passage contrasts causelessness with true Cause:

> What *you* remember never was. It came from causelessness which you confused with cause. It can deserve but laughter, when you learn you have remembered consequences that were causeless and could never be effects. The miracle reminds you of a Cause forever present, perfectly untouched by time and interference. Never changed from what It is. And you are Its Effect, as changeless and as perfect as Itself (T-28.I.9:1-6).

**(4:1) This is the way reality is made by partial vision, purposefully set against the given truth.**

This is the third time we have seen Jesus punning on the word *partial,* with the same double meaning each time: when we see partially we see only in part – a separated fragment, not the whole; *partial* also means biased, having a hidden agenda that governs our perceptions. Jesus has both meanings in mind here. The "partial vision" reflects the first three paragraphs, that we do not see the whole, but only the part. Yet the fact that its purpose is to oppose truth reveals that the ego's perception is not an

impartial witness. It has its point to get across: proving it is right about the separation and God is wrong.

**(4:2-4) Its enemy is wholeness. It conceives of little things and looks upon them. And a lack of space, a sense of unity or vision that sees differently, become the threats which it must overcome, conflict with and deny.**

We find another incisive description of the ego's hidden agenda for all who come into this world: to attack unity and tell Jesus what he believes is wrong, for we know better. *A Course in Miracles* teaches that everything we perceive is an illusion – "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" (T-22.111.6:7) – and we know perception is illusory because we see in fragments and not the whole. We think God's Son is many, with differences that do make a difference. These either become sources of pleasure, in which we indulge our special love needs, or establish that someone has the power to hurt us, in which case they indulge our special hate. It is therefore inevitable that Jesus, as well as his message – then, and now in *A Course in Miracles* – be perceived as a threat. As long as we identify with the body and believe our thoughts and specific experiences are real, we must believe his course is dangerous and we will have no choice but to attack, distort, or deny it. Recall Jesus' words about himself:

> Many thought I was attacking them, even though it was apparent I was not.... What you must recognize is that when you do not share a thought system, you are weakening it. Those who believe in it therefore perceive this as an attack on them. This is because everyone identifies himself with his thought system, and every thought system centers on what you believe you are (T-6.V-B.1:5, 7-9).

**(5:1) Yet does this other vision still remain a natural direction for the mind to channel its perception.**

Even though we still distort or argue with Jesus' teachings, denying his presence in our right minds does not mean it is gone. His vision remains and awaits our decision. When we finally decide to accept his love, it will gently guide our perceptions until we perceive wholeness of purpose, not separated needs.

**(5:2-3) It is hard to teach the mind a thousand alien names, and thousands more. Yet you believe this is what learning means; its one essential goal by which communication is achieved, and concepts can be meaningfully shared.**

This is the same thought Jesus speaks of at the beginning of Chapter 31, where he addressed Helen who was complaining of the Course's difficulty, and how she could not learn it. Jesus' response to her, and to all of us, was simple and clear: "Do not tell me you cannot be taught. Look at the power of your mind and learning skill. You have taught yourself a thousand alien names, and thousands more – a most daunting task when reality is perfect oneness." The mind is thus so extraordinarily powerful that we can fall asleep and dream a dream, believing its world of multiplicity is true. Thus Jesus denies our assertions that we cannot learn his simple course, for we need but say: "I am wrong about everything." The principle *is* simple, and once understood, we would never again take our thoughts quite so seriously, recognizing our ego attacks to be like a little child's temper tantrum that screams: "I want it thus!" (T-18.II.4:1). Once more, Jesus

only to the particular perception of his offering by which the ego judges it (T-14.X.7:1-3, 6).

**(8:5) His true Identity is hidden from you by what you believe he really is.**

Our brother's true Identity is spirit. Yet we believe he is a body, whose purpose is to meet our special needs. Thus our fragmented perception prevents remembering our shared reality. True perception, however, sees through the blocks of guilt to the light that shines in all of us as one:

> The world stands like a block before Christ's face. But true perception looks on it as nothing more than just a fragile veil, so easily dispelled that it can last no longer than an instant. It is seen at last for only what it is. And now it cannot fail to disappear, for now there is an empty place made clean and ready. Where destruction was perceived the face of Christ appears, and in that instant is the world forgot, with time forever ended as the world spins into nothingness from where it came (C-4.4).

**(8:6-7) His body makes response to what you call him, for his mind consents to take the name you give him as his own. And thus his unity is twice denied, for you perceive him separate from you, and he accepts this separate name as his.**

When I see you as an object of my ego's specialness, I not only reinforce my belief in separation, but yours as well. I tell you that you are right in thinking of yourself as an ego, and in the process I reinforce the ego in myself Thus if we both are in our wrong minds, we reinforce each other'

you are not of it. As long as you believe you are a body, you need to relate to the world's symbols. Yet to the extent you allow me to be your teacher, I will help you realize that what you experience is not what it seems. Everything in the dream is a symbol, which has but two sources: the wrong and right minds." This is summarized in the clarification of terms:

> The mind can be right or wrong, depending on the voice to which it listens. *Right- mindedness* listens to the Holy Spirit, forgives the world, and through Christ's vision sees the real world in its place.... *Wrong- mindedness* listens to the ego and makes illusions; perceiving sin and justifying anger, and seeing guilt, disease and death as real (C-1. 5:1-2; 6:1).

**(9:4-5) They do not stand for anything at all, and in your practicing it is this thought that will release you from them. They become but means by which you can communicate in ways the world can understand, but which you recognize is not the unity where true communication can be found.**

Everything here is a shadow of the ego thought, which, being an illusion, stands for nothing. Through this recognition we can be released from the world's symbols. Yet such release must come in a way it can be understood and accepted. Recall the passage from the text where Jesus says: "The value of the Atonement does not lie in the manner in which it is expressed" (T-2.IV.5:1). For the Atonement to be lovingly expressed, it need come in symbols one can understand without fear. This explains why *A Course in Miracles* comes within a dualistic framework. Without its message being expressed in symbols, we would never be able to understand it. Jesus thus exemplifies for us his previously quoted statement from the text about using the dualistic language we can understand, in the separated condition in which we think we exist:

> All this [forgiveness] takes note of time and place as if they were discrete, for while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a Oneness joined as One is meaningless. It is apparent that a mind so split could never be the Teacher of a Oneness which unites all things within Itself. And so What is within this mind, and does unite all things together, must be its Teacher. Yet must It use the language that this mind can understand, in the condition in which it thinks it is. And It must use all learning to transfer illusions to the truth, taking all false ideas of what you are, and leading you beyond them to the truth that *is* beyond them (T-25.I.7:1-5).

The confusion of symbols with source is the root cause of most problems students have with *A Course in Miracles.* Its words, phrases, and language symbolize a love that is not of this world, a love that is the Course's source, and the foundation for understanding its meaning. As teachers of God we need to learn how to use the words and symbols of this world, not because we believe them to be real, but because they are helpful ways of reflecting the non-specific love of Jesus that comes from outside the dream. Many students and teachers of *A Course in Miracles* unfortunately get caught in the symbols and make them reality, not realizing that any dualistic symbol, phrase, or term in this Course is not meant to be taken literally. We will discuss this crucial point again in the next lesson. For now, read Jesus' familiar comments in the manual for teachers on "a new way" of using words:

> Is the teacher of God, then, to avoid the use of words in his teaching? No, indeed! There are many who must be reached through words, being as yet unable to hear in silence. The teacher of God must, however, learn to use words in a new way. Gradually, he learns how to let his words be chosen for him by ceasing to decide for himself what he will say.... The teacher of God accepts the words which are offered him, and gives as he receives. He does not control the direction of his speaking. He listens and hears and speaks.... God's teachers have God's Word behind their symbols. And He Himself gives to the words they use the power of His Spirit, raising them from meaningless symbols to the Call of Heaven itself (M-21.4:1-5, 7-9; 5:8-9).

**(10:1) Thus what you need are intervals each day in which the learning of the world becomes a transitory phase; a prison house from which you go into the sunlight and forget the darkness.**

Jesus refers to the holy instant, wherein we realize there is something wrong with our perceptions. Returning to Jesus in our minds, we are helped to realize there is another way of looking – through the lens of the holy instant. More specifically, Jesus speaks here of the intervals these lessons ask us to reserve each day, so we would spend a little time with him.

**(10:2) Here you understand the Word, the Name which God has given you; the one Identity which all things share; the one acknowledgment of what is true.**

The holy instant – the reflection of God's Oneness – is the locus of God's Word, the Atonement principle that states the separation never happened. It therefore corrects all ego thoughts and perceptions, bringing them to the truth of our unitive state.

**(10:3) And then step back to darkness, not because you think it real, but only to proclaim its unreality in terms which still have meaning in the world that darkness rules.**

Thus we are to be present in this world, like everyone else, as we learned in Lesson 155. We have the same body as others, which essentially operates the same, but now it serves a purpose different from before. We are not urged to go to a monastery or convent, or retreat into the desert, for Jesus wants us to practice *A Course in Miracles* in the world of our relationships. Thus he teaches us his split vision: on the one hand, focused on the world's specifics; on the other, focused on his light-filled presence in the mind. He informs us of the proper purpose of everything here, expressed in terms we can accept and understand. Our behavior appears worldly, for its purpose is to be helpful, yet we do not identify with the world's interpretations. Recall this statement from the manual that reflects this split vision:

> The body's eyes will continue to see differences. But the mind that has let itself be healed will no longer acknowledge them. There will be those who seem to be "sicker" than others, and the body's eyes will report their changed appearances as before. But the healed mind will put them all in one category; they are unreal. This is the gift of its Teacher; the understanding that only two

> categories are meaningful in sorting out the messages the mind receives from what appears to be the outside world. And of these two, but one is real. Just as reality is wholly real, apart from size and shape and time and place – for differences cannot exist within it – so too are illusions without distinctions. The one answer to sickness of any kind is healing. The one answer to all illusions is truth (M-8.6).

**(11:1-2) Use all the little names and symbols which delineate the world of darkness. Yet accept them not as your reality.**

Many people mistakenly believe that if they practice *A Course in Miracles* they should not indulge in certain behaviors such as war, sex, or marriage, or relate to certain groups such as lawyers or doctors, because they are of the ego. True enough, but everything is of the ego! It is *the purpose* we give to what we do that is important, and so Jesus says: "Use all the little names" – not some, all – that are part of your world, but "accept them not as your reality." In other words, we do not identify them as truth, but see them as opportunities to reinforce our learning and help us teach others. Again, it is a question of purpose—what are the symbols for?

> Yet can perception serve another goal. It is not bound to specialness but by your choice. And it is given you to make a different choice, and use perception for a different purpose. And what you see will serve that purpose well, and prove its own reality to you (T-24.VII.11:10-13).

**(11:3-4) The Holy Spirit uses all of them, but He does not forget creation has one Name, one meaning, and a single Source which unifies all things within Itself. Use all the names the world bestows on them but for convenience, yet do not forget they share the Name of God along with you.**

This last part of the lesson focuses on the idea that everything in the world is the same, for all share the ego's or the Holy Spirit's purpose. There are no exceptions, otherwise we would be subscribing to the ego's first law of chaos: *there is a hierarchy of illusion* (T-23.II.2:3). Again, we read about purpose:

> Illusions serve the purpose they were made to serve. And from their purpose they derive whatever meaning that they seem to have. God gave to all illusions that were made another purpose that would justify a miracle whatever form they took (T-26.VII.15:1-3).

**(12:1-2) God has no name. And yet His Name becomes the final lesson that all things are one, and at this lesson does all learning end.**

As we discussed in Lesson 183, *God's Name* is not to be equated with His Name in Heaven. *He has no Name.* Rather, *God's Name* should be regarded as a right-minded symbol that teaches the lesson – the final lesson – of bringing to the Atonement our thoughts of fragmentation: the names – sacred to the ego – of separation, sin, and specialness.

**(12:3-4) All names are unified; all space is filled with truth's reflection. Every**

**gap is closed, and separation healed.**

Even though we all have names in this world, we learn that we remain the same: sharing the single interest of awakening from the ego's dream of hate and death. This inherent unity means our thoughts of judgment and attack are but flimsy attempts to deny the unity we share as Christ, as well as its right-minded reflection of forgiveness.

**(12:5-6) The Name of God is the inheritance He gave to those who chose the teaching of the world to take the place of Heaven. In our practicing, our purpose is to let our minds accept what God has given as the answer to the pitiful inheritance you made as fitting tribute to the Son He loves.**

In stating that God has given an answer, Jesus uses a symbol he does not mean for us to take literally. If God truly gave an answer, He could only have done so within a dualistic framework: *God* gave an *answer* to *His Son* about his *real problem.* Thus we see another example of how Jesus uses the words and symbols of our world, but with a different content. God is not a person, and does not see problems and give answers, yet seeing God this way is a helpful symbol to us little children who believe we have been abandoned by our father's angry response to our sin. Acceptance of this symbolic correction for our illusory problem allows us ultimately to accept the true Answer: God's ever- present Love, our true inheritance as His beloved Son.

**(13:1-2) No one can fail who seeks the meaning of the Name of God. Experience must come to supplement the Word.**

Here again, what is important is the experience; not of the body, but the mind's peace that is unlike anything this world can offer, as Jesus makes clear in the manual for teachers:

> God's peace is ... in every way ... totally unlike all previous experiences. It calls to mind nothing that went before. It brings with it no past associations. It is a new thing entirely (M-20.2:2-5).

**(13:3-5) But first you must accept the Name for all reality, and realize the many names you gave its aspects have distorted what you see, but have not interfered with truth at all. One Name we bring into our practicing. One Name we use to unify our sight.**

Before we can accept the truth of God's one Name and our Name as His one Son, we first must recognize our mistakes, getting in touch with the ego's attempts to indulge our specialness, make differences into reality, and justify judgments. Only then can we turn to the Name of God as the mind's symbol of correction, realizing at last that our mistakes have had no effect. Recall the first principle of miracles, the foundation for this healing process:

> There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal (T-1.I.1:1-4).

**(14:1-3) And though we use a different name for each awareness of an aspect of God's Son, we understand that they have but one Name, which He has given them. It is this Name we use in practicing. And through Its use, all foolish separations disappear which kept us blind.**

Our practicing does not consist of meditating specifically on God's Name, but on realizing the differences we have made real and important, and have used as a weapon against God and our true Self.

**(14:4-5) And we are given strength to see beyond them. Now our sight is blessed with blessings we can give as we receive.**

Our vision has its source in Jesus' presence and love, not the ego's need to separate and prove itself right.

**(15:1-3)** ***Father, our Name is Yours. In It we are united with all living things, and You Who are their one Creator. What we made and call by many different names is but a shadow we have tried to cast across Your Own reality.***

Once again we need to be aware of how we have used perceptual differences as a weapon against others. We do not deny the differences we experience or perceive, but need only deny that they make a difference. This we cannot do without the Help that shifts our purpose from separation to unity.

And now one of the most important lines in *A Course in Miracles:*

**(15:4)** ***And we are glad and thankful we were wrong.***

You can tell you have advanced in *A Course in Miracles* when you are truly grateful for the fact you have been wrong about absolutely everything. Genuine humility – to be discussed again in Lesson 186 – undoes the arrogance of thinking you know what is best for yourself and the world. Thus you *want* to be glad and thankful you are wrong. First, however, be aware of how "unglad" and "unthankful" you are, and how angry it makes you that Jesus, and not you, is right. It is helpful to know how infuriating it is to realize this course is true – every word, just as every word you have thought, uttered, or written has been false. "Do you prefer that you be right or happy?" (T-29.VII.1:9) remains the only question we need answer.

**(15:5-9)** ***All our mistakes we give to You, that we may be absolved from all effects our errors seemed to have. And we accept the truth You give, in place of every one of them. Your Name is our salvation and escape from what we made. Your Name unites us in the oneness which is our inheritance and peace. Amen.***

In summary, calling upon God's Name symbolizes calling upon Jesus for help in undoing our past mistakes in perception. This means we first have to acknowledge them as mistakes, which frees us to claim our rightful Name and inheritance as God's Son.

* See, for example, *The Message of A COURSE IN MIRACLES,* Vol. Two: *Few Choose to Listen,* pp. 88-89, 175-76; tape albums: "Duality as Metaphor in *A Course in Miracles,"* and "True Empathy."

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 185**
**I want the peace of God.**

This lesson contrasts the special and holy relationships, even though those words are not used. The special relationship operates on the ego's principle of *one or the other:* you and I are different, and if I am to have my innocence, it must come at your expense. Thus I want to give as little as possible to get what I want, and so I bargain with you, while you, of course, do the same to me. A holy relationship is the opposite, for it operates on the principle that no one loses and everyone gains; my happiness is not based on your loss, but on the Holy Spirit's correction: "together, or not at all" (T-19.1V-D.12:8). True peace, therefore, comes only from releasing our investment in specialness: someone has to be wrong so I am right; someone has to lose so I can win. The archetype of that principle is that God had to be destroyed so I could exist.

**(1:1-2) To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything.**

We have discussed the importance of distinguishing between words and experience, *form* and *content.* Thus, simply to say "I want the peace of God" is nothing if we do not mean it. We need to be reminded frequently that this is not a course in lip service: we have not succeeded simply because we remembered the lesson every hour or even six times an hour. Saying the words is unimportant, as is repeating God's Name, but the willingness to look at our thought system, realize we have been wrong, and question all values we have held (T-24.in.2:1) – *that* is important. We thus give up the special investment in maintaining our separate self at another's expense.

**(1:3-4) If you could but mean them for just an instant, there would be no further sorrow possible for you in any form; in any place or time. Heaven would be completely given back to full awareness, memory of God entirely restored, the resurrection of all creation fully recognized.**

When in the holy instant we say to Jesus, "I was wrong and you were right, and I am glad and grateful this is so," the ego's thought system disappears, and along with it the sorrow of the world. The reason is obvious: choosing peace over guilt is the choice for Atonement over separation. In the holy instant, when the choice for forgiveness is made, the ego – held in place only by our belief in it – cannot but disappear in the light of resurrection.

**(2:1-2) No one can mean these words and not be healed. He cannot play with dreams, nor think he is himself a dream.**

To be in the holy instant is to be outside the dream. Thus talking about Jesus' bodily life misses the point. The thought of love that *is* Jesus remains in the healed mind, beyond the dream. What appeared as his body but reflected in *form* the *content* of non-specific love.

**(2:3-8) He cannot make a hell and think it real. He wants the peace of God, and it is given him. For that is all he wants, and that is all he will receive. Many have said these words. But few indeed have meant them. You have but to look upon the world you see around you to be sure how very few they are.**

People have been talking about peace for millennia, yet there is no peace here. Individuals talk about peace, yet they are not peaceful. Again, Jesus tells us how very difficult his course is, for it undoes everything we have learned. Simply to say these thoughts without meaning them is not enough, for if we truly meant them, we would bring him all our illusions, looking without judgment at our thought system of separation: specialness, hate, pain, and death. We may thus believe we can make a hell – the ego's world of *one or the other* – but we cannot make it real. That is the principle of the Atonement:

> The separation has not interrupted it [creation]. Creation cannot be interrupted. The separation is merely a faulty formulation of reality, with no effect at all (T-13.VIII.3:3-5).

**(2:9-3:1) The world would be completely changed, should any two agree these words express the only thing they want.**
**Two minds with one intent become so strong that what they will becomes the Will of God.**

These words have also been misunderstood. A holy relationship does not exist between two people. For the world to be changed for my mind to be healed – all that is required is that I not see you and me as separate. As this lesson makes clear, the other person does not even have to know about this – he or she may have died, for example – nor has to agree with what I am doing. The two minds that join are mine that joins with yours, which means I undo the prior belief that says my happiness comes at your expense. You need do nothing but accept the healing that comes the instant I realize you and I share one intent and purpose.

Again, Jesus does not speak of two separate personalities or bodies that join. If that were the case, he would be placing a condition upon our salvation: I could not be saved unless another joined with me, thereby making the body and separation real. However, Jesus' focus is only on undoing my mind's thought system of separation that says another must lose so I can gain. When I choose against that principle by asking Jesus for help, my mind has joined with another's, because God's Son is one. This, then, is the essence of the holy instant: turning away from the belief in separate interests, a decision that reflects Heaven's unity. It is also the essence of healing, as we see in these two passages, one already familiar to us, that state it takes two to establish a sickness, but only one to heal it:

> No mind is sick until another mind agrees that they are separate. And thus it is their joint decision to be sick. If you withhold agreement and accept the part you play in making sickness real, the other mind cannot project its guilt without your aid in letting it perceive itself as separate and apart from you. Thus is the body not perceived as sick by both your minds from separate points of view. Uniting with a brother's mind prevents the cause of sickness and perceived effects. Healing is the effect of minds that join, as sickness comes from minds that separate (T-28.III.2).

> Accepting the Atonement for yourself means not to give support to someone's dream of sickness and of death. It means that you share not his wish

> to separate.... The Holy Spirit is in both your minds, and He is One because there is no gap that separates His Oneness from Itself. The gap between your bodies matters not, for what is joined in Him is always one. No one is sick if someone else accepts his union with him. His desire to be a sick and separated mind can not remain without a witness or a cause. And both are gone if someone wills to be united with him (T-28.IV.1:1-2; 7:1-5).

Healing occurs within the mind of each individual student, thus occurring in the mind of the Sonship. The manual answers the question "How Many Teachers of God Are Needed to Save the World?" with a single word: *one* (M-12.1). We need only one teacher of God to save the world because there *is* only one teacher – God's Son. This does not literally mean Jesus, incidentally, who is but one expression of the Son's healed mind. The one teacher of God who saves the world is *you,* when in the holy instant you choose the Holy Spirit as your teacher. Since the mind of God's Son is one, your healing is the healing of the Sonship.

These ideas cannot be understood from the world's perspective, for they can be known only through the mind's – not the brain's – experience. In the holy instant – when your mind is outside the dream of time and space – the peace and love you feel tell you these words are true. Recall this important passage from the text that explicitly states the impossibility of understanding *A Course in Miracles* (truth) from the perspective of the world (fantasy):

> Think you that you can bring truth to fantasy, and learn what truth means from the perspective of illusions? Truth *has* no meaning in illusion. The frame of reference for its meaning must be itself. When you try to bring truth to illusions, you are trying to make illusions real, and keep them by justifying your belief in them (T-17.I.5:1-4).

Therefore, the Course's words in and of themselves mean nothing. It is where they lead you that is important. When your mind undoes its belief in separate interests, it is restored to its oneness with the Will of God.

**(3:2-5) For minds can only join in truth. In dreams, no two can share the same intent. To each, the hero of the dream is different; the outcome wanted not the same for both. Loser and gainer merely shift about in changing patterns, as the ratio of gain to loss and loss to gain takes on a different aspect or another form.**

Jesus is describing the ego's dream of specialness, where the underlying dynamic is always one body wins and another loses. Typically, therefore, some days you think you win the game of special relationships; some days I think I win. However, in the end we both lose, since only when both partners win can there be true gain.

**(4:1-6) Yet compromise alone a dream can bring. Sometimes it takes the form of union, but only the form. The meaning must escape the dream, for compromising is the goal of dreaming. Minds cannot unite in dreams. They merely bargain. And what bargain can give them the peace of God?**

In specialness the *form* is always emphasized and the *content* dismissed. We

have seen that bargaining is at the core of the ego's relationships: I pay as little as possible and hope to get as much as I can in return. Yet the real meaning of relationship – the loving oneness of God's Son – has nothing to do with specialness at all. Recall this telling description of this bargaining – i.e., sacrificial – aspect of the special relationship:

> Most curious of all is the concept of the self which the ego fosters in the special relationship. This "self" seeks the relationship to make itself complete. Yet when it finds the special relationship in which it thinks it can accomplish this it gives itself away, and tries to "trade" itself for the self of another. This is not union, for there is no increase and no extension. Each partner tries to sacrifice the self he does not want for one he thinks he would prefer.... The "better" self the ego seeks is always one that is more special. And whoever seems to possess a special self is "loved" for what can be taken from him. Where both partners see this special self in each other, the ego sees "a union made in Heaven" (T-16.V.7:1-5; 8:1-3).

The world's peace comes when I get what I want: my anxiety is gone because you have met my need for relief. When you feel the same, we have the ego's "union made in Heaven."

**(4:7-8) Illusions come to take His place. And what He means is lost to sleeping minds intent on compromise, each to his gain and to an- other's loss.**

The meaning of God – His Oneness and all-inclusive Love – is lost when you believe you are separated and need something from others. This does not mean you should feel guilty because of your specialness, but that you do not justify it. Instead, bring the specialness to the One Who can teach you another way of looking at it. This corrects the ego's thought system of sacrifice – *one or the other* – which has replaced the oneness of God's creation:

> In the "dynamics" of attack is sacrifice a key idea. It is the pivot upon which all compromise, all desperate attempts to strike a bargain, and all conflicts achieve a seeming balance. It is the symbol of the central theme that *somebody must lose* (T-2611:1-3).

**(5:1) To mean you want the peace of God is to renounce all dreams.**

That is why to say these words is nothing. Jesus is not saying to renounce *some* dreams, but *all* dreams. If you are truly serious about wanting the peace of God and returning home, you must be just as serious about bringing your illusions to the truth. You need not let them go, but you can at least try not to justify them.

Jesus continues in the same vein:

**(5:2-3) For no one means these words who wants illusions, and who therefore seeks the means which bring illusions. He has looked on them, and found them wanting.**

These are two important sentences. To be sincere about wanting God's peace, you need look at your dreams – with the love of Jesus beside you – and say: "How

foolish to think my specialness could give me what I want!" You would thus cease to seek "the means which bring illusions"; that is, you would no longer foster relationships for the purpose of having your needs met. This shift is the fundamental component of forgiveness: *denying the denial of truth* (T-12.11.1:5), saying no to the ego's negation of God (T-21.VII.12).

**(5:4-6) Now he seeks to go beyond them, recognizing that another dream would offer nothing more than all the others. Dreams are one to him. And he has learned their only difference is one of form, for one will bring the same despair and misery as do the rest.**

You begin to generalize your learning, realizing you will never find what you want in this world: not in a more satisfying relationship, better car, bigger house, or more lucrative job. You will have understood that all you do is trade one dream for another, arrogantly believing you know what is best for yourself. Yet what is not of God cannot be real, and cannot help but bring the despair and misery that inevitably follows separating from our only Joy. Thus are all dreams seen as one illusion, reflecting the one perceptual world made to take the place of Heaven's knowledge. The healed mind sees beyond the world's multitudinous forms – such as sickness – to their single, illusory content, and then beyond it to the truth, as we now remind ourselves:

> The body's eyes will continue to see differences. But the mind that has let itself be healed will no longer acknowledge them. There will be those who seem to be "sicker" than others, and the body's eyes will report their changed appearances as before. But the healed mind will put them all in one category; they are unreal. This is the gift of its Teacher; the understanding that only two categories are meaningful in sorting out the messages the mind receives from what appears to be the outside world. And of these two, but one is real (M-8.6:1-6).

**(6:1) The mind which means that all it wants is peace must join with other minds ...**

Jesus does not say "other bodies" or "other individuals"; he says "other minds." Your mind is seemingly trapped in the physical hell we call the world, as is mine, for we share the same illusion and need, and cannot escape without the other. Thus are our interests one. This does not mean I literally have to do it with you, as we have discussed, but that in my mind I cannot do it without you – for you and I are one. From *The Song of Prayer:*

> Now can you say to everyone who comes to join in prayer with you:
>
> *I cannot go without you, for you are a part of me.*
>
> And so he is in truth (S-1.V.3:8-10).

**(6:1-2) The mind which means that all it wants is peace must join with other minds, for that is how peace is obtained. And when the wish for peace is genuine, the means for finding it is given, in a form each mind that seeks for it in honesty**

**can understand.**

To repeat, in saying that God or the Holy Spirit gives us lessons, sends us people, or has a plan, Jesus speaks metaphorically. The Holy Spirit's plan, as we saw in Lesson 135, is the Atonement: His loving Presence in our minds. If we believe it has specific form, it is because we have taken the abstract Atonement plan and translated it into something we can accept and understand. Thus, again, do not confuse the symbols of *A Course in Miracles* with their source.

The means for finding peace is a relationship. Yet the relationship is not given us – we are already in relationships. When my wish for peace is genuine and I honestly ask Jesus for help, I see the opportunities that were there all along. Before, I saw them as opportunities for murder: either you kill me or I kill you – but one will survive. They now become my chance to learn I cannot do this on my own. My selfish interests bring nothing, but my selfless interests bring everything. Learning from these opportunities is our special function, as we see in the following passage. Its context is learning we prefer the sanity of God – His perfect Oneness – to the ego's insanity of separation. The forms of this madness differ widely, but the sane content of forgiveness remains constant when seen through the eyes of the Holy Spirit:

> Your special function is the special form in which the fact that God is not insane appears most sensible and meaningful to you. The content is the same. The form is suited to your special needs, and to the special time and place in which you think you find yourself, and where you can be free of place and time, and all that you believe must limit you.... Because He is not mad has God appointed One as sane as He to raise a saner world to meet the sight of everyone who chose insanity as his salvation.... This One but points to an alternative, another way of looking at what he has seen before, and recognizes as the world in which he lives, and thought he understood before (T-25. VII.7:1-3; 8:2,4).

**(6:3-4) Whatever form the lesson takes is planned for him in such a way that he can not mistake it, if his asking is sincere. But if he asks without sincerity, there is no form in which the lesson will meet with acceptance and be truly learned.**

Restating this important point, the Holy Spirit does not make plans for us. *We* are the ones who have made the plan – a plan of death. Yet when we realize our mistake, the ego's plan of specialness becomes a learning opportunity for being led home to life in such a way we can not mistake it – if our asking is sincere. Jesus thus appeals to us to be honest with ourselves, to recognize the lack of sincerity and authenticity in our desire for peace. To want peace truly means the willingness to give up war, by seeing how our lives have been nothing but a series of battles – without sincerity, we must perceive ourselves unfairly treated, justifying our attacks in return.

**(7:1-3) Let us today devote our practicing to recognizing that we really mean the words we say. We want the peace of God. This is no idle wish.**

Jesus again addresses the little child within that wants to return home, realizing this world is alien to it. In Lesson 73 we saw Jesus distinguishing between *wish* and *will,* explained more fully in the text. Here is a representative passage that highlights the

strength of our right-minded wishing – joining with Jesus – reflecting the union of our will with God's:

> You believe that doing the opposite of God's Will can be better for you. You also believe that it is possible to *do* the opposite of God's Will.... Yet God wills. He does not wish. Your will is as powerful as His because it *is* His. The ego's wishes do not mean anything, because the ego wishes for the impossible. You can wish for the impossible, but you can will only with God. This is the ego's weakness and your strength.... I said before that you are the Will of God. His Will is not an idle wish, and your identification with His Will is not optional, since it is what you are. Sharing His Will with me is not really open to choice, though it may seem to be (T-7.X.4:3-4, 6-11; 6:4-6).

**(7:4-8:1) These words do not request another dream be given us. They do not ask for compromise, nor try to make another bargain in the hope that there may yet be one that can succeed where all the rest have failed. To mean these words acknowledges illusions are in vain, requesting the eternal in the place of shifting dreams which seem to change in what they offer, but are one in nothingness.**

**Today devote your practice periods to careful searching of your mind, to find the dreams you cherish still.**

These passages tell us why it is important we not bring Jesus into the dream and ask for specific help. When we do, we ask for our dream to be made better, and thus have made it real. As we have seen, it *is* important to ask him for such help as we take our first steps on the journey. However, that level of relationship should not be for the duration; otherwise we would only be asking for a happier dream, not for the release that is Jesus' will for us.

We have not seen the idea of "careful searching of your mind" for many, many lessons, but remember that early in the workbook Jesus emphasized this important aspect of our training – the honesty he teaches us is so essential for our forgiveness. We need to be aware of the subtleties of our investments in specialness – having our specific needs met by the various idols the ego taught us to cherish in its hate-filled world of illusion:

> All idols of this world were made to keep the truth within from being known to you, and to maintain allegiance to the dream that you must find what is outside yourself to be complete and happy. It is vain to worship idols in the hope of peace. God dwells within, and your completion lies in Him. No idol takes His place. Look not to idols. Do not seek outside yourself (T-29.VII.6).

You need not feel guilty about your search for idols, but it is essential you be aware of "the dreams you cherish still," because they will impede your learning.

**(8:2-4) What do you ask for in your heart? Forget the words you use in making your requests. Consider but what you believe will comfort you, and bring you happiness.**

We again see Jesus urging us to move beyond the *form* of our words to their *content, as* in the following passage. Remember, he is asking us to understand that only

his thought system of forgiveness will bring us peace and happiness:

> Strictly speaking, words play no part at all in healing. The motivating factor is prayer, or asking. What you ask for you receive. But this refers to the prayer of the heart, not to the words you use in praying (M-21.1:1-4).

**(8:5) But be you not dismayed by lingering illusions, for their form is not what matters now.**

Jesus asks us not to be upset if we still find illusions of specialness in our minds. Thus he comforts us in the manual: "Do not despair, then, because of limitations" (M-26.4:1), and in the text:

> Concentrate only on this [your willingness], and be not disturbed that shadows surround it. That is why you came. If you could come without them you would not need the holy instant (T-18.IV.2:4-6).

Again, we should not feel guilty because we still hold to our dreams of specialness. "But do not hide them from me," Jesus says to us, "and please do not spiritualize or justify them. Above all, do not believe I am teaching that you are special – this is what *you* want me to teach you. I am teaching you instead to leave this special world behind. Yet I cannot be of help if you keep your illusions from me." Jesus' plea is underscored in this exhortation from the text:

> The necessary condition for the holy instant does not require that you have no thoughts that are not pure. But it does require that you have none that you would keep.... Atonement would not be if there were no need for it. You will not be able to accept perfect communication as long as you would hide it from yourself. For what you would hide *is* hidden from you. In your practice, then, try only to be vigilant against deception, and seek not to protect the thoughts you would keep to yourself. Let the Holy Spirit's purity shine them away, and bring all your awareness to the readiness for purity He offers you (T- 15.IV.9:1-2, 5-9).

**(8:6-7) Let not some dreams be more acceptable, reserving shame and secrecy for others. They are one.**

Jesus is asking us to bring all our dreams to him, especially those of which we are most ashamed. After all, illusions are illusions – feeling guilty about even one illusion makes them all real – and it is the aim of *A Course in Miracles* to teach us this truth.

**(8:8) And being one, one question should be asked of all of them, "Is this what I would have, in place of Heaven and the peace of God?"**

This is the ultimate question Jesus urges us to consider: "Do I want the specialness I have made and continue to justify and indulge? Indeed, why would I, knowing it does not make me happy?" In the text, you will recall, Jesus poses this last of four questions, the one we have yet to answer: *"And do I want to see what I denied* ***because it*** *is the truth?"* (T-21.VII.5:14).

**(9:1-4) This is the choice you make. Be not deceived that it is otherwise. No compromise is possible in this. You choose God's peace, or you have asked for dreams.**

That is the choice, not the myriad possibilities offered by the world. We choose between happiness and misery, the right-minded way of understanding *one or the other.*

**(9:5-6) And dreams will come as you requested them. Yet will God's peace come just as certainly, and to remain with you forever.**

As Lesson 253 tells us, we are the rulers of the universe of the wrong and right minds, and have the power to choose our experience: happiness or misery, peace or pain.

**(9:7) It will not be gone with every twist and turning of the road, to reappear, unrecognized, in forms which shift and change with every step you take.**

Regardless of what goes on in our lives, the peace of God is constant. As an example, you could be in Auschwitz and be peaceful, for God's peace will never change. It is this constancy that establishes its value:

> In Heaven is everything God values, and nothing else.... Everything is clear and bright, and calls forth one response. There is no darkness and there is no contrast. There is no variation. There is no interruption. There is a sense of peace so deep that no dream in this world has ever brought even a dim imagining of what it is (T-13.XI.3:7, 9-13).

**(10:1-3) You want the peace of God. And so do all who seem to seek for dreams. For them as well as for yourself, you ask but this when you make this request with deep sincerity.**

Everyone needs the same thing, and sharing the illusion of separation unites us on the ego level. Likewise, we are one on the right-minded level, sharing the desire to be released from the dream. The meaning of our joining is that – in the mind – we do not see ourselves as separate from anyone else. In the end, of course, we are united in Heaven as Christ.

**(10:4) For thus you reach to what they really want, and join your own intent with what they seek above all things, perhaps unknown to them, but sure to you.**

As previously discussed, joining with another does not mean that person directly joins with you, for the process occurs only in the mind. That is why students of *A Course in Miracles* should never let its metaphysics get too far from them; otherwise, confusion between mind and body, source and symbol is inevitable. Joining means setting aside the mind's belief in separate interests, identifying instead with Jesus' belief that all interests are one. In "Beyond the Body," Jesus describes the condition of peace: joining with something perceived as separate from you. The importance of this unique passage in clarifying that joining occurs in the mind and not the body warrants a more extensive quotation than usual:

> Everyone has experienced what he would call a sense of being transported beyond himself. This feeling of liberation far exceeds the dream of freedom sometimes hoped for in special relationships. It is a sense of actual escape from limitations. If you will consider what this "transportation" really entails, you will realize that it is a sudden unawareness of the body, and a joining of yourself and something else in which your mind enlarges to encompass it. It becomes part of you, as you unite with it. And both become whole, as neither is perceived as separate. What really happens is that you have given up the illusion of a limited awareness, and lost your fear of union. The love that instantly replaces it extends to what has freed you, and unites with it. And while this lasts you are not uncertain of your Identity, and would not limit It. You have escaped from fear to peace, asking no questions of reality, but merely accepting it. You have accepted this instead of the body, and have let yourself be one with something beyond it, simply by not letting your mind be limited by it.
>
> This can occur regardless of the physical distance that seems to be between you and what you join; of your respective positions in space; and of your differences in size and seeming quality. Time is not relevant; it can occur with something past, present or anticipated. The "something" can be anything and anywhere; a sound, a sight, a thought, a memory, and even a general idea without specific reference. Yet in every case, you join it without reservation because you love it, and would be with it. And so you rush to meet it, letting your limits melt away, suspending all the "laws" your body obeys and gently setting them aside (T-18.VI.11-12).

The body's laws – the ego's laws of separation – disappear because we join outside our selves. Regardless of the form joining takes, healing has occurred, for the holy instant knows not of magnitude or importance: there is no order of difficulty in miracles (T-1.I.1:1).

**(10:5-7) You have been weak at times, uncertain in your purpose, and unsure of what you wanted, where to look for it, and where to turn for help in the attempt. Help has been given you. And would you not avail yourself of it by sharing it?**

I cannot have Jesus' love and keep it to myself, for his love must embrace the entire Sonship. To exclude anyone from his love denies his love, and I do so only because, having feared his teaching, I wanted my judgments to keep him away. Thus Jesus reminds us we have faltered: "weak at times, uncertain in [our] purpose."

**(11) No one who truly seeks the peace of God can fail to find it. For he merely asks that he deceive himself no longer by denying to himself what is God's Will. Who can remain unsatisfied who asks for what he has already? Who could be unanswered who requests an answer which is his to give? The peace of God is yours.**

Peace is not something God has to give us; it is something we accept, by choosing not to see someone's interests as separate from our own. This is the happy reflection of God's Will: Oneness with His Son.

**(12:1-3) For you was peace created, given you by its Creator, and established as His Own eternal gift. How can you fail, when you but ask for what He wills for you? And how could your request be limited to you alone?**

If you truly desire the Love of God, you must see everyone as one with you. This cannot be said too often, and Jesus asks us in *The Song of Prayer* to see our special hate partner as our brother, the Son we share:

> Hold out your hand. This enemy has come to bless you. Take his blessing, and feel how your heart is lifted and your fear released. Do not hold on to it, nor onto him. He is a Son of God, along with you. He is no jailer, but a messenger of Christ. Be this to him, that you may see him thus (S-1.111.5:3-9).

**(12:4-5) No gift of God can be unshared. It is this attribute that sets the gifts of God apart from every dream that ever seemed to take the place of truth.**

Every dream in this world has a winner and loser. Recall again that we are not talking about *form.* Jesus does not mean you should love everyone the same way, but that your love should not exclude anyone else – in *content:* your love for one should not be a choice against another. Love – since it is one – can only be shared, if it is to be itself. Thus the Holy Spirit asks us to share His judgment, by asking us to bring our judgments of exclusion to Him:

> Nothing in this world can give this peace, for nothing in this world is wholly shared. Perfect perception can merely show you what is capable of being wholly shared. It can also show you the results of sharing, while you still remember the results of not sharing. The Holy Spirit points quietly to the contrast, knowing that you will finally let Him judge the difference for you, allowing Him to demonstrate which must be true. He has perfect faith in your final judgment, because He knows that He will make it for you (T-13.XI.4:1-5).

**(13:1) No one can lose and everyone must gain whenever any gift of God has been requested and received by anyone.**

This is Jesus' answer to the ego's principle of *one or the other.* In the text, he refers to this as "the rock on which salvation rests" (T-25.VII.12:7): everyone gains and no one loses. Recall this clarion statement of salvation's rock, in the context of our special function of forgiveness:

> Salvation is rebirth of the idea no one can lose for anyone to gain. And everyone *must* gain, if anyone would be a gainer.... This is the rock on which salvation rests, the vantage point from which the Holy Spirit gives meaning and direction to the plan in which your special function has a part. For here your special function is made whole, because it shares the function of the whole (T-25.VII.12:1-2, 7-8).

**(13:2-3) God gives but to unite. To take away is meaningless to Him.**

This is Jesus' answer to the ego's third law of chaos:

> [God] must accept His Son's belief in what he is [a sinner], and hate him for it. See how the fear of God is reinforced by this third principle. Now it becomes impossible to turn to Him for help in misery. For now He has become the "enemy" Who caused it, to Whom appeal is useless.... There can be no release and no escape. Atonement thus becomes a myth, and vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God. From where all this begins, there is no sight of help that can succeed. Only destruction can be the outcome. And God Himself seems to be siding with it, to overcome His Son (T-23.II.6:6-7:3; 8:1-5).

The good news, of course, is God's Love never takes away. It simply loves.

**(13:4-5) And when it is as meaningless to you, you can be sure you share one Will with Him, and He with you. And you will also know you share one Will with all your brothers, whose intent is yours.**

Again, Jesus expresses his course's ultimate goal – awareness of our oneness, as we recall:

> The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him. Heaven is not a place nor a condition. It is merely an awareness of perfect Oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within (T-18.VI.1:4-6).

This awareness returns to us when we choose against the ego's sacrifice and loss.

**(14:1) It is this one intent we seek today, uniting our desires with the need of every heart, the call of every mind, the hope that lies beyond despair, the love attack would hide, the brotherhood that hate has sought to sever, but which still remains as God created it.**

To state it again, we do not join with a brother's body, but with his mind's call that echoes the call in ours. That is the "one intent" that makes a relationship holy—shifting from the belief in separate interests to the acceptance that all interests are the same.

**(14:2) With Help like this beside us, can we fail today as we request the peace of God be given us?**

When you feel upset, it is only because you separated yourself from the Help that is within you. The cause of the upset is thus the fear of the love within your mind, which ends your individual identity. To protect this separated self, you deny pushing Jesus away, attributing your loss of peace to some external agent. Yet you never truly pushed him away, for his love remained with you, as expressed in this lovely passage we quoted earlier. It brings our discussion of the lesson to a gently comforting and hope-filled close:

> How can you who are so holy suffer? All your past except its beauty is

gone, and nothing is left but a blessing. I have saved all your kindnesses and every loving thought you ever had. I have purified them of the errors that hid their light, and kept them for you in their own perfect radiance. They are beyond destruction and beyond guilt. They came from the Holy Spirit within you, and we know what God creates is eternal. You can indeed depart in peace because I have loved you as I loved myself. You go with my blessing and for my blessing. Hold it and share it, that it may always be ours. I place the peace of God in your heart and in your hands, to hold and share. The heart is pure to hold it, and the hands are strong to give it. We cannot lose. My judgment is as strong as the wisdom of God, in Whose Heart and Hands we have our being. His quiet children are His blessed Sons. The Thoughts of God are with you (T-5.IV.8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 186**
**Salvation of the world depends on me.**

**(1) Here is the statement that will one day take all arrogance away from every mind. Here is the thought of true humility, which holds no function as your own but that which has been given you. It offers your acceptance of a part assigned to you, without insisting on another role. It does not judge your proper role. It but acknowledges the Will of God is done on earth as well as Heaven. It unites all wills on earth in Heaven's plan to save the world, restoring it to Heaven's peace.**

I want to point out once again that the language here, as in many other places, should not be taken literally. The Holy Spirit is not a Person Who writes a script, assigns us specific roles, or sends us opportunities. When Jesus speaks in anthropomorphic terms, as he does throughout *A Course in Miracles,* he uses symbols for a reality and process we could not otherwise understand. Thus, in saying we each have been assigned a part, Jesus speaks symbolically about a function that in a sense is automatic. Recall our discussion of the ontological instant, wherein the ancient ego script was written along with the Holy Spirit's correction script. Also set in that one instant was our "proper role" of realizing our mistaken choice, and then correcting it.

By our choosing the Holy Spirit, forgiveness corrects our mistaken identification with the ego. Although this function is shared by everyone and thus is non-specific, the forms in which we express it differ markedly since each of us is in specific relationships. Yet because God's Son is one and the content of forgiveness is the same, each mind's healing heals the Sonship. Thus the world is saved, for the thought of separation that gave rise to it has been undone.

Humility comes when we accept we have been wrong and the Holy Spirit right, while arrogance results from maintaining the opposite, its original statement being I exist, God is gone, and separation is indeed the reality. Once we find ourselves in the dream, aware of the ego's enormity, we arrogantly tell Jesus he made a mistake in thinking we could learn and apply his course. Few fail to fall into this trap. As you become increasingly aware of your ego-identification and the rampant nature of your specialness, it becomes inconceivable that the light of Christ shines in you; perhaps in others, certainly in *A Course in Miracles,* but definitely not in you. Thus we proclaim in false humility that we are right and Jesus is wrong.

I referred earlier to the beginning of Chapter 31, where Jesus addresses our complaints about this course being too difficult for us to learn. He exposes our unconvincing claims in light of what we already have learned, his response being, in effect: "You have learned such an incredibly complicated and insane thought system and believed it to be real. How, then, can you possibly tell me you cannot learn the simplicity of my teaching? After all, I merely teach that what is true is true, and what is false is false." Our arrogance in saying that we are right and Jesus is wrong reflects the ultimate arrogance of saying: "I am *not* as God created me. My new self is reality, while God's true creation of Christ is the illusion."

**(2:1-5) Let us not fight our function. We did not establish it. It is not our idea. The means are given us by which it will be perfectly accomplished. All that we are asked to do is to accept our part in genuine humility, and not deny with self-deceiving arrogance that we are worthy.**

To the ego it is arrogant to think you can learn this course and choose to hear Jesus' guidance. Yet it is truly arrogant to think the ego is so enormous that is there is no way you could set it aside and experience God's Love. You but say this frightened mouse that is your self, roaring at the universe, has the power to make it quake with fear. When you realize this is what you are saying, you could only laugh at the arrogant silliness in thinking the ego's littleness has power over the magnitude of God and His Answer:

> You are altogether irreplaceable in the Mind of God.... To accept yourself as God created you cannot be arrogance, because it is the denial of arrogance. To accept your littleness *is* arrogant, because it means that you believe your evaluation of yourself is truer than God's.
>
> Yet if truth is indivisible, your evaluation of yourself must *be* God's.... He would have you replace the ego's belief in littleness with His Own exalted Answer to what you are, so that you can cease to question it and know it for what it is (T-9.VIII.10:1,8-9; 11:1, 9).

**(2:6-7) What is given us to do, we have the strength to do. Our minds are suited perfectly to take the part assigned to us by One Who knows us well.**

We have the strength to fulfill our function of forgiveness because we have already done so – the Atonement has been accepted and is fully present in our minds. Yet we have not accepted our acceptance. The part the Holy Spirit "assigned to us" is our role in salvation—forgiveness--which restores to awareness our grandeur as God's Son. How could we fail?

> Can your grandeur be arrogant when God Himself witnesses to it? And what can be real that has no witnesses?... Grandiosity is delusional, because it is used to replace your grandeur. Yet what God has created cannot be replaced. God is incomplete without you because His grandeur is total, and you cannot be missing from it (T-9.VIII.9:1-2, 6-8).

**(3:1-2) Today's idea may seem quite sobering, until you see its meaning. All it says is that your Father still remembers you, and offers you the perfect trust He holds in you who are His Son.**

This, then, is the Atonement principle. The statement "Salvation of the world depends on me" seems an impossible challenge to meet until you realize it is only saying: "Salvation of the world depends on you because there is no world." The means of undoing the belief the world is real is present within you; in fact it *is* you. You simply dissociated from it by establishing separation to take the place of Atonement.

**(3:3-5) It does not ask that you be different in any way from what you are. What could humility request but this? And what could arrogance deny but this?**

Arrogance states you are not what you are – the Christ that God created – but the separated ego and its home of littleness. Why choose this, Jesus asks, when through forgiveness you can remember your glory in Heaven, and that of all your brothers?

> Be not content with littleness.... the offering you give yourself. You offer this in place of magnitude, and you accept it.... Call forth in everyone only the remembrance of God, and of the Heaven that is in him. For where you would have your brother be, there will you think you are. Hear not his appeal to hell and littleness, but only his call for Heaven and greatness. Forget not that his call is yours, and answer him with me. God's power is forever on the side of His host, for it protects only the peace in which He dwells. Lay not littleness before His holy altar, which rises above the stars and reaches even to Heaven, because of what is given it (T-15.III.1:1, 3-4; 12).

**(3:6-7) Today we will not shrink from our assignment on the specious grounds that modesty is outraged. It is pride that would deny the Call for God Himself.**

Jesus reverses the ego's definition of *humility* and *arrogance,* teaching us their true meaning. Recall this wonderful line, and then the call to fulfill our function:

> Be humble before Him, and yet great *in* Him. And value no plan of the ego before the plan of God. For you leave empty your place in His plan, which you must fill if you would join with me, by your decision to join in any plan but His. I call you to fulfill your holy part in the plan that He has given to the world for its release from littleness (T-15.IV.3:1-4).

**(4:1) All false humility we lay aside today, that we may listen to God's Voice reveal to us what He would have us do.**

"False humility" is the belief the ego is so gargantuan it is impossible to let it go, for there is nothing *but* thoughts of specialness running through our minds. As we have seen, Jesus does not ask us *not* to have these thoughts. He simply asks us not to take them seriously, and to step back with him and watch the ego in action:

> The necessary condition for the holy instant does not require that you have no thoughts that are not pure. But it does require that you have none that you would keep.... In your practice, then, try only to be vigilant against deception, and seek not to protect the thoughts you would keep to yourself. Let the Holy Spirit's purity shine them away, and bring all your awareness to the readiness for purity He offers you (T-15.IV.9:1-2, 8-9).

This we can do, expressing the little willingness that marks the beginning of our fulfilling the function of forgiveness given us by the Holy Spirit.

**(4:2-5) We do not doubt our adequacy for the function He will offer us. We will be certain only that He knows our strengths, our wisdom and our holiness. And if He deems us worthy, so we are. It is but arrogance that judges otherwise.**

Become aware of your ego thoughts, whatever their form, realizing each one spits in Jesus' face, saying: "You do not know what you are talking about!" Recognize how you want to maintain you know better than he, and soon it will be difficult to take seriously the ego's insane thought system of hate. Your honesty about this hidden

motivation will undo the arrogance of which Jesus speaks.

**(5:1) There is one way, and only one, to be released from the imprisonment your plan to prove the false is true has brought to you.**

There are many places throughout the Course where Jesus reduces his message and its application to one simple statement, as he does here. Thus, all we need do is the following:

**(5:2) Accept the plan you did not make instead.**

You need to say you are wrong and Jesus is right. That is all: "Accept the plan you did not make instead." The plan you did make established sin as real, denied its presence in the mind, and miscreated a world replete with figures on whom rested the projection of your sin: "I am the innocent victim, and you are responsible for my pain." This ego strategy is undone when you go to Jesus and admit your mistake. You do not deny your fear, nor say you are ready to accept his plan. You simply say you were wrong, which begins the process of accepting his plan instead of yours. This necessitates the forgiveness that looks without judgment at what the ego has chosen. Being a process, forgiveness does not demand your perfect healing.

**(5:3-5) Judge not your value to it. If God's Voice assures you that salvation needs your part, and that the whole depends on you, be sure that it is so. The arrogant must cling to words, afraid to go beyond them to experience which might affront their stance.**

We again see reference to the theme of *form – content* – the words being the *form,* the *content* the experience. The arrogant cling to the words "salvation of the world depends on me," and ask, with the ego: "How can the world's salvation depend on me, a miserable sinner filled with thoughts of specialness and darkness?" However, the humble are led beyond the words to their meaning of Atonement: I am not separate from God, but a part of His Holiness and Love. Thus the ego's illusory thoughts and identification have no power. His Voice tells me this, for which I can only be grateful:

> And now sit down in true humility, and realize that all God would have you do you can do. Do not be arrogant and say you cannot learn His Own curriculum. His Word says otherwise. His Will be done. It cannot be otherwise. And be you thankful it is so (M-14. 5:10-15).

**(5:6-6:1) Yet are the humble free to hear the Voice which tells them what they are, and what to do.**
**Arrogance makes an image of yourself that is not real.**

Arrogance points to God at the beginning and says: the Self You created is not enough. I want my own. This new self – elsewhere called a travesty and parody of God's creation (T-24.VII.1:11; 10:9) – begins with an image of individuality and quickly evolves into an image of sin, guilt and fear, culminating finally in the projected image of a body. Moreover, everyone else's body becomes responsible for mine – the innocent and victimized self.

**(6:2) It is this image which quails and retreats in terror, as the Voice for God assures you that you have the strength, the wisdom and the holiness to go beyond all images.**

Strength, wisdom, and holiness are not found in the wrong mind, nor, certainly, in the body – the individual self I believe I am. They abide in the right mind, the Holy Spirit's home, and Jesus refers here to the theme to which he repeatedly returns: the terror of looking at our self-created image and saying this is not who we are. I thus retreat, fearful of losing my identity, and since "frightened people can be vicious" (T-3.I.4:2), I strike back by projecting wildly and indiscriminately, finding fault with everyone, including myself. I look in the mirror and recoil in horror from what I see. Yet this image but defends against the underlying thought I am as God created me, not the miserable self I made instead. Jesus helps me recognize this fear of losing my individuality, the self I defined as who I am: an abused child with a terrible problem, deformed body, or life-threatening disease; one who cannot sustain a relationship, is abandoned and victimized; and on and on. I need to see how I cling to this image, which I defend to the death against any thought system or teacher telling me I am wrong.

**(6:3-5) You are not weak, as is the image of yourself. You are not ignorant and helpless. Sin can not tarnish the truth in you, and misery can come not near the holy home of God.**

This, then, is the Atonement principle: nothing happened, for separation had no effect on reality. In the following passage, written during the Christmas season, Jesus reminds us of our glory as God's Son, which we have sacrificed for the ego's shabby and little substitutes for love:

> Is it a sacrifice to leave littleness behind, and wander not in vain? It is not sacrifice to wake to glory. But it is sacrifice to accept anything less than glory. Learn that you must be worthy of the Prince of Peace, born in you in honor of Him Whose host you are. You know not what love means because you have sought to purchase it with little gifts, thus valuing it too little to understand its magnitude. Love is not little and love dwells in you, for you are host to Him. Before the greatness that lives in you, your poor appreciation of yourself and all the little offerings you give slip into nothingness (T-15.III.8).

**(7:1-2) All this the Voice for God relates to you. And as He speaks, the image trembles and seeks to attack the threat it does not know, sensing its basis crumble.**

We can see the importance of this idea, for Jesus states it in two successive paragraphs. In the presence of the Holy Spirit, the part of the mind that identifies with the ego becomes terrified, and seeks to attack what threatens it. As we have seen, some prominent ways of attacking *A Course in Miracles* – the Holy Spirit's Word – include distorting its teaching by claiming it says something other than what it says, attacking its messenger or any aspect of its thought system, or by putting it down all together. Sometimes people attack it by trying to prove it is not true; and even if it is, it cannot be true for them. Thus, one of the best ways of attacking Jesus and his course is to

demonstrate it does not work: “I have sincerely studied the Course for twenty-five years and ask the Holy Spirit for help all the time – and nothing has changed. I remain my miserable self.” Such students need to look at their identification with that self, and the need to prove *A Course in Miracles* wrong in order to protect this identity.

**(7:3) Let it go.**

In other words, let the shabby self-image go. Stop trying to pretend you are right when part of you clearly knows you are not, and, moreover, is glad and grateful to be wrong.

**(7:4) Salvation of the world depends on you, and not upon this little pile of dust.**

Recall how Jesus uses the word *dust* in *A Course in Miracles* as a symbol of the body, taken from the biblical statement where God says: “For dust thou art; and unto dust thou shalt return” (Genesis: 3:19). God creates Adam out of the dust by breathing life into it, and then proceeding to punish the first sinner by creating death. Yet Jesus teaches we are not this body; not “this little pile of dust” – we are the glorious Self of light.

**(7:5-6) What can it tell the holy Son of God? Why need he be concerned with it at all?**

The fact of the matter is we are greatly concerned with the body, which is proof of our strong identification with this false self-image. Jesus simply says not to defend, justify, or spiritualize the body; not to make it or its activities holy, for in and of itself the body is nothing – a “little pile of dust.” It is the *thought* behind the body that is holy or unholy.

**(8:1-2) And so we find our peace. We will accept the function God has given us, for all illusions rest upon the weird belief that we can make another for ourselves.**

The ego’s thought system rests on the fundamental belief we have accomplished the impossible, and now exist as separated individuals outside God. Peace will come when we recognize we are wrong and Jesus is right. How often does he plead with us to accept his help, as in this continuation of the Christmas passage quoted above? Herein is found our peace:

> Holy child of God, when will you learn that only holiness can content you and give you peace? ... I would but teach you what is yours, so that together we can replace the shabby littleness that binds the host of God to guilt and weakness with the glad awareness of the glory that is in him. My birth in you is your awakening to grandeur. Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness, where holiness abides in perfect peace (T-15.III. 9:1, 4-6).

Thus do we choose against the ego’s unholy function of specialness, electing forgiveness as the only function we want. It alone will bring us home.

**(8:3-5) Our self-made roles are shifting, and they seem to change from mourner to ecstatic bliss of love and loving. We can laugh or weep, and greet the day with welcome or with tears. Our very being seems to change as we experience a thousand shifts in mood, and our emotions raise us high indeed, or dash us to the ground in hopelessness.**

In this and the three paragraphs to follow, Jesus shows us how the self we made cannot be of God, Whose Self – Christ – is immutable: perfect and eternal. Our self-concept changes continuously. We wake in the morning refreshed, we wake tired; we wake up angry, we wake up happy. As we go through the day, our moods go up and down like a roller coaster. As our body grows older and becomes increasingly infirm, our self-concept changes: the twenty-year old who can conquer the world changes to the seventy- and eighty-year old who seems capable of almost nothing. Is there anyone who cannot identify with this experience? This, then, is Jesus' demonstration that our changing self cannot be reality. It is arrogant, he says, to think this is who we are; that our mood changes, for example, are real and important, and not caused by us. However, we are learning that all these are but different aspects of a dream we have dreamed, but then forgot we were the dreamer. Recall this passage about the changeless nature of reality versus the principle of change inherent in the ego's self:

> Appearances deceive, but can be changed. Reality is changeless. It does not deceive at all, and if you fail to see beyond appearances you *are* deceived. For everything you see will change, and yet you thought it real before, and now you think it real again. Reality is thus reduced to form, and capable of change. Reality is changeless. It is this that makes it real, and keeps it separate from all appearances. It must transcend all form to be itself. It cannot change (T-30.VIII.1).

Jesus' argument on our behalf continues:

**(9) Is this the Son of God? Could He create such instability and call it Son? He Who is changeless shares His attributes with His creation. All the images His Son appears to make have no effect on what he is. They blow across his mind like wind-swept leaves that form a patterning an instant, break apart to group again, and scamper off. Or like mirages seen above a desert, rising from the dust.**

In "The Substitute Reality" Jesus reflects the same idea, using the image of feathers:

> Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, have no substance. They fuse and merge and separate in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all… Let them all go, dancing in the wind, dipping and turning till they disappear from sight, far, far outside of you (T-18.I.7:6-7; 8:1).

Note the consistency of themes at play in the three volumes, weaving in and out of the symphonic tapestry that is *A Course in Miracles.*

**Lesson 186**

**(10:1) These unsubstantial images will go, and leave your mind unclouded and serene, when you accept the function given you.**

When I say to Jesus "I am wrong and you are right; I have a function to forgive, which you help me to fulfill," my miserable self-concept weakens. It will not disappear at once, but diminishes in strength as I step back and see the purpose it had served. Behind the clouds of guilt shines the light of peace, to which Jesus gently leads me:

> So should it be with the dark clouds of guilt, no more impenetrable and no more substantial. You will not bruise yourself against them in traveling through. Let your Guide teach you their unsubstantial nature as He leads you past them, for beneath them is a world of light whereon they cast no shadows. Their shadows lie upon the world beyond them, still further from the light. Yet from them to the light their shadows cannot fall (T-18.IX.8).

**(10:2-3) The images you make give rise to but conflicting goals, impermanent and vague, uncertain and ambiguous. Who could be constant in his efforts, or direct his energies and concentrated drive toward goals like these?**

Our goals continually change – moment to moment, day to day, month to month, year to year. When we were young we had certain goals, and they changed as we grew older. We have specific goals during the day as we practice this course we love and believe in, until a certain someone "walks across a crowded room." Everyone understands the special relationship, and easily, if not unhappily relates to it. However, Jesus does want us to feel guilty, but only to recognize what is going on. The lure of specialness is powerful indeed, and its spell broken only by the dedication to bring our "conflicting goals" to Jesus' constancy of purpose.

**(10:4-5) The functions which the world esteems are so uncertain that they change ten times an hour at their most secure. What hope of gain can rest on goals like this?**

We find this humorous because of its obvious truth. There are many places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus pokes fun at the body's activities. For example, note this passage where he describes the body's "serial adventures" (T-27.VIII. 3:1), and good-naturedly points out the value we place on paper strips and stacks of coins:

> ... the body seeks in many ways to prove it is autonomous and real. It puts things on itself that it has bought with little metal discs or paper strips the world proclaims as valuable and real. It works to get them, doing senseless things, and tosses them away for senseless things it does not need and does not even want. It hires other bodies, that they may protect it and collect more senseless things that it can call its own (T-27.VIII.2:1-4).

We smile as we read passages like these because we realize their truth. It sounds absurd in Jesus' description, but is not so silly when we realize how invested we are in these shifting goals, centered on meaningless symbols that keep us from returning to reality.

Now the other side:

**(11) In lovely contrast, certain as the sun's return each morning to dispel the night, your truly given function stands out clear and holy unambiguous. There is no doubt of its validity. It comes from One Who knows no error, and His Voice is certain of Its messages. They will not change nor be in conflict. All of them point to one goal, and one you can attain. Your plan may be impossible, but God's can never fail because He is its Source.**

Our function here reflects the perfect unity of our Self. While everything changes in the world, our purpose need not. Indeed, if we remain with Jesus, the purpose could never change. Thus, our reality as God's Son is the changelessness of Christ, reflected here by learning to accept one purpose for everything. This single-mindedness unifies each day of our lives, which becomes a classroom in which we have one teacher who teaches us his one lesson of forgiveness. The curriculum is specific – our special relationships – but the lesson remains the same. Forgiveness – *A Course in Miracles'* teaching message – is Jesus' means for unifying our disparate dreams of fear into the single, happy dream that leads us "beyond all dreams unto the peace of everlasting life":

> Such is the core of fear in every dream that has been kept apart from use by Him Who sees a different function for a dream. When dreams are shared they lose the function of attack and separation, even though it was for this that every dream was made. Yet nothing in the world of dreams remains without the hope of change and betterment, for here is not where changelessness is found. Let us be glad indeed that this is so, and seek not the eternal in this world. Forgiving dreams are means to step aside from dreaming of a world outside yourself. And leading finally beyond all dreams, unto the peace of everlasting life (T-29.V.8).

**(12:1) Do as God's Voice directs.**

As we read through these next two paragraphs, it may appear that Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit does specific things. However, as we have discussed, all He directs us to do is forgive. This injunction, therefore, is not about doing specific things, but about one specific purpose for the things we do. Thus the Holy Spirit guides us to look through His eyes and see the single purpose that unites our world, to which His gentle teaching is directed.

**(12:1-2) Do as God's Voice directs. And if It asks a thing of you which seems impossible, remember Who it is that asks, and who would make denial.**

Forgiveness – our part in God's plan – may seem impossible, but that is the ego's evaluation. We are not asked to forgive by ourselves, but urged to ask for help in forgiving, which means asking for help to look differently at the special relationship. *A Course in Miracles* emphasizes we do not forgive on our own, and that is precisely what it means to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit. He simplifies what we have made to be so difficult, as this passage about the holy instant explains:

> The preparation for the holy instant belongs to Him Who gives it. Release yourself to Him Whose function is release. Do not assume His function for Him. Give Him but what He asks, that you may learn how little is your part, and how

great is His.

It is this that makes the holy instant so easy and so natural. You make it difficult, because you insist there must be more that you need do. You find it difficult to accept the idea that you need give so little, to receive so much. And it is very hard for you to realize it is not personally insulting that your contribution and the Holy Spirit's are so extremely disproportionate (T-18.1V.6:5-7:4).

**(12:3-4) Then consider this; which is more likely to be right? The Voice that speaks for the Creator of all things, Who knows all things exactly as they are, or a distorted image of yourself, confused, bewildered, inconsistent and unsure of everything?**

We arrogantly think we know better than our Teacher. Recall this quotation from the text: "Resign now as your own teacher.... for you were badly taught" (T- 12.V.8 :3 ; T-28.I.7 :1). We have to accept we have been badly taught – *by ourselves* – but have another Teacher Who will teach us differently. Calling on Him requires only the admission we were wrong; our shabby self can never substitute for the glorious Self God created.

**(12:5-13:1) Let not its voice direct you. Hear instead a certain Voice, which tells you of a function given you by your Creator Who remembers you, and urges that you now remember Him.**
**His gentle Voice is calling from the known to the unknowing.**

The Holy Spirit is the abstract memory of Love in our minds, which we experience within the unknowing dream. His Voice is constant, but experience will come in whatever form we can accept without fear, a form determined by the right mind.

**(13:2-5) He would comfort you, although He knows no sorrow. He would make a restitution, though He is complete; a gift to you, although He knows that you have everything already. He has Thoughts which answer every need His Son perceives, although He sees them not. For Love must give, and what is given in His Name takes on the form most useful in a world of form.**

Once again Jesus speaks to us in anthropomorphic terms, portraying the Holy Spirit as a Person Who communicates in terms of our needs. This is because we cannot comprehend a process occurring in a trans-human mind, beyond the body's brain; a process that began with the decision maker choosing the ego. We now realize our mistake and decide for the Holy Spirit's Love. His abstract principle of the Atonement is translated by the mind into a form we can accept and understand, even though the language of *A Course in Miracles* makes it sound as if the Holy Spirit were actively involved in the process. Love merely shines; it can do nothing else. Helen's poem "The Comforter" expresses the comfort of God's Voice, which gently reminds us of the home we had denied, and never thought to know again:

> Step back, My child, and let Him lead the way
> Whom I have sent to you. He holds your hand
> And speaks to you of Me. His memory
> Holds in your mind My Name. His peace surrounds

**Lesson 186**

My child with all the love a Father feels
For what He cherishes above all else
In earth and Heaven. Whom I sent to you
Has shared My Heart and brings My Word with Him
To solace and to comfort all the world
That has forgot My Name. Homeless are they
Who would abide alone, apart from Me.
Yet would I call them home. My Voice I send
To sing in soundless places. Hear from Me
The song a Father sings to you, His child;
A melody from far beyond the world.
Step back and listen, for He comes to bless
And tell you that you are not comfortless.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 71)

**(14:1-2) These are the forms which never can deceive, because they come from Formlessness Itself. Forgiveness is an earthly form of love, which as it is in Heaven has no form.**

We have seen before that forgiveness is illusory; an expression in form of God's Love. Though not love, which has no place in illusion, forgiveness does not contradict it. It merely undoes the barriers to our remembering Heaven, returning us to the Formlessness that created us as Itself. Let us re-read this passage from *The Song of Prayer,* expressing forgiveness' role in leading us to the formless Love of God:

> Forgiveness is the call to sanity, for who but the insane would look on sin when he could see the face of Christ instead? This is the choice you make; the simplest one, and yet the only one that you *can* make. God calls on you to save His Son from death by offering Christ's Love to him. This is your need, and God holds out this gift to you. As He would give, so must you give as well. And thus is prayer restored to formlessness, beyond all limits into timelessness, with nothing of the past to hold it back from re-uniting with the ceaseless song that all creation sings unto its God (S-2.I.8).

**(14:3-4) Yet what is needed here is given here as it is needed. In this form you can fulfill your function even here, although what love will mean to you when formlessness has been restored to you is greater still.**

Thus we learn how to practice forgiveness in specific forms. These are the relationships that begin with our nuclear families, and continue throughout our lives. This is reminiscent of Lesson 184, where Jesus discussed our living in a world of symbols, while knowing the symbols are not true. Yet our function of forgiveness pales before the formless light of love that awaits our return from the world of form. Recall this passage from the manual:

> The path becomes quite different as one goes along. Nor could all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene and the enormous opening vistas that rise to meet one as the journey continues, be foretold from the outset. Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds, fall short

indeed of all that wait when the pathway ceases and time ends with it (M-19.2:5-7).

**(14:5-6) Salvation of the world depends on you who can forgive. Such is your function here.**

We are not asked to remember our function in Heaven. We are asked simply to choose a function on earth that will restore us to Heaven. Forgiveness is thus the means, and love the End.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 187**
**I bless the world because I bless myself.**

The theme of *form-content* returns, in the context of giving and receiving, another prominent theme in the Course. To the Holy Spirit, giving and receiving are the same because there is no one outside the mind, and therefore I give only to myself: "... you can interact but with yourself" (T-31. V.15:5). To the ego, what I give I no longer have, for it now belongs to someone else – the meaning of sacrifice, as this lesson teaches. If I am to receive from you, I have to give in return; and my hope is to give less and receive more. This is but another form of the ego principle of *one or the other.* If I give, you have what I do not; you won and I lost. However, if I am cleverer than you, I will give something I judge to be of little worth, and will deceive you into giving me something I value more. It may look as if you won, but in my mind it is the opposite – a triumph that is the heart of the special relationship. The lesson thus reinforces the idea that giving and receiving are the same, and sacrifice is impossible.

**(1:1-5) No one can give unless he has. In fact, giving is proof of having. We have made this point before. What seems to make it hard to credit is not this. No one can doubt that you must first possess what you would give.**

All would agree you cannot give something unless you possess it. I cannot give you a thousand dollars, for example, unless I first have it; I cannot love unless I feel loved. People in miserable relationships often justify them by saying they cannot possibly extend love to another when they are so lacking it themselves; they cannot be selfless while their needs are not met.

**(1:6-7) It is the second phase on which the world and true perception differ. Having had and given, then the world asserts that you have lost what you possessed.**

This reflects the fourth law of chaos, which we have cited many times before:

> The ego values only what it takes. This leads to the *fourth* law of chaos, which ... must be true. This seeming law is the belief you have what you have taken. By this, another's loss becomes your gain (T-23.II.9:1-4).

Again, this dynamic of sacrifice – one wins, another loses – is central to all specialness.

Jesus now explains that all we can give is an idea, a principle frequently discussed in the text:

**(1:8-2:5) The truth maintains that giving will increase what you possess.**
**How is this possible? For it is sure that if you give a finite thing away, your body's eyes will not perceive it yours. Yet we have learned that things but represent the thoughts that make them. And you do not lack for proof that when you give ideas away, you strengthen them in your own mind. Perhaps the form in which the thought seems to appear is changed in giving.**

Clearly, if I have two thousand dollars and give you half, you have what I now lack. The *form* – my financial situation – has definitely changed: "If you share a physical

possession, you do divide its ownership" (T-5.I.1:10). If, however, I do this with Jesus, the love in me has not changed at all. That is why it is essential for students of the Course to remember its metaphysics that teach there is no world outside the mind, and so it cannot be the body that gives – puppets cannot give anything. My mind gives only a thought system, which is the meaning of Jesus' comments in the manual when discussing teaching and learning:

> ... teaching is a constant process; it goes on every moment of the day, and continues into sleeping thoughts as well.
>
> To teach is to demonstrate. There are only two thought systems, and you demonstrate that you believe one or the other is true all the time. From your demonstration others learn, and so do you. The question is not whether you will teach, for in that there is no choice. The purpose of the course might be said to provide you with a means of choosing what you want to teach on the basis of what you want to learn. You cannot give to someone else, but only to yourself, and this you learn through teaching (M-in.1:6-2:6).

You teach what you believe you are: your wrong-minded self, reinforcing the belief you are right and God is wrong; or your right-minded self, reinforcing the corrected belief that you were wrong and God is right. Thus you teach and give one of two ideas: guilt-fear or forgiveness-love. A thought system is strengthened by teaching it, the meaning of giving it away. By teaching what I believe, I reinforce its truth within myself. For example, if I extend love to you, I strengthen its presence in myself, as Jesus explains:

> If you share an idea, however, you do not lessen it. All of it is still yours although all of it has been given away. Further, if the one to whom you give it accepts it as his, he reinforces it in your mind and thus increases it. If you can accept the concept that the world is one of ideas, the whole belief in the false association the ego makes between giving and losing is gone.
>
> Let us start our process of reawakening with just a few simple concepts:
>
> *Thoughts increase by being given away.*
> *The more who believe in them the stronger they become.*
> *Everything is an idea.*
> *How, then, can giving and losing be associated?* (T-5 .I.1:11-2:5)

The principle works the other way as well: If I believe guilt is my reality, giving it away – through projection and attack – makes me guiltier. "Defenses *do* what they would defend" (T-17.IV.7:1) – if my mind is fearful and I erect defenses as protection, I grow more fearful as these defenses remind me of their purpose of protecting me from fear. Moreover, the more I attack, the more fearful I become of counter-attack, as the following passage describes:

> If you identify with the ego, you must perceive yourself as guilty. Whenever you respond to your ego you will experience guilt, and you will fear punishment. The ego is quite literally a fearful thought.... Listening to the ego's voice means that you believe it is possible to attack God, and that a part of Him has been torn away by you. Fear of retaliation from without follows, because the severity of the

guilt is so acute that it must be projected (T-5.V.3:5-7, 10-11).

It goes without saying that this has nothing to do with the body, but only our thoughts: love or fear, forgiveness or guilt.

**(2:6-8) Yet it must return to him who gives. Nor can the form it takes be less acceptable. It must be more.**

Thus the demands of the special relationship: if I give you a thousand dollars, there is a hidden thought that says I want something back that equals more than what I have given – e.g., your undying gratitude so you will always be there for me. I buy your love for a thousand dollars, and in exchange I receive a lifetime of servitude. The forms of such bargaining differ widely, but their underlying content is constant: wanting more and giving less.

**(3:1-2) Ideas must first belong to you, before you give them. If you are to save the world, you first accept salvation for yourself.**

We saw in Lesson 154 – "I am among the ministers of God" – that the messages we give to others we first give to ourselves. How can I teach this course to others if I do not live it, for I would be teaching empty words – the *form* – and the love that is *A Course in Miracles* – the *content* – would be lost. Therefore, if you truly want to teach Jesus' course, you must exemplify it. Again, our teaching does not come through words, but through the thought system with which we identify. Thus Jesus tells us, his students:

> Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you (T-11.VI.7:3-4).

**(3:3-5) But you will not believe that this is done until you see the miracles it brings to everyone you look upon. Herein is the idea of giving clarified and given meaning. Now you can perceive that by your giving is your store increased.**

One of the ways we know which teacher we have chosen is to notice the results. Thus, for example, what teaches me I have accepted the truth of *A Course in Miracles* is realizing how different I am with others. I see their change when they are around me: no longer hiding in fear when they see me, genuinely glad to be in my presence, or where they once were happy to be with me because I stroked their specialness, their joy now comes because I reflect love. Perhaps you remember this passage from "The Test for Truth":

> You have one test, as sure as God, by which to recognize if what you learned is true. If you are wholly free of fear of any kind, and if all those who meet or even think of you share in your perfect peace, then you can be sure that you have learned God's lesson, and not your own (T-14.XI.5:1-2).

Again, you see the miracles of peace brought by your change of mind, and that demonstrates what you are teaching is true.

**(4:1) Protect all things you value by the act of giving them away, and you**

**are sure that you will never lose them.**

Jesus teaches us not to withhold love, nor to hide behind our selfishness. Rather, we learn how to be selfless, as he says, in effect: "If you want to learn this course, you must practice it by protecting all that you value." In truth, we value only the peace that comes in undoing the guilt of specialness, which we protect by extending it to others. It would actually be better to say we let it extend through us, for by releasing all investment in selfish interests, we let the Holy Spirit's peace flow naturally through our healed minds. Thus we are sure we will never lose it.

**(4:2-6) What you thought you did not have is thereby proven yours. Yet value not its form. For this will change and grow unrecognizable in time, however much you try to keep it safe. No form endures. It is the thought behind the form of things that lives unchangeable.**

We could not ask for a clearer statement of our *form-content* theme, so central to *A Course in Miracles.* Special relationships value the form: our bodies, or those of others. Recall this explicit discussion of the ego's use of *the forms* of specialness to triumph over the *content* of love:

> Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is content, and not form of any kind. The special relationship is a ritual of form, aimed at raising the form to take the place of God at the expense of content. There is no meaning in the form, and there will never be. The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning (T-16.V.12:1-4).

Worldly things change, but the underlying thought of Jesus' love is changeless. Having that realization as a constant goal unifies our daily experiences. This passage also helps us understand why God could not have created this world, nor have anything to do with it – all the world's forms are of the ego, of which God knows nothing.

**(5:1-2) Give gladly. You can only gain thereby.**

We give gladly and gratefully because we realize that by changing our perception of others, being more loving and peaceful, we become more loving and peaceful to ourselves. By being kinder to others, we learn of Jesus' kindness; if we are not kind, it is because we are trying to prove how unkind he is to us, justifying our own lack of kindness. Jesus asks us to practice his teaching and not block his forgiving love. If we do, we will not have learned from him, for love must be extended, if it is love. Our job is to be aware of how we block this natural extension; how we do not withhold judgment, but do withhold love. Thus, we need to be aware we are not really giving to others, but only to ourselves – by cursing others, we curse ourselves; by blessing others, we bless ourselves.

**(5:3-5) The thought remains, and grows in strength as it is reinforced by giving. Thoughts extend as they are shared, for they can not be lost. There is no**

**giver and receiver in the sense the world conceives of them.**

The world does not conceive of giving and receiving as the same, and the Course's view of giving is what makes it so difficult to comprehend. In its non-dualistic system, there is no giver (God) and receiver (Christ) in Heaven – They are One, as are giving, love and creation:

> Your creations belong in you, as you belong in God. You are part of God, as your sons are part of His Sons. To create is to love. Love extends outward simply because it cannot be contained. Being limitless it does not stop.... To will with God is to create like Him. God does not limit His gifts in any way. You *are* His gifts, and so your gifts must be like His. Your gifts to the Kingdom must be like His gifts to you (T-71.3:1-5; 4:5-8).

Our giving here reflects Heaven's inherent unity – the basis of creation and source of right-minded giving in the illusion.

**(5:6-7) There is a giver who retains; another who will give as well. And both must gain in this exchange, for each will have the thought in form most helpful to him.**

This sharing of one interest – "both must gain in this exchange" – reflects Heaven's unity.

**(5:8) What he seems to lose is always something he will value less than what will surely be returned to him.**

What will surely be returned to us is love. Because we have valued the ego's gifts more than God's, we need to distinguish between the valueless and the valuable. The former can always be given away, for it is nothing; but the latter – the gift of God's Love – can never be lost. It is who we are, along with the Sonship. It is beyond earthly value and, being of God, has no cost. Note well this discussion from the text, for it helps us understand why we experience ourselves as having so little – it is our value!

> Never forget, then, that you set the value on what you receive, and price it by what you give. To believe that it is possible to get much for little is to believe that you can bargain with God.... By giving you receive. But to receive is to accept, not to get.... What you give is ... the value you put on what you have, being the exact measure of the value you put upon it. And this, in turn, is the measure of how much you want it (T-9.II.11:1-2, 4-5,8-9).

**(6:1-3) Never forget you give but to yourself. Who understands what giving means must laugh at the idea of sacrifice. Nor can he fail to recognize the many forms which sacrifice may take.**

Jesus tells us it is laughable to think someone must lose for another to gain. We saw in Lessons 163 and 167 the many forms taken by the thought of death: sadness, misery, unhappiness, etc. Now Jesus will talk to us about the different forms of sacrifice:

**Lesson 187**

**(6:4) He laughs as well at pain and loss, at sickness and at grief, at poverty, starvation, and at death.**

If taken out of context, this sentence seems absolutely dreadful. Critics of *A Course in Miracles* could easily use statements like this to prove that it teaches you to be insensitive to others, to laugh at their misery, misfortune, and suffering. Yet this is the exact opposite of Jesus' teaching. When you join with him outside the dream, you realize everyone gains and no one loses; not *one or the other,* as the ego claims. Having accepted that truth, you return to the ego's dream of sacrifice with the gentle laughter mentioned in the next sentence, which says that none of this is true. If you believe you are a figure in the dream, laughter such as this would inevitably be derisive, and not meant kindly at all. It is gentle only when you stand with Jesus outside the dream, realizing that since God's Son has never crucified, he has never been crucified. That is why, from Jesus' point of view, the crucifixion was a non-event – nothing happened, and so he smiled gently at the world's silliness in thinking something did. To the Christian Churches, rooted in the ego thought system of sacrifice, it was imperative to believe the crucifixion was a real event with serious meaning, justified by being seen as part of God's plan.

Once again, laughter is truly gentle only when you join with Jesus and accept the truth that giving and receiving are the same. The aforementioned fourth law of chaos – the ego's version of giving and receiving – is a lie. Near the end of Chapter 27, Jesus makes the same and familiar point when he says that if you do not look at the senseless cause - the belief in sin – what happens in this world does indeed seem tragic:

> It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause. Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest.
>
> In gentle laughter does the Holy Spirit perceive the cause, and looks not to effects. How else could He correct your error, who have overlooked the cause entirely? He bids you bring each terrible effect to Him that you may look together on its foolish cause and laugh with Him a while. *You* judge effects, but *He* has judged their cause. And by His judgment are effects removed. Perhaps you come in tears. But hear Him say, "My brother, holy Son of God, behold your idle dream, in which this could occur." And you will leave the holy instant with your laughter and your brother's joined with His (T-27.VIII.8:4-9:8).

In that same section, Jesus says "it is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity ..." (T-27.VIII.6:5). It is hardly funny when you are *in medias res;* not a joke when you forget the "trifling cause"—the causeless cause of sin. Accepting sin's reality, we believe bodies are real, as is people's suffering. Jesus is not asking us – as long as we think we are here – to turn our back on pain. However, he is saying: "Ask my help to look at it differently, and I will teach you that the thought system on which the world's suffering rests – the sacrificial thought of *one or the other* – is faulty. And then we shall laugh together:"

> Yet you can show him [your brother] that his suffering is purposeless and wholly without cause.... And laughter will replace your sighs, because God's Son remembered that he *is* God's Son (T-27.II.8:6,9).

In that gentle laughter we are healed together of the seriousness of sin:

**(6:5) He recognizes sacrifice remains the one idea that stands behind them all, and in his gentle laughter are they healed.**

How are the suffering healed? When my mind is healed, God's Son is healed. The importance of this cannot be overstated – when I am healed, I realize God has only one Son: the separation never happened, and everything here but a bad dream. Thus is the world saved from its illusions, as we now see:

**(7:1) Illusion recognized must disappear.**

This statement reflects the theme of looking. When I recognize the ego's illusory nature, it disappears. By *not* looking at the source of the world – the mind's separation thought – I forget it came from nothing. I thus believe what goes on here is both real and important, as is my being here; indeed, *I* am real and important. Once caught in the ego's web, I will inevitably misinterpret the Course's statements to mean my function is to save the ignorant world by teaching *A Course in Miracles,* donating money to various causes, or helping people in distress. Yet when I step away from my ego with Jesus, I recognize the illusory nature of the dream. The world then disappears in my experience, as we see in this parallel statement from the text:

> Hallucinations disappear when they are recognized for what they are. This is the healing and the remedy. Believe them not and they are gone. And all you need to do is recognize that *you* did this. Once you accept this simple fact and take unto yourself the power you gave them, you are released from them (T-20.VIII. 8:1-5).

**(7:2) Accept not suffering, and you remove the thought of suffering.**

Jesus tells us in "The Greater Joining" not to join with our brother's dream of sickness, but to stand with him outside it. If we are not taken in by the dream, we will not identify with our brother's suffering. We will know he thinks he suffers, and will certainly not minimize his experience, but also will not identify with it. To do so is the false empathy that reflects the separating confusion of form and content. True empathy realizes that the strength of Christ – our true content – is in my brother *and* me, for we are one. Here is an excerpt from that section, highlighting our learning to identify with the mind—the *content* of the dreamer – and not the body – the *form* of the dream figure; the former unites us; the latter keeps us separate:

> Refuse to be a part of fearful dreams whatever form they take, for you will lose identity in them. You find yourself by not accepting them as causing you, and giving you effects. You stand apart from them, but not apart from him who dreams them. Thus you separate the dreamer from the dream, and join in one, but let the other go. The dream is but illusion in the mind. And with the mind you would unite, but never with the dream (T-28.IV.2:2-7).

**(7:3-5) Your blessing lies on everyone who suffers, when you choose to see**

**all suffering as what it is. The thought of sacrifice gives rise to all the forms that suffering appears to take. And sacrifice is an idea so mad that sanity dismisses it at once.**

Sacrifice is insane because it is an inherent part of the ego's thought system of insanity that says I have separated from God, for which a price must be paid – hopefully by someone else. Look at these representative statements from the text:

> Sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God. It arises solely from fear, and frightened people can be vicious. Sacrificing in any way is a violation of my injunction that you should be merciful even as your Father in Heaven is merciful (T-3.1.4:1-3).

> You cannot sacrifice yourself alone. For sacrifice is total. If it could occur at all it would entail the whole of God's creation, and the Father with the sacrifice of His beloved Son.
>
> In your release from sacrifice is his made manifest, and shown to be his own. But every pain you suffer do you see as proof that he is guilty of attack (T-27.I.1:7-2:2).

**(8:1-3) Never believe that you can sacrifice. There is no place for sacrifice in what has any value. If the thought occurs, its very presence proves that error has arisen and correction must be made.**

We should not believe in the *one or the other* principle, nor that special relationships will give us what we want. However, this does not mean we should feel guilty for having such thoughts. Jesus tells us that when specialness rears its ugly head, we should turn to him and he will show us its causeless source, thus undoing this insane presence in our minds.

**(8:4-5) Your blessing will correct it. Given first to you, it now is yours to give as well.**

If I become upset because you are in pain, I am as sick as you, and will be of no help to you or others. I thus need turn to the Holy Spirit to look at the situation differently, learning that my mind's decision is the cause of my false perception. From the holy instant wherein my mind is healed, I return to the body's darkness with a blessing. I may behave exactly as an ego-based person, but my inner peace will have transcended the experience of suffering – demonstrating that the light within has not been extinguished by another's dream of darkness:

> Accepting the Atonement for yourself means not to give support to someone's dream of sickness and of death. It means that you share not his wish to separate, and let him turn illusions on himself. Nor do you wish that they be turned, instead, on you. Thus have they no effects. And you are free of dreams of pain because you let him be (T-28.IV.1:1-5).

Thus love cannot extend through me unless I first accept it within myself – my only responsibility remains to accept the Atonement for myself:

**(8:6) No form of sacrifice and suffering can long endure before the face of one who has forgiven and has blessed himself.**

When I release my thought system, I will no longer perceive sacrifice and suffering. My eyes may see them in you, but I will not have made this insanity real for myself.

**(9:1) The lilies that your brother offers you are laid upon your altar, with the ones you offer him beside them.**

Lilies are *A Course in Miracles'* symbol for forgiveness, which teach that giving and receiving are the same: you and I are both giver and receiver. This makes no sense to bodies, in which such gifts are impossible, but the healed mind of the one Son understands:

> Gifts are not made through bodies, if they be truly given and received.... Only the mind can value, and only the mind decides on what it would receive and give.... Forget not that it is your savior to whom the gift is offered. Offer him thorns and *you* are crucified. Offer him lilies and it is yourself you free (T-20.II.2:1,3; 3:7-9).
>
> You have the vision that enables you to see the body not. And as you look upon your brother, you will see an altar to your Father, holy as Heaven, glowing with radiant purity and sparkling with the shining lilies you laid upon it (T-20.VIII.4:3-4).

**(9:2-3) Who could fear to look upon such lovely holiness? The great illusion of the fear of God diminishes to nothingness before the purity that you will look on here.**

When I do not see you as separate from me, I deny the ego's thought system that rests on the belief I am separate from God, and therefore am sinful, guilty, and deserving of punishment. When I realize you and I share the same interests – givers and receivers of love – the thought system of separation disappears and I no longer fear losing my special identity. Realizing the concept of an individual self is irrelevant, the bargaining necessitated by our conflicting interests disappears, replaced by the joyful acknowledgment we are the same.

**(9:4-5) Be not afraid to look. The blessedness you will behold will take away all thought of form, and leave instead the perfect gift forever there, forever to increase, forever yours, forever given away.**

The ego tells us we should never look, because our eyes will light on sin and God will strike us blind (T-21.IV.2:3). Yet Jesus tells us not to be afraid, because we will see only light. Nowhere is this image more clearly presented than in "The Two Pictures." We have examined the passages dealing with the ego's picture of death, but not the Holy Spirit's picture of light, the one Jesus urges us now to look upon in the holy instant. Here are his words from the section:

> The holy instant is a miniature of eternity.... as the whole thought system of the ego lies in its gifts, so the whole of Heaven lies in this instant, borrowed from eternity and set in time for you.
>
> Two gifts are offered you.... Each is a picture of all that you can have, seen very differently.... Look at the pictures.... The picture of Heaven and eternity grows more convincing as you look at it.... The picture of light, in clear-cut and unmistakable contrast, is transformed into what lies beyond the picture. As you look on this, you realize that it is not a picture, but a reality.... The frame fades gently and God rises to your remembrance, offering you the whole of creation in exchange for your little picture, wholly without value and entirely deprived of meaning (T-17.IV.11:4,8-12:1,3,8; 14:3; 15:1-2, 5).

**(10) Now are we one in thought, for fear has gone. And here, before the altar to one God, one Father, one Creator and one Thought, we stand together as one Son of God. Not separate from Him Who is our Source; not distant from one brother who is part of our one Self Whose innocence has joined us all as one, we stand in blessedness, and give as we receive. The Name of God is on our lips. And as we look within, we see the purity of Heaven shine in our reflection of our Father's Love.**

Note the repetition of the word *one* to emphasize our oneness with each other and with God. This is our reality. If within the dream we share one interest with one person, the principle of *one or the other* disappears, leaving but one Son of God, united at last with the One. The Epilogue to the clarification of terms movingly expresses this joyous end to our journey:

> Let us wait here in silence, and kneel down an instant in our gratitude to Him Who called to us and helped us hear His Call. And then let us arise and go in faith along the way to Him. Now we are sure we do not walk alone. For God is here, and with Him all our brothers (C-ep.4:1-4).

Thus is the reflection of God's Love seen in a holy relationship: the special relationship transformed through asking Jesus' help in changing its purpose. No longer centered on the belief in sacrifice, the relationship reflects our shared interest of returning home.

**(11:1) Now are we blessed, and now we bless the world.**

Now that our minds have accepted the Holy Spirit's blessing instead of the ego's curse, it extends through us, for what is within the mind flows outward. If it is guilt, we project and attack; if it is forgiveness, it extends, embracing the world in Jesus' unified perception of peace.

**(11:2-3) What we would have looked upon we would extend, for we would see it everywhere. We would behold it shining with the grace of God in everyone.**

We behold the shining of God's grace, regardless of the form. In fact, we cannot help but see it everywhere. I could be looking at the most vicious killers, and still know

the light of Christ shines in their minds behind the insanity of their thought system. That is the meaning of "I trust my brothers, who are one with me," as we saw in Lesson 181. To be sure, I do not trust their egos, but the Holy Spirit's Love that awaits their right-minded choice.

**(11:4) We would not have it be withheld from anything we look upon.**

I would feel peace whether I look on a bright or cloudy day, a garden of beautiful flowers or one of weeds, someone I think is a saint or one I have judged to be a heinous sinner. I am tempted to quote the following and familiar lines in each and every lesson; they are that important:

> To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not (T-31.VIII.8:4-5).

In the all-inclusiveness of Jesus' vision we find the undoing of the ego's thought system of separation and specialness.

**(11:5-6) And to ensure this holy sight is ours, we offer it to everything we see. For where we see it, it will be returned to us in form of lilies. we can lay upon our altar, making it a home for Innocence Itself, Who dwells in us and offers us His Holiness as ours.**

Try to see how often you seek to withhold that blessing. Observe how you offer it to the "good guys" and not the "bad guys," to the "good things" you are doing and not the "bad things." If the blessing of Jesus' love is to be yours, it must extend to embrace *all* your work, relationships, and bodily activities. The more you exemplify this vision in your life, the more it strengthens love's presence in your mind. Thus if you are truly serious about remembering your Identity as God's Son, you must share His oneness with everyone you see. Thus is the mind's altar strewn with lilies of forgiveness, which gently undo the thorns of sin that concealed the innocence of God's most holy Son.

We close this beautiful lesson with one of Helen's Easter poems, "The Place of Resurrection." Jesus' message that ends the ego's dream of crucifixion is presented here in the context of the Easter themes of forgiveness and resurrection – the awakening from the nightmare world of punishment and death:

> There is an altar that I seek. For there
> And only there can certain peace be found.
> The light of holiness shines white upon
> Its cooling stillness wreathed with lilies round.
> Here is the place where those who thought that death
> Was lord of life must come, to learn of One
> Who seemed to die, that life is lord of death.
> Beside the lilies sickly dreams are gone,
> And stillness spreads a blanket over all
> Who seemed to know no rest and find no peace,
> To bring the quiet and the dreamless sleep

**Lesson 187**

In which their dreaming will forever cease.
Here we awake, my brothers and myself,
For all of us come here to find the way
To waken from the dream of sin the world
Was made to represent. We come to lay
Our guilt beside the altar and step back,
Putting illusions and mistakes aside,
And learn before an empty tomb to see,
He is not dead Who here was crucified.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 99)

Lesson 188

The peace of God is shining in me now.

Our next two lessons, Lessons 188 and 189, share the symbolism of light. The first one, incidentally, was one of Bill Thetford's favorites. The lesson begins with Jesus' plea from Lesson 131: "Why wait for Heaven?" (W-pI.131.6:1) Why, he asks, delay the peace—the happy effects of forgiveness – choosing to believe instead you have to suffer to receive your eventual reward? This is the traditional Christian view that your crucified life will be rewarded in the hereafter. Its message of salvation's delay – central to the ego thought system of guilt and punishment – is corrected by Jesus in "The Immediacy of Salvation":

> The one remaining problem that you have is that you see an interval between the time when you forgive, and will receive the benefits of trusting in your brother.... The interval you think lies in between the giving and receiving of the gift seems to be one in which you sacrifice and suffer loss. You see eventual salvation, not immediate results. Salvation is immediate.... For a miracle is now. It stands already here, in present grace, within the only interval of time that sin and fear have overlooked, but which is all there is to time.
>
> The working out of all correction takes no time at Be not content with future happiness. It has no meaning, and is not your just reward. For you have cause for freedom now. .. . The Holy Spirit's purpose now is yours. Should not His happiness be yours as well? (T-26.VIII.1:1; 2:6-3:1; 5:8-6:1; 9:1-3, 9-10).

And so the lesson begins:

(1:1-4) Why wait for Heaven? Those who seek the light are merely covering their eyes. The light is in them now. Enlightenment is but a rec ognition, not a change at all.

When we believe we have to seek the light we simply cover our eyes, a way of saying we deny Christ's vision and choose to see through the ego's eyes instead of His. We do not have to seek for the light, but need only look within, where the light is. Remembering the truth that is already present in us, we realize that nothing has changed, and so nothing need change. Thus Jesus exhorts us, again, not to exceed the little willingness asked of us by the Holy Spirit.

> It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more. Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask, or you will add the ego to Him and confuse the two (T-18.IV.1:5-6).

Jesus does not want us to try hard, because struggling against the ego gives it a reality it lacks. Recognition of the light is not a change, for there is nothing to change from!

(1:5) Light is not of the world, yet you who bear the light in you are alien here as well.

This is a familiar theme by now. We are truly alien here, for the world of bodies is not our home – the self we think we are is not our Self.

(1:6-8) The light came with you from your native home, and stayed with you because it is your own. It is the only thing you bring with you from Him Who is your Source. It shines in you be cause it lights your home, and leads you back t o where it came from and you are at home.

Light symbolizes the Holy Spirit's Presence, the memory of God's Love we took from our native home. It is the only thing of God we have within the dream, and therefore links us back to Him. Recall this inspiring passage about the light of the real world, reminding us of Heaven's light, wherein dwells God and His one Son:

> There is a light that this world cannot give. Yet you can give it, as it was given you. And as you give it, it shines forth to call you from the world and follow it. For this light will attract you as nothing in this world can do. And you will lay aside the world and find another. This other world is bright with love which you have given it. And here will everything remind you of your Father and His holy Son. Light is unlimited, and spreads across this world in quiet joy. All those you brought with you will shine on you, and you will shine on them in gratitude because they brought you here. Your light will join with theirs in power so compelling, that it will draw the others out of darkness as you look on them (T-13.VI.11).

Thus does the light lead us home, and all our brothers with us.

(2:1-3) This light can not be lost. Why wait to find it in the future, or believe it has been lost al ready, o r was never there? It can so easily be looked upon that arguments which prove it is not there become ridiculous.

We are told that losing something does not mean it is gone; it simply means we forgot where it is (T-3.VI.9). The light is in our minds, yet we have wandered away in the great effort to forget our Identity, erecting massive defenses to prevent our returning to the home we never left. Yet it is easy to remember It, as we only dreamed we were banished from the light, which patiently awaits our awakening from the self-imposed dream of exile:

> Everything that was created is therefore perfectly safe, because the laws of God protect it by His Love. Any part of your mind that does not know this has banished itself from knowledge, because it has not met its conditions. Who could have done this but you? Recognize this gladly, for in this recognition lies the realization that your banishment is not of God, and therefore does not exist (T-10.I.1:4-7).

(2:4) Who can deny the presence of what he be holds in him?

Since it is already in you, why would you want to deny it? Setting aside for the moment the hallucinations of psychosis, could you?

(2:5) It is not difficult to look within, for there all vision starts.

The ego of course asserts the opposite, saying it is most difficult to look within, for if you do, as we have seen many times, "your eyes will light on sin and God will strike you blind" (T-21.IV.2:3), a euphemistic way of saying God will destroy you because of your sin. However, in truth it cannot be difficult to look within since you are already within. Your self resides in the mind, unchanged by your belief it is in the body. Following the path of the miracle, our attention is brought from the world back to the mind, from the dream to the dreamer.

This familiar statement succinctly sums up the miracle's role:

> Nothing at all has happened but that you have put yourself to sleep, and dreamed a dream in which you were an alien to yourself, and but a part of someone else's dream. The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is (T-28.II.4:1-2).

(2:6-8) There is no sight, be it of dreams or from a truer Source, that is not but the shadow of the seen through inward vision. There perception starts, and there it ends. It has no s ource but this.

This also is a familiar theme, to reappear in the next lesson. We first look within and decide the teacher to follow, and then look through its eyes. If we have chosen the ego, we see through eyes of separation and attack; if Jesus, we see through eyes of unity and forgiveness. Perception thus begins and ends in our minds. Since ideas leave not their source, we never see or hear through the body's eyes and ears, but experience in form what our minds have first made real.

We repeatedly see Jesus' emphasis on our need to recognize that both problem and solution are in our minds. In fact, there is nothing but our minds, where perception starts – light or darkness – and where it ends – love or fear. Everything is projection. Understanding this characteristic of the split mind is the vision of Christ to which Jesus leads us, and which we know well:

> Vision depends on light. You cannot see in darkness. Yet in darkness, in the private world of sleep, you see in dreams although your eyes are closed. And it is here that what you see you made. But let the darkness go and all you made you will no longer see, for sight of it depends upon denying vision. Yet from denying vision it does not follow you cannot see.... Do not seek vision through your eyes, for you made your way of seeing that you might see in darkness, and in this you are deceived. Beyond this darkness, and yet still within you, is the vision of Christ, Who looks on all in light. Your "vision" comes from fear, as His from love (T-13.V.8:1-6; 9:1-3).

(3:1-4) The peace of God is shining in you now, and from your heart extends around the world. It pauses to caress each living thing, and leaves a blessing with it that remains forever and for ever. What it gives must be eternal. It removes all thoughts of the ephemeral and valueless.

Since the world is a projection of the idea of separation and has not left its source in the Son's mind, choosing Jesus' light instead of the ego's darkness allows us to perceive the Sonship in that light as well. As we know, vision has nothing to do with physically seeing light, such as auras, but with extending the light of truth when we

accept the Holy Spirit as our Teacher. At that point, any thought of "the ephemeral and valueless" disappears because its unimportance has been realized. With the ego gone, inner peace naturally extends throughout the Sonship, blessing all minds with its reflection of God's eternal peace. The Introduction to "The Obstacles to Peace" describes this extension:

> As peace extends from deep inside yourself to embrace all the Sonship and give it rest, it will encounter many obstacles.... Yet peace will gently cover them, extending past completely unencumbered.... The peace He [the Holy Spirit] lay, deep within you and your brother, will quietly extend to every aspect of your life, surrounding you and your brother with glowing happiness and the calm awareness of complete protection. And you will carry its message of love and safety and freedom to everyone who draws nigh unto your temple, where healing waits for him.... And you will draw him in and give him rest, as it was given you (T-19.IV.1:1, 4, 6-7, 9).

(3:5-6) It brings renewal to all tired hearts, and lights all vision as it passes by. All of its gifts are given everyone, and ever yone unites in giv ing thanks to you who give, and you who have received.

This is yet another expression of the theme of giving and receiving. Deciding to rest in the peace of God, we allow its healing light to extend to the Sonship as one, embracing it in comfort and love, as we read in these beautiful words from the text:

> And in the sunlight you will stand in quiet, in innocence and wholly unafraid. And from you will the rest you found extend, so that your peace can never fall away and leave you homeless. Those who offer peace to everyone have found a home in Heaven the world cannot destroy. For it is large enough to hold the world within its peace.
>
> In you is all of Heaven. Every leaf that falls is given life in you. Each bird that ever sang will sing again in you. And every flower that ever bloomed has saved its perfume and its loveliness for you. What aim can supersede the Will of God and of His Son, that Heaven be restored to him for whom it was created as his only home? Nothing before and nothing after it. No other place; no other state nor time. Nothing beyond nor nearer. Nothing else. In any form. This can you bring to all the world, and all the thoughts that entered it and were mistaken for a little while. How better could your own mistakes be brought to truth than by your willingness to bring the light of Heaven with you, as you walk beyond the world of darkness into light? (T-25.IV.4:7-5:12)

(4:1) The shining in your mind reminds the world of what it has forgotten, and the world re stores the me mory to you as well.

Our function as a teacher of God is to have our peace remind others they can make the same choice we have. As we do so, we reinforce our own decision. Thus we join with Jesus and our forgiven brother, becoming our elder brother's light that shines in the darkness of the world as a beacon of sanity and love:

> In your relationship you have joined with me in bringing Heaven to the Son

> of God, who hid in darkness. You have been willing to bring the darkness to light, and this willingness has given strength to everyone who would remain in darkness. Those who would see will see. And they will join with me in carrying their light into the darkness, when the darkness in them is offered to the light, and is removed forever (T-18.III.6:1-4).

(4:2-4) From you salvation radiates with gifts beyond all measure, given and returned. To you, the giver of the gift, does God Himself give thanks. And in His blessing does the light in you shine brighter, adding to the gifts you have to offer to the world.

Another statement that giving and receiving are one. When we give love, we receive the love we have given, which not only reminds others of a different choice, but strengthens that choice in ourselves. Who could object to reading again the wonderful words that close "The Light in the Dream," and which echo the light-filled message of this lesson?

> Not one light in Heaven but goes with you. Not one Ray that shines forever in the Mind of God but shines on you. Heaven is joined with you in your advance to Heaven. When such great lights have joined with you to give the little spark of your desire the power of God Himself, can you remain in darkness? You and your brother are coming home together, after a long and meaningless journey that you undertook apart, and that led nowhere. You have found your brother, and you will light each other's way. And from this light will the Great Rays extend back into darkness and forward unto God, to shine away the past and so make room for His eternal Presence, in which everything is radiant in the light (T-18.III.8).

(5:1-2) The peace of God can never be con tained. Who recognizes it within himself must give it.

The principal characteristic of mind is that whatever is within it must project or extend. If guilt, we see it in everyone else, thus attacking them; if Jesus' peace, we love what we see in others. We recognize our choice by observing our attitudes toward the world, which helps define its purpose of reflecting the mind's decision: thoughts of specialness and judgment are the projections of the ego's thought system; the recognition that we share one interest, for everyone – without exception – is part of Christ.

(5:3-7) And the means for giving it are in his un derstanding. He forgives because he recognized the truth in him. The peace of God is shining in you now, and in all living things. In quietness is it acknowledged universally. For what your inward vision looks upon is your perception of the universe.

What we have made real within, we perceive without. Having chosen the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, peace is the happy and inevitable result in which the dream of past and future disappear in the holy instant – first into happy dreams of forgiveness, and then into nothingness as God's Love shines away the dream of separation:

> The peace of God passeth your understanding only in the past. Yet here it

> is, and you can understand it now. God loves His Son forever, and His Son returns his Father's Love forever.... You will first dream of peace, and then awaken to it. Your first exchange of what you made for what you want is the exchange of nightmares for the happy dreams of love. In these lie your true perceptions, for the Holy Spirit corrects the world of dreams, where all perception is (T-13.VII. 8:1-3; 9:1-3).

(6:1-2) Sit quietly and close your eyes. The light within you is sufficient.

It is not necessary to see through physical eyes – that is not even seeing, as we have learned. Real vision occurs through inner quietness.

(6:3-6) It alone has power to give the gift of sight to you. Exclude the outer world, and let your thoughts fly to the peace within. They know the way. For honest thoughts, untainted by the dream of worldly things outside yourself, become the holy messengers of God Himself.

Jesus speaks of our right-minded thoughts of forgiveness, shared interests, and peace, which reflect the Thought of God. Jesus thus appeals to our decision-making mind to reverse its mistaken choice and turn away from the ego and the world that arose from it, and return to the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle – the vision of Christ – to share with those who cannot see:

> He [the Holy Spirit] is a Thought of God, and God has given Him to you because He has no Thoughts He does not share. His message speaks of timelessness in time, and that is why Christ's vision looks on everything with love.... Every miracle you offer to the Son of God is but the true perception of one aspect of the whole.... Everyone seen without the past thus brings you nearer to the end of time by bringing healed and healing sight into the darkness, and enabling the world to see. For light must come into the darkened world to make Christ's vision possible even here. Help Him to give His gift of light to all who think they wander in the darkness, and let Him gather them into His quiet sight that makes them one (T-13.VIII.4:3-4; 5:2, 4-6).

(7) These thoughts you think with Him. They recognize their home. And they point surely to their Source, Where God the Father and the Son are one. God's peace is shining on them, but they must remain with you as well, for they were born within your mind, as yours was born in God's. They lead you back to peace, from where they came but to remind you how you must return.

Our honest thoughts reflect the Mind in which God and Christ are One. Jesus describes again the process of the decision maker reversing its mistaken choice, choosing now to identify with the right- minded thoughts that lead back to God.

(8:1) They heed your Father's Voice when you refuse to listen.

When these right-minded thoughts of forgiveness – always present in our minds – threaten our individuality, we reject them by refusing to listen.

This does not mean that someone may not physically or verbally attack you. It simply means that what will be attacked is the dream figure, not the dreamer. How, then, could *you* be hurt? Analogously, you dream at night that you are injured, and then awaken and feel perfectly fine. While you slept you felt pain, insult, and outrage, but outside the dream, you – the decision-making mind – realize the suffering figure was not *you,* and thus, safe within God's sane love, you experience no pain, danger, or fear of any kind:

> It is God's Will that nothing touch His Son except Himself, and nothing else comes nigh unto him. He is as safe from pain as God Himself, Who watches over him in everything. The world about him shines with love because God placed him in Himself where pain is not, and love surrounds him without end or flaw. Disturbance of his peace can never be. In perfect sanity he looks on love, for it is all about him and within him. He must deny the world of pain the instant he perceives the arms of love around him. And from this point of safety he looks quietly about him and recognizes that the world is one with him (T-13.VII.7).

**(2:3-6) It offers you a warm and gentle home in which to stay a while. It blesses you throughout the day, and watches through the night as silent guardian of your holy sleep. It sees salvation in you, and protects the light in you, in which it sees its own. It offers you its flowers and its snow, in thankfulness for your benevolence.**

This world – the real world – is the home that precedes our awakening in Heaven, to which the Holy Spirit gently and quietly leads us:

> Whenever you are tempted to undertake a useless journey that would lead away from light, remember what you really want, and say:
>
> *The Holy Spirit leads me unto Christ, and where else would I go? What need have I but to awake in Him?*
>
> Then follow Him in joy, with faith that He will lead you safely through all dangers to your peace of mind this world may set before you.... and be not restless, for you undertake a quiet journey to the peace of God, where He would have you be in quietness (T-13.VII.14:1-15:1, 3).

**(3:1-4) This is the world the Love of God reveals. It is so different from the world you see through darkened eyes of malice and of fear, that one belies the other. Only one can be perceived at all. The other one is wholly meaningless.**

When I am in an ego state, the real world is an illusion and means nothing. In the

clarity. It is invisible to you because you are looking at something else. Yet it is no more up to you to decide what is visible and what is invisible, than it is up to you to decide what reality is. What can be seen is what the Holy Spirit sees.... What is not real cannot be seen and has no value.... You have made invisible the only truth that this world holds.... By making nothing real to you, you have seen it. *But it is not there.* And Christ is invisible to you because of what you have made visible to yourself ... The real world was given you by God in loving exchange for the world you made and the world you see. Only take it from the hand of Christ and look upon it. Its reality will make everything else invisible, for beholding it is total perception. And as you look upon it you will remember that it was always so. Nothingness will become invisible, for you will at last have seen truly (T-12.VIII.3:1-5; 6:2, 7, 9-11; 8:1-5).

**(3:5) A world in which forgiveness shines on everything, and peace offers its gentle light to everyone, is inconceivable to those who see a world of hatred rising from attack, poised to avenge, to murder and destroy.**

Such a fearful perception is inevitable once you believe you are separated. The guilt from the belief you destroyed Heaven must be projected out, resulting in your seeing sin and murder all around you, but not in yourself. This gives rise to the face of innocence, as we now read:

> You can be neither blamed for what you are, nor can you change the things it makes you do. Your brother then is symbol of your sins to you who are but silently, and yet with ceaseless urgency, condemning still your brother for the hated thing you are (T-31.V.6:7-8).

**(4) Yet is the world of hatred equally unseen and inconceivable to those who feel God's Love in them. Their world reflects the quietness and peace that shines in them; the gentleness and innocence they see surrounding them; the joy with which they look out from the endless wells of joy within. What they have felt in them they look upon, and see its sure reflection everywhere.**

We need to be reminded that Jesus speaks only of our inner world. The teacher we choose is the only issue, and the real world is the culmination of choosing the right One. If you see yourself as vulnerable in a hostile world surrounded by evil people, you know you have chosen the ego and have judged yourself as deserving of hatred. But Christ thinks otherwise, as He quietly leads us home:

> You have been wrong about the world because you have misjudged yourself. From such a twisted reference point, what could you see? All seeing starts with the perceiver, who judges what is true and what is false. And what he judges false he does not see.... Christ is still there, although you know Him not. His Being does not depend upon your recognition. He lives within you in the quiet present, and waits for you to leave the past behind and enter into the world He holds out to you in love.... Love leads so gladly! As you follow Him, you will rejoice that you have found His company, and learned of Him the joyful journey home (T-13.VII.5:1-4, 7-9; 6:3-4).

**Lesson 189**

The world's value lies in its being a classroom that reflects our mistaken choice, so now we can make the correct one. To accomplish this, it is necessary to become aware of how much we do not want to choose correctly, and then forgive ourselves.

**(5) What would you see? The choice is given you. But learn and do not let your mind forget this law of seeing: You will look upon that which you feel within. If hatred finds a place within your heart, you will perceive a fearful world, held cruelly in death's sharp-pointed, bony fingers. If you feel the Love of God within you, you will look out on a world of mercy and of love.**

You may recall Jesus saying something similar in "The Simplicity of Salvation" – there are but two lessons we can learn, each resulting in a different world:

> The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find....
>
> The outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guiltless is a world in which there is no fear, and everything is lit with hope and sparkles with a gentle friendliness (T-31.I.7:4-8; 8:1).

This important theme reflects one of the key principles of *A Course in Miracles,* quite familiar to us by now: *projection makes perception.*

**(6) Today we pass illusions, as we seek to reach to what is true in us, and feel its all-embracing tenderness, its Love which knows us perfect as itself, its sight which is the gift its Love bestows on us. We learn the way today. It is as sure as Love itself, to which it carries us. For its simplicity avoids the snares the foolish convolutions of the world's apparent reasoning but serve to hide.**

We move past the ego's illusions by trusting in the Guide Who will lead us home. Thus we follow along *the silent* way, the title of this lovely poem of Helen's:

> Choose once again. For it is given you
> To trail the peace of God across the world
> Without exception. Every child receives
> The gifts you bring, and men and women turn
> To you in thankfulness. With joy are you
> Accepted everywhere. For you have come
> Only to bring Infinity's appeal
> To those who are as infinite as He.
> You come with memory of God in you,
> To waken this same memory in those
> In whom it seems to sleep. The world would die
> Without its saviors. Do not, then, deny
> Your proper place. For Christ has called to you
> To follow Him, and choose the silent way
> That brings you to eternity today.
>
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 29)

Silencing our thoughts is the way, allowing the one Thought to come:

**(7) Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God.**

If we want to pass illusions by, we begin by forgetting everything we think, and letting Jesus teach us afresh. He asks us to forget everything because we have been wrong about everything. "Only then," he says in effect, "will you realize how right I am, and how right you will be when you join me. Let go of the past and come to me with wholly empty hands. Do not ask me to take away a problem you have made real, but let me show you instead the problem and its solution. Let me take you home, and do not decide the pathway by yourself. Above all, lay aside all you ever learned about God and His truth – what the Bible, Synagogue, or Churches have taught you – and listen only to me." Recall this parallel statement from near the end of the text:

> Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away (T-31.I.12).

This point is reiterated from here to the end of the lesson. Incidentally, while Jesus' words say God leads us, strictly speaking the Holy Spirit is our Guide.

**(8:1-3) Is it not He Who knows the way to you? You need not know the way to Him. Your part is simply to allow all obstacles that you have interposed between the Son and God the Father to be quietly removed forever.**

Jesus tells us many times that our only responsibility is to accept the Atonement for ourselves; to choose the correction instead of what we made to be the truth. We do not have to know what God is, nor love, nor the way home. All we need know is that our one function is to observe the ego and ask Jesus' help in letting it go. Thus are our obstacles – all based on fear – brought to his love, as we see in this summarizing statement from the four obstacles to peace:

> Every obstacle that peace must flow across is surmounted in just the same way; the fear that raised it yields to the love beyond, and so the fear is gone.... From beyond each of the obstacles to love, Love Itself has called. And each has been surmounted by the power of the attraction of what lies beyond. Your wanting fear seemed to be holding them in place. Yet when you heard the Voice of Love beyond them, you answered and they disappeared (T-19.IV-D.5:1,6-9).

**(8:4-8) God will do His part in joyful and immediate response. Ask and**

**receive. But do not make demands, nor point the road to God by which He should appear to you. The way to reach Him is merely to let Him be. For in that way is your reality proclaimed as well.**

Everyone makes demands of Jesus: "This is what I want from you," or, "I have studied your course and been a faithful student, and yet I am not happy. Do something!" Our relationship with Jesus will be like our relationship with any other authority: grudging or perhaps respectful, but also resentful because authorities do not always do what we want them to do. In any relationship with an authority there is an underlying demand: your purpose is to make us happy and satisfy our needs – in the case with Jesus, to bring us home. Thus he urges us to see the demands we would make of him or of God, and then release them. He does not ask us to change – which we did in the beginning by changing our reality, and thus God's – but to accept the truth about ourselves and our Creator. This means releasing investment in the substitutes we made instead.

The underlying theme here is humility. Jesus wants me humbly to approach my work with *A Course in Miracles* and with him. Arrogance says I know what salvation is; I know what I need, what will help me, what this course says, and what Jesus ought to do for me. Humility says I understand nothing, including *A Course in Miracles,* for which I am happily grateful. Thus our arrogance takes the form of asking for *specific* help with *specific* problems to meet our *specific* needs, as if we could possibly understand what they are—our demands all center on the body, which, as we have repeatedly seen, was made to keep the problem of separation from the mind's solution of Atonement. We have already considered a passage from *The Song of Prayer* that addresses the problem of asking for specific help. Here is a parallel discussion that comes later in the pamphlet, in the context of two people praying together:

> Even together you may ask for things, and thus set up but an illusion of a goal you share.... Even the joining, then, is not enough, if those who pray together do not ask, before all else, what is the Will of God. From this Cause only can the answer come in which are all specifics satisfied; all separate wishes unified in one. Prayer for specifics always asks to have the past repeated in some way.... The aim of prayer is to release the present from its chains of past illusions; to let it be a freely chosen remedy from every choice that stood for a mistake. What prayer can offer now so far exceeds all that you asked before that it is pitiful to be content with less.... Do not restrict your asking. Prayer can bring the peace of God. What time-bound thing [i.e., specifics] can give you more than this, in just the little space that lasts until it crumbles into dust? (S-1.IV.2:5; 3:1-3, 5-6; 4:3-5)

In other words, by laying aside our specific demands, we allow His Love to be. Who in their right minds could ever want anything more than Everything?

**(9:1-3) And so today, we do not choose the way in which we go to Him. But we do choose to let Him come. And with this choice we rest.**

We "choose to let Him come" by acknowledging we made a mistake by accepting the ego as our teacher. This acknowledgment is all we need do. It is the basis of Jesus telling us that his course offers us so much, while asking so little:

> This course requires almost nothing of you. It is impossible to imagine one

that asks so little, or could offer more (T-20.VII.1:7-8).

**(9:4-8) And in our quiet hearts and open minds, His Love will blaze its pathway of itself. What has not been denied is surely there, if it be true and can be surely reached. God knows His Son, and knows the way to him. He does not need His Son to show Him how to find His way. Through every opened door His Love shines outward from its home within, and lightens up the world in innocence.**

The second and third laws of chaos describe how we tell God what He should believe and think (T-23.II.4-6). This is reminiscent of our previous discussion of demanding from God what we want. It is crucial we be aware of the subtleties with which the ego's arrogance manifests in our lives. We really think we know what is best for us in terms of our bodies – where we should live, what job we should have, etc.; and we certainly think we know what is needed for our salvation. Yet we only exhibit the arrogance of asking the one thing in the universe that does not know (T-20.III.7:6); in this case our brains, which think they think, and think they know and understand our needs:

> Why do you think the body is a better home, a safer shelter for God's Son? Why would you rather look on it than on the truth? How can the engine of destruction be preferred, and chosen to replace the holy home the Holy Spirit offers, where He will dwell with you?
>
> The body is the sign of weakness, vulnerability and loss of power. Can such a savior help you? Would you turn in your distress and need for help unto the helpless? Is the pitifully little the perfect choice to call upon for strength? (T-20.VI11.4:6-5:4)

When we let the ego's arrogant insanity go, our hearts will be quiet and our minds open, and we will no longer deny the Love that has always been there, and which shines away the darkness of sin and guilt.

The lesson closes with this lovely prayer:

**(10)** ***Father, we do not know the way to You. But we have called, and You have answered us. We will not interfere. Salvation's ways are not our own, for they belong to You. And it is unto You we look for them. Our hands are open to receive Your gifts. We have no thoughts we think apart from You, and cherish no beliefs of what we are, or Who created us. Yours is the way that we would find and follow. And we ask but that Your Will, which is our own as well, be done in us and in the world, that it become a part of Heaven now Amen.***

These beautiful words are really not directed toward God, but are a plea to our decision-making selves to become sane, and humbly admit with gratitude we have been wrong; a plea to ourselves to remove ourselves, and to let God's Love lead the way.

**light we grope in darkness, using reason but to justify our rage and our attack. Our understanding is so limited that what we think we understand is but confusion born of error. We are lost in mists of shifting dreams and fearful thoughts, our eyes shut tight against the light; our minds engaged in worshipping what is not there.**

We need go through the process of applying these principles day by day, and our learning will advance to the extent we can consistently and humbly recognize the limitations of our understanding. We do not yet recognize our best interests or anyone else's because we have been lost in the ego's darkness – "the mists of shifting dreams." Forgiveness' role in leading us from darkness to light is beautifully captured in the following passage:

> How holy are you, that the Son of God can be your savior in the midst of dreams of desolation and disaster. See how eagerly he comes, and steps aside from heavy shadows that have hidden him, and shines on you in gratitude and love. He is himself, but not himself alone. And as his Father lost not part of him in your creation, so the light in him is brighter still because you gave your light to him, to save him from the dark. And now the light in you must be as bright as shines in him. This is the spark that shines within the dream; that you can help him waken, and be sure his waking eyes will rest on you. And in his glad salvation you are saved (T-29.III.5).

**(8:1) Who can be born again in Christ but him who has forgiven everyone he sees or thinks of or imagines?**

Jesus often presents a biblical verse, providing it with a different meaning. Here he takes the well- known phrase from John's gospel (3:3, 7) and relates it to his thought system of forgiveness. We are thus "born again" when we choose a different teacher. Rather than seeing ourselves as born of the ego, we remember our "birth" in God. Here is another reference, in the context of the holy instant, even though the term is not used at this point in the text:

> To be born again is to let the past go, and look without condemnation upon the present.... The miracle enables you to see your brother without his past, and so perceive him as born again (T-13.VI.3:5; 5:1).

**(8:2-6) Who could be set free while he imprisons anyone? A jailer is not free, for he is bound together with his prisoner. He must be sure that he does not escape, and so he spends his time in keeping watch on him. The bars that limit him become the world in which his jailer lives, along with him. And it is on his freedom that the way to liberty depends for both of them.**

Who is the jailer and who the prisoner? Both parties. Even though the prisoner is

reinforce the prison of your own sinfulness.

**(9:1-2) Therefore, hold no one prisoner. Release instead of bind, for thus are you made free.**

This is one of many references in *A Course in Miracles* to the famous passages in the gospels of Matthew and John, where Jesus appeals to the apostles to release instead of bind:

> Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19b).
>
> Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:23).

In other words, we have the power to keep people imprisoned, or free them. The Church used this principle as the foundation for the sacrament of penance (confession), but Jesus gives it a totally different meaning. He does not speak of anything external or ritualistic, but of our shared imprisonment in the prison of sin, and shared liberation as we shift from seeing our interests as separate from another's. The way I perceive you reflects the way I perceive me, because my self-perception determines my perception of you. Here is the first reference in the text to this biblical passage, elaborating on the point we have must made:

> Whenever you are with a brother, you are learning what you are because you are teaching what you are. He will respond either with pain or with joy, depending on which teacher you are following. He will be imprisoned or released according to your decision, and so will you. Never forget your responsibility to him, because it is your responsibility to yourself. Give him his place in the Kingdom and you will have yours (T-8.III.5:8-12).

**(9:3-4) The way is simple. Every time you feel a stab of anger, realize you hold a sword above your head.**

This is a helpful line to remember. We all can attest to the fact that rarely, if ever, do we get through a day without a stab of anger or even a mild twinge of annoyance. Jesus asks us when we experience that stab or twinge, to return to the mind and ask his help to see that we condemn only ourselves. No matter how justified our anger may seem, if we could understand that when we attack someone else we keep ourselves out of Heaven, we would stop the attack. The problem is we do not believe it, believing instead that by attacking another we ensure that *we* stay in Heaven, because Heaven is the state of *one or the other:* I win and you lose. However, as has been well said, resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

It is important, to state it again, that we practice this teaching as specifically as possible, and recognize that we exclude ourselves from love when we judge. We need to stop and ask: "Is this really what I want for myself? Do I hate Jesus and myself that much that I want to exclude him from my heart?" When we are clear about the truth of the situation, we will no longer need to justify our annoyances – petty or otherwise.

**(9:5) And it** [this sword] **will fall or be averted as you choose to be**

**and beautiful enough to let the light of Heaven shine upon it. It is He Who answers what His Son would contradict, and keeps his sinlessness forever safe.**

God, through the Holy Spirit, is the Source of this new perception. Again, God does not do anything. However, Jesus describes healing our misperceptions in these terms because it is the only way we can understand the process that lies beyond our understanding.

**(3:1-2) These are the lessons God would have you learn. His Will reflects them all, and they reflect His loving kindness to the Son He loves.**

The lesson is forgiveness, the reflection of God's loving Will. To make this point again, God's Love is beyond the world, yet its memory has remained with us to teach the Atonement, symbolized in our minds by the Holy Spirit.

**(3:3-5) Each lesson has a central thought, the same in all of them. The form alone is changed, with different circumstances and events; with different characters and different themes, apparent but not real. They are the same in fundamental content.**

The principle of Heaven is perfect Oneness, reflected by seeing the unity in all lessons. Recall Lesson 99, where Jesus used many of the same words in teaching the same thought: the Holy Spirit sees the single *content* of forgiveness behind all *form.* In realizing this unity of purpose, we begin to understand we are the same within the dream. This is the meaning of the prayer at the end of Chapter 15: "Make this year different by making it all the same" (T-15.XI.10:11). In other wordsaame

the principle *ideas leave not their source.* Since there is no world outside our thoughts, it is only these that can meaningfully change. Recall this statement from the text:

> Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them. Ideas are of the mind. What is projected out, and seems to be external to the mind, is not outside at all, but an effect of what is in, and has not left its source (T-26.VII.4:7-9).

This principle is the basis for forgiveness: I do not forgive what appears to be outside my mind, but only what is within it, since they are the same— *projection makes perception.*

**(4:1) Certain it is that all distress does not appear to be but unforgiveness.**

This is one of those maddening lines with negating negatives. The meaning is that suffering certainly does not appear to come from unforgiveness, a thought repeated in Lesson 198 (9:5). Suffering and distress seem to come from everything but unforgiveness. A parallel statement speaks of our unawareness of guilt's part in causing suffering. Here it is again, in its full context:

> Once you were unaware of what the cause of everything the world appeared to thrust upon you, uninvited and unasked, must really be. Of one thing you were sure: Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them. Nor did you in any way request them for yourself. This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind. He cannot doubt his dreams' reality, because he does not see the part he plays in making them and making them seem real (T-27.VII.7:3-9).

Thus is guilt or unforgiveness protected by our blindness, undone by choosing to forgive, which restores to mind its function of causation (T-2811.9:3).

**(4:2-3) Yet that is the content underneath the form. It is this sameness which makes learning sure, because the lesson is so simple that it cannot be rejected in the end.**

The lesson is: "I am never upset for the reason I think" (W-pI.5). Whatever bothers me or gives me pleasure has nothing to do with externals. The wrong mind has set up the world to produce the ego's desired outcome – guilt or fear; while right mind reverses it to achieve the Holy Spirit's outcome – forgiveness or love:

> I have said you have but two emotions, love and fear. One is changeless but continually exchanged, being offered by the eternal to the eternal. In this exchange it is extended, for it increases as it is given. The other has many forms, for the content of individual illusions differs greatly. Yet they have one thing in common; they are all insane (T-13.V.1:1-5).

The inherent sameness of illusions allows forgiveness to heal them all: one content of fear, one content of forgiveness—the simplicity of salvation (T-31.I).

**(4:4) No one can hide forever from a truth so very obvious that it appears in countless forms, and yet is recognized as easily in all of them, if one but wants to see the simple lesson there.**

The point is that we do not want to see this simple lesson, because to do so means we would never again take our lives seriously, thus undermining the ego's strategy that is aimed at making sure we take the body and the world most seriously. Consequently, we do not think about the mind at all. What allows us to laugh at sickness, starvation, poverty, and death – i.e., not giving them power to take away our peace – is that we have recognized there is a mind beyond this world and body. Thus they are not what they appear to be – the thought the ego never wants us to consider, because on returning to the mind we will recognize our mistaken choice and choose again, marking the beginning of the ego's end.

When the ego pain becomes excruciating and we call out for help – there must be another way of living here – we have invited Jesus back to our minds. He can teach us that what we have been experiencing is but our own script, and he would help us see why we made it up. There is therefore a simple content behind everything:

**(5:1)** ***Forgive, and you will see this differently.***

If you want to feel and see differently, Jesus says, you need to release the stubborn insistence you are right and he is wrong; to resign your self- imposed position and let him be your teacher.

**(5:2) These are the words the Holy Spirit speaks in all your tribulations, all your pain, all suffering regardless of its form.**

At the end of the text, Jesus reminds us:

> In every difficulty, all distress, and each perplexity Christ calls to you and gently says, "My brother, choose again" (T-31.VIII.3:2).

Choosing again – the Holy Spirit over the ego – is the answer to all our pain and suffering.

**(5:3-5) These are the words with which temptation ends, and guilt, abandoned, is revered no more. These are the words which end the dream of sin, and rid the mind of fear. These are the words by which salvation comes to all the world.**

The ego is undone and the world saved by the simple realization we were wrong: It is not the world that caused us pain, but the mind's mistaken choice.

**(6) Shall we not learn to say these words when we are tempted to believe that pain is real, and death becomes our choice instead of life? Shall we not learn to say these words when we have understood their power to release all minds**

**from bondage? These are words which give you power over all events that seem to have been given power over you. You see them rightly when you hold these words in full awareness, and do not forget these words apply to everything you see or any brother looks upon amiss.**

There are no exceptions. The idea is to remember – the moment we are tempted to believe that pain is real in ourselves or others – that suffering, sickness, and judgment express a thought system of death that leads to unhappiness. We then say: "I can see this differently if only I forgive. This means I ask help of Someone else, because I cannot do this alone. I must learn not to be afraid of His Love, wisdom, and kindness, because only these will bring me happiness." This principle applies without exception to everything we see incorrectly, and everything anyone else sees incorrectly, too.

In paragraph 7, along with three places in the text I will quote below, Jesus provides us with a simple criterion to judge whether we are listening with our right or wrong minds. The criterion is inner peace – if you are not peaceful, you have chosen the wrong teacher; if you are disquieted because of something you heard on the news, were told by a family member or friend, or something you think or feel, you have separated from the source of quiet in your mind, saying to Jesus: "Your love and peace are not enough. I want to be on my own." Such a statement is the source of the upset we project onto the world, claiming we are troubled because of external "causes," none of which is true:

> You have one test, as sure as God, by which to recognize if what you learned is true. If you are wholly free of fear of any kind, and if all those who meet or even think of you share in your perfect peace, then you can be sure that you have learned God's lesson, and not your own. Unless all this is true, there are dark lessons in your mind that hurt and hinder you, and everyone around you. The absence of perfect peace means but one thing: You think you do not will for God's Son what his Father wills for him (T-14.XI.5:1-4).

> How can you know whether you chose the stairs to Heaven or the way to hell? Quite easily. How do you feel? Is peace in your awareness? Are you certain which way you go? And are you sure the goal of Heaven can be reached? If not, you walk alone (T-23.II.22:6-12).

> Only this is certain in this shifting world that has no meaning in reality: When peace is not with you entirely, and when you suffer pain of any kind, you have beheld some sin within your brother, and have rejoiced at what you thought was there (T-24.IV.5:2).

Jesus provides an additional criterion, with the same content we have just seen:

**(7) How can you tell when you are seeing wrong, or someone else is failing to perceive the lesson he should learn? Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned. And there remains an unforgiveness hiding in the mind that sees the pain through eyes the mind directs.**

If pain is real to you – in you or anyone else – realize immediately you chose the ego, for there is guilt in your mind that needs undoing *(unforgiveness* is another word for

*guilt* or *attack).* If you want to know who sits with you watching the news, you need only notice whether your peace is disturbed by accounts of suffering. This in no way suggests you should deny what your eyes see, or deny people's pain. The point is that if you are no longer peaceful, it is not because of the news broadcast, but because you made a decision to push Jesus away. If he were with you, you would be looking with compassion on the subjects of the news story, realizing you are among them – and in fact that everyone is among them. If you were watching with Jesus, you would understand that the accounts of suffering in your family or the world were specific forms of the pain we all experience, and so would not make distinctions among the sufferers.

This does not mean, again, that you would become callously insensitive to the sufferings of others. It does mean, however that you would view them differently, through the eyes of a different teacher. To turn your back on people, dismissing their pain by saying it is an illusion is hardly loving. Yet you do want to see the suffering, but in *everyone* – the ones in pain, the ones inflicting the pain. and the ones observing the pain. This is the universal pain of believing in the irreparable and irremediable separation from God. Be sure, however, not to use statements like this against yourself, but see them as gifts from Jesus that help identify the source of the problem, that you may experience the love it has kept from your awareness.

**(8) God would not have you suffer thus. He would help you forgive yourself. His Son does not remember who he is. And God would have him not forget His Love, and all the gifts His Love brings with it. Would you now renounce your own salvation? Would you fail to learn the simple lessons Heaven's Teacher sets before you, that all pain may disappear and God may be remembered by His Son?**

God's Love is forever present. We renounced it, and therefore we can reclaim it. We need only the willingness to be shown we were wrong, especially in believing it is God's Will we suffer as payment for our sins against Him. Early in the text, Jesus cites the scriptural verse "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord" as a gross misperception, born of our guilt:

> The statement... is a misperception by which one assigns his own "evil" past to God. The "evil" past has nothing to do with God. He did not create it and He does not maintain it. God does not believe in retribution. His Mind does not create that way. He does not hold your "evil" deeds against you (T-31.3:1-6).

Indeed, what we truly hold against God is that He does *not* wish us to suffer, but only to remember His Love and our Self. Thus Jesus tells us in the text: "Forgive your Father it was not His Will that you be crucified" (T-24111.8:13).

**(9) All things are lessons God would have you learn. He would not leave an unforgiving thought without correction, nor one thorn or nail to hurt His holy Son in any way. He would ensure his holy rest remain untroubled and serene, without a care, in an eternal home which cares for him. And He would have all tears be wiped away, with none remaining yet unshed, and none but waiting their appointed time to fall. For God has willed that laughter should replace each one, and that His Son be free again.**

The key word in the first sentence is *all* – salvation has no exceptions. Our lives

are classrooms, and *everything* that occurs is an opportunity to learn and practice forgiveness.

God does not literally wipe away tears, of course, which incidentally is a biblical reference (Is 25:8; Rv 7:17; 21:4a). Jesus' message is that our tears ultimately come from a mistaken choice, which we correct by joining with him. This choice is expressed through our changing – to borrow the Easter symbolism – from the thorns and nails of crucifixion to the lilies of forgiveness. These are the gifts we give our brothers and ourselves, the only gift God asks of us, as expressed in Helen's early poem "He Asks but This":

> My tiny empire is no fitting gift
> For God's most holy Son. His Father gives
> Him infinite dominion and estate
> Unlimited, extending outward to
> Embrace the universe.
>
> What can I offer Him Who came to save
> Me from the world I made, except Himself'?
> For there remains within me still one gift
> That yet is worthy to be given Him.
> Let me forgive myself. For that is all
> He asks and needs. And He will take this gift,
> And bring it to His Father from Himself.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 37)

In this forgiveness are the tears born of guilt wiped away, happily replaced by the gentle laughter that harbingers our return to the home we never left.

**(10:1-4) We will attempt today to overcome a thousand seeming obstacles to peace in just one day. Let mercy come to you more quickly. Do not try to hold it off another day, another minute or another instant. Time was made for this.**

Originally, time was made by the ego to be merciless, for it reflects its merciless self:

> The ego ... regards the function of time as one of extending itself in place of eternity .... The continuity of past and future, under its direction, is the only purpose the ego perceives in time, and it closes over the present so that no gap in its own continuity can occur (T-13.IV.8:1-2).

When, however, we ask Jesus for help, time releases us from itself. It is not that God created time, or that Jesus did, but he corrects our mistake in having made it by assigning it a different purpose – the holy instant:

> Begin to practice the Holy Spirit's use of time as a teaching aid to happiness and peace. Take this very instant, now, and think of it as all there is of time. Nothing can reach you here out of the past, and it is here that you are completely absolved, completely free and wholly without condemnation. From this holy instant wherein holiness was born again you will go forth in time without fear,

and with no sense of change with time (T-15.I.9:4-7).

Thus Jesus' mercy comes more quickly, for time and space are under his control (T-2.VII.7:9).

**(10:5-6) Use it today for what its purpose is. Morning and night, devote what time you can to serve its proper aim, and do not let the time be less than meets your deepest need.**

In other words, try not to meditate or pray with a stop watch. Simply rest in the quiet of Jesus' love, bringing to that quiet your disquiet, so that his love can gently shine it away.

**(11) Give all you can, and give a little more. For now we would arise in haste and go unto our Father's house. We have been gone too long, and we would linger here no more. And as we practice, let us think about all things we saved to settle by ourselves, and kept apart from healing. Let us give them all to Him Who knows the way to look upon them so that they will disappear. Truth is His message; truth His teaching is. His are the lessons God would have us learn.**

Jesus asks us to bring our thoughts of specialness to his healing love, for they lose their appeal when we realize they stand in the way of our return home. Moreover, we are asked specifically to bring him the problems we sought to solve ourselves, magically hoping we would be protected from his love, for we believed the ego that their darkness would keep out his light, preserving our specialness. Jesus thus wants us to see through this ploy, recognizing the pain it brings. He therefore asks: "Why remain outside the Kingdom, when my loving hand awaits your grasp to lead you home?"

**(12) Each hour, spend a little time today, and in the days to come, in practicing the lesson in forgiveness in the form established for the day. And try to give it application to the happenings the hour brought, so that the next one is free of the one before. The chains of time are easily unloosened in this way. Let no one hour cast its shadow on the one that follows, and when that one goes, let everything that happened in its course go with it. Thus will you remain unbound, in peace eternal in the world of time.**

As an example, what you said to me thirty minutes ago has no power to upset me *now.* What you said to me thirty seconds ago has no power to upset me *now.* They have neither the power to keep me in hell or bring me to Heaven. The ego wants me to believe they do, so I would forget all power in Heaven and earth was given unto me – *in my mind.* I have denied that power and given it to you, proclaiming that you can make me happy or sad. As you go through your day, therefore, see how you have imprisoned yourself to the past – whether it be thirty years ago, yesterday, or the preceding minute. Realize you have given your power to a piece of dust – your own body or someone else's – and then believed it had power to keep you from remembering Heaven's love. In releasing ourselves through the holy instant, we at the same time release our brothers, whom we had chained to our guilt. Knowing the ego's insanity, who in their right minds would not choose this blessed instant, Jesus asks:

> How long is an instant? ... Practice giving this blessed instant of freedom to all who are enslaved by time, and thus make time their friend for them. The Holy Spirit gives their blessed instant to you through your giving it. As you give it, He offers it to you.... In the crystal cleanness of the release you give is your instantaneous escape from guilt (T-15.I.13:1, 3-5, 7).

Whenever you find yourself bound by the past, as quickly as possible choose the holy instant and ask Jesus' help to look at the situation differently. In choosing the holy instant, you rise above the world of time and space to the place in your mind where you understand that your pain was caused by having chosen wrongly, a choice you now undo and find peace. This is the proper use of time, for it does not reinforce itself, but brings it to a happy ending.

**(13:1-3) This is the lesson God would have you learn: There is a way to look on everything that lets it be to you another step to Him, and to salvation of the world. To all that speaks of terror, answer thus:**

***I will forgive, and this will disappear.***

The earlier phrase was: "Forgive, and you will see this differently." When I totally forgive, thus ending the journey, the problem literally disappears. Jesus is teaching us his other way, and we have to be willing to learn it, which entails the willingness to learn we were wrong and he was right – about everything!

**(13:4) To every apprehension, every care and every form of suffering, repeat these selfsame words.**

The key word again is every – there are no exceptions. When anything bothers you – of minor or major consequence – remind yourself you could be at peace if you returned to the mind, asking your teacher's help to look at the situation differently. Remember, this is a course in undoing the ego, which means looking at it without judgment or fear. Looking, therefore, brings the darkness of illusions to the light of Jesus' truth; our imagined conflict between God and the ego – the source of all suffering – to the peace that transcends all care and pain:

> See how the conflict of illusions disappears when it is brought to truth! For it seems real only as long as it is seen as war between conflicting truths .... Thus, conflict is the choice between illusions.... Here will the Father never be remembered. Yet no illusion can invade His home and drive Him out of what He loves forever. And what He loves must be forever quiet and at peace *because* it is His home (T-23.I.9).

**(13:5-7) And then you hold the key that opens Heaven's gate, and brings the Love of God the Father down to earth at last, to raise it up to Heaven. God will take this final step Himself. Do not deny the little steps He asks you take to Him.**

These little steps comprise our everyday experiences: what happens from moment to moment. Do not, Jesus asks, let a little twinge of annoyance go by without paying attention to it and reminding yourself: "This expresses my desire to keep love

away so my specialness will remain intact." Then ask: "Is this what I really want?"

As we increasingly practice the holy instants, they will occur more frequently, coalescing at last into one holy instant. Thus have we attained the real world, when God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself. This is the last step that never truly was, as Jesus explains to us as we close this wonderful lesson, which leads us back to the God we never left:

> God does not take steps, because His accomplishments are not gradual.... He does nothing last, because He created first and for always.... The "last step" that God will take was therefore true in the beginning, is true now, and will be true forever. What is timeless is always there, because its being is eternally changeless.... God does not reveal this to you because it was never hidden. His light was never obscured, because it is His Will to share it. How can what is fully shared be withheld and then revealed? (T-7.I.7:1, 3, 8-9,13-15)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 194**
**I place the future in the Hands of God.**

This lesson – I will wait until paragraph 4 to discuss the metaphoric meaning of the title – is about the holy instant, and contrasts the ego's and the Holy Spirit's use of time, which we discussed briefly in the previous lesson. Since the ego's use of time is crucial to this lesson, I shall briefly review it here. Recall the ego's unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear – the foundation of its thought system. Projected into form, it becomes linear time: sin is equated with the past *(I have sinned in the past),* guilt is what the ego knows as the present *(I feel terrible now),* and fear is of what is sure to happen in the future *(I will be punished for my sins). We* are thus left in a terrifying state of apprehension, certain that at some future point Chicken Little's sky will fall upon us as God's punishment for our sins, destroying us all. Indeed, everything here eventually dies: the ego's proof its thought system is right and the Holy Spirit's, based upon eternal life, is wrong.

**(1:1-3) Today's idea takes another step toward quick salvation, and a giant stride it is indeed! So great the distance is that it encompasses, it sets you down just short of Heaven, with the goal in sight and obstacles behind. Your foot has reached the lawns that welcome you to Heaven's gate; the quiet place of peace, where you await with certainty the final step of God.**

This is a description of the real world. The *lawns of Heaven* symbolizes the beautiful and peaceful culmination of the Atonement, when God opens His gate, reaches in, and takes us back unto Himself. These two passages from *The Song of Prayer* reflect the journey up the ladder of prayer, ending at these welcoming lawns:

> Lay down your dreams, you holy Son of God, and rising up as God created you, dispense with idols and remember Him Prayer will sustain you now, and bless you as you lift your heart to Him in rising song that reaches higher and then higher still, until both high and low have disappeared. Faith in your goal will grow and hold you up as you ascend the shining stairway to the lawns of Heaven and the gate of peace (S-1.in.3:1-3).

> The ladder ends with this .... Now you stand before the gate of Heaven, and your brother stands beside you there. The lawns are deep and still, for here the place appointed for the time when you should come has waited long for you. Here will time end forever. At this gate eternity itself will join with you (S-1.V.4:1-5).

**(1:4-6) How far are we progressing now from earth! How close are we approaching to our goal! How short the journey still to be pursued!**

This progress is contingent, of course, upon our having learned our lessons, especially the one for today. When we accept its message, the ego's thought system is undone. If God is to be trusted and therefore not feared, the ego is wrong, for if you disprove one aspect of the ego's system you have disproved all of it – its thoughts are bound together as one, and undone as one as well. Thus is the journey shortened by the miracles of forgiveness.

## Lesson 194

**(2:1) Accept today's idea, and you have passed all anxiety, all pits of hell, all blackness of depression, thoughts of sin, and devastation brought about by guilt.**

The last part of this description refers to the ego's unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear, with the "devastation brought about by guilt" being the inevitable punishment for our sins. This gives rise to the fear that can be undone only through the holy instant, in which Jesus looks with us at what we had heretofore been so afraid to see, and thus ends all suffering:

> The sick attraction of guilt must be recognized for what it is. For having been made real to you, it is essential to look at it clearly, and by withdrawing your investment in it, to learn to let it go.... As we bring it to light, your only question will be why it was you ever wanted it. You have nothing to lose by looking open-eyed, for ugliness such as this belongs not in your holy mind (T-15.VII.3:1-2,5-6).

> The holy instant is truly the time of Christ. For in this liberating instant no guilt is laid upon the Son of God, and his unlimited power is thus restored to him (T-15.X.2:1-2).

**(2:2-3) Accept today's idea, and you have released the world from all imprisonment by loosening the heavy chains that locked the door to freedom on it. You are saved, and your salvation thus becomes the gift you give the world, because you have received.**

These later lessons continually refer to the principal themes of the Course. Here we return to the theme of the equality of giving and receiving. If I am saved, so is the world. Salvation of the world thus depends on me because the world and mind are one: if my mind is healed, the world must be healed as well. This also finds expression in the following summary of the holy instant's power to heal our belief in separation and guilt, restoring us to our completion in God:

> In the holy instant guilt holds no attraction, since communication has been restored.... There is complete forgiveness here, for there is no desire to exclude anyone from your completion, in sudden recognition of the value of his part in it. In the protection of your wholeness, all are invited and made welcome. And you understand that your completion is God's, Whose only need is to have you be complete (T-15.VII.14:2, 6-8).

**(3:1-3) In no one instant is depression felt, or pain experienced or loss perceived. In no one instant sorrow can be set upon a throne, and worshipped faithfully. In no one instant can one even die.**

This is parallel to the statement from the text: "At no single instant does the body exist at all." The "instant" is the holy instant, and here is the complete passage:

> At no single instant does the body exist at all. It is always remembered or anticipated, but never experienced just *now.* Only its past and future make it seem real. Time controls it entirely, for sin is never wholly in the present. In any single instant the attraction of guilt would be experienced as pain and nothing

> else, and would be avoided. It has no attraction *now.* Its whole attraction is imaginary, and therefore must be thought of in the past or in the future (T-18.VII.3).

In the holy instant we have taken Jesus as our teacher instead of the ego, which means we have chosen not to identify with its thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, thus leaving it nowhere. With the ego's unholy trinity gone, so too are its bodily effects: depression, pain, sorrow, and death. They vanish when their underlying cause vanishes in the holy instant's denial of the special self, the hero of the ego's dream of separation.

**(3:4) And so each instant given unto God in passing, with the next one given Him already, is a time of your release from sadness, pain and even death itself.**

Nothing changes in the world, but everything changes in the mind as the decision maker realizes its mistake and chooses truth instead of illusion— the light of forgiveness instead of the darkness of guilt:

> When you have learned to look on everyone with no reference at all to the past, either his or yours as you perceived it, you will be able to learn from what you see *now.* For the past can cast no shadow to darken the present, *unless you are afraid of light.* And only if you are would you choose to bring darkness with you, and by holding it in your mind, see it as a dark cloud that shrouds your brothers and conceals their reality from your sight (T-13.VI.2:3-5).

Paragraph 4 explains why Jesus, again, uses symbols and dualistic language, making statements in one place of *A Course in Miracles* that contradict in form his teachings in other places. When we say we place the future in the Hands of God, for example, we imply that God knows about a future and therefore knows about linear time. Since time is illusory, this cannot be, anymore than God can have hands. These symbols simply convey to God's little children – in non-threatening language – their Father's Love for them. Thus Jesus says:

**(4:1-5) God holds your future as He holds your past and present. They are one to Him, and so they should be one to you. Yet in this world, the temporal progression still seems real. And so you are not asked to understand the lack of sequence really found in time. You are but asked to let the future go, and place it in God's Hands.**

Jesus is telling us it is beyond our capacity now to understand the non-linearity of time. How could we, given the belief we are here in the body, reading these words with our eyes and thinking of them with our brains? We clearly are not ready to accept the unreality of the separation, for to do so would mean facing the terrifying implications of the unreality of our self. To avoid being overwhelmed, therefore, we begin at the level of our experience in the body's dualistic world. There we can learn to trust God, Jesus, and his words in *A Course in Miracles,* which undoes the ego's thought system that teaches we cannot trust our Creator because He is hell-bent on our destruction. We know we believe such insanity because our specialness – without which we could not exist – tells us so:

> You who prefer separation [i.e., specialness] to sanity cannot obtain it in your right mind. You were at peace until you asked for special favor. And God did not give it for the request was alien to Him, and you could not ask this of a Father Who truly loved His Son. Therefore you made of Him an unloving father, demanding of Him what only such a father could give. And the peace of God's Son was shattered, for he no longer understood his Father. He feared what he had made, but still more did he fear his real Father, having attacked his own glorious equality with Him (T-13.III.10).

In the next lesson Jesus returns to this idea of questioning the thought that God is to be feared, and directs the questioning to a deeper level.

**(4:6) And you will see by your experience that you have laid the past and present in His Hands as well, because the past will punish you no more, and future dread will now be meaningless.**

Sin, guilt, and fear are here given temporal expression: we sinned in the past, witnessed to by our present feelings of guilt, and justified punishment in the future. Jesus asks us to look with him at this insane thought system and observe how our lives are permeated by the belief we deserve to suffer – to be betrayed, abandoned, and forsaken. Jesus does not ask us to accept that this is a lie, but to begin the process of questioning that belief, as he helps us do here:

> The ego has a strange notion of time, and it is with this notion that your questioning might well begin. The ego invests heavily in the past, and in the end believes that the past is the only aspect of time that is meaningful. Remember that its emphasis on guilt enables it to ensure its continuity by making the future like the past, and thus avoiding the present. By the notion of paying for the past in the future, the past becomes the determiner of the future, making them continuous without an intervening present. For the ego regards the present only as a brief transition to the future, in which it brings the past to the future by interpreting the present in past terms (T-13.IV.4).

In the holy instant we step back with Jesus and observe the ego's beliefs, recognizing they make no sense. If we could truly see that the way we live is senseless because of the premises on which our lives are based, we would change the premises and the perception of our lives would change accordingly. This is Jesus' point in this lesson.

In other words, Jesus is asking us to question a thought system that says God cannot be trusted. In our heart of hearts we know we believe this. Whenever something unfortunate happens to us or our loved ones, the ego uses that as proof God has lied. His Word lies, the ego claims, because it said we are already one with His Love and therefore are happy. Thus if we are not happy, we were obviously misled. The problem is that we are not aware of this underlying motivation to prove God wrong, which we do by being miserable, feeling unfairly treated and betrayed, or sick or depressed. Remember, "Sickness is a defense against the truth," as we learned in Lesson 136. So is distrust and unhappiness. Indeed, everything here is a defense against the truth. That is why we come. Without recognizing this underlying need to prove God wrong and thus

protect our existence as special, unique individuals, we would never be able to question it, let alone change it. Thus, the thrust of Jesus' teaching is that we be willing to look with him at the ego's thought system and question its validity. Recall this oft-quoted statement from the text:

> To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning (T-24.in.2:1-2).

Thus we begin to think: Maybe I can trust God after all. Maybe I can trust Jesus and his course. Maybe *I* am the one who is wrong and he is right. As Jesus asks:

> Under the circumstances, would it not be more desirable to have been wrong, even apart from the fact that you were wrong? (T-13.IV.3:1)

**(5:1-2) Release the future. For the past is gone, and what is present, freed from its bequest of grief and misery, of pain and loss, becomes the instant in which time escapes the bondage of illusions where it runs its pitiless, inevitable course.**

That is the nature of time, holding us bondage to the ego thought system: pitiless and inevitable, for everyone is born but to die. To release the future is to withdraw all projections of our sinful past, which alone imprisons us in a thought system of grief, pain, and death:

> Judgment and condemnation are behind you, and unless you bring them with you, you will see that you are free of them. Look lovingly upon the present, for it holds the only things that are forever true.... The present is before time was, and will be when time is no more. In it are all things that are eternal, and they are one. Their continuity is timeless and their communication is unbroken, for they are not separated by the past. Only the past can separate, and it is nowhere (T-13.VI.6:1-2, 5-8).

**(5:3-4) Then is each instant which was slave to time transformed into a holy instant, when the light that was kept hidden in God's Son is freed to bless the world. Now is he free, and all his glory shines upon a world made free with him, to share his holiness.**

The light is present in our right minds, and in turning to Jesus for help we affirm we want to be taught the light is true, and the darkness of our thought system is false.

**(6:1) If you can see the lesson for today as the deliverance it really is, you will not hesitate to give as much consistent effort as you can, to make it be a part of you.**

You need to work at this, which means joining with Jesus in a holy instant, wherein you understand the ego's dynamics. You will work diligently to the extent you understand you will be happily at peace when you let go of guilt and fear of punishment, as well as your belief that you deserve to suffer and be unfairly treated.

**(6:2-3) As it becomes a thought that rules your mind, a habit in your problem-solving repertoire, a way of quick reaction to temptation, you extend your learning to the world. And as you learn to see salvation in all things, so will the world perceive that it is saved.**

Jesus urges us to make a habit of correcting old habits of rushing to judgment and criticizing others. Thus we develop the new habit of looking past seeming sins to the underlying call for help, and it takes discipline and hard work to honestly examine our projections:

> As you prepare to make a choice that will result in different outcomes, there is first one thing that must be overleamed. It must become a habit of response so typical of everything you do that it becomes your first response to all temptation, and to every situation that occurs. Learn this, and learn it well, for it is here delay of happiness is shortened by a span of time you cannot realize. You never hate your brother for his sins, but only for your own. Whatever form his sins appear to take, it but obscures the fact that you believe them to be yours, and therefore meriting a "just" attack (T-31.III.1:2-6).

Jesus is not saying we are not going to be tempted, but that when temptation comes to judge ourselves or others, we need to call on him for help. Our thoughts do not have to be pure, but we should not rationalize, justify, or spiritualize them. Willingness to look at them with Jesus is all the Holy Spirit asks of us.

**(7:1-5) What worry can beset the one who gives his future to the loving Hands of God? What can he suffer? What can cause him pain, or bring experience of loss to him? What can he fear? And what can he regard except with love?**

This is our experience in the holy instant, when the ego thought system is undone. Both the fear of God and the guilt that is its cause are gone. All that remains is the love that fear and guilt sought to hide.

**(7:6) For he who has escaped all fear of future pain has found his way to present peace, and certainty of care the world can never threaten.**

Jesus is not saying the world will become a wonderful place, but that you will see it in proper perspective, realizing it has no power over you and therefore cannot be a threat. Once again, the world does not change; our minds change. And from that change comes the holy instant, in which we find the peace that brings us from doubt to certainty, as Helen's "little" poem, "The Holy Instant," so nicely expresses:

> Each instant celebrates another birth
> More perfect than the last, as time goes on
> To meet eternity. Yet one can come
> Between each instant and the next, to make
> The interval a shortening of time
> By an immeasurable leap ahead.
> How near the goal seems afterwards! How sure

The journey's Guide, how true His words, how pure
The Son of God to whom He speaks. And see
How quickly doubt is lost in certainty.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 6)

**(7:7-8) He is sure that his perception may be faulty, but will never lack correction. He is free to choose again when he has been deceived; to change his mind when he has made mistakes.**

These statements are significant because Jesus acknowledges we will make mistakes: "You will forget about me and this course, and will go back to the ego and luxuriate in the comfort of its thought system of hatred. That tendency will not disappear right away." Yet we now have at our disposal the means to look at it differently, as we saw in Lesson 193: "I will forgive and this will disappear." Again, we do not have to feel pressured or guilty if there are ego thoughts and temptations, but we need learn that the ego will not make us happy, and that anytime we choose forgiveness we will be freed from the painful prison of our misperceptions. This is always the fundamental choice: freedom with God or bondage to the ego:

> You must choose between total freedom and total bondage, for there are no alternatives but these. You have tried many compromises in the attempt to avoid recognizing the one decision you must make. And yet it is the recognition of the decision, *just as it is,* that makes the decision so easy (T-15.X.9:3-5).

**(8:1-2) Place, then, your future in the Hands of God. For thus you call the memory of Him to come again, replacing all your thoughts of sin and evil with the truth of love.**

We cannot have love replace our thoughts of sin and evil until we are first aware of them. As we have seen, the Holy Spirit's purpose for the world is to be a classroom in which we learn that the sin and evil we have seen outside – whether in our body or those of others – come from a decision we made in our minds. Now that we are aware of the mistaken choice, we can choose again and replace sin and evil with love, calling upon God's memory – the Holy Spirit – to be our Teacher and Guide. Another of Helen's little poems, "The Will of God," helps us express our newly gained certainty of the safety that comes in resting in God's Will – His loving Hands:

There is a silence and a certainty
Apart from time; a peace and quietness
Surrounded by a thousand angels' wings,
And kept inviolate by God's Own Hand.
It is for everyone. Yet very few
Have found it. It will wait for everyone
Who seek, and all of them will find at last
This secret haven, hidden from the world,
And yet in open sight. Its clarity
Is blazing, yet it is not often seen.
Its call is constant, yet is rarely heard.
Attack must overlook it, yet to love

It gives an instant answer. Here the Will
Of God is recognized and cherished still.
And it is here that finally God's Son
Will understand his will and God's are one.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 7)

**(8:3-5) Think you the world could fail to gain thereby, and every living creature not respond with healed perception? Who entrusts himself to God has also placed the world within the Hands to which he has himself appealed for comfort and security. He lays aside the sick illusions of the world along with his, and offers peace to both.**

This returns us to the theme of our inherent oneness as God's Son. Moreover, the world we had perceived as separate is one with us as well. Therefore, when we are healed we are not healed alone, and no one can be excluded if the healing be true:

> To believe that one exception can exist is to confuse what is the same with what is different. One illusion cherished and defended against the truth makes all truth meaningless, and all illusions real.... And faith in innocence is faith in sin, if the belief excludes one living thing and holds it out, apart from its forgiveness (T-22.II.4:3-4, 7).

**(9:1-5) Now are we saved indeed. For in God's Hands we rest untroubled, sure that only good can come to us. If we forget, we will be gently reassured. If we accept an unforgiving thought, it will be soon replaced by love's reflection. And if we are tempted to attack, we will appeal to Him Who guards our rest to make the choice for us that leaves temptation far behind.**

Jesus tells us once again we will forget, accepting unforgiving thoughts and being tempted to attack. However, now we know there is a Teacher within our minds Who will free us from our prisons of guilt. To be released, all that is required is the vigilance and discipline that says: my thought system does not make me happy. We then need to see how quickly we fall back into the ego's arms, as judgment, specialness, and sickness seem to embrace us. However, they do not arise unbidden. We have unconsciously chosen them as guardians of our individuality, meaning we still think we are right and Jesus is wrong, and need to defend this decision. Yet when we return to sanity and to him, we drop our swords of judgment and say:

**(9:6) No longer is the world our enemy, for we have chosen that we be its friend.**

When sin, guilt, and fear comprise our identity, the world indeed is our enemy, because our sin has been projected onto it. When Jesus is our friend, however, the world becomes our friend, because it teaches us his friendly lessons of forgiveness, the vision that sees the face of Christ in everyone. Helen's "The Mirror of Forgiveness" provides a lovely conclusion to this important lesson, expressing the vision that allows us to see the universe as a mirror, reflecting back to us Jesus' friendly purpose of awakening us to the holiness of God's Son:

**Lesson 194**

I cannot fail in anything. I am
Supported by the angels, led by God
Unto Himself. The Christ establishes
My own Identity as His. The love
Of all God's universe belongs to me.
What place has sorrow in my universe
When it is but a mirror for what God
Created as forever filled with joy?
Forgiveness is the mirror of His Love,
And it is this I would hold out to Him,
To catch the dream of holiness He gives,
And then to find that it is not a dream.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 30)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 195**
**Love is the way I walk in gratitude.**

Gratitude has been an important theme in several workbook lessons, and is referred to throughout the text as well. In this lesson, Jesus contrasts the ego's gratitude with ours to the Holy Spirit. The ego's notion of gratitude is based on differences, the core of the special relationship – I am grateful to one who is different from me. Our gratitude to the Holy Spirit, however, is based on oneness – I am grateful to learn you and I are not separate. At the end of the lesson, Jesus says gratitude is an aspect of the Love of God. If that Love is perfect oneness, then gratitude must reflect that unity. When we speak in this lesson of two kinds of gratitude, we thus speak of the contrast between differences and oneness.

**(1:1-6) Gratitude is a lesson hard to learn for those who look upon the world amiss. The most that they can do is see themselves as better off than others. And they try to be content because another seems to suffer more than they. How pitiful and deprecating are such thoughts! For who has cause for thanks while others have less cause? And who could suffer less because he sees another suffer more?**

This describes the gratitude typical of special relationships, based on the principle of *one or the other.* Examples abound: I am grateful you lost, because that means I won; I am grateful the lab test came back negative and I do not have cancer, even though other people were not so fortunate. I am grateful God saved me from this tragedy, even though He did not save you. I got what I wanted, even from God Himself; but if that meant someone had to miss out, I am certainly grateful it was not me. The popular saying "There but for the grace of God go I" is hardly a kind and loving thought. Thus is our gratitude based on differences, inherent in which is the notion of comparison. The following passage from *The Song of Prayer* highlights this insane idea, and I substitute *Gratitude-to-destroy* for *Forgiveness-to-destroy,* and *gratitude* for *forgiveness,* to illustrate the place *difference* and *comparison* holds in the ego's gratitude:

> *Gratitude-to-destroy* has many forms, being a weapon of the world of form. Not all of them are obvious, and some are carefully concealed beneath what seems like charity. Yet all the forms that it may seem to take have but this single goal; their purpose is to separate and make what God created equal, different. The difference is clear in several forms where the designed comparison cannot be missed, nor is it really meant to be.... All forms *gratitude* takes that do not lead away from anger, condemnation and comparisons of every kind are death. For that is what their purposes have set. Be not deceived by them, but lay them by as worthless in their tragic offerings (S-2.II.1; 8:1-3; italics mine)

**(1:7) Your gratitude is due to Him alone Who made all cause of sorrow disappear throughout the world.**

Our deepest gratitude is to the Holy Spirit, our Teacher of forgiveness and gratitude. The following passage nicely expresses this sentiment:

> The gratitude you owe to Him He asks but that you receive for Him. And when you look with gentle graciousness upon your brother, you are beholding

> Him.... When God has taken the last step Himself, the Holy Spirit will gather all the thanks and gratitude that you have offered Him, and lay them gently before His Creator in the Name of His most holy Son (T-19 .IV.3 :1-2,8).

**(2:1) It is insane to offer thanks because of suffering.**

This is the other side of the coin. I remember a friend of mine, a religious Catholic and not a student of *A Course in Miracles,* telling me of his experience one evening as he was driving home. The road conditions were poor and his car skidded off the road. As he headed into an embankment he kept saying: "Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus." It was only afterwards he realized there was something very wrong with that picture. He was thanking Jesus because that is what a good Catholic was supposed to do: thank him for providing this wonderful opportunity of perhaps being killed. At the same time, however, he was terrified of what seemed to await him. The above statement is aimed at undoing this insane thinking.

It makes sense to be grateful for suffering if we believe God demands atonement for our sins through pain and sacrifice, and that we will be rewarded after death by our acceptance into Heaven. This image of God makes no sense, however, to the sane mind. It is the way the world thinks, but certainly not the way God thinks – "And God thinks otherwise" (T-2312:7). We have no idea we but project our own vicious insanity onto Him:

> You think that everyone outside yourself demands your sacrifice, but you do not see that only you demand sacrifice, and only of yourself. Yet the demand of sacrifice is so savage and so fearful that you cannot accept it where it is.... To Him you ascribed the ego's treachery, inviting it to take His place to protect you from Him. And you do not recognize that it is what you invited in that would destroy you, and does demand total sacrifice of you (T-15. X.8:1-2, 5-6).

Thus Jesus teaches us to forgive God for our projections of specialness onto Him:

> God asks for your forgiveness. He would have no separation, like an alien will, rise between what He wills for you and what you will.... Forgive the great Creator of the universe, the Source of life, of love and holiness, the perfect Father of a perfect Son, for your illusions of your specialness.... Forgive the Holy One the specialness He could not give, and that you made instead (T-24.111.5:1-2; 6:1, 7).

**(2) It is insane to offer thanks because of suffering. But it is equally insane to fail in gratitude to One Who offers you the certain means whereby all pain is healed, and suffering replaced with laughter and with happiness. Nor could the *even* partly sane refuse to take the steps which He directs, and follow in the way He sets before them, to escape a prison that they thought contained no door to the deliverance they now perceive.**

The implication of these statements is that you must be completely insane if you turn your back on Jesus and not take the steps he asks of you. Even if you were partly sane you would listen to him, which means when you do not listen, you are not in your right mind. It is thus imperative to realize you should not then trust anything you think, believe, or feel. Whenever you have thoughts with even the slightest hint of specialness

– thoughts of comparison or differences – you have turned away from Jesus or the Holy Spirit and toward the ego, which means you are again insane. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to have you realize your insanity, so you may learn to become sane through the Holy Spirit's guidance:

> The Holy Spirit takes you gently by the hand, and retraces with you your mad journey outside yourself, leading you gently back to the truth and safety within. He brings all your insane projections and the wild substitutions that you have placed outside you to the truth. Thus He reverses the course of insanity and restores you to reason (T-18.I.8:3-5).

**(3:1) Your brother is your "enemy" because you see in him the rival for your peace; a plunderer who takes his joy from you, and leaves you nothing but a black despair so bitter and relentless that there is no hope remaining.**

This is the heart of the special love or hate relationship. You believe you lack, and what is missing someone took from you. Thus the only way to retrieve this "treasure" is to take it back—the ego's fourth laws of chaos:

> What is this precious thing, this priceless pearl, this hidden secret treasure, to be wrested in righteous wrath from this most treacherous and cunning enemy? It must be what you want but never found. And now you "understand" the reason why you found it not. For it was taken from you by this enemy, and hidden where you would not think to look. He hid it in his body.... [which must] be destroyed and sacrificed, that you may have that which belongs to you. His treachery demands his death, that you may live (T-23.11.11:2-8).

**(3:2-3) Now is vengeance all there is to wish for. Now can you but try to bring him down to lie in death with you, as useless as yourself; as little left within his grasping fingers as in yours.**

The ultimate goal of specialness, as Jesus repeatedly tells us in the text, is murder and death. I want your death, but mine as well, because death proves the ego right and God wrong. Jesus thus asks us to question how we could possibly be grateful to someone we secretly believe is stealing from us. Recall that the ego's governing principle is *one or the other:* If I am to be happy, you cannot be; if you are to be happy, I cannot be. Furthermore, since you are literally made in my image and likeness, I know you are out to do exactly what I do: get happiness at someone else's expense; steal love and give nothing in return. How can I possibly trust anyone, let alone be grateful, when I have made this thought system real in my mind? I have no choice but to kill in order to protect myself, as you must kill me. Recall this explicit – one might say too explicit – passage from the text:

> Yet let your specialness direct his [your brother's] way, and you will follow. And both will walk in danger, each intent, in the dark forest of the sightless, unlit but by the shifting tiny gleams that spark an instant from the fireflies of sin and then go out, to lead the other to a nameless precipice and hurl him over it. For what can specialness delight in but to kill? What does it seek for but the sight of death? Where does it lead but to destruction? (T-24.V.4:1-5)

**(4:1) You do not offer God your gratitude because your brother is more slave than you, nor could you sanely be enraged if he seems freer.**

You should not thank God because you have escaped injury when others have not—the meaning, again, of "There but for the grace of God go I"; nor should you be enraged if someone else has more than you: attention, love, money, or better health.

**(4:2) Love makes no comparisons.**

An almost identical line is found at the beginning of "The Treachery of Specialness." You know you have accepted the ego thought system if you are comparing your lack, for example, with another's abundance. This is a crucial concept in the ego's thought system of specialness:

> Comparison must be an ego device, for love makes none. Specialness always makes comparisons. It is established by a lack seen in another, and maintained by searching for, and keeping clear in sight, all lacks it can perceive. This does it seek, and this it looks upon (T-24.II.1 :1-4).

**(4:3) And gratitude can only be sincere if it be joined to love.**

Remember, love is perfect oneness. That is why it is impossible to love Jesus or be grateful to him if you believe he is different from you. Indeed, you *cannot* love someone you perceive as different – not the obvious superficial differences, but those we judge as significant – because you see them as having something you lack. Or: if you have it and they do not, the ego tells you: "It is yours because you stole it from them, and they are justified in stealing it back from you." The meaning of "gratitude can be sincere only if it be joined to love" is that I am grateful because you and I are the same, not different. Borrowing from a passage describing justice joined to love, I substitute *gratitude for justice* to illustrate this connection between love and gratitude:

> You can be perfect witness to the power of love and *gratitude....* Your special function shows you nothing else but perfect *gratitude* can prevail for you.... The world deceives, but it cannot replace God's *gratitude* with a version of its own. For only love ... can perceive what *gratitude* must accord the Son of God. Let love decide, and never fear that you, in your unfairness, will deprive yourself of what God's *gratitude* has allotted you (T-25.VIII.12:1; 14:3, 5-7; italics mine).

**(4:4-6) We offer thanks to God our Father that in us all things will find their freedom. It will never be that some are loosed while others still are bound. For who can bargain in the name of love?**

Sentence 5 is another reference to the gospels where Jesus teaches the apostles that whoever they bind or free are bound or freed. Here, however, Jesus teaches that it cannot be that some are forgiven and others condemned, some held in bondage and others freed. If the Sonship of God is one, what is true of one part must be true of all. If my experience is otherwise, I have identified with the ego that sees bargaining as the essential dynamic in all relationships:

> The ego .... is always willing to strike a bargain, but it cannot understand that to be like another means that no bargains are possible. To gain you must give, not bargain. To bargain is to limit giving, and this is not God's Will.... You *are* His gifts, and so your gifts must be like His (T-714:1-4,7).

**(5:1) Therefore give thanks, but in sincerity.**

Our gratitude is sincere only if it comes from truly wanting to return home and awaken from the dream. This means choosing Jesus as our teacher and learning his lessons; specifically, learning that any belief in differences will prevent our return. It is therefore our will to learn how wrong we have been in perceiving others and ourselves.

**(5:2-3) And let your gratitude make room for all who will escape with you; the sick, the weak, the needy and afraid, and those who mourn a seeming loss or feel apparent pain, who suffer cold or hunger, or who walk the way of hatred and the path of death. All these go with you.**

Jesus' point, again, is that no one is excluded from our grateful love. When we are outside the dream of pain and death, we smile happily, acknowledging this world is nothing more than a silly dream of separation, with no power to change the perfect Oneness of Father and Son:

> It should especially be noted that God has only *one* Son. If all His creations are His Sons, every one must be an integral part of the whole Sonship. The Sonship in its Oneness transcends the sum of its parts (T-2.VII.6:1-3).

**(5:4) Let us not compare ourselves with them, for thus we split them off from our awareness of the unity we share with them, as they must share with us.**

Comparison, again, is of the ego, preventing us from remembering God's knowledge:

> The ego literally lives by comparisons. Equality is beyond its grasp, and charity becomes impossible.... Knowledge never involves comparisons. That is its main difference from everything else the mind can grasp (T-4.II.7:1-2; 11:12-13).

To avoid knowledge of our undifferentiated oneness, we continually compare ourselves with others, blaming them for the differences between us.

**(6:1) We thank our Father for one thing alone; that we are separate from no living thing, and therefore one with Him.**

Thus, we are grateful to God, not because He gives us special gifts or spares our lives or those around us, but for the Love and Oneness that are His reality and ours as well.

Let me comment briefly about the phrase *living thing(s),* which appears throughout *A Course in Miracles.* To avoid confusion, you need to keep in mind, once again, that Jesus is not consistent in his language. He tells us "there is no life outside of

Heaven" (T-23.11.19:1), meaning there are no living things in the world. Yet in our bodily experience living things do exist. Because that is our experience, Jesus uses terms that are meaningful to us in the worldly context, even though nothing truly lives here. The language is inconsistent because Jesus' purpose is specific to the lesson he wants us to learn at any given point, which differs from his lessons elsewhere. Here, Jesus refers to our experience of separation, and thus we make comparisons between ourselves and what we perceive to be other living things—hence, the use of the phrase. The message within the dream is not that we are one, but that we share the same insanity and need to escape from the ego's madhouse. Practicing this lesson will eventually lead us to recognize the ultimate truth: "There *is* no life outside of Heaven."

**(6:2) And we rejoice that no exceptions ever can be made which would reduce our wholeness, nor impair or change our function to complete the One Who is Himself completion.**

From our point of view we complete God; but in truth He is already complete. The message here is that there are no exceptions to His completion. Therefore, within the illusion we must make no exceptions in our forgiveness. Only then can we remember our completion as Christ, God's one Son. This includes our creations – the extensions of our Self:

> Heaven waits silently, and your creations are holding out their hands to help you cross and welcome them. For it is they you seek. You seek but for your own completion, and it is they who render you complete.... Acceptance of your creations is the acceptance of the Oneness of creation, without which you could never be complete.... Across the bridge [leading from the world to Heaven] is your completion, for you will be wholly in God...completing Him by your completion (T-16.IV.8:1-3, 6; 9:1).

**(6:3) We give thanks for every living thing, for otherwise we offer thanks for nothing, and we fail to recognize the gifts of God to us.**

To be grateful to one person but not another is to "offer thanks for nothing," for that implicitly offers thanks for reinforcing the ego's thought system, which is nothing. Again, living things are whatever we perceive in our lives, and our gratitude is not for what they do for us, but to the One Who teaches us our perceptions of separation come from the mind's illusory thought system. Now aware the problem is not what we perceive outside but the separation thought inside, we can correct our mistaken decision. Thus do we see through the eyes of Christ, Whose vision teaches us our completion lies in "each living thing":

> The Christ in you is very still.... He looked upon you first, but recognized that you were not complete. And so He sought for your completion in each living thing that He beholds and loves. And seeks it still, that each might offer you the Love of God (T-24.V.6:1, 7-9).

**(7) Then let our brothers lean their tired heads against our shoulders as they rest a while. We offer thanks for them. For if we can direct them to the peace that we would find, the way is opening at last to us. An ancient door is swinging**

**free again; a long forgotten Word re-echoes in our memory, and gathers clarity as we are willing once again to hear.**

The ancient door is to our right minds, which hate had closed. However, realizing we have been wrong and the Holy Spirit right, allows the door to open. By helping others find peace—letting our forgiveness extend to everyone without exception – it is reinforced in ourselves. Thus does "an ancient hate ... [pass] from the world" (T-30.V.9:1), for "the holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love" (T-26.IX.6:1). The passing of hate allows our Self to open the door to our Self – God's one Son:

> He [Christ] stands beside the door to which forgiveness is the only key. Give it to Him to use instead of you, and you will see the door swing silently open upon the shining face of Christ. Behold your brother there beyond the door; the Son of God as He created Him (S-2.III.7:6-8).

**(8:1-2) Walk, then, in gratitude the way of love. For hatred is forgotten when we lay comparisons aside.**

True gratitude goes hand in hand with the oneness of love, and thus our gratitude to each other reflects the love Jesus holds out for us as a blessing:

> The Son of God is always blessed as one. And as his gratitude goes out to you who blessed him, reason will tell you that it cannot be you stand apart from blessing. The gratitude he offers you reminds you of the thanks your Father gives you for completing Him.... Your Father is as close to you as is your brother. Yet what is there that could be nearer you than is your Self? (T-21.VI.10:1-3, 5-6)

**(8:3-6) What more remains as obstacles to peace? The fear of God** [the last obstacle] **is now undone at last, and we forgive without comparing. Thus we cannot choose to overlook some things, and yet retain some other things still locked away as "sins." When your forgiveness is complete you will have total gratitude, for you will see that everything has earned the right to love by being loving, even as your Self.**

My Self is total love, and therefore everyone shares Its love as part of the Self. If someone believes he is outside that love, he deserves to be reminded of it. When I attack others, I tell them they do not deserve such remembrance. Yet I have failed to remember that by excluding them I but exclude myself – God's one Son. However, Jesus never tires of reminding me:

> Heaven is the gift you owe your brother, the debt of gratitude you offer to the Son of God in thanks for what he is, and what his Father created him to be (T-19.IV-D.19:6).

**(9:1-2) Today we learn to think of gratitude in place of anger, malice and revenge. We have been given everything.**

The ego tells us we have been given nothing and a serious lack exists in us,

which gives rise to the comparisons and bargains that are the hallmark of the special relationship. In answer, the Holy Spirit patiently teaches us of our abundance, and how to understand the ego's camouflaging it with attack – "anger, malice and revenge":

> One Teacher is in all minds and He teaches the same lesson to all. He always teaches you the inestimable worth of every Son of God, teaching it with infinite patience born of the infinite Love for which He speaks. Every attack is a call for His patience, since His patience can translate attack into blessing. Those who attack do not know they are blessed. They attack because they believe they are deprived. Give, therefore, of your abundance, and teach your brothers theirs. Do not share their illusions of scarcity, or you will perceive yourself as lacking (T-7.VII.7:2-8).

**(9:3) If we refuse to recognize it, we are not entitled therefore to our bitterness, and to a self-perception which regards us in a place of merciless pursuit, where we are badgered ceaselessly, and pushed about without a thought or care for us or for our future.**

You may recall this important idea from Lesson 166: We are never justified in perceiving ourselves unfairly treated – abandoned, betrayed, or persecuted. Such a statement, taken out of context, seems cruel indeed; not so, however, when its central point is understood: all this is chosen – *by us.* In place of gratitude to God or the Holy Spirit for reminding us of our oneness as Christ, we chose anger, malice, and revenge, believing we lack what we need. Amnesia followed as we denied that we deprived ourselves by turning away from God and His Voice, throwing away Heaven's treasure by treasuring instead a separated self. We believed we were lacking, but listening to the ego's lies we concluded it was because someone took the treasure from us. This misperception justified our attempts to get it back, the genesis of specialness' dynamic of attack. Therefore, if we refuse to recognize we already have everything, it is the fault of no one; not society, the educational system, our parents, spouses, lovers, bodies, or some bacteria. If we feel something is missing in us, it is only because *we* chose against the love and the abundance of Heaven:

> You have so little faith in yourself because you are unwilling to accept the fact that perfect love is in you (T-15.VI.2:1).

We are thus not entitled to our bitterness because people badger us, relentlessly pursue us, or push us around with no care taken for our welfare. Jesus tells us we are not justified in our complaints and accusations because they are not true – our feelings, again, come from our decision. Yet we are not urged to give up our thought system of victimization, but simply asked not to justify it, learning to recognize the pain it brings us – holding on is not without cost. Going to Jesus for help allows us to see how wrong we were in believing we were innocent victims, for his love teaches us we but victimized ourselves. Recall:

> The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself (T-27.VIII.10:1).

We will return to this important theme in the next lesson.

**(9:4-6) Gratitude becomes the single thought we substitute for these insane perceptions. God has cared for us, and calls us Son. Can there be more than this?**

The way I recognize myself as God's Son is through the daily practice of the principle of oneness – especially when I am tempted to believe others are out to get me, or they have something I need. Gratitude, once again, is not for what I receive, but for the awareness that we are one. I am thus grateful for the opportunity my misperceptions provided, because they enabled me to understand there is another way of looking at what I am seeing. In this way the specialness my ego used to attack becomes Jesus' way of teaching me to forgive. Moreover, my plea for another way put me in touch with Jesus' love, the other way of looking. Thus I am grateful for the classroom and teacher who reminds me of who I am, undoing all perceptions of victimization and leading me to the God Whose Love I have always sought:

> Trust Him Whose Voice you heard, and do not think He does not hear your frightened voice that calls in whispered agony.... Do not despair of Him Who loves you with an everlasting Love; Who knows your need and watches over you in everything with ceaseless vigilance.
>
> Do not forget His thanks, and understand the gratitude of God goes far beyond all things the world can offer, for His Gifts will last forever in His Heart and ours. Be thankful for His Love and for His care ....
>
> And so our Father Himself says to us:
>
> You are My Son.... Come ... open your heart and let Me shine on you .... You are My light and dwelling place.... I call in love, as you will answer Me.... Remember love, so near you cannot fail to touch its heart because it beats in you *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 127-28).

**(10:1-2) Our gratitude will pave the way to Him, and shorten our learning time by more than you could ever dream of. Gratitude goes hand in hand with love, and where one is the other must be found.**

Love is the perfect Oneness of God and Christ, from which no one is excluded. Therefore, watch how you exclude people and then justify the attack. See the temptation to find allies and attach your gratitude to feeling you were proven right. Then take the next step and realize how unhappy that makes you in the end – specialness was not what you thought, for it did not give you what you wanted. You are not studying *A Course in Miracles* so you will be happier in the dream – the goal of specialness – but for the little steps of forgiveness that lead you to awaken from the dream. Yet its path takes discipline and diligence in monitoring your ego thoughts, for resistance to love is great.

**(10:3) For gratitude is but an aspect of the Love which is the Source of all creation.**

Gratitude, in this sense, is not of God, but a correction for the ego's lack of gratitude. It is an aspect, or right-minded reflection of His Love.

**(10:4) God gives thanks to you, His Son, for being what you are; His Own completion and the Source of love, along with Him.**

Needless to say, God does not give thanks. These are lovely and comforting thoughts that convey a love that transcends our understanding, and which find echo in "The Gifts of God":

> There is no gift of faith that God does not accept with gratitude. He loves His Son. And as He gives His gifts to him, so is He grateful for the gifts His Son gives Him. Gratitude is the song of Heaven's gift, the single harmony that is sung by all creation at one with its Creator. For gratitude is love expressed in joining; the necessary precondition for extension and the requisite for peace *(The Gifts of God,* p. 123).

**(10:5-6) Your gratitude to Him is one with His to you. For love can walk no road except the way of gratitude, and thus we go who walk the way to God.**

If you are truly sincere about returning home, you will be sincere about practicing the forgiveness that will accomplish your goal. When you are tempted to say forgiveness is too difficult to achieve, remember the one who asks, telling you that you can. Realize that your ungrateful protestations reflect your having placed yourself in the position of knowing better than Jesus. In the end, our gratitude is to God, Whose Love teaches us to look differently on everyone and everything in the world. We close with these lovely lines of gratitude from "The Gifts of God":

> Child of Eternal Love, what gift is there your Father wants of you except yourself'? And what is there that you would rather give, for what is there that you would rather have? You have forgotten Who you really are.... Hear the call of love to love, by love, in love to you, and rise with love beside you to return the gift of love that God has given you, and you have given Him in gratitude *(The Gifts of God,* p. 125).

**Lesson 196**

Except the Word of truth can liberate
Whom he imprisons? Let him be Himself,
And not one star can lose a single gleam,
Or flicker in uncertain galaxy
Without a purpose and without a cause.
No blade of grass but rises perfectly
From earth toward Heaven. And no sin appears
To hold in shadows whom all Heaven loves.
God does not crucify. He merely is.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 91)

Now we are ready to take the second step, Lesson 197.

* *Absence from Felicity,* p. 251.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 197**
**It can be but my gratitude I earn.**

In addition to continuing the theme of the previous lesson, this one elaborates on some of the ideas we discussed in Lesson 195, including the unity of gratitude and love that reflects the oneness of our reality in Heaven.

**(1:1) Here is the second step we take to free your mind from the belief in outside force pitted against your own.**

The thrust of the ego's strategy is to have us believe, beyond any doubt, that there are outside forces pitted against us.

**(1:2-4) You make attempts at kindness and forgiveness. Yet you turn them to attack again, unless you find external gratitude and lavish thanks. Your gifts must be received with honor, lest they be withdrawn.**

This is the ego's version of giving, the core of the special relationship: *giving to get.* Thus, I will give you kindness, forgiveness, and whatever else you want, but in return I demand your gratitude, loyalty, love, and attention. Jesus exposes the nature of this giving: If your gratitude to me is lacking, I see how quickly I become resentful and bitter, which means there was a subtle hook in my giving. In other words, if you show you are not worthy of my gift, I will take it back. After all, I did my part – being loving, giving, kind, and generous – but you were not properly appreciative. Borrowing the phrase *forgiveness-to-destroy* from *The Song of Prayer, we* can speak of this as *giving-to-destroy,* and we shall return to it below. For now, re-read this description from the text of the ego's version of giving – i.e., bargaining – in contrast to Heaven's limitless giving, reflecting its Oneness:

> The ego ... always demands reciprocal rights, because it is competitive rather than loving. It is always willing to strike a bargain, but it cannot understand that to be like another means that no bargains are possible. To gain you must give, not bargain. To bargain is to limit giving, and this is not God's Will.... God does not limit His gifts in any way (T-7.I.4:1-4, 6).

This does not mean people should not be grateful and appreciative to us, but for their own benefit, not ours. We have simply let the gift of Jesus' love extend through us, and allowing that to happen is our only concern. We leave to others their reactions to this gift.

**(1:5) And so you think God's gifts are loans at best; at worst, deceptions which would cheat you of defenses, to ensure that when He strikes He will not fail to kill.**

I secretly believe God's gifts are not eternal or totally loving. They ask something of me, and if I do not give Him what He wants, He will surely kill me. I therefore need to retain my defenses, for if I allow God into my life I will have given Him my ego, leaving me totally vulnerable to His destruction of my sinful self, as we now read:

> Sin is not error, for it goes beyond correction to impossibility. Yet the belief

that it is real has made some errors seem forever past the hope of healing, and the lasting grounds for hell. If this were so, would Heaven be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it. Then would God's Will be split in two, and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His Love at last to vengeance's heels (T-26.VII.7:1-5).

What I think about God is acted out in my special and holy relationships, for what I believe is true of Him I must believe is true for everyone in my life:

> He [your brother] represents his Father, Whom you see as offering both life and death to you.... what you see as gifts your brother offers represent the gifts you dream your Father gives to you (T-27.VII.15:7; 16:2).

**(2:1) How easily are God and guilt confused by those who know not what their thoughts can do.**

In "The Ego-Body Illusion," Jesus speaks of the insanity of a thought system that cannot distinguish between Thoughts of God and thoughts of the body. The ego tells us we should be afraid of God *and* the body. How insane to be afraid of two mutually exclusive things, Jesus explains, for we end up being afraid of love *and* guilt! Thus do we confuse God and the body, believing both will hurt us. Here is the relevant passage:

> A major source of the ego's off-balanced state is its lack of discrimination between the body and the Thoughts of God. Thoughts of God are unacceptable to the ego, because they clearly point to the nonexistence of the ego itself. The ego therefore either distorts them or refuses to accept them. It cannot, however, make them cease to be. It therefore tries to conceal not only "unacceptable" body impulses, but also the Thoughts of God, because both are threatening to it. Being concerned primarily with its own preservation in the face of threat, the ego perceives them as the same. By perceiving them as the same, the ego attempts to save itself from being swept away, as it would surely be in the presence of knowledge.
>
> Any thought system that confuses God and the body must be insane. Yet this confusion is essential to the ego, which judges only in terms of threat or non-threat to itself. In one sense the ego's fear of God is at least logical, since the idea of Him does dispel the ego. But fear of the body, with which the ego identifies so closely, makes no sense at all (T-4.V.2-3).

**(2:2) Deny your strength, and weakness must become salvation to you.**

When I deny the strength of Christ, I am left to depend only on my ego's weakness, which on the one hand I am told is strength. On the other hand, however, the ego leads me to buttress my weakness by stealing what I perceive to be other people's strength. That is the cannibalistic aspect of specialness, vividly described in the following passage from the text:

> You think it safer to endow the little self you made with power you wrested

> from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless. See how exactly is this ritual enacted in the special relationship. An altar is erected in between two separate people, on which each seeks to kill his self, and on his body raise another self to take its power from his death. Over and over and over this ritual is enacted.... The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning (T-16.V.11:3-6; 12:4).

This insane thought system has never left its source in the mind that believes it has indeed killed God and lives off His strength. Yet is its underlying weakness reinforced by guilt, which to the ego is its only real strength.

**(2:3-4) See yourself as bound, and bars become your home. Nor will you leave the prison house, or claim your strength, until guilt and salvation are not seen as one, and freedom and salvation are perceived as joined, with strength beside them, to be sought and claimed, and found and fully recognized.**

Recall Lesson 39, "My holiness is my salvation," where Jesus spoke of our confusing guilt and holiness, thus equating guilt with salvation. He makes the same point here, and it explains the attractiveness of guilt to the ego. The ego's first tier of defense is to make guilt real, because this confirms the reality of the separation. I next project the guilt and see it in you, the second tier. I am thus attracted to finding guilt in others because that lets me off the hook – the first obstacle to peace. This dynamic becomes the source of my "strength," and I fail to recognize it as imprisonment – when I attack you and keep you in prison I am as confined as well. We seem to be on opposite sides of the bars, but in truth are both imprisoned by the thought system of guilt and punishment.

**(3:1-2) The world must thank you when you offer it release from your illusions. Yet your thanks belong to you as well, for its release can only mirror yours.**

This is so because the mind and world are one. When I heal my mind by asking Jesus' help, the world is healed accordingly, as there is no world apart from my thoughts. Thus when I change my mind, I am grateful to the decision maker that realized its mistake. My gratitude to Jesus or the Holy Spirit – important for me to feel – reflects my gratitude to myself for having made the right choice. I chose against Them; I can change my mind and choose for Them.

**(3:3-5) Your gratitude is all your gifts require, that they be a lasting offering of a thankful heart, released from hell forever. Is it this you would undo by taking back your gifts, because they were not honored? It is you who honor them and give them fitting thanks, for it is you who have received the gifts.**

I am grateful because I chose to recognize the insanity of the ego's thought system, thereby releasing myself from hell. My gifts to you, therefore, are not really to you, but gifts to myself – you are simply a split-off part of me. It makes no difference whether the figure in my dream I call "you" is grateful or not. *My* gratitude for the gifts I

give is required, not yours. It may be important that you experience gratitude, but that has nothing to do with me. I realize that if this is truly a gift of love, the gift is the love of Jesus I chose in my mind that extended through me. The end product of that extension is of no concern. My task is only to choose the miracle. What follows my decision is irrelevant to me. Recall:

> Concern yourself not with the extension of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do not understand. Nor do you do them. It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you do not do them. Why should you worry how the miracle extends to all the Sonship when you do not understand the miracle itself? (T-16.II.1:3-6)

**(4) It does not matter if another thinks your gifts unworthy. In his mind there is a part that joins with yours in thanking you. It does not matter if your gifts seem lost and ineffectual. They are received where they are given. In your gratitude are they accepted universally, and thankfully acknowledged by the Heart of God Himself. And would you take them back, when He has gratefully accepted them?**

It does not matter whether others appreciate your gifts – part of their minds does. This is why we are asked in Lesson 181 to trust our brothers who are one with us. Our brother's ego is not one with us, anymore than our ego is one with him. Rather, we trust that the light of Christ shines in him, despite his ego, reinforcing the fact that the same light shines in us, despite our specialness. We are thus grateful for the Atonement's truth that we and our brothers are one, in the unity of which we remember our oneness with God, acknowledging the Heart of God Himself.

Our gifts are received in the mind of God's Son because they are given in the mind of God's Son, who is one. When we give through the holy instant by having chosen Jesus as our teacher, we remember we are this Son, and therefore know that we give and receive but *to* ourselves, *from* ourselves – giving and receiving are indivisible. That is why it is *our* gratitude we earn – the gratitude of God's Son. Whether or not we specifically acknowledge it is unimportant, for since our minds are one, there is a part of us that has already acknowledged it.

This same thinking, by the way, underlies the manual's passages on healing, specifically those where Jesus addresses the issue of whether healing should be repeated (M-7). His answer is "no," because when you offer healing it is accepted. In that context, Jesus makes the seemingly outrageous statement that to be continually concerned about someone is really an attack, not an expression of love. In your concern you see the other person as different from you, part of the ego's hateful dream of separation, born of mistrust of the Holy Spirit's Atonement:

> One of the most difficult temptations to recognize is that to doubt a healing because of the appearance of continuing symptoms is a mistake in the form of lack of trust. As such it is an attack. Usually it seems to be just the opposite. It does appear unreasonable at first to be told that continued concern is attack. It has all the appearances of love. Yet love without trust is impossible, and doubt and trust cannot coexist. And hate must be the opposite of love, regardless of the form it takes. Doubt not the gift and it is impossible to doubt its result (M-7.4:1-8).

When you offer healing it is received, the same principle found here, for the mind

of God's Son is one. You offer healing and forgiveness only to yourself, because there is no one else. To be preoccupied with the words or actions of others is part of the ego's plan to divert us from Heaven's Oneness. You cannot understand these teachings, nor their personal application if you do not understand their underlying metaphysics. If you do not know we are one in Heaven as Christ, and one in this world as an ego, these statements will make no sense, for you will think Jesus is saying something other than what is clearly contained in his words and teaching.

**(5:1-2) God blesses every gift you give Him, and every gift is given Him, because it can be given only to yourself. And what belongs to God must be His Own.**

The reasoning implied in this statement is that I give only to myself, because I am the one mind of God's one Son, Who is one with his Source. This theme of oneness is crucial, for it undoes the belief in separation, on which the ego and its world rest. We undo their thought system by reflecting Heaven's unity here, learning we all share the goal of returning to our innocence as part of God's perfect and shining creation:

> There is no gift the Father asks of you but that you see in all creation but the shining glory of His gift to you. Behold His Son, His perfect gift, in whom his Father shines forever, and to whom is all creation given as his own. Because he has it is it given you, and where it lies in him behold your peace. The quiet that surrounds you dwells in him, and from this quiet come the happy dreams in which your hands are joined in innocence (T-29.V.5:1-4).

**(5:3) Yet you will never realize His gifts are sure, eternal, changeless, limitless, forever giving out, extending love and adding to your never-ending joy while you forgive but to attack again.**

Jesus describes *forgiveness-to-destroy* or *giving-to-destroy,* and asks us to be mindful of the ego's specialness, the telltale sign of which is the perception of separation and differences that this dynamic fosters, as we now read:

> Forgiveness-to-destroy has many forms, being a weapon of the world of form. Not all of them are obvious, and some are carefully concealed beneath what seems like charity. Yet all the forms that it may seem to take have but this single goal; their purpose is to separate and make what God created equal, different (S-2.II.1:1-3).

Therefore, be discerning for any subtle hook in your being loving and helpful to others. If and when you find that hook of separation, do not jump all over yourself and feel guilty, but say to Jesus: "There I go again, trying to change your love into mine. I realize now this will not make me happy." Yet how can you say that to him without first recognizing what you do? Pay careful attention and be aware of what you lose by the giving-to-get of specialness: I want you to like, appreciate, and love me, and so I will be kind and helpful. If you are truly being kind and helpful, however, it is because you have allowed the love of Jesus to flow through you. At that point there is no investment in form or outcome, and certainly no investment in external gratitude. What remains is the gratitude to yourself for having welcomed love back into your life.

**(6:1) Withdraw the gifts you give, and you will think that what is given you has been withdrawn.**

Even though the word *projection* is not used, this is what Jesus describes. If I withdraw gifts from you, I will feel guilty over my attack, reminding me of the original attack when I believed I withdrew the gifts of love from God. I project my overwhelming and thus unacceptable guilt, thus believing God is withdrawing His gifts from me. I manifest this dynamic in my personal life in the belief that people will do to me what I secretly accuse myself of doing to them. If I withhold love from others I will expect them to withhold it from me, and will easily find many such instances – real or otherwise – that will prove I am right and Jesus is wrong. It is as if I run back to him and say: "For your information, let me show you just how insensitive people are; how unkind, unloving, and ungrateful." This previously quoted passage succinctly summarizes the ego's bread-and-butter dynamic of sin, guilt, and projection:

> Attack could never promote attack unless you perceived it as a means of depriving you of something you want. Yet you cannot lose anything unless you do not value it, and therefore do not want it. This makes you feel deprived of it, and by projecting your own rejection you then believe that others are taking it from you. You must be fearful if you believe that your brother is attacking you to tear the Kingdom of Heaven from you. This is the ultimate basis for all the ego's projection.... Projecting its insane belief that you have been treacherous to your Creator, it believes that your brothers, who are as incapable of this as you are, are out to take God from you. Whenever a brother attacks another, that *is* what he believes. Projection always sees your wishes in others. If you choose to separate yourself from God, that is what you will think others are doing to you (T-7.VII.8; 9:2-5).

Yet Jesus' only response to my accusations is a gentle tap on the shoulder, saying: "My brother look at this again. You believe *you* are the one who is insensitive, unkind, unloving, and ungrateful." Recall the Holy Spirit's correction of our anger from the manual for teachers, which gently undoes the guilt that gave rise to our projected wrath:

> You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong. But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes. God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world. His Love remains the only thing there is. Fear is illusion, for you are like Him (M-18.3:7-12; italics omitted).

**(6:2-3) But learn to let forgiveness take away the sins you think you see outside yourself, and you can never think the gifts of God are lent but for a little while, before He snatches them away again in death. For death will have no meaning for you then.**

Just about everyone believes God gives us life, and when He is good and ready takes that life away. Here is one such description of God's vicious insanity:

> In this perception of the universe [in which all things die] as God created it, it would be impossible to think of Him as loving. For who has decreed that all things pass away, ending in dust and disappointment and despair, can but be feared. He holds your little life in his hand but by a thread, ready to break it off without regret or care, perhaps today. Or if he waits, yet is the ending certain (M-27.2:1-4).

Deep within our minds, therefore, the ego tells us death's inevitability is proof of our sin, which is why God treats us so heavy-handedly. When we realize what we are doing and how unhappy it makes us, we plead: "There must be another way and another teacher." Thus we go within and ask Jesus for help, looking at everything differently and without concern for outcome. How can anything concern us when we feel the love and peace that comes from outside the world of illusion? That is Jesus' plea to us here.

**(7:1-2) And with the end of this belief is fear forever over. Thank your Self for this for He is grateful only unto God, and He gives thanks for you unto Himself.**

The *you* He thanks is the decision maker that chooses Him. This is similar to what we saw in Lesson 182, where the little Child is grateful for our taking Him home. Obviously, it is not Christ Who is returned home; we but take ourselves.

**(7:3) To everyone who lives will Christ yet come, for everyone must live and move in Him.**

The concluding phrase is taken from St. Paul's statement in the Acts of the Apostles (17:28). It is quoted several times in *A Course in Miracles,* and we will see it again in Lesson 222. The key point is the oneness of creation, reflected in everyone's seemingly separated mind. Thus Jesus says: "to everyone who lives will Christ yet come" – He has already come!

**(7:4-5) His Being in His Father is secure, because Their Will is One. Their gratitude to all They have created has no end, for gratitude remains a part of love.**

There is no division in Heaven, and therefore all division here is illusory. Read Jesus' joyous acclamation of this happy truth:

God's Oneness and ours are not separate, because His Oneness encompasses ours. To join with me is to restore His power to you because we are sharing it. I offer you only the recognition of His power in you, but in that lies all truth. As we unite, we unite with Him. Glory be to the union of God and His holy Sons! All glory lies in Them *because* They are united. The miracles we do bear witness to the Will of the Father for His Son, and to our joy in uniting with His Will for us (T-8.V.3).

**(8:1-2) Thanks be to you, the holy Son of God. For as you were created, you contain all things within your Self.**

In Lesson 195 we discussed the meaning of *living things.* In saying "you contain all things within yourself," Jesus teaches that the separated fragments of the Sonship are contained within each of us. I need only choose to be with him, and in that holy

instant *I* become the memory of Christ, in which I realize the unity of God's Son. Recall Jesus' prayer to God on our behalf:

> I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son. Your Holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them. And they are joined because what is in one is in them all. How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part (T-28.IV.9).

**(8:3) And you are still as God created you.**

Regardless of the ego's lies, the fact remains that the oneness of my Self has never changed. I remain the sinless Son that God created, as Helen's "Our Daily Bread" quietly reminds us:

> Let me this day arise in quietness
> With only thoughts of sinlessness, through which
> To look upon the world. Let me today
> Behold the world as You would have it be,
> Because I am as You created me.
> This I accept today. And as the day
> Draws to a close, all unforgiving thoughts
> Have disappeared, and night comes quietly
> To bless a day in quietness begun,
> And ending in forgiveness of God's Son.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 5)

**(8:4-5) Nor can you dim the light of your perfection. In your heart the Heart of God is laid.**

In my right mind – which is what Jesus means by "heart" – is found the memory of the Heart of God. I realize the two are one, and in that experience the world disappears along with the separated mind, and I am back in the Heart I never left.

**(8:6-9:2) He holds you dear, because you are Himself. All gratitude belongs to you, because of what you are.**
**Give thanks as you receive it. Be you free of all ingratitude to anyone who makes your Self complete.**

Watch your ingratitude, and realize that if you feel unfairly treated, you state that others are different and separate from you. Thus have you again crucified Christ and His perfect Oneness. Therefore, when you find yourself tempted to exclude anyone from His Love, recognize what you are doing to your Self, and you will have happily earned your gratitude.

**(9:3-4) And from this Self is no one left outside. Give thanks for all the countless channels which extend this Self.**

These "countless channels" are everything we perceive to be outside us, for each contains the memory of God's Love that is within us, which we remember through forgiveness. We begin with our brothers and gratefully end with ourselves, the only true gift we can give to our Self Recall the end of Helen's poem, "He Asks but This," which describes the gift to God of our forgiveness:

> For there remains within me still one gift
> That yet is worthy to be given Him.
> Let me forgive myself. For that is all
> He asks and needs. And He will take this gift,
> And bring it to His Father from Himself.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 37)

**(9:5-6) All that you do is given unto Him. All that you think can only be His Thoughts, sharing with Him the holy Thoughts of God.**

A lovely way to speak of perfect Oneness.

**(9:7) Earn now the gratitude you have denied yourself when you forgot the function God has given you.**

The function God has given us in Heaven is to create, and in this world to forgive:

> The Holy Spirit forgives everything because God created everything. Do not undertake His function, or you will forget yours. Accept only the function of healing in time, because that is what time is for. God gave you the function to create in eternity. You do not need to learn that, but you do need to learn to want it. For that all learning was made. This is the Holy Spirit's use of an ability that you do not need, but that you made. Give it to Him! (T-9.III.8:1-8)

And so we shall, earning our gratitude, as we gratefully receive Heaven's.

**(9:8) But never think that He has ever ceased to offer thanks to you.**

Again, it is not that God literally thanks us. This statement merely expresses the truth that we are always part of God and He part of us – the unity of His Love is our reality as Christ. Jesus speaks of gratitude because there is such lack of gratitude here, and he needs us to become increasingly aware of this ingratitude for our brothers, as well as for the classrooms in which we learn to remember who we are as God's one Son. Throughout our day, therefore, we need realize how much we wish to move away from this truth because it frightens us, and the joy of our gratitude when we accept it. We close with this passage from the text, beautifully summarizing our final point, as well as the entire lesson:

> How could the Lord of Heaven not be glad if you appreciate His masterpiece? What could He do but offer thanks to you who love His Son as He does? Would He not make known to you His Love, if you but share His praise of what He loves? God cherishes creation as the perfect Father that He is. And so

His joy is made complete when any part of Him joins in His praise, to share His joy. This brother is His perfect gift to you. And He is glad and thankful when you thank His perfect Son for being what he is. And all His thanks and gladness shine on you who would complete His joy, along with Him. And thus is yours completed. Not one ray of darkness can be seen by those who will to make their Father's happiness complete, and theirs along with His. The gratitude of God Himself is freely offered to everyone who shares His purpose. It is not His Will to be alone. And neither is it yours...

You and your brother are the same, as God Himself is One and not divided in His Will. And you must have one purpose, since He gave the same to both of you. His Will is brought together as you join in will, that you be made complete by offering completion to your brother. See not in him the sinfulness he sees, but give him honor that you may esteem yourself and him. To you and your brother is given the power of salvation, that escape from darkness into light be yours to share; that you may see as one what never has been separate, nor apart from all God's Love as given equally (T-2511.9, 11).

Lesson 198

Only my condemnation injures me.

This is another in the current series where Jesus emphasizes that we are responsible for what we feel, be it gratitude, injury, or thoughts of victimization. In other words, the world in and of itself has no power over us, for our pain and joy come only from the mind's decision. Thus, when it seems *A Course in Miracles* is impossible to do, let alone understand, it is because we believe the ego's thought system is all powerful, in the face of which we are helpless victims and incapable of change. Jesus teaches, however, there is indeed hope, because the power to make us miserable rests within us, and there is nothing outside that can hurt us in any way. Again, the hopelessness of learning this course comes simply from not accepting Jesus' lessons about the mind. This is expressed in different ways throughout this lesson, which focuses almost exclusively on forgiveness – the power of the mind to choose again. Thus we forgive others for what they have *not* done, for they have not made us unhappy or brought us pain.

(1:1-4) Injury is impossible. And yet illusion makes illusion. If you can condemn, you can be injured. For you have believed that you can in jure, and the right you have established for yourself can be now used agai nst you, till you lay it down as valueless, unwanted and unreal.

From Jesus' point of view – outside the dream, to where he calls us to join him – injury and death are impossible. Yet as long as we make real the thought system of separation, which means we killed God so we could live, those illusory thoughts will produce an equally illusory world and body – "illusion makes illusion." If we believe we have condemned God, we must believe we can be injured by Him, for our sin demands we be punished. The same is true of our experiences in the world: If we attack others, we will believe attack will be used against us. Having made it real, we watch attack run its "natural" course of attack breeding itself:

> By believing that you have successfully attacked truth, you are believing that attack has power (T-11.V.10:6).

Thus we believe the power of our attack – sin – justifies our guilt, which then demands our punishment by attack coming from another. This dynamic of fear of punishment being engendered by projected guilt over attack thoughts is expressed in this passage I quoted earlier:

> ... those who project are vigilant for their own safety. They are afraid that their projections will return and hurt them. Believing they have blotted their projections from their own minds, they also believe their projections are trying to creep back in. Since the projections have not left their minds, they are forced to engage in constant activity in order not to recognize this (T-7.VIII.3:9-12).

Thus guilt demands that the attack thoughts we displaced onto others be inflicted on us in return. This warrants defense, the "constant activity" needed to protect ourselves from recognizing what projection has wrought and guilt has protected.

Again, by establishing my separate identity by attack – I attacked God so I could exist – I have made attack real. Because of projection, I must believe attack will be used against me. This insanity continues until I realize attack, condemnation, and hurt are of

no value to me. This realization occurs in the holy instant, when I step outside the dream with Jesus to finally see what the ego has been up to, and the disastrous consequences of my having identified with its thought system of guilt and hate. Recall these lines:

> The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find (T-31.I.7:4-8).

(1:5) Then does illusion cease to have effects, and those it seemed to have will be undone.

The mind's thought system will be undone, along with its seeming effects – pain and suffering – when I am outside the dream and no longer experience myself as a body. Recall this discussion on our mind's decision to be sick – its power versus the powerlessness of the body:

> ...sickness is an election; a decision.... Healing must occur in exact proportion to which the valuelessness of sickness is recognized. One need but say, "There is no gain at all to me in this" and he is healed. But to say this, one first must recognize certain facts. First, it is obvious that decisions are of the mind, not of the body. If sickness is but a faulty problem- solving approach, it is a decision. And if it is a decision, it is the mind and not the body that makes it (M-5.I.1:4; II.1:1-6).

Therefore, by undoing the *cause* – the decision to be a sick body – we also undo the *effect* – the physical (or psychological) symptom.

(1:6) Then are you free, for freedom is your gift, and you can now receive the gift you gave.

The freedom of which Jesus speaks, as we will see in a moment, is forgiveness. This allows me to release you from the prison of guilt in which I put you, at the same time – since minds are joined – it frees me from the same prison house. Note this similar statement from the text:

> Whom you forgive is given power to forgive you your illusions. By your gift of freedom is it given unto you (T-29.III.3:12-13).

(2:1-3) Condemn and you are made a prisoner. Forgive and you are freed. Such is the law that rules perception.

Since you are part of me, when I attack you I also attack myself, and we both will be imprisoned in the jail of hate. When I choose to release the hate, however, I also release you. It is important to remember this has nothing to do with your experience of yourself, but only with how I see you; a choice that reflects how I see myself – condemned or free:

> All that must be forgiven are the illusions you have held against your

> brothers. Their reality has no past, and only illusions can be forgiven.... Release your brothers from the slavery of their illusions by forgiving them for the illusions you perceive in them. Thus will you learn that you have been forgiven, for it is you who offered them illusions (T-16.VII.9:2-3, 5-6).

(2:4) It is not a law that knowledge understands, for freedom is a part of knowledge.

Knowledge – Heaven, God, truth – does not understand forgiveness, nor the need for correction to experience freedom, our natural state. Our will is part of God's Oneness, and so there can be no sin of separation to forgive or undo. Yet within the dream there is the need for true perception to correct the ego's false perception of sin and guilt. Thus we need forgiveness, salvation, and Atonement – one and the same, as we read in this previously quoted passage:

> Knowledge is not the remedy for false perception since, being another level, they can never meet. The one correction possible for false perception must be true perception.... a remedy with many names. Forgiveness, salvation, Atonement, true perception, all are one. They are the one beginning, with the end to lead to oneness far beyond themselves. True perception is the means by which the world is saved from sin, for sin does not exist. And it is this that true perception sees (C-4.3:1-2, 5-9; italics omitted).

(2:5-7) To condemn is thus impossible in truth. What seems to be its influence and its effects have not occurred at all. Yet must we deal with them a while as if they had.

Jesus again provides his rationale for speaking as though the body's world of time and space were real; as if God knows us and created the Holy Spirit in response to our needs; as if we have to forgive someone outside us. Since our dualistic experience demands he address us that way, we speak of Levels One and Two. The former contrasts reality and illusion, while the latter contrasts our wrong- and right- minded experience within the dream. As we have seen: "This course remains within the ego framework, where it is needed" (C-in.3:1).

(2:8-10) Illusion makes illusion. Except one. Forgiveness is illusion that is answer to the rest.

Jesus points out many times that forgiveness is an illusion. Therefore, how could God have anything to do with it? How could He have given us the Holy Spirit Who teaches us to forgive, if He does not know of this? Once again, these are metaphors or symbols that reflect a love beyond them. Forgiveness, though, is the one illusion that undoes the rest. Not the truth, it yet makes way for it as it does not oppose its coming. It simply removes the barriers to our remembering the truth that has always been within us. Recall this oft-cited passage that reflects the Course's Level Two discourse:

> Forgiveness, then, is an illusion, but because of its purpose, which is the Holy Spirit's, it has one difference. Unlike all other illusions it leads away from error and not towards it.

> Forgiveness might be called a kind of happy fiction; a way in which the unknowing can bridge the gap between their perception and the truth (C-3.1:3-2:1).

(3) Forgiveness sweeps all other dreams away, and though it is itself a dream, it breeds no others. All illusions save this one must multiply a thousandfold. Bu t this is where illusions end. Forgiveness is the end of dreams, because it is a dream of waking. It is not itself the truth. Yet does it point to where the truth must be, and gives direction with the certainty of God Him self. It is a dream in which the S on of God awak ens to his Self and to his Father, knowing They are one.

Attack breeds attack, guilt fosters guilt; yet forgiveness, though illusory itself, brings illusions to an end in the mind that chose them, but now chooses against them. We might say, then, that forgiveness is the mechanism of the happy dream, which helps us awaken from the dream entirely, remembering Who we are as God's eternal Son.

> A dream is given you in which he is your savior, not your enemy in hate. A dream is given you in which you have forgiven him for all his dreams of death; a dream of hope you share with him, instead of dreaming evil separate dreams of hate.... Forgiving dreams are means to step aside from dreaming of a world outside yourself. And leading finally beyond all dreams, unto the peace of everlasting life (T-29.V.7:1-2; 8:5-6).

(4:1) Forgiveness is the only road that leads out of disaster, past all suffering, and finally away from death.

Changing our minds through forgiveness is the way out of all suffering. Indeed, it is *the* way, for it alone undoes the guilt that is the source of suffering. By forgiving our brothers for what they did not do, we demonstrate the impotence of sin; thus is our brother healed along with us, and death dissolved before the Atonement's "clarion call of life":

> ... hopelessness and death must disappear before the ancient clarion call of life. This call has power far beyond the weak and miserable cry of death and guilt. The ancient calling of the Father to His Son, and of the Son unto His Own, will yet be the last trumpet that the world will ever hear. Brother, there is no death. And this you learn when you but wish to show your brother that you had no hurt of him. He thinks your blood is on his hands, and so he stands condemned. Yet it is given you to show him, by your healing, that his guilt is but the fabric of a senseless dream (T-27.II.6:5-11).

(4:2) How could there be another way, when this one is the plan of God Himself?

Jesus is speaking metaphorically. God's "plan" is Himself: the Atonement principle that reflects the reality of God's perfect Oneness.

(4:3-5:1) And why would you oppose it, quarrel with it, seek to find a

thousand ways in which it must be wrong; a thousand other possibilities?
Is it not wiser to be glad you hol d the answer to your problems in your hand?

The theme of proving God wrong and ourselves right returns. It is helpful to read lines like these often, and see how a part of our minds is always opposing God's "plan" and attempting to prove Him wrong. This plan entails learning that feeling unfairly treated is the mind's decision, not the fault of another, a situation, or the body. Jesus thus asks why we would oppose this plan when he has repeatedly shown us it is the only one that works. To understand this, we must first understand the ego's strategy, which, in opposing salvation's plan, has us deny all responsibility for our unhappiness. Therefore Jesus says: "Please do not argue with me, saying you are right and I am wrong. It will not make you happy." In other words, when presented with our refusal to concede our mistake, he gently says, again: "And God thinks otherwise" (T-2312:7).

(5:2-3) Is it not more intelligent to thank the One Who gives salvation, and accept His gift with gratitude? And is it not a kindness to yourself to hear His Voice and learn the simple lessons He would teach, instead of trying to dismiss His words, and substitute your own in place of His?

Throughout the day, try to become as aware as possible of how you strive to prove you are right and Jesus is wrong, and this course does not work. Responding to Helen's complaint, Jesus asked whether she had ever considered that the reason *A Course in Miracles* did not work for her was she had not done what it said:

> You may complain that this course is not sufficiently specific for you to understand and use. Yet perhaps you have not done what it specifically advocates. This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application (T-11.VIII.5:1 -3).

Jesus is telling Helen *and* us we must accept responsibility for everything we feel, and not attribute it to something else. Yet before we can become aware of our projections, we need to see how much we argue with his truth and oppose it in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Thus every time we feel unfairly treated, or even a twinge of pain, there is a thought in our minds that says: "I will prove God's plan does not work, and my unhappiness and pain is the proof." On the larger level, our very existence is proof that there is no God, for if He is perfect Oneness, how can I exist in a body? And if I exist, His Oneness must have been obliterated. All this but demonstrates the extent of our insanity.

(6:1-3) His words will work. His words will save. His words contain all hope, all blessing and all joy that ever can be found upon this earth.

Hope will never be found in the world. *A Course in Miracles,* on the other hand, is filled with hope when you accept that it lies within your mind, and not in anything external. To find that hope we must choose against the ego's hopelessness, as Jesus reminds us:

> Think not that happiness is ever found by following a road away from it.

> This makes no sense, and cannot be the way. To you who seem to find this course to be too difficult to learn, let me repeat that to achieve a goal you must proceed in its direction, not away from it. And every road that leads the other way will not advance the purpose to be found (T-3 LIV.7:1-4).

Once we choose against hopelessness and despair, we remember our Creator and Self – His Thoughts – and turn toward Him. Thus does hope replace despair, blessing a curse, and joy all fear. We have found our pathway home, as expressed in these familiar and wonderful words:

> He has not left His Thoughts! But you forgot His Presence and remembered not His Love. No pathway in the world can lead to Him, nor any worldly goal be one with His.... He has not left His Thoughts! He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in Their Oneness Both are kept complete. There is no road that leads away from Him. A journey from yourself does not exist. How foolish and insane it is to think that there could be a road with such an aim! Where could it go? And how could you be made to travel on it, walking there without your own reality at one with you? ... Nowhere but where He is can you be found. There *is* no path that does not lead to Him (T-31.IV.9:1-3; 10; 11:6-7).

(6:4-7) His words are born in God, and come to you with Heaven 's love up on them. Those who hear His words have heard the song of Heaven. For these are the words in which all merge as one at last. And as this one will fade away, the Word of God will come to take its place, for it will be remembered then and loved.

Through diligent practice of Jesus' lessons, the error of separation is undone and we accept the Atonement for ourselves. Thus does the Word of God take the place of all little dreams, and the memory of God dawns on our minds as we say a simple "I love you" to our brother, who is all brothers, as we read in Helen's early poem, "The Greeting":

> Say but "I love you" to all living things,
> And they will lay their blessing over you
> To keep you ever safe and ever sure
> That you belong to God and He to you.
>
> What but "I love you" could the greeting be
> Of Christ to Christ, Who welcomes but Himself?
> And what are you except the Son of God,
> The Christ Whom He would welcome to Himself?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 19)

From paragraph 7 to the end of the lesson we find parallels with "For They Have Come" (T-26.IX), the profound beauty of which is perhaps not matched here, but the language and some of the rhythms of the lesson's phrases are reminiscent of that section's loveliness. Moreover, the theme is the same: replacing the bloodied earth of hate with the miracle of forgiveness:

(7:1-2) This world has many seeming separate haunts where mercy has no meaning, and attack appears as justified. Yet all are one; a place where death is offered to God 's Son and to his Father.

We need not search far to find instances of mercilessness in our world, and few would disagree that attack is often justified in the face of such cruelty and unkindness. Throughout *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus reminds us that underlying the world's experience is the ego's thought of death. As difficult as it may be to accept, we are really memorializing that thought system, especially when we feel unfairly treated and justified to attack in self-defense.

(7:3-7) You may think They have accepted. But if you will look a gain upon the place where you beheld Their blood, you will perceive a miracle instead. How foolish to believe that They could die! How foolish to believe you can attack! How mad to think that you could be condemned, and that the holy Son of God can die!

We tacitly believe that God's Son and his Father are part of this dream of death, both sharing equally in its insanity – the second and third laws of chaos: God is dead because I killed Him so I could live; but in turn I die at His Hand as punishment for my sin. This foolishness is undone when we look with Jesus on the ego's madness and recognize it as such. Thus is "the bloodied earth cleansed" (T-26.IX.4:6), and the blood of sin and hate replaced by the miracle:

> Where stood a cross stands now the risen Christ, and ancient scars are healed within His sight. An ancient miracle has come to bless and to replace an ancient enmity that came to kill (T-26.IX.8:4-5).

(8:1) The stillness of your Self remains un moved, untouched by thoughts like these, and unaware of any condemnation which could need forgiveness.

The Self is outside the dream, totally unaffected by our feverish imaginings. Recall this beautiful passage near the end of the text, describing the Thought of Self beyond the idol we worshipped as our self:

> Beyond all idols is the Thought God holds of you. Completely unaffected by the turmoil and the terror of the world, the dreams of birth and death that here are dreamed, the myriad of forms that fear can take; quite undisturbed, the Thought God holds of you remains exactly as it always was. Surrounded by a stillness so complete no sound of battle comes remotely near, it rests in certainty and perfect peace. Here is your one reality kept safe, completely unaware of all the world that worships idols, and that knows not God. In perfect sureness of its changelessness and of its rest in its eternal home, the Thought God holds of you has never left the Mind of its Creator Whom it knows, as its Creator knows that it is there (T-30.III.10).

(8:2-3) Dreams of an y kind are strange and alien to the truth. And what but truth could have a Thought which builds a bridge to it that brings illusions to the other side?

All dreams – of hate as well as forgiveness – are unknown to truth, and yet truth is reflected in our dreams through the Atonement principle, indicated here by the capitalized "Thought."

(9:1-4) Today we practice letting freedom come to make its home with you. The truth bestows these words upon your mind, that you may find the key to light and let the dark ness end:

> Only my condemnation injures me.
> Only my own forgiveness sets me free.

This is the key to *A Course in Miracles,* not just to this lesson. Both the problem—our mistaken choice – and its solution – our choice to correct that mistake – are in our minds. Again, when you feel the Course will not work for you and its accomplishment absolutely hopeless, it is because you refuse to learn what it is teaching, the essence of which is that since everything occurs in the mind, there is nothing outside it. Recognize how alien this is to your experience, for regardless of how many years you have faithfully studied this course, it will remain alien as long as you believe your existence is physical. The idea, thus, is not to deny your bodily experience, but to be aware that this is your ego's strategy. In the end, you are trapped only by the mind's decision to be a body, condemned to a separated life in hell.

(9:5-6) Do not forget today that there can be no form of suffering that fails to hide an unforgiv ing t hought. Nor can there be a form of pain for giveness cannot heal.

This goes back to the statement highlighted in Lesson 193: "Certain it is that all distress does not appear to be but unforgiveness" (W-pI.193.4:1). Here Jesus repeats it, in slightly more straightforward English. *All* suffering, regardless of its form, hides an unforgiving thought. We have already seen the following passage from *Psychotherapy* on the relationship between sickness and unforgiveness; its clear statement warrants another mention:

> Sickness takes many forms, and so does unforgiveness. The forms of one but reproduce the forms of the other, for they are the same illusion. So closely is one translated into the other, that a careful study of the form a sickness takes will point quite clearly to the form of unforgiveness that it represents (P-2.VI.5:1-3).

To restate this point, all pain comes from guilt, which in turn comes from the mind's decision. When we change our minds through forgiveness, we are healed because guilt is undone. That is why Jesus is so emphatic in teaching us, as you may recall:

> ...Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them. Nor did you in any way request them for yourself. This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind (T-27.VII.7:4-8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 199**

**I am not a body. I am free.**

This lesson anticipates Review VI (Lessons 201-220), in which for twenty days we say: "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me." This major theme recurs throughout the workbook, and the main point in this lesson is that not being a body means we are a mind. Thus we see the contrast between our identity as a body – keeping us convinced of which is the ego's goal – and the fact that this identity exists solely in our minds.

**(1:1) Freedom must be impossible as long as you perceive a body as yourself.**

Jesus continues to develop the theme of freedom. As long as I think I am a body I am imprisoned, and thus will never know the freedom that comes when I return my attention to the mind. There I made the choice that imprisoned me, which I now undo with Jesus' help. Indeed, this is my *only* freedom:

> In this world the only remaining freedom is the freedom of choice; always between two choices or two voices (C-1.7:1).

Jesus' role as a our teacher, therefore, is to help us choose the right voice – his:

> Healing reflects our joint will… The decision to unite must be unequivocal, or the mind itself is divided and not whole. Your mind is the means by which you determine your own condition, because mind is the mechanism of decision. It is the power by which you separate or join, and experience pain or joy accordingly. My decision cannot overcome yours, because yours is as powerful as mine (T-8.IV. 5:1, 6-9).

Thus do we learn our true power when we join with Jesus, a joining that cannot occur in the illusory body but only in the mind, the source of imprisonment *and* freedom.

**(1:2) The body is a limit.**

The body, as Jesus tells us in the text *"is* a limit on love" (T-18.VIII.1:2); and yet we stubbornly insist we are bodies and continually choose to see everyone else as a body, too. His message, though, is not to deny these experiences, but also not to justify them. As long as we experience ourselves in the world, we must also experience the body, which we have accorded reality. Jesus merely asks us to recognize the disastrous consequences of such identification:

> It is only the awareness of the body that makes love seem limited. For the body *is* a limit on love. The belief in limited love was its origin, and it was made to limit the unlimited. Think not that this is merely allegorical, for it was made to limit *you.* Can you who see yourself within a body know yourself as an idea?... The body cannot know. And while you limit your awareness to its tiny senses, you will not see the grandeur that surrounds you. God cannot come into a body, nor can you join Him there. Limits on love will always seem to shut Him out, and keep you apart from Him. The body is a tiny fence around a little part of a glorious and

> complete idea. It draws a circle, infinitely small, around a very little segment of Heaven, splintered from the whole, proclaiming that within it is your kingdom, where God can enter not (T-18.VIII.1:1-5; 2).

Who in his right mind would choose to remain in the body, once its role in limiting love became clear? Our resistance to this thought is enormous, as we can all attest, yet we can at least begin the process of learning to dis-identify with the body that keeps us from Heaven. Lessons such as these facilitate this unlearning.

**(1:3) Who would seek for freedom in a body looks for it where it can not be found.**

This is what oppressed people do when they rebel against a tyrant; indeed, what we all do when we rebel against authorities. We automatically think our freedom is inhibited by something outside us – a government, body, or world – and we are not aware that true freedom lies only in the mind, where the choice is ours:

> Do you want freedom of the body or of the mind? For both you cannot have. Which do you value? ... No one but yearns for freedom and tries to find it. Yet he will seek for it where he believes it is and can be found (T-22.VI. 1:1-3,8-9).

We return to this theme of seeking and finding in the next lesson.

**(1:4-5) The mind can be made free when it no longer sees itself as in a body, firmly tied to it and sheltered by its presence. If this were the truth, the mind were vulnerable indeed!**

We are quite familiar by now with the ego's strategy, which tells us that the mind – the repository of sin, guilt, and fear – is a dangerous place, and thus we need to be protected from God's wrath by hiding in the body. Making us mindless, the ego ensures we would never again be able to use the mind to choose against it. Recall this clever passage from the text, exposing the ego's strategy of convincing us we would be safe within the body, at the same time establishing it as the epitome of vulnerability and preventing us – through denial – from ever challenging its plan:

> The body is the ego's home by its own election. It is the only identification with which the ego feels safe ... Here is where the mind becomes actually dazed. Being told by the ego that it is really part of the body and that the body is its protector, the mind is also told that the body cannot protect it. Therefore, the mind asks, "Where can I go for protection?" to which the ego replies, "Turn to me." The mind, and not without cause, reminds the ego that it has itself insisted that it is identified with the body, so there is no point in turning to *it* for protection. The ego has no real answer to this because there is none, but it does have a typical solution. It obliterates the question from the mind's awareness. Once out of awareness the question can and does produce uneasiness, but it cannot be answered because it cannot be asked.
>
> This is the question that *must* be asked: "Where can I go for protection?" "Seek and ye shall find" does not mean that you should seek blindly and

> desperately for something you would not recognize. Meaningful seeking is consciously undertaken, consciously organized and consciously directed (T-4.V.4:1-2, 5-5:3).

*A Course in Miracles,* then, presents Jesus' message of the mind's invulnerability, awareness of which is his goal for us. He thus urges us to seek only what we wish to find: the safety and protection of God.

**(2:1) The mind that serves the Holy Spirit is unlimited forever, in all ways, beyond the laws of time and space, unbound by any preconceptions, and with strength and power to do whatever it is asked.**

This describes our minds when we stand outside the dream, having realized our mistake of choosing the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. In the holy instant, born of our new choice, we are beyond the prison of space, time, and all preconceptions. In this instant of forgiveness there is no past or future; only the unlimited reflection of the eternal moment that is Heaven, wherein our will and God's are one:

> ... The Will of God is without limit, and all power and glory lie within it. It is boundless in strength and in love and in *peace.* It has no boundaries because its extension is unlimited, and it encompasses all things because it created all things. By creating all things, it made them part of itself. You are the Will of God because that is how you were created. Because your Creator creates only like Himself, you are like Him. You are part of Him Who is all power and glory, and are therefore as unlimited as He is (T-8.1I.7).

**(2:2) Attack thoughts cannot enter such a mind, because it has been given to the Source of love, and fear can never enter in a mind that has attached itself to love.**

This is an oblique reference to the well-known verse from John's first epistle, quoted often in *A Course in Miracles:* "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18). In the presence of love there can be no fear, for in the instant of choosing Jesus as our teacher – the Love of God within the dream – there is no separation or guilt. Only peace remains when dreams are gone – unchosen and thus unshared, their fear can but disappear into the love that is our reality:

> It is the sharing of the evil dreams of hate and malice, bitterness and death, of sin and suffering and pain and loss, that makes them real. Unshared, they are perceived as meaningless. The fear is gone from them because you did not give them your support. Where fear has gone there love must come, because there are but these alternatives. Where one appears, the other disappears. And which you share becomes the only one you have. You have the one that you accept, because it is the only one you wish to have (T-28.V.2).

**(2:3-4) It rests in God. And who can be afraid who lives in Innocence, and only loves?**

When we have chosen the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, He reminds us that our

true reality is the Oneness of Heaven. Incidentally, "Innocence" here refers to God, in Whom no sin can abide.

**(3:1) It is essential for your progress in this course that you accept today's idea, and hold it very dear.**

When Jesus speaks like this you should pay careful attention, for he is telling you that if you truly want to make progress, it is essential to realize your identity is not the body but the mind. Thus everything you have believed about yourself and others is wrong, having been based upon a perception that the separation, world, and body are real. Thus Jesus is emphasizing the necessity of our being attentive to the idea for the day, which recurs throughout the lesson.

**(3:2) Be not concerned that to the ego it is quite insane.**

You need realize you are the ego Jesus speaks about, and so to you this is insane. Recognize that you believe Jesus is a body, talking to you as a body, telling it what it should do. Remember the important line:

> Everything you recognize you identify with externals, something outside itself. You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize (T-18.VIII.1:6-7).

Yet since Jesus is not a body, he most certainly would not be telling your body what to do. Rather, he appeals to your mind to choose him in your mind, and from the love you have chosen, the body would automatically reflect his purpose of forgiveness. Yet it takes great diligence and practice to recognize, and then accept the insanity of bodily identification – for God, Jesus, and ourselves.

**(3:3-4) The ego holds the body dear because it dwells in it, and lives united with the home that it has made. It is a part of the illusion that has sheltered it from being found illusory itself.**

A clarification of sentence 3: The ego does not really dwell in the body, because the mind cannot be in a projection – *ideas leave not their source.* However, the ego's strategy tells us that our self, which is now an ego, does indeed dwell in a body. These statements thus reflect the double-shielded ego strategy. The second shield is the body, which was made to keep the thought of separation and guilt hidden, the ego's first shield. The purpose of the body, thus, is to keep us from finding out that the ego is nothing but a thought we had decided is the truth. Yet since we made the decision, we can change our minds about it. Once again, the focus is on shifting our attention from the physical and psychological self to the source, the decision made by the mind not to be as God created it.

**(4:1) Here does it hide, and here it can be seen as what it is.**

The ego hides in the body, and therefore when you see the body for what it really is, you will see the ego for what it really is. Like the ego, the body is separation – a prison of limitation – designed to keep us from the Love of God.

**(4:2) Declare your innocence and you are free.**

Jesus says to us: "Step back with me to the holy instant, where you will be innocent and free, no longer sinful and bound." Nothing has changed with the body, but the mind's thought system has shifted – from guilt to guiltlessness, from fear to love. This shift is accomplished by bringing our dark illusions of separation to the redemptive light of the Atonement. Thus is our eternal innocence proclaimed, as we joyfully recognize our redemption:

> Your "guilty secret" is nothing, and if you will but bring it to the light, the light will dispel it. And then no dark cloud will remain between you and the remembrance of your Father, for you will remember His guiltless Son, who did not die because he is immortal. And you will see that you were redeemed with him, and have never been separated from him.... For the redeemed son of man is the guiltless Son of God, and to recognize him *is* your redemption (T-13.11.9:2-4,7).

**(4:3-4) The body disappears, because you have no need of it except the need the Holy Spirit sees. For this, the body will appear as useful form for what the mind must do.**

The body does not vanish into thin air, but becomes a classroom in which the mind, with its newly chosen Teacher, learns the lessons that undo its belief in the body. Thus the ego's purpose for the body disappears into the Holy Spirit's vision of health, wherein the body serves a loving instead of a loveless purpose, representing life instead of death:

> The Holy Spirit teaches you to use your body only to reach your brothers, so He can teach His message through you. This will heal them and therefore heal you.... Do not allow the body to be a mirror of a split mind. Do not let it be an image of your own perception of littleness. Do not let it reflect your decision to attack. Health is seen as the natural state of everything when interpretation is left to the Holy Spirit, Who perceives no attack on anything. Health is the result of relinquishing all attempts to use the body lovelessly. Health is the beginning of the proper perspective on life under the guidance of the one Teacher Who knows what life is, being the Voice for Life Itself (T-8.VIII.9:1-2, 5-10).

**(4:5) It thus becomes a vehicle which helps forgiveness be extended to the all-inclusive goal that it must reach, according to God's plan.**

The body, having no meaning in and of itself, becomes the means for fulfilling the plan of the Atonement – "God's plan." This is the true source of joy, because we no longer allow the ego's plan of attack to darken forgiveness' gentle light, our one purpose and goal:

> Joy is unified purpose, and unified purpose is only God's. When yours is unified it is His. Believe you can interfere with His purpose, and you need salvation. You have condemned yourself, but condemnation is not of God (T-8.VII.15:1-4).

**(5:1-2) Cherish today's idea, and practice it today and every day. Make it a part of every practice period you take.**

Instead of our cherishing the ego and guilt, Jesus asks that we accept and cherish his thought system, the Course that teaches it, and its teacher – cherish them because they happily lead us out of prison. Never should we be so arrogant as to think we know what is in our best interests.

**(5:3-5) There is no thought that will not gain thereby in power to help the world, and none which will not gain in added gifts to you as well. We sound the call of freedom round the world with this idea. And would you be exempt from the acceptance of the gifts you give?**

We again come upon the theme of giving and receiving as the same: if I give the gift, I receive it; if I offer it to you, I accept it for myself. The world is thus healed because the world is one with us. In this vision of freedom the purpose of Atonement is fulfilled – *for all:*

The offer of Atonement is universal. It is equally applicable to all individuals in all circumstances.... Healing is very simple. Atonement is received and offered. Having been received, it must be accepted. It is in the receiving, then, that healing lies. All else must follow from this single purpose (M-22. 6:1-2, 10-14).

**(6:1-4) The Holy Spirit is the home of minds that seek for freedom. In Him they have found what they have sought. The body's purpose now is unambiguous. And it becomes perfect in the ability to serve an undivided goal.**

I no longer seek for freedom outside myself, but only within. The body's sole purpose is to be a classroom my Teacher can use to instruct me in forgiveness, the right-minded meaning of communication within the ego's dream of separation and hate. I see only that purpose in everything I do today, the unifying thought that makes my life meaningful and undoes the meaninglessness of specialness and attack:

When the body ceases to attract you, and when you place no value on it as a means of getting anything, then there will be no interference in communication and your thoughts will be as free as God's. As you let the Holy Spirit teach you how to use the body only for purposes of communication, and renounce its use for separation and attack which the ego sees in it, you will learn you have no need of a body at all. In the holy instant there are no bodies, and you experience only the attraction of God. Accepting it as undivided you join Him wholly, in an instant, for you would place no limits on your union with Him (T-15.IX.7:1-4).

**(6:5) In conflict-free and unequivocal response to mind with but the thought of freedom as its goal, the body serves, and serves its purpose well.**

We remain conflicted insofar as we see the body as a protective home and source of pleasure or pain. As long as our goal is to make the body real – positively or negatively – we can never accept the Holy Spirit's single goal of regarding the body as a

learning tool. In a particularly beautiful passage, Jesus describes the body's holy purpose of forgiveness when it becomes the instrument of Christ and His holy vision:

> Where could your peace arise *but* from forgiveness? The Christ in you looks only on the truth, and sees no condemnation that could need forgiveness. He is at peace *because* He sees no sin. Identify with Him, and what has He that you have not? He is your eyes, your ears, your hands, your feet. How gentle are the sights He sees, the sounds He hears. How beautiful His hand that holds His brother's, and how lovingly He walks beside him, showing him what can be seen and heard, and where he will see nothing and there is no sound to hear....
>
> Rejoice you have no eyes with which to see; no ears to listen, and no hands to hold nor feet to guide. Be glad that only Christ can lend you His, while you have need of them. They are illusions, too, as much as yours. And yet because they serve a different purpose, the strength their purpose holds is given them. And what they see and hear and hold and lead is given light, that you may lead as you were led (T-24.V.3, 5).

**(6:6-7:3) Without the power to enslave, it is a worthy servant of the freedom which the mind within the Holy Spirit seeks.**

**Be free today. And carry freedom as your gift to those who still believe they are enslaved within a body. Be you free, so that the Holy Spirit can make use of your escape from bondage, to set free the many who perceive themselves as bound and helpless and afraid.**

We become teachers of truth through exemplifying it. By my ever-increasing peace, regardless of the body's fate, I become a shining reminder to others that they can choose as I did. In the following passage, part of which is quite familiar by now, Jesus urges us to demonstrate his resurrecting message of freedom, forgiveness, and peace that redeems the world from its nightmares of crucifixion:

> Would you join in the resurrection or the crucifixion? Would you condemn your brothers or free them? Would you transcend your prison and ascend to the Father?... Believe in the resurrection because it has been accomplished, and it has been accomplished in you. This is as true now as it will ever be, for the resurrection is the Will of God, which knows no time and no exceptions.... You will not find peace until you have removed the nails from the hands of God's Son, and taken the last thorn from his forehead.... Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you. For the undoing of the crucifixion of God's Son is the work of the redemption, in which everyone has a part of equal value (T-11.VI.2:1-3; 4:6-7; 7:1, 3-5).

Our redemption is accomplished, not by our words or deeds, but by the simple quietness within our minds that says: "I choose to remember I am not a body, and you, my brother, can make the same choice, for the same teacher lives in both of us."

**(7:4-6) Let love replace their fears through you. Accept salvation now, and give your mind to Him Who calls to you to make this gift to Him. For He would give you perfect freedom, perfect joy, and hope that finds its full accomplishment in God.**

The theme of hope returns in the next lesson, but let us recall that hope does not come from external change. *A Course in Miracles,* for example, will not work in the world, nor bring a happier body living a happier dream. The hope in this course lies in the Teacher Who leads us outside the dream by taking us to our right minds, thus allowing us to make the correct choice. For this to happen, however, we must seek for joy where it is, not where it is not:

> How else can you find joy in a joyless place except by realizing that you are not there? You cannot be anywhere God did not put you, and God created you as part of Him. That is both where you are and what you are. It is completely unalterable. It is total inclusion. You cannot change it now or ever. It is forever true. It is not a belief, but a Fact (T-6.II.6:1-8).

**(8:1-3) You are God's Son. In immortality you live forever. Would you not return your mind to this?**

To return our minds to God means to retrieve our wandering thoughts that, following the ego's strategy, took us into the bodily world of special relationships. Back now in our minds, we choose again – to deny what never happened, and accept what has always been. Recall the closing lines in Helen's poem, "Song to My Self":

> I never left my Father's house. What need
> Have I to journey back to Him again?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 38)

**(8:4-9) Then practice well the thought the Holy Spirit gives you for today. Your brothers stand released with you in it; the world is blessed along with you, God's Son will weep no more, and Heaven offers thanks for the increase of joy your practice brings even to it. And God Himself extends His Love and happiness each time you say:**

***I am not a body. I am free. I hear the Voice that God has given me, and it is only this my mind obeys.***

This is the gift of joy we give to everyone, including ourselves. The love and peace we experience within is the effect of choosing the Holy Spirit as our only Voice. Thus is the world freed from sorrow, as our happy voices join as one, along with Helen's in "A Brother's Prayer":

> There is an end to sorrow. What was made
> Will be unmade. The transient toys of spite
> Will turn to dust. The things of time will fade
> And vanish into nothingness. The night
> Of evil dreams will gently yield to light.
>
> All things that God created not will close
> As they began, in secret and in shame
> Which, never being born, cannot oppose

**Lesson 199**

God's holy Will to let forgiveness frame
The face of Christ, Who enters in His Name.

What need we do to let forgiveness come?
Nothing. We need but realize that we
And all the world together are the sum
Of all salvation's promise. I am he
Who speaks God's Word, and you along with me.

There is an end to sorrow. In God's Will
The Christ serenely rests. God's holy Son
Is all creation is, for he is still
As God created him. Forever one,
His Word is changeless; spoken, it is done.

The flicker of an instant stands between
Us and complete salvation. Need we do
More than God asks? The face of Christ is seen
And then unseen forever. Sorrow too
Has disappeared, and I along with you.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 63)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 200**

**There is no peace except the peace of God.**

This is the last full lesson in Part I, a wonderful culmination of our previous discussions. In centering on the theme of seeking and finding, and even in some of its phrasing, this lesson reflects "Seek Not Outside Yourself" (T-29.VII). Jesus helps us recognize that we are never really successful in seeking for happiness and freedom from pain in the world. Whatever pleasure and peace we seem to attain is short-lived, for true happiness comes only from remembering who we are as children of love. Yet if the body is a limitation on love, and the world was made as an attack on love, it is impossible to find the love we seek here. Since we have been seeking in the wrong place and, as a result, never finding what we want, we live in a constant state of hopeless despair. Real hope, that offered by *A Course in Miracles,* lies in going back to the problem and solution – *in our minds.* If we seek for the solution where it is, we will certainly find it. This message, then, is the burden of the lesson.

**(1:1-2) Seek you no further. You will not find peace except the peace of God.**

Peace cannot be found here, for the body and world were specifically made to hide the source of peace in the mind.

**(1:3-5) Accept this fact, and save yourself the agony of yet more bitter disappointments, bleak despair, and sense of icy hopelessness and doubt. Seek you no further. There is nothing else for you to find except the peace of God, unless you seek for misery and pain.**

The ego would have us seek for pain in the world, find it, and then blame everyone else for our misery. It never wants us to understand that the source of our suffering lies in our choice for its thought system instead of the Holy Spirit's. To keep this choice concealed and to guarantee we never change our minds, the ego made a world to be the source of pain, beginning at birth and following our life's path until we die. Yet the misery is not our fault – we who sought for what we could never find – for it was the idols of specialness that failed us:

> The world believes in idols. No one comes unless he worshipped them, and still attempts to seek for one that yet might offer him a gift reality does not contain. Each worshipper of idols harbors hope his special deities will give him more than other men possess.... And when one fails another takes its place, with hope of finding more of something else (T-29.VIII.8:4-6, 10).

> He does not see what he is asking for. And so he seeks it in a thousand ways and in a thousand places, each time believing it is there, and each time disappointed in the end. "Seek but do not find" remains this world's stern decree, and no one who pursues the world's goals can do otherwise (M-13.5:6-8).

**(2) This is the final point to which each one must come at last, to lay aside all hope of finding happiness where there is none; of being saved by what can only hurt; of making peace of chaos, joy of pain, and Heaven out of hell. Attempt no more to win through losing, nor to die to live. You cannot but be asking for defeat.**

The final point we reach is the realization we have been wrong; we will never find hope or happiness, God or truth here. Indeed, we will never find anything of value, for nothing here is meaningful. If, as Jesus says, the purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to save us time, we need not exhaust every possibility of the special relationship, hoping "this time it will work." It will never work, so we may as well not even begin. Ultimately we realize he was right and we were wrong, but in the meantime we cause ourselves unnecessary pain and suffering by continuing to search for happiness and hope in the body's specialness. At some point we must see our mistake in believing that joy and freedom are pain and imprisonment, and vice versa:

> The Holy Spirit will direct you only so as to avoid pain. Surely no one would object to this goal if he recognized it. The problem is not whether what the Holy Spirit says is true, but whether you want to listen to what He says. You no more recognize what is painful than you know what is joyful, and are, in fact, very apt to confuse the two. The Holy Spirit's main fimetion is to teach you to tell them apart. What is joyful to you is painful to the ego, and as long as you are in doubt about what you are, you will be confused about joy and pain (T-7.X.3:1-6).

> We have said that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy. That is the same as saying He teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom. You cannot make this distinction without Him because you have taught yourself that imprisonment is freedom. Believing them to be the same, how can you tell them apart? Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they are the same, to teach you how they are different? (T-8.II.5)

In the last two sentences of the above workbook passage we find reference to the ego's principle of *one or the other:* I win by another's losing, I live and another dies; or I die so I may live beyond the grave.

**(3:1-2) Yet you can ask as easily for love, for happiness, and for eternal life in peace that has no ending. Ask for this, and you can only win.**

As Jesus often assures us, he is not denying us love, happiness, or peace, but pointing out that we will never find them in the world. His course, however, offers them to us, for the learning:

> Decide for God, and everything is given you at no cost at all. Decide against Him, and you choose nothing, at the expense of the awareness of everything.... Atonement is for you. Your learning claims it and your learning gives it. The world contains it not. But learn this course and it is yours (M-13.8:2-3,7-10).

**(3:3-4) To ask for what you have already must succeed. To ask that what is false be true can only fail.**

This is obvious when we look at our insane lives in which we try to prove that God's truth is wrong and our illusions true: a world of hatred, betrayal, loneliness, and

despair. However, since the truth is already within us, we place ourselves in perpetual conflict – torn between teachers who lead us in opposite directions. How could we not fail to learn?

> The curriculum of the Atonement is the opposite of the curriculum you have established for yourself, but so is its outcome. If the outcome of yours has made you unhappy, and if you want a different one, a change in the curriculum is obviously necessary. The first change to be introduced is a change in direction. A meaningful curriculum cannot be inconsistent. If it is planned by two teachers, each believing in diametrically opposed ideas, it cannot be integrated. If it is carried out by these two teachers simultaneously, each one merely interferes with the other.... The total senselessness of such a curriculum must be fully recognized before a real change in direction becomes possible. You cannot learn simultaneously from two teachers who are in total disagreement about everything. Their joint curriculum presents an impossible learning task. They are teaching you entirely different things in entirely different ways, which might be possible except that both are teaching you about yourself. Your reality is unaffected by both, but if you listen to both, your mind will be split about what your reality is (T-8.I.5:1-6; 6).

**(3:5) Forgive yourself for vain imaginings, and seek no longer what you cannot find.**

Thus we look with Jesus at our guilt, and hear him say: "Look at your vain imaginings, how mistaken you have been – but look without judgment. There *is* another way of looking at the world, not as a means of fulfilling your ego's dreams, but as a classroom in which you learn of the reality beyond all dreams – your purpose for being here":

> To change all this [dreams of depression, death, and disappointment], and open up a road of hope and of release in what appeared to be an endless circle of despair, you need but to decide you do not know the purpose of the world. You give it goals it does not have, and thus do you decide what it is for. You try to see in it a place of idols found outside yourself.... [they] do what you would have them do, and have the power you ascribe to them. And you pursue them vainly in the dream, because you want their power as your own (T-29.VII.8:1-3, 5-6).

**(3:6) For what could be more foolish than to seek and seek and seek again for hell, when you have but to look with open eyes to find that Heaven lies before you, through a door that opens easily to welcome you?**

That door will open easily to welcome us when we welcome it, accomplished by Christ's vision. Yet we do not welcome it, because then our specialness would disappear. To restate this central point, we need to see how almost everything we do conceals a thought that says: "I am going to prove this course does not work, and that Jesus does not tell the truth." It is imperative we realize how subtly that underlying thought influences our daily experiences.

**(4) Come home. You have not found your happiness in foreign places and in alien forms that have no meaning to you, though you sought to make them**

**meaningful. This world is not where you belong. You are a stranger here. But it is given you to find the means whereby the world no longer seems to be a prison house or jail for anyone.**

Among others, this refers specifically to Lesson 160, "I am at home. Fear is the stranger here," and Lesson 182, "I will be still an instant and go home." Jesus could not be more explicit: the body is not our home, nor do we belong here. Recall this description of our worldly home, and consider whether the body is really where we wish to remain – prisoner to guilt and sorrow:

> The world you see is the delusional system of those made mad by guilt. Look carefully at this world, and you will realize that this is so. For this world is the symbol of punishment, and all the laws that seem to govern it are the laws of death. Children are born into it through pain and in pain. Their growth is attended by suffering, and they learn of sorrow and separation and death. Their minds seem to be trapped in their brain, and its powers to decline if their bodies are hurt. They seem to love, yet they desert and are deserted. They appear to lose what they love, perhaps the most insane belief of all. And their bodies wither and gasp and are laid in the ground, and are no more (T-13.in.2:2-10).

**(5:1-2) Freedom is given you where you beheld but chains and iron doors. But you must change your mind about the purpose of the world, if you would find escape.**

This is another pellucid statement, reflecting the text's: "Seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.in.1:7). The purpose of the world, kept hidden by the ego, is to keep us mindless. It tells us instead that the world's purpose is to maximize our pleasure, minimize our pain, and blame everyone else for what goes wrong by our accepting no responsibility for the world and its vicissitudes. Yet having chosen a new Teacher, we see the world's purpose to be a classroom in which we learn the Holy Spirit's lessons:

> The ego made the world as it perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the reinterpreter of what the ego made, sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home.... Correct and learn, and be open to learning. You have not made truth, but truth can still set you free. Look as the Holy Spirit looks, and understand as He understands (T-5.III.11:1, 4-6).

**(5:3-5) You will be bound till all the world is seen by you as blessed, and everyone made free of your mistakes and honored as he is. You made him not; no more yourself. And as you free the one, the other is accepted as he is.**

On the ego level we made our brother and ourselves. However, all we made were the illusory "shadows of the past" (T-17.III). Our real Self has nothing to do with the unreal, and so we need do nothing but change our minds and look through Christ's vision. Everyone is made free of our mistakes because we are one—there can be no exceptions. Thus Jesus leads us to bless everyone in our holy relationship, which his love exemplifies:

**Lesson 200**

> My holy brother, I would enter into all your relationships, and step between you and your fantasies. Let my relationship to you be real to you, and let me bring reality to your perception of your brothers.... Be not separate from me, and let not the holy purpose of Atonement be lost to you in dreams of vengeance. Relationships in which such dreams are cherished have excluded me. Let me enter in the Name of God and bring you peace, that you may offer peace to me (T-17.III.10:1-2, 6-8).

**(6:1-4) What does forgiveness do? In truth it has no function, and does nothing. For it is unknown in Heaven. It is only hell where it is needed, and where it must serve a mighty function.**

At the beginning of Part II we will read of forgiveness: "[it] is still, and quietly does nothing.... It merely looks, and waits, and judges not" (W-pII.1.4:1,3). There is nothing to do, because there is no world in which to act. Forgiveness merely undoes belief in such an illusory world, and thus has no place in Heaven's truth, which needs no correction.

**(6:5-6) Is not the escape of God's beloved Son from evil dreams that he imagines, yet believes are true, a worthy purpose? Who could hope for more, while there appears to be a choice to make between success and failure; love and fear?**

The choice between success and failure, love and fear is an illusory one. Yet within the world's dream it is the only choice available to me. As long as I believe I can choose one or the other, both have become real, which means love has ceased to be it-self and has turned into special love. True choice – between truth and illusion – occurs when I realize the world offers none. Once I recognize I choose between two illusions, both disappear. Even the forgiveness I finally choose is an illusion, and yet it leads beyond them all as we go from nightmares to happy dreams, and then awaken to the reality we never lost:

> You will first dream of peace, and then awaken to it. Your first exchange of what you made for what you want is the exchange of nightmares for the happy dreams of love. In these lie your true perceptions, for the Holy Spirit corrects the world of dreams, where all perception is. Knowledge needs no correction. Yet the dreams of love lead unto knowledge. In them you see nothing fearful, and because of this they are the welcome that you offer knowledge. Love waits on welcome, not on time, and the real world is but your welcome of what always was. Therefore the call of joy is in it, and your glad response is your awakening to what you have not lost (T-13.VII.9).

As Jesus recommends in sentence 5, ask yourself as you go through your day: Is it not a worthy purpose for me to see this day as one that could make me happy? Am I not worthy to receive this gift? See how your day answers the negative that says: "No, I am not worthy to awaken from the world's evil dreams of sorrow and fear." Recall this last stanza of Helen's poem "The Quiet Dream," which beautifully expresses our yes to the peace-filled fruits of Jesus' forgiveness:

> What can remain of evil in the world

Christ's vision looks upon? And what could still
Appear to me as fearful, with the light
Of His perfection on it? What could teach
Me sorrow has a cause, or death is real?
Help me forgive the world. The peace You give
In my forgiveness will be given me.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 65)

**(7:1) There is no peace except the peace of God, because He has one Son who cannot make a world in opposition to God's Will and to his own, which is the same as His.**

There is no peace in this world because there is no world. We only thought there was. The Holy Spirit's presence in our minds ensures that our wildest nightmares and most vicious thoughts have had no effect on the peace of Heaven, which remains far beyond our illusions:

> You whose mind is darkened by doubt and guilt, remember this: God gave the Holy Spirit to you, and gave Him the mission to remove all doubt and every trace of guilt that His dear Son has laid upon himself. It is impossible that this mission fail. Nothing can prevent what God would have accomplished from accomplishment. Whatever your reactions to the Holy Spirit's Voice may be, whatever voice you choose to listen to, whatever strange thoughts may occur to you, God's Will *is* done. You will find the peace in which He has established you, because He does not change His Mind.... Peace will be yours because His peace still flows to you from Him Whose Will is peace. You have it now.... Learn that even the darkest nightmare that disturbs the mind of God's sleeping Son holds no power over him.... Can God's Son lose himself in dreams, when God has placed within him the glad Call to waken and be glad? (T-13.XI.5:1-5; 8:4-5; 9:5; 10:1)

**(7:2-6) What could he hope to find in such a world? It cannot have reality, because it never was created. Is it here that he would seek for peace? Or must he see that, as he looks on it, the world can but deceive? Yet can he learn to look on it another way, and find the peace of God.**

Asking Jesus' help, we look on the specifics of our special relationships and realize they do not work. They deceive because they will never provide what we want: the return home. No one truly wants to be in this place of misery, pain, and death. Yet we must see how we cherish the illusion there is cause for hope here. In the context of payment in psychotherapy, Jesus reflects the ego's proviso of seeking in the world, but never finding the salvation we truly seek:

> How much is gained by striving for illusions? How much is lost by throwing God away? And is it possible to do so? Surely it is impractical to strive for nothing, and to attempt to do what is impossible. Then stop a while, long enough to think of this: You have perhaps been seeking for salvation without recognizing where to look (P-3.III.7:3-7).

**(8:1) Peace is the bridge that everyone will cross, to leave this world behind.**

In the text, Jesus refers to the bridge to the real world (T-16.VI) and how the Holy Spirit is our Bridge to Heaven (T-16.IV.12:2). Peace, then, is the inevitable effect of learning to forgive, and of taking Jesus' hand and journeying with him unto our God:

> The Holy Spirit is the Bridge to Him, made from your willingness to unite with Him.... Turn with me firmly away from all illusions now, and let nothing stand in the way of truth. We will take the last useless journey away from truth together, and then together we go straight to God, in joyous answer to His Call for His completion (T-16.IV.12:2, 5-6).

**(8:2) But peace begins within the world perceived as different, and leading from this fresh perception to the gate of Heaven and the way beyond.**

The entirety of the journey is encapsulated in this statement. I begin in my perceptual world comprised of differences, the home of specialness. I then realize that peace does not come from getting what I want from you, but realizing that what I want is already within me. I need only choose it. I realize that you and I are the same, and this new perception, born of the miracle, leads me to the gate of Heaven – the real world – and I am home:

> The miracles you do on earth are lifted up to Heaven and to Him. They witness to what you do not know, and as they reach the gates of Heaven, God will open them. For never would He leave His Own beloved Son outside them, and beyond Himself (T-13.VIII.10:5-7).

**(8:3-4) Peace is the answer to conflicting goals, to senseless journeys, frantic, vain pursuits, and meaningless endeavors. Now the way is easy, sloping gently toward the bridge where freedom lies within the peace of God.**

This peace is unknown in Heaven, yet it comes from forgiveness here, enabling us to remember Who we are as God's Son. It is a right-minded correction for having chosen the wrong mind; the decision to forgive instead of condemn:

> How willing are you to forgive your brother? How much do you desire peace instead of endless strife and misery and pain? These questions are the same, in different form. Forgiveness is your peace, for herein lies the end of separation and the dream of danger and destruction, sin and death; of madness and of murder, grief and loss (T-29. VI.1:1-4).

**(9:1-3) Let us not lose our way again today. We go to Heaven, and the path is straight. Only if we attempt to wander can there be delay, and needless wasted time on thorny byways.**

We can delay this as long as we wish, but the outcome is still certain. Why, though, would we want to continue to journey along painful, thorny detours, when we could experience the gladness of joining with Jesus and all our brothers on the lawns of Heaven?

> Let us be glad that we can walk the world, and find so many chances to perceive another situation where God's gift can once again be recognized as ours! And thus will all the vestiges of hell, the secret sins and hidden hates be gone. And all the loveliness which they concealed appear like lawns of Heaven to our sight, to lift us high above the thorny roads we travelled on before the Christ appeared. Hear me, my brothers, hear and join with me. God has ordained I cannot call in vain, and in His certainty I rest content (T-31.VIII.9:1-5).

**(9:4-7) God alone is sure, and He will guide our footsteps. He will not desert His Son in need, nor let him stray forever from his home. The Father calls; the Son will hear. And that is all there is to what appears to be a world apart from God, where bodies have reality.**

Nothing of certainty can be found in this world, whose only purpose is to be a classroom in which we learn to recognize, and then answer the Holy Spirit's Call in our minds. Within that surety the world disappears into the quietness of God:

> Then follow Him in joy, with faith that He will lead you safely through all dangers to your peace of mind this world may set before you. Kneel not before the altars to sacrifice, and seek not what you will surely lose. Content yourself with what you will as surely keep, and be not restless, for you undertake a quiet journey to the peace of God, where He would have you be in quietness (T-13.VII.15).

**(10:1-4) Now is there silence. Seek no further. You have come to where the road is carpeted with leaves of false desires, fallen from the trees of hopelessness you sought before. Now are they underfoot.**

The road we trod upon is the pathway of the world, marked by hopelessness and despair. Now we realize there is another way of looking. The fallen leaves of false desires are behind us, and we recognize the path that will lead us beyond them to our home. This requires our unequivocal acknowledgment that nothing in this world has ever worked. Yet must we realize how strenuously we resist this step, because we will still believe something here will bring us happiness. It is necessary we see how open we are to changing anything and everything, as long as we do not have to change our minds. Recall Helen's poem "Conversion," which contrasts the ego's silence with God's. Here are the first two stanzas, reflecting each silence:

> There is a silence that betrays the Christ
> Because the Word of God remains unheard
> By those in bitter need. Unspoken still
> The Word salvation holds for them, and kept
> Away their resurrection from a world
> That is but hell and alien to God's Son.
> Homeless they wander, nowhere finding peace,
> Unknown, unknowing, blind in darkness, and
> Unborn within the silence of the tomb.
> There is a silence into which God's Word
> Has poured an ancient meaning, and is still.

Nothing remains unsaid nor unreceived.
Strange dreams are washed in golden water from
The blazing silence of the peace of God,
And what was evil suddenly becomes
The gift of Christ to those who call on Him.
His final gift is nothing but a dream,
Yet in that single dream is dreaming done.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 61)

**(10:5-6) And you look up and on toward Heaven, with the body's eyes but serving for an instant longer now. Peace is already recognized at last, and you can feel its soft embrace surround your heart and mind with comfort and with love.**

When we change our minds about the world's purpose, everything shifts. Rather than the world being a prison, it becomes the means by which we leave the prison entirely. That is the comfort, love, and soft embrace of peace we now begin to feel. The world does not change; *we* change. Rather than constantly striving after the world's "leaves of false desires," we rise above them, our gaze directed only toward Heaven.

**(11:1-3) Today we seek no idols. Peace can not be found in them. The peace of God is ours, and only this will we accept and want.**

This is hardly easy. Recall that Lesson 185, "I want the peace of God," began with the words: "To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything." We thus need to let go of the peace we sought here, understanding that continued seeking for its idols will not work:

> All idols of this world were made to keep the truth within from being known to you, and to maintain allegiance to the dream that you must find what is outside yourself to be complete and happy. It is vain to worship idols in the hope of peace. God dwells within, and your completion lies in Him.... To ... open up a road of hope and of release in what appeared to be an endless circle of despair, you need but to decide you do not know the purpose of the world.... You try to see in it a place of idols found outside yourself.... [S]peed the end of idols in a world made sad and sick by seeing idols there. Your holy mind is altar unto God, and where He is no idols can abide (T-29.VII.6:1-3; 8:1, 3; 9:4-5).

**(11:4-5) Peace be to us today. For we have found a simple, happy way to leave the world of ambiguity, and to replace our shifting goals and solitary dreams with single purpose and companionship.**

What unifies your worldly experiences is the single purpose that comes from the single teacher in your mind. See everything that occurs during the day as part of your script to enslave you and everyone else, but which you now turn into a happy classroom that Jesus uses to teach you to awaken from the dream. Yet see how quickly you forget. You close your book and forget everything you just read. Therefore, join with Jesus in watching this ego reaction, and hear him explain the fear of realizing you were wrong, which means your identity was misplaced – you are not separate and alone, but one with the Sonship, the Holy Spirit, and God.

**(11:6) For peace is union, if it be of God.**

The Oneness of Christ within Himself, and His Oneness with God are reflected here in the one purpose of forgiveness we share with everyone. Peace cannot but follow.

**(11:7-9) We seek no further. We are close to home, and draw still nearer every time we say:**

> ***There is no peace except the peace of God,***
> ***And I am glad and thankful it is so.***

The key is to be glad and thankful this world will never give us what we want. Our egos are ungrateful this is so, for it does not want us to see that the world fails to satisfy our needs. True gratitude, however, comes in realizing: "Thank God I was wrong, for now I find the peace for which I always yearned. It will not be found here, but I gratefully know it is in my mind, along with Jesus and my brothers." And then in the blessed silence of God's peace our words are still, for our one heart sings its silent song of gratitude, as in Helen's poem "The Peace of God":

> Silence and nothing more. There is no sound
> And nothing to be seen. No fingers still
> Grasp at the world. All prayers have been forgot,
> For there is nothing now that can be asked.
>
> The Voice for God no longer speaks. There is
> No need remaining. There was once a time,
> Now unremembered, when there was a world.
> A Word is spoken, and the world is done.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 94)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 201**
**REVIEW VI**
**Introduction**

We preface our discussion of the sixth and final review by returning to comments previously made when we looked at the fifth review. All the reviews help to reinforce our purpose in doing the workbook by taking us back over the previous lessons, as do teachers who present material in class, and after a period of time review it to make sure the students understand what has been taught. Jesus does the same here. As we will see in this Introduction, he thinks highly of each lesson, telling us his entire curriculum can be found in any one of them. In fact, we can make the identical statement of each lesson's central idea, not to mention almost every sentence. Again, Jesus' purpose is to reinforce how seriously he takes his workbook, and that he would like us to take it just as seriously. These are therefore not just pretty words he asks us to say a few times every day, but words and ideas he wants us to apply continuously to our lives.

When we consider the workbook's construction and what the daily exercises ask of us, we can see that Jesus' purpose is training us to bring to him our illusions—pain, attack, and specialness—and not leave any person outside the healing love of his Atonement. Recall:

> The offer of Atonement is universal. It is equally applicable to all individuals in all circumstances. And in it is the power to heal all individuals of all forms of sickness (M-22.6:1-3).

We are therefore asked to be vigilant. The lessons, and review periods especially, punctuate the importance of this vigilance. We shall keep that in mind as we go through this final review period of Part I.

**(1:1-2) For this review we take but one idea each day, and practice it as often as is possible. Besides the time you give morning and evening, which should not be less than fifteen minutes, and the hourly remembrances you make throughout the day, use the idea as often as you can between them.**

As you read these words, ask yourself: Why would you not do this? What stops you from bringing every experience throughout the day – especially those that bring pain, anxiety, and feelings of unfair treatment – to the central thought Jesus presents? The answer is obvious. If you did what he asked, you could no longer retain thoughts of victimization and specialness, without which your self-concept would be gone. Therefore, be mindful of how often you forget what Jesus says, and how you do not want to make this workbook, and *A Course in Miracles* itself, the central focus of your life; specifically – to make these exercises, lessons, and ideas the focal points of your daily experience. Note how quickly you forget and cast the thoughts aside, putting your own special needs ahead of them. Realize you do so because you would rather be right than happy, preferring to be miserable so you could blame someone else – all this instead of going to Jesus and simply saying: "Thank God I was wrong."

**(1:3-4) Each of these ideas alone would be sufficient for salvation, if it were learned truly. Each would be enough to give release to you and to the world from every form of bondage, and invite the memory of God to come again.**

**Lesson 201**

If you truly understood, practiced, and integrated fully any one idea in this course, you would have learned it in its entirety, because the whole is found in every part, as is true, in fact, of the Sonship and the ego thought system. For example, if properly understood, the first principle of miracles – "There is no order of difficulty of miracles" (T-1.I.1:1) – holds the key to the thought system of *A Course in Miracles:* the ego's attack and the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. Jesus now restates this point, in case we missed it:

**(2:1-2) With this in mind we start our practicing, in which we carefully review the thoughts the Holy Spirit has bestowed on us in our last twenty lessons. Each contains the whole curriculum if understood, practiced, accepted, and applied to all the seeming happenings throughout the day.**

Every idea and lesson title would be enough if accepted as true and applied to our lives. Jesus thus asks us to apply these thoughts to all "the seeming happenings throughout the day," and we need realize the importance we give to them. We think what goes on in our lives not only is real, but vital. We even think sometimes it is a matter of life and death. This shows the arrogant insanity of all of us who believe we are here, and is the significance of the adjective "seeming."

**(2:3-4) One is enough. But from that one, there must be no exceptions made.**

If you think back to the beginning exercises of the workbook, one of the rules Jesus asks us to follow is to make no exceptions as we apply the day's idea to everything in the room, or whatever the instructions call for. It is not that we need to include everything, because that would only make us good obsessive compulsives. Rather, Jesus wants us to be sure that we are not intentionally excluding anything. That is the principle he states here of not making exceptions to the "seeming happenings" we bring to him. Were we to make exceptions, we would be giving support to the ego's principle that there is a hierarchy of illusions – its first law of chaos (T-23.II.2:3) – and therefore choose to keep some, while gladly giving others to him. However, since there is no order of difficulty in miracles—the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego's first law of chaos – every problem is the same problem, each unforgiveness is all unforgiveness. Thus Jesus' final vision contains this familiar statement:

> Not one illusion is accorded faith, and not one spot of darkness still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone (T-31.VIII.12:5).

**(2:5) And so we need to use them all and let them blend as one, as each contributes to the whole we learn.**

Because we are not yet able to master any one single lesson, Jesus provides three hundred and sixty-five, and we use them all until we reach the point of generalization, realizing they say the same thing. We are therefore asked to practice this *same thing* day in and day out, from Lesson 1 through Lesson 365. We do so throughout the rest of our lives as well, bringing whatever causes us distress – in ourselves or another – to his forgiving love.

**(3:1-5) These practice sessions, like our last review, are centered round a**

**central theme with which we start and end each lesson. It is this:**

***I am not a body. I am free.***
***For I am still as God created me.***

As we have seen, this is probably the single most important theme that Jesus repeats throughout *A Course in Miracles.* I will comment further as we begin the review.

**(3:6-8) The day begins and ends with this. And we repeat it every time the hour strikes, or we remember, in between, we have a function that transcends the world we see. Beyond this, and a repetition of the special thought we practice for the day, no form of exercise is urged, except a deep relinquishment of everything that clutters up the mind, and makes it deaf to reason, sanity and simple truth.**

This instruction is reminiscent of the conclusion of the manual, where Jesus asks us to begin and end our day with the Holy Spirit, and to think of God as often as possible in between:

> Prepare for this [the gift of the Holy Spirit's wisdom] each morning, remember God when you can throughout the day, ask the Holy Spirit's help when it is feasible to do so, and thank Him for His guidance at night. And your confidence will be well founded indeed (M-29.5:9-10).

Our resistance to this, however, is explained by the presence of the mind's clutter of specialness, which deafens us "to reason, sanity and simple truth," diverting our attention from the mind's decision maker that can choose reason instead of insanity. This clutter, as well as the projected clutter of our bodily lives, is purposive. We make distracting work for ourselves and create problems when in truth there are none – each external problem being a shadow of the internal problem of guilt, which is also illusory. The ego's purpose, again, is to prevent us from remembering and therefore choosing the right-minded thought system of the Holy Spirit.

**(4:1) We will attempt to get beyond all words and special forms of practicing for this review.**

Jesus reminds us – as we saw in these later lessons – that *content is* crucial, not *form.* Thus it is not the words or concepts that are important, nor the specific exercises of the lesson, but where they lead us and what they reflect. In other words, it is the meaning or purpose beyond the specifics that is essential:

> He [the Holy Spirit] opposes the idea that differences in form are meaningful, emphasizing always that *these differences do not matter.* The meaning of His message is always the same; only the meaning matters (T-7.II.5:3-4).

To restate the point, it is the love beyond the words – the *content* beyond the *form* - that is important. Thus Jesus continues training our minds to see the one meaning behind all relationships, situations, and experiences. Of such vision is his kingdom on earth.

**(4:2) For we attempt, this time, to reach a quickened pace along a shorter path to the serenity and peace of God.**

"Why wait for Heaven?" as Jesus said earlier (W-pI.13 1.6:1; 188.1:1). Why delay happiness and continue to maintain the illusion that misery will bring peace? What helps quicken our pace is to think of these ideas and practice them throughout the day.

**(4:3-4) We merely close our eyes, and then forget all that we thought we knew and understood. For thus is freedom given us from all we did not know and failed to understand.**

To forget means choosing against ego thoughts – the world "we thought we knew and understood" – so that we can be taught something different. We thus forget the fear we remembered, and remember the love we forgot. As the text states:

> ...the Holy Spirit's teaching is a lesson in remembering.... He teaches remembering and forgetting, but the forgetting is only to make the remembering consistent. You forget in order to remember better (T-7.II.6:3-5).

**(5:1-2) There is but one exception to this lack of structuring. Permit no idle thought to go unchallenged.**

This is the key. Even though the practice periods are left relatively unstructured, Jesus wants us to impose a structure on ourselves throughout the day – to be aware of ego thoughts. He asks us to see how quickly we fall back into the habit of having specialness be uppermost in our minds, and our needs and interests become more important than anyone else's. This is an important directive – "Permit no idle thought to go unchallenged" – and try to see how quickly you forget. Training oneself to become aware, however, undoes the ego's purposive amnesia.

**(5:3) If you notice one, deny its hold and hasten to assure your mind that this is not what it would have.**

The mind to which we appeal is the decision maker. We realize that holding onto a grievance or indulging in specialness, though not sinful, will not make us happy, and certainly will not bring us the peace of God. It is of the essence that we see the painful consequences of our idle thoughts, for this will be our motivation to let them go – the point behind this familiar, albeit startling statement from the text:

> You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery *is* happiness (T-14.II.1:2-3 ).

Idle thoughts withheld from the Holy Spirit bring misery; forgiving ones lead to happiness.

**(5:4) Then gently let the thought which you denied be given up, in sure and quick exchange for the idea we practice for the day.**

This is what is meant by "turning things over" to the Holy Spirit. This is not an exercise in magic, wherein we ask Him to take away something painful to us, while still holding on to it. Since we denied the importance of the day's idea, gladly substituting an ego thought in exchange, we must first decide we no longer want it, choosing to let the ego go. Jesus reminds us that we must take total responsibility for everything we feel and think. No one and nothing is responsible for us, and therefore no one and nothing, including Jesus, can take the ego from us. His hands are open, but we must place the ego's thoughts in them. Thus do we bring darkness to light, hate to love, denial to awareness, as this oft-quoted passage from the text states:

You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself (T-13.III.1:1-2).

**(6:1-3) When you are tempted, hasten to proclaim your freedom from temptation, as you say:**

***This thought I do not want. I choose instead_____.***

The blank is the appropriate form of correction. For instance, the thought of attack toward this person is no longer what we want; we choose to forgive instead. Yet we know that to say these words is nothing. We have to *mean* them, and be willing to let go of a thought system that we believed provided safety and comfort, realizing now it was a lie. Therefore, we acknowledge that our separate identity as a special self does not promote happiness or peace, and so we at last have the little willingness to choose something else.

**(6:4) And then repeat the idea for the day, and let it take the place of what you thought.**

The beginning of paragraph 4 told us to go beyond the words, for Jesus does not mean for us to use these words – the idea for the day – as mantras or affirmations that mysteriously dispel the mind's ego thoughts. This is not a workbook in ritual, but in using *the forms* to seek the *content* behind the words. In a passage that implicitly points to Christianity's excessive use of ritual, Jesus exposes the special relationship's worship *of form* over *content:*

> Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is content, and not form of any kind. The special relationship is a ritual of form, aimed at raising the form to take the place of God at the expense of content. There is no meaning in the form, and there will never be (T-16.V.12:1-3).

This familiar passage thus cautions us against the error of turning *A Course in Miracles* into a practice of ritual, its words a substitute for the love beyond them.

**(6:5) Beyond such special applications of each day's idea, we will add but a few formal expressions or specific thoughts to aid in practicing.**

Jesus explains that he will add a few sentences to the title of the lesson, which is framed by the statement: "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me."

**(6:6) Instead, we give these times of quiet to the Teacher Who instructs in quiet, speaks of peace, and gives our thoughts whatever meaning they may have.**

This review is about choosing between the ego and the Holy Spirit, learning that the ego will bring us pain, and the Holy Spirit peace. We again read Jesus' question in the text:

> Who with the Love of God upholding him could find the choice of miracles or murder hard to make? (T-23.IV.9:8)

The general purpose of the workbook, and this review specifically, is to help us see the implications of the choice between the ego and the Holy Spirit. With our acquiring this new perception, the right choice is hardly difficult to make.

**(7:1-2) To Him I offer this review for you. I place you in His charge, and let Him teach you what to do and say and think, each time you turn to Him.**

Jesus says virtually the same thing at the end of the workbook:

> And now I place you in His hands, to be His faithful follower, with Him as Guide through every difficulty and all pain that you may think is real.... You will be told exactly what God wills for you each time there is a choice to make. And He will speak for God and for your Self, thus making sure that hell will claim you not, and that each choice you make brings Heaven nearer to your reach (W-ep.4:1; 5:3-4).

We might be tempted to take these words out of context and think that Jesus is telling us to continually ask the Holy Spirit what we should do in our lives. Asking for such specifics constitutes the *early* part of our training, but Jesus now wants us to bring our ego thoughts to the Holy Spirit, because these are the interferences to our return home. When these are gone, His Love guides us naturally in all we think, say, and do. The message here is to be vigilant for the ego, *not* to try to hear the Holy Spirit's Voice. To restate this crucial point: This is not a course in learning how to listen to His Voice specifically, but in learning how to bring the ego's interferences to His Presence. Thus will His Love be the only source of what we seem to do here in the world. Recall one more time these all-important lines from the text:

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6:1-2).

**(7:3) He will not fail to be available to you, each time you call to Him to help you.**

The Holy Spirit is always available because He is always in our minds. We made

ourselves unavailable to Him, but when we return, He suddenly is there.

**(7:4) Let us offer Him the whole review we now begin, and let us also not forget to Whom it has been given, as we practice day by day, advancing toward the goal He set for us; allowing Him to teach us how to go, and trusting Him completely for the way each practice period can best become a loving gift of freedom to the world.**

Once again, do not forget the Holy Spirit or Jesus throughout the day. If you have gone this far with the workbook, you have obviously made a commitment. What prevents you then from making it total, from thinking how you can best learn from each situation in your life? The answer could only be that you do not want to give up your individual and special self. You do not want to learn you have been wrong and Jesus right all along. The focus of this day and every day ought to be the purpose given it by your teacher. If you are in distress of any kind, it is only because you have chosen to listen to the ego instead of him.

We will run through these lessons relatively quickly. Keep in mind, however, that their theme is that our identity is not the body but the mind, and the choice between pain and joy, fear and love, is always available to us. If we are not at peace, it is because we chose not to be at peace; if we see ourselves as separate, it is because we chose not to see ourselves joined with others. Although the principal consideration is that we are not bodies, it is certainly not suggested that we should feel guilty because we have physical and psychological needs. We need only give the body a different purpose. Recall these frequently quoted lines near the end of the text, a kind warning from Jesus not to abandon our self- concepts too quickly, for we are still too fearful:

> There is no statement that the world is more afraid to hear than this:
>
> *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself* (T-31.V.17:6-7).

Before we are asked to let go of our individual self, we are guided to shift our self-concept from the face of innocence that hides the face of the murderer, to the true face of innocence that reflects the forgiven and forgiving self, sharing one purpose with all its brothers.

The purpose of a review such as this is to remind us of our ultimate goal. On a practical level, again, we are not asked to deny we are a body as we go through the day – "a particularly unworthy form of denial" (T-2.IV.3:11) – but rather to deny the ego's *purpose* for our bodies, which is always to attack in its glorification of separation and specialness. We want to choose against that purpose and in favor of the Holy Spirit's, which sees the body only as a classroom. To be clear, *Jesus is not instructing us to deny our bodies.* The very fact these words appear on a page in front of us, to which Jesus is asking us to pay attention, acknowledges that he knows we still believe we are bodies—reading these words with eyes we believe can see, and think about with brains we believe can think. Our teacher is simply asking us to allow him to tell us his purpose for the body – to teach us a different way of looking at ourselves and the world.

Now to the review:

**LESSON 201***

## Lesson 201

**(1)** (181) **I trust my brothers, who are one with me.**

***No one but is my brother. I am blessed with oneness with the universe and God, my Father, one Creator of the whole that is my Self forever One with me.***

Jesus begins this review by reminding us that reality is our oneness and unity. Our purpose, therefore, is bring to that truth all illusions of separation, individuality, and specialness.

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – “I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me” – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 202**

**(1)** (182) **I will be still an instant and go home.**

***Why would I choose to stay an instant more where I do not belong, when God Himself has given me His Voice to call me home?***

Jesus is appealing to us – as we will see throughout this review – to make another choice. This world is not our home, but if we choose to have him as our teacher he will lead us away from hell and toward Heaven. When we are tempted by the ego, we should call upon God's Name. As we saw when we discussed Lesson 183, Jesus does not literally mean for us to call on the Name of God, Who does not have a name. The *Name of God* is but a symbol for the right-minded correction of the ego's thought system. Thus he tells us:

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me" – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 203**

**(1)** (183) **I call upon God's Name and on my own.**

***The Name of God is my deliverance from every thought of evil and of sin, because it is my own as well as His.***

I first must be aware of my thoughts of evil and sin – not that they are in truth, but it *is* what guilt tells me. I bring those thoughts of evil, sin, and guilt to the Name of God, which helps me realize the *content* behind the *form:* my true identity and inheritance as God's Son. The next lesson expresses the same idea.

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me" – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 204**

**(1)** (184) **The Name of God is my inheritance.**

***God's Name reminds me that I am His Son, not slave to time, unbound by laws which rule the world of sick illusions, free in God, forever and forever one with Him.***

Calling for help reminds us there is indeed another Voice in our minds, another Teacher Whose lessons of forgiveness remove the chains that bind us to the world's cruel laws of sickness and death. Now we are free to remember our Name is God's, "and in His certainty [we] rest content" (T-31.VIII.9:5).

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me" – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 205**

**(1)** (185) **I *want* the peace of God.**

***The peace of God is everything I want The peace of God is my one goal; the aim of all my living here, the end I seek, my purpose and my function and my life, while I abide where I am not at home.***

This lesson reminds us why we choose against the ego: we want the peace of God. In order to take this step, we need be aware that what happens in the world does not bring us this peace. In other words, choosing against having chosen against peace allows its gentle truth to be our own.

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me" – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

## Lesson 206

**(1)** (186) **Salvation of the world depends on me.**

***I am entrusted with the gifts of God, because I am His Son. And I would give His gifts where He intended them to be.***

God's gifts, through the Holy Spirit, are not given to the world so I would have a happier body and happier dream. His gift is the Atonement principle, the reflected Presence of Love in my mind. Thus the gift I give my brother is the gift of peace, which tells him I have accepted my mind's correction, and he is free to make the same choice for salvation.

* For ease of reading, the title common to all twenty review lessons – "I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me" – has been omitted, as has its repetition at the end of each lesson.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 207**

**(1)** (187) **I bless the world because I bless myself.**

***God's blessing shines upon me from within my heart, where He abides. I need but turn to Him, and every sorrow melts away, as I accept His boundless Love for me.***

Jesus speaks poetically here about our minds. Obviously, God does not dwell in a physical heart, but His Love abides in our right minds through the Holy Spirit. However, I first have to be aware of my sorrow and unhappiness, realizing that nothing here works. Only then am I motivated to say: "There must be another way, another Teacher in my mind." We see the same thought expressed in Lesson 208:

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 208**

**(1)** (188) **The peace of God is shining in me now.**

***I will be still, and let the earth be still along with me. And in that stillness we will find the peace of God. It is within my heart, which witnesses to God Himself.***

When Jesus talks about being still, he means silencing the ego's raucous shrieking. When my mind is no longer filled with noise, I will not hear it in the world, either. The stillness and quiet in my mind is now reflected in my experience of the world – both my mind and the earth are still. What happens here has no effect on my inner peace, because I have chosen the Voice of stillness rather than the voice of noise. "And in that stillness we will find the peace of God. It is within my heart, which witnesses to God Himself" – His peace is in my right mind, the home of Love and now, happily, my home as well.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 209**

**(1)** (189) **I feel the Love of God within me now.**

Read carefully, this lesson tells us that the Love of God is always present in us.

***The Love of God is what created me. The Love of God is everything I am. The Love of God proclaimed me as His Son. The Love of God within me sets me free.***

Jesus of course refers to the mind, not the physical/psychological self. The Love of God is within my right mind, which I learn to choose – the purpose of *A Course in Miracles.*

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 210**

**(1)** (190) **I choose the joy of God instead of *pain.***

***Pain is my own idea. It is not a Thought of God, but one I thought apart from Him and from His Will. His Will is joy, and only joy for His beloved Son. And that I choose, instead of what I made.***

We have repeatedly discussed how pain is a choice; a thought that comes from the mind, not the world. Once again, Jesus appeals to us to choose the joy of God instead of pain, to see ourselves as extensions of God's Will rather than projections of the ego's guilt. When the right choice is finally made, all pain is gone.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 211**

**(1)** (191) **I *am* the holy Son of God Himself.**

***In silence and in true humility I seek God's glory, to behold it in the Son whom He created as my Self.***

We return to the theme of being silent, which means quieting the ego's voice by choosing against it. Clearly implied is that the Son is not only me, but everyone else as well. It is only from the quiet place in my mind that I can look out and see everyone as my brother, and in that brotherhood we are one in the silence of God.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 212**

**(1) (192) I have a function God would *have me*** fill.

***I seek the function that would set me free from all the vain illusions of the world Only the function God has given me can offer freedom. Only this I seek, and only this will I accept as mine.***

We are reminded that our function of forgiveness sets us free from the illusions of the world. As we become aware of them, we remember we can choose to be led by a different Teacher; One of freedom, not imprisonment.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 213**

**(1)** (193) **All things are lessons God would have me learn.**

***A lesson is a miracle which God offers to me, in place of thoughts I made that hurt me. What I learn of Him becomes the way I am set free. And so I choose to learn His lessons and forget my own.***

I first am aware of my pain. Then, through my new Teacher, I learn that this hurt comes from a decision I made – they are *my* hurtful thoughts. Now I choose to learn His lessons and forget my own. The Holy Spirit's lessons are in my mind, but I must choose them before their beneficent effects become my experience.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 214**

**(1)** (194) **I place the future in the Hands of God.**

***The past is gone; the future is not yet Now am I freed from both. For what God gives can only be for good. And I accept but what He gives as what belongs to me.***

Lesson 194, as you recall, centered on the holy instant, in which there is no separation from God because we have rejoined the love of Jesus. In that love there can be no thought of separation, and therefore no sin, guilt, or fear to protect it. Without these defenses, there is nothing in our minds to project: no sin (the past), guilt (the ego's present), or fear (the future). At that point, then, we simply accept the Love of God, which has always been present within us.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 215**

**(1)** (195) **Love is the way I walk in gratitude.**

***The Holy Spirit is my only Guide. He walks with me in love. And I give thanks to Him for showing me the way to go.***

Gratitude has been an important theme, and Jesus returns to it here. It is difficult to be grateful for learning we are wrong and do not know anything. Yet that is the lesson we wish to learn if we are to return home. Thus our gratitude is to Him Who teaches us, and Whose Love gently guides us.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 216**

**(1)** (196) **It *can* be but myself I crucify.**

***All that I do I do unto myself If I attack, I suffer. But if I forgive, salvation will be given me.***

This is a key theme throughout *A Course in Miracles:* everything comes from me, for I am the dreamer of my dream. Others cannot affect me in any way unless I give them that power, making them victimizing figures in order to justify my face of innocence. Thus they are responsible for my pain, until the holy instant of sanity comes when I forgive them for what they have never done.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 217**

**(1)** (197) **It *can* be but my gratitude I *earn.***

***Who should give thanks for my salvation but myself? And how but through salvation can I find the Self to Whom my thanks are due?***

This continues Jesus' emphasis on the importance of recognizing we have a mind and are not our bodies. In *A Course in Miracles, salvation* means being saved from my decision to be guilty. I am the one who chose wrongly, and therefore I am the one who can choose correctly by asking my new Teacher for help. I am thus grateful to my decision-making self for choosing salvation instead of crucifixion.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 218**

**(1)** (198) **Only my condemnation injures *me.***

***My condemnation keeps my vision dark, and through my sightless eyes I cannot see the vision of my glory. Yet today I can behold this glory and be glad.***

My vision is not dark because of what you have done to me; nor is my unhappiness a result of your mercilessness and abuse. They are the result of a choice I have made, and therefore one I can undo. As easily as I chose the blindness of condemnation, I can choose the vision of forgiveness.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 219**

**(1)** (199) **I am not a body. I am free.**

***I am God's Son. Be still, my mind, and think a moment upon this. And then return to earth, without confusion as to what my Father loves forever as His Son.***

We are to ask the decision maker in our minds to think about the truth that we are God's Son, and not the ego's. We know we have chosen wrongly whenever we feel pain in any form, are in distress, or believe in the importance of our specialness needs. We forget the purpose for our relationships and for being a student of *A Course in Miracles.* This purpose of forgiveness is renewed each time we choose to have the Holy Spirit be our Teacher.

We have seen repeatedly that the focus of the lessons is on our minds, wherein is found the correction of the holy instant. We then return our attention to the world and its daily demands, but differently from before. We engage the world now with a clear understanding of our purpose – not to have our needs met at another's expense, but to remind us of our Identity as God's one Son: mind, not body. Our purpose in doing these review lessons, therefore, is to bring our mistaken thoughts about our purpose to the corrected one: from the body's attacks to the mind's forgiveness.

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 220**

**(1)** (200) **There is no peace except the peace of God.**

***Let me not wander from the way of peace, for I am lost on other roads than this. But let me follow Him Who leads me home, and peace is certain as the Love of God***

This is reminiscent of *A Course in Miracles'* version of the Lord's Prayer, found at the end of Chapter 16:

> *Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with You, in which there are no illusions, and where none can ever enter. Our holiness is Yours. What can there be in us that needs forgiveness when Yours is Perfect? The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember Your forgiveness and Your Love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not Your Will. And let us receive only what You have given, and accept but this into the minds which You created and which You love. Amen* (T-16.VII.12).

When we wander, we now understand it was our choice to do so. God Himself cannot stop us, but calling on His Name and His Love reminds us we took a wrong turn, and that the correction is in our minds, waiting for us to choose it: "But let me follow Him Who leads me home, and peace is certain as the Love of God." This final plea, which ends the first part of the workbook, is to let the Holy Spirit be our Teacher, and not the ego. It is important as we go through the day to realize that this does mean we continue to do what we have always done, merely paying lip service to a loving inner Presence. This will not heal, because our ego thoughts remain uncorrected. To have the Holy Spirit be our Teacher and Guide means that we bring to Him our ego thoughts. Uppermost in our minds, therefore, are not the day's activities that concern us, but their changed purpose – forgiveness instead of specialness.

We have discussed before the figure/ground aspect of perception, wherein our daily needs become the background, and our new Teacher the foreground. Normally, it is the other way around: our daily needs are prominent (the figure), and the Holy Spirit is the background, to Whom we go when we are in trouble. We will not advance far in *A Course in Miracles* if that is our practice. When we wake in the morning, our first thoughts should not be on what lies ahead – meetings to attend; yesterday's unresolved problems; a doctor's appointment; chores to perform; people to contact; etc. – but how we can best learn the lesson that we are not separate from anyone else. Having the prominent Figure as our new focus will give meaning to our day, and will speed us along the path. As we noted at the beginning of this review, Jesus takes these exercises seriously, and he wants us to take them seriously, too, for they are the means of awakening from our sleep of forgetfulness and remembering our Father's Love. What could be more serious or important?

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 221**
**Introduction to Part II**

As prelude to our discussion of Part II, we return to the workbook's Introduction:

> The workbook is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with the undoing of the way you see now, and the second with the acquisition of true perception (W-in.3:1).

The purpose of Part I, therefore, has been to undo the ego's thought system. We have repeatedly seen that Jesus presents us with the mind's wrong- and right-minded beliefs, appealing to us to choose between them. Our having consolidated everything we have learned so far – sufficiently choosing against the ego's specialness – the lessons and summaries in Part II help us with the next step: acquiring true perception. Once the ego has been chosen against, we will hear Jesus' voice more frequently and begin to see more clearly.

**(1:1) Words will mean little now.**

This theme is familiar to us by now – Jesus emphasizing how we must faithfully practice what he has taught, learning not to be dependent on the *form,* but only his *content.*

**(1:2-5) We use them but as guides on which we do not now depend. For now we seek direct experience of truth alone. The lessons that remain are merely introductions to the times in which we leave the world of pain, and go to enter peace. Now we begin to reach the goal this course has set, and find the end toward which our practicing was always geared.**

Jesus does not expect us to be one step away from Heaven, for now that we have done the introductory work, the real journey begins. Indeed, at the end of the workbook he tells us: "This course is a beginning not an end" (W-ep.1:1). He thus appeals to us to remember that our goal is to "find the end toward which our practicing was always geared"; it is this goal that renders the exercises meaningful, reflecting the principle articulated in the following passage:

> In any situation... the first thing to consider, very simply, is "What do I want to come of this? What is it *for?"* The clarification of the goal belongs at the beginning, for it is this which will determine the outcome.... The value of deciding in advance what you want to happen is simply that you will perceive the situation as a means to *make* it happen. You will therefore make every effort to overlook what interferes with the accomplishment of your objective, and concentrate on everything that helps you meet it.... The situation now has meaning, but only because the goal has made it meaningful (T-17.VI.2:1-3; 4:1-2, 6).

We walk the fine line of paying attention to the ego, yet avoiding the trap of wallowing in its ingenious complexity. Remember, Jesus warns, our goal is to jump into the ego's waters and swim to the real world on the other side, not to be so enchanted with its specialness that we wind up scuba diving in exploration of its buried treasure. It is thus important to be aware of the ego, but not to place its cherished idols before our

goal of peace, which we attain by looking at our special relationships so we can be free of them – the means Jesus uses to lead us home.

**(2:1-2) Now we attempt to let the exercise be merely a beginning. For we wait in quiet expectation for our God and Father.**

Jesus asks us to be quiet, even in the midst of a busy day. As we saw in Review VI, the focus now is on learning how to silence the shrieking ego in our minds. In this closing passage of *The Song of Prayer* listen to God our Father "speak" to us of the Love that is remembered within the stillness of our quiet minds:

> Come unto Me, My children ... without such twisted thoughts upon your hearts.... My Arms are open to the Son I love, who does not understand that he is healed, and that his prayers have never ceased to sing his joyful thanks in unison with all creation, in the holiness of Love. Be still an instant. Underneath the sounds of harsh and bitter striving and defeat there is a Voice That speaks to you of Me.... Return to Me Who never left My Son. Listen, My child, your Father calls to you. Do not refuse to hear the Call for Love (S-3.IV.6:1; 7:3-5; 8:5-7).

**(2:3-7) He has promised He will take the final step Himself. And we are sure His promises are kept. We have come far along the road, and now we wait for Him. We will continue spending time with Him each morning and at night, as long as makes us happy. We will not consider time a matter of duration now.**

In the manual for teachers Jesus discusses this same time structuring, dependent more on our need than any formal ritual:

> This course is always practical. It may be that the teacher of God is not in a situation that fosters quiet thought as he awakes. If this is so, let him but remember that he chooses to spend time with God as soon as possible, and let him do so. Duration is not the major concern. One can easily sit still an hour with closed eyes and accomplish nothing. One can as easily give God only an instant, and in that instant join with Him completely.... The same procedures should be followed at night.... If possible... just before going to sleep is a desirable time to devote to God. It sets your mind into a pattern of rest, and orients you away from fear (M-16. 4:1-6; 5:1, 6-7).

It is obvious that Jesus is not talking about time, but attitude. It is possible to be physically busy, yet with a quiet mind. Indeed, that is the goal – not that we be physically quiet twenty-four hours a day, but that we be mentally quiet, even though the body may be quite active. Jesus tells us his is a practical course, and so he is not suggesting we deny our worldly responsibilities, but he does urge us to remember our primary responsibility: choosing him instead of the ego. Learning to be devoted to Jesus as our teacher is what speeds us along the "journey without distance" (T-8.VI.9:7), until God reaches down and raises us unto Himself (T-11.VIII.15:5).

**(2:8-9) We use as much as we will need for the result that we desire. Nor will we forget our hourly remembrance in between, calling to God when we have need of Him as we are tempted to forget our goal.**

We are not to give up our structured practicing, because we still need it. Yet Jesus tells us to become less and less dependent on it. This allows our need to become the determiner of asking for help, and we have been trained to be vigilant for our ego choices so we can ask Jesus to remind us of our goal of returning home.

**(3) We will continue with a central thought for all the days to come, and we will use that thought to introduce our times of rest, and calm our minds at need. Yet we will not content ourselves with simple practicing in the remaining holy instants which conclude the year that we have given God. We say some simple words of welcome, and expect our Father to reveal Himself, as He has promised. We have called on Him, and He has promised that His Son will not remain unanswered when he calls His Name.**

Since God is present in our minds through His memory – the Holy Spirit – "revealing" Himself means simply that we have removed the barriers to our awareness of His Presence, reversing the mind's decision not to be fully present to Him. Thus our daily practicing should not be simply a matter of completing a specific exercise or whatever the lesson instructs us to do, but should include an ongoing vigilance for the ego.

**(4:1) Now do we come to Him with but His Word upon our minds and hearts, and wait for Him to take the step to us that He has told us, through His Voice, He would not fail to take when we invited Him.**

The key phrase is "when we invited Him." It is *our* choice to invite the Holy Spirit. In the context of our sharing his thinking that giving and receiving are the same, Jesus states:

> This is the invitation to the Holy Spirit. I have said already that I can reach up and bring the Holy Spirit down to you, but I can bring Him to you only at your own invitation. The Holy Spirit is in your right mind, as He was in mine. The Bible says, "May the mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus," and uses this as a blessing. It is the blessing of miracle- mindedness. It asks that you may think as I thought, joining with me in Christ thinking (T-5.I.3).

**(4:2) He has not left His Son in all his madness, nor betrayed his trust in Him.**

God's Love is fully present in us, and thus our trust in Him is fully grounded and has not been betrayed. Remember that the ego wants us to believe that God and Jesus deceive us, and this course is untrustworthy because it does not work. Re-read this passage from the text on how our specialness leads us to think of God as an ego:

> You who prefer separation [i.e., specialness] to sanity cannot obtain it in your right mind. You were at peace until you asked for special favor. And God did not give it for the request was alien to Him, and you could not ask this of a Father Who truly loved His Son. Therefore you made of Him an unloving father, demanding of Him what only such a father could give. And the peace of God's Son was shattered, for he no longer understood his Father. He feared what he

> had made, but still more did he fear his real Father, having attacked his own glorious equality with Him (T-13.III.10).

The fact is, however, that we want to feel betrayed, as the means of concealing the belief that we are the sinful traitors. Since our seeming sin had no effect, there is nothing to conceal or defend. Therefore Jesus reminds us that God has not betrayed our trust, and we need only remember His faithful Love:

> He has not left His Thoughts! But you forgot His Presence and remembered not His Love.... Yet has He never left His Thoughts to die, without their Source forever in themselves.... He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in Their Oneness Both are kept complete (T-31.IV.9:1-2,6; 10:2-3).

**(4:3-6) Has not His faithfulness earned Him the invitation that He seeks to make us happy? We will offer it, and it will be accepted. So our times with Him will now be spent. We say the words of invitation that His Voice suggests, and then we wait for Him to come to us.**

In this Introduction Jesus equates himself with the Holy Spirit. Although it was clear to Helen it was Jesus' voice she listened to, here he tells us these are the Holy Spirit's words. Helen was not hearing two voices, however, for there is only One – *the Holy Spirit, Jesus, Voice* are but different symbols for God's non-symbolic Love. Ultimately, of course whether these lessons come from Jesus or the Holy Spirit is irrelevant. It is their application alone that matters. Thus the above constitutes our invitation to the Holy Spirit to teach us His lessons of forgiveness, the means of remembering our true Identity in God's Kingdom, along with all our brothers:

> Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, because that is where the laws of God operate truly.... But seek this only, because you can find nothing else. There *is* nothing else.... Love needs only this invitation. It comes freely to all the Sonship, being what the Sonship is. By your awakening to it, you are merely forgetting what you are not. This enables you to remember what you are (T-7.IV.7:1-3, 9-12).

**(5:1-2) Now is the time of prophecy fulfilled. Now are all ancient promises upheld and fully kept.**

The fulfillment of prophecy refers to the ancient promise made by God that His Son be forever one with Him. Throughout *A Course in Miracles,* especially in the text, Jesus speaks of these promises, all of which relate to our oneness with God. Recall this lovely statement:

> God keeps His promises; His Son keeps his. In his creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." His Son remembers not that he replied "I will," though in that promise he was born (T-28.VI.6:3-6).

The instant we seemed to separate from God and fall asleep, the memory of Who we are as His Son became embedded in our minds as the Holy Spirit and His

Atonement, the ancient promise that what has always been, still is, and will always be. Nothing we believe to the contrary has had any effect on the truth: we never left God, and thus remain at one with our Creator and Source. The prophecy is fulfilled.

**(5:3) No step remains for time to separate from its accomplishment.**

The quasi-infinite world of time and space, spanning billions of years, has not affected reality. In the atemporal and non-spatial holy instant when we choose to be with Jesus, time is non-existent: no sin, guilt, and fear; no past, present, and future. There remains only the memory of Who we are, which undoes the thought we ever could have been something else. Here are three brief statements that reflect the time- and space-less truth of the holy instant:

> So very long ago, for such a tiny interval of time, that not one note in Heaven's song was missed (T-26.V.5:4).

> Time seems to go in one direction, but when you reach its end it will roll up like a long carpet spread along the past behind you, and will disappear (T-13.I.3:5).

> Yet separation is but empty space, enclosing nothing, doing nothing, and as unsubstantial as the empty place between the ripples that a ship has made in passing by. And covered just as fast, as water rushes in to close the gap, and as the waves in joining cover it. Where is the gap between the waves when they have joined, and covered up the space which seemed to keep them separate for a little while? (T-28.III.5:2-4)

**(5:4-6) For now we cannot fail. Sit silently and wait upon your Father. He has willed to come to you when you have recognized it is your will He do so.**

God is spoken of here as if He were a person. These are simply symbols, yet since we think we are human beings, we can only understand language set in that framework. The truth, however, is that God's Will is perfect Oneness. When we choose to understand that the separation did not bring us peace and so we no longer want it, we have accepted the Atonement and know that God's Will is one with us, and ours with Him.

**(5:7) And you could have never come this far unless you saw, however dimly, that it is your will.**

The phrase "however dimly" is also found in Chapter 2, where Jesus speaks of the inevitability of our recognizing there must be another way:

> Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there *must* be a better way (T-2.III.3:5-6).

What allowed us to begin the journey and come this far was realizing that being separate from God and indulging our specialness did not make us happy. Thus it could

not reflect our will.

**(6:1-2) I am so close to you we cannot fail. Father, we give these holy times to You, in gratitude to Him Who taught us how to leave the world of sorrow in exchange for its replacement, given us by You.**

This is one of the few places in the workbook where Jesus talks to us in the first person. Note, too, that in some places in *A Course in Miracles* Jesus is our teacher; in others, as here, the Holy Spirit has that role. The Two are interchangeable, for there are not really two "People" in our minds, any more than there are two Voices. Remember that Jesus uses symbols that speak to us on whatever level we can accept and understand.

**(6:3) We look not backward now.**

This is a reference to the well-known mythological symbol, found, for example, in the biblical tale of Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26) and the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Here, looking backward means looking to the ego as our teacher. Jesus points out our mistake so we can look only in the direction of the right mind – looking at the ego and saying no:

> Do not look back except in honesty. And when an idol tempts you, think of this:
>
> *There never was a time an idol brought you anything except the "gift" of guilt. Not one was bought except at cost of pain, nor was it ever paid by you alone.*
>
> ... Look forward, then; in confidence walk with a happy heart that beats in hope and does not pound in fear (T-30.V.10:1-4,8).

**(6:4) We look ahead, and fix our eyes upon the journey's end.**

Keep in mind the goal of awakening from the dream, not becoming happier within it. Choosing Jesus as your teacher is the means to awaken, for he will help you forgive your special relationships. As he asks in the text, if you want the end of awakening from the ego's dream, why would you not accept the means of forgiveness offered to help you reach your goal? Further, he explains, it is not forgiveness that is difficult or frightening, but the goal of God to which it leads you. As always, Jesus pleads with us to be honest with ourselves and him:

> You recognize you want the goal. Are you not also willing to accept the means? If you are not, let us admit that *you* are inconsistent [and not the Course]. A purpose is attained by means, and if you want a purpose you must be willing to want the means as well. How can one be sincere and say, "I want this above all else, and yet I do not want to learn the means to get it?"
>
> To obtain the goal the Holy Spirit indeed asks little. He asks no more to give the means as well. The means are second to the goal. And when you hesitate, it is because the purpose frightens you, and not the means. Remember

> this, for otherwise you will make the error of believing the means are difficult. Yet how can they be difficult if they are merely given you? They guarantee the goal, and they are perfectly in line with it. Before we look at them a little closer, remember that if you think they are impossible, your wanting of the purpose has been shaken. For if a goal is possible to reach, the means to do so must be possible as well (T-20.V11.2:3-7; 3).

**(6:5) Accept these little gifts of thanks from us, as through Christ's vision we behold a world beyond the one we made, and take that world to be the full replacement of our own.**

Jesus tells us he is asking God to accept our little gifts of thanks, for before we transcend perception we must look at the world through Christ's vision – the healing world of forgiveness – and then accept the real world in place of our own. This is the penultimate step before God takes the last one, and we are home. The following passage summarizes the role that healing the separation with our brothers plays in remembering our Creator:

> Shine on your brothers in remembrance of your Creator, for you will remember Him as you call forth the witnesses to His creation. Those whom you heal bear witness to your healing, for in their wholeness you will see your own. And as your hymns of praise and gladness rise to your Creator, He will return your thanks in His clear Answer to your call. For it can never be that His Son called upon Him and remained unanswered. His Call to you is but your call to Him. And in Him you are answered by His peace (T-13.VI.9).

**(7:1-2) And now we wait in silence, unafraid and certain of Your coming. We have sought to find our way by following the Guide You sent to us.**

And so we find the peace we truly sought.

**(7:3-4) We did not know the way, but You did not forget us. And we know that You will not forget us now.**

We find here an echo of the lovely second part of Lesson 189. The ego would have us believe that if God does not punish us, He will forget us, meaning we will remain abandoned and orphaned. In our right minds, however, is the healing message that God could neither let us go nor forget us, because we are one with Him. Recall this moving passage:

> You are altogether irreplaceable in the Mind of God. No one else can fill your part in it, and while you leave your part of it empty your eternal place merely waits for your return. God, through His Voice, reminds you of it.... Your value is in God's Mind, and therefore not in yours alone (T-9.VIII.10:1-3, 7).

**(7:5-8) We ask but that Your ancient promises be kept which are Your Will to keep. We will with You in asking this. The Father and the Son, Whose holy Will created all that is, can fail in nothing. In this certainty, we undertake these last few steps to You, and rest in confidence upon Your Love, which will not fail the Son**

**who calls to You.**

These promises represent the truth that we have always remained one with our Creator. The outcome is as certain as He is because our Oneness has never changed:

> A space where God is not, a gap between the Father and the Son is not the Will of Either, Who have promised to be One. God's promise is a promise to Himself, and there is no one who could be untrue to what He wills as part of what He is. The promise that there is no gap between Himself and what He is cannot be false. What will can come between what must be One, and in Whose Wholeness there can be no gap? (T-28.VII.1:5-8)

**(8:1-2) And so we start upon the final part of this one holy year, which we have spent together in the search for truth and God, Who is its one Creator. We have found the way He chose for us, and made the choice to follow it as He would have us go.**

Jesus continually returns to the importance of recognizing that since we chose a mistaken path, we now can choose the one that will lead us home. The opening paragraph of the Epilogue to the clarification of terms beautifully expresses the journey's end, the certain goal to which forgiveness and Jesus gently lead us:

> Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when hope like this is his? Illusions of despair may seem to come, but learn how not to be deceived by them. Behind each one there is reality and there is God. Why would you wait for this and trade it for illusions, when His Love is but an instant farther on the road where all illusions end? The end *is* sure and guaranteed by God. Who stands before a lifeless image when a step away the Holy of the Holies opens up an ancient door that leads beyond the world? (C-ep.1)

**(8:3-5) His Hand has held us up. His Thoughts have lit the darkness of our minds. His Love has called to us unceasingly since time began.**

We have never been alone because God's Love has always been with us – supporting our efforts, enlightening our minds, and reminding us through Its Voice to return home.

**(9:1-3) We had a wish that God would fail to have the Son whom He created for Himself. We wanted God to change Himself, and be what we would make of Him. And we believed that our insane desires were the truth.**

This is the core of the ego's thought system. We want God to fail His Son, because that proves we are right and He is not to be trusted. *We* can be, however, for we alone know what is best for us. It is important to note that we not only want God to fail us, but every authority figure as well. We want to be unfairly treated by authorities – not being there for us, nor giving us the comfort, love, and help we need – because that

proves our judgment was correct. Our authority problem changes God into the image we made, rather than seeing ourselves in His image. These two passages express our shift from the true God of Love to a vengeful Father Who punishes His sinful children:

> Atonement thus becomes a myth, and vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God. From where all this begins, there is no sight of help that can succeed. Only destruction can be the outcome. And God Himself seems to be siding with it, to overcome His Son (T-23.II.8:2-5).

> Sin is not error, for it goes beyond correction to impossibility. Yet the belief that it is real has made some errors seem forever past the hope of healing, and the lasting grounds for hell. If this were so, would Heaven be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it. Then would God's Will be split in two, and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His Love at last to vengeance's heels (T-26.VII.7:1-5).

However, none of this is true, and our choosing to remember the truth of God's Love terrifies the ego and demands our unremitting hatred of Him:

> They [the special ones] hate the call that would awaken them, and they curse God because He did not make their dream reality (T-24.III.7:5).

**(9:4) Now we are glad that this is all undone, and we no longer think illusions true.**

Behind gladness, of course, is gratitude. We need to be glad and grateful we have been proven wrong. Once we accept that happy fact, the interference to truth is gone:

> You cannot make untruth true. If you are willing to accept what is true in everything you perceive, you let it be true for you. Truth overcomes all error... (T-3.II.6:2-4).

And so, the above passage continues:

> Curse God and die, but not by Him Who made not death; but only in the dream.... Forgive your Father it was not His Will that you be crucified (T-24.III.7:6; 8:13).

**(9:5-7) The memory of God is shimmering across the wide horizons of our minds. A moment more, and it will rise again. A moment more, and we who are God's Sons are safely home, where He would have us be.**

The text ends similarly:

For we have reached where all of us are one, and we are home, where You would have us be (T-31. VI11.12 :8).

**(10:1-2) Now is the need for practice almost done. For in this final section, we will come to understand that we need only call to God, and all temptations disappear.**

Jesus again assumes we have learned his lessons, realizing that when we are tempted to feel unfairly treated or distressed, all we need do is call on God's Name and accept the mind's Correction. The ego's temptations then disappear, and peace is the happy result.

**(10:3-5) Instead of words, we need but feel His Love. Instead of prayers, we need but call His Name. Instead of judging, we need but be still and let all things be healed.**

We go to Jesus and the problem is gone. We need not say special prayers nor do anything at all, except realize we were wrong. We know where to choose the Answer, and whatever our concerns, they will have disappeared into the stillness of the holy instant.

**(10:6-8) We will accept the way God's plan will end, as we received the way it started. Now it is complete. This year has brought us to eternity.**

It can be upsetting to discover, having completed the workbook, that we are still a long way from eternity. This, then, is Jesus' pep talk to remind us of our goal. If we combine the statement "this year has brought us to eternity" with the later one that says "this course is a beginning not an end," we will be tempted to think Jesus speaks out of both sides of his mouth. His words are not contradictory, however, when we realize their purpose, for he teaches us on different levels. On the one hand Jesus inspires us to continue our journey, and on the other he gives us a vision of the end, the reason we embarked on the journey in the first place.

Sentences 6 and 7 reflect the final vision presented at the end of the text, where Jesus says that "the journey closes, ending at the place where it began" (T-31.VIII.12:3). Beginning with the mind's decision maker choosing against God and for the ego, the journey ends when the mind reverses itself and chooses against the ego and for God. Here is the lovely closing of the Epilogue, from which we just quoted:

> Let us go out and meet the newborn world, knowing that Christ has been reborn in it, and that the holiness of this rebirth will last forever. We had lost our way but He has found it for us. Let us go and bid Him welcome Who returns to us to celebrate salvation and the end of all we thought we made. The morning star of this new day looks on a different world where God is welcomed and His Son with Him. We who complete Him offer thanks to Him, as He gives thanks to us. The Son is still, and in the quiet God has given him enters his home and is at peace at last (C-ep.5).

**(11:1-2) One further use for words we still retain. From time to time, instructions on a theme of special relevance will intersperse our daily lessons and the periods of wordless, deep experience which should come afterwards.**

"From time to time" will be every ten lessons: the fourteen special and wonderful summaries that are the heart of Part II.

**(11:3-5) These special thoughts should be reviewed each day, each one of them to be continued till the next is given you. They should be slowly read and thought about a little while, preceding one of the holy and blessed instants in the day. We give the first of these instructions now.**

These instructions are inspiring reviews of the Course's thought system, and should be read thoughtfully and with great care. To these special thoughts we gladly bring the interferences to our peace that arise daily, as we do with each of the day's meditations.

Each of these lessons, except at the end of Part II, comes in two parts. One consists of a prayer addressed to God as Father, and this is always written in italics. The other consists of a message or teaching, and is frequently in the first person, which reminds us that our teacher is Jesus. There are some rare exceptions where the *I* is ourselves, and we find that sometimes the prayer is first, and other times the message.

Another and familiar point bears repeating insofar as these prayers are directed to God as Father. You may remember that in Lesson 183 Jesus says that God does not hear our little prayers, and throughout *A Course in Miracles* he teaches that God (or spirit) does not know about our separated and changing self. For example:

> Nothing can reach spirit from the ego, and nothing can reach the ego from spirit.... They are fundamentally irreconcilable, because spirit cannot perceive and the ego cannot know. They are therefore not in communication and can never be in communication (T-4.I.2:6,11-12).

> Spirit in its knowledge is unaware of the ego. It does not attack it; it merely cannot conceive of it at all (T-4.II.8:6-7).

> Nothing that God knows not exists. And what He knows exists forever, changelessly (T-3 0.111.6: 1-2).

Speaking in the manual on the role of words in healing, Jesus explicitly states that God does not understand words, which were made to keep us separate from Him (M-21.1:7). Yet here in Part II we have one prayer after another, one more lovely than the preceding one, each of which is directed toward God. However, we should not take them to mean that we are literally praying to God our Source, and that He hears our words. These prayers are meant for *us.* In other words, Jesus is having us experience our gratitude to God, how much we truly love Him, and how mistaken we have been in our choices against Him and His Love. The prayers to God as Father should thus be seen as symbolic, and it is essential to understand the difference between symbol and source.

Literature abounds with passages expressed in symbolic form. There is Portia's beautiful speech in *The Merchant of Venice,* "The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as a gentle rain from Heaven" (IV,i), a line we shall see quoted later in Part II. Shakespeare is not saying that mercy is rain, and obviously he is not saying you should use an umbrella in the presence of someone who is being kind and merciful. In Macbeth's famous words at the end of the play, "Out, out brief candle" (V,v), the fallen

king is not speaking of candles, but the end of his life. Again, do not confuse the symbol with what it represents.

Therefore, in calling God "Father" Jesus is not saying God is a Person Who hears our prayers and answers them. Everything in *A Course in Miracles* speaks against that. These are but symbols that meet us where we believe we are, for it is clearly helpful to think of God as a loving Father, the right-minded correction of the ego's misperception that God is hateful. Before we can realize that God is not a father at all, is not a member of homo sapiens, and does not have a body, we first have to undo the ego's wrong-minded thought system of sin and punishment.

Finally, a basic theme found explicitly in many lessons, and implicitly in all of them, is our having been mistaken: "Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken" (T-10.V.6: 1). Part II assumes we have learned what Jesus taught us in Part I, recognizing we have wrong and right minds, and have made the correct choice. In our right minds, we realize our choices for the ego were merely mistaken attempts to uphold our specialness and prove we were right and everyone else wrong; that our happiness comes at the expense of another. I will continually refer to this crucial thought as we read through Part II.

## 1. What Is Forgiveness?

We begin Part II with the first in a series of fourteen summaries that encapsulate the thought system of *A Course in Miracles.* Its subject is *forgiveness,* the Course's single most important theme. Paragraphs 1, 4, and 5 describe what forgiveness is – forgiveness of illusions – and 2 and 3 summarize what it is not – unforgiving thoughts of guilt.

**(1:1-4) Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred. It does not pardon sins and make them real. It sees there was no sin. And in that view are all your sins forgiven.**

This is one of the more significant ways in which *A Course in Miracles* departs from other spiritualities, many of which similarly emphasize the importance of forgiveness. In the Course, Jesus explains that we forgive our brothers for what they have *not* done:

> Salvation is a paradox indeed! ... It asks you but that you forgive all things that no one ever did; to overlook what is not there, and not to look upon the unreal as reality (T-30.IV.7:1, 3).

Since there is no world, and everyone appearing to be in it is but a dream figure, there is no one to do anything. This ultimately means we forgive ourselves for what we have not done – we merely *believe* we separated from God and destroyed His Kingdom. In truth, nothing happened and so there is nothing to forgive. On the practical level of our daily experience – forgetting for the moment this is an illusion and we are not even here – forgiveness means you have not taken the peace of God from me. My disquiet stems from the thought that you have – by your words or actions. I therefore forgive you for what you have *not* done, because the only one who took God's peace from me is *me.*

**(1:5) What is sin, except a false idea about God's Son?**

Sin is not a fact, but a mistaken thought stemming from the belief that the ego tells the truth about guilt and punishment, and the Holy Spirit lies about the innocence of God's sinless Son:

> The Holy Spirit cannot punish sin. Mistakes He recognizes, and would correct them all as God entrusted Him to do. But sin He knows not, nor can He recognize mistakes that cannot be corrected.... What calls for punishment must call for nothing. Every mistake *must* be a call for love. What, then, is sin? What could it be but a mistake you would keep hidden; a call for help that you would keep unheard and thus unanswered? (T- 1 9.III.4:1-3, 6-9)

Thus the ego tells us God's Son is not the glorious Self created by God, but the separated and sinful self to which we have given a distinct name and identity.

**(1:6) Forgiveness merely sees its falsity, and therefore lets it go.**

This, then, is the core of forgiveness – looking on the ego and seeing there is nothing to forgive. We look at our false perceptions and realize they are not what we thought they were. The specialness we thought would make us happy – coming at another's expense – was not true. We will not know this, however, until we see its inherent falsity, recognizing we do not know our own best interests. Jesus helps us to share his grace-filled vision, seeing only the healing love that unites us as God's Son, as we read again:

> The grace of God rests gently on forgiving eyes, and everything they look on speaks of Him to the beholder. He can see no evil; nothing in the world to fear, and no one who is different from himself. And as he loves them, so he looks upon himself with love and gentleness. He would no more condemn himself for his mistakes than damn another. He is not an arbiter of vengeance, nor a punisher of sin. The kindness of his sight rests on himself with all the tenderness it offers others. For he would only heal and only bless. And being in accord with what God wills, he has the power to heal and bless all those he looks on with the grace of God upon his sight (T-25.VI.1).

**(1:7) What then is free to take its place is now the Will of God.**

Forgiveness undoes what is false in our minds, leaving the truth that was always present; the wondrous realization of our oneness that comes when sin has left. Recall this lovely paragraph:

> Forgiveness turns the world of sin into a world of glory, wonderful to see. Each flower shines in light, and every bird sings of the joy of Heaven. There is no sadness and there is no parting here, for everything is totally forgiven. And what has been forgiven must join, for nothing stands between to keep them separate and apart. The sinless must perceive that they are one, for nothing stands between to push the other off. And in the space that sin left vacant do they join as one, in gladness recognizing what is part of them has not been kept apart and separate (T-26.IV.2).

Paragraphs 2 and 3 discuss unforgiving thoughts – toward another – and how they defend against the unforgiving thought we hold toward ourselves for having destroyed Heaven:

**(2:1-2) An unforgiving thought is one which makes a judgment that it will not raise to doubt, although it is not true. The mind is closed, and will not be released.**

When you hold a grievance against someone, you are certain your judgment is correct and not open to doubt. Thus the primary aim of Jesus' teachings in *A Course in Miracles is* to help you doubt the accuracy of your perceptions of yourself, others, him, and God. In the passage I quoted earlier from Chapter 24, "To learn this Course requires the willingness to question every value that you hold" (T-24.in.2:1), Jesus does not say to dismiss your values. On the contrary, he says that the little willingness to question every value is sufficient. You need only entertain some doubt about the conviction you are correct, for once so convinced, your mind is so closed you will no longer know you even have one. The effect is that the thought of separation from God – sin, guilt, and fear – is forever barred from awareness. Your unforgiving thought sets the sequence in motion and maintains it, as these sentences explain:

**(2:3-4) The thought protects projection, tightening its chains, so that distortions are more veiled and more obscure; less easily accessible to doubt, and further kept from reason. What can come between a fixed projection and the aim that it has chosen as its wanted goal?**

Remember our discussion of the ego's double shield of oblivion. The second shield – our bodily experience – culminates in the special love and hate relationships. These have but the one goal of protecting the ego's thought system so we would never examine it and make another choice: the unforgiving thought protects projection – my projected unforgiveness protects me from recognizing the unforgiveness of myself. In other words, my problem is the guilt I do not want to look at, but deny, project, and see in you, certain my perceptions of your sin are correct. My mind's chains are therefore tightened, leaving it even more imprisoned. I can therefore never access it, and the bodily distortions become increasingly more veiled and obscure as I am driven still further from the Holy Spirit's right- minded reason. Nothing now can come between my anger and the ego's underlying goal of perpetuating its thought system of guilt and attack—"What can come between a fixed projection and the aim that it has chosen as its wanted goal?":

> Anger always involves projection of separation, which must ultimately be accepted as one's own responsibility, rather than being blamed on others (T-6.in.1:2).
>
> Yet projection will always hurt you. It reinforces your belief in your own split mind, and its only purpose is to keep the separation going (T-6.II.3:1-2).
>
> Whenever you are angry, you can be sure that you have formed a special relationship which the ego has "blessed," for anger *is* its blessing.... All anger is

> nothing more than an attempt to make someone feel guilty, and this attempt is the only basis the ego accepts for special relationships (T-15.VII.10:1, 3).

And now the ego's goal:

**(3:1-2) An unforgiving thought does many things. In frantic action it pursues its goal, twisting and overturning what it sees as interfering with its chosen path.**

In contrast to forgiveness, which does nothing, unforgiveness frantically does everything because it must preserve the ego's individuality. The image portrayed here is of a frenetic being inside us – ourselves – that furiously attempts to protect its identity. It accomplishes its goal by making the mind a fearful place, impelling us to project the mind's content of guilt onto a world, believing then that things happen around us and to us. Desperate to preserve its identity, therefore, it does everything possible to survive. This requires tremendous effort and ingenuity – the special relationship – at which we have all become very adept; yet these methods prove to be the greatest sources of pain in the world:

> In looking at the special relationship, it is necessary first to realize that it involves a great amount of pain. Anxiety, despair, guilt and attack all enter into it, broken into by periods in which they seem to be gone (T-16.V.1:1-2).

**(3:3) Distortion is its purpose, and the means by which it would accomplish it as well.**

This is the "wanted goal" Jesus speaks of at the end of paragraph 2: the distortion of Who we are as God's Son and of God Himself. The ego first distorts reality, and then chooses the means whereby this distortion will be protected, making a world of relationships seen outside the mind. We are thus mercilessly forced to spend our lives trying to adjust to the problems of bodies – physically, psychologically, and interpersonally:

> The world you see is but a judgment on yourself. It is not there at all. Yet judgment lays a sentence on it, justifies it and makes it real. Such is the world you see; a judgment on yourself, and made by you. This sickly picture of yourself is carefully preserved by the ego, whose image it is and which it loves, and placed outside you in the world. And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe this picture is outside, and has you at its mercy. This world *is* merciless, and were it outside you, you should indeed be fearful. Yet it was you who made it merciless, and now if mercilessness seems to look back at you, it can be corrected (T-20.III.5:2-9).

**(3:4) It sets about its furious attempts to smash reality, without concern for anything that would appear to pose a contradiction to its point of view.**

This is another way of defining the ego's goal: the distortion, if not smashing of reality, in the insane attempt to obliterate the Identity of God and His Son. Since *ideas do not leave their source,* the idea of a separated world filled with special bodies is but a shadowy fragment of the original thought: I exist only at God's expense. If I am going to

establish my self as real, I need sacrifice God's reality, and an unforgiving thought holds this thought system in place. Moreover, in pursuing its goal, the ego has no concern for anything standing in the way of achieving it, which is why Jesus teaches us that the ego's goal is murder, as is the goal of all specialness:

> The death penalty is the ego's ultimate goal, for it fully believes that you are a criminal, as deserving of death as God knows you are deserving of life. The death penalty never leaves the ego's mind, for that is what it always reserves for you in the end. Wanting to kill you as the final expression of its feeling for you, it lets you live but to await death. It will torment you while you live, but its hatred is not satisfied until you die. For your destruction is the one end toward which it works, and the only end with which it will be satisfied (T-12.VII.13:2-6).

In a strikingly graphic passage in Chapter 24, already quoted, Jesus similarly describes this murderous goal of specialness:

> Yet let your specialness direct his way, and you will follow. And both [you and your brother] will walk in danger, each intent, in the dark forest of the sightless, unlit but by the shifting tiny gleams that spark an instant from the fireflies of sin and then go out, to lead the other to a nameless precipice and hurl him over it. For what can specialness delight in but to kill? What does it seek for but the sight of death? Where does it lead but to destruction? (T-24.V.4:1-5)

We seek to destroy anything we suspect of impeding the defense of our thought system. In sentence 2, Jesus said we would overturn whatever we see as interfering with our chosen path; here he says we would have no concern for anyone or anything – the source of our guilt, for firmly lodged deep in our minds is the thought of how we have selfishly used and manipulated everyone. We do not see others as reminders of our oneness, but as threats and rivals. Our distorted thinking thus tells us that if we do not deal with them, our happiness will be jeopardized. If we had our way, we would deal with others by attacking them outright – special hate – but if we need be more covert, we simply manipulate them through the guilt of special love.

> For it [the ego] would prefer to attack directly, and avoid delaying what it really wants. Yet the ego acknowledges "reality" as it sees it, and recognizes that no one could interpret direct attack as love. Yet to make guilty *is* direct attack, although it does not seem to be (T-15. VII.6:3-5).

This insanity begins with the original special relationship: we need what God has, and therefore He must be killed. *Ideas do not leave their source,* and as the thought of killing God is the source, we cannot but repetitively act out that thought in our projections, as we recall:

> You think it safer to endow the little self you made with power you wrested from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless. See how exactly is this ritual enacted in the special relationship. An altar is erected in between two separate people, on which each seeks to kill his self, and on his body raise another self to take its power from his death. Over and over and over this ritual is enacted.... The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which

> strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer... (T-16.V.11:3-6; 12:4).

Our guilt does not allow us to recognize specialness for what it is, and if we cannot look at what our bodies do, how can we ever remember the mind's decision? Thus we need recognize that guilt over our actions is a defense; another part of the ego's strategy to keep us from casting our gaze on our behavior, revealing it as but a shadow of the mind's guilt over the separation.

The right-minded purpose of the world, therefore, is to be a classroom reflecting back to me what the ego does *in my mind.* If I am guilty over my behavior – my special relationships of manipulation and deception – it would be impossible to ask Jesus for help. Recall that guilt is blinding for it makes it impossible to see truly. When I feel guilt and ask the ego to help me alleviate my pain through projection, this does not undo the mind's guilt that is the true cause of pain. Asking Jesus for help, however, means undoing guilt at its source. He helps me look at what I believe I am guilty of in the world, and see this as a shadow of the secret guilt in my mind. Only then can I look at both the outer and inner guilt, seeing them as one illusion, thus allowing them to disappear. The following two paragraphs explain this process of forgiveness and healing:

**(4:1) Forgiveness, on the other hand, is still, and quietly does nothing.**

The above comes from the beginning of Psalm 46: "Be still and know that I am God." Being still silences the ego's raucous shrieks, and in the lessons to come we will see how often Jesus speaks of our stillness. Thus forgiveness "quietly does nothing," for *doing* does not come from God's creation or the Holy Spirit's correction, but originates with the ego's belief it destroyed God. This was pretty heavy "doing," demanding we have to "do" like crazy to protect ourselves from being destroyed. Yet Jesus tells us we need do nothing but quietly look with him at the brother we sought to condemn to *our* sin and guilt:

> *Behold the Son of God, and look upon his purity and be still. In quiet look upon his holiness, and offer thanks unto his Father that no guilt has ever touched him.*
>
> ...Let us look upon him together and love him. For in love of him is your guiltlessness. But look upon yourself, and gladness and appreciation for what you see will banish guilt forever (T-13.X.11:10-11; 12:3-5).

To summarize, forgiveness does nothing; neither does Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or our right minds. They merely look at falsity and realize it had no effect on the holiness of God's Son.

**(4:2-3) It offends no aspect of reality, nor seeks to twist it to appearances it likes. It merely looks, and waits, and judges not.**

That last sentence is the essence of forgiveness: it merely *looks at* the ego thought system, *waits* patiently for us to change our minds, and above all *does not judge.* It does not condemn the egos of others or ourselves, but says: "Isn't this a silly thought? Isn't this silly behavior that comes from a silly thought? Not evil, sinful, or

wicked; just silly, because it will not give us what we want, even as we insist it will work when we secretly know it won't." Forgiveness therefore is the simple looking that undoes sin, while our taking it seriously – giving it effects it does not have – solidifies its existence in our minds.

Forgiveness and the miracle are different names for the same process of looking without judgment at the ego's dream of separation, in which it made a world in its own hateful likeness, thus "offending" the reality of love:

> The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions. No one is afraid of them when he perceives he made them up. The fear was held in place because he did not see that he was author of the dream, and not a figure in the dream. He gives himself the consequences that he dreams he gave his brother. And it is but this the dream has put together and has offered him, to show him that his wishes have been done. Thus does he fear his own attack, but sees it at another's hands. As victim, he is suffering from its effects, but not their cause. He authored not his own attack, and he is innocent of what he caused. The miracle does nothing but to show him that he has done nothing (T-28.II.7:1-10).

**(4:4) He who would not forgive must judge, for he must justify his failure to forgive.**

"Judgment" in this passage is a synonym for the unforgiving thought. When I have not forgiven myself, I protect this unforgiveness by projecting the guilt and not letting anyone else off the hook. Thus I see my sins in you, and rather than undo them in myself I seek their undoing by punishing you, the sinner. I undo nothing, however, for deep down I reinforce the sin in my mind, thus my intense need to judge, criticize, and find fault. Recall this important passage that implicitly exposes the ego's lies, which masquerade as holy martyring. In truth, these martyrs only condemn others through their innocent sufferings:

> The world's escape from condemnation is a need which those within the world are joined in sharing. Yet they do not recognize their common need. For each one thinks that if he does his part, the condemnation of the world will rest on him. And it is this that he perceives to *be* his part in its deliverance. Vengeance must have a focus. Otherwise is the avenger's knife in his own hand, and pointed to himself. And he must see it in another's hand, if he would be a victim of attack he did not choose. And thus he suffers from the wounds a knife he does not hold has made upon himself.
>
> This is the purpose of the world he sees. And looked at thus, the world provides the means by which this purpose seems to be fulfilled (T-27.VII.4:2-5:2).

This dynamic of the martyr serves as a model for what we all do. Rather than acknowledge our sin – the knife of sin in our blood-drenched hand – we see it in someone else. Our pain becomes the witness (the etymological root of *martyr)* to another's sin. Thus does the sinful world justify our unforgiving thought, the murderer's face behind the face of innocence.

**(4:5) But he who would forgive himself must learn to welcome truth exactly**

**as it is.**

We need but accept the truth already held in our right minds by the Holy Spirit. Near the end of the workbook comes a wonderful line reflecting this passage: "We are concerned only with giving welcome to the truth" (W-pII.14.3:7). We welcome the truth by turning our backs on the ego's untruth, renouncing its illusion for now we want the truth and only the truth.

**(5:1) Do nothing, then, and let forgiveness show you what to do, through Him Who is your Guide, your Savior and Protector, strong in hope, and certain of your ultimate success.**

This parallels "I Need Do Nothing" from the text and does not mean you do nothing behaviorally. Rather, you let the Holy Spirit guide you. This does not mean He specifically tells you what to do – even though that may be your experience – for His Love simply extends Itself through you, and your body expresses *inform* the *content* of His Love. The following passage is familiar to us:

> To do anything involves the body. And if you recognize you need do nothing, you have withdrawn the body's value from your mind.... To do nothing is to rest, and make a place within you where the activity of the body ceases to demand attention. Into this place the Holy Spirit comes, and there abides.... This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent. For from this center will you be directed how to use the body sinlessly (T-18.VII.7:1-2, 7-8; 8:3-4).

**(5:2-3) He has forgiven you already, for such is His function, given Him by God. Now must you share His function, and forgive whom He has saved, whose sinlessness He sees, and whom He honors as the Son of God.**

Just as we have been forgiven by the Holy Spirit for what we have *not* done, we are asked to share that same forgiveness with others, reinforcing the truth of Atonement in ourselves and all our brothers. We conclude with this inspiring passage from the text, describing the Holy Spirit's extension of forgiveness through our minds, healed as we bring the darkened thoughts of guilt to His radiant light:

> What can it be but universal blessing to look on what your Father loves with charity? Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's function. Leave this to Him. Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can be extended. Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever. He will take each one and make of it a potent force for peace. He will withhold no blessing from it, nor limit it in any way. He will join to it all the power that God has given Him, to make each little gift of love a source of healing for everyone. Each little gift you offer to your brother lights up the world. Be not concerned with darkness; look away from it and toward your brother. And let the darkness be dispelled by Him Who knows the light, and lays it gently in each quiet smile of faith and confidence with which you bless your brother (T-22.VI.9).

## LESSON 221
## Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still.

We again find reference to the opening verse of Psalm 46: "Be still, and know that I am God."

**(1)** ***Father, I come to You today to seek the peace that You alone can give. I come in silence. In the quiet of my heart, the deep recesses of my mind, I wait and listen for Your Voice. My Father, speak to me today. I come to hear Your Voice in silence and in certainty and love, sure You will hear my call and answer me.***

I cannot come to God with noise in my mind, or if it is filled with little prayers asking for little things; i.e., specifics in this world; nor can I come to Him thinking **I** know the way. I come only in silence, when **I** have emptied my heart (i.e., my mind) of all ego thoughts. In that silence, God – through His Voice – will speak to me. His answer to our call comes in the forms of our special relationships; the opportunities to choose again about our brother, and therefore about ourselves.

**(2:1-2) Now do we wait in quiet. God is here, because we wait together.**

We come to God through our relationship with Jesus, who represents the part of our minds that has accepted the truth of the Atonement – we have not left our Source. Joining with him is thus joining with the Sonship, for the mind of God's Son is one:

> Our function is to work together, because apart from each other we cannot function at all. The whole power of God's Son lies in all of us, but not in any of us alone (T-8.VI.8:4-5).

**(2:3-5) I am sure that He will speak to you, and you will hear. Accept my confidence, for it is yours. Our minds are joined.**

We have seen many times already, and in the text as well, that we are like Jesus and he is like us. The only difference is that we do not know this equality, which he will teach us:

> My mind will always be like yours, because we were created as equals. It was only my decision that gave me all power in Heaven and earth. My only gift to you is to help you make the same decision (T-5.II.9:1-3).

Thus we need Jesus as an elder brother, that we may learn from him that the sinlessness we perceive in him echoes the sinlessness in ourselves.

**(2:6) We wait with one intent; to hear our Father's answer to our call, to let our thoughts be still and find His peace, to hear Him speak to us of what we are, and to reveal Himself unto His Son.**

Now we have only *one* goal, *one* purpose, *one* intent – to return home with Jesus, whose patience with us will be rewarded:

**Lesson 221**

> I will never forsake you any more than God will, but I must wait as long as you choose to forsake yourself. Because I wait in love and not in impatience, you will surely ask me truly. I will come in response to a single unequivocal call (T-4.III.7:8-10).

Our silence reflects our "unequivocal call," and allows us to hear God's answer of unity with Him: "a Oneness joined as One" (T-251.7:1).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 222**
**God is with me. I live and move in Him.**

This refers to the well-known statement of St. Paul from the Acts of the Apostles, to which I referred earlier. It recalls to our minds Lesson 41, "God is with me wherever I go." Needless to say at this point, the meaning of the words should not to be taken literally.

**(1:1-2) God is with me. He is my Source of life, the life within, the air I breathe, the food by which I am sustained, the water which renews and cleanses me.**

God is not in our water, food, or air; He is not in the world. These words symbolize God being our life. What sustains us here are water, food, and air, and our bodies cannot live without them. Similarly, our Identity as spirit cannot live without God, for He is our Source and our Life, and our being lies only in Him:

> You can not escape from what you are. For God is merciful, and did not let His Son abandon Him. For what He is be thankful, for in that is your escape from madness and from death. Nowhere but where He is can you be found (T-3 1.IV.11:3-6).

**(1:3-4) He is my home, wherein I live and move; the Spirit which directs my actions, offers me Its Thoughts, and guarantees my safety from all pain. He covers me with kindness and with care, and holds in love the Son He shines upon, who also shines on Him.**

We think our home is the body, and thus are tempted to bring God into the world as we seek to take up His home in our bodies. We want Jesus to do likewise, and in an upside-down understanding of his course we distort its message to mean making our bodies happier. In truth, however, we want to make our home in God, which is reflected here in the right-minded love of Jesus. We do not want to bring the light to the darkness, but the darkness of our false identity to the light of Who we truly are as Christ. Only then can we be safe and experience our Father's kindness, care, and Love – not *as* a body *from* a body, but *as* a mind that is *part* of Mind. Thus Jesus asks us rhetorically:

> Is *He* [God] a body, and did He create you as He is not, and where He cannot be? You are surrounded only by Him (T-18.VI.10:5-6).

**(1:5) How still is he who knows the truth of what He speaks today!**

When we understand the Holy Spirit's words to be true, there is no need to do anything. We need no longer frantically try to keep our sanity and our bodies happy. When we understand there is nothing to forgive, we can truly be quiet to the truth.

**(2)** ***Father, we have no words except Your Name upon our lips and in our minds, as we come quietly into Your Presence now, and ask to rest with You in peace a while.***

Implicit in setting aside the ego's words is recognizing they were a mistake, as

have been our attempts to understand God, Jesus, and forgiveness. We recognize now these words and concepts are not what we want, for we choose the Holy Spirit's Atonement instead. It alone leads to the Presence of God, Whose Name reminds us It is ours as well, and in that Fact we find our peace and rest a while.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 223**
**God is my life. I have no life but His.**

This continues the theme of oneness. I live in God and He in me – not in body, but in the spirit He created as one with Him.

**(1:1) I was mistaken when I thought I lived apart from God, a separate entity that moved in isolation, unattached, and housed within a body.**

Making my way through the first part of the workbook, I learned my mistake. I believed I was a body, a wrong-minded self, but now I happily choose the spirit as my Self:

> ... choose the spirit, and all Heaven bends to touch your eyes and bless your holy sight, that you may see the world of flesh no more except to heal and comfort and to bless (T-31.VI.1:8).

**(1:2-3) Now I know my life is God's, I have no other home, and I do not exist apart from Him. He has no Thoughts that are not part of me, and I have none but those which are of Him.**

This does not mean I have no other thoughts, but that I no longer recognize my ego thoughts as true, attempting to justify them or make them holy. Thus do these thoughts lose their power, which were held in place only by my belief in them. When that belief is withdrawn and placed in the right-minded thought of Atonement, the ego gradually disappears back into its own nothingness.

**(2:1)** ***Our Father, let us see the face of Christ instead of our mistakes.***

This is another acknowledgment of our being wrong, and this statement presupposes our recognition and – the key to genuine gratitude – gladness to see the light-filled face of Christ:

> Thus is the concept of himself laid by, for nothing stands between his sight and what he looks upon, to judge what he beholds. And in this single vision does he see the face of Christ, and understands he looks on everyone as he beholds this one. For there is light where darkness was before, and now the veil is lifted from his sight (T-31.VII.8:5-7).

**(2:2-4)** ***For we who are Your holy Son are sinless. We would look upon our sinlessness, for guilt proclaims that we are not Your Son. And we would not forget You longer.***

Our desire for God is now so strong that it eclipses all attraction to guilt; oneness has dissolved separation, for love remains our only reality:

> What God did not give you has no power over you, and the attraction of love for love remains irresistible. For it is the function of love to unite all things unto itself, and to hold all things together by extending its wholeness (T-12.VIII.7:10-11).

**(2:5-7)** ***We are lonely here, and long for Heaven, where we are at home. Today we would return. Our Name is Yours, and we acknowledge that we are Your Son.***

How joyous is our decision, for we no longer suffer a state apart from God! Our longing for Heaven has opened our eyes, long closed in feverish dreams of loneliness. Thus we are home, where God would have us be (T-3 1.VIII.12:8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 224**
**God is my Father, and He loves His Son.**

This lesson contrasts Christ, our true Self, with the ego's little self we believe we are.

**(1:1) My true Identity is so secure, so lofty, sinless, glorious and great, wholly beneficent and free from guilt, that Heaven looks to It to give it light.**

This is again a beautiful symbol. Heaven does not look to Christ to give It light, for the light of Heaven and Christ are one in purity and truth:

> The truth in you remains as radiant as a star, as pure as light, as innocent as love itself. And you *are* worthy that your will be done! (T-31.VI.7:4-5)

**(1:2-3) It lights the world as well. It is the gift my Father gave to me; the one as well I give the world.**

We remind the world of Heaven's light. In the text, Jesus talks about our Identity as the "Great Rays," and in the world we are a little spark that reflects the Rays of Christ:

> Yet God has kept the spark alive so that the Rays can never be completely forgotten. If you but see the little spark you will learn of the greater light ... (T-10.1V.8:2-3).

We reflect that greater light, and our gift of forgiveness to the world reflects God's gift of Love.

**(1:4-7) There is no gift but this that can be either given or received. This is reality, and only this. This is illusion's end. It is the truth.**

Jesus speaks of the real world, attainment of which is illusion's end. God's Son has remembered his Identity, and this the gift of his happily familiar vision he shares with the world:

> To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world.... Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained... it be for you (T-31.VIII.8:4-7).

**(2:1-2)** ***My Name, O Father, still is known to You. I have forgotten It, and do not know where I am going, who I am, or what it is I do.***

This harks back to the familiar end of "Self-Concept versus Self" (T-3 1.V.17:6-7). Remembering Who we are undoes our false self, which however miserable, remains an identity we recognize and with which we are strangely comfortable. However, we now understand the painful parameters of our lives – *kill or be killed* – within which we sometimes wish to be the killer, and other times the killed, that we be the innocent victims. Since we believe we know the world, suddenly realizing we understand nothing causes us to feel disoriented, at the very least.

**(2:3-4)** ***Remind me, Father, now, for I am weary of the world I see. Reveal what You would have me see instead.***

Christ's vision corrects the world that has grown so weary, and yet can be brought to a gentle end through the healed mind of God's teachers:

> Time winds on wearily, and the world is very tired now. It is old and worn and without hope.... Yet time has an ending, and it is this that the teachers of God are appointed to bring about (M-1.4:4-5, 8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 225**
**God is my Father, and His Son loves Him.**

Since God's Oneness meant my separate identity would disappear, He was the enemy. How could I possibly love Him, Whose Love represented my ego's non-existence? Thus my Father had to be killed to preserve my self, and the ego become my father instead. Yet recognizing my insane mistake I happily choose again, and welcome the truth of my Identity as the Son God loves, and Whom I love as the Father Who created me one with Him.

**(1)** ***Father, I must return Your Love for me, for giving and receiving are the same, and You have given all Your Love to me. I must return it, for I want it mine in full awareness, blazing in my mind and keeping it within its kindly light, inviolate, beloved, with fear behind and only peace ahead How still the way Your loving Son is led along to You!***

The theme that giving and receiving are the same returns. I have received love from God, and therefore can only give love to Him in return. Indeed, in my right mind there *is* nothing else. The love I give is the love I receive, which now blazes in my mind that has never left the loving Mind that created it. This love is unlimited, for it embraces all my eyes survey. As the Sonship is one with me, I naturally extend that love to everyone else, causing it to shine ever more brightly in my dream. No one is excluded from the love I have received from my Source and my God, for I would not keep it from myself:

> God has given you a place in His Mind that is yours forever. Yet you can keep it only by giving it, as it was given you.... Love does not limit, and what it creates is not limited. To give without limit is God's Will for you, because only this can bring you the joy that is His and that He wills to share with you. Your love is as boundless as His because it *is* His (T-11.I.6:1-2, 6-8).

**(2) Brother, we find that stillness now. The way is open. Now we follow it in peace together. You have reached your hand to me, and I will never leave you. We are one, and it is but this oneness that we seek, as we accomplish these few final steps which end a journey that was not begun.**

This journey we take with Jesus, not alone, and with him we take all our brothers, with not one left behind for God's Son is one, reflected in the forgiveness of our special relationships. Yet it remains a journey without distance, because in truth we never left our Father's house. Jesus here reflects to us the thought we reached out to him, dropping the ego's hand as we say: "I come with empty hands, asking you to fill them with your gifts." Thus we gladly and gratefully take his hand, and with it, again, the hands of all the Sonship. The illusion of strength in separation and attack has been replaced by the strength of all-inclusive love. This love of Father and Son is thus reflected in the healing truth of Jesus' forgiveness, which we happily accept as we offer it to the sleeping world:

> The ego's way is not mine, but it is also not yours.... Leave all illusions behind, and reach beyond all attempts of the ego to hold you back. I go before you because I am beyond the ego. Reach, therefore, for my hand because you

want to transcend the ego. My strength will never be wanting, and if you choose to share it you will do so (T-8.V.6:1, 6-9).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 226**
**My home awaits me. I will hasten there.**

The theme of this lesson is the mind's power to choose correctly, wherein we recognize we had chosen the wrong teacher, embracing the body's world as our home. Now we choose again, and allow Jesus to lead us to our true home, where our Father's Love awaits us.

**(1:1-2) If I so choose, I can depart this world entirely. It is not death which makes this possible, but it is change of mind about the purpose of the world.**

In other words, one does not leave this world by death. We have the illusion of leaving the body, but since it is only a projection of the mind's thought, we could not have been in the body in the first place. What enables us to leave this world, by which Jesus means to leave the world's thought system of separation, is to change from the teacher of illusion to the teacher of truth:

> The world is not left by death but by truth, and truth can be known by all those for whom the Kingdom was created, and for whom it waits (T-3.VII.6: 11).

**(1:3-5) If I believe it has a value as I see it now, so will it still remain for me. But if I see no value in the world as I behold it, nothing that I want to keep as mine or search for as a goal, it will depart from me. For I have not sought for illusions to replace the truth.**

This undoes our mistake of seeking illusions to replace the truth. We again see the importance of recognizing the difference between the valuable and valueless. The ego thought system and the world that arose from it are valueless; Jesus' thought system alone is valuable. As we go through our day, tempted by grievances and feelings of ingratitude and specialness, we need realize these thoughts have no value for they do not bring the peace and happiness we want. Only giving up the valueless earns us the joyful gift of truth:

> Where he anticipated grief, he finds a happy lightheartedness instead; where he thought something was asked of him, he finds a gift bestowed on him (M-4.I-A.5:8).

**(2)** ***Father, my home awaits my glad return. Your Arms are open and I hear Your Voice. What need have I to linger in a place of vain desires and of shattered dreams, when Heaven can so easily be mine?***

This is our choice. We need realize this world is "a place of vain desires and of shattered dreams." Nothing we aspire to will ever truly work, for the world cannot give us the peace we want. Yet Jesus does not ask us to change our world, but only our minds about our world (T-21.in.1:7). Any external change will thus be peaceful, because it will have come from the mind's decision for peace. Such change occurs through the forgiveness that transforms the special relationship into a holy one:

> The holy relationship reflects the true relationship the Son of God has with his Father in reality.... Here the unholy instant is exchanged in gladness for the

holy one of safe return. Here is the way to true relationships held gently open, through which you and your brother walk together, leaving the body thankfully behind and resting in the Everlasting Arms. Love's Arms are open to receive you, and give you peace forever (T-20.VI.10:1,4-6).

Thus do we return on forgiveness' wings into our Father's Arms.

Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles by Kenneth Wapnick

Lesson 229

Love, which created me, is what I am.

These next two lessons return to the theme of seeking and finding. It is important that we understand what we wish to find, as that determines what we seek. If we want proof we exist as separated entities, we will look for it. If we want to find we were mistaken about God and His Son, we will seek experiences and situations to prove how wrong we were. We therefore first decide what we want to find – separate or shared interests – and then choose the means to bring it about – attack or forgiveness.

(1) I seek my own Identity, and find It in these words: "Love, which created me, is what I am." Now need I seek no more. Love has prevailed. So still It waited for my coming home, that I will turn away no longer from the hol y face of Christ. And what I look upon attests the truth of the Identity I sought to lose, but which my Father has kept safe for me.

The memory of my Identity as Christ is quiet in my mind. It does not seek after me nor scream, as does my miscreated and separated self. This memory does not literally call, for the Holy Spirit's Call is not active, being only the still and simple presence of truth in our minds. We thus ask the Voice, and listen and see:

> "What is the meaning of what I behold?" Then is the answer given. And the door held open for the face of Christ to shine upon the one who asks, in innocence, to see beyond the veil of old ideas and ancient concepts held so long and dear against the vision of the Christ in you (T-31.VII.13:5-7).

What we see in our brothers is the innocent face of Christ, for we have heard the Holy Spirit's Call that our special love and hate partners express the Love of God or call for It. In that Call the Sonship is united, for we share together the same wrong and right minds, and the decision-making power to choose between the two. Thus are we freed to awaken from the dream of separation and remember our Identity as Love's one creation.

(2) Father, my thanks to You for what I am; for keeping my Identity

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 230**
**Now will I seek and find the peace of God.**

We have learned through the lessons in Part I, and our study of the text, how mistaken we have been in seeking for happiness and truth where we would never find it. We realize now they are only in the right mind, which alone is what we want.

**(1) In peace I was created. And in peace do I remain. It is not given me to change my Self. How merciful is God my Father, that when He created me He gave me peace forever. Now I ask but to be what I am. And can this be denied me, when it is forever true?**

Changing my Self was never an option or possibility. In my dreams, perhaps, but it is given me to be part of God, and how could part of perfect Wholeness ever be separate from Itself? how could sin affect the truth of my reality? and how could the Holy Spirit *not* remind me of the forgiveness of my perceived sinfulness?

> Now He can remind the world of sinlessness, the one unchanged, unchangeable condition of all that God created. Now He can speak the Word of God to listening ears, and bring Christ's vision to eyes that see. Now is He free to teach all minds the truth of what they are, so they will gladly be returned to Him. And now is guilt forgiven, overlooked completely in His sight and in God's Word (M-18.2:4-7).

**(2:1-4)** ***Father, I seek the peace You gave as mine in my creation. What was given then must be here now, for my creation was apart from time, and still remains beyond all change. The peace in which Your Son was born into Your Mind is shining there unchanged. I am as You created me.***

My Identity is outside time and space, and is therefore not rooted in the world or body. This central theme of the workbook, indeed of the Course itself, reminds me that the truth of Who I am is unchanged and remains within my mind. All I need do is claim it through the miracle:

> Reality is changeless. Miracles but show what you have interposed between reality and your awareness is unreal, and does not interfere at all… *Because* reality is changeless is a miracle already there to heal all things that change, and offer them to you to see in happy form, devoid of fear. It will be given you to look upon your brother thus.... The Christ in him is perfect.... And when He has appeared to you, you will be certain you are like Him, for He is the changeless in your brother and in you (T-30.VIII.4:1-2; 5:1-2, 5, 9).

**(2:5-6)** ***I need but call on You to find the peace You gave. It is Your Will that gave it to Your Son.***

God's answer to our call is heard in the special relationship, for when we forgive our special partners the darkened guilt we projected onto them, we remember the light that joins us as one. As Jesus closes the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet:

> Remember the plan of God for the restoration of joy and peace. And do not

forget how very simple are the ways of God:

> *You were lost in the darkness of the world until you asked for light.*
> *And then God sent His Son to give it to you* (P-3.III.8:10-13).

In this light of forgiveness we have found the peace we sought, for we have remembered that our will and God's are one.

**Lesson 231**

The illusions of the world hide the mind's illusions of guilt, which in turn hide the truth of the Atonement principle, with the memory of God just beyond it.

The word *altar* refers to the mind, which either drips with the blood of guilt, or is bedecked with lilies of forgiveness. When we do not support someone else's dreams of separation or specialness, we do not support our own. That returns us to our right minds, whereon God's Word is written. When we choose the Holy Spirit's lilies, and only those, the right mind undoes the wrong mind, which disappears along with the no-longer-needed right mind. The memory of God now dawns on our minds and we are home. The final lines of Helen's poem "Long Darkness," addressed to our Father, movingly express the end of the ego's sad dream:

> Your child is sad. Remind her of Your Word,
> And all the joy that suddenly becomes
> Your gift to her is shared by all the world.
> She is afraid. But let her hear the sound
> Of Heaven's reassurance, and the years
> Of almost hopeless waiting and despair
> Shrink to a holy instant and are gone.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 69)

**(4:1) Let us come daily to this holy place, and spend a while together.**

This is Jesus' invitation to come to where he is in the right mind, the altar of truth Think of this invitation whenever you are tempted to be upset and want him to join you at the ego's unholy altar of specialness. We undo this temptation by joining with him to hear him say: "Come with me instead to the holy place in your mind, where I will show you how to look at your world through sane eyes that see clearly, rather than with eyes of insanity that do not see at all." Therefore, be aware of how you want Jesus to join you in your specialness, and realize this will not make you happy. Hear his plea to join him where he is. Hear his call from "The Gifts of God":

> Come now to me and we will go to God. There is no way that we can go alone. But when we come together there can be no way in which the Word of God can fail. For His the Word that makes us one in Him, and mine the Voice that speaks this Word to you *(The Gifts of God,* p. 118).

**(4:2-3) Here we share our final dream. It is a dream in which there is no sorrow, for it holds a hint of all the glory given us by God.**

When we finally release our illusory thoughts and join with Jesus, and *only* Jesus, we are in the real world. This final dream is still an illusion, but it does not oppose the truth, nor do we seek to substitute our glory for God's. Indeed, the real world reflects that glory, being its hint, and Jesus again invites us to hear his call:

> I have heard your calll wites us to hear h

by Kenneth Wapnick

Lesson 234

Father, today I am Your Son again.

Jesus explains to us again that we remember our Identity as God's Son when we choose him as our teacher instead of the ego, shifting from its unholy instant to his holy instant of forgiveness.

(1) Today we will anticipate the time when dreams of sin and guilt are gone, and we have reached the holy peace we never left. Merely a tiny instant has elapsed between eternity and timelessness. So brief the interval there was no lapse in continuity, nor break in thoughts which are forever unified as one. Nothing has ever happened to disturb the peace of God the Father and the Son. This we accept as wholly true today.

"Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). In other words, even though our worldly concerns seem so real, in truth they are merely a dream that originated in a thought that never happened in reality. The ego made the world of time and space to camouflage Heaven's eternity and timelessness, which yet wait for our return from the insane and illusory world of separation:

> In time this [the separation] happened very long ago. In reality it never happened at all.
>
> The world of time is the world of illusion. What happened long ago seems to be happening now (M-2.2:7-3:2).

And yet it only seems to be happening. The separation dream of sin, guilt, and fear disappears in the instant we see our brother's interests as one with our own, as the ego's past shrinks into the holy instant and is gone.

Incidentally, you can see in these brief meditative lessons that Jesus continually returns to themes he has discussed in the text and earlier in the workbook.

(2) ***W e t h a n k Y o u , F a t h e r , t h a t w e c Y o u r L o v e . W e r e c o g n i z e o u r s a f e b e s t o f w o r d a n d l u t s h , e l o v i n g h e l p w e p a t i e n c e , a n d t h e W o r d w h i c h Y o u***

All we have lost is the awareness of God's Love. Yet it is not really lost because it has been held in safekeeping in our minds by the Holy Spirit, Who patiently awaits our return to sanity when we can choose again. How could we not feel gratitude for His gifts of forgiveness and peace when they are the means of salvation from our dreams of sin and guilt, and our return to the home we never left?

> Gratitude to God becomes the way in which He is remembered, for love cannot be far behind a grateful heart and thankful mind. God enters easily, for these are the true conditions for your homecoming (M-23.4:6-7).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 235**
**God in His mercy wills that I be saved.**

**(1:1) I need but look upon all things that seem to hurt me, and with perfect certainty assure myself, "God wills that I be saved from this," and merely watch them disappear.**

The crucial principle underlying this statement is that forgiveness means looking at the ego without judgment. Everything that I believe hurts me within the world – my body or other people's bodies – will disappear when I step back with Jesus in the holy instant, look on the world and realize it has no power to affect me. Think back to "The Substitute Reality," where Jesus asks us to look at the forms in which the "original error" seems to come – our special relationships – and then say, "God is not fear, but Love," and they will disappear (T-18.1.7:1). It is what he is asking us to do here. Not that we call upon God with an incantation that will magically make the ego disappear. Rather, we bring the illusion of our thought system to the truth of His correction, which is reflected in the statements: "God is not fear, but Love"; "God wills that I be saved from this." This truth of the Atonement undoes the ego thought system that told us God is to be feared, because His vengeful Will demanded our punishment for our unpardonable sin against Him.

This opening sentence is thus another way of expressing the thought that with Jesus' love beside us we should look without guilt and fear at our thought system – everything we have given power to hurt us. We bring the ego's thoughts of separation to his love, and watch them disappear, just as darkness disappears in a room when you turn on the light. All this is true because we have happily never ceased to be part of God's Love.

**(1:2-5) I need but keep in mind my Father's Will for me is only happiness, to find that only happiness has come to me. And I need but remember that God's Love surrounds His Son and keeps his sinlessness forever perfect, to be sure that I am saved and safe forever in His Arms. I am the Son He loves. And I am saved because God in His mercy wills it so.**

Thus I bring to God's loving Arms my thoughts of sin and injustice to His Son. His Love surrounds me in its mercy, reminding me of the inherent sinlessness of the Son of God, of which I am a part. My feverish dreams of hate and punishment had no effect on this truth of God's all-loving justice. They disappear in my forgiveness of God's innocent Son:

> And God rejoices as His Son receives what loving justice knows to be his due. For love and justice are not different. *Because* they are the same does mercy stand at God's right Hand, and gives the Son of God the power to forgive himself of sin (T-25.VIII.9:9-11).

**(2)** ***Father, Your Holiness is mine. Your Love created me, and made my sinlessness forever part of You. I have no guilt nor sin in me, for there is none in You.***

Since God is without sin and guilt, and I am part of Him, I must share in His perfect innocence. Thus if I feel sinful or guilty, or accuse someone else of sin, I aver

that God's Will is fear instead of love, and that punishment is justice. However, Jesus' words help me realize, still again, that I was simply mistaken: happily, he was right and I was wrong – God's sinless Son never left his sinless Source.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 236**
**I rule my mind, which I alone must rule.**

Lesson 253, "My Self is ruler of the universe," expresses the same thought we find here, though in a slightly different form. The meaning is that I am in charge of whatever kingdom I choose—the ego's specialness or the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. The decision maker chooses my reality, and if I am miserable and unhappy, I have chosen to be lord of *my* kingdom. If on the other hand I am happy and peaceful, it is my choice for Jesus that brought me such joy. Thus his appeal to change our minds and teacher.

**(1:1-3) I have a kingdom I must rule. At times, it does not seem I am its king at all. It seems to triumph over me, and tell me what to think, and what to do and feel.**

Whether in our wrong or right minds, we are the ones who choose our kingdom. Yet we believe we are the vassals of the body, and it is our own or others' that rule us and determine how we feel. The ego's strategy is to convince us that the body is real, but its reactions are not our fault or responsibility for we are the innocent victims of what others have done to us. Thus we are reminded in this lesson that *we* are the determiners of everything we think, feel, and believe. No one and no thing has the power to bring us pain and sorrow, or happiness and peace. These are based solely on our own decision:

> Nothing created not by your Creator has any influence over you. And if you think what you have made can tell you what you see and feel, and place your faith in its ability to do so, you are denying your Creator and believing that you made yourself. For if you think the world you made has any power to make you what it wills, you are confusing Son and Father; effect and Source (T-21.II.11:3-5).

**(1:4-8) And yet it has been given me to serve whatever purpose I perceive in it. My mind can only serve. Today I give its service to the Holy Spirit to employ as He sees fit. I thus direct my mind, which I alone can rule. And thus I set it free to do the Will of God.**

My mind serves only what the decision maker chooses: the ego or the Holy Spirit. Thinking back to the "Rules for Decision" in the text, you will recall that Jesus is quite explicit that our minds have only one power: our decision for which teacher we shall follow; the one opposes God's Will by invoking our own, while the Other frees us to remember that we *are* God's Will, and there is no other.

**(2:1)** ***Father, my mind is open to Your Thoughts, and closed today to every thought but Yours.***

Yet another acknowledgment that we made a mistake, thus allowing ourselves to choose again – God's Thoughts instead of our own.

**(2:2-3)** ***I rule my mind, and offer it to You. Accept my gift, for it is Yours to me.***

Instead of the ego's hate, my gift to God is my right mind, the gift of choosing His Love – His gift to me:

**Lesson 236**

God does not limit His gifts in any way. You *are* His gifts, and so your gifts must be like His. Your gifts to the Kingdom must be like His gifts to you (T-7.I.4:6-8).

And in that gift is Heaven and its Son rejoined as one.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 237**
**Now would I be as God created me.**

Lesson 237 echoes the familiar statement, "I am as God created me," the most frequently cited theme in the workbook.

**(1:1-3) Today I will accept the truth about myself. I will arise in glory, and allow the light in me to shine upon the world throughout the day. I bring the world the tidings of salvation which I hear as God my Father speaks to me.**

When I choose against the ego's illusion and for the Holy Spirit's Love, my reality as love and light shine through me. This embraces the world because I – as God's one Son – am the world. There is nothing outside the mind, and when that mind is identified with light, the light can only shine throughout the Sonship. The external world recedes into the background, for we recognize its source – the mind of God's Son. It is to the mind's world we bring the glad tidings of salvation, as we have heard them through the Voice for God:

> No darkness abides anywhere in the Kingdom, but your part is only to allow no darkness to abide in your own mind. This alignment with light is unlimited, because it is in alignment with the light of the world. Each of us is the light of the world, and by joining our minds in this light we proclaim the Kingdom of God together and as one (T-6.11.13:3-5).

**(1:4) And I behold the world that Christ would have me see, aware it ends the bitter dream of death; aware it is my Father's Call to me.**

Since we see outside what we have made real inside – *projection makes perception* – our decision for light is now extended, as we perceive the forgiven world of light through Christ's sane vision:

> The Holy Spirit is the light in which Christ stands revealed. And all who would behold Him can see Him, for they have asked for light.... they looked within and saw beyond the darkness the Christ in them, and recognized Him. In the sanity of His vision they looked upon themselves with love, seeing themselves as the Holy Spirit sees them. And with this vision of the truth in them came all the beauty of the world to shine upon them (T-13.V.11:1-2,5-7).

**(2)** ***Christ is my eyes today, and He the ears that listen to the Voice for God today. Father, I come to You through Him Who is Your Son, and my true Self as well. Amen.***

Recall these lovely and parallel lines from the text that describe the Holy Spirit's use of the body, once our minds are healed of their bitter dreams of death:

> Identify with Him [Christ], and what has He that you have not? He is your eyes, your ears, your hands, your feet. How gentle are the sights He sees, the sounds He hears. How beautiful His hand that holds His brother's, and how lovingly He walks beside him, showing him what can be seen and heard, and where he will see nothing and there is no sound to hear (T-24.V.3:4-7).

It is our forgiveness that leads us to this vision of God's Son, and the peace and love that accompany the journey back to our Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 238**
**On my decision all salvation rests.**

We return to the theme of the power of our minds to choose, the central message of *A Course in Miracles.*

**(1)** ***Father, Your trust in me has been so great, I must be worthy. You created me, and know me as I am. And yet You placed Your Son's salvation in my hands, and let it rest on my decision. I must be beloved of You indeed. And I must be steadfast in holiness as well, that You would give Your Son to me in certainty that he is safe Who still is part of You, and yet is mine, because He is my Sell***

The fate of the world rests on me, but this does not mean the world outside because there is no world outside. This cannot be said too often. Since I and the world are one, God's Son is one, and the world nothing more than an out-picturing of the mind's thoughts, the world is saved when I change my mind. Indeed, everything here rests on this power to choose. This makes no sense from the perspective of the bodily experience that appears so real, but is crystal clear when we step outside the dream with Jesus. Looking back on everything here, we literally see it all differently.

What makes these words so difficult to understand, let alone apply, is that our desire to be a separated self tempts us to bring them into the dream, instead of bringing our dream to the mind that is the source of these words. This is the challenge posed by the special relationship: to recognize in this seeming other the split-off part of the mind's self. Re-uniting the fragments of the Sonship saves us all, and removes the interference to remembering our true Self. Think again of this prayer Jesus says to God on our behalf:

> I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son. Your Holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them. And they are joined because what is in one is in them all. How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part (T-28.IV.9).

Thus, recognizing God's Son in one part allows us to remember him in all—the Whole *is* found in every part.

**(2) And so, again today, we pause to think how much our Father loves us. And how dear His Son, created by His Love, remains to Him Whose Love is made complete in him.**

This sentiment finds beautiful expression at the very end of *The Song of Prayer,* where the words of love are put into the mouth of God Himself. Some of this is already familiar to us, and certainly deserves another reading:

> Return to Me Who never left My Son. Listen, My child, your Father calls to you. Do not refuse to hear the Call for Love. Do not deny to Christ what is His Own. Heaven is here and Heaven is your home.... How lovely are you, child of Holiness! How like to Me! How lovingly I hold you in My Heart and in My Arms....

Remember this; whatever you may think about yourself, whatever you may think about the world, your Father needs you and will call to you until you come to Him in peace at last (S-3.IV.8:5-9; 9:4-6; 10:7).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 239**
**The glory of my Father is my own.**

We see in this lesson another statement of the important theme of our oneness, the foundational premise for all Jesus is teaching us in *A Course in Miracles.*

**(1) Let not the truth about ourselves today be hidden by a false humility. Let us instead be thankful for the gifts our Father gave us. Can we see in those with whom He shares His glory any trace of sin and guilt? And can it be that we are not among them, when He loves His Son forever and with perfect constancy, knowing he is as He created him?**

The false humility that some religions promulgate is the acceptance of our lot as miserable sinners. Yet how can this be anything but the ego's arrogance, when God created us sinless and perfect as Himself? The following passage from the text describes and questions this seeming humility:

> A major tenet in the ego's insane religion is that sin is not error but truth, and it is innocence that would deceive. Purity is seen as arrogance, and the acceptance of the self as sinful is perceived as holiness. And it is this doctrine that replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever. Is this humility? Or is it, rather, an attempt to wrest creation away from truth, and keep it separate? (T-19.II.4)

True humility accepts the reality of our sinless state, along with all our brothers; accepting as well our glory as God's one perfect Son, as He created him.

**(2)** ***We thank You, Father, for the light that shines forever in us. And we honor it, because You share it with us. We are one, united in this light and one with You, at peace with all creation and ourselves.***

We are at peace with everyone and everything because the war against ourselves has ended. The ego's thought system, including our existence as individual entities, was based on conflict and war. If I exist, someone must pay the price for it; if I get what I want, another has to lose – the ego's principle of *one or the other* forever reigns supreme in its darkened kingdom of sacrifice. What allows us to remember our inherent oneness as God's Son is recognizing that we were wrong and the Atonement principle – the separation never occurred – is right. Specifically, this means the Holy Spirit is right about the shared interests of our relationships, the healing of which restores to our awareness the single interest of the entire Sonship – the wish to return home to Heaven's love and peace:

> Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship, for in it lies the Sonship, whole and beautiful, safe in your love. Heaven has entered quietly, for all illusions have been gently brought unto the truth in you, and love has shined upon you, blessing your relationship with truth. God and His whole creation have entered it together. How lovely and how holy is your relationship, with the truth shining upon it! Heaven beholds it, and rejoices that you have let it come to you. And God Himself is glad that your relationship is as it was created. The universe within you stands with you, together with your brother. And Heaven

looks with love on what is joined in it, along with its Creator (T-18.I.11).

Who in his right mind could ever choose the ego's world of darkness over this holy vision of love and truth?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 240**
**Fear is not justified in any form.**

This statement goes directly against the ego's thought system, for fear is definitely justified from its point of view. Because we sinned against God – the origin of our separated existence – God is justified in stealing from us the life we believe we stole from Him. Who would not be fearful of such an imminent threat to life as we know it? Sin and fear are thus projected, making up a world in which we now fear everyone and everything. Yet this fear is only justified by the belief that we exist at someone else's expense – God died so we could live. That is why it is essential to correct the ego's mistaken view by learning that we all share the same need to undo its thought system of fear and return home.

**(1:1-5) Fear is deception. It attests that you have seen yourself as you could never be, and therefore look upon a world which is impossible. Not one thing in this world is true. It does not matter what the form in which it may appear. It witnesses but to your own illusions of yourself.**

We see ourselves as we "could never be" every time we think of ourselves as separate, and therefore sinful and vulnerable. The "impossible" world we look upon is a hostile place that threatens us, which justifies our living in a continual state of fear. The form of anything here – fear-inducing or not – does not matter. Even if it is something everyone in the world agrees is real, it nonetheless comes from the same thought system of illusion-50 million Frenchmen *can* be wrong!

We can see from these passages how, even though the lessons in Part II are primarily meditative, Jesus every now and then drops a metaphysical bombshell: "Not one thing in this world is true." He means that literally. Our perennial problem is that if this statement is correct, it includes all of us who regard ourselves as live entities in the world; our bodies, with their ever-present physical and emotional needs, seem quite real. That is why *A Course in Miracles* is such a threat: it teaches the nonexistence of our very self – "Not one thing in this world is true."

**(1:6-8) Let us not be deceived today. We are the Sons of God. There is no fear in us, for we are each a part of Love Itself.**

Recall this derivation of the famous statement from John's letter, cited before: If perfect love casts out fear and we are part of love, there is no place for fear in us: two mutually exclusive states cannot coexist. The second paragraph tells us how the fear is undone.

**(2)** ***How foolish are our fears! Would You allow Your Son to suffer? Give us faith today to recognize Your Son, and set him free. Let us forgive him in Your Name, that we may understand his holiness, and feel the love for him which is Your Own as well.***

If I truly want to realize I am saved from guilt and fear, and am innocent and free, I must see innocence in everyone, without exception. Thus the way to remember who we are as God's Son is to realize his oneness, and to see that attack thoughts are part of the ego's strategy to keep from us the awareness of our inherent unity. If we are therefore serious about learning, practicing, and achieving the goal of this course, we

must be equally serious about changing our minds about those against whom we hold grievances. This mind changing is the purpose of the daily application of these teachings; and it is Jesus' purpose to help us learn them in the specific relationships of our lives.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 241**
**3. What Is the World?**

This is among the more important summaries in Part II, succinctly describing the world's illusory nature. The summary also teaches that as long as we believe we are here, we can choose to have this unreal world serve a different purpose: forgiveness instead of attack. Thus on the one hand we have depicted the world's origin in the ego's thought system of separation, and on the other how the Holy Spirit uses this same world as a classroom to lead us home.

**(1:1-2) The world is false perception. It is born of error, and it has not left its source.**

Recall the important principle – *ideas leave not their source.* The world's source is the false belief we have separated from God, making our individual self a reality. Whatever arises from that erroneous thought must therefore also be illusory, or "false perception":

> You do not realize the magnitude of that one error [the substitution of illusion for truth]. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge. What else could come of it?... That was the first projection of error outward. The world arose to hide it, and became the screen on which it was projected and drawn between you and the truth.... Do you really think it strange that a world in which everything is backwards and upside down arose from this projection of error? It was inevitable (T-18.I.5:2-4; 6:1-2, 4-5).

This is a crucial concept in *A Course in Miracles'* thought system, for it is the basis of its non-dualistic metaphysics on which true forgiveness rests: an illusory thought engenders an illusory world, which, when forgiven, disappears back into its own nothingness.

**(1:3) It will remain no longer than the thought that gave it birth is cherished.**

Change your mind about your separation from God, and the world must change accordingly. Earlier, I quoted from the following passage in *Psychotherapy* where Jesus discusses how the bodily world of sickness and death arose as shadows from the mind's thought of guilt:

> Once God's Son is seen as guilty, illness becomes inevitable.... There can be nothing that a change of mind cannot effect, for all external things are only shadows of a decision already made. Change the decision, and how can its shadow be unchanged? Illness can be but guilt's shadow, grotesque and ugly since it mimics deformity. If a deformity is seen as real, what could its shadow be except deformed?
>
> The descent into hell follows step by step in an inevitable course, once the decision that guilt is real has been made. Sickness and death and misery now stalk the earth in unrelenting waves, sometimes together and sometimes in grim succession. Yet all these things, however real they seem, are but illusions (P-2.IV.2:1, 4-3:3).

When you accept the Atonement for yourself, there is literally no world for you. People may still remain asleep and believe the world exists, and they may think they see you as a body, as they believed they saw Jesus as a body, but your reality remains with his outside the dream. Thus, looking at the dream you realize everything you see is made up, similar to lucid dreamers who are aware they are dreaming. How could one then take seriously what goes on here? For instance, you may dream of being attacked by someone in China, but knowing you are dreaming, you realize you are not in China and are being attacked by no one. Thus our situation in the real world: the world may not disappear for those who still believe in it, but for you the world is gone. It is from this perspective that *A Course in Miracles* comes to us. It is written in the language of the world, but its truth rests beyond it. You appreciate, understand, and apply it only to the extent to which you can leave this world behind by stepping with Jesus outside it. Looking back on the world, then, everything is seen differently for it remains no longer in your experience.

**(1:4-5) When the thought of separation has been changed to one of true forgiveness, will the world be seen in quite another light; and one which leads to truth, where all the world must disappear and all its errors vanish. Now its source has gone, and its effects are gone as well.**

The other light is the light of truth in the holy instant, in which the world is seen differently. To be in the real world – the ultimate goal of our work with *A Course in Miracles* – is to be outside the dream looking back on it. This is the beautiful vision described in "The Forgotten Song," wherein the world disappears into infinity's one light:

> Beyond the body, beyond the sun and stars, past everything you see and yet somehow familiar, is an arc of golden light that stretches as you look into a great and shining circle. And all the circle fills with light before your eyes. The edges of the circle disappear, and what is in it is no longer contained at all. The light expands and covers everything, extending to infinity forever shining and with no break or limit anywhere. Within it everything is joined in perfect continuity. Nor is it possible to imagine that anything could be outside, for there is nowhere that this light is not (T-21.I.8).

And now the world's nature and purpose:

**(2:1-3) The world was made as an attack on God. It symbolizes fear. And what is fear except love's absence?**

"Perfect love casts out fear," but if you believe in fear, love has no place in your mind. Fear is the effect of thoughts of sin and guilt, which constitute the first shield of attack, covering the innocence of God's Son that is held in place by the Atonement principle. When the sin of attack is projected, it gives rise to a world of attack. Since *ideas leave not their source,* this projected world – the second shield of attack – mirrors the first. Thus the physical universe is an attack on God, resulting in our fear of God's retaliation. This now familiar statement from the text encapsulates the dynamic of fear, wherein the God of Love is changed into a projected figure of attack, "an unloving father":

> You who prefer separation to sanity cannot obtain it in your right mind. You were at peace until you asked for special favor. And God did not give it for the request was alien to Him, and you could not ask this of a Father Who truly loved His Son. Therefore you made of Him an unloving father, demanding of Him what only such a father could give. And the peace of God's Son was shattered, for he no longer understood his Father. He feared what he had made, but still more did he fear his real Father, having attacked his own glorious equality with Him (T-13.III.10).

The ego therefore has us believe there is no hope. With love gone and its place taken by fear, there is nothing left but to defend against our inevitable destruction.

**(2:4) Thus the world was meant to be a place where God could enter not, and where His Son could be apart from Him.**

When we chose the ego over the Holy Spirit, for all intents and purposes we buried Him in the mind and dwelled only in the ego's world where God's Love is forbidden entry. Fear alone exists in the ego's kingdom of mind and body:

> For the body *is* a limit on love. The belief in limited love was its origin, and it was made to limit the unlimited.... God cannot come into a body, nor can you join Him there. Limits on love will always seem to shut Him out, and keep you apart from Him. The body is a tiny fence around a little part of a glorious and complete idea. It draws a circle, infinitely small, around a very little segment of Heaven, splintered from the whole, proclaiming that within it is your kingdom, where God can enter not (T-18.VIII.1:2-3; 2:3-6).

Clearly now we are separate from our Source, and as our very existence constitutes an attack on God, we cannot but be afraid. Once we deny this attack thought it is projected, giving rise to a world that shares the attributes of that thought. Indeed, the world *is* that attack thought. Think of your sleeping dreams, wherein you see an out-picturing of your own thoughts, not anyone else's. In like manner, this world, as a dream, out-pictures the thoughts of the sleeping Son, who in his insanity believes he attacked his Creator and now stands in terror before God's anticipated counterattack. In no way, therefore, does the Son want God anywhere near him, and so excludes Him from his kingdom. As a student of this course, therefore, you need to understand the world's purpose: literally made to exclude God's Love, the world is the final goal of the ego's strategy to ensure that in our mindlessness we could never choose that Love again.

**(2:5) Here was perception born, for knowledge could not cause such insane thoughts.**

This is another of the countless places in *A Course in Miracles* that tell us that God did not create the world. *Knowledge,* a synonym for Heaven, God, and love, could not cause the ego's insane thinking of separation – the world's origin. Perception is dualistic, which means that I, as subject, perceive something outside me, as object – perceiver and perceived. This state is unknown in Heaven, where there is only perfect Oneness. The reader may recall this passage from the text:

> God's laws do not obtain directly to a world perception rules, for such a world could not have been created by the Mind to which perception has no meaning.... Perception rests on choosing; knowledge does not. Knowledge has but one law because it has but one Creator (T-25.III.2:1; 3:1-2).

**(2:6-7) But eyes deceive, and ears hear falsely. Now mistakes become quite possible, for certainty has gone.**

This is the purpose of deception the body was made to serve. As we saw when we read Lesson 161, hate is specific: "Thus were specifics made" (W-pI. 161.7:1; 3:1). We needed something onto which we could project our despised guilt, so we – collectively as God's one Son – made up a world of bodies. We do this individually as well in our special relationships. Thus the body was made with an elaborate sensory apparatus – sensory organs that report back to the brain the "reality" they see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. The brain interprets this sensory input as it was programmed by the mind to do; namely, there is a world out there to be attracted to, if its sensory input is appealing, or to be repelled by, if the sensory input is repulsive. Yet all this is illusory and our sensory organs deceive. The certainty of the Atonement principle is gone, its place taken by our mistaken belief in separation, now elevated to reality. Recall this statement: "Nothing so blinding as perception of form" (T-22.III.6:7). Perception was made to blind us to the truth *and* illusion within the mind. And so our eyes and ears but report back to the mind the lies they were made to find. The *Psychotherapy* pamphlet nicely summarizes this for us:

The ear translates; it does not hear. The eye reproduces; it does not see. Their task is to make agreeable whatever is called on, however disagreeable it may be. They answer the decisions of the mind, reproducing its desires and translating them into acceptable and pleasant forms (P-2.VI.3:1-4).

**(3:1-2) The mechanisms of illusion have been born instead. And now they go to find what has been given them to seek.**

These mechanisms of illusion are our sensory organs that send data to the brain, which, as we have just seen, interprets the received information to reinforce the belief there is an actual world out there. Again, it is all made up; but the mind – of which we are now totally unaware – has programmed the body to perceive this way. Thus we hear the message we want to hear, and the world proves the separation is alive and well, meaning the oneness of God's Love has disappeared Think back to "The Attraction of Guilt," which speaks of the "hungry dogs of fear" sent out to bring back messages of fear, hate, and guilt. The sensory mechanisms of illusions find the seeming truth that the separation from God is real, "proving" we are right and He is wrong – *guilt is reality:*

> Fear's messengers are trained through terror, and they tremble when their master calls on them to serve him. For fear is merciless even to its friends. Its messengers steal guiltily away in hungry search of guilt, for they are kept cold and starving and made very vicious by their master, who allows them to feast only upon what they return to him. No little shred of guilt escapes their hungry eyes. And in their savage search for sin they pounce on any living thing they see, and carry it screaming to their master, to be devoured (T-19.IV-A.12:3-7).

**(3:3-4) Their aim is to fulfill the purpose which the world was made to witness and make real. They see in its illusions but a solid base where truth exists, upheld apart from lies.**

Thus we believe this world to be reality, and think we know what truth is while spirit – Heaven, God, and our Identity as Christ – is a lie. The ego's "truth" is only what our senses tell us, and our brains interpret the sensory information through their perverted version of "reason."

**(3:5) Yet everything that they report is but illusion which is kept apart from truth.**

Our Identity as Christ is the truth, while the world is the lie. Even though we may understand these words intellectually, they will make no sense to us, nor have any practical effect unless we can accept we are not the body, which is why the statement "I am as God created me" is repeated in various forms more than 140 times throughout *A Course in Miracles.* As we know, this does not mean we should feel guilty because our bodily needs press upon us. Simply be aware that their source – the need to prove we are right and God is wrong – is the motivation to which Jesus refers. Yet perception lies, and the early workbook lessons emphasize the inherent meaningless of the world we perceive. It was indeed made to be meaningless, and yet its nature is camouflaged in garbs of significance and importance. Only when we bring our false perceptions to the truth of Christ's vision – the inherent unity of God's Son in the dream as well as in reality – do we look at the world through cleansed perception. And then we see!

Jesus now discusses this new perception of the world:

**(4:1) As sight was made to lead away from truth, it can be redirected.**

The ego directs our sight to reinforce the belief the world is real, with the brain being its slave. If, however, we bring what we perceive to the presence of Jesus in our minds, he would tell us there is another way of looking at the body's sensory data. He would have us see the world as a classroom in which he teaches us that separate interests are not justified, because we all share the same need, purpose, and goal. Thus the world we experience as real can have a transformed purpose, as we read:

**(4:2) Sounds become the call for God, and all perception can be given a new purpose by the One Whom God appointed Savior to the world.**

The new purpose is given by the Holy Spirit. He saves the world, not by magically changing what we do not like, but by helping us change our minds about what we do not like – no longer giving it power to affect our peace. This is therefore not a course in bringing the Holy Spirit into the dream, for the world, being only a misthought, is only saved through the correction of that misthoughtgiving the ego thought system control over our minds. Learning from Jesus how to forgive is the means of accomplishing that correction. Recall this passage:

> There is another purpose in the world that error made, because it has another Maker Who can reconcile its goal with His Creator's purpose. In His

> perception of the world, nothing is seen but justifies forgiveness and the sight of perfect sinlessness. Nothing arises but is met with instant and complete forgiveness. Nothing remains an instant, to obscure the sinlessness that shines unchanged... (T-25.III.5:1-4).

**(4:3-5) Follow His light, and see the world as He beholds it. Hear His Voice alone in all that speaks to you. And let Him give you peace and certainty, which you have thrown away, but Heaven has preserved for you in Him.**

Our purpose is to see the world through Christ's vision. The physical eye will see what it saw before – war, disease, poverty, suffering, and death – but our understanding will have changed. Standing outside the dream with Jesus, we realize that everything within it is a call for help, its ultimate meaning being: "Please show me I was wrong." It may not be what people consciously think, but it nonetheless underlies their call. By our love and peace we teach them the other choice available in their minds. Perhaps we will choose the ego in the next minute, but in this holy instant we are at peace and not sharing the ego's insane dreams of pain. Thus a major purpose of *A Course in Miracles is* to convince us how much happier we will be above the battleground, seeing the world only through the Holy Spirit's eyes:

> Be lifted up, and from a higher place look down upon it. From there will your perspective be quite different.... And God Himself and all the lights of Heaven will gently lean to you, and hold you up. For you have chosen to remain where He would have you, and no illusion can attack the peace of God together with His Son.
>
> See no one from the battleground, for there you look on him from nowhere.... Think what is given those who share their Father's purpose, and who know that it is theirs. They want for nothing. Sorrow of any kind is inconceivable. Only the light they love is in awareness, and only love shines upon them forever.... eternally complete and wholly shared (T-23.IV.5:1-2; 6:6-7; 7:1; 8:1-5).

**(5:1-2) Let us not rest content until the world has joined our changed perception. Let us not be satisfied until forgiveness has been made complete.**

Salvation of our mind is everyone's salvation. This does not mean everyone has to accept the love we offer, but it is important to recognize that our interests are not apart from anyone else's. This applies to our worldly interests as well as our spiritual paths, regardless of their forms – we are one in pain and pleasure, and one in their undoing. Thus we realize that we want our minds to be totally healed, not just healed of something specific that adversely affects us at the moment. The healing, if it is true, must extend to *all* relationships and situations, *all* the time. Only then will we know that the world is healed with us. This all-inclusive nature of salvation is the meaning of resurrection, the awakening from the ego's dream of death:

> Here the curriculum ends.... Vision is wholly corrected and all mistakes undone.... Thoughts turn to Heaven and away from hell.... The last illusion spreads across the world, forgiving all things and replacing all attack.... There is no opposition to the truth. And now the truth can come at last. How quickly will it come as it is asked to enter and envelop such a world! (M-28.3:1,3,6,8,11-13)

**(5:3-4) And let us not attempt to change our function. We must save the world.**

Obviously this is not a call to go out and preach the gospel of *A Course in Miracles* to the nonbelievers. Our function is to save the world by changing our perception of the world through forgiveness. We avoid misinterpreting lines like this by keeping the metaphysics of the Course close at hand. The opening two paragraphs of this summary emphasize that the world comes from a misthought, and is nothing more than that. Since I rule my mind, **I** rule the world that is part of my mind, and thus the world is saved when my mind is saved. This occurs when I can say to Jesus: "Thank God you were right and **I** was wrong."

**(5:5) For we who made it must behold it through the eyes of Christ, that what was made to die can be restored to everlasting life.**

"What was made to die" is God's Son, because death is the end product of our choice for guilt. Our minds made the Son a body in which to die, but he is restored to everlasting life by changing our minds from thoughts of death to thoughts of life. The world we made to exclude life now has a holy purpose, for it reflects Life's eternal Oneness—the Son of Life has never left his Source:

> When you accepted the Holy Spirit's purpose in place of the ego's you renounced death, exchanging it for life. We know that an idea leaves not its source. And death is the result of the thought we call the ego, as surely as life is the result of the Thought of God (T-19.IV-C.2:13-15)

## LESSON 241
## This holy instant is salvation come.

**(1:1-5) What joy there is today! It is a time of special celebration. For today holds out the instant to the darkened world where its release is set. The day has come when sorrows pass away and pain is gone. The glory of salvation dawns today upon a world set free.**

Forgiveness is the key to this passing, for it alone undoes the guilt that is the source of all sorrow. Its darkened clouds, filled with tears of pain, gently evanesce when the warmth of the holy instant's light shines upon it, as the warm morning sun dissolves the early mist that casts a pall on a new day's dawning.

**(1:6-8) This is the time of hope for countless millions. They will be united now, as you forgive them all. For I will be forgiven by you today.**

True hope is found, not in the world of darkened clouds but in the mind's power to choose the light. Only this can undo the guilt that is the source of all pain and sorrow. These clouds, seeded by our belief in separation, gently disappear when brought to the thought of unity. Yet this thought must truly embrace *all* living things, otherwise the guilt-filled spots of darkness will continue to cast their evil shadows on the world and exclude the Sonship from its rightful place in Heaven's oneness. Moreover, this all-inclusive embrace must include Jesus, too, for how can he be excluded from the Sonship, and yet we be saved? Recall his plea to us from the text:

> Forgive me all the sins you think the Son of God committed. And in the light of your forgiveness he will remember who he is, and forget what never was (T-19.IV-B.6:2-3).

In forgiving Jesus for what he never did, we forgive ourselves as well. The sin of separation had no effect on the unity of creation's light. In this workbook statement, therefore, Jesus tells us that in the holy instant God's Son is one, which means we forgive everyone for what they have never done, recognizing that the peace within is impervious to any external influence. Thus we all share together the same need and purpose of remembering the happy fact of forgiveness, as the light of eternity, reflected in this instant of salvation, gently shines away the thought of separation that never happened.

**(2)** ***We have forgiven one another now, and so we come at last to You again. Father, Your Son, who never left, returns to Heaven and his home. How glad are we to have our sanity restored to us, and to remember that we all are one.***

When we have turned away from the thought system of separation, all differences among us disappear as our seemingly separate interests come together and become one. In this holy instant Jesus ceases to be our teacher, as his love and ours are the same. And in that love the Sonship is united as one, *without exception.* Once again, we are brought to this final realization by accepting the unity of purpose that forgiveness restores to the mind of the sleeping Sonship. Thus do we leave the ego's hell and return to the Heaven we never left, as we are gratefully reminded in Jesus' final vision of the

awakening Sons of God who have chosen again:

> Salvation's song will echo through the world with every choice they make. For we are one in purpose, and the end of hell is near.... And as each one elects to join with me, the song of thanks from earth to Heaven grows from tiny scattered threads of melody to one inclusive chorus from a world redeemed from hell, and giving thanks to You (T-31.VIII.10:7-8; 11:5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 242**
**This day is God's. It is my gift to Him.**

**(1:1-2) I will not lead my life alone today. I do not understand the world, and so to try to lead my life alone must be but foolishness.**

This foolishness unfortunately characterizes our lives here as bodies. Even when we think we are good students of *A Course in Miracles,* always asking for help, we inevitably fall back on the belief we know what is right and wrong, best and worst for us and others. All such foolishness, in one way or another, involves judgment and attack. Thus Jesus tells us here, as he does throughout his course, that we do not understand anything about the world. This is the humility he encourages us to maintain. Every student knows these oft-quoted lines:

> You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing (T-18.IV. 7:5-6).

**(1:3-5) But there is One Who knows all that is best for me. And He is glad to make no choices for me but the ones that lead to God. I give this day to Him, for I would not delay my coming home, and it is He Who knows the way to God.**

Again, this is a statement of humility that says there is Someone who knows better than we. We know we have made the wrong choice when we are upset, angry, anxious, depressed, and preoccupied with our specialness—a red flag that says we know what is best for us and do not need the Holy Spirit's help. We have listened to the ego's caution that when we do ask, He will remove the specialness we value and need, without which we could never survive.

**(2:1-3)** ***And so we give today to You. We come with wholly open minds. We do not ask for anything that we may think we want.***

We have emphasized many times the importance of having an open mind in which we acknowledge we have been wrong. Thus our minds are no longer closed to the truth, for we accept that there is Someone within who does know what we need. We have ceased asking Jesus for specifics, for that assumed we knew what was best for us, a belief entailing a problem *other* than separation and guilt. Once we "asked" for such help, we believed we "heard" a specific answer. Yet all we did was make real the ego's scarcity and specificity, defining our problem of lack – whether something as trivial as a parking space, or as important as our health – and magically expecting Jesus to supply what was missing.

**(2:4-6)** ***Give us what You would have received by us. You know all our desires and our wants. And You will give us everything we need in helping us to find the way to You.***

And what do we need? Our Father's Love. At the beginning of *The Song of Prayer, as* we recall, Jesus reminds us we want the song itself, not its fragments (S-1.I.2:9-3:6); we want a love that is all-inclusive, not the specifics of specialness. To attain this goal we need to learn from our classroom of relationships – "everything we need" –

and need the Teacher that God "gives." Thus while the Holy Spirit does not send us these relationships, He can yet use them to teach us His lessons of forgiveness, as we recall those familiar words.

> Such is the Holy Spirit's kind perception of specialness; His use of what you made, to heal instead of harm (T-25.VI.4:1).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 243**
**Today I will judge nothing that occurs.**

This key statement logically follows from the preceding lesson. We judge everything, based on the insanely arrogant premise that we know. How could we? Central to *A Course in Miracles* is the fact that we cannot judge anything; that is the Holy Spirit's function, not ours.

**(1:1-3) I will be honest with myself today. I will not think that I already know what must remain beyond my present grasp. I will not think I understand the whole from bits of my perception, which are all that I can see.**

My bits of perception are the specific needs that have become my world: the special people on whom I call for help; the special situations that meet my special needs; the special parts of the body that bring me pleasure or cause me pain. Underlying this specialness is the belief we understand what we need. Honesty is the humble recognition that we do not.

**(1:4-6) Today I recognize that this is so. And so I am relieved of judgments that I cannot make. Thus do I free myself and what I look upon, to be in peace as God created us.**

This is yet another way of saying I was mistaken, but Someone within knows the truth. As you go through your day, see how quickly you rely on the illusion that you know what is best; watch how you come up with insane plans to bring about the conclusion you think will work for you. "A healed mind does not plan" (W-pI.135.11: 1) because the healed mind realizes there are no problems to be solved. On the level of specifics, this certainly does not mean you should not make plans – we all have to in this world. However, Jesus asks you not to take these plans too seriously, and not think that what you are doing will solve the real problem of the separation.

Remember that the ego's strategy makes up nonexistent problems, causing us to spend the rest of our lives trying to solve them with solutions that do not work. There is only one problem – our mistaken choice for the ego; and one solution – choosing the Holy Spirit. Everything else is a subterfuge for this simplicity. That is why we cannot understand anything, nor know what it is for. The only purpose of anything is to remind us we are minds and not bodies, and that the mind's faulty choice can be corrected by our inner Teacher. Nothing else will work, for the ego's strategy uses the world to ensure that we never return to the mind from our mindless state.

The lesson closes with this prayer of oneness:

**(2)** ***Father, today I leave creation free to be itself I honor all its parts, in which I am included We are one because each part contains Your memory, and truth must shine in all of us as one.***

I accept the oneness of the Sonship, and its shared need, purpose, and interest. In honoring the Sonship I do not try to change others or myself, attack or exclude anyone, or elevate others to the status of special love idols – all God's Sons are equal parts of the same unity, including me. If truth does not shine in all of us, it cannot be the truth. Throughout history, millions have died in the name of a truth that excluded: my way is right, and yours is wrong. No path works for all people, but in form it cannot be

more true than anyone else's, including *A Course in Miracles* – the Holy Spirit is equally present in all of us. As has been taught: "Truth is one; the sages know it by many names." *A Course in Miracles* is but one among many thousand forms of the universal course (M-1.4:1-2).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 244**
**I am in danger nowhere in the world.**

Our invulnerability as God's Son is another important recurring theme. Within the ego's system we are in perpetual danger as bodies living in the world. The ego begins with a thought of vulnerability – I attacked God, and He will attack me in return – which inevitably gives rise to a body that is vulnerability in projected form. However, when we no longer identify with the ego's thought system of sin and attack, we share in the inherent invulnerability as the Son God created at one with Him.

**(1)** ***Your Son is safe wherever he may be, for You are there with him. He need but call upon Your Name, and he will recollect his safety and Your Love, for they are one. How can he fear or doubt or fail to know he cannot suffer, be endangered, or experience unhappiness, when he belongs to You, beloved and loving, in the safety of Your Fatherly embrace?***

If God is in Heaven with me, I am there with Him. Thus I am not truly here in the world, because God is not here. Calling on God's Name is not part of a magical incantation, but a correction for the little names I have given to the things of the world; some I think will hurt, some I think will help. Yet are they all perceived as different, a perception based on my specialness needs and not their shared functions as projections of illusion or extensions of forgiveness. Recognizing the inherent unity in wrong-minded and right-minded illusions allows me to remember the one truth of Heaven's love, and awaken to my Self, safe and secure within Its Fatherly embrace.

**(2) And there we are in truth. No storms can come into the hallowed haven of our home. In God we are secure. For what can come to threaten God Himself, or make afraid what will forever be a part of Him?**

That home is our right minds. When we are there, with the Holy Spirit, we are outside the dream of guilt and fear. We can be hurt only within the dream, which begins with the thought of hurt: I hurt God, Who will hurt me in return. Since *ideas leave not their source,* the world that arises from that thought shares the same quality. When beyond the dream, however, it disappears; and we gently smile at the silliness of believing we were ever in danger. Remember, when you feel threat, you believe you know what will save you. This leads you further from the truth, and deeper into insanity. "That way madness lies," exclaimed King Lear, for all of us. Helen's little poem "Safety" is a kind reminder of the other way:

> The wish to harm alone engenders fear.
> Without it is protection obvious,
> And shelter offered everywhere. There is
> No time when safety need be sought, no place
> Where it is absent, and no circumstance
> Which can endanger it in any way.
> It is secured by every loving thought,
> Made more apparent by each loving glance,
> Brought nearer by forgiving words, and kept
> Untroubled, cloudless, open to the light,
> Redeemed, restored and holy in Christ's sight.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 244**
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 8)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 245**
**Your peace is with me, Father. I am safe.**

***(1) Your peace surrounds me, Father. Where I go, Your peace goes there with me. It sheds its light on everyone I meet I bring it to the desolate and lonely and afraid. I give Your peace to those who suffer pain, or grieve for loss, or think they are bereft of hope and happiness. Send them to me, my Father. Let me bring Your peace with me. For I would save Your Son, as is Your Will, that I may come to recognize my Self***

This should not be taken as a behavioral imperative to preach, heal, and save others. The peace of God surrounding me is in my mind, and when I return there, it is mine. Indeed, the total Sonship is there as well, joined in God's peace, for the mind of God's Son is one. Shifting my attention to the dream, even though my reality is outside it, I am able to be a messenger of peace, hope, and comfort in whatever form the dream figures need to receive that message. This has nothing to do with what I say or do, but solely with the thoughts of peace and love with which I have now identified. These thoughts of the Holy Spirit naturally extend through my mind, and I do nothing but let them be. Thus their gifts are given through me, and the world gives thanks. This is the theme of "The Gift," a poem of Helen's written as an expression of gratitude from her to a friend. It applies equally to all of us, from all of us – gifts from Jesus:

> You are a blessing. You have come to me
> Because He asked you to. And you have come
> To speak to me about Him, so that He
> Could show me through your voice the pathway home.
>
> You came because He asked, but did not know
> He spoke to you of Him. His Voice came through
> With crystal clarity. You came to show
> The gift you brought to me is given you.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 77)

Again, God does not send people to us, for He does nothing but love – He simply is. Returning to our minds, we reflect His pure Being, in which everyone is found.

**(2) And so we go in peace. To all the world we give the message that we have received. And thus we come to hear the Voice for God, Who speaks to us as we relate His Word; Whose Love we recognize because we share the Word that He has given unto us.**

To receive peace, I must give it to others. This "exchange" occurs when I forgive, bringing my projections of sin back to my mind, where I make another choice. The Holy Spirit's loving peace I now accept for myself and is freely given all, as I receive it in return. How could this peace not be shared, since God's Son is one – we give to all because we *are* all:

> How many times has it been emphasized that you give but to yourself? And where could this be better shown than in the kinds of help the teacher of God gives to those who need his aid? Here is his gift most clearly given him. For he

will give only what he has chosen for himself. And in this gift is his judgment upon the holy Son of God (M-17.2:6-10).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 246**
**To love my Father is to love His Son.**

**(1) Let me not think that I can find the way to God, if I have hatred in my heart. Let me not try to hurt God's Son, and think that I can know his Father or my Self. Let me not fail to recognize myself, and still believe that my awareness can contain my Father, or my mind conceive of all the love my Father has for me, and all the love which I return to Him.**

If I truly mean that I love God and want to return to Him, how can I possibly harbor grievances against anyone else? When I do, I am really saying I do not love Him. Jesus wants us to see this clearly, for if the world had this understanding, we would have been spared two thousand years of Christian persecution, as well as persecutions in almost every other religion as well. If you know that the only way to love God is to see no separation in His Son, then when you make separation real – through indulging your special loves and hates – you would know that at that instant you do not want to remember God, your protestations to the contrary. That is mere honesty. You must look at that thought of resistance and understand its meaning: If I remember God, I cease to exist; therefore the only way to maintain my existence is to keep God away, which is easily accomplished by attacking His Son. I am thus always finding fault in others and judging them. That is the underlying message in this lesson, and the point behind Jesus' plea to us in the text to choose against condemnation – of our brothers and ourselves – and to accept his invitation to return home with him:

> *You cannot enter God's Presence if you attack His Son....* Christ is at God's altar, waiting to welcome His Son. But come wholly without condemnation, for otherwise you will believe that the door is barred and you cannot enter. The door is not barred.... Come unto me who hold it open for you, for while I live it cannot be shut, and I live forever. God is my life and yours, and nothing is denied by God to His Son (T-11.IV.5:6; 6:1-3, 6-7).

**(2)** ***I will accept the way You choose for me to come to You, my Father. For in that will I succeed, because it is Your Will. And I would recognize that what You will is what I will as well, and only that And so I choose to love Your Son. Amen.***

Think back to the lovely prayer that ends Lesson 189:

> *Father, we do not know the way to You. But we have called, and You have answered us. We will not interfere.... Yours is the way that we would find and follow* (W-pI.189.10:1-3, 8).

We do not follow *our* way to God; we choose His, which means forgiveness of His Son, including everyone we look upon or think about – past, present, or future. Our way is insane: pray more, suffer and sacrifice more, read holy books, write holy books, do holy things, etc. However, this is not God's way, as He does not see *form,* but only His *content* of love. Thus our Father would have us simply look at His Son as one, without attack. This important theme of vision is continued in Lesson 247.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 247**
**Without forgiveness I will still be blind.**

As long as hatred or judgment is in my heart, I will not see. Christ's vision has been veiled and I am blind to the truth.

**(1:1-2) Sin is the symbol of attack. Behold it anywhere, and I will suffer.**

Here the I refers to us and not Jesus. If I see sin anywhere, I will suffer. If I attack you, I exclude only myself from the Kingdom.

**(1:3-4) For forgiveness is the only means whereby Christ's vision comes to me. Let me accept what His sight shows me as the simple truth, and I am healed completely.**

I pray to myself to choose Jesus' eyes through which to see. I do not deny my sight, that you may be attacking me or others, or that your body is wasting away with a disease. Yet through forgiveness I give a different interpretation to what I have seen:

> ... by your own forgiveness you are free to see. Yet what you see is only what you made, with the blessing of your forgiveness on it (T-17.II. 3:5-6).

I realize your attack or sickness is a dream I have chosen, along with you. In my right mind I no longer support it, which reminds you that you can make the same choice for freedom I have. Thus are we healed together and as one.

**(1:5-8) Brother, come and let me look on you. Your loveliness reflects my own. Your sinlessness is mine. You stand forgiven, and I stand with you.**

Again, this is our prayer to ourselves, that we would look on people differently. Our responsibility is to be aware of our hatred and anger, asking Jesus' help to look at them with his love. Everything will then change for us, for we will have seen our brother as ourselves. From Helen's "A Brother's Prayer":

> What need we do to let forgiveness come?
> Nothing. We need but realize that we
> And all the world together are the sum
> Of all salvation's promise. I am he
> Who speaks God's Word, and you along with me.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 63)

**(2)** ***So would I look on everyone today. My brothers are Your Sons. Your Fatherhood created them, and gave them all to me as part of You, and my own Self as well Today I honor You through them, and thus I hope this day to recognize my Self***

Again, if I am serious about awakening from this dream of separation and returning home, I cannot harbor attack thoughts against anyone. If I do, I attack Christ and continue to crucify God's Son by seeing him in fragments instead of unity. This is the perfect way of keeping myself asleep in the ego's dreams of sin and specialness,

and apart from my Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 248**
**Whatever suffers is not part of me.**

When you get upset because of someone else's pain, it is only because you have psychologically identified with them: "Whatever suffers *is* a part of me." When you are mourning the death of a loved one, it is because you believe something in you has died, as Freud explained in his brilliant paper, "Mourning and Melancholia." Mourning of course is normal, but when it turns into depression – *melancholia* is the old term for "depression" – it is because mourners believe that the person who died is a part of them, as they are part of that person. Thus something in them is suffering or has died. In our right minds, however, we know that whatever suffers is *not* part of us, because the body is outside the mind and our identity. We know this is a dream of sickness, pain, and death, and what has this to do with God's Son, who is my Self?

**(1:1-2) I have disowned the truth. Now let me be as faithful in disowning falsity.**

When we indulge in false empathy – identifying with someone's pain – we are disowning the truth, which is that God's one Son remains as He created him as spirit. Our Identity, therefore, is invulnerable in the perfect Oneness that disowns the falsity and insanity of the ego's thought system of sin, attack, and death.

**(1:3-5) Whatever suffers is not part of me. What grieves is not myself. What is in pain is but illusion in my mind.**

Being in pain is the result of the mind's illusion of separation and vulnerability that we project onto the body. When we identify with someone else's pain, we do the same thing and thus support another's dream of suffering as we reinforce it in ourselves. This is the unholy instant, the opposite of the holy instant in which we say there must be another way of looking at this.

**(1:6) What dies was never living in reality, and did but mock the truth about myself.**

The body dies, but only within the dream. Death mocks the truth of who we are as eternal spirit, not to mention mocking God. It says that what God has made now can perish, which we all believe who think that God created the physical universe.

**(1:7-8) Now I disown self-concepts and deceits and lies about the holy Son of God. Now am I ready to accept him back as God created him, and as he is.**

This occurs simply by my asking Jesus for help. I step with him outside the dream and look back on its figures, no longer perceived as living bodies. *A Course in Miracles* is difficult to practice only because we are so identified with our physical selves. Yet, the Course gently leads us step by step as we grow into acceptance of its truth: we remain as God created us.

**(2)** ***Father, my ancient love for You returns, and lets me love Your Son again as well. Father, I am as You created me. Now is Your Love remembered, and my own. Now do I understand that they are one.***

## Lesson 248

When I am in the real world outside the dream, God's Love dawns on my mind and I understand His love and mine are the same. In special love, with which we almost always identify, love is seen as distinct and different. Happily now, we recognize the falsity of this belief.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 249**
**Forgiveness ends all suffering and loss.**

**(1:1-4) Forgiveness paints a picture of a world where suffering is over, loss becomes impossible and anger makes no sense. Attack is gone, and madness has an end. What suffering is now conceivable? What loss can be sustained?**

This does not mean that figures in the dream will not suffer pain and loss, or be angry. It simply means that you, standing outside the dream, will no longer see it as real. *Your mind has changed,* not the world. When you awaken from the dream, it is over. If people still choose to see themselves as dream figures, their bodies will suffer pain in their experience. However, with Jesus in your right mind outside the dream, you acknowledge all this as illusory. If you still feel pain, do not beat yourself up or think you have failed *A Course in Miracles,* or that it has failed you. Simply say in all humility: "I am not yet ready to let go of my bodily identification." What is the surprise? You knew this anyway, and so it makes no sense to pretend you are further along than you are.

This course is meant for people who are at the bottom of the ladder, just beginning their journey. Jesus shows us the ladder's end and how to attain our goal, but he also says: "Let me help you where you believe you are, but let us not stay there. Take my hand and I shall help you to grow and ascend the ladder until you are home."

**(1:5) The world becomes a place of joy, abundance, charity, endless giving.**

This does not mean that suddenly all will be well here. However, from outside the dream – "a place of joy, abundance, charity, endless giving" – everything will be different.

**(1:6-7) It is now so like to Heaven that it quickly is transformed into the light that it reflects. And so the journey which the Son of God began has ended in the light from which he came.**

Thus the picture frame disappears, and the picture of light dissolves back into its source. "The Reflection of Holiness" expresses the same inspiring idea in these familiar lines:

> Those who have learned to offer only healing, because of the reflection of holiness in them, are ready at last for Heaven. There, holiness is not a reflection, but rather the actual condition of what was but reflected to them here. God is no image, and His creations, as part of Him, hold Him in them in truth. They do not merely reflect truth, for they *are* truth (T-14.IX.8:4-7).

We no longer are the reflections of light, but have become what we had reflected. In other words, we do not symbolize the light for we have disappeared into the very light itself.

**(2)** ***Father, we would return our minds to You. We have betrayed them, held them in a vise of bitterness, and frightened them with thoughts of violence and death. Now would we rest again in You, as You created us.***

This acknowledges our mistake in betraying Who we are as God's Son. We were

unfaithful to the truth in our minds, and instead substituted the vise of bitterness for the lovely haven of Love. Now we choose again and happily realize our mistake, for which no penalty is exacted; only the rewards of Heaven's love are ours.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 250**
**Let me not see myself as limited.**

When we chose the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, we made ourselves a limited self, the ego's shabby substitute for the limitless Self that is the creation of Limitlessness and has never left Its Source.

**(1) Let me behold the Son of God today, and witness to his glory. Let me not try to obscure the holy light in him, and see his strength diminished and reduced to frailty; nor perceive the lacks in him with which I would attack his sovereignty.**

Let me not see lack in myself or anyone else. If I do, I attack the sovereignty, magnitude, and abundance of God's Son. If I want to know myself as limitless, I must see everyone else as limitless. The choice is mine: the vision of sinlessness or the judgment of guilt. The one I choose to see reflects the choice for my own identity:

> Vision will come to you at first in glimpses, but they will be enough to show you what is given you who see your brother sinless. Truth is restored to you through your desire, as it was lost to you through your desire for something else. Open the holy place that you closed off by valuing the "something else," and what was never lost will quietly return. It has been saved for you. Vision would not be necessary had judgment not been made. Desire now its whole undoing, and it is done for you (T-20.VIII.1).

**(2)** ***He is Your Son, my Father. And today I would behold his gentleness instead of my illusions. He is what I am, and as I see him so I see myself. Today I would see truly, that this day I may at last identify with him.***

All you need do to realize which teacher you have chosen is pay attention to the way you perceive someone – anyone. If you see that person as greater or less than you, as deserving of attack, judgment, and criticism, or different from you in any way at all, that perception tells you you no longer wish to see the Holy Spirit's gentleness. You prefer instead to justify God's cruelty because of how cruel you believe you were to Him. However, rather than recognize that "fact," you see everyone else as sinful and deserving of punishment. The bottom line is to pay careful attention to the way you perceive others and the world, for, again, that will tell you which teacher you have chosen. Thus, when you realize your error, simply say: "Yes, I made a mistake and now can choose correctly." Recall this passage from the text:

> Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God. If you behold disaster and catastrophe, you tried to crucify him. If you see holiness and hope, you joined the Will of God to set him free. There is no choice that lies between these two decisions. And you will see the witness to the choice you made, and learn from this to recognize which one you chose. The world you see but shows you how much joy you have allowed yourself to see in you, and to accept as yours (T-21.in.2:1-7).

If we do not experience the joy we truly seek, we know where to find it – in our gentle brother, who mirrors our gentle self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 251**
**4. What Is Sin?**

This summary makes reference to the previous "What Is the World?" as well as foreshadowing "What Is the Body?" that comes next. They all discuss the body's origin and purpose.

**(1:1-2) Sin is insanity. It is the means by which the mind is driven mad, and seeks to let illusions take the place of truth.**

We have discussed many times how the ego uses sin as the first step in its attempt to protect itself. After the Son had chosen the insane separation as his reality and turned the Atonement into illusion, the ego ensured he would never change his mind by making him mindless. To accomplish its goal, the ego convinced the Son his separation was a deplorable sin that deserved punishment. The Son therefore concluded that his mind was a dangerous place, and remaining there meant certain annihilation at the hands of a vengeful God. His only option was to leave the mind through projection and make up a world and body. Thus sin is the first step in the ego's plan to defend an insane thought and protect illusions against the truth. Recall:

> A major tenet in the ego's insane religion is that sin is not error but truth, and it is innocence that would deceive. Purity is seen as arrogance, and the acceptance of the self as sinful is perceived as holiness. And it is this doctrine that replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever. Is this humility? Or is it, rather, an attempt to wrest creation away from truth, and keep it separate? (T-19.II.4)

**(1:3) And being mad, it sees illusions where the truth should be, and where it really is.**

Truth is in the right mind, the home of the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle. Yet in his insanity God's Son sees only the "fact" that he has won his individuality by sinning against his Father. The projection of this sin results in a world and body, with sensory apparatus that perceives sin all around him, but never within the mind itself.

**(1:4) Sin gave the body eyes ...**

This harks back to the statements in Lesson 161: "Thus were specifics made" and "hate is specific." A perceptual world of specifics was made to fulfill the ego's need to see the object of sin outside the mind in a body, perceived by eyes specifically made to see it there and not in the mind. The reader may recall this passage on the role of guilt in making the body to conceal its presence in the mind. The point is the same as here in the workbook, but with sin as the subject:

> Here [in the world] are all the illusions ... that were made to keep the guilt in place, so that the world could rise from it and keep it hidden. Its shadow rises to the surface .... Yet its intensity is veiled by its heavy coverings, and kept apart from what was made to keep it hidden. The body cannot see this, for the body arose from this for its protection, which depends on keeping it not seen. The body's eyes will never look on it. Yet they will see what it dictates (T-18.IX.4:2-7).

Thus do sin and guilt operate to keep the mind hidden behind the body's sensory organs that can only look *outward,* but never *within.*

**(1:4-7) Sin gave the body eyes, for what is there the sinless would behold? What need have they of sights or sounds or touch? What would they hear or reach to grasp? What would they sense at all?**

When we are at home in God, awake as spirit, we are in a non-dualistic state. There is no subject or object, and no need to protect our identity by making up a body to see sin. This ensures that the ego's illusory existence is never recognized as such. Thus perception plays a mighty part in the ego's strategy to imprison the Son in sin. Yet when sin has gone, what need is there for perception? – there is nothing to see, and nothing to see with! The world of separation disappears, first in the true perception of shared interests – the innocent face of Christ – and then beyond this holiest of perceptions into the Presence of God:

> The sinless must perceive that they are one, for nothing stands between to push the other off. And in the space that sin left vacant do they join as one, in gladness recognizing what is part of them has not been kept apart and separate.... And here you see the face of Christ, arising in its place. Who could behold the face of Christ and not recall His Father as He really is? (T-26.IV.2:5-6; 3:2-3)

**(1:8-9) To sense is not to know. And truth can be but filled with knowledge, and with nothing else.**

The word *sense* refers to our sensory organs. Perception – sensing – is the opposite of knowledge for they are mutually exclusive states. The former is the home of separation and judgment; the latter the home of oneness and wholeness:

> Perception, on the other hand, is impossible without a belief in "more" and "less." At every level it involves selectivity.... Evaluation is an essential part of perception, because judgments are necessary in order to select.
>
> What happens to perceptions if there are no judgments and nothing but perfect equality? Perception becomes impossible. Truth can only be known.... Knowledge transcends the laws governing perception .... It is all one and has no separate parts. You who are really one with it need but know yourself and your knowledge is complete (T-3.V.7:5-6,8-8:3,6-8).

**(2:1) The body is the instrument the mind made in its efforts to deceive itself.**

The mind made the body specifically to deceive the Son of God about his identity, and within its boundaries the mind is in effect held hostage, with no opening to the truth of the Son's reality. Now he knows only the body – its moribund home in the world:

> The body is the ego's idol; the belief in sin made flesh and then projected outward. This produces what seems to be a wall of flesh around the mind,

> keeping it prisoner in a tiny spot of space and time, beholden unto death, and given but an instant in which to sigh and grieve and die in honor of its master (T-20. VI.11:1-2).

**(2:2) Its purpose is to strive.**

By "striving," Jesus means that the body has to be doing something to preserve its own existence. Think a moment – the body is continually active. Even if you have the illusion that your body is quiet, yet do its lungs breathe and its heart pump. However, we know it is not the body itself that is active but the mind, which programs the body's behavior as part of the ego's strategy to keep the Son of God mindless. The body is directed to seek externally for solutions to its problems – the ego's maxim of *seek but do not find* – all the while the true problem and solution rest quietly within, where they cannot be found.

**2:(3-4) Yet can the goal of striving change. And now the body serves a different aim for striving.**

In other words, the ego made the body to kill, but the Holy Spirit uses it as a classroom to teach us to remember there is no death and God's Son is eternal. Rather than having the body seek and never find – the purpose of the ego's striving – the Holy Spirit teaches the mind to reclaim its power and seek only where it can truly find. Thus does "the goal of striving change" – from separation and attack to joining and healing:

> If you use the body for attack, it is harmful to you. If you use it only to reach the minds of those who believe they are bodies, and teach them *through* the body that this is not so, you will understand the power of the mind that is in you. If you use the body for this and only for this, you cannot use it for attack.... The Holy Spirit does not see the body as you do, because He knows the only reality of anything is the service it renders God on behalf of the function He gives it (T-8.VII.3:1-3, 6).

**(2:5-7) What it seeks for now is chosen by the aim the mind has taken as replacement for the goal of self-deception. Truth can be its aim as well as lies. The senses then will seek instead for witnesses to what is true.**

Jesus refers here to the decision maker, the part of my mind that chooses. I now realize I decided wrongly, and rather than seek to perpetuate the delusion that I exist as a separate self, I ask the help of my gentle Teacher to undo what I made real by choosing again. Recall "The Attraction of Guilt," where Jesus describes our choice to send out messengers of fear or love. The former bring back perceptions of guilt, sin, and blame, while the latter return with perceptions of love or calls for it – mistakes instead of sins. These mistakes are not of the body, but the mind's wrong choices. As we know, Jesus does not tell us to deny the body, but rather that before we can know this is not our identity, we first have to use the body differently. This we do by choosing a different teacher – the Holy Spirit's forgiveness instead of the ego's attack.

**(3:1) Sin is the home of all illusions, which but stand for things imagined, issuing from thoughts that are untrue.**

"Illusions" refers to the world, with sin being the source of all we made real outside our minds. What we perceive outside – the witnesses to sin – are only the effects of the underlying cause, which is the mind's need to protect itself by denying its own sinfulness and seeing it in the body. Thus our perceptions of blame represent the mind's thoughts of sin and guilt that are also imagined: illusions cannot but breed illusions. We are continually reminded that the entirety of the ego's thought system is made up—the world we see rests on nothing, and must therefore be nothing as well: "The world will end in illusion, as it began" (M-14.1:2).

**(3:2) They are the "proof' that what has no reality is real.**

The ego has the body tell us the world is real, even though it is illusory and has no existence outside our mistaken thoughts. The body's sensory organs confirm the lie that the world is indeed real, and we all know how present our physical and psychological needs are to us – yet they deceive:

> Let not the world deceive you. It was made to be deception.... Dreams are dreams, and every one is equally untrue *(The Gifts of God,* p. 115).

**(3:3-4) Sin "proves" God's Son is evil; timelessness must have an end; eternal life must die. And God Himself has lost the Son He loves, with but corruption to complete Himself, His Will forever overcome by death, love slain by hate, and peace to be no more.**

In "The Anti-Christ," Jesus describes how the ego – the anti-Christ – proves that the eternal dies and the timeless is filled with time. Once again we see how sin attempts to prove that God is wrong and we are right. Let us revisit these important passages:

> This is the anti-Christ; the strange idea there is a power past omnipotence, a place beyond the infinite, a time transcending the eternal. Here the world of idols has been set by the idea this power and place and time are given form, and shape the world where the impossible has happened. Here the deathless come to die, the all-encompassing to suffer loss, the timeless to be made the slaves of time. Here does the changeless change; the peace of God, forever given to all living things, give way to chaos. And the Son of God, as perfect, sinless and as loving as his Father, come to hate a little while; to suffer pain and finally to die (T-29.VIII.6:2-6).

Indeed, God, too, has become a monster of hate:

> He [God] must accept His Son's belief in what he is [a sinner], and hate him for it.... Now it becomes impossible to turn to Him for help in misery. For now He has become the "enemy" Who caused it, to Whom appeal is useless.... Atonement thus becomes a myth, and vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God.... Only destruction can be the outcome. And God Himself seems to be siding with it, to overcome His Son (T-23.II.6:6; 7:2-3; 8:2, 4-5).

**(4:1) A madman's dreams are frightening, and sin appears indeed to terrify.**

The key word here is *appears.* What we perceive outside through projection certainly seems to be terrifyingly real. Yet again, it is merely a dream or hallucination:

> Hallucinations serve to meet the goal of madness. They are the means by which the outside world, projected from within, adjusts to sin and seems to witness to its reality. It still is true that nothing is without. Yet upon nothing are all projections made. For it is the projection that gives the "nothing" all the meaning that it holds (T-20.VIII.9:5-9).

We thus fear nothing but our illusory thoughts projected outward. Yet our insanity cannot give sin a reality it does not have, except in the dreams from which Jesus gently wakes us.

We turn now to an image Jesus has used before – the toys of sin with which children play:

**(4:2-3) And yet what sin perceives is but a childish game. The Son of God may play he has become a body, prey to evil and to guilt, with but a little life that ends in death.**

To the ego, these lines are the height of outrage, because they tell us that everything we think to be so important – history's profound thoughts and significant events, as well as our own – are all nothing. They are like games children play, deluded that what they play with is real. Yet, all the while the adult gently smiles at the child's imagination as he plays a game he thinks to be very real. Thus, too, the games we call our lives. Our work seems so essential and our relationships exceedingly vital, our needs so oppressive and our bodies urgently in need of care and attention – all true within the dream we call life. We step outside the dream with Jesus, however, and everything looks different. Now we simply smile at the seriousness with which we took our lives before; where there was danger there now is the gentle reminder of our safety, for our reality is the Law of God, not the dancing toys of children:

> Reality observes the laws of God, and not the rules you set. It is His laws that guarantee your safety. All illusions that you believe about yourself obey no laws. They seem to dance a little while, according to the rules you set for them. But then they fall and cannot rise again. They are but toys, my child, so do not grieve for them. Their dancing never brought you joy. But neither were they things to frighten you, nor make you safe if they obeyed your rules. They must be neither cherished nor attacked, but merely looked upon as children's toys without a single meaning of their own (T-30.IV.4:1-9).

**(4:4) But all the while his Father shines on him, and loves him with an everlasting Love which his pretenses cannot change at all.**

The thought system of the ego is the pretense that says God's Love has turned to hate. The Atonement principle is the simple truth that says what could not happen did not happen, and therefore had no effect – the Love of God has not changed:

> The ego is nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself. Your

other life has continued without interruption, and has been and always will be totally unaffected by your attempts to dissociate it (T-4.VI.1:6-7).

God's Love merely is, and nothing else *is* at all.

**(5:1) How long, O Son of God, will you maintain the game of sin?**

That cry comes from Psalms 13 and 89, where the psalmist appeals to God: "How long, O Lord, will you let me suffer? How long, O Lord, will you keep your face hidden from me?" Jesus turns this around, both at the beginning and the end of this paragraph: "How long, O Son of God, will *you* remain hidden? How long will *you* keep yourself out of Heaven?" As Jesus said in earlier lessons: "Why wait for Heaven?" (W-pI.131,188).

**(5:2-8) Shall we not put away these sharp-edged children's toys? How soon will you be ready to come home? Perhaps today? There is no sin. Creation is unchanged. Would you still hold return to Heaven back? How long, O holy Son of God, how long?**

Jesus says to us: "All this is a dream. Why, then, do you persist in remaining asleep, having nightmares that cause you pain? All you need do is take my hand, forgive your brother, and awaken." From where Jesus is, above the battleground of time and space, this awakening occurs in an instant. Yet his plea to us from outside the dream is to learn the lessons, within time, that teach us to be free of pain here. Blaming others for our discomfort is the perfect way of keeping the dream of sin real in our minds, and this projection is poignantly expressed in these anguished lines from Helen's "The Wayside Cross." They transpose the lesson's final words into an indictment of Jesus, reminiscent of the psalms, for failing to keep his promise of return:

> How long, 0 Lord, did You ordain I be
> A dweller in a ghost-house?
>
> I have not forgot
> Your promise. I will wait until You come.
> But I must wait in sorrow, with the song
> Of dying all around me on the road
> On which I stand and wait for Your return.
> How long, O lovely Lord of Life, how long?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 50)

And yet forgiveness shows us it was we who played the children's game of sin and death, the toys of which have no power to hurt or help us once we return to our right minds and recognize that Jesus but waited for us – it was our betrayal, not his. Once our eyes open from the dream of death, the toys of sin disappear into the light of truth – the sinlessness of God's Son. Read Helen's correction from "Stranger on the Road":

> Lord, did You really keep Your lovely Word?
> Was I mistaken? Did You rise again?
> And was it I who failed, instead of You?

**Lesson 251**

The light has come.
My eyes are opening to look on You.
*(The Gifts of God,* pp. 104,105)

Thus ends the dream of sin, in happy gratitude that we were wrong, and Jesus right – again.

## LESSON 251
## I am in need of nothing but the truth.

This lesson returns to the important theme of special relationships, a term, as I have said before, that is never mentioned by name in the workbook, but is certainly the subject of many discussions.

**(1:1) I sought for many things, and found despair.**

We are always seeking and striving to achieve in this world – whether a conquest in a relationship, business, or any situation at all. We seek for things in this world to satisfy our specialness needs, and they inevitably fail us. Whatever the pleasure and gain, it is never more than temporary. Recall these lines from the manual for teachers regarding the mind's belief in sacrifice:

> Now has the mind condemned itself to seek without finding; to be forever dissatisfied and discontented; to know not what it really wants to find.... He [the believer in sacrifice] does not see what he is asking for. And so he seeks it in a thousand ways and in a thousand places, each time believing it is there, and each time disappointed in the end. "Seek but do not find" remains this world's stern decree, and no one who pursues the world's goals can do otherwise (M-13.3:3; 5:6-8).

**(1:2-9) Now do I seek but one, for in that one is all I need, and only what I need. All that I sought before I needed not, and did not even want. My only need I did not recognize. But now I see that I need only truth. In that all needs are satisfied, all cravings end, all hopes are finally fulfilled and dreams are gone. Now have I everything that I could need. Now have I everything that I could want. And now at last I find myself at peace.**

Truth alone is what we seek, which can be found here only in the forgiveness we practice toward our special love and hate partners. This means letting go of grievances, for this will truly bring us the peace that is the prerequisite for truth, as well as being its natural state:

> The goal of truth has further practical advantages. If the situation is used for truth and sanity, its outcome must be peace.... If peace is the condition of truth and sanity, and cannot be without them, where peace is they must be (T-17. VI.5:1-2, 4).

**(2)** ***And for that peace, our Father, we give thanks. What we denied ourselves You have restored, and only that is what we really want.***

On a practical level, as you think of what you want to happen today in order to feel good, realize that no special relationship will ever give you the peace of God. Be honest with yourself and think about what you want – even if it is something as simple as wanting the sun to shine – and how convinced you are that that will make you happy. Everyone has preferences in the world, but when your preference becomes a religion or obsession, when it becomes something for which you would push other people out of the

way, or even kill, you have crossed the line that puts you in the ego's camp. Accept that whatever your desire, it will not last, and if it is not eternal it cannot be of God – the criterion for distinguishing between the valuable and the valueless (W-pI.133.6). Why settle for less than what we deserve as our Father's Son? Recall how Jesus tells us that we ask, not for too much, but for far too little (T-26.VII.11:7). Specialness can never substitute for love, which alone is what we truly want.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 252**
**The Son of God is my Identity.**

This reminds us of Who we are, and that we have been mistaken in the self we adopted as true. Thankfully, our mistake had no effect on our reality as Christ.

**(1:1-4) My Self is holy beyond all the thoughts of holiness of which I now conceive. Its shimmering and perfect purity is far more brilliant than is any light that I have ever looked upon. Its love is limitless, with an intensity that holds all things within it, in the calm of quiet certainty. Its strength comes not from burning impulses which move the world, but from the boundless Love of God Himself.**

We all are pressured by these burning impulses such as romantic or sexual passions, urges to eat, or needs to save the world and make an impact on others. Jesus is teaching us these are not the source of our strength or happiness, which come only from the Love of God within. We choose this Love in the instant we remember our holiness, as limitless as the Source from which it comes.

**(1:5) How far beyond this world my Self must be, and yet how near to me and close to God!**

My Self is far beyond the world because my mind is not in the world. The memory of Who I am is in my right mind, and is so close because *I* – my identity as a decision maker – am in my mind as well. I therefore become sane at any instant I choose to remember my sane Teacher. This requires a shift in identification from body to mind, recognizing that the body is only a puppet or robot, carrying out a program conceived by the mind, its programmer. In other words, I am the dreamer of the dream, in a mind far beyond the dream. Once again, this mind contains the memory of the Self, the Thought that God has always held of His Son, as these familiar lines remind us:

> Beyond all idols is the Thought God holds of you. Completely unaffected by the turmoil and the terror of the world, the dreams of birth and death that here are dreamed, the myriad of forms that fear can take; quite undisturbed, the Thought God holds of you remains exactly as it always was (T-30.III.10:1-2).

**(2)** ***Father, You know my true Identity. Reveal It now to me who am Your Son, that I may waken to the truth in You, and know that Heaven is restored to me.***

Christ, our Self, is revealed to us when the veils to His face are removed by forgiveness. And where it is seen, His memory cannot be far behind – indeed, only a little while. Thus we move from our ego's dreams of hate and judgment to the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of forgiveness. These culminate in the real world, from which we joyously waken unto the happy truth of our timeless Self:

> How lovely is the world whose purpose is forgiveness of God's Son! How free from fear, how filled with blessing and with happiness! And what a joyous thing it is to dwell a little while in such a happy place! Nor can it be forgot, in such a world, it *is* a little while till timelessness comes quietly to take the place of time (T-29.VI.6).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 253**
**My Self is ruler of the universe.**

This lesson relates to Lesson 236, "I rule my mind, which I alone must rule." Here, however, the Self that rules is Christ, and the universe to which Jesus refers is the universe of spirit—another example of Jesus' inconsistent use of words. Recall that sometimes "universe" refers to the physical cosmos, ruled by our illusory self.

**(1:1-2) It is impossible that anything should come to me unbidden by myself. Even in this world, it is I who rule my destiny.**

My separated self is ruler of the world, for only *I* can choose between my wrong and right minds. Yet all the while my true Self remains ruler of the universe of Christ.

**(1:3-5) What happens is what I desire. What does not occur is what I do not want to happen. This must I accept.**

This is a reference to the statement from "The Responsibility for Sight":

> *I* ***am*** *responsible for what I see.*
> *I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve.*
> *And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked* (T-21.II.2:3-5).

This needs to be understood on two levels:

1. Metaphysically, everything in my life is my dream, for my mind has chosen all: genes, parents, body – gender, height, weight, skin color, etc.
2. Experientially, I have chosen my reaction to what goes on here – a level much easier to relate to. If I am upset it is because I have chosen to be upset; not because of something you did. You may certainly have behaviorally done what I accused you of, but that is not the cause of my loss of peace. The truth is that no one can take this peace away from me but myself. This is what Jesus is saying I must accept. No one is responsible for my happiness or dis-ease, which come only from my mind's choice. Once I accept that it is not the world that affected me, I can change my mind and undo my mistake. Healing is the inevitable result.

**(1:6) For thus am I led past this world to my creations, *children* of my will, in *Heaven where* my holy Self abides with them and Him Who has created me.**

This is one of the few places in the workbook where Jesus mentions "creations." The term refers to the extensions of Christ's Love, just as Christ is the extension of God's Love. When we realize it is not the world that caused us, but that we caused the world, we can change our minds. Remaining totally in our right minds, we are in the real world, which quickly disappears as the memory of our Identity as Christ returns to our awareness. Thus we know we are the love that extends itself as our creations.

**(2)** ***You are the Self Whom You created Son, creating like Yourself and One with You. My Self, which rules the universe, is but Your Will in perfect union with my own, which can but offer glad assent to Yours, that it may be extended to Itself***

**Lesson 253**

This is a lovely description of the Oneness of Heaven: Christ in God, Who together share the one function of extending love.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 254**
**Let every voice but God's be still in me.**

We return to the theme of stilling the ego's voice, meaning that I turn away from it. I listen to its lies, and say: "This is not what I want. I no longer wish to live my life in pursuit of the idols of specialness, nor live in constant anger and fear."

**(1)** ***Father, today I would but hear Your Voice. In deepest silence I would come to You, to hear Your Voice and to receive Your Word. I have no prayer but this: I come to You to ask You for the truth. And truth is but Your Will, which I would share with You today.***

I realize there is nothing here I want, nothing I choose to seek, nothing for which I pray. I want only to forgive, that I return to sanity. This return is based on realizing my mistaken choice so I can make a better one – forgiveness instead of anger, truth instead of illusion. This, then, is my prayer:

> ...the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly meaningless. The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have (T-3.V.6:3-5).

**(2:1-2) Today we let no ego thoughts direct our words or actions. When such thoughts occur, we quietly step back and look at them, and then we let them go.**

This is a variation of the three steps of forgiveness presented in Lesson 23. Crucial to this process is learning not to deny our ego thoughts, nor to try *not* to have them. Rather, we simply ask for help when they occur. Thus we choose the holy instant in which we listen to Jesus instruct us on the proper way of looking at these insane thoughts and perceptions. When we step back with his love beside us and look, we realize the silliness of the ego's ideas. Its offerings will never give us the love and peace we truly want, which we cannot have as long as we cherish the ego's calls for specialness. We thus say and mean:

**(2:3-4) We do not want what they would bring with them. And so we do not choose to keep them.**

We must first look at what we are choosing against. This is not a course in denial or in pretending we are so holy we have no ego thoughts. Rather, this is a course in saying: "I am not holy, otherwise I would not be in this world. I have these ego thoughts, but now have the means within my mind to look at them another way." Thus we do not deny we have a body with needs, nor deny the ego thought system itself. We simply look at them without judgment of ourselves or anyone else, and then happily watch them gently disappear.

**(2:5-6) They are silent now. And in the stillness, hallowed by His Love, God speaks to us and tells us of our will, as we have chosen to remember Him.**

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 254**

"The memory of God comes to the quiet mind" (T-23.I.1:1). With the ego's voice silenced by our decision, the mind is quiet. And we hear at last God's Voice speak to us of Who we are, as the memory of our Self dawns within the stillness of our holy minds.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 255**
**This day I choose to spend in perfect peace.**

**(1) It does not seem to me that I can choose to have but peace today. And yet, my God assures me that His Son is like Himself. Let me this day have faith in Him Who says I am God's Son. And let the peace I choose be mine today bear witness to the truth of what He says. God's Son can have no cares, and must remain forever in the peace of Heaven. In His Name, I give today to finding what my Father wills for me, accepting it as mine, and giving it to all my Father's Sons, along with me.**

It does not seem as if I can be at peace today because it is threatened at every turn. The weather makes me unpeaceful, as does this person I live or work with, not to mention the body in which I reside. There are always special things that impinge on me, and it does not appear as if I have any choice about their deleterious effects on me.

In these meditations, Jesus brings us back to the mind, where the problem is. Thus our day should be spent in realizing that what we feel comes from the mind's choice, and if we have chosen a feeling, it is because we want it. The text helps us to understand that we are insane enough to want to be upset and in pain in order to hold someone else responsible for our victimization and suffering. The outcome is that we maintain our separate identities, but without being responsible for them. And so we gladly choose not to be at peace. Without understanding this motivation, our decisions make no sense, especially when we spend years reading and studying *A Course in Miracles,* and yet do not integrate its teachings into our lives. We seem not to progress in our learning because to accept what we are being taught would lead us to let go of our self. However, because we do not want to be accused of stealing that individual identity, we need specific people who sin against us or others to avoid having to deal with our perceived sin.

Once again, therefore, we need to be aware that distress is a choice. We first accept this intellectually, and then gradually experience the desire to be unfairly treated. Only then will we let this insanity go, and be grateful we have done so.

**(2)** ***And so, my Father, would I pass this day with You. Your Son has not forgotten You. The peace You gave him still is in his mind, and it is there I choose to spend today.***

Our prayer to God is to help us realize it is His Love we have chosen against, yet it is only His Love we want. That should be the operative motivation of every day, and each minute of every day. Jesus is reminding us to choose to spend our days in the peace that God gave us, held in the right mind by the Holy Spirit. Thus His second lesson: "To have peace, teach peace to learn it" (T-6.V-B.7:5). Therefore, if I truly want to spend this day in perfect peace, I must share this peace with others through forgiveness. Otherwise, my wish will be refused – *by me.* Yet let me release my brother from my projections, and God's peace will flow through the mind of His one Son, now become a temple of healing, at the altar of which all are embraced in Heaven's love:

> The peace He lay, deep within you and your brother, will quietly extend to every aspect of your life, surrounding you and your brother with glowing happiness and the calm awareness of complete protection. And you will carry its message of love and safety and freedom to everyone who draws nigh unto your

temple, where healing waits for him (T-19.IV.1:6-7).

**Lesson 257**

Again, as you go through your day, keep uppermost in your mind the need for vigilance. Observe how quickly you forget and cling to grievances, pettiness, and thoughts of specialness. Try to remember that they will not make you happy, for your purpose is to remember that God's Will for you is perfect happiness (W-pI.101), and it is your own as well.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 269**
**My sight goes forth to look upon Christ's face.**

The *face of Christ* is the symbol for the innocence of God's Son, and to look upon His face means to look upon our brothers sinlessly. This means we set our judgment

vision – one sane way of looking at everything in this world, and it is not *our* way of looking. Our need, then, is to monitor our minds as we go through the day to see how quickly we forget this simple truth and take sides; seeing winners and losers, good and bad outcomes – all based on our judgment that separation is reality, and attack is salvation. Recognizing the illusions of our perceptions allows us to ask help of the One Who sees for us, Whose Love for God's Son becomes our own.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 270**
**I will not use the body's eyes today.**

Jesus does not mean we should walk around with eyes shut, or with a glassy look that says we do not see anything because there is nothing here. He repeatedly tells us that his course is simple, but never says it is simple-minded. Jesus' statement here, therefore, means that we not let the ego interpret what our body's eyes see. That is his function.

**(1:1)** ***Father, Christ's vision is Your gift to me, and it has power to translate all that the body's eyes behold into the sight of a forgiven world.***

This is the key. You cannot translate something unless you first know what you are translating. Therefore, your body's eyes must first perceive specialness and differences, good and evil, *one or the other.* Seeing your error at that point, you can meaningfully ask Jesus for help to look through his eyes at what you perceived. Forgiven, everything will look different, as this lovely passage describes:

> Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? ... Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near to such loveliness.... Nothing that you remember that made your heart sing with joy has ever brought you even a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you. For you will see the Son of God. You will behold the beauty the Holy Spirit loves to look upon, and which He thanks the Father for (T-17.H.1:1, 3, 5-7).

**(1:2)** ***How glorious and gracious is this world! Yet how much more will I perceive in it than sight can give.***

Our body's eyes may see beauty, but it is nothing compared to the beauty of the forgiven world. Indeed, it is impossible to describe it to earthly eyes. Nonetheless, forgiveness can reveal it to us through removing the veils that obstructed its loveliness.

**(1:3-6)** ***The world forgiven signifies Your Son acknowledges his Father, lets his dreams be brought to truth, and waits expectantly the one remaining instant more of time which ends forever, as Your memory returns to him. And now his will is one with Yours. His function now is but Your Own, and every thought except Your Own is gone.***

This is the theme of bringing darkness to the light, or illusion to the truth. Jesus cannot help you unless you first bring him what he needs – your dreams and misperceptions. Only then can he teach you to remember your Father's Will, which is one with yours.

**(2) The quiet of today will bless our hearts, and through them peace will come to everyone. Christ is our eyes today. And through His sight we offer healing to the world through Him, the holy Son whom God created whole; the holy Son whom God created one.**

Helen's poem "Healing" closes with lines that nicely summarize the meaning of healing:

Your brother's pain
Has but one remedy; the same as yours.
He must be whole, because he joins with you,
And you are healed, because you join with him.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 27)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 271**
**6. What Is the Christ?**

We have observed that Jesus uses words and terms differently, depending on their context. This summary provides us with another example, for *Christ* is used in three ways. The first is seen in paragraph 1, with Christ defined as God's Son as He is in Heaven: spirit, oneness, and love. His unchanging nature has never left His Source, and so He remains in a non-dualistic state, totally beyond the non-existent world. In paragraph 2, however, Jesus speaks of Christ as being in our right minds, where *Christ is* a synonym for *the Holy Spirit,* denoting the part of us that dwells as the holy Child, so poignantly depicted in Lesson 182. Thus *Christ* refers not only to God's perfect Son as spirit, but also to the Holy Spirit's Correction or Atonement principle – God's purpose for His Son within the dream of separation. Still later, near the end of this summary, Jesus speaks of seeing the face of Christ, the innocence of God's Son, in all our brothers.

**(1) Christ is God's Son as He created Him. He is the Self we share, uniting us with one another, and with God as well. He is the Thought which still abides within the Mind that is His Source. He has not left His holy home, nor lost the innocence in which He was created. He abides unchanged forever in the Mind of God.**

Christ is an idea in the Mind of God and has never left His Source. This Thought is the key to our release from the ego's prison of separation and guilt, for if Christ remains at home with His Source, so has the Son, for they are one. And where is guilt when Christ's innocence is revealed to us?

> The Christ as revealed to you now has no past, for He is changeless, and in His changelessness lies your release. For if He is as He was created, there is no guilt in Him (T-13.VI.3:2-3).

**(2:1) Christ is the link that keeps you one with God ...**

In the text, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Communication Link between God and His separated Sons, which ensures remembrance of our true Identity despite our ego's efforts:

> The Communication Link that God Himself placed within you, joining your mind with His, cannot be broken. You may believe you want It broken, and this belief does interfere with the deep peace in which the sweet and constant communication God would share with you is known. Yet His channels of reaching out cannot be wholly closed and separated from Him (T-13.XI.8:1-3).

We therefore need to let the words speak through their content, and not pick them apart on the level of form, else we will subtly and surely sabotage our relationship with the Course. Remember that the words are but symbols – wrong- and right-minded – that point to something beyond themselves.

**(2:1) Christ is the link that keeps you one with God, and guarantees that separation is no more than an illusion of despair, for hope forever will abide in Him.**

This reflects the Atonement principle that says the separation from God is an illusion. It never happened, and recognizing this is our redemption:

> Can God's Son lose himself in dreams, when God has placed within him the glad Call to waken and be glad? He cannot separate himself from what is in him. His sleep will not withstand the Call to wake. The mission of redemption will be fulfilled as surely as the creation will remain unchanged throughout eternity (T-13.XI.10:1-4).

**(2:2-3) Your mind is part of His, and His of yours. He is the part in which God's Answer lies; where all decisions are already made, and dreams are over.**

We have been told repeatedly in *A Course in Miracles* that God's Answer is the Holy Spirit, Who resides in our right minds. Christ, thus, is now defined as being our right minds, and His Love calls us to answer His Answer with our acceptance:

> It is an exalted answer because of its Source, but the Source is true and so is Its answer. Listen and do not question what you hear, for God does not deceive. He would have you replace the ego's belief in littleness with His Own exalted Answer to what you are, so that you can cease to question it and know it for what it is (T-9.VIII.11:7-9).

Thus our right minds wait upon our decision. Let us make it soon!

**(2:4-5) He remains untouched by anything the body's eyes perceive. For though in Him His Father placed the means for your salvation, yet does He remain the Self Who, like His Father, knows no sin.**

We are again offered two ways of conceiving Christ. The latter clause of sentence 5 is the One-Minded Christ, the Self Who is sinless and totally at one with His Father. The first clause talks of Christ as being in our right minds – the means to save ourselves from mistakenly believing in the reality of the separation and the body. Thus we are reminded in the text that our Self does not reside in a body, though that is where perception is experienced, ending in the mind that has been healed of illusory thoughts of sin:

> The Christ in you inhabits not a body. Yet He is in you. And thus it must be that you are not within a body.... Christ is within a frame of Holiness whose only purpose is that He may be made manifest to those who know Him not, that He may call to them to come to Him and see Him where they thought their bodies were.... No one who carries Christ in him can fail to recognize Him everywhere. *Except* in bodies. And as long as he believes he is in a body, where he thinks he is He cannot be.... The body needs no healing. But the mind that thinks it is a body is sick indeed! And it is here that Christ sets forth the remedy. His purpose folds the body in His light, and fills it with the Holiness that shines from Him (T-25.in.1:1-3, 8; 2:1-3; 3:1-4).

Here once more, we see how Jesus does not take away our bodily identifications,

but simply transforms their purpose from sin to holiness, guilt to forgiveness, darkness to light.

**(3) Home of the Holy Spirit, and at home in God alone, does Christ remain at peace within the Heaven of your holy mind. This is the only part of you that has reality in truth. The rest is dreams. Yet will these dreams be given unto Christ, to fade before His glory and reveal your holy Self, the Christ, to you at last.**

Once again we see references to both aspects of Christ: God's one Son, and the right-minded correction principle that leads to the real world, beyond which is the glory of Heaven's love, our true home:

> He [Christ] looks quietly on the real world, which He would share with you because He knows of the Father's Love for Him. And knowing this, He would give you what is yours. In perfect peace He waits for you at His Father's altar, holding out the Father's Love to you in the quiet light of the Holy Spirit's blessing. For the Holy Spirit will lead everyone home to his Father, where Christ waits as his Self (T-12.VI.5:6-9).

**(4:1-2) The Holy Spirit reaches from the Christ in you to all your dreams, and bids them come to Him, to be translated into truth. He will exchange them for the final dream which God appointed as the end of dreams.**

We are reminded that we are to bring the illusion's darkness to truth's light; our nightmare dreams to the Holy Spirit's happy dreams of forgiveness. When all our dreams are happy and our daily practice of forgiveness complete, the Holy Spirit leads us to the final dream – the real world – wherein all choosing is done. Jesus explains elsewhere that we remain in that final dream just an instant, and then God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself (T-11.VIII.15 :4-5). In "The Gifts of God" he describes the joy of returning to the Christ Who is our Self:

> How joyful and how holy is our way when death has no dominion, and the dream of separation, agony and loss has been dispelled forever. Do not think that anything the gifts of fear hold out is worth an instant's hesitation, when the gate of Heaven stands before you and the Christ of God is waiting your return. Be still and hear Him, for His call to you could not be more insistent nor more dear, for it is but the call of Love itself, which will not cease to speak of God to you. You have forgot. But He is faithful still, because He is so like His Father He remembers Him forever in His Love. And He cannot forget creation is inseparable from Creator, so He understands that you are part of God and of the Son created like Himself *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 121-22).

**(4:3) For when forgiveness rests upon the world and peace has come to every Son of God, what could there be to keep things separate, for what remains to see except Christ's face?**

*Christ's face* symbolizes the innocence of God's Son. If he is innocent, there is no sin and thus no separation. In our right-minded state our physical eyes will continue to see, yet through Christ's vision we understand that what we see are only figures in a

dream, aspects of the one Son of God who fell asleep. In the real world we are outside the dream, and realize that only God is true. Such is forgiveness' holy purpose, its realization guaranteed by God. When nothing remains but the face of Christ, can God's all-inclusive Love be far behind?

> This is the purpose given you. Think not that your forgiveness of your brother serves but you two alone. For the whole new world rests in the hands of every two who enter here to rest. And as they rest, the face of Christ shines on them and they remember the laws of God, forgetting all the rest and yearning only to have His laws perfectly fulfilled in them and all their brothers (T-20.IV.7:1-4).

**(5:1) And how long will this holy face be seen, when it is but the symbol that the time for learning now is over, and the goal of the Atonement has been reached at last?**

Elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles,* seeing the face of Christ is part of the ongoing process of forgiveness; but here Jesus speaks of it as the end product – the real world, when the time of learning is over. Having chosen only the truth, there can be no wrong mind, and therefore no right mind as well – nothing remains to be corrected. Perception lasts but an instant longer, and then everything is gone but God:

> The stars will disappear in light, and the sun that opened up the world to beauty will vanish. Perception will be meaningless when it has been perfected, for everything that has been used for learning will have no function. Nothing will ever change; no shifts nor shadings, no differences, no variations that made perception possible will still occur. The perception of the real world will be so short that you will barely have time to thank God for it. For God will take the last step swiftly, when you have reached the real world and have been made ready for Him (T-17.II.4).

**(5:2) So therefore let us seek to find Christ's face and look on nothing else.**

This should be our prayer as we go through the day: "Let us seek only Christ's face and look on nothing else." The ego has us seek the ego's face of sin and guilt; but never in ourselves. Having first made this face real in our minds, we pretend it is not there but in others. Thus we need recognize how the above is not our prayer, which is: "Let me seek only the ego's face and look on nothing else. Except I do not want to see it in the mirror, but only in you." Let us then realize this will not make us happy, but asking Jesus to help us look at our brothers differently most definitely will.

**(5:3) As we behold His glory, will we know we have no need of learning or perception or of time, or anything except the holy Self, the Christ Whom God created as His Son.**

The Holy Spirit's only purpose for perception – the world of time and space – is that it become our classroom for learning all this is illusory. As we progress, we first see Christ's face in our brother – the Holy Spirit's happy dream. Practicing this vision more and more consistently, we learn this face of innocence is shared equally by all, as we share one Self:

**Lesson 271**

The face of Christ is looked upon before the Father is remembered. For He must be unremembered till His Son has reached beyond forgiveness to the Love of God. Yet is the Love of Christ accepted first. And then will come the knowledge They are One (T-30.V.7:5-8).

## LESSON 271
## Christ's is the vision I will use today.

We are reminded in this lesson that sight is a choice between the ego's way of seeing and Christ's vision.

**(1:1) Each day, each hour, every instant, I am choosing what I want to look upon, the sounds I want to hear, the witnesses to what I want to be the truth for me.**

Jesus does not refer to what our physical eyes see, but the *meaning* of what they see. In other words, which witness do we call forth: crucifixion or resurrection; the ego's sin, guilt, and fear, or the Holy Spirit's forgiveness and peace?

> Each day, each hour and minute, even each second, you are deciding between the crucifixion and the resurrection; between the ego and the Holy Spirit. The ego is the choice for guilt; the Holy Spirit the choice for guiltlessness.... there are no alternatives except truth and illusion.... You are guilty or guiltless, bound or free, unhappy or happy (T-14.III.4:1-2, 4, 6).

**(1:2-4) Today I choose to look upon what Christ would have me see, to listen to God's Voice, and seek the witnesses to what is true in God's creation. In Christ's sight, the world and God's creation meet, and as they come together all perception disappears. His kindly sight redeems the world from death, for nothing that He looks on but must live, remembering the Father and the Son; Creator and creation unified.**

This again is a choice. What brings the world and truth together is Christ's vision. Its unifying factor reflects the truth of God's Oneness, which returns to our awareness as both false and true perception disappear into the single light of creation.

**(2:1)** ***Father, Christ's vision is the way to You.***

Elsewhere Jesus tells us that forgiveness is the way – different names for the same process:

> Forgiveness, salvation, Atonement, true perception, all are one. They are the one beginning, with the end to lead to oneness far beyond themselves (C-4.3:6-7).

**(2:2)** ***What He beholds invites Your memory to be restored to me.***

I have referred to the quasi formula in *A Course in Miracles* of seeing the face of Christ in our brother, and then remembering God. Recall this succinct statement from the text:

> The face of Christ is looked upon before the Father is remembered. For He must be unremembered till His Son has reached beyond forgiveness to the Love of God. Yet is the Love of Christ accepted first. And then will come the knowledge

They are One (T-30.V.7:5-8).

**(2:3)** ***And this I choose, to be what I would look upon today.***

My mistaken choice was that I looked upon the body and made it real, believing in what I saw. However, though my eyes still see the body, it is now with a different interpretation. Through Christ's vision, awareness of my Self is restored to me.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 272**
**How can illusions satisfy God's Son?**

Jesus tells us throughout *A Course in Miracles* that we will never be satisfied, happy, or peaceful in the world, because only illusions exist here. The idols of specialness work for a while, and then fail us, but Jesus' love works all the time and never fails, regardless of external circumstances. Thus he would say: "Let my love be what you seek, because that alone will satisfy you."

**(1:1-2)** ***Father, the truth belongs to me. My home is set in Heaven by Your Will and mine.***

Let us read again these comforting words from the Epilogue to the clarification of terms, paralleling the above:

> We *have* begun the journey. Long ago the end was written in the stars and set into the Heavens with a shining Ray that held it safe within eternity and through all time as well. And holds it still; unchanged, unchanging and un-changeable (C-ep.2:4-6).

**(1:3-8)** ***Can dreams content me? Can illusions bring me happiness? What but Your memory can swish? Your Son? I will accept no less than You have given me. I am surrounded by Your Love, forever still, forever gentle and forever safe. God's Son must be as You created him.***

We realize our mistake, for choosing illusions has not brought us happiness. Yet the truth of the Holy Spirit's Atonement restores to us the happy memory of Heaven's love:

> Remember that you always choose between truth and illusion; between the real Atonement that would heal and the ego's "atonement" that would destroy. The power of God and all His Love, without limit, will support you as you seek only your place in the plan of Atonement arising from His Love (T-16.VII.10:1-2).

**(2) Today we pass illusions by. And if we hear temptation call to us to stay and linger in a dream, we turn aside and ask ourselves if we, the Sons of God, could be content with dreams, when Heaven can be chosen just as easily as hell, and love will happily replace all fear.**

Jesus is letting us know, as we will see repeatedly, that we are continually tempted to linger in the ego's dreams of special relationships, and cannot but suffer because of their attack thoughts and judgments. Yet Jesus wants us to recognize how much hurt and pain our specialness brings, for at that moment of recognition we will gladly accept his words, gladly taking his hand as we step out of the dream with him. This is our choice to make. Jesus cannot do it for us, yet his loving presence continually calls us to make the single choice he did, as we read again from the text:

> I have said already that I can reach up and bring the Holy Spirit down to you, but I can bring Him to you only at your own invitation. The Holy Spirit is in your right mind, as He was in mine. The Bible says, "May the mind be in you that

was also in Christ Jesus," and uses this as a blessing.... It asks that you may think as I thought, joining with me in Christ thinking (T-5.I.3:2-4,6).

How could we not make such a choice, when Heaven alone will bring us peace?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 273**
**The stillness of the peace of God is mine.**

Jesus tells us that he knows we are not always going to choose the peace of God:

**(1:1-2) Perhaps we are now ready for a day of undisturbed tranquility. If this is not yet feasible, we are content and even more than satisfied to learn how such a day can be achieved.**

Jesus asks that we not pretend we are spiritual giants: "I know you are not ready for a day of undisturbed tranquility and peace, because if you were, you would not need me as your teacher, nor this workbook. Thus, let me teach you to forgive, allowing peace to come to your disturbed and conflicted mind." He continues:

**(1:3-4) If we give way to a disturbance, let us learn how to dismiss it and return to peace. We need but tell our minds, with certainty, "The stillness of the peace of God is mine," and nothing can intrude upon the peace that God Himself has given to His Son.**

In order to find peace and move past the disturbance to which we have succumbed, we need but turn to Jesus and say: "I am grateful you are right and I am wrong." Thus the humility to which we repeatedly return. We need to be aware, then, that if we are not at peace it is because we chose the ego, a choice for conflict. It is thus always the case that our lack of peace is caused not by what someone else has done to us, but by something *we* have done to us. However, we could just as easily choose the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, for even in the midst of our insanity His truth patiently awaits us, as we read in the text:

> When you seem to see some twisted form of the original error rising to frighten you, say only, "God is not fear, but Love," and it will disappear. The truth will save you. It has not left you, to go out into the mad world and so depart from you. Inward is sanity; insanity is outside you (T-18.1.7:1-4).

**(2)** ***Father, Your peace is mine. What need have I to fear that anything can rob me of what You would have me keep? I cannot lose Your gifts to me. And so the peace You gave Your Son is with me still, in quietness and in my own eternal love for You.***

Only our fear of it could rob us of the peace that God would have us keep. This is our own doing, and it is essential we understand the mind's decision and recognize our underlying motivation. In other words, there is a purpose behind our feeling unhappy or disturbed. Peace and happiness have consequences our egos fear, for we would no longer know who we were. Therefore, rather than accept responsibility for the conflict we have chosen, we project it onto others and indict them for taking away our peace, leaving us disturbed and disquieted. Recall, however, this stanza from Helen's poem, "Heaven's Gift," reminding us that loss of any kind, from any source, is an illusion – we forever remain at one in the peace our Father gave us:

> No one can take away from everything.

**Lesson 273**

Its very wholeness is a guarantee
It is complete forever. There can be
No loss left unrestored before it comes.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 80)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 274**
**Today belongs to love. Let me not fear.**

Lesson 274 continues Lesson 268, "Let all things be exactly as they are." Jesus begins with the thought expressed in that lesson:

**(1:1)** ***Father, today I would let all things be as You created them, and give Your Son the honor due his sinlessness; the love of brother to his brother and his Friend.***

By realizing you are my brother walking the same path I am, I learn that you are also my Friend. I thus first see the face of Christ in you, realizing you and I share the same illusory belief in sin, but share also the forgiveness of God's innocent Son. It is only then that my healed mind remembers that we share the same unified and sinless Self – two friends have become one Friend:

> This is your brother, crucified by sin and waiting for release from pain. Would you not offer him forgiveness, when only he can offer it to you? For his redemption he will give you yours, as surely as God created every living thing and loves it. And he will give it truly, for it will be both offered and received. There is no grace of Heaven that you cannot offer to your brother, and receive from your most holy Friend (T-19.IV-D.15:1-5).

**(1:2-3)** ***Through this I am redeemed Through this as well the truth will enter where illusions were, light will replace all darkness, and Your Son will know he is as You created him.***

Choosing the Love of God means there will be no fear, and therefore no pain or hurt. When we are fearful it is because we chose against the Love and unity of Christ – the choice to make *one or the other* the reigning principle of our lives: you lose so I can win. How easily is this illusory law of darkness replaced by the light of truth! And how easily we can recognize our mistake and choose again, remembering that despite our nightmares of separation and death, God's Son remains as he was created. This correction requires only our little willingness to admit we were wrong and God was right.

**(2) A special blessing comes to us today, from Him Who is our Father. Give this day to Him, and there will be no fear today, because the day is given unto love.**

Once again we see reference to the wonderful biblical statement "Perfect love casts out fear," so familiar to us:

> There is no fear in perfect love. We will but be making perfect to you what is already perfect in you.... You who have tried to banish love have not succeeded, but you who choose to banish fear must succeed. The Lord is with you, but you know it not. Yet your Redeemer liveth, and abideth in you in the peace out of which He was created. Would you not exchange this awareness for the awareness of fear? (T-12.11.8:1-2; 9:1-4)

Who with such a clear-cut choice open before them could not choose against the

ego's hate – its "redemption" from sin and fear – when the blessing of God's Love is held out as the certain way out of fear?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 275**
**God's healing Voice protects all things today.**

This lesson centers on the Holy Spirit.

**(1:1-2) Let us today attend the Voice for God, which speaks an ancient lesson, no more true today than any other day. Yet has this day been chosen as the time when we will seek and hear and learn and understand.**

That ancient lesson is the Atonement principle that the separation never happened. Jesus is asking us to choose today to have the Holy Spirit be our Teacher rather than the ego. The choice is ours: to hear His Voice and His Voice alone. More often than not it will be a day in which we shift back and forth between the two voices. Yet we want always to be aware that if we are in a state of fear, anxiety, or discomfort, it is only because of the choice we made, which can happily be changed in an instant.

**(1:3-6) Join me in hearing. For the Voice for God tells us of things we cannot understand alone, nor learn apart. It is in this that all things are protected. And in this the healing of the Voice for God is found.**

Jesus is telling us: "I hear the Holy Spirit's Voice because there is no other. Join me in that right-minded place of refuge, and you, too, will hear Him." True learning and understanding take place only when we unlearn the ego's belief in separation and differences. Jesus is not talking about understanding something a book says, as we would a theorem in physics or rule of logic, but understanding truth. If truth is oneness, understanding in this world means anything that reflects oneness. This cannot be understood alone. If I try to – by excluding others – I negate the very oneness I seek to understand. True learning thus occurs only in the context of forgiveness, because the only thing to be learned is the unlearning of separation and separate interests.

**(2)** ***Your healing Voice protects all things today, and so I leave all things to You. I need be anxious over nothing. For Your Voice will tell me what to do and where to go; to whom to speak and what to say to him, what thoughts to think, what words to give the world. The safety that I bring is given me. Father, Your Voice protects all things through me.***

Sentence 3, "For Your Voice will tell me...," is addressed to us at the bottom of the ladder, where we believe we exist as bodies. We think we are told to do and say specific things by a specific Voice, but when we joined with the Holy Spirit's non-specific Love, our specifics-oriented mind that believes it is in a specific body translated non-specific love into specific guidance and instruction. In passages like this, therefore, Jesus addresses us at the level of our experience. As we progress up the ladder, however, we come to better understand the passages in *A Course in Miracles* that teach that words were made to separate us from God. He does not understand them, and specifics root us in the world's dreams instead of helping us awaken from them. Thus Jesus speaks to us on the level of our bodily identification. Since we live in a constant state of fear, highly vulnerable to the potential threats posed by the world around us, we desperately need the protection Jesus holds out to us here. To be told that God or the Holy Spirit is non-specific would not be helpful in our fearful state of perceived specificity, and so Jesus presents his message to us as a reflection of the non-specific truth we can relate to,

understand, and finally accept.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 276**
**The Word of God is given me to speak.**

As we have seen, *Word* in *A Course in Miracles* is almost always a reference to the Atonement principle or its expression.

**(1:1-4) What is the Word of God? "My Son is pure and holy as Myself." And thus did God become the Father of the Son He loves, for thus was he created. This the Word His Son did not create with Him, because in this His Son was born.**

Recall the end of "The Secret Vows" where Jesus says virtually the same thing, in reference to God's Word and the promise He made:

> In his creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." His Son remembers not that he replied "I will," though in that promise he was born (T-28.VI.6:4-6).

**(1:5) Let us accept His Fatherhood, and all is given us.**

This corrects the original moment when we denied God's Fatherhood and said the ego was our father, the beginning of the authority problem. When we finally realize we made a mistake and see its dreadful consequences of unhappiness and pain, we return to the source of the mistake – the denial of the Atonement principle that says: "God is your Father and you never left Him" – and accept the Correction.

**(1:6-7) Deny we were created in His Love and we deny our Self, to be unsure of Who we are, of Who our Father is, and for what purpose we have come. And yet, we need but to acknowledge Him Who gave His Word to us in our creation, to remember Him and so recall our Self.**

Since the problem is our denial of love, the solution is simply to accept it. All doubt and uncertainty come from this denial, for how can we be sure of our Self if we are unsure of our Source? We learn to acknowledge God as Father by acknowledging our brothers as part of us. By quieting the ego's raucous shrieks of hate and judgment, we quietly remember Who we are:

> His quietness becomes your certainty. And where is doubt when certainty has come? (T-24 .V.9: 6-7)

**(2)** ***Father, Your Word is mine. And it is this that I would speak to all my brothers, who are given me to cherish as my own, as I am loved and blessed and saved by You.***

God's Word is the Atonement principle that says He created me, and I remain unseparated from Him in that creation. Thus, our message to everyone reflects the Atonement: You and I are not separate. Whatever I have accused you of doing, whatever you think you have done, whatever pain you are in – has not changed the fact that you remain God's holy Son, perfectly at one with your Source. This certainty is communicated by the love and peace we share with others. It is not something we

communicate verbally, but through demonstration. Jesus thus instructs us that when we are in the presence of those who still dream they are separate from God, our love, born of our acceptance of the Word that we are part of God and have never left Him, teaches the world the atoning truth that heals it of all pain and suffering.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 277**
**Let me not bind Your Son with laws I made.**

Lessons 277 and 278 are a dyad, dealing with the familiar and biblically related theme of binding and loosing. When we bind another we bind ourselves, and ultimately bind God, at least in our dream. The laws to which Jesus refers are the body's laws of specialness, particularly the law of *one or the other.* I bind and imprison you by giving you my sin, thereby hoping you will remain in prison until God finds and punishes you for *your* sin. In so doing I have the illusion of being free. Earlier in the workbook, Jesus explained that the jailer is imprisoned as much as the prisoner (W-pI.192.8). Though each is on opposite sides of the bars, both are confined by the prison of sin. If I accuse you, I want to see you imprisoned in sin; yet I continually have to project mine onto you in order to keep you there. This patently imprisons me by sin, for I am myself bound by the need to project, attack, and bind.

**(1:1-3)** ***Your Son is free, my Father. Let me not imagine I have bound him with the laws I made to rule the body. He is not subject to any laws I made by which I try to make the body more secure.***

I secure my body's safety by attacking you – the ego's fundamental law. Indeed, it underlies all bodily laws – *one or the other.*

**(1:4-6)** ***He is not changed by what is changeable. He is not slave to any laws of time He is as You created him, because he knows no law except the law of love.***

Regardless of our insane dreams of time and space, the law by which God's Son was created has never ceased to be – truth has never changed, and we have never slept:

> Awaking unto Christ is following the laws of love of your free will, and out of quiet recognition of the truth in them (T-13.VI.12:1).

**(2:1-2) Let us not worship idols, nor believe in any law idolatry would make to hide the freedom of the Son of God. He is not bound except by his beliefs.**

This is the ego's idol of specialness, which says my happiness is found at someone else's expense – if I bind you I am free. By supporting your tale of woe, I say: "You poor, poor dear; you are bound by these terrible things that have victimized you, over which you had no control. Of course you feel terrible. Anyone in your situation would." Yet all I really do is teach that you are right in believing you are victimized by something outside yourself. Needless to say, I am teaching myself the same thing about the mind's impotence. Jesus, however, wants me to teach instead that you could share the peace that is mine in the holy instant. This will remind you there is another choice available to you, and if you are unhappy it is due only to your mind's prior choice to see yourself as separate from your Source, victimized by sin – yours or another's.

**(2:3-5) Yet what he is, is far beyond his faith in slavery or freedom. He is free because he is his Father's Son. And he cannot be bound unless God's truth can lie, and God can will that He deceive Himself.**

**Lesson 277**

And so we want to teach each other we are bound only by our mistaken choice, easily undone when we realize how wrong we were, for God cannot be wrong about His Son. Lesson 278 takes this principle one step further.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 278**
**If I am bound, my Father is not free.**

If you or I are imprisoned, God must be, too, for we are one; if I deny the unity of the Sonship, I deny the reality of creation and thus deny the reality of God. Yet is this a distortion of the true Oneness of Father and Son, for we are one in God's Love and in the freedom of His Will.

**(1:1-2) If I accept that I am prisoner within a body, in a world in which all things that seem to live appear to die, then is my Father prisoner with me. And this do I believe, when I maintain the laws the world obeys must I obey; the frailties and the sins which I perceive are real, and cannot be escaped.**

Thus I have made God as insane as I, calling to mind the second and third laws of chaos (T-23.11.4-8) – the sinful body is real, God created the body, and therefore He must be insane for He believes in separation, birth, and death.

We are not asked, as we stand on the bottom rungs of the ladder, to deny we are a body subject to physical laws. For example, if it is cold outside you wear a coat, and you do not cross the street in the path of oncoming cars. You obey the laws in the world, yet with the awareness you are obeying what is inherently an illusion. Recall the discussion in Lesson 76, "I am under no laws but God's." The only law you truly want to obey is forgiveness, which allows you to choose to be happy – at peace instead of in conflict.

**(1:3-5) If I am bound in any way, I do not know my Father nor my Self. And I am lost to all reality. For truth is free, and what is bound is not a part of truth.**

As long as I identify with my body, I am bound by its laws. Yet Jesus teaches that my experience deceives, for the body is not my reality. The curriculum of his course starts me out from where I believe I am – the body – and takes me to where I truly am in the dream – the mind. I am not asked to deny the body's laws, but only to interpret them through the laws of forgiveness. Remember, being bound has nothing to do with the physical, but only with the mind's decision for the ego.

**(2:1-2)** ***Father, I ask for nothing but the truth. I have had many foolish thoughts about myself and my creation, and have brought a dream of fear into my mind.***

Truth cannot come to our awareness without first realizing we were mistaken. We therefore begin by recognizing our false beliefs. These foolish thoughts about ourselves and others relate to a body ruled by the laws of specialness: someone wins, another loses; someone gains, another is without.

**(2:3-5)** ***Today, I would not dream. I choose the way to You instead of madness and instead of fear. For truth is safe, and only love is sure.***

In the right mind, having realized we made a mistake, we choose to follow the path of forgiveness' law. It is a law of the mind that nonetheless does not ask us to ignore the laws of the world or body. Forgiveness simply asks us to place them in their proper perspective: the ego's laws are true within the dream, but exist for us now only

that we may learn our reality is outside them. In truth, we remain as God created us – in freedom and in love.

**(2:5)** ***Let me not be afraid of truth today.***

This presupposes that we are afraid of truth. This lesson, then, will be meaningless – in theory *and* practice – without first becoming aware of our fear of love and truth. Only then can asking Jesus for help be meaningful.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 283**
**My true Identity abides in You.**

We are reminded in this lesson of what we denied.

**(1:1-3)** ***Father, I made an image of myself, and it is this I call the Son of God. Yet is creation as it always was, for Your creation is unchangeable. Let me not worship idols.***

This false self we have made is an *idol,* a term used in *A Course in Miracles* for the special love object, the ego's substitute for the Love of God. The idol declares that His Love is not enough, and that this other person, event, or substance will make us happy and bring us peace. Yet we are asked to hear Heaven's Voice for Love speak to us – "Whom God has called should hear no substitutes" (T-18.I.12:1) – the call from the Unchanging to the unchangeable.

**(1:4-8)** ***I am he my Father loves. My holiness remains the light of Heaven and the Love of God. Is not what is beloved of You secure? Is not the light of Heaven infinite? Is not Your Son my true Identity, when You created everything that is?***

These words, reflective of the Atonement, reassure us of the certainty of Heaven's Love, which softly embraces our holiness within its own – the temple of Holiness Itself:

> God has not left His altar, though His worshippers placed other gods upon it. The temple still is holy, for the Presence that dwells within it *is* Holiness.
>
> In the temple, Holiness waits quietly for the return of them that love it.... The graciousness of God will take them gently in, and cover all their sense of pain and loss with the immortal assurance of their Father's Love.... The Presence of Holiness lives in everything that lives, for Holiness created life, and leaves not what It created holy as Itself (T-14.IX.3:8-9; 4:1, 3, 7).

**(2:1) Now are we one in shared Identity, with God our Father as our only Source, and everything created part of us.**

Here again is the theme of *oneness:* We are one with each other as Christ, and one with God – "a oneness joined as one" (T-25.I.7:1).

**(2:2) And so we offer blessing to all things, uniting lovingly with all the world, which our forgiveness has made one with us.**

We realize that God has only one Son, and even in his dream state he, remains one Son. Since *ideas leave not their source,* everything we perceive outside us – separate and differentiated – remains what it always was: the Son's projection of his separated mind.

We also see in this sentence a description of *extension.* We do not really offer blessings, but rather choose to see ourselves as blessed instead of cursed. In that decision, made in the holy instant, the Holy Spirit's Love extends that state of blessedness through us. It is essential to understand this distinction, otherwise we will

walk around blessing everyone – in thought or word – thinking this is what Jesus teaches and advocates in his course. Yet this "blessing" will end up being nothing more than the scourge of specialness. Once again, we are not the ones who bless, but choose instead the Holy Spirit's blessing instead of the ego's curse. Thus His Love and blessing are freed to extend through our healed mind in an unending flow of love. There is nothing to say, do, or bless; we need only be.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 284**
**I can elect to change all thoughts that hurt.**

This is another important lesson for its concise description of the learning process of *A Course in Miracles.* The lesson's theme recalls Lesson 281, "I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts." This is further developed by emphasizing the aspect of decision: Since these hurtful thoughts were chosen by me, I can now elect – i.e., choose – to change them.

**(1:1-4) Loss is not loss when properly perceived. Pain is impossible. There is no grief with any cause at all. And suffering of any kind is nothing but a dream.**

Loss, pain, grief, and suffering are made up. As we saw in Lesson 187, we can laugh at sickness, starvation, poverty, and death. We laugh, not because we are making fun of ourselves or others who are in pain, but because of the silliness in believing that a part of God could wrench itself from Him and therefore suffer. Our gentle laughter reflects the Atonement that says the separation never happened, and it is important to recognize our deep investment in pain and grief, for these prove that we are right and Jesus has lied to us. His response, however, is that deep down we do not believe this, and he now describes the process of our coming to this truth:

**(1:5-6) This is the truth, at first to be but said and then repeated many times; and next to be accepted as but partly true, with many reservations. Then to be considered seriously more and more, and finally accepted as the truth.**

Jesus traces the course of every student's process. First we read the words and say them over and over, struggling to understand them. We then attempt to accept their truth – perhaps they are true, but not all the time – and even if we believe intellectually they are true, our daily lives certainly do not demonstrate that belief. Yet Jesus understands we are not going to accept this immediately, for it is a process spanning many, many years, not simply days or months. In fact, the Course's truth goes directly against everything we believe and stand for as separated entities. Thus considerable time and hard work are required to admit gratefully – albeit begrudgingly at first – we were wrong about everything, especially the person we think we see in our bathroom mirror every morning. When we finally accept our mistake – and Jesus does not mean mere intellectual acceptance – we are in the real world, for we have learned everything our teacher can teach us.

Jesus now returns to the message of the lesson:

**(1:7-8) I can elect to change all thoughts that hurt. And I would go beyond these words today, and past all reservations, and arrive at full acceptance of the truth in them.**

Recognizing our fear, Jesus asks us to practice with this thought, for truth is terrifying to our separated egos. Again, he does not expect us to accept his lesson without reservation, but he is asking for our little willingness to be taught.

**(2)** ***Father, what You have given cannot hurt, so grief and pain must be impossible. Let me not fail to trust in You today, accepting but the joyous as Your gifts; accepting but the joyous as the truth.***

God's gift is the principle of the Atonement – His Love remains unbroken, and we, His Son, are healed and restored to the awareness of our wholeness.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 285**
**My holiness shines bright and clear today.**

Our unholiness brought to the holiness of Christ allows the radiant light of truth to shine in our minds.

**(1:1-3) Today I wake with joy, expecting but the happy things of God to come to me. I ask but them to come, and realize my invitation will be answered by the thoughts to which it has been sent by me. And I will ask for only joyous things the instant I accept my holiness.**

We should awaken every morning in joy because of the happy things we will learn that day – different forms of forgiveness. The aim of *A Course in Miracles* is thus to teach us that our daily joy comes from knowing we can take a few more steps toward our goal of awakening from the dream and returning home. If this is our orientation, nothing that happens during the day will dissuade us from being faithful to our goal. In cheerful confidence we begin our day because "All things are lessons God would have me learn," regardless of their seeming form – happy or unhappy (W-pI.193). We are thus glad because we can once again learn the lesson that the world is a dream and our holy Self rests within, beyond all illusion. Our shared truth here reflects the truth of our unified state as Christ. Could anything be more joyful?

**(1:4) For what would be the use of pain to me, what purpose would my suffering fulfill, and how would grief and loss avail me if insanity departs from me today, and I accept my holiness instead?**

Jesus underscores the purposive nature of our suffering, grief, and loss in the terms he used in the previous lesson. He informs us these are purposely chosen to reinforce the seeming reality of the separation and our separated self. However, when we choose the holiness of our Self instead, and joyfully anticipate the lessons this day will bring, pain has no further use; its purpose gone, replaced by the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. Remember that life is our dream, and if we are in pain, it is to fulfill our wish to prove that the separation is real. Freud's theory of wish fulfillment was the key to his understanding dreams, and to Jesus, our lives are also a dream that fulfill a wish; not the wish Freud identified, to be sure, but a wish nonetheless – to preserve our identity as separated entities, and then hold someone else responsible for it. Pain persuasively fulfills that purpose, for it establishes the reality of our physical and psychological selves, but that someone or something external to us is the cause of our distress. We thus need to go through our day striving to identify the specific purpose our unhappiness serves, needing to keep in focus that pain is never caused by anything outside, but only by the mind's decision to be separate.

**(2) *Father, my holiness is Yours. Let me rejoice in it, and through forgiveness be restored to sanity. Your Son is still as You created him. My holiness is part of me, and also part of You. And what can alter Holiness Itself?***

Thus we choose the light of holiness to be our reality instead of the darkness of sin, for we wish only to look upon the forgiven face of Christ and recognize that its holiness is our own:

**Lesson 285**

> Only that [true forgiveness] can give rememberance of immortality, which is the gift of holiness and love. Forgiveness must be given by a mind which understands that it must overlook all shadows on the holy face of Christ... (S-3.I.3:2-3).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 286**
**The hush of Heaven holds my heart today.**

The theme of this lesson is silence and stillness. The lovely phrase "hush of Heaven" appears only one other time in the Course, in "The Obstacles to Peace":

> There is a hush in Heaven, a happy expectancy, a little pause of gladness in acknowledgment of the journey's end (T-19.1V-A.6:1).

We have often referred to the raucous shrieks that echo through the ego's thought system, and thus we always scream: "I exist, I exist, I exist; but someone else did it to me." Every sound we utter, from the time we are born to the death rattle, issues from the idea that we exist, but another is held responsible for our fate. When we silence the ego's noise through forgiveness, having joined with the Holy Spirit, all that remains is stillness and quiet. Thus Jesus tells us in this lesson that this should be the mind's choice (recall that *heart is* a synonym for *mind).* Note, also, the soft alliteration of hush, Heaven, holds, and heart.

**(1:1-4)** ***Father, how still today! How quietly do all things fall in place! This is the day that has been chosen as the time in which I come to understand the lesson that there is no need that I do anything. In You is every choice already made.***

In the truth of God, the choice for the Atonement has already been made, undoing the mind's original decision to be separate. This is the choice that happily states: "I am wrong and the Holy Spirit has been right all along."

**(1:5-9)** ***In You has every conflict been resolved. In You is everything I hope to find already given me. Your peace is mine. My heart is quiet, and my mind at rest. Your Love is Heaven, and Your Love is mine.***

Jesus asks again that we still the ego's raucous shrieking – its screaming attacks at everyone and everything, including God. He asks us to choose against that hate-filled cacophony and replace it with the fervent desire that the hush of Heaven be our truth, God's peace be our own, and that we remember his love, for it is ours – as Helen reminds us in her "Love Song" to her beloved Lord:

> My Lord, my Love, my Life, I live in you.
> There is no life apart from what you are.
>
> The world I see is enemy to me
> When I forget my lovely Love is you.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 53)

**(2) The stillness of today will give us hope that we have found the way, and travelled far along it to a wholly certain goal. Today we will not doubt the end which God Himself has promised us. We trust in Him, and in our Self, Who still is one with Him.**

We therefore pray to Jesus, in Helen's poetic words from "The Last Prayer":

> Hold out Your Hand at last, my Lord, to me,
> And lift me to the final Certainty.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 47)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 287**
**You are my goal, my Father. Only You.**

Jesus underscores what he taught us in Lesson 285. If God is our goal, then we must accept the means of forgiveness He has given us. As students of *A Course in Miracles,* the specific means includes the Course itself. If we are therefore serious about reaching God, we must be serious about what will help us attain our goal. This means that when we hold thoughts of anger, judgment, and specialness, we are stating that God is *not* our goal. At least not right now.

Thus there is method in the ego's madness. We do not get angry because of something external, for anger is a defense against the underlying thought of fear that says: "If I go home to God, I will disappear." Recall that in the manual for teachers Jesus talks about anger as the heavy curtain that quickly drops to cover the peace of God (M-20.4:2). If you fear this peace, you need only pick a fight with someone or with yourself by getting sick. The world is most adept at supplying innumerable opportunities for us – once we seek them we will find them, and when we do, it is because we looked to them to support the ego's goal of separation instead of God's living Oneness.

**(1) Where would I go but Heaven? What could be a substitute for happiness? What gift could I prefer before the peace of God? What treasure would I seek and find and keep that can compare with my Identity? And would I rather live with fear than love?**

In *A Course in Miracles,* the word *specialness* almost always stands behind the word *substitute.* We substitute for the reality of God, our only real relationship, which means we have chosen the goal of specialness as substitute for Heaven. We thus need to look at how we continually try to substitute for the truth, and how these attempts will always meet with futility because the substitutes will never bring us happiness, which God alone can bring. Recall:

> To substitute is to accept instead. If you would but consider exactly what this entails, you would perceive at once how much at variance this is with the goal the Holy Spirit has given you, and would accomplish for you (T-18.I.1:1-2).

To achieve the Holy Spirit's goal, we need only change teachers and our perceptions of others, shifting our desire from judgment to forgiveness, fear to love, and hell to Heaven.

**(2)** ***You are my goal, my Father. What but You could I desire to have? What way but that which leads to You could I desire to walk? And what except the memory of You could signify to me the end of dreams and futile substitutions for the truth? You are my only goal. Your Son would be as You created him. What way but this could I expect to recognize my Self, and be at one with my Identity?***

To attain our goal, we first must attain its condition of peace:

> Forget not that the motivation for this course is the attainment and the keeping of the state of peace. Given this state the mind is quiet, and the condition in which God is remembered is attained.... There is no substitute for peace. What God creates has no alternative. The truth arises from what He knows. And your

decisions come from your beliefs as certainly as all creation rose in His Mind *because* of what He knows (T-24.in.1:1-2; 2:7-10).

Thus we make the only sane decision there is and choose to forgive instead of condemn, that we know the peace that ushers in the remembrance of God's Love and of our Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 288**
**Let me forget my brother's past today.**

This forgetting of the past occurs in the holy instant, as we return home through shifting our perceptions of others. By letting go of the sins of which my grievances accused you, I do the same for myself – the sins I perceived in you are the projected sins I first made real in me. We thus again see the continuity of Jesus' teachings on forgiveness throughout the workbook.

**(1:1-2)** ***This is the thought that leads the way to You, and brings me to my goal. I cannot come to You without my brother.***

Jesus does not mean this behaviorally, for we do not need a literal partner to do this course. Since the world exists only in our minds, Jesus' message is to undo the thought system of *one or the other:* we attain the ego's heaven at someone else's expense. Yet true Heaven is reached by accepting the Holy Spirit's familiar correction: "together, or not at all" (T-19.IV-D.12:8).

**(1:3-9)** ***And to know my Source, I first must recognize what You created one with me. My brother's is the hand that leads me on the way to You. His sins are in the past along with mine, and I am saved because the past is gone. Let me not cherish it within my heart, or I will lose the way to walk to You. My brother is my savior. Let me not attack the savior You have given me. But let me honor him who bears Your Name, and so remember that it is my own.***

Jesus speaks of the Sonship as one, and so be aware of grievances that would say: "God's Sonship is fragmented and I have proof. Look at what these victimizers have done to me and other innocents. You are wrong, Jesus, and I am right – the Son of God cannot be one, for there is clearly a hierarchy of good and evil." We justify our position by using the past to make another's sins real, which becomes our defense against the holy instant where sinful bodies do not exist. Only the memory of God's Love remains in the healed mind, and it is this we fear. Our brother becomes our savior, not because of the special things he does for us, but because in him we see the memory of God's true Son that had been buried in our minds. We remember him to the extent we realize the grievances we hold are the grievances we hold against ourselves and against God. Such insanity cannot make us happy, nor can withholding forgiveness from Jesus, as he now tells us:

**(2) Forgive me, then, today. And you will know you have forgiven me if you behold your brother in the light of holiness. He can not be less holy than can I, and you can not be holier than he.**

If we hold grievances against Jesus, and the Sonship is one, we must hold them against everyone else. Likewise, we know we hold grievances against Jesus if we hold a grievance against another. Successful practice of the workbook rests on accepting the fact of our oneness: as Christ, but also as egos. If we truly love Jesus, therefore, and want to learn his lessons, how can we possibly do so if we do not apply what he teaches? When we attack another, we tell him he is mistaken, for our happiness comes from being right and proving this other person wrong. To demonstrate our love for Jesus and desire to follow him home, therefore, we need to do what he says. When we do not,

he asks us to be aware of these thoughts without feeling guilty, for this is the basis of our forgiving him and ourselves – the means for remembering the holiness of God's Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 289**
**The past is over. It can touch me not.**

This continues Lesson 288. When the past is over, the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear – past, present, and future – is over as well, and we are solely in our right minds, the entry point to the real world. The passing of the ego's world of time and space is this lesson's message.

**(1:1) Unless the past is over in my mind, the real world must escape my sight.**

My fear of the real world stems from the realization that there is no individual self outside the dream of separation, and thus I can no longer be the dream figure I think of as myself. Therefore, the way to keep the real world away and eliminate the threat of loss of my separate identity is to hold on to the past. What better way to do this than to retain the belief in sin, as linear time is simply the projection into form of the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear?

**(1:2) For I am really looking nowhere; seeing but what is not there.**

At the beginning of Chapter 28, Jesus gives us these words we know so well:

> This world was over long ago. The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a little while (T-2811:6-7).

We therefore look at nothing; only an afterimage of what is already gone. Our eyes and ears were specifically made to teach us that we are looking at and hearing something real, yet in truth we "see" and "hear" what is not there.

**(1:3) How can I then perceive the world forgiveness offers?**

Obviously I cannot, and I cannot because I do not want to. Looking at the world forgiveness offers mean I would confront my greatest fear: disappearing as a special and unique entity.

**(1:4-6) This the past was made to hide, for this the world that can be looked on only now. It has no past. For what can be forgiven but the past, and if it is forgiven it is gone.**

Forgiveness is already present in us for the past is gone. We but seek to perpetuate it out of fear of what it means to be in the holy instant. However, as Jesus reflects in the prayer that follows, forgiveness marks the end of guilt. If there is no past there is no sin, and without sin there can be no guilt or fear. Being in the holy instant ends the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear and ushers in the real world: "the world that can be looked on only now."

**(2)** ***Father, let me not look upon a past that is not there. For You have offered me Your Own replacement, in a present world the past has left untouched and free of sin. Here is the end of guilt. And here am I made ready for Your final step. Shall I demand that You wait no longer for Your Son to find the loveliness***

In the same spirit, Jesus closes the “new” Lord’s Prayer:

> The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember Your forgiveness and Your Love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not Your Will. And let us receive only what You have given, and accept but this into the minds which You created and which You love. Amen (T-16.VII.12:4-7; italics omitted).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 290**
**My present happiness is all I see.**

Lesson 290 continues the theme of the present and the holy instant.

**(1:1) Unless I look upon what is not there, my present happiness is all I see.**

What is not there is unnatural, for it seeks to replace the naturalness of my present happiness. Thus if I see something that is not there – attack, pain, or specialness – I cannot be happy, which comes only by letting go of the ego's thought system that is the source of unhappiness. This unhappiness becomes the barometer that shows me I have elected to hold on to a thought system that says I am right and God is wrong.

**(1:2) Eyes that begin to open see at last.**

Jesus is not talking about physical sight, but uses the symbolism of eyes to talk about the right- minded attitude that gives birth to Christ's vision. Recall this homage to Plato's Allegory of the Cave, which describes the process of opening one's eyes to the light:

Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free. It takes a while for them to understand what freedom is (T-20.III.9:1-2).

**(1:3-6) And I would have Christ's vision come to me this very day. What I perceive without God's Own Correction for the sight I made is frightening and painful to behold. Yet I would not allow my mind to be deceived by the belief the dream I made is real an instant longer. This the day I seek my present happiness, and look on nothing else except the thing I seek.**

Jesus tells us we will yet recognize that everything we perceive is a mistake, for it is a defense against Christ's vision that reflects the reality of our oneness in Heaven. This truth is kindly expressed in the dream by perception of our one purpose, the other point of view described in this excerpt from the Preface to *A Course in Miracles:*

> Christ's vision is the Holy Spirit's gift, God's alternative to the illusion of separation and to the belief in the reality of sin, guilt and death.... Its kindly light shows all things from another point of view, reflecting the thought system that arises from knowledge and making return to God not only possible but inevitable (p. xiii).

**(2)** ***With this resolve I come to You, and ask Your strength to hold me up today, while I but seek to do Your Will. You cannot fail to hear me, Father. What I ask have You already given me. And I am sure that I will see my happiness today.***

The opening stanza of Helen's "The Promise" captures the feeling of this prayer to our brother Jesus, Helen's Lord:

**Lesson 290**

Hear me, my Lord! I cannot call in vain.
Such is Your promise. I but do Your Will
To call on You. And You will answer me,
Because Your promise holds the Answer still.
*(The Gifts of God,* p. 14)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 291**
**8. What Is the Real World?**

The ultimate goal of *A Course in Miracles* is the attainment of the real world, where all learning leads and ends as the ego's thought system fades into nothingness. In the real world there is nothing further to be learned, for true learning is unlearning all the ego had taught us:

> It is the function of God's teachers to bring true learning to the world. Properly speaking it is unlearning that they bring, for that is "true learning" in the world (M-4.X.3:6-7).

When we have completed this process of unlearning or undoing, the ego thought system simply disappears, and what remains is the state of mind we call the real world.

**(1:1-2) The real world is a symbol, like the rest of what perception offers. Yet it stands for what is opposite to what you made.**

In the text, Jesus explains that the term *real world is,* in effect, an oxymoron, because it is *not* real:

> ...there is a contradiction here, in that the words imply a limited reality, a partial truth, a segment of the universe made true (T-26.III.3:3).

The world, seen through the eyes of forgiveness, reflects the reality of Heaven. Similarly, Jesus tells us that holiness is not possible here, yet we are asked to choose a *holy* instant, and to allow our relationships to be transformed into *holy* ones, which then reflect the holiness of our relationship with God, a process described in "The Reflection of Holiness":

> In this world you can become a spotless mirror, in which the Holiness of your Creator shines forth from you to all around you. You can reflect Heaven here. Yet no reflections of the images of other gods must dim the mirror that would hold God's reflection in it. Earth can reflect Heaven or hell; God or the ego. You need but leave the mirror clean and clear of all the images of hidden darkness you have drawn upon it. God will shine upon it of Himself. Only the clear reflection of Himself can be perceived upon it (T-14.IX.5).

We are therefore asked to be a reflection of holiness or reality in this world. Even though the real world does not exist in reality, it can yet be thought of as real insofar as "it stands for what is opposite to what you made" – the opposite of everything the ego has told us is real. It is thus a state of mind that does not contradict or oppose the truth, but gently reflects it.

**(1:3) Your world is seen through eyes of fear, and brings the witnesses of terror to your mind.**

This is obvious to us by now. Our world comes from guilt, which demands punishment – we project the guilt, and therefore believe we deserve to be punished for our sin:

> Guilt asks for punishment, and its request is granted. Not in truth, but in the world of shadows and illusions built on sin. The Son of God perceived what he would see because perception is a wish fulfilled (T-26.VII.3:1-3).

**(1:4) The real world cannot be perceived except through eyes forgiveness blesses, so they see a world where terror is impossible, and witnesses to fear can not be found.**

To underscore the point I made throughout the last series of lessons, discovering we have been holding on to grievances indicates that we want the goal unforgiveness brings: preventing us from being with Jesus, entering the real world, and realizing all this – including our individual identities – is a dream. In order to protect our special selves, we make up stories about people – the terrible things they have done to us or to other innocents. We get others to share that belief, and the more who do, the more right we believe we are as we solidify our defense against Jesus and his teachings. We must never lose sight of this underlying purpose of our judgments and sickness. If we do, we will never be able to change it. A central focus of *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, is to have us see the ego's purpose for everything – a mistaken purpose because it will not make us happy. Above all, the Course's objective is to teach us there is a Teacher Who will help us change that purpose from harm to healing.

**(2:1) The real world holds a counterpart for each unhappy thought reflected in your world; a sure correction for the sights of fear and sounds of battle which your world contains.**

The correction is the Holy Spirit, Whose Presence represents the truth that the separation from God never happened. As the Holy Spirit and Jesus represent God's Love in our dreams, we cannot be separate from Them either. Moreover, if the separation from God never happened, the separated mind's dynamics could not have happened. Thus it is not as if we have billions of unhappy and happy thoughts in our minds. There is an illusion of billions, but in truth the mind contains only one unhappy thought and one happy thought. As long as we have the illusion of billions of mistakes, however, we will have the illusion of billions of corrections. Yet again, there is but one error and one correction, as we read in this important passage we have seen before:

> God gave His Teacher to replace the one you made, not to conflict with it. And what He would replace has been replaced. Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. And so is all time past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. What God gave answer to is answered and is gone (T-26.V.3).

**(2:2-6) The real world shows a world seen differently, through quiet eyes and with a mind at peace. Nothing but rest is there. There are no cries of pain and sorrow heard, for nothing there remains outside forgiveness. And the sights are gentle. Only happy sights and sounds can reach the mind that has forgiven itself.**

This is a state of mind that perceives the world from outside the dream. We see the dream, but from the perspective of Jesus' home above the battleground. Yet has the world dragged him into the dream as its own image, rather than have the dream figures be remade in his image of light and love. When we rejoin him in the real world, we do not hear cries of pain and sorrow because they remain part of the dream. Outside the dream we hear people speak, but there are no sounds to hear. Instead, we "hear" people still choosing to remain asleep, their pain coming from the decision to dream apart from the real world.

**(3:1) What need has such a mind for thoughts of death, attack and murder?**

This is the same point made in the preceding series of lessons. There is a purpose behind our thoughts and experiences of attack, murder, and death. They continually occur in our dreams because we have need of them. If attack, murder, and death are real, so is the underlying thought that we murdered God so we could live. All this proves our existence, for the sin of destroying Heaven is how we came into being in the first place. Our personal dreams of attack and death are shadowy fragments of the original thoughts of attack and death. We need them to be real for they make us real, which is why so many popular movies contain gruesome scenes of attack, and murder – violence, violence, and yet more violence – for we all share the need to have attack be reality. Nonetheless, when we realize hate and attack do not pay – they do not make us happy – the need for them is gone; so, too, the need to be right as an ego. Thus our minds can be quiet at last, allowing the memory of God's Love to rise gently to the surface of our awareness:

> The memory of God comes to the quiet mind. It cannot come where there is conflict, for a mind at war against itself remembers not eternal gentleness. The means of war are not the means of peace, and what the warlike would remember is not love (T-23.I.1:1-3).

**(3:2) What can it perceive surrounding it but safety, love and joy?**

By identifying with Jesus' love and the Holy Spirit's Atonement, all we know is safety, love, and joy. We experience what we make real in our minds, and therefore if we experience only safety, love, and joy, it is because we chose love's strength for our identity, and thus we are forever safe and joyful. Recall the words that clarify this distinction:

> You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. And what you choose is what you think is real. Simply by never using weakness to direct your actions, you have given it no power. And the light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you do. For you have brought your weakness unto Him, and He has given you His strength instead (T-31.VIII.2:3-7).

**(3:3) What is there it would choose to be condemned, and what is there that it would judge against?**

What we choose to condemn and judge against is an aspect of God's Son that we

want to see as other than ourselves. That is done only to preserve our own fragmented image of separation. When that need is gone – our identification has shifted from the ego's hate to Jesus' love – there is no longer any hate to judge and project onto others. We have accepted instead God's loving judgment, and in His holy Name we bless the world – our function within the dream:

> Time pauses as eternity comes near, and silence lies across the world that everyone may hear this Judgment of the Son of God:
>
> *Holy are you, eternal, free and whole, at peace forever in the Heart of God. Where is the world, and where is sorrow now? ...*
>
> It is your function to prepare yourself to hear this Judgment and to recognize that it is true.... Judge not, for you but judge yourself, and thus delay this Final Judgment.... His promises are sure.... [and] have guaranteed His Judgment, and His alone, will be accepted in the end. It is your function to make that end be soon. It is your function to hold it to your heart, and offer it to all the world to keep it safe (M-15.1:10-12; 2:5, 8; 3:7, 9-11).

**(3:4-5) The world it** [the forgiven mind] **sees arises from a mind at peace within itself. No danger lurks in anything it sees, for it is kind, and only kindness does it look upon.**

Kindness is central to applying the principles of *A Course in Miracles.* It remains an impossible ideal as long as I believe I exist because of my unkindness to God, existing at Another's expense. Thus I practice kindness behaviorally as a reflection of my mind's decision to be kind. An earlier lesson said "Kindness created me kind" (W-pI.67.2:4), and so by withholding kindness from another I am stating: "I am not a child of kindness, for such a child cannot exist here and I want to prove that I do. Since like begets like, and *ideas leave not their source,* all I need do to prove I am a child of the ego's unkindness is to be unkind to everyone else." It does not even have to be everyone – one person will suffice.

This, then, is the origin of all unkind thoughts, which we seek to justify by claiming someone else was unkind to us first. Yet how easily all this is set aside when we forgive, as we read in this familiar and lovely passage from the text:

> The grace of God rests gently on forgiving eyes, and everything they look on speaks of Him to the beholder. He can see no evil; nothing in the world to fear, and no one who is different from himself. And as he loves them, so he looks upon himself with love and gentleness. He would no more condemn himself for his mistakes than damn another. He is not an arbiter of vengeance, nor a punisher of sin. The kindness of his sight rests on himself with all the tenderness it offers others. For he would only heal and only bless. And being in accord with what God wills, he has the power to heal and bless all those he looks on with the grace of God upon his sight (T-25.VI.1).

**(4:1) The real world is the symbol that the dream of sin and guilt is over, and God's Son no longer sleeps.**

Jesus emphasizes the symbolic nature of the real world for the second time in this summary. It is not inherently real; neither is forgiveness, our teacher of forgiveness, and his course that teaches that all this is not real. Therefore, worshipping *A Course in Miracles* or Jesus would be totally inappropriate, for we should worship only the non-symbolic God Who gave us life – worship in the sense of the awe Jesus speaks of at the beginning of the text.

> Awe should be reserved for revelation [i.e., God], to which it is perfectly and correctly applicable. It is not appropriate for miracles because a state of awe is worshipful, implying that one of a lesser order stands before his Creator. You are a perfect creation, and should experience awe only in the Presence of the Creator of perfection. The miracle is therefore a sign of love among equals. Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me [Jesus] (T-1.II.3:1-6).

Awe says to God: I am not like You – You are the creator, I the created; I am not God, but a part of You that *is* God. This is the only truth, and all else a symbol. Thus, again, Jesus could be speaking of *A Course in Miracles,* telling us not to place its symbolic form on a pedestal. Rather, we demonstrate our love for it through the practice of kindness, for that is how we shall achieve its purpose of awakening us from the ego's nightmares of sin and guilt to find ourselves in the real world.

**(4:2-3) His waking eyes perceive the sure reflection of his Father's Love; the certain promise that he is redeemed. The real world signifies the end of time, for its perception makes time purposeless.**

The real world is the culmination of our unlearning, and thus reflects God's Love. Again, it is not that Love, because in the real world we are still aware there is a dream, of which God knows nothing. Yet at the same time we know our reality is outside the dream, which disappears from awareness when we truly know we are part of God's Love and have returned to Heaven:

> The real world is the second part of the hallucination time and death are real, and have existence that can be perceived. This terrible illusion was denied in but the time it took for God to give His Answer to illusion for all time and every circumstance. And then it was no more to be experienced as there (T-26.V.12:3-5).

**(5:1) The Holy Spirit has no need of time when it has served His purpose.**

The Holy Spirit's purpose for time is to teach there is no time. He did not make it, we did – to hurt – and now He uses time to heal, by helping us choose the holy instant that ends all time:

> The Holy Spirit interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for time unnecessary. He regards the function of time as temporary, serving only His teaching function, which is temporary by definition. His emphasis is therefore on the only aspect of time that can extend to the infinite, for *now* is the closest approximation of eternity that this world offers (T-13.IV.7:3-5).

**(5:2-3) Now He waits but that one instant more for God to take His final step, and time has disappeared, taking perception with it as it goes, and leaving but the truth to be itself. That instant is our goal, for it contains the memory of God.**

In that last step the real world itself disappears; the wrong and right minds are gone – indeed, the entire split mind is gone. All that remains is the truth, as we are in the real world but an instant longer, and then God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself:

> What better way to close the little gap between illusions and reality than to allow the memory of God to flow across it, making it a bridge an instant will suffice to reach beyond? For God has closed it with Himself.... His Father wills that he be lifted up and gently carried over. He has built the bridge, and it is He Who will transport His Son across it. Have no fear that He will fail in what He wills. Nor that you be excluded from the Will that is for you (T-28.I.15:3-4, 6-9).

**(5:4) And as we look upon a world forgiven, it is He Who calls to us and comes to take us home, reminding us of our Identity which our forgiveness has restored to us.**

To make this point again – if you find yourself holding on to grievances, it is because you do not want to return home, but desire instead to assert your identity as a child of unkindness and hate, rather than kindness and love. This choice is reflected in your behavior here. Being aware of your unkind thoughts and actions thus allows you to recognize that you are not really being unkind to another, but only to yourself by withholding your rightful place in the unified Kingdom of God and His Son. At this point of recognition, turning to Jesus for help becomes meaningful for it is born of your new purpose: to be taught how to return home and claim the Sonship that is truly yours, and has always been your birthright and inheritance.

The conclusion to the Course's Preface nicely concludes our summary of the real world – the gate of total forgiveness through which we pass with Jesus into Heaven:

> Forgiveness is the means by which we will remember. Through forgiveness the thinking of the world is reversed. The forgiven world becomes the gate of Heaven, because by its mercy we can at last forgive ourselves. Holding no one prisoner to guilt, we become free. Acknowledging Christ in all our bothers, we recognize His Presence in ourselves. Forgetting all our misperceptions, and with nothing from the past to hold us back, we can remember God. Beyond this, learning cannot go. When we are ready, God Himself will take the final step in our return to Him (p. xiii).

## LESSON 291
## This is a day of stillness and of peace.

We return now to two familiar themes: Christ's vision and the mind's stillness and peace.

**(1:1-3) Christ's vision looks through me today. His sight shows me all things forgiven and at peace, and offers this same vision to the world. 'And I accept this vision in its name, both for myself and for the world as well.**

When the Course's metaphysics has been understood, it is apparent that Jesus is reflecting the principle that the world and mind are one. Thus, vision has nothing to do with what our eyes see, but with the teacher with whom we have chosen to see. When Jesus is our choice, our minds will be at peace and everything we look at will be peaceful as well.

**(1:4-6) What loveliness we look upon today! What holiness we see surrounding us! And it is given us to recognize it is a holiness in which we share: it is the Holiness of God Himself.**

I want to stress again the importance of keeping the metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles* in mind. Without that grounding, you could be tempted to believe that Jesus is talking about seeing holiness with your eyes, and, moreover, that holiness exists here: holy bodies, holy places, holy objects. Moreover, if you think you are a good student of the Course, you may seek to deny the horrible things that go on in this world, thinking instead that everything here is holy because you are looking through the eyes of holiness. This is the exact opposite of what Jesus is teaching, which has nothing to do with the holiness your eyes see, but only with the holiness you accept in your mind. This acceptance is preceded by realizing what has to be corrected and undone in your perception. Therefore, before you can truly see holiness around you, you first must realize how angry, despairing, and upset you are by what goes on in the world. Again, as long as you think you are a body, you can never be happy here. Bodies are the equivalent of pain, because they are made from the thought of pain – the separation from God.

Thus you cannot share in Christ's vision without first looking at what your sight has told you is true, bringing it to the Holy Spirit's correction in your mind. At that point you will have accepted the holiness that is your and everyone else's true Identity. Looking out through the mind's lens of holiness, you will see it all around you – not because anything has changed externally, but because your mind has changed.

**(2:1)** ***This day my mind is quiet, to receive the Thoughts You offer me.***

I need to quiet my mind of its identification with the ego thought system. The stillness of the Atonement now takes the place of the ego's noise, and this is the Thought God offers me.

**(2:2-6)** ***And I accept what comes from You, instead of from myself. I do not know the way to You. But You are wholly certain. Father, guide Your Son along the quiet path that leads to You. Let my forgiveness be complete, and let the***

***memory of You return to me.***

The phrase “I do not know the way to You” comes from the prayer at the end of Lesson 189, and we will find it referred to again in the lessons to come. The issue here, once again, is that we recognize we have made a mistake and do not know the right way, but God – i.e., the Holy Spirit – does: the quiet path of forgiveness. Thus our having chosen a different Teacher reflects the mind’s decision to accept that we are wrong and He is right.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 292**
**A happy outcome to all things is sure.**

You may recall the sentence that is stated twice in the text: "The outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10; T-4.II.5:8). To the ego the outcome is also as certain, but it is the ego's god whose certainty is unhappiness and misery. It tells us that the way we achieve happiness is at someone else's expense – another must suffer. Since we are different, if you are unhappy then I am not, for my happiness comes only when yours is sacrificed. The happy correction leading to the happy outcome is that happiness is our inheritance – yours *and* mine – and is safely held for us in minds that await our decision to accept it.

**(1:1) God's promises make no exceptions.**

This means I cannot forgive some people and exclude the rest. The Sonship of God is one, and He does not recognize a fragmentation that never happened.

**(1:2-3) And He guarantees that only joy can be the final outcome found for everything. Yet it is up to us when this is reached; how long we let an alien will appear to be opposing His.**

In the Introduction to *A Course in Miracles* Jesus tells us that *free will* means that we are free to choose the time when we accept the truth that is already present in us:

> Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time (T-in.1:4-5).

This is not something Jesus does for us. We must be willing to recognize our prior mistakes and then choose to have them be undone for us. The truth, which is the reflection of God's Will, is already present in our right minds. We have chosen to substitute the alien will of the ego in its place, and it is our responsibility as to when we recognize we were mistaken, and to be grateful we were wrong so we can finally make the correct choice that ensures the joyful outcome.

**(1:4-7) And while we think this will is real, we will not find the end He has appointed as the outcome of all problems we perceive, all trials we see, and every situation that we meet. Yet is the ending certain. For God's Will is done in earth and Heaven. We will seek and we will find according to His Will, which guarantees that our will is done.**

We cannot fail when we call upon the One Who cannot fail. Seeking only a happy outcome, that is all we shall find when we call upon the Teacher of happiness, thanking God for His Love:

**(2)** ***We thank You, Father, for Your guarantee of only happy outcomes in the end. Help us not interfere, and so delay the happy endings You have promised us for every problem that we can perceive; for every trial we think we still must meet.***

From the end of the text we read words that can only bring us comfort in the world of pain:

**Lesson 292**

Trials are but lessons that you failed to learn presented once again, so where you made a faulty choice before you now can make a better one, and thus escape all pain that what you chose before has brought to you. In every difficulty, all distress, and each perplexity Christ calls to you and gently says, “My brother, choose again.” He would not leave one source of pain unhealed, nor any image left to veil the truth.... His strength is yours because He is the Self that God created as His only Son (T-31.VIII.3:1-3, 7).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 293**
**All fear is past and only love is here.**

As we have seen many times, if perfect love casts out fear, and we have accepted love through the Holy Spirit in our minds, the fear that is the heart of the ego thought system must be gone. Only the Love of God and His Son will remain.

**(1:1) All fear is past, because its source is gone, and all its thoughts gone with it.**

The source of fear is sin, the belief that the separation is real and deserves punishment. When we join with Jesus, the dream's symbol of God's Love, we are no longer separate from him or our Source. Therefore there is no sin of separation, and so there could be no fear. Gone as well is the thought system of the ego, with its thoughts of sin, specialness, sacrifice, and suffering.

**(1:2-5) Love remains the only present state, whose Source is here forever and forever. Can the world seem bright and clear and safe and welcoming, with all my past mistakes oppressing it, and showing me distorted forms of fear? Yet in the present love is obvious, and its effects apparent. All the world shines in reflection of its holy light, and I perceive a world forgiven at last.**

This beautiful light-filled passage is echoed in an equally beautiful passage from the text, which describes the world of light that greets our decision for the inner light:

> Nothing around you but is part of you. Look on it lovingly, and see the light of Heaven in it. So will you come to understand all that is given you. In kind forgiveness will the world sparkle and shine, and everything you once thought sinful now will be reinterpreted as part of Heaven. How beautiful it is to walk, clean and redeemed and happy, through a world in bitter need of the redemption that your innocence bestows upon it! (T-23.in.6:1-5)

**(2:1)** ***Father, let not Your holy world escape my sight today.***

When in the holy instant we choose Christ's vision instead of the ego's, we perceive the world from our new perspective outside the dream – the real world.

**(2:2)** ***Nor let my ears be deaf to all the hymns of gratitude the world is singing underneath the sounds of fear.***

The sounds of fear – the thought system of the ego and its world – are a cover for the prayerful hymns of gratitude that are within everyone's mind. We thus see again a reference to the core of Jesus' teaching: the ego thought system is nothing more or less than a defense against the truth, already present in our minds. Using the image of layering, we can view the Atonement principle at the bottom of the mind, covered by layers and layers of the ego's specialness until we are so far removed from the truth that we end up believing only what the body's eyes tell us is the truth. Blind and deaf, we await our change of mind that truly lets us see:

**(2:3-4)** ***There is a real world which the present holds safe from all past***

***mistakes. And I would see only this world before my eyes today.***

We cannot make the choice to see the real world unless we first recognize our minds have the power to do so. We have misused this power by choosing the ego instead of truth, the same power we now use to correct our mistake so that Christ's vision becomes our eyes.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 294**
**My body is a wholly neutral thing.**

This important lesson deserves more extensive discussion than the others in Part II. It will be particularly helpful in clarifying the distinction between the two levels of discourse reflected in *A Course in Miracles,* which we now briefly review:

Level One is the metaphysical basis for the Course, teaching that only spirit is true, and everything else, including the body, is false. On this level, everything of the world is symbolic of sin, which means the body is hardly neutral. It is sin's repository, for in our pain and desperation we seek to find projected sin in everyone except ourselves. The purpose of this projection is to keep the thought of sin alive, but buried in our minds. Carrying out this ego strategy, we are driven to perceive sin all around us, thereby establishing the body's sinfulness. This accounts for people's unending attempts to make the body holy, and, most importantly, why the pillar of religious thought, especially in the West, is that God is the creator of the world and body. Psychologically, we refer to that dynamic as reaction formation, where we perceive and believe the opposite of what we have made real in our minds. We first establish sin's reality, deny it, and then project it onto the body. To counter our devastating self-image, we regard the body not as sinful, but as sinless and holy – in fact so holy that God Himself created it. This strange notion of the creator God has had a remarkable hold on society because it conceals the ego's use for the body – making it the source of sin, thereby protecting the ego's existence in the mind.

Yet Jesus tells us here and elsewhere in *A Course in Miracles* that the body is neither sinful nor sinless – it is nothing. However, because we have made it real – moving us to the Level Two discourse – the body can be used either to root us still further in the dream, or be the means by which the Holy Spirit awakens us from it. In that sense the body is neutral, because it merely awaits the split mind's decision to project the ego's purpose of reinforcing the dream of sin, or extend the Holy Spirit's purpose of our learning through the body that the world is an illusion – not evil, wicked, or sinful, just an illusion.

**(1:1-4) I am a Son of God. And can I be another thing as well? Did God create the mortal and corruptible? What use has God's beloved Son for what must die?**

This is a clear refutation of the foundation of Western thought – all systems of theology, philosophy, psychology, and science that rest on the premise that the world and body are real.

**(1:5) And yet a neutral thing does not see death, for thoughts of fear are not invested there, nor is a mockery of love bestowed upon it.**

From the ego's point of view, death proves the reality of separation and guilt, and that God's punishment has been accomplished. Therefore death is hardly neutral within the system that teaches we are separate from God – the "mockery of love." This mocking thought is projected into the body, which, too, becomes a mockery, or as the Course says, a "parody" or "travesty" of the glorious Self that God created (T-24.VII.10 :9; W-pI.95.2:1).

**(1:6) Its neutrality protects it while it has a use.**

When we realize the body is neutral, we realize as well that it cannot be hurt. We have seen several lessons recently that center on this idea that we can be hurt only by our thoughts. Again, the body itself is not vulnerable, for it is inherently nothing.

**(1:7-9) And afterwards, without a purpose, it is laid aside. It is not sick nor old nor hurt. It is but functionless, unneeded and cast off.**

This occurs when we have learned the lessons of our classroom and no longer need the body, and so we lay it down. *The Song of Prayer* contains a lovely rendition of death when seen through the eyes of the Holy Spirit. In His vision death is irrelevant to the body, for it reflects the mind's decision to choose Christ's vision and its right-minded and holy purpose:

> This is what death should be; a quiet choice, made joyfully and with a sense of peace, because the body has been kindly used to help the Son of God along the way he goes to God. We thank the body, then, for all the service it has given us. But we are thankful, too, the need is done to walk the world of limits, and to reach the Christ in hidden forms and clearly seen at most in lovely flashes. Now we can behold Him without blinders, in the light that we have learned to look upon again (S-3.II.2).

**(1:10) Let me not see it more than this today; of service for a while and fit to serve, to keep its usefulness while it can serve, and then to be replaced for greater good.**

This is a prayer to ourselves not to place undue emphasis on the body, for it is neither holy or unholy, the instrument of salvation or damnation. Its only sane purpose is to be the means of returning to the mind. Once we made and identified with the body, the mind seemed forever closed. When we say "there must be another way," we are asking Jesus to help us understand that what we think, perceive, and feel through the body is a projection of the thought of separation we first made real in the mind. The body and world therefore become the only means we have of reflecting back to us the mind's decision, and that we indeed have a mind. If we thus deny what our senses report and our bodies feel, we deny the only thing in the universe that can save us.

When the body's purpose is given to the Holy Spirit, we remember that our feelings here serve only to reinforce the ego, perpetuating the decision we made to be separated. Once we understand the proper mind-body relationship, we can at last make a meaningful choice – *in our minds.* Therefore nothing in this course should be used to deny the body. At the same time, nothing in this course should be used to glorify the body, making it into something it is not. Made to kill, the body has become a classroom that Jesus uses to help us learn that God's Son is eternal.

**(2:1-2)** ***My body, Father, cannot be Your Son. And what is not created cannot be sinful nor sinless; neither good nor bad.***

We have seen the overwhelming emphasis Jesus places on this idea throughout *A Course in Miracles.* He means it very literally that we are not bodies. Moreover, since the body did not come from God, it cannot be real and thus can have no qualities: good

or bad, holy or unholy, well or sick, alive or dead, beautiful or ugly. Once we assign a quality to something, we give it reality. Jesus is not telling us to feel guilty when we do this, but he does want us to be aware of what we do so he can help us reinterpret our experience and understand it to be a projection of the ego's belief in fantasy and illusion. Learning that the ego's reality is not in the world but in the mind, our decision maker can reverse its mistaken choice.

**(2:3)** ***Let me, then, use this dream to help Your plan that we awaken from all dreams we made.***

God's plan is the Atonement, carried out through our forgiveness or change of mind. Once again, what facilitates this change is allowing our new Teacher to shift how we perceive the body. The following statement from the text succinctly summarizes this plan, and integrates the two levels of discourse with which we began our discussion of this lesson – the body is an illusion ("not made by love"), and yet it can be the healing instrument of the Holy Spirit (Who "can use it lovingly") to teach us that only spirit is real:

> The body was not made by love. Yet love does not condemn it and can use it lovingly, respecting what the Son of God has made and using it to save him from illusions (T-18.VI.4:7-8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 295**
**The Holy Spirit looks through me today.**

This lesson appears to be about the Holy Spirit, but is another example of how Jesus uses *Christ as* a synonym for God's Voice. The title says that the Holy Spirit looks through me, but Jesus begins by speaking of Christ looking; not Christ as He is in Heaven, but as a symbol for the Atonement principle – the Holy Spirit's Presence that is itself the correction.

**(1:1-3) Christ asks that He may use my eyes today, and thus redeem the world. He asks this gift that He may offer peace of mind to me, and take away all terror and all pain. And as they are removed from me, the dreams that seemed to settle on the world are gone.**

All I need do is shift my vision or teacher, and the ego's dream world of specialness – pain, sadness, joy, and pleasure – is gone.

We now return to the theme of oneness:

**(1:4-5) Redemption must be one. As I am saved, the world is saved with me.**

To say this again, a statement like this makes no sense unless you understand the underlying metaphysics of *A Course in Miracles.* There is no world outside the mind, which is one – one Mind in Heaven, and one mind within the dream. This latter is the ego self – God's one Son who fell asleep. The physical universe arose from that mind, which is why it is all one – dream and dreamer are not separate, and thus are redeemed together.

**(1:6) For all of us must be redeemed together.**

When your mind is healed and you have accepted the undoing of sin that is your redemption, you know God's Son is one and everyone has been saved with you. You look out upon the dream, being now outside it, and you see the dream figures as split-off parts of one thought: "I am separate from God." This allows you to hear the single Voice of redemption tell you it was all a dream.

**(1:7) Fear appears in many different forms, but love is one.**

Therefore there is no order of difficulty in miracles. The miracle reflects the Love of God, healing all problems as one for there is but one problem. As an earlier lesson said: "One problem; one solution. Salvation is accomplished" (W-pI.80.1:5-6).

**(2)** ***My Father, Christ has asked a gift of me, and one I give that it be given me. Help me to use the eyes of Christ today, and thus allow the Holy Spirit's Love to bless all things which I may look upon, that His forgiving Love may rest on me.***

Seeing the face of Christ in our brother allows us to see it in ourselves and all the world:

> Behold your Friend, the Christ Who stands beside you. How holy and how beautiful He is! You thought He sinned because you cast the veil of sin upon Him

to hide His loveliness. Yet still He holds forgiveness out to you, to share His Holiness....

This is your brother, crucified by sin and waiting for release from pain. Would you not offer him forgiveness, when only he can offer it to you? (T-19.IV-D.14:1-4; 15:1-2)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 296**
**The Holy Spirit speaks through me today.**

We see here the idea expressed so beautifully in the Introduction to the fifth review, where Jesus tells us he needs our voice, eyes, feet, and hands through which he saves the world (W-pI.rV.in.9:3). In fact this important theme is repeated many times throughout *A Course in Miracles* – the world and body are illusions, yet since we believe we are here, they can reflect the truth that is in our minds.

**(1:1-2)** ***The Holy Spirit needs my voice today, that all the world may listen to Your Voice, and hear Your Word through me. I am resolved to let You speak through me, for I would use no words but Yours, and have no thoughts which are apart from Yours, for only Yours are true.***

We have seen this idea frequently in our journey through the workbook: realizing the mistake in choosing our words instead of the Holy Spirit's – ours the words of separation, His the Word of Atonement that says there is no separation. Thus do we become His teachers, the manifestations *inform* of His Voice of forgiveness – the *content* of salvation:

> Yet what makes God's teachers is their recognition of the proper purpose of the body. As they advance in their profession, they become more and more certain that the body's function is but to let God's Voice speak through it to human ears. And these ears will carry to the mind of the hearer messages that are not of this world, and the mind will understand because of their Source. From this understanding will come the recognition, in this new teacher of God, of what the body's purpose really is; the only use there really is for it (M-12.4:1-4).

**(1:3-4) I** ***would be savior to the world I made. For having damned it I would set it free, that I may find escape, and hear the Word Your holy Voice will speak to me today.***

We damned the world by projecting our self- damnation onto it. This occurred in the mind, where it can be undone – the *only* place it can be undone.

**(2) We teach today what we would learn, and that alone. And so our learning goal becomes an unconflicted one, and possible of easy reach and quick accomplishment. How gladly does the Holy Spirit come to rescue us from hell, when we allow His teaching to persuade the world, through us, to seek and find the easy path to God.**

Our unequivocally asking the Holy Spirit for help invites His vision of forgiveness to heal our minds and the world as one, leading us from the self-deceptive hell of separation – the world's "hopeless and closed learning situation" – to the Heaven of our perfect Oneness:

> The purpose of the course might be said to provide you with a means of choosing what you want to teach on the basis of what you want to learn. You cannot give to someone else, but only to yourself, and this you learn through teaching.... Into this hopeless and closed learning situation, which teaches

> nothing but despair and death, God sends His teachers. And as they teach His lessons of joy and hope, their learning finally becomes complete.
>
> Except for God's teachers there would be little hope of salvation, for the world of sin would seem forever real. The self-deceiving must deceive, for they must teach deception. And what else is hell? (M-in.2:5-6; 4:7-5:3)

And would we choose to remain in hell when the peace of Heaven is ours for the mere "price" of forgiveness?

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 297**
**Forgiveness is the only gift I give.**

This reflects the important idea that giving and receiving are the same.

**(1:1) Forgiveness is the only gift I give, because it is the only gift I want.**

This gift is our change of mind. We must realize that the gifts we have chosen in place of forgiveness – the gifts of specialness, *one or the other,* being right – have not brought us what we truly want: the undoing of fear. Bringing the Holy Spirit our secret gifts – the essence of forgiveness—allows His gifts to be ours forever, and – through us – the world's as well. Recall this previously quoted passage:

> Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's function. Leave this to Him Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can be extended. Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever. He will take each one and make of it a potent force for peace. He will withhold no blessing from it, nor limit it in any way. He will join to it all the power that God has given Him, to make each little gift of love a source of healing for everyone. Each little gift you offer to your brother lights up the world (T-22.VI.9:2-9).

**(1:2-3) And everything I give I give myself. This is salvation's simple formula.**

The ego principle of salvation is that I escape from what I give: I am saved from my guilt by giving it to you. The Holy Spirit undoes that cruel insanity by having me realize that when I blame you I blame myself, a silly and self-defeating thing to do! Seeing that silliness helps me realize how wrongly I have been looking at everything.

**(1:4) And I, who would be saved, would make it mine, to be the way I live within a world that needs salvation, and that will be saved as I accept Atonement for myself.**

I happily remember that God's Son is one, and by forgiving my brother I forgive myself. That is salvation's joyful message, and one I gladly accept for myself and for the world.

**(2)** ***Father, how certain are Your ways; how sure their final outcome, and how faithfully is every step in my salvation set already, and accomplished by Your grace. Thanks be to You for Your eternal gifts, and thanks to You for my Identity.***

Who would not be grateful for the gift of God's grace, when through its gentle forgiveness salvation comes? The Son who wandered lonely and alone is made whole, and thanks his Father for His gift of love, seen in himself and all his brothers—the vision that heals the world:

> The wish to see calls down the grace of God upon your eyes, and brings the gift of light that makes sight possible. Would you behold your brother? God is glad to have you look on him. He does not will your savior be unrecognized by

you. Nor does He will that he remain without the function that He gave to him. Let him no more be lonely, for the lonely ones are those who see no function in the world for them to fill; no place where they are needed, and no aim which only they can perfectly fulfill (T-25.VI.3).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 298**
**I love You, Father, and I love Your Son.**

This love is not based upon the principle of *one or the other.* We have said many times that if we truly love God we must love everyone – not in *form,* but *content.* If we do not love all-inclusively – holding grievances and justifying blame – we are really saying we do not love God. The guilt over this statement is horrendous. Here we are, devoted students of *A Course in Miracles,* the goal of which is to reach God and remember our Self, and we do the exact opposite of what it says. It is important not to minimize the guilt this induces in both our study and practice of the Course. Yet what helps eliminate the guilt is becoming aware we have conflicting goals: God versus ego survival. If we are aware of this conflict we will not repress it, and without repression there is nothing to project. Thus, whenever we find ourselves becoming angry or sick, we need recall that there is a secret guilt that has escaped our attention. The right-minded gift of anger or sickness, then, is that they become red flags unveiling our choice for the ego instead of God. In truth, if we loved God unequivocally we would also love His Son and not attack him – ourselves or another.

**(1:1) My gratitude permits my love to be accepted without fear.**

I am grateful I have been wrong, and need only recognize my stubborn insistence in being right about my perceptions.

**(1:2-5) And thus am I restored to my reality at last. All that intruded on my holy sight forgiveness takes away. And I draw near the end of senseless journeys, mad careers and artificial values. I accept instead what God establishes as mine, sure that in that alone I will be saved; sure that I go through fear to meet my Love.**

Forgiveness does not give or teach us anything positive. It merely shines away the negative – a most important distinction. Its light reflects the Love of God by dissolving the darkness of the ego's sin, guilt, and fear. In and of itself, therefore, forgiveness does nothing but be the radiance that dispels the thoughts of specialness, leading us on a journey to resurrection and life and away from the ego's useless journey to crucifixion and death, as the reader recalls Jesus telling us in this early passage from the text:

> The journey to the cross should be the last "useless journey." Do not dwell upon it, but dismiss it as accomplished. If you can accept it as your own last useless journey, you are also free to join my resurrection.... Do not make the pathetic error of "clinging to the old rugged cross."... This is not the gospel I intended to offer you. We have another journey to undertake ... (T-4.in.3:1-3,7,10-11).

**(2)** ***Father, I come to You today, because I would not follow any way but Yours. You are beside me. Certain is Your way. And I am grateful for Your holy gifts of certain sanctuary, and escape from everything that would obscure my love for God my Father and His holy Son.***

I thus recognize the way I chose to find God was specialness. I realize with gladness and gratitude I was wrong, and now happily choose to undo my mistake by

asking Jesus' help to walk through fear to love, the journey that leads me to God's holy Son.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 299**
**Eternal holiness abides in me.**

**(1) My holiness is far beyond my own ability to understand or know. Yet God, my Father, Who created it, acknowledges my holiness as His. Our Will, together, understands it. And Our Will, together, knows that it is so.**

As long as I think I am an individual, bodily self, I can never know my holiness, for the ego's self was made to conceal the holy Son that rests safely and comfortably in the right mind. His holiness can be known only by uniting my will with God's, which I do through the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. In this union I realize that everything I believed was false, because it was based on separation. We are more than familiar with these humbling lines, acceptance of which will bring us salvation:

> You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing. Salvation is easy just *because* it asks nothing you cannot give right now (T-18.IV.7:5-7).

All we are asked to give is acknowledgment of our *in*holiness, releasing our identification with it. This allows the mind's natural holiness to shine through unimpeded by guilt. Our part is simply to bring unholiness to holiness, illusion to truth, and fear to love. Recall this all-important statement from the text:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it; It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6:1-2)

**(2:1-4)** ***Father, my holiness is not of me. It is not mine to be destroyed by sin. It is not mine to suffer from attack. Illusions can obscure it, but can not put out its radiance, nor dim its light.***

The obscuring illusions of our thought system keep truth hidden in our minds, but they cannot remove its shining light. That is Jesus' real gospel. No matter how powerful the ego seems to be, it cannot take away the truth that is in us. When you are tempted to feel discouraged and despairing of hope, realize that you are saying the light of Christ in your mind has been extinguished – what the ego has always maintained was true: separation is reality. However, the happy truth is that nothing has changed, sin has not destroyed holiness, and our perfection as God's Son remains as it was created. Thus our gratitude wells up within us as we read:

**(2:5-8)** ***It stands forever perfect and untouched. In it are all things healed, for they remain as You created them. And I can know my holiness. For Holiness Itself created me, and I can know my Source because it is Your Will that You be known.***

The opening to "What It Says" in the Course's Preface states this well:

> Truth is unalterable, eternal and unambiguous. It can be unrecognized, but it cannot be changed. It applies to everything that God created, and only what He created is real. It is beyond learning because it is beyond time and process. It has

no opposite; no beginning and no end. It merely is (p. x).

What God created holy and perfect has never not been so, and for this Fact we are glad and thankful.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 300**

**Only an instant does this world endure.**

We see here another stylistic example of Jesus making a statement and then presenting the ego's interpretation. This is instructive, for it reminds us how often we do that with the Course. We often misinterpret Jesus' words in order to prove our thought system right, thus succeeding in making Jesus part of *our* thinking, and in the process misunderstand his teaching. The lesson begins by Jesus explaining how the ego would take this statement, "Only an instant does this world endure," and use it to convince us we are justified in feeling hopeless. The ego encourages us to conclude that perhaps we can be happy for an instant, but that is as far as we will get. In the end we die, hopeless because there was never any justification for hope. Needless to say, Jesus' hope-filled message teaches the opposite.

**(1:1) This is a thought which can be used to say that death and sorrow are the certain lot of all who come here, for their joys are gone before they are possessed, or even grasped.**

Implicit here is that there is nothing but this in the world. We eke out a few moments of happiness, and then it is snuffed out as easily as the light of a candle – the ego's understanding of this thought. The right-minded interpretation, however, is that the world endures only for an instant because that is all it is – nothing: "Not one note in Heaven's song was missed" (T-26.V.5:4). In truth that instant never occurred – a far too frightening thought because, if true, it means we do not exist. In order to keep our identities alive and well, therefore, we have to turn the Course upside down and have it say the exact opposite of what it means.

**(1:2-3) Yet this is also the idea that lets no false perception keep us in its hold, nor represent more than a passing cloud upon a sky eternally serene. And it is this serenity we seek, unclouded, obvious and sure, today.**

Again, the world endures but an instant because it comes from a thought that endured but an instant. In the same moment the separation seemed to happen, God gave the answer, a metaphor for the Atonement. Try to see how mightily you strive to prove the Atonement wrong by making this world and body, and our passage through time and space, real and present; how you do not want to let the illusion go and step outside the dream and look at it differently. To do that would mean never again taking yourself seriously as a special self – the ego's greatest fear.

**(2:1-3)** ***We seek Your holy world today. For we, Your loving Sons, have lost our way a while. But we have listened to Your Voice, and learned exactly what to do to be restored to Heaven and our true Identity.***

This is an admission of our mistake. The premise of every lesson in Part II – implicit or explicit – is the need to recognize our error, that we lost the way because we followed *our* way instead of the path of forgiveness Jesus holds out to us, and which leads ultimately to the real world.

**(2:4-5)** ***And we give thanks today the world endures but for an instant. We would go beyond that tiny instant to eternity.***

**Lesson 300**

Gratitude is the bottom line in our process, and in the end we are grateful for having been wrong. Thus do the separation and all its consequences disappear into the holy instant, and are gone forever.

Lesson 301

9. What Is the Second Coming?

This is a companion to the next summary, “What Is the Last Judgment?” These two terms are used infrequently in A Course in Miracles, and the Second Coming only in the early chapters of the text. There, Jesus explains that the First Coming of Christ was the creation, after which the Son seemed to fall asleep and wander into the ego’s dream of materiality, bringing about his need to be awakened. On the individual level, this awakening occurs through the attainment of the real world. The total undoing of the Son’s dream, however, is the Second Coming, when the entire Sonship has made the right choice, as one Son, to awaken to the Fact of its Identity as Christ. The Last (or Final) Judgment is our acceptance, again, as one Son, that we were wrong and the Holy Spirit was right. Here is the first of the two places in the text where Jesus discusses the Second Coming and revises the traditional Christian view:

> The First Coming of Christ is merely another name for the creation, for Christ is the Son of God. The Second Coming of Christ means nothing more than the end of the ego’s rule and the healing of the mind. I was created like you in the First, and I have called you to join with me in the Second. I am in charge of the Second Coming... (T-4.IV.10:1-4).

We can see that A Course in Miracles’ teachings about the Second Coming and Last Judgment are corrections for the Christian concepts, which are heavily laden with thoughts of fear and punishment. Every Christian has dreaded the time when Jesus would return—the Second Coming. His miraculous birth is his “First Coming,” and the Second is his arrival on clouds of glory to judge the living and the dead (Matthew 16:27, 25:31). God help you if you are on the wrong side! – and of course God will not help you if you are, as demonstrated in the well- known parable of the saved sheep and the condemned goats (Matthew 25:31-46).

This fear-lased notion of the Second Coming – the expectation of doom when Jesus returns and punishes our sins – is given a totally different meaning in A Course in Miracles. Jesus’ advent has nothing to do with him at all, except that he leads us to the Second Coming, which, again, is the awakening from a sleep that never happened in reality. It is the return of reason to the mind of the deluded and fearful Son, as we read in the second text reference:

> Do not fear the Last Judgment, but welcome it and do not wait, for the ego’s time is “borrowed” from your eternity. This is the Second Coming that was made for you as the First was created. The Second Coming is merely the return of sense. Can this possibly be fearful? (T-9.IV.9:2-5)

(1:1) Christ ’s Second Coming, which is sure as God, is merely the correction of mistakes, and the return of sanity.

In other words, the separation is no big deal. The Second Coming is nothing more than the simple recognition we were mistaken. As we now read, the Second Coming is all-inclusive; its universality meaning no member of the Sonship is excluded from its healing advent:

(1:2-3) It is a part of the condition that restores the never lost, and re -

establishes what is forever and forever true. It is the invitation to God's Word to take illusion's place; the willingness to let forgiveness rest upon all things without exception and without reserve.

"God's Word," the principle of the Atonement, takes the place of the illusion that the impossible actually happened. In truth, nothing displaced God's Son from his home, and he forever remains one with his Source: "Remember always that you cannot be anywhere except in the Mind of God" (T-9.VIII.5:3). Choosing his new Teacher, God's Son steps back to realize the world of time and space has been nothing more than a dream, with no effects upon reality. Because it is a dream there are no exceptions. All figures in the dream – sentient and non-sentient alike – are part of the one illusion, and therefore have no reality. Whether we speak of the denizens of Earth, Mars, or another galaxy makes no difference. Everything is seen as the same, because all illusions are the same. That fact is the only truth in an illusory world, as we see in this passage on form and content, illusion and reality:

> Reason will tell you that if form is not reality it must be an illusion, and is not there to see. And if you see it you must be mistaken, for you are seeing what can not be real as if it were. What cannot see beyond what is not there must be distorted perception, and must perceive illusions as the truth. Could it, then, recognize the truth? (T-22.III.7:4-7)

(2:1) It is the all-inclusive nature of Christ's Second Coming that permits it to embrace the world and hold you safe within its gentle advent, which encompasses all living things with you.

This summary was written during Advent, the penitential period before Christmas, which is why the word play on advent. At the Second Coming, God's Son is outside the dream, which allows his newly acquired vision to embrace the world of guilt with its love. The world and everything in it is seen differently by making it all the same (T-15.XI.10:11), for we see no separation between our brothers and our self.

(2:2-4) There is no end to the release the Second Coming brings, as God's creation must be limitless. Forgiveness lights the Second Coming's way, because it shines on everything as one. And thus is oneness recognized at last.

Forgiveness is our means of returning home. Choosing to hold onto grievances indicates that we do not want to return, which is why we must continually monitor our minds to see that behind every grievance, attack, and judgment, there is this underlying thought: "I choose not to awaken from the dream." Our anger disguises the underlying thought over which we feel so guilty and ashamed: "I want to romp in the hologram," to use my wife Gloria's words. "I do not want to go home and disappear into the Heart of God. I want to remain here. And if I suffer, that is fine with me, because there is still an I that suffers." It is not difficult to see that this is exactly the point of our attack, which conceals the memory of God's Oneness, and ours within His – my attack says you are separate from me and we are not one. Again, we need only look at our attack thoughts without guilt – with open eyes and total honesty – and recognize their cost. This is forgiveness, which undoes separation's attack by shining its light of salvation on our special relationships, reminding us it shines on us as well:

translate the abstract into the specific. Thus Jesus tells us that Love is the End we seek, and also the Means that will take us There. He is not asking us to accept truth in its fullness, for it is still too threatening, but he does ask us to accept truth's specific reflection, which undoes the shadow of illusion we have made into ourselves. However, the Love of God remains our true reality and ultimate goal, and at the same time is our companion and comfort as we make our way to Him: "He the End we seek," but also "the Means by which we go to Him." In this sense, we have salvation's cake and enjoy it, too. We are thus not asked to give up our individual identity, but only to have it be reinterpreted by the loving presence that walks with us each step along the way.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 303**
**The holy Christ is born in me today.**

This is a most beautiful lesson. Written at Christmas time, its theme is the familiar one of being born again. It is borrowed from John's gospel (3:3,7), the well-known account of the Jewish leader Nicodemus stealing away to be with Jesus. "Born again" in *A Course in Miracles* is not meant in the Fundamentalist sense of religious conversion, but to denote "making another choice." Thus in choosing to see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus we are born again by virtue of having awakened to the truth that God is our Source, not the ego. Shifting from the ego to Jesus as our teacher is thus the underlying theme of this lesson, movingly expressed in the symbolism of Christmas.

**(1:1-3) Watch with me, angels, watch with me today. Let all God's holy Thoughts surround me, and be still with me while Heaven's Son is born. Let earthly sounds be quiet, and the sights to which I am accustomed disappear.**

The quieting of earthly sounds involves letting go of our investment in the ego and in listening to its raucous shrieks. The opening of Helen's "The Holiness of Christmas," written on Christmas Day, depicts the quietness of the mind's manger, wherein our Self is reborn:

> Christmas is holy only if you come
> In silence to the manger, to behold
> Your holiness made visible to you.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 97)

**(1:4-6) Let Christ be welcomed where He is at home. And let Him hear the sounds He understands, and see but sights that show His Father's Love. Let Him no longer be a stranger here, for He is born again in me today.**

Recall this lovely theme as it was expressed in Lesson 182, where Christ is born again as a little Child each time a wanderer leaves his home and decides to return (W-pI.182.10). Christ is thus welcomed in our right minds, portrayed in the conclusion of Helen's poem:

> ... let the door to Heaven open wide
> And hear the angels sing of peace on earth,
> For Christmas is the time of your rebirth.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 97)

**(2)** ***Your Son is welcome, Father. He has come to save me from the evil self I made. He is the Self that You have given me. He is but what I really am in truth. He is the Son You love above all things. He is my Self as You created me. It is not Christ that can be crucified Safe in Your Arms let me receive Your Son.***

We are saved from "the evil self" by the change in mind that undoes the ego belief that sin and guilt are real, and love and peace illusory. We have seen ourselves and others as we could never be – a faulty image of God's Son – each time we perceive crucified victims anywhere in the Sonship. Jesus helps us realize we were simply mistaken – our evil dreams of murder, suffering, and pain have had no effect upon our

reality as God's beloved Son, Who never left the safety of his Father's Arms.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 304**
**Let not my world obscure the sight of Christ.**

We come now to three lessons on vision – "the sight of Christ," born of the Atonement principle that sees no separation. Thus any perception that reflects separation must be illusory.

**(1:1-2) I can obscure my holy sight, if I intrude my world upon it. Nor can I behold the holy sights Christ looks upon, unless it is His vision that I use.**

We are the ones who intrude our world on Christ's vision – "The world stands like a block before Christ's face" (C-4.4:1). Vision, of course, does not disappear; but our Self seems to when we choose a thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, and then a world that substitutes for the truth in our minds.

**(1:3-4) Perception is a mirror, not a fact. And what I look on is my state of mind, reflected outward.**

This is one of the more important themes in *A Course in Miracles.* What we seem to perceive outside is not a fact, but a mirror of our own state of mind. The right-minded value of the world and its special relationships – our bodily preoccupations – have only one true purpose: to remind us that what we are seeing outside is nothing more than a shadow of what we first made real inside. Their value is as a classroom in which our Teacher instructs us in the proper way of understanding what we are seeing, correcting the ego's illusory interpretations:

> ... everyone sees only what he thinks he is. And what your sight would show you, you will understand *because* it is the truth. Only your vision can convey to you what you can see. It reaches you directly, without a need to be interpreted to you.... Nor will it ever be made understandable by an interpreter you cannot understand (T-22.I.5:2-5, 7).

**(1:5-6) I would bless the world by looking on it through the eyes of Christ. And I will look upon the certain signs that all my sins have been forgiven me.**

This lovely passage from the text describes the blessed world of light that vision looks upon:

> In you is all of Heaven. Every leaf that falls is given life in you. Each bird that ever sang will sing again in you. And every flower that ever bloomed has saved its perfume and its loveliness for you. What aim can supersede the Will of God and of His Son, that Heaven be restored to him for whom it was created as his only home?... This can you bring to all the world, and all the thoughts that entered it and were mistaken for a little while. How better could your own mistakes be brought to truth than by your willingness to bring the light of Heaven with you, as you walk beyond the world of darkness into light? (T-25.IV.5:1-5, 11-12)

**(2)** ***You lead me from the darkness to the light; from sin to holiness. Let me forgive, and thus receive salvation for the world. It is Your gift, my Father, given***

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 307**
**Conflicting wishes cannot be my will.**

Being in a perpetual state of conflict is common to all of us. Part of us recognizes our misery and wants to return home. As its students, we recognize in A Course in Miracles our form of truth, and so we sincerely want to practice and live it. Yet we don't. Thus the conflict within our split minds: one part wants to return to our Self, while the other part – usually out of awareness – is terrified of losing its identity and being wrong.

**(1:1-3)** ***Father, Your Will is mine, and only that There is no other will for me to have Let me not try to make another will, for it is senseless and will cause me pain.***

We have seen how Jesus hopes to gain our allegiance through our selfishness. We do not want to be unhappy, nor do we want to be in pain. He tells us that if we let go of judgment and our stubborn insistence we are right, we will be truly happy. "You do not think like that now," he tells us, "because you think you know better than I. But your pain comes from thinking you have a will that is in conflict with mine, and so you believe it is in conflict with God's." That belief is how the separation began, and our acceptance of the Atonement – "Your Will is mine, and only that" – is its end.

**(1:4-5)** ***Your Will alone can bring me happiness, and only Yours exists. If I would have what only You can give, I must accept Your Will for me, and enter into peace where conflict is impossible, Your Son is one with You in being and in will, and nothing contradicts the holy truth that I remain as You created me.***

Again, Jesus wants us to understand and accept

is that His Son be One, and united with Him in His Oneness. That is why healing is the beginning of the recognition that your will is His (T-11.I.11:6-9).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 308**
**This instant is the only time there is.**

Unlike the ego's present, the holy instant – the true present – is outside time, wherein we suspend belief in the reality of the ego's thought system of separation: sin, guilt, and fear.

**(1:1-3) I have conceived of time in such a way that I defeat my aim. If I elect to reach past time to timelessness, I must change my perception of what time is for. Time's purpose cannot be to keep the past and future one.**

The ego's purpose for time is to prove its thought system of sin, guilt, and fear is true, for linear time is but their shadowy projection. Having chosen the ego's purpose as our own, we hold onto the sins of the past, especially reveling in holding onto the sins of *someone else's* past, whether they were committed within the past five minutes, five months, five years, or five decades. Thus is sin proven real, but existing in another. Our experience of guilt in what the ego calls the present justifies our belief in sin, and leads to guilt's projection, followed by the belief in future punishment. That is why we love to be unhappy, and why we do the very things we will fail at so we will be reprimanded. Punishment proves time is real, as are sin, guilt, and fear. Thus time – past, present, and future – is in league with the ego, which has proven that Jesus lied and *A Course in Miracles* does not work. We need to see this makes no sense, for its insanity leaves us miserable and unhappy. Yet there is another use for time – to help us realize there is no sin in the past, and so there is nothing to forgive. Moreover, guilt in the present is not justified, and so there is no basis for fear of future punishment.

**(1:4-5) The only interval in which I can be saved from time is now. For in this instant has forgiveness come to set me free.**

No one can save me – not God, Jesus, *A Course in Miracles,* nor my special loves. Only the decision-making part of my mind can help me by choosing the Holy Spirit in the holy instant – "the only interval in which I can be saved." Forgiveness is the Course's means of bringing the problem from the world where I placed it, back to my mind where I sought to hide it.

**(1:6-8) The birth of Christ is now, without a past or future. He has come to give His present blessing to the world, restoring it to timelessness and love. And love is ever-present, here and now.**

Jesus continues the Christmas theme with this reference to the "birth of Christ," the change of mind that occurs now – not in the past or some unforeseen future, but in the holy instant:

> The holy instant is truly the time of Christ. For in this liberating instant no guilt is laid upon the Son of God, and his unlimited power is thus restored to him.... The time of Christ is the time appointed for the gift of freedom, offered to everyone. And by your acceptance of it, you offer it to everyone (T-15.X.2: 1-2; 3:6-7).

**(2)** ***Thanks for this instant, Father. It is now I am redeemed. This instant is***

***the time You have appointed for Your Son's release, and for salvation of the world in him.***

This is echoed in the following from the text, describing the limitlessness of God's Son:

> In the holy instant... you experience only the attraction of God. Accepting it as undivided you join Him wholly, in an instant, for you would place no limits on your union with Him (T-15.IX.7:3-4).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 309**
**I will not fear to look within today.**

This lesson is a reflection of "The Fear to Look Within" (T-21.IV), which describes the ego's counsel that what is within us is not eternal innocence, but eternal guilt and sin, so horrid that if we ever looked in our minds we would be destroyed, as we read again:

> Loudly the ego tells you not to look inward, for if you do your eyes will light on sin, and God will strike you blind (T-21.IV.2:3).

Yet the truth is that if we look within we would find only the Atonement, which we sought to bury under veils of sin, guilt, and fear.

**(1:1-3) Within me is eternal innocence, because it is God's Will that it be there forever and forever. I, His Son, whose will is limitless as His Own, can will no change in this. For to deny my Father's Will is to deny my own.**

My innocence as God's Son is beyond all change, and so I have never ceased to remain at one with the Will that created me as part of Itself:

> If God's Will for you is complete peace and joy, unless you experience only this you must be refusing to acknowledge His Will. His Will does not vacillate, being changeless forever. When you are not at peace it can only be because you do not believe you are in Him. Yet He is All in all. His peace is complete, and you must be included in it (T-8.IV.1:1-5).

**(1:4-8) To look within is but to find my will as God created it, and as it is. I fear to look within because I think I made another will that is not true, and made it real. Yet it has no effects. Within me is the Holiness of God. Within me is the memory of Him.**

The will we made is the false self the ego equates with sin, behind which is the wrathful God Who wants nothing less than to destroy us as punishment for what we did to Him. It is imperative as we work with *A Course in Miracles* to understand that the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear is a ploy, part of its strategy to convince us that the mind is dangerous, and that we are only safe outside it in the body – thus our fear of looking within. However, the real fear is that we would find nothing within except the resplendent light of God's Son, in the presence of which the ego disappears:

> The Holy Spirit teaches only that the "sin" of self-replacement on the throne of God is not a source of guilt. What cannot happen can have no effects to fear.... Madness may be your choice, but not your reality. Never forget the Love of God, Who has remembered you. For it is quite impossible that He could ever let His Son drop from the loving Mind wherein he was created, and where his abode was fixed in perfect peace forever (T-14.III.15:3-4, 6-8).

**(2)** ***The step I take today, my Father, is my sure release from idle dreams of sin. Your altar stands serene and undefiled It is the holy altar to my Self, and there I find my true Identity.***

The altar is the mind, which we believe we sullied with sin and guilt, then destroyed with fear. Yet, all that is in our minds is the Atonement principle, serenely reminding us that nothing happened. Jesus asks us not to be afraid to look within, nor to fear the anger, upset, sickness, and anxiety that are part of the ego's strategy, with no real justification at all. Their purpose is to keep our gaze focused on what is outside, and nothing better focuses our attention than pain, suffering, and specialness in any of its myriad forms.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 310**
**In fearlessness and love I spend today.**

The ego, of course, would have me spend this day in fear and hate, believing it is justified. I therefore am afraid of you because you are wicked and sinful. Moreover, I want you to be abusive because that proves the separation is real, but you are responsible for it, not me.

**(1:1)** ***This day, my Father, would I spend with You, as You have chosen all my days should be.***

Jesus uses this symbolism of God as Father to teach that our day should be spent in learning lessons of forgiveness. God does not choose anything for us, but forgiveness is the means by which His memory is restored to our awareness through the Holy Spirit.

**(1:2-4)** ***And what I will experience is not of time at all. The joy that comes to me is not of days nor hours, for it comes from Heaven to Your Son. This day will be Your sweet reminder to remember You, Your gracious calling to Your holy Son, the sign Your grace has come to me, and that it is Your Will I be set free today.***

In *A Course in Miracles,* joy has nothing to do with anything external, which is most often associated with what makes the body feel happy. True joy, on the other hand, is the result of learning our reality is not of this world, and comes as we gratefully awaken to that thought.

Paragraph 2 begins with another plea from Jesus that we spend the day with him:

**(2:1) We spend this day together, you and I.**

We spend the day with Jesus by choosing him to instruct us in the proper way of perceiving our lives. We choose him as our teacher, not to ask his help that we be wonderfully happy here, because part of us actually wants to be wonderfully unhappy. We ask his help, rather, that we perceive the world as a vehicle for returning to our minds, that we may see what is there and thus make an informed choice against our unhappiness, and for our quiet joy.

**(2:2-4) And all the world joins with us in our song of thankfulness and joy to Him Who gave salvation to us, and Who set us free. We are restored to peace and holiness. There is no room in us for fear today, for we have welcomed love into our hearts.**

This is another reference to the verse from John's first letter, "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18). When we choose Jesus as our teacher, we are filled with his love and fear is gone. It is, in fact, impossible to experience fear in the presence of love, which is why the ego's secret goal for us is to be afraid – its secret weapon against love:

> For though the ego takes many forms, it is always the same idea. What is not love is always fear, and nothing else (T-15.X.4:4-5).

Thus Jesus asks us to choose his love over the ego's fear. Once chosen, it

becomes our savior from fear, which cannot touch us as long as we identify with his love, which unites the Sonship in its peace and holiness. With love in our hearts, how can we be afraid?

> Your gift unto your brother has given me [Jesus] the certainty our union will be soon. Share, then, this faith with me, and know that it is justified. There is no fear in perfect love *because* it knows no sin, and it must look on others as on itself. Looking with charity within, what can it fear without? (T-20.III.11:1-4)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 311**
**10. What Is the Last Judgment?**

In the Second Coming, God's Son realizes he is one Son – not a fragment – and thus makes the Last Judgment that undoes the original judgment of separation. We need to remember that *A Course in Miracles* is focused on undoing the error, which originated in the one Son's judgment against God and His Voice, and for the ego. At the very end of the Atonement process, again as one Son, we look at the ego and the Holy Spirit, and remember to laugh as we recall our original judgment that we now happily correct. It is thus a synonym for our correction within the dream, which undoes the dream entirely:

> The Last Judgment is generally thought of as a procedure undertaken by God. Actually it will be undertaken by my brothers with my help. It is a final healing ... The Last Judgment might be called a process of right evaluation. It simply means that everyone will finally come to understand what is worthy and what is not.... The first step toward freedom involves a sorting out of the false from the true. This is a process of separation in the constructive sense, and reflects the true meaning of the Apocalypse (T-2.VIII.3:1-3, 5-6; 4:1-2).

In this summary, however, Jesus uses the term *Last Judgment* in another way as well, speaking of the Last or Final Judgment of God. This has nothing to do with correction or undoing; indeed it has nothing to do with the world at all. God's Judgment simply expresses the truth that is beyond the dream: God loves us, we love Him, and we are one in that Love. Recall the previously cited opening of *The Song of Prayer,* which beautifully expresses this shared love in the image of Heaven's song of gratitude:

> ... the song the Son sings to the Father, Who returns the thanks it offers Him unto the Son. Endless the harmony, and endless, too, the joyous concord of the Love They give forever to Each Other.... The Love They share is what all prayer will be throughout eternity, when time is done. For such it was before time seemed to be (S-1.in.1:2-3, 7-8).

Just as we had seen with the *Second Coming,* the *Last Judgment* in Christianity elicits fear, guilt, and a certainty – despite what our conscious minds tell us – that in the end God will punish us. Thus the same term is now used to symbolize fear's undoing, as it points to God's non-judgmental Love that casts out all fear.

**(1:1) Christ's Second Coming gives the Son of God this gift: to hear the Voice for God proclaim that what is false is false, and what is true has never changed.**

That is the proclamation we chose to deny at the beginning. The false is the ego's thought system that proclaims the reality of the separation and our individuality; the truth states that nothing changed in Heaven, for nothing happened. This echoes the beginning of Chapter 31:

> ...what was never true is not true now, and never will be. The impossible has not occurred, and can have no effects. And that is what is false can not be true, and what is true can not be false ... (T-31.I.1:2-4, 7).

This of course is the Atonement principle, which teaches us that we only believed we left God. In truth, again, nothing happened. We turned away from the Holy Spirit's proclamation at the beginning because we liked the idea we were on our own; how wonderful it was to be free – or what we thought was freedom. However, at some point – outside time – we realize we made a mistake. This recognition takes only an instant, even though in this world it may appear to take billions of years. In that holy instant, the world that seemed to spin out from the original mistake disappears. The reader may recall that in the text Jesus compares time to a huge carpet that rolled out, and then is rolled back by the Atonement:

> Time seems to go in one direction, but when you reach its end it will roll up like a long carpet spread along the past behind you, and will disappear (T-13.I.3:5).

**(1:2) And this the judgment is in which perception ends.**

Our Last Judgment is the culmination of the Atonement process. Jesus expressed it this way in the text:

> Nothing the Son of God believes can be destroyed. But what is truth to him must be brought to the last comparison that he will ever make; the last evaluation that will be possible, the final judgment upon this world. It is the judgment of the truth upon illusion, of knowledge on perception: "It has no meaning, and does not exist" (T-26.III.4:1-3).

**(1:3) At first you see a world that has accepted this as true, projected from a now corrected mind.**

The world we see – the real world – emanates from our recognition that the Atonement principle is true. Incidentally, this passage is one of the few places in *A Course in Miracles* where Jesus uses what would seem to be the wrong word. The "right" word here would have been *extended,* because almost always *extension* pertains to God's Love or the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, which is what we are asked to choose. Likewise, *projection* almost always pertains to the ego and its guilt. The value of this seeming inconsistency is that it helps us not be wedded to the literal word. One thing that can trip students up with this course is fault-finding, complaining that Jesus does not use words the same way throughout. Imagine how we would ruin our enjoyment of Shakespeare, for example, if we insisted his words be taken literally. We would lose all touch with the poetry and its underlying meaning. This is true of *A Course in Miracles* as well. Therefore, we find here another instance where Jesus does not take his forms seriously; nor does he want us to – the *content* yes, but not the *form.* This was the kind of thing that drove Helen crazy, by the way, because she was a stickler for form. Yet Jesus specifically told her not to be concerned with this – the *content* of meaning was sacrosanct, not the *form* of the words.

**(1:4) And with this holy sight, perception gives a silent blessing and then disappears, its goal accomplished and its mission done.**

**Lesson 311**

We accept the Atonement and are in the presence of God's Love, outside the dream, aware that everything here is illusory. This lasts but an instant, as God reaches down and lifts us unto Himself. This is God's last step, which is expressed in the closing lines of Helen's familiar poem, "The Shining Instant," where the healed Son of God – Christ awakens from the dream that was the world, which gently disappears from the final holy instant and into God:

> For Christ will stay
> Until the faint and final echo dies
> And stillness claims the world.
>
> And time is over. Even now He makes
> Your way to Him. This instant is the door
> To that in which the world will disappear
> In Him, as He will vanish into One
> Who will remain forever. In this clear
> And shining instant all of time is done.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 74)

**(2:1-2) The final judgment on the world contains no condemnation. For it sees the world as totally forgiven, without sin and wholly purposeless.**

This refers to the Son of God who is outside the dream. He sees no condemnation in the world because he realizes there is no world. He looks on figures in the dream, and says: "What is there to condemn?" He is like an adult looking at the toy soldiers with which a child plays – some have been defeated, others are triumphant; some are good, others bad. Yet the adult does not share these perceptions and judgments because they are make believe. The child may believe he is involved in something serious, but the adult knows it is fantasy. That is the case when we forgive, and is the meaning of the Last Judgment that ends fear and condemnation.

**(2:3-4) Without a cause, and now without a function in Christ's sight, it merely slips away to nothingness. There it was born, and there it ends as well.**

When you join with the Holy Spirit there is no sin of separation, and therefore no cause. Without a cause there is no effect – the ego's thought system of sacrifice – which means there is no physical universe. Therefore, the world was born and will end in the mind that had erred – the First Judgment – and now undoes its mistake in the Last Judgment, making way for Heaven:

> Its time is done, and in the little space it seemed to own is nothingness. The dream has gone, and all its dreams of gifts have disappeared as well.... Beyond the dream, reaching to everything, embracing all, creation and Creator still remain in perfect harmony and perfect love *(The Gifts of God,* p. 122).

**(2:5) And all the figures in the dream in which the world began go with it.**

A pregnant sentence indeed! The spatial and temporal universe consists of nothing but dream figures. When you step outside the dream, where Jesus is and

always was – remember Christianity's original mistake of bringing him into the body's dream – you look with him on the world and share his gentle smile, knowing that what you see are children's games, with no real consequence. Recall this passage from the text on the hallucinatory figures in the dream we call life, and how they disappear when looked at through the eyes of vision:

> What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it?
>
> Hallucinations disappear when they are recognized for what they are. This is the healing and the remedy. Believe them not and they are gone (T-20.VIII.7:3-8:3).

**(2:6) Bodies now are useless, and will therefore fade away, because the Son of God is limitless.**

Jesus often reminds us that the body's purpose is a classroom. When we have learned its lessons, the body is no longer needed, for without a purpose it simply disappears.

**(3:1) You who believed that God's Last Judgment would condemn the world to hell along with you, accept this holy truth ...**

This belief is in the condemnatory Last Judgment of Christianity. Yet it is a thought that is in everyone's mind, regardless of religious persuasion. If you believe you are in a body, it is because you destroyed Heaven and therefore God will rise from the ashes and destroy you. Thus to the ego, God's Last Judgment will snatch the life you took from Him, leaving you lifeless – what we fearfully know as death. This insane thinking is corrected by the Atonement:

> The term "Last Judgment" is frightening not only because it has been projected onto God, but also because of the association of "last" with death.... If the meaning of the Last Judgment is objectively examined, it is quite apparent that it is really the doorway to life.... You can ... apply it meaningfully and at any time to everything you have made, and retain in your memory only what is creative and good. This is what your right-mindedness cannot but dictate. The purpose of time is solely to "give you time" to achieve this judgment.... When everything you retain is lovable, there is no reason for fear to remain with you. This is your part in the Atonement (T-2.VIII.5:1, 3, 6-8,10-11).

Jesus now tells us about God's real Judgment, which is not the Last Judgment of the Son, but the Judgment that always was, and that says simply: "My Love for you and yours for Me are unified, and nothing can ever come between Us." This is the truth, as we read:

**(3:1) God's Judgment is the gift of the Correction He bestowed on all your errors, freeing you from them, and all effects they ever seemed to have.**

The reflection of God's Judgment, His Love, is the Holy Spirit's Presence in our minds – the memory we took with us into the dream when we first believed we had fallen asleep:

> ... the Final Judgment will not come until it is no longer associated with fear. One day each one will welcome it, and on that very day it will be given him. He will hear his sinlessness proclaimed around and around the world, setting it free as God's Final Judgment on him is received. This is the Judgment in which salvation lies. This is the Judgment that will set him free. This is the Judgment in which all things are freed with him Time pauses as eternity comes near, and silence lies across the world that everyone may hear this Judgment of the Son of God:
>
> *Holy are you, eternal, free and whole, at peace forever in the Heart of God. Where is the world, and where is sorrow now?* (M-15.1:4-12)

**(3:2) To fear God's saving grace is but to fear complete release from suffering, return to peace, security and happiness, and union with your own Identity.**

In this important statement, Jesus tells us how fearful we are of God's grace, which is an aspect of His Love in the dream (W-pI.169); how fearful we are to be released from suffering, and to be happy and safe; how fearful to be one with our Self. This fear is justified from the ego's point of view, for if we accepted the oneness that is our happiness, we would no longer exist as special individuals. To truly understand *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, we must realize that the bottom line is our fear of being without unhappiness, suffering, and abuse. We thus fear being in love's presence, for our Identity as God's true Son would instantly be restored to awareness as the memory of our former self disappears.

**(4:1) God's Final Judgment is as merciful as every step in His appointed plan to bless His Son, and call him to return to the eternal peace He shares with him.**

Recall that in *A Course in Miracles,* the term *God's appointed plan* is not meant literally, as though He actually has a plan, but is rather used as a symbol of the Atonement – that we would all come to realize we made a mistake, change our minds, and make the corrected judgment with the Holy Spirit. Thus we will have accepted the Atonement for ourselves, having chosen resurrection over murder:

> These things await us all, but we are not prepared as yet to welcome them with joy. As long as any mind remains possessed of evil dreams, the thought of hell is real. God's teachers have the goal of wakening the minds of those asleep, and seeing there the vision of Christ's face to take the place of what they dream. The thought of murder is replaced with blessing. Judgment is laid by, and given Him Whose function judgment is. And in His Final Judgment is restored the truth about the holy Son of God. He is redeemed, for he has heard God's Word and understood its meaning. He is free because he let God's Voice proclaim the truth.

> And all he sought before to crucify are resurrected with him, by his side, as he prepares with them to meet his God (M-28.6).

**(4:2) Be not afraid of love.**

Jesus is indicating to us that he knows we fear love; otherwise he would not tell us *not* to be afraid of it. Yet we do not snap our fingers and instantly decide not to be afraid, but rather become aware of how fearful we are of love, and bring that thought to Jesus. Asking for help is now meaningful, because we have identified the problem – not what another has done, but what we believe we have done to deserve punishment. Thus we need not fear the correction of Jesus' judgment:

> Do not fear the Last Judgment, but welcome it and do not wait, for the ego's time is "borrowed" from your eternity (T-9.IV.9:2).

**(4:3-6) For it alone can heal all sorrow, wipe away all tears, and gently waken from his dream of pain the Son whom God acknowledges as His. Be not afraid of this. Salvation asks you give it welcome. And the world awaits your glad acceptance, which will set it free.**

The world awaits your acceptance because the world is in your mind – not separate from you. Therefore, if you truly want to be happy, with sorrow healed and tears wiped away, do not look to anything external, for that will not accomplish what you want; perhaps momentarily, but the world will not remove pain's underlying cause. Only the love of right-minded judgment will succeed in waking you from your nightmares of hate and pain:

> Nothing in this world can give this peace, for nothing in this world is wholly shared. Perfect perception can merely show you what is capable of being wholly shared. It can also show you the results of sharing, while you still remember the results of not sharing. The Holy Spirit points quietly to the contrast, knowing that you will filially let Him judge the difference for you, allowing Him to demonstrate which must be true. He has perfect faith in your final judgment, because He knows that He will make it for you (T-13.XI.4:1-5).

Now the lesson's beautiful, inspiring, and comforting end:

**(5) This is God's Final Judgment: "You are still My holy Son, forever innocent, forever loving and forever loved, as limitless as your Creator, and completely changeless and forever pure. Therefore awaken and return to Me. I am your Father and you are My Son."**

This undoes the thought system that says God is not our Father, for the ego is our source and we its child. We are thus asked to bring thoughts of our illegitimacy, our false birth and its effects—anger, sickness, and pain—to the truth Jesus holds out to us. Only by bringing the darkness to the light can our pain be truly undone. Jesus' gentle fairy tale has at last corrected the ego's—God the harsh avenger has become God the loving Judge—and we awaken from the dream of judgment to God's first, only, and last Judgment: "I am your Father and you are My Son."

## LESSON 311
## I judge all things as I would have them be.

This lesson and the three that follow, 311 through 314, are of one piece, centering on the dynamics of the ego thought system and its undoing: We first look within our minds, choose the ego as our teacher, and then project out its judgment, perceiving in others what is really within us. Ultimately realizing our mistake, we ask the Holy Spirit for help to accept His correction. Our mind's mistake has thus been brought to the holy instant, and we are healed. Now Lesson 311:

"I judge all things as I would have them be" is true from the ego's point of view as well as the Holy Spirit's. If I want to reinforce my belief in the reality of the separation, that is how I will perceive and judge the world. If, on the other hand, I want to know I was mistaken – the separation from God never happened and therefore nothing here is real – I perceive and judge only the correction.

**(1:1-3) Judgment was made to be a weapon used against the truth. It separates what it is being used against, and sets it off as if it were a thing apart. And then it makes of it what you would have it be.**

We defend ourselves against the truth through judging, just as we do through sickness, guilt, and depression. We set off the special person or object we judge as desirable or undesirable, seen through the lens of our specialness. Yet this judgment comes from our original self-condemnation that we exist by having stolen God's Self and life, appropriating Them for ourselves and leaving Him lifeless. Projecting our own judgment, we then see others taking from us what we secretly believe we took from them, and even more secretly believe we took from God.

**(1:4) It judges what it cannot understand, because it cannot see totality and therefore judges falsely.**

The only way we can see totality is to release the thought system of separation that diminished it. If we originally were part of wholeness and now believe we exist outside it, totality can no longer be totality, which means we can never know it.

**(1:5-6) Let us not use it today, but make a gift of it to Him Who has a different use for it. He will relieve us of all the agony of all the judgments we have made against ourselves, and re-establish peace of mind by giving us God's Judgment of His Son.**

In this important statement, Jesus does not say we should not judge. He tells us, rather, to bring our judgment to the Holy Spirit, our dark cornerstones to His light. Moreover, it is pointless even to try to give up judgment, for if we do, it is only because we first made it real, which ensures its survival. We thus ask Jesus' help to look at the consequences of judgment, not only because of the harm it brings to others within the dream, but because of the harm it brings to us by keeping us in the dream. The Holy Spirit's value, therefore, does not lie in telling us what to do with our lives, but simply in being the loving Presence to which we go with our judgments. When we see that these do not give us what we want, they are undone. The Holy Spirit is thus the beacon of light that represents the truth of God's Judgment: His Love has never changed, despite our

judgment against God's Son.

**(2)** ***Father, we wait with open mind today, to hear Your Judgment of the Son You love. We do not know him, and we cannot judge. And so we let Your Love decide what he whom You created as Your Son must be.***

We hear God's Judgment that we are His beloved Son, by realizing he is one. Our judgments have sought to replace that truth with the ego's judgment that God's Son is fragmented and sinful. How, then, can we possibly hear the Holy Spirit telling us about God's Son if we insist someone has treated us unfairly? Bringing our judgments to His, again, is how they disappear.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 312**
**I see all things as I would have them be.**

Since I judge all things as I would have them be (Lesson 311), I see all things as I would have them be. Remember that *projection makes perception* – what I judge in my mind I project, and that is what I perceive and make real.

**(1:1-2) Perception follows judgment. Having judged, we therefore see what we would look upon.**

The judgment of separation occurs in the mind, not the brain. Projecting it out in order to keep it, we judge the bodies around us: good or evil, victim or victimizer. We think we judge others, but we really judge a shadowy fragment projected from the thought of judgment within. Jesus helps us understand this dynamic and our need for it, which enables us to change our minds.

**(1:3) For sight can merely serve to offer us what we would have.**

We have read this many times before. The body's eyes do not see, but simply report what they have been instructed to seek and find. They cannot see on their own because they are nothing, seeing nothing. Thus within the dream we have the illusion of seeing, for our sensory organs perceive the mind's projected illusion of separation they were made to preserve and protect.

**(1:4-6) It is impossible to overlook what we would see and fail to see what we have chosen to behold. How surely, therefore, must the real world come to greet the holy sight of anyone who takes the Holy Spirit's purpose as his goal for seeing. And he cannot fail to look upon what Christ would have him see, and share Christ's Love for what he looks upon.**

This principle works both ways. From the ego's point of view, this is an example of what Jesus refers to in *The Song of Prayer* as "forgiveness-to-destroy" (S-2.II). We make sin real, and then pretend to forgive it. This is the question Jesus asks there, as he does now: "How could you overlook what you have made real?" To do so is to pretend what you have seen is not there. Yet since you have seen it, your pretense is merely denial. Therefore, again, the sin we choose to behold reflects the sin we have chosen to believe in. In the right mind, however, once we choose Jesus as our teacher, we look through his eyes of unity, love, and forgiveness, and that will be what we perceive as real in the world. Therefore how could we overlook it, when we have seen it?

**(2)** ***I have no purpose for today except to look upon a liberated world, set free from all the judgments I have made. Father, this is Your Will for me today, and therefore it must be my goal as well***

I thus orient my day around this new purpose of learning the Holy Spirit's lessons. Recall this statement from the end of the manual for teachers:

> Prepare for this each morning, remember God when you can throughout the day, ask the Holy Spirit's help when it is feasible to do so, and thank Him for His guidance at night (M-29.5:9).

In this way a day of freedom and peace is ensured, for I have chosen their Voice to be my Guide for perception.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 313**
**Now let a new perception come to me.**

This is another important lesson, which follows the two preceding ones. Recall that we begin with a negative judgment about ourselves, which leads us to make up a negative world perceived outside ourselves. We eventually realize there must be another way, because ours is making us too unhappy. We thus pray: "Now let a new perception come to me." This is not meant to invoke a magical perception that comes to us, for we come to it. The source of this new perception – Christ's vision – is our right minds. We are the ones who wandered away by choosing against it; therefore, we are the ones who must return and choose again.

**(1:1-5)** ***Father, there is a vision which beholds all things as sinless, so that fear has gone, and where it was is love invited in. And love will come wherever it is asked. This vision is Your gift. The eyes of Christ look on a world forgiven. In His sight are all its sins forgiven, for He sees no sin in anything He looks upon.***

Love and fear are mutually exclusive, and cannot be present simultaneously. The same is true of forgiveness and judgment. Asking Jesus for help means looking through his forgiving eyes at love's reflection, and in that vision we are forgiven and healed, and the world along with us.

**(1:6)** ***Now let His true perception come to me, that I may waken from the dream of sin and look within upon my sinlessness, which You have kept completely undefiled upon the altar to Your holy Son, the Self with which I would identify.***

The holy altar is our minds. Our inherent sinlessness has been kept pure and undefiled through the Holy Spirit's Presence, reminding us that reality is unchanged, our insane beliefs to the contrary. The key phrase in this passage is "look within." We cannot see our sinlessness until we first look at the image of evil, darkness, and sin we believe is there. Only then do we realize this image is a thin veil that barely contains the light of sinlessness behind it. However, we must first look at the darkness within, choosing to do so by asking Jesus' help to look differently on the special relationships we made to be the repository of sin.

**(2:1-4) Let us today behold each other in the sight of Christ. How beautiful we are! How holy and how loving! Brother, come and join with me today.**

If you want this vision, you must let Jesus teach you to see Christ's light in everyone – not only in certain holy people – but in everyone you have condemned and judged against. How beautiful the Sonship becomes when it is seen as it really is – *one!*

**(2:5-6) We save the world when we have joined. For in our vision it becomes as holy as the light in us.**

Jesus' concept of saving the world cannot be understood from the body's perspective, but only from outside the dream where we realize God has one Son, and that the world that seemed to arise from his mind has never left its source. If that mind believes it is separated, the separated world will seem real. Yet when the mind is healed,

there is no separation and the world is saved from our belief in it. Again, this makes no sense from the perspective of the world, unless we adopt the megalomaniacal position that we changed our minds and the world is saved because of *us.* However, this *us* is part of the world and the crucifixion of God's Son. The world's salvation occurs only when we are beyond the dream with Jesus, leaving our crucified self behind.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 314**
**I seek a future different from the past.**

This is the last of the series on the ego and its undoing. The emphasis here is on our future expectations. To the ego, a sinful past results in a guilty present and inevitable punishment in the future. To seek a future different from the past means to see the future as the extension of God's timeless Love, which means there is no future. Lesson 194 taught that placing the future in God's Hands corrects the ego's belief that in them we will be destroyed because of our sins. This lesson helps us undo that strange ego concept.

**(1:1) From new perception of the world there comes a future very different from the past.**

Once we choose the new perception (Lesson 313), we look at everything differently – from the perspective of timelessness extended into the dream of time. In Lesson 184, Jesus spoke of our need to use the world's symbols, but without regarding them as real. Thus we use time's symbols, yet knowing our reality is outside them.

**(1:2-3) The future now is recognized as but extension of the present. Past mistakes can cast no shadows on it, so that fear has lost its idols and its images, and being formless, it has no effects.**

Love exists only in the present, with the future now being its right-minded extension. Outside the dream, we realize this extension is not a linear event, as were our past mistakes that cast a shadow on a future that held our punishment. In the holy instant there is no past or future – only the Love of God. Thus everything that seemed to come from fear has disappeared into its own nothingness.

**(1:4-5) Death will not claim the future now, for life is now its goal, and all the needed means are happily provided. Who can grieve or suffer when the present has been freed, extending its security and peace into a quiet future filled with joy?**

The end of death is the end of the ego, along with its thought system of pain and misery.

**(2:1)** ***Father, we were mistaken in the past, and choose to use the present to be free.***

This idea of our mistakenness is implicit throughout *A Course in Miracles,* but here Jesus is explicit in asking us to admit we were wrong, not because God wants to lord it over us, but simply because being "right" has not resulted in our happiness. We want to reach the point where we can sincerely say we are glad and grateful we were mistaken.

**(2:2)** ***Now do we leave the future in Your Hands, leaving behind our past mistakes, and sure that You will keep Your present promises, and guide the future in their holy light.***

Once again, placing the future in God's Hands has nothing to do with giving Him

our future. We simply correct the mistake of having given our future to the ego's god, which we did to avoid the punishment that would prove our sin and demonstrate our existence. The body may not survive death, but the thought system of individuality remains alive and well in the mind. That is why Jesus speaks of undoing the mind's thought system in which sin, guilt, and fear are reflected in our worldly state of past, present, and future. Thus are God's *present* promises kept.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 315**
**All gifts my brothers give belong to me.**

These next two lessons share the theme that giving and receiving are the same, a concept grounded in the oneness of God's Son. The gifts of which Jesus speaks may be understood on two levels: the opportunities for forgiveness that the special relationship with my brother provides, and my brother's gift of forgiveness reminding me I can choose again, as I do when I am in my right mind. We do this for and with each other because of the underlying oneness of God's Son, even in the illusion.

**(1:1-2) Each day a thousand treasures come to me with every passing moment. I am blessed with gifts throughout the day, in value far be- yond all things of which I can conceive.**

These gifts come in every moment, in every relationship – the opportunity to look past the ego's gifts of specialness to Jesus' gift of seeing the Son as God created him:

> There is no gift the Father asks of you but that you see in all creation but the shining glory of His gift to you. Behold His Son, His perfect gift, in whom his Father shines forever, and to whom is all creation given as his own (T-29.V.5:1-2).

**(1:3) A brother smiles upon another, and my heart is gladdened.**

I am gladdened because now there is hope. If this brother can change his mind and forgive, where before he was attacking, I can, too, since God's Son is one. Indeed, no greater joy exists in this world than knowing one is forgiven.

**(1:4-5) Someone speaks a word of gratitude or mercy, and my mind receives this gift and takes it as its own. And everyone who finds the way to God becomes my savior, pointing out the way to me, and giving me his certainty that what he learned is surely mine as well.**

In *A Course in Miracles,* Jesus usually goes the other way, telling us that *our* change of mind is the healing gift to our brother. However, in reversing the direction of forgiveness here, he reflects that whether I give the gift to you, or you to me, it is God's Son giving it to himself. It is the gift that says we can make another choice, for our love and peace tell each other and ourselves that we can choose again.

**(2)** ***I thank You, Father, for the many gifts that come to me today and every day from every Son of God. My brothers are unlimited in all their gifts to me. Now may I offer them my thankfulness, that gratitude to them may lead me on to my Creator and His memory.***

This echoes the idea of gratitude that embraces us even in painful circumstances, for these cause us to ask Jesus for help, accepting his teaching that says that by changing our minds we can look at this relationship or situation another way. Recall this prayer from "The Gifts of God":

> Father, we thank You for these gifts that we have found together. Here we

> are redeemed. For it is here we joined, and from this place of holy joining we will come to You because we recognize the gifts You gave and would have nothing else *(The Gifts of God,* p. 119).

In joining with Jesus, therefore, we join with our brothers, and we give thanks for the gift of remembrance that is ours at last.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 316**
**All gifts I give my brothers are my own.**

My brothers and I are joined, and so the gift of forgiveness given others through extension reinforces its presence in me – God's Son is one.

**(1:1-3) As every gift my brothers give is mine, so every gift I give belongs to me. Each one allows a past mistake to go, and leave no shadow on the holy mind my Father loves. His grace is given me in every gift a brother has received throughout all time, and past all time as well.**

By forgiving the sins we perceived in our brothers, we let go of the shadows they cast through projection: our attacks and grievances. They are thus forgotten as we gently remember the gifts our Father gave us:

> To forgive is merely to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on your selection (T-17.III.1:1-3).

**(1:4-5) My treasure house is full, and angels watch its open doors that not one gift is lost, and only more are added. Let me come to where my treasures are, and enter in where I am truly welcome and at home, among the gifts that God has given me.**

My right mind is the "treasure house" in which God's gifts are found. When we seek for treasures in the world – objects of specialness to delight us and give us happiness, peace, and pleasure – we are saying God's treasure is not enough, nor is the Holy Spirit's Atonement. Again, it is not that we should feel guilty for seeking the treasured objects of specialness, but we do want to recognize what we are doing and why. Gratitude for the classrooms of our lives will inevitably follow, for they have provided the opportunities that enabled us finally to realize where our real treasure is. The statement "let me come to where my treasures are" is clearly a prayer to our decision-making selves: we are the ones who wandered into the ego's far country, and we are the ones who must choose to return. And we are glad and grateful to do so, as Heaven sings its song of gratitude.

**(2)** ***Father, I would accept Your gifts today. I do not recognize them. Yet I trust that You Who gave them will provide the means by which I can behold them, see their worth, and cherish only them as what I want.***

The means of true perception is forgiveness, which allows us to accept God's gift of love. Unless we give it, we shall never know we have received it. Therefore to deny His Love anywhere in the Son- ship is to deny it in all, including ourselves. Yet to accept it in one accepts it in all, including ourselves. Thus Jesus encourages us to give as God gives – without limit or constraint:

> Could any part of God be without His Love, and could any part of His Love be contained? God is your heritage, because His one gift is Himself. How can you give except like Him if you would know His gift to you? Give, then, without limit and without end, to learn how much He has given you. Your ability to accept Him

depends on your willingness to give as He gives (T-11.I.7:1-5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 317**
**I follow in the way appointed me.**

This lesson is of great importance, and its theme is echoed in two lessons that we will see in the next series. "I follow in the way appointed me" means I do not want to be first. As one of these later lessons says, "I choose the second place to gain the first" (W-pII.328). At the beginning we told God: "I am First Cause and You follow me – I have the power and I am in charge." This belief is the motivation behind the mantra found in some New Age circles: "I am God." None of us wants to follow, for we want to be number one. In this lesson, therefore, Jesus brings us back to the humility we must practice as students of his course: "I will follow the way my teacher instructs so I can come to God, Who is my Creator—I am not His; He is mine."

**(1:1) I have a special place to fill; a role for me alone.**

Here we can see another example of Jesus using the word *special* for the Holy Spirit, when almost always it is reserved for the ego. Our *special* place is our *special* function, which is to forgive our *special* relationships, as he explains in the text:

> Here, where the laws of God do not prevail in perfect form, can he yet do *one* perfect thing and make *one* perfect choice. And by this act of special faithfulness to one perceived as other than himself, he learns the gift was given to himself, and so they must be one (T-25.VI.5:1-2).

**(1:2-4) Salvation waits until I take this part as what I choose to do. Until I make this choice, I am the slave of time and human destiny. But when I willingly and gladly go the way my Father's plan appointed me to go, then will I recognize salvation is already here, already given all my brothers and already mine as well.**

It is our choice and no one else's. Once again, our only role is to forgive, which has nothing at all to do with behavior or anything external.

**(2:1)** ***Father, Your way is what I choose today.***

This is yet another reference to the closing prayer in Lesson 189, "Father, we do not know the way to You." Our Father calls through His Voice, and we will follow – the essence of humility.

**(2:2-4)** ***Where it would lead me do I choose to go; what it would have me do I choose to do. Your way is certain, and the end secure. The memory of You awaits me there.***

The focus again is on our choice, and we now gladly choose God's way. The journey ends with the return of His memory – the real world – achieved by the forgiveness that excludes no one from the Sonship.

**(2:5)** ***And all my sorrows end in Your embrace, which You have promised to Your Son, who thought mistakenly that he had wandered from the sure protection of Your loving Arms.***

**Lesson 317**

The world arose from the belief we had indeed wandered from God's loving Arms. The ego told us these Arms were not loving, and that we were wise in running away—if we had stayed, God would surely have destroyed us. Jesus tells us, however, that we are not sinful, but we did indeed make a mistaken choice, reflecting the well-known line from the text: "Son of God you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken" (T-10.V.6:1).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 318**
**In me salvation's means and end are one.**

This title recalls the lovely statement at the end Lesson 302: "He the End we seek, and He the Means by which we go to Him." In that lesson, God is both Means and End. In this lesson, *we* are the means and end – the end is God's Son as Christ, and the means of reaching Him is God's Son's choosing to forgive himself.

**(1:1) In me, God's holy Son, are reconciled all parts of Heaven's plan to save the world.**

Traditional Christian theology has taught that the Son of God – Jesus – was the one who reconciled sinful man to God's Love. Thus Jesus takes that same idea and applies it to God's Son in all of us. This Son is not the magical figure named Jesus Christ who came into the world to atone for our sin through his suffering and sacrificial death. Rather, it is God's Son – again, *all of us* – who reconciles God's Son to himself. This means that *we* undo the belief in sin, the prerequisite to realizing our oneness with God.

**(1:2-3) What could conflict, when all the parts have but one purpose and one aim? How could there be a single part that stands alone, or one of more or less importance than the rest?**

The *parts* refer to the seeming fragments of the Sonship. Elsewhere in the Course, Jesus refers to these as *aspects* (e.g., T-13.VI.6:4). The value of using neutral terms such as *parts* or *aspects* is that it emphasizes that God's Son is not only homo sapiens, for every separated fragment – animate or inanimate – is a fragmentary shadow of the one sleeping Son. Each part of the Sonship shares one purpose and goal, which marks the end of separation's specialness. As you go through your day, therefore, try to see how often you take sides and judge the parts of God's Son as better or worse, more or less important, more or less spiritual. And then ask Jesus to help you see the inherent sameness in God's one Son.

**(1:4-8) I am the means by which God's Son is saved, because salvation's purpose is to find the sinlessness that God has placed in me. I was created as the thing I seek. I am the goal the world is searching for. I am God's Son, His one eternal Love. I am salvation's means and end as well.**

The *end* is to realize I am God's Son as Christ, and the *means* of attainment is to see God's Son in everyone, including myself, recognizing our single purpose and goal. Seeing at last that we share the same self, I awaken to the truth that we share one Self. Thus, I *am* God's Son, and I *seek* God's Son.

**(2:1)** ***Let me today, my Father, take the role You offer me in Your request that I accept Atonement for myself.***

Strictly speaking, it is not God Who makes this request, but Jesus or the Holy Spirit – our Teachers of forgiveness.

**(2:2)** ***For thus does what is thereby reconciled in me become as surely reconciled to You.***

We become one through forgiveness, the meaning of *reconciled:* one as God's separated Son; one as Christ, at one with His Source.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 319**
**I came for the salvation of the world.**

Recall the earlier lesson, "Salvation of the world depends on me" (W-pI.186). As Jesus tells us, this is not a statement of arrogance, but of humility:

**(1:1-3) Here is a thought from which all arrogance has been removed, and only truth remains. For arrogance opposes truth. But when there is no arrogance the truth will come immediately, and fill up the space the ego left unoccupied by lies.**

Our function is to be aware of the ego's arrogant interpretation of "I am the salvation of the world," realize its insanity, and ask Jesus' help to look at it differently. Through his eyes we realize we are the salvation of the world, not because of something we do, but because of the unity that is our Self. Our humbly bringing arrogance to the truth allows truth simply to be.

**(1:4-5) Only the ego can be limited, and there- fore it must seek for aims which are curtailed and limiting. The ego thinks that what one gains, totality must lose.**

This is a wonderfully succinct statement of what happened in the original instant. Because of the principle of *one or the other,* winning our individuality meant totality lost: the ego and world were thus born and saved when we believed we killed wholeness and perfect Love. Yet true salvation of the world comes in realizing all this was a mistake, with no true effects.

**(1:6) And yet it is the Will of God I learn that what one gains is given unto all.**

The rock on which salvation rests, Jesus tells us in the text, is that no one loses and everyone gains. To be God's Son does not mean God has to be destroyed. It means we are at one with our Father, as is every other seemingly separate fragment. Thus we read how the Holy Spirit converts the ego's insane world of separation to a sane world of forgiveness, undoing the ego's belief in *one or the other:*

> The Holy Spirit has the power to change the whole foundation of the world you see to something else; a basis not insane, on which a sane perception can be based, another world perceived. And one in which nothing is contradicted that would lead the Son of God to sanity and joy. Nothing attests to death and cruelty; to separation and to differences. For here is everything perceived as one, and no one loses that each one may gain (T-25.VII.5).

**(2)** ***Father, Your Will is total. And the goal which stems from it shares its totality. What aim but the salvation of the world could You have given me? And what but this could be the Will my Self has shared with You?***

To remember that God's Will embraces mine, as well as the Sonship as a whole, I must share the single purpose of forgiveness with my brother. Thus are we saved together, and the world along with us:

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 340**
**I can be free of suffering today.**

This lesson provides us with another clear statement of what our experience can be if we choose the Teacher of freedom instead of the teacher of suffering.

**(1:1-2)** ***Father, I thank You for today, and for the freedom I am certain it will bring. This day is holy, for today Your Son will be redeemed.***

Our gratitude is not for whatever pain we experience this day - that would be masochism. We thank our Father for His Love, which, through the Holy Spirit's Presence in our hurtful dream, reminds us that we can yet choose again. Our suffering is the effect of the mind's mistaken choice for a teacher, but we can change the cause to the Cause that alone will free us from our prison house of pain. Forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's means to liberate us from hell, for it reflects the Will of Heaven, the only Source of joy:

> To fulfill the Will of God perfectly is the only joy and peace that can be fully known, because it is the only function that can be fully experienced (T-8.III.2:1).

**(1:3-6)**

longer wish its cause – the decision to be on my own and separate from the Love of God. Thus I joyfully allow myself to hear God's loving Judgment on me, His Son:

> *Holy are you, eternal, free and whole, at peace forever in the Heart of God* (M-15.1:11).

Lesson 341

13. What Is a Miracle?

This is one of the more important of the 14 summaries in Part II, as the focus of A Course in Miracles is on the miracle, which is why it is part of the Course's title. It will be clear as we go through this, as well as in the lessons to come, that Jesus treats the roles of the miracle and forgiveness synonymously. It would be difficult to regard them as significantly different as they are really aspects of the same process of healing. However, more often than not Jesus gives the name forgiveness to the process of changing our minds, and the miracle to the realization that our minds are the cause of the dream, not its effect.

(1:1-3) A miracle is a correction. It does not create, nor really change at all. It merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false.

This passage parallels the first summary, which says forgiveness "is still, and quietly does nothing. ... It merely looks, and waits, and judges not" (W-pII.1.4:1, 3). In other words, the miracle can be viewed as the process of 1) going above the battleground with Jesus and looking on the world's devastation – what we believe has victimized us and others – and understanding that this is the external dream that mirrors our internal dream of devastation – the belief we attacked and destroyed God; and 2) looking at that belief with a gentle smile, as we realize that what we are looking on – form and content – is false. Thus, the miracle is not about external changes, but solely about a change of mind. It is as if we shifted lenses – no longer looking at the world through the lens of the ego, but through the lens of the Holy Spirit. Remember that the miracle is not truth and thus cannot be found in Heaven. Its home is the illusion, where it simply undoes the false, correcting what the ego told us was true.

(1:4-6) It undoes error, but does not attempt to go beyond perception, nor exceed the function of forgiveness. Thus it stays within time's limits. Yet it paves the way for the return of timelessness and love's awakening, for fear must slip away under the gentle remedy it brings.

The miracle, like forgiveness, is an illusion, as is the Holy Spirit's function that corrects what never happened. Before we attain that realization, however, we must first look at what the ego has made in the world, understanding that what appears to be external is the reflection of what we made real in our minds. Only then can we realize that another choice is possible.

Jesus speaks of the miracle as a gentle remedy because it does not do or demand anything. Recall this wonderful passage describing the Holy Spirit's gentleness:

> The Voice of the Holy Spirit does not command, because It is incapable of arrogance. It does not demand, because It does not seek control. It does not overcome, because It does not attack. It merely reminds. It is compelling only because of what It reminds you of It brings to your mind the other way, remaining quiet even in the midst of the turmoil you may make (T-5.II.7:1-6).

Thus we need do nothing except look nonjudgmentally at the ego, which is why Jesus repeatedly says his course is simple. He is not saying we have to change or give up anything, but only change our teacher, which undoes our original choice for the ego.

Again, the miracle merely undoes the error, allowing truth to be itself:

> The miracle does nothing. All it does is to undo. And thus it cancels out the interference to what has been done. It does not add, but merely takes away (T-28.I.1:1-4).

(2:1) A miracle contains the gift of grace, for it is given and received as one.

This is so because the mind of God's Son is one. The correction I offer you by releasing my faulty perceptions is what I offer myself. This gift is given in the holy instant, in which the sinful past and fearful future are overlooked in the miracle's present grace:

> For a miracle is now. It stands already here, in present grace, within the only interval of time that sin and fear have overlooked, but which is all there is to time (T-26.VIII.5:8-9).

(2:2-3) And thus it illustrates the law of truth the world does not obey, because it fails entirely to understand its ways. A miracle inverts perception which was upside down before, and thus it ends the strange distortions that were manifest.

The dream's law that the mind determines everything reflects Heaven's law of truth – the Mind of God is the Source of all that is. In our right mind we understand that the mind is the source of all we perceive, while the wrong-minded law of illusion teaches that the world determines us. To use the perceptual terminology of figure and ground, we perceive figures or objects in our environment against a background, and then judge their worth accordingly. For example, as I see people sitting in an auditorium in which I am lecturing, I do not pay much attention to the background of the physical room itself: color, carpet, lighting, wall decorations, etc., focusing instead on the people to whom I am speaking. While we all normally perceive this way in the everyday world, what the ego has done with this figure-ground concept is abnormal indeed.

The ego causes the mind to recede so much into the background that we do not even know we have a mind, the foreground being only the body. The miracle reverses this relationship, inverting perception. The background – the mind – now assumes the foreground, and we realize this mind is the cause of everything. The world that before had been the dominant figure now recedes in importance, as we understand that the figures we perceive are simply shadowy reflections of the mind's thoughts. Thus the miracle does not totally undo perception, but simply reverses our perspective. Recall this previously quoted excerpt from Helen's poem, "Transformation":

> It happens suddenly. There is a Voice
> That speaks one Word, and everything is changed.
>
> what seemed large
> Resumes the littleness that is its due.
> The dim grow bright, and what was bright before
> Flickers and fades and finally is gone.
> (The Gifts of God, p. 64)

In other words, for a while we still perceive a world, yet it is interpreted as reflecting back to us a decision made by the mind. Again, the miracle allows us to reverse cause and effect, and the following passage from the text summarizes this process of reversal or inversion, using the metaphor of the dream:

> The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions.... The separation started with the dream the Father was deprived of His Effects, and powerless to keep them since He was no longer their Creator.... Effect and cause are first split off, and then reversed, so that effect becomes a cause; the cause, effect.... The miracle is the first step in giving back to cause the function of causation, not effect.... This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt. They are the dream's alternative, the choice to be the dreamer, rather than deny the active role in making up the dream (T-28.II.7:1-2; 8:1, 8; 9:3; 12:1-3).

We are thus the dreamers of the dream, not its figures. These figures – our bodies and the bodies of others – had been the ego's dominant perception, but seen through the Holy Spirit's vision they become the background, with the mind's purpose the foreground.

(2:4-5) Now is perception open to the truth. Now is forgiveness seen as justified.

When I am restored to my role as dreamer of the dream – the decision maker – I am available to choose the right-minded truth. Recall the wonderful line from William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell:

> If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

The miracle's inversion of perception – moving our attention from the world to the mind demonstrates the successful fulfillment of guilt's undoing: the process of forgiveness that cleanses the mind of its thought system of separation and opens us to the vision that leads to the infinite:

> Forgiveness is the healing of the perception of separation. Correct perception of your brother is necessary, because minds have chosen to see themselves as separate.... But God's miracles are as total as His Thoughts because they are His Thoughts (T-3.V.9:1-2, 7).

(3:1-3) Forgiveness is the home of miracles. The eyes of Christ deliver t hem to all they look upon in mercy and in love. Perception stands cor rected in His sight, and what was meant to curse has come to bless.

Forgiveness makes miracles possible, for it asks the Holy Spirit that we perceive the world differently. The ego's world, made to curse God and everyone in it, now becomes a blessing because it serves His purpose, as God's Son returns to His Father – for They have come:

> An ancient miracle has come to bless and to replace an ancient enmity that came to kill. In gentle gratitude do God the Father and the Son return to what is Theirs, and will forever be. Now is the Holy Spirit's purpose done. For They have come! For They have come at last! (T-26.IX.8:5-9)

(3:4-5) Each lily of forgiveness offers all the world the silent miracle of love. And each is laid before the Word of God, upon the universal altar to Creator and creation in the light of perfect purity and endless joy.

We bring our misperceptions back to the love that is in the mind's universal altar of light. By choosing the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, we choose the thought that reminds us that Creator and creation are one. Our pathway home, walked with all our brothers, is joyously strewn with lilies:

> Would you not have your holy brother lead you there? His innocence will light your way, offering you its guiding light and sure protection, and shining from the holy altar within him where you laid the lilies of forgiveness. Let him be to you the savior from illusions, and look on him with the new vision that looks upon the lilies and brings you joy. We go beyond the veil of fear, lighting each other's way. The holiness that leads us is within us, as is our home. So will we find what we were meant to find by Him Who leads us.... Walk with him now rejoicing, for the savior from illusions has come to greet you, and lead you home with him (T-20.II.9; 10:5).

(4:1) The miracle is taken first on faith, because to ask for it implies the mind has been made ready to conceive of what it cannot see and does not understand.

This reflects the process of healing as we begin to practice the Course's principles. Jesus knows we do not yet believe everything he says. However, we will come to accept his teachings when we realize they work, feeling more peaceful because we feel less victimized by what goes on around us. Our happiness, thus, does not rest upon a whim, as is often the case: someone has a good or bad day, does or does not smile; the weather is nice or nasty – or whatever else we believe secures our happiness and peace. As we increasingly experience this release from the ego's nightmares of judgment and pain, we recognize the joy in learning we are not figures in this dream, but the dreamer. Simply stated, we will feel better as we happily learn we were wrong about everything – the illusory dream has never left its source in the illusory mind – and that faith in Jesus as our teacher bore us wonderful fruit.

(4:2-3) Yet faith will bring its witnesses to show that what it rested on is really there. And thus the miracle will justify your faith in it, and show it rested on a world more real than what you saw before; a world redeemed from what you thought was there.

We feel better not because something magical happened, but because we practice what A Course in Miracles teaches. Bringing the problem to its source in the mind changes how we feel. Through deciding for the miracle, we are redeemed. As we

means is vision. For what the seeing look upon is sinless. No one who loves can judge, and what he sees is free of condemnation. And what he sees he did not make, for it was given him to see, as was the vision that made his seeing possible (T-20.VII.9).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 342**
**I let forgiveness rest upon all things,**
**For thus forgiveness will be given me.**

Lessons 342 through 345 revisit the theme of giving and receiving, so prominent in the workbook, not to mention in the text. The fact that giving and receiving are the same undoes the ego's principle of *one or the other* – if I give you something, you have it and I do not; if I take it from you, you do not have it and I do. Thus to the ego, giving and receiving are *not* the same. This is patently true of the world of materiality, but not in thought, where the equality of giving and receiving holds for both the ego and the Holy Spirit. If I give my guilt to you and attack, I still receive it. Likewise, when I undo guilt and forgive, I teach myself I am forgiven, too: "I let forgiveness rest upon all things. For thus forgiveness will be given me." I therefore learn that my sin of separating from God is undone through recognizing there is no sin in my brother. I begin there because that is where my ego taught me I am – the attacking world of bodies – at the bottom of its ladder of guilt and hate. Asking Jesus to help me look differently on my perceptions of separate bodies in relationship, I learn that what I perceived outside is simply what I made real inside, a mistaken choice for separation I can now happily correct through forgiveness – the gift I both give and receive as one.

**(1:1-4)** ***I thank You, Father, for Your plan to save me from the hell I made. It is not real. And You have given me the means to prove its unreality to me. The key is in my hand, and I have reached the door beyond which lies the end of dreams.***

The hell of the external world of suffering and death is not real, and neither is the hell of the internal world of sin, guilt, and fear. Metaphorically speaking, God gives us the means to prove this unreality through the Holy Spirit in our minds. The "key" is not in Jesus' hand, God's Hands, or the Course's hands; it is in *our* hands. It was our choice to leave Heaven, and it is now our choice to return to it. "Forgiveness is the key to happiness" (W-pI.121), but we can only turn the key when our hands are joined with Jesus'. We cannot do it without him, and he cannot do it without us. Patiently, he awaits our decision to have him help us.

**(1:5-8)** ***I stand before the gate of Heaven, wondering if I should enter in and be at home. Let me not wait again today. Let me forgive all things, and let creation be as You would have it be and as it is. Let me remember that I am Your Son, and opening the door at last, forget illusions in the blazing light of truth, as memory of You returns to me.***

As he is wont to do, Jesus lets us know there is a part of us that is still uncertain this is what we want, for we fear that if we do what he asks, we will lose.

**(2) Brother, forgive me now. I come to you to take you home with me. And as we go, the world goes with us on our way to God.**

Jesus says to us, "I cannot help you return home if you still hold grievances against me, thinking I am a tyrant who demands sacrifice of you, insisting you do it my way instead of yours. You must realize these are projections you have placed on me, and have nothing to do with my love for you." Needless to say, as we walk home with Jesus we walk with everyone else. God's Son is one, and through our forgiveness of the

one who represents the One, we remember the Christ Who is our home.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 343**
**I am not asked to make a sacrifice**
**To find the mercy and the peace of God.**

Continuing the theme of the unity of giving and receiving, this lesson focuses specifically on sacrifice, which is based on the idea that if I am to receive something, I have to give something away; if I am to receive love, I have to pay for it.

**(1:1-4)** ***The end of suffering can not be loss. The gift of everything can be but gain. You only give. You never take away.***

This is our prayer to God, but the ego has us believe the exact opposite: the world's God gives life and takes it away. Funeral services almost always affirm that thinking, and behind it is the idea we stole from God, and now He is justified in taking back from us – through our death – the life we believed we stole from Him.

**(1:5-11)** ***And You created me to be like You, so sacrifice becomes impossible for me as well as You. I, too, must give. And so all things are given unto me forever and forever. As I was created I remain. Your Son can make no sacrifice, for he must be complete, having the function of completing You. I am complete because I am Your Son. I cannot lose, for I can only give, and everything is mine eternally.***

This corrects the ego thought system that says the way to win God's mercy and peace is to pay Him for it – the birth of the strange notion that God demands sacrifice. In biblical times God demanded animal sacrifice, then the sacrifice of His Son. Following along, we sacrifice the pleasure of our own bodies. All this makes perfect sense from the ego's point of view, but makes no sense at all from the point of view of truth, which knows nothing of such insanity:

> Sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God. It arises solely from fear, and frightened people can be vicious. Sacrificing in any way is a violation of my injunction that you should be merciful even as your Father in Heaven is merciful (T-3.I.4:1-3).

In other words, "God thinks otherwise" (T-23. 1.2:7), and so our thought system of guilt and punishment, vengeance and sacrifice, is quietly undone through forgiveness, which restores to our awareness the completion of God's Son. The ego's dream of sacrifice – *one or the other* – ends in our embrace of the Holy Spirit's principle – together, *or not at all.* Thus we remember our Identity, the eternal Christ God created like Himself.

**(2) The mercy and the peace of God are free. Salvation has no cost. It is a gift that must be freely given and received. And it is this that we would learn today.**

God's Love is total, and is totally present to *all* Sons, who in their delusions believe they are separate. Thus they believe their separation from God must be bought at a price – the compromise of the Oneness of God and His Son. Yet does Jesus save us from this insanity by gently teaching that reality cannot be compromised, for Heaven's

love is not diminished by our belief in the hell of judgment:

> Salvation is no compromise of any kind. To compromise is to accept but part of what you want; to take a little and give up the rest. Salvation gives up nothing. It is complete for everyone (T-23.III.3:1-4).

Recall this comforting statement: “The Word of God has no exceptions” (M-13.7:5).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 344**
**Today I learn the law of love; that what**
**I give my brother is my gift to me.**

This reiterates the idea that giving and receiving are the same, both from wrong-minded and right-minded points of view. It holds for the law of hate *and* for the law of love, and so the guilt I give my brother is the guilt I give to myself, as is the case with forgiveness.

**(1:1-2)** ***This is Your law, my Father, not my own. I have not understood what giving means, and thought to save what I desired for myself alone.***

We have a secret place in our minds where we hold onto what we cherish and call our own. We will never give it up, and therefore we can never give love entirely. Whether we are conscious of this thinking or not, it is in all of us. We will not give a relationship everything; we will not give Jesus or *A Course in Miracles* everything; we will not give God everything. There remains a piece of our individuality we hold back. That is *our* law, because if we lose this special identity we lose our very selves.

**(1:3-4)** ***And as I looked upon the treasure that I thought I had, I found an empty place where nothing ever was or is or will be. Who can share a dream?***

This is the dream of specialness, beginning with the dream of our own existence. We seek above all to preserve this special existence, even if it means killing one who threatens it. After all, we killed God in order to exist, and this *kill or be killed* mentality is reflected each and every day of our lives. If we do not do it physically, we do it psychologically – others have what we want, and we must kill to get it. When we succeed, or believe we have, we must continue to protect our treasure by the same hate- filled tactic that seemed to win it in the first place.

**(1:4-9)** ***Who can share a dream? And what can an illusion offer me? Yet he whom I forgive will give me gifts beyond the worth of anything on earth. Let my forgiven brothers fill my store with Heaven's treasures, which alone are real. Thus is the law of love fulfilled. And thus Your Son arises and returns to You.***

The gifts you give me when I forgive are the gifts of remembering my sinlessness. When I forgive you, I realize the light of Christ shines in you as it does in me, and your unkindness is but a call for the love that mirrors my own. We are united in that call for love, as we are united in the love that is our true Self.

**(2) How near we are to one another, as we go to God. How near is He to us. How close the ending of the dream of sin, and the redemption of the Son of God.**

We need learn as we make our way home how close we are to each other, and at the journey's end we realize we are not close to each other at all, we *are* each other; not the individual selves we seem to share, but the one Son of God who fell asleep, and the one Son of God who remained awake within his Father. Recall this passage from *The Song of Prayer:*

The ladder ends with this, for learning is no longer needed. Now you stand

before the gate of Heaven, and your brother stands beside you there. The lawns are deep and still, for here the place appointed for the time when you should come has waited long for you. Here will time end forever. At this gate eternity itself will join with you. Prayer has become what it was meant to be, for you have recognized the Christ in you (S-1.V.4).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 345**
**I offer only miracles today,**
**For I would have them be returned to me.**

The theme of the oneness of giving and receiving is discussed here in the context of miracles. The miracles we offer correct our projected thoughts. They are nothing external; not beautiful, kind, holy, and pure – not something to brag about. They are but withdrawals of the projection, reflecting the change of mind about our original guilt. They undo, reversing what the ego has done. Thus we look upon the ego's dreams of devastation – internal and external – and smile gently as we accept they are not the truth. It is therefore our right-minded goal to teach each other, by showing that attacks have no effect on our love for those who sought to hurt us. As we teach that miracle to others, we reinforce its truth in ourselves.

**(1:1)** ***Father, a miracle reflects Your gifts to me, Your Son.***

God's gift is His Love; the miracle Its reflection. At the beginning of the text Jesus says that the source of miracles is love (T-1.I.3), which means the miracle is not love, but the Holy Spirit's correction principle in our minds – the right-minded Atonement thought that reflects Heaven's love.

**(1:2-4)** ***And every one I give returns to me, reminding me the law of love is universal. Even here, it takes a form which can be recognized and seen to work. The miracles I give are given back in just the form I need to help me with the problems I perceive.***

The law of love is universal, holding for everyone; the Atonement principle is universal, holding for everyone. Yet the specific ways in which we practice the Atonement will differ for each of us, the meaning of Jesus' words at the end of the manual that the curriculum is highly individualized (M-29.2:6). It is what he means here by saying we will experience the correction in the forms we need. Since we wrote our scripts of special relationships, and these differ from the scripts of others, our experiences of undoing the ego will also differ. The underlying principle is always the same, however – the mind has dreamt the dream, and therefore it is the mind alone that can change it.

**(1:5-7)** ***Father, in Heaven it is different, for there, there are no needs. But here on earth, the miracle is closer to Your gifts than any other gift that I can give. Then let me give this gift alone today, which, born of true forgiveness, lights the way that I must travel to remember You.***

Our only need here is forgiveness or the miracle, for, as the text states, we already have all we need as God's Son (T-3.V.6). The miracle reminds us of our prior choice for nothing, which now can be reconsidered in light of truth's reflection of the Everything. In the end, making the right choice is inevitable, as we recall:

> Who with the Love of God upholding him could find the choice of miracles or murder hard to make? (T-23.IV.9:8)

**(2) Peace to all seeking hearts today. The light has come to offer miracles to**

**Lesson 345**

**bless the tired world. It will find rest today, for we will offer what we have received.**

Again, the miracle is not needed in Heaven. However, as long as I believe I am in this weary world, I need the rest that only the miracle's healing light can provide.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 346**

**Today the peace of God envelops me,**
**And I forget all things except His Love.**

This is another important lesson that can be helpful as you go through your day. Realize how much you forget His Love and seek to remember everything else. If it is His Love you really want to remember, your specialness needs will recede into the background and His Love, as reflected through Jesus' teachings of forgiveness, will come to the foreground. If you realize that the purpose of this day is not to satisfy your ego's needs, but rather to be a classroom in which your only need of forgiveness is satisfied, that purpose will be the foreground, and the daily events and relationships will reflect that changed purpose. They will thus have become the curriculum in which you learn the lessons that will speed you along your Atonement path. That is the meaning of "I forget all things except His Love." Jesus does not mean that you literally have to think of God's Love throughout the day; but he asks that you think of the gift Love's reflection offers you in very specific ways – the opportunity of learning lessons in your classroom of forgiveness.

**(1:1-2)** ***Father, I wake today with miracles correcting my perception of all things. And so begins the day I share with You as I will share eternity, for time has stepped aside today.***

When I choose the holy instant I am outside time. That is how it has stepped aside. This does not mean I deny that I live in a world of time and space. It simply means that the world recedes into the background; its place taken by the lesson that comes from timelessness – my reality is outside the dream. I now understand I chose this dream because I desired to keep my special dream figure alive and well, but am ready and willing to learn something else.

**(1:3-4)** ***I do not seek the things of time, and so I will not look upon them. What I seek today transcends all laws of time and things perceived in time.***

That is not meant to imply that you do not watch a news program, read a newspaper, or listen to someone's sad story, but that you look at them through Jesus' eyes. Remember that before you realize the perceptual world is an illusion, you first must reverse the perceived figure and ground. You do not want to skip steps, meaning that before you realize the illusory nature of everything, including yourself, you first must pay careful attention to what goes on here, but seen with a different purpose. The world of specialness, instead of being front and center, becomes the background of your new purpose. Thus what emerges in the forefront is Jesus' teaching that will help you realize that you can look on the world another way.

**(1:5-7)** ***I would forget all things except Your Love. I would abide in You, and know no laws except Your law of love. And I would find the peace which You created for Your Son, forgetting all the foolish toys I made as I behold Your glory and my own.***

These foolish toys, as we have seen elsewhere, are the ego's thoughts of sin and attack.

**Lesson 346**

**(2) And when the evening comes today, we will remember nothing but the peace of God. For we will learn today what peace is ours, when we forget all things except God's Love.**

This is the thought with which we should awaken, keep with us throughout the day, and with which we go to bed; namely, our only purpose here is learning we are not here. Our loving teacher helps us to remember this purpose when we forget.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 347**

**Anger must come from judgment. Judgment is**
**The weapon I would use against myself,**
**To keep the miracle away from me.**

Lesson 347 is another opportunity for us to realize the insanity of our choices, here exemplified by judging ourselves, the cause of our anger. Thus we again see the importance of recognizing the purpose behind our making the world and judging everything in it. Such judgments hold us in a state of mindlessness, which keeps the Holy Spirit's miracle away from us.

**(1:1-3)** ***Father, I want what goes against my will, and do not want what is my will to have. Straighten my mind, my Father. It is sick.***

This passage calls to mind the well-known lament of St. Paul: "Why is it that the good that I would do, I do not do, and the evil that I would not do, I do do?" (Romans 7:19) In other words, why am I so insane? Why is it that part of me wants to do the right thing, and yet I always end up doing the wrong thing; and the wrong things I do not want to do, are the very things I find myself doing? This is Jesus' point here, making clear to us our insanity in doing the very things that keep us from being happy. We think happiness comes through holding grievances or worshiping the gods of specialness. Yet they only bring us sadness, and our minds are sick to think otherwise. Humility helps us realize this sick insanity, the precursor to letting it go.

**(1:4-8)** ***But You have offered freedom, and I choose to claim Your gift today. And so I give all judgment to the One You gave to me to judge for me. He sees what I behold, and yet He knows the truth. He looks on pain, and yet He understands it is not real, and in His understanding it is healed. He gives the miracles my dreams would hide from my awareness.***

Interestingly, in the context of this passage the Holy Spirit sees the world through our eyes. Strictly speaking, of course, He does not see anything; the point being that we should not deny what our eyes see, but rather look at the world through a different lens. Jesus tells us, for example, that we should look on pain: "Do not deny the existence of wars, floods, and famine, from which countless people suffer. Do not deny that you are suffering. But let me help you look at pain differently. Let me use your perception of suffering to show you that it mirrors your choice for an internal thought of suffering." This, then, is the world's only value – there is no other way to return to the mind except through the world, because we made it and believe we are here. Though the world is not holy in itself, it can yet serve the holy purpose of reflecting back to us the repressed mind's choices, which correct the purpose served by the ego's dreams of anger, judgment, pain, and death: to hide the fact that we are the mind's decision maker, the dreamer of the dream.

**(1:9-11)** ***Let Him judge today. I do not know my will, but He is sure it is Your Own. And He will speak for me, and call Your miracles to come to me.***

I simply have to ask the Holy Spirit's help, and thus Jesus tells us:

**(2) Listen today. Be very still, and hear the gentle Voice for God assuring**

**you that He has judged you as the Son He loves.**

To be still means to silence my thoughts of judgment, anger, and specialness, and above all, my arrogant assertions that I am right.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 348**
**I have no cause for anger or for fear,**
**For You surround me. And in every need**
**That I perceive, Your grace suffices me.**

"I have no cause for anger or for fear" because I am invulnerable, and thus no longer have to defend myself – preserving my individuality by getting angry, fearful of what others will do to me. This reflects the ego's belief that God's grace is not enough, the antithesis of St. Paul's experience of Jesus telling him: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9a). Thus, we want to realize that whenever we get angry or indulge our specialness, we are saying to Jesus: "Your love and peace are not sufficient; I desire *special* love and *my peace.* I want things my way, not yours, and if you insist on helping me, be assured it will be the way I want it done." Realizing the insanity of this position, we are finally free to make another choice – *his*.

**(1:1-5)** ***Father, let me remember You are here, and I am not alone. Surrounding me is everlasting Love. I have no cause for anything except the perfect peace and joy I share with You. What need have I for anger or for fear? Surrounding me is perfect safety.***

When we indulge our specialness, are angry or fearful, it is the ego's god that is with us, not the true God. What makes *A Course in Miracles* unique among world spiritualities is Jesus' teaching that there is specific motivation for anger, fear, and specialness: to block awareness of his love and the memory of God.

**(1:6-8)** ***Can I be afraid, when Your eternal promise goes with me? Surrounding me is perfect sinlessness. What can I fear, when You created me in holiness as perfect as Your Own?***

When I am afraid, angry, and filled with judgments, I deny my invulnerability and safety because the Love of God is within. I thus have denied the Love that is my only need, and the promise God gave when He created me. The second stanza of Helen's poem, "The Promise," also speaks of our Creator's promise:

> Throughout the years, throughout the arc of time,
> What was still is, and yet will be again;
> Your single promise, never to be changed.
> Hear me, my Lord! I cannot call in *vain.*
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 14)

**(2) God's grace suffices us in everything that He would have us do. And only that we choose to be our will as well as His.**

We need realize how much we do not choose God's Will in our everyday life, and yet have the power to choose His grace as the blessed guide in our daily activity, as we read again from the manual's closing verse:

> And now in all your doings be you blessed.
> God turns to you for help to save the world.
> Teacher of God, His thanks He offers you,

**Lesson 348**

And all the world stands silent in the grace
You bring from Him (M-29.8:1-3).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 349**
**Today I let Christ's vision look upon**
**All things for me and judge them not, but give**
**Each one a miracle of love instead.**

Our prayer, then, is that we not judge, which means that we not attack or condemn our brothers. In so doing we attack ourselves, and thus we ask for help that we look on the world through Christ's vision instead of our own, allowing His miracle to rest on us.

**(1:1)** ***So would I liberate all things I see, and give to them the freedom that I seek.***

By releasing you from the bondage of guilt I placed on you, I liberate you from my dream. Within your dream you still must choose whether or not to accept that freedom, but in my forgiveness I demonstrate that our guiding principle is not *one or the other,* but *together, or not at all.* That is how I come to realize I am forgiven, too.

**(1:2-6)** ***For thus do I obey the law of love, and give what I would find and make my own. It will be given me, because I have chosen it as the gift I want to give. Father, your gifts are mine. Each one that I accept gives me a miracle to give. And giving as I would receive, I learn Your healing miracles belong to me.***

I want to *give* the gift, because I want to *receive* the gift. If I really wish to learn my sins are forgiven and that God loves me, all I need do is extend that love through my forgiveness to others, who may yet believe otherwise.

**(2) Our Father knows our needs. He gives us grace to meet them all. And so we trust in Him to send us miracles to bless the world, and heal our minds as we return to Him.**

This is taken from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel, where Jesus explains that God knows our needs and loves us: indeed, every hair on our head is counted, and He loves us even more than the lilies of the field (Matthew 6:8, 28-30,32). Placing this within the teachings of *A Course in Miracles,* we understand that God does not really know about our need, because He does not know about us in a separated state. Yet has His Love come with us into the illusion through the Holy Spirit, and thus the need "our Father knows" is to undo our mistaken choice through the miracle. We have already seen that the miracle's corrective nature reflects God's Love within the dream, which undoes the ego's thought system and heals our bloodied nightmares of separation, hopelessness, and death. The miracle that forgiveness brings can therefore only heal our brother and ourselves as one, the single need held by the world of hate and guilt, for the miracle alone allows us to hear our Father's ancient clarion call of grace:

> A miracle can offer nothing less to him than it has given unto you. So does your healing show your mind is healed, and has forgiven what he [your brother] did not do. And so is he convinced his innocence was never lost, and healed along with you. Thus does the miracle undo all things the world attests can never be undone. And hopelessness and death must disappear before the ancient

clarion call of life. This call has power far beyond the weak and miserable cry of death and guilt. The ancient calling of the Father to His Son, and of the Son unto His Own, will yet be the last trumpet that the world will ever hear. Brother, there is no death. And this you learn when you but wish to show your brother that you had no hurt of him. He thinks your blood is on his hands, and so he stands condemned. Yet it is given you to show him, by your healing, that his guilt is but the fabric of a senseless dream (T-27.II.6).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 350**
**Miracles mirror God's eternal Love.**
**To offer them is to remember Him,**
**And through His memory to save the world.**

The way we remember God's Love is to forgive, withdrawing the projections placed on the world. Since it is one with our thought, as the thought of separation is healed, the world is healed as well.

**(1:1-2)** ***What we forgive becomes a part of us, as we perceive ourselves. The Son of God incorporates all things within himself as You created him.***

My attack teaches you are different and separate from me; not a part of my self. That is the ego's purpose for specific bodies – to perceive people as separate and different: "You are sinful and I sinless. Thus you are not a part of me and I shun your presence, lest your sins contaminate my innocence." When I let that insane thinking go, I begin to understand that you and I are one, and I cannot return home to God's Love unless I first realize we are the same – in illusion and in truth. This undoes our wrong-minded attempts to separate all things from ourselves. The correction – the miracle's gift – helps us remember our inherent oneness as God's Son.

**(1:3-5)** ***Your memory depends on his forgiveness. What he is, is unaffected by his thoughts. But what he looks upon is their direct result.***

Recall what amounts to a formula in *A Course in Miracles:* We see the face of Christ in our brother and remember God. To see the face of Christ is to forgive, which allows the memory of God's Love to return to us. The Son of God's true Identity has never been affected by his insane thinking, but what we believe we are and perceive with our eyes is a direct result of the ego's thoughts. When we indulge these thoughts we make them real, project them out, and believe we see them all around us instead of in ourselves. Yet is our true reality unaffected by what we think – the meaning of the Atonement. However, because we think these thoughts of separation are real, we remain asleep, believing our dreams to be reality. Our physical and psychological experiences as bodies are the witnesses that "prove" that what we are dreaming is really there. It is from that dream of insanity that the miracle helps us gently to awake.

**(1:6-8)** ***Therefore, my Father, I would turn to You. Only Your memory will set me free. And only my forgiveness teaches me to let Your memory return to me, and give it to the world in thankfulness.***

The only way the memory of God will return to me and I will realize I *am* His Son is by changing my thought system of separation and specialness. I accomplish this through letting go of my investment in its effects – the projections I have placed onto everyone around me, which have imprisoned the world, along with me.

**(2) And as we gather miracles from Him, we will indeed be grateful. For as we remember Him, His Son will be restored to us in the reality of Love.**

That Son is the Oneness of Christ. As the text says, the Son's Oneness transcends the sum of its parts (T-2.VII.6:3). It is not you, me, and everyone else adding

up to one glorious whole, for the wholeness of Christ is its undivided unity and absence of individuality. Remembering that Identity through forgiveness is the birthplace of our gratitude and return to sanity.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 351**
**14. What Am I?**

We come to the final summary, "What Am I?" Of the many jewels in the Course's treasure chest, this is among the most treasured – a beautiful description of Who we are as God's Son. The answer Jesus gives to this question has been the underlying focus of *A Course in Miracles,* inasmuch as the problem at the beginning when we chose the ego over the Holy Spirit was our making a self that is decidedly not Who we are. Paralleling this is the only question asked of his followers by the enlightened Indian teacher Ramana Maharshi: "Who am I?" If the answer is the body and personality, we have answered incorrectly, and from that belief comes our pain, misery, and unhappiness. The purpose of *A Course in Miracles,* therefore, is to help us be open to ask the right question – "What am I?" – that we may hear and accept this inspiring answer:

**(1)** ***I am God's Son, complete and healed and whole, shining in the reflection of His Love. In me is His creation sanctified and guaranteed eternal life. In me is love perfected, fear impossible, and joy established without opposite. I am the holy home of God Himself I am the Heaven where His Love resides. I am His holy Sinlessness Itself for in my purity abides His Own.***

This is our response to everything the ego ever taught is true about ourselves, undoing all fear and guilt, all pain and suffering. What remains is the eternal life given us in creation, unblemished by the ego's sullying thoughts of miscreation and usurpation. Never real, these thoughts evanesce into the nothingness of their own illusion. From the glorious end of the text, we read of the ending of a journey that never really happened:

> Not one illusion is accorded faith, and not one spot of darkness still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone (T-31.VIII.12:5).

This shining face lasts but an instant before its place is taken by the sinless Self that God created, residing in God's holy home. Recall the lovely close to the clarification of terms:

> The Son is still, and in the quiet God has given him enters his home and is at peace at last (C-ep.5:6).

Jesus' voice now returns to speak to us:

**(2:1-2) Our use for words is almost over now. Yet in the final days of this one year we gave to God together, you and I, we found a single purpose that we shared.**

Recall that *A Course in Miracles* is about purpose and our need to realize that maintaining the ego's purpose of individuality has not made us happy or brought us peace. Indeed, the single purpose mentioned above, shared by everyone, is the need to forgive and recognize our simple mistake – nothing more than a bad dream that will last only as long as we choose to believe in the ego's purpose of separation. This passage from the text nicely expresses our shared purpose, which reveals to our awakened awareness the Oneness of God's holy Will:

> The Will of God forever lies in those whose hands are joined.... when they joined and shared a purpose, they were free to learn their will is one. And thus the Will of God must reach to their awareness. Nor can they forget for long that it is but their own (T-30.V.11:1, 3-5).

**(2:3) And thus you joined with me, so what I am are you as well.**

Jesus returns to this important theme – *we are like him.* He enunciates it at the beginning of the text because it is essential to our learning, so much so that it warrants another citation here:

> Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted. It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. There is nothing about me that you cannot attain. I have nothing that does not come from God. The difference between us now is that I have nothing else. This leaves me in a state which is only potential in you (T-1.II.3:5-13).

This teaching is crucial for undoing Christianity's millennia-old tradition that Jesus is ontologically different from us and thus we are *not* like him. With such specialness as our foundation, we can only *hope* to join with him, asking his help and suffering as he did, but never able to see that we are what he is. Recall these lines from Helen's "A Jesus Prayer" that, in contrast, confidently ask Jesus' help that we will in fact become like him – thus to be seen by our brothers and remember for ourselves:

> Come, brothers, see
> How like to Christ am I, and I to you
> Whom He has blessed and holds as one with me.
>
> A perfect picture of what I can be
> You show to me, that I might help renew
> Your brothers' failing sight. As they look up
> Let them not look on me, but only You.
> *(The Gifts of God,* pp. 82-83)

**(2:4-5) The truth of what we are is not for words to speak of nor describe. Yet we can realize our function here, and words can speak of this and teach it, too, if we exemplify the words in us.**

Again, Who we are as Christ in the realm of knowledge is not what Jesus teaches in his course, and is certainly not what we are capable of learning. However, he can teach and we can learn how to undo the interferences to the remembrance of our Self. Therefore words can be of use as symbols that correct the ego's symbols. The reader will no doubt recall this important discussion in the clarification of terms, where Jesus explains how words – i.e., symbols – fulfill his purpose in *A Course in Miracles:*

> This course remains within the ego framework, where it is needed. It is not

> concerned with what is beyond all error because it is planned only to set the direction towards it. Therefore it uses words, which are symbolic, and cannot express what lies beyond symbols (C-in.3:1-3).

The ego speaks first, as the text says (T-5. VI.3:5), and is always wrong. The Holy Spirit is the Answer, and is always right. The ego spoke first by producing its thought system of separation and making the perceptual world to be its cover. *A Course in Miracles* is one of the answers the Holy Spirit has given that uses the ego's symbols within its framework – the separated world – but for a totally different purpose. Our function, however, is not to teach the truth of *A Course in Miracles* by preaching or explaining its theory, but by accepting its principles and living them, accepting Jesus' forgiving love so that it extends through us. That is what he teaches us, and asks us to teach through him. We cannot quote often enough his exhortation to us, his disciples: "Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you" (T-11.VI.7:3-4).

**(3:1) We are the bringers of salvation.**

Once again, we bring salvation through exemplifying Jesus' teaching. *A Course in Miracles* states that the best teaching is by example (T-5.IV.5: 1). In fact we could say that the only real teaching is by example, as this previously quoted passage from the manual illustrates.

> To teach is to demonstrate. There are only two thought systems, and you demonstrate that you believe one or the other is true all the time. From your demonstration others learn, and so do you. The question is not whether you will teach, for in that there is no choice. The purpose of the course might be said to provide you with a means of choosing what you want to teach on the basis of what you want to learn (M-in.2:1-5).

Thus, our choice is whether we are to be bringers of salvation or damnation, resurrection or crucifixion – knowing that what we bring to others we have first brought to ourselves.

**(3:2-4) We accept our part as saviors of the world, which through our joint forgiveness is redeemed. And this, our gift, is therefore given us. We look on everyone as brother, and perceive all things as kindly and as good.**

It is not that things in and of themselves are kindly and good – being nothing, illusions have neither positive nor negative qualities. It is the purpose we give to the things of this world that render them kindly and good. Forgiveness brings us this beneficent perception, for it alone lifts the veils that cast an evil pale over the projected world our egos have us see. Yet does our cleansed vision reveal a world kindly and good, for it reflects the kind goodness of the Holy Spirit's Love that redeems the world from its false concepts and perceptions – our special hate becomes our special love (T-25.VI.6:8), our enemy becomes our friend.

**(3:5-7) We do not seek a function that is past the gate of Heaven. Knowledge will return when we have done our part. We are concerned only with**

**giving welcome to the truth.**

Our function past Heaven's gate of knowledge is to create, as an extension of God's Love and spirit. Our goal here, however, is different, as we recall:

> Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is. This is the prerequisite for knowledge only because those who are in conflict are not peaceful, and peace is the condition of knowledge because it is the condition of the Kingdom. Knowledge can be restored only when you meet its conditions (T-8.I.1:14).

In this world we aim to forgive, and then let the forgiveness we chose extend through us without introducing anything of our own to interfere with its gentle flow. Left by itself, without the ego, forgiveness naturally extends, and we need not concern ourselves with the truth, but only in giving welcome to it. We have seen this idea many times before:

> Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it *is* necessary to seek for what is false (T-16.IV.6:1-2).

Forgiveness makes room for truth, already present in us. Thus is it made welcome.

**(4:1-3) Ours are the eyes through which Christ's vision sees a world redeemed from every thought of sin. Ours are the ears that hear the Voice for God proclaim the world as sinless. Ours the minds that join together as we bless the world.**

Even here at the workbook's end, Jesus makes it clear that we still have bodily eyes and ears – he is not asking us to ignore or deny our physical experiences – but they now serve a different purpose: a classroom in which we learn to accept Christ's vision as our own, and the Holy Spirit's Voice as the only One we wish to hear. Helen's early poem "Thy Kingdom Come" expresses this same thought:

> There is no answer to the Voice for God
> Except His Word.
> There is no sound except the Voice for God
> That can be heard.
> For this His Son has ears; to hear God's Will,
> And let the ego's voice at last be still.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 12)

This vision and Voice extend naturally through us as we learn we but extend to ourselves, since the mind of God's Son is one.

**(4:4) And from the oneness that we have attained we call to all our brothers, asking them to share our peace and consummate our joy.**

This poetically expresses what we are so familiar with – the Sonship of God is one, and what we accept for ourselves we must accept for everyone. If we exclude even one person from this oneness, we have crucified Christ once again. Thus by our inclusion – calling to all brothers, without exception – we become the messenger of Christ Himself. We call again on an early poem of Helen's – this time "Christ's Need" – to express this right-minded purpose for living in the world as bodies:

> He needs my voice. He needs my hands and feet.
> He needs my eyes to look upon and bless
> Our tired brothers, weary of the world,
> And yet believing it is all there is.
> How can they learn except He teach through me?
> How can He give them hope but through my voice?
> How can I hear His Voice except through them?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 20)

**(5:1) We are the holy messengers of God who speak for Him, and carrying His Word to everyone whom He has sent to us, we learn that it is written on our hearts.**

The lovely phrase "it is written on our hearts" comes from St. Paul (Romans 2:15). Strictly speaking, as we have seen, God does not send people to us, even though that may be our experience because we are unaware of the decision maker having chosen to experience different dreams that are already present in our minds. By exemplifying God's Word – the Atonement principle – we learn it is also secure within us, and we recognize His Word by its all-inclusive expression: everyone is part of its healing love.

**(5:2-5) And thus our minds are changed about the aim for which we came, and which we seek to serve. We bring glad tidings to the Son of God, who thought he suffered. Now is he redeemed. And as he sees the gate of Heaven stand open before him, he will enter in and disappear into the Heart of God.**

The workbook continues for a while after this beautiful conclusion, but the above passage reflects its final vision: We realize our mistake, and by such realization the thought of correction shines throughout the mind of the Sonship as the dream gently disappears and we pass through Heaven's gate. This, then, is Jesus' role, leading us across the bridge of redemption to the real world, and beyond its holy portals to the Heart of God Himself where we are complete forever:

> The bridge that He would carry you across lifts you from time into eternity. Waken from time, and answer fearlessly the Call of Him Who gave eternity to you in your creation. On this side of the bridge to timelessness you understand nothing. But as you step lightly across it, upheld *by* timelessness, you are directed straight to the Heart of God. At its center, and only there, you are safe forever, because you are complete forever. There is no veil the Love of God in us together cannot lift. The way to truth is open. Follow it with me (T-16.IV.13:4-11).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 351**
**Introductory Comments**

We come now to the last series of ten lessons, and before continuing, I would like to briefly review the purpose of the workbook and *A Course in Miracles* itself, which is to help us reverse the figure and ground of our perceptions. To the ego, its world of specialness is prominent, pushing into the background – so much so that we are not even aware of it – the guilt that is the source of its world. Learning Jesus' lessons enables us to shift our perception so that the world, formerly in the foreground, recedes into the background and becomes the classroom in which the Holy Spirit's Atonement thought assumes prominence as the mind's correction for the special relationship.

It is extremely easy as you do the daily lessons or read the text to forget that your work with *A Course in Miracles* is about incorporating this perceptual shift in how you think and perceive. It is tempting to lose sight of the purpose and have these wonderful words never be more than wonderful words, having no real experiential meaning – you say them in the morning and at night, you talk about them and listen to lectures, you read the book, but you never truly bring their meaning into your everyday life. When you are caught up in having your needs met and proving yourself right by seeing yourself as an innocent victim, it is only because you returned to the ego's definition of figure and ground—your specialness needs remain dominant in your attention, and so the Holy Spirit recedes into the background. Again, the purpose in doing the workbook is to train the mind to do just the opposite: to realize you have a mind – what had been in the background you bring to the foreground – that contains two thought systems you can choose between; one will bring you pain, and the other freedom from pain.

As we come to the end of the workbook, Jesus assumes we have learned its lessons, but paraphrasing his statement in the text, learning does not mean mastery (T-2.VII.7). And so he tells us in the Epilogue that his course "is a beginning not an end" (W-ep.1:1), reminding us that whatever we have learned must be practiced and practiced, over and over. Jesus thus urges us to maintain a constant vigilance for the ego thoughts that would tempt us to think this mind-training program is all too threatening, and that counsel us to push the glorious Self of Christ as far into the background as possible, thus to preserve our separate selves. Therefore, Jesus encourages us on our journey to be as mindful as we can of *A Course in Miracles'* purpose, and ours as its students, to practice its teachings, trying as best we can to see that everything that goes on in our lives has only one meaning and purpose – to look within the mind to make the choice for forgiveness, a choice not possible in the mindless world of bodies.

We turn now to the final series of lessons.

**LESSON 351**
**My sinless brother is my guide to peace.**
**My sinful brother is my guide to pain.**
**And which I choose to see I will behold.**

As we shall see, these final lessons are composed only of prayers to God. The first two are similar in presenting the mind's opposite thought systems – sinfulness and sinlessness (Lesson 351), and judgment and love (Lesson 352) – and our ability to choose between them. We could also say: I choose to see one or the other – sin or sinlessness - and beholding my choice, I make it real in my perception. Thus the way I perceive you will show me how I have perceived myself.

**(1:1)** ***Who is my brother but Your holy Son?***

Remember, the Son of God is one, and therefore the way I see you must be the way I see me. To believe anything different from that principle denies the Atonement and affirms the seeming reality of the separation.

**(1:2-3)** ***And if I see him sinful I proclaim myself a sinner, not a Son of God; alone and friendless in a fearful world Yet this perception is a choice I make, and can relinquish.***

The only way we let this perception go is to realize it is a choice that brings us pain – the turning point on our journey. Jesus thus appeals to the selfish need in all of us to feel better. The problem is, as we have already seen, that we do not know what will make us feel better. We think pleasure is pain and pain is pleasure. Thus our need for a Teacher to instruct us in the difference, helping us understand that forgiveness alone brings pleasure, while a life of attack and fear reinforces the pain of our separation and aloneness. Once this understanding is made clear to us, the choice is not difficult to make.

**(1:4-7)** ***I can also see my brother sinless, as Your holy Son. And with this choice I see my sinlessness, my everlasting Comforter and Friend beside me, and my way secure and clear. Choose, then, for me, my Father, through Your Voice. For He alone gives judgment in Your Name.***

We have seen that God does not choose. These words but symbolize Jesus reminding us that we are the ones who have to choose the Holy Spirit – our Comforter and Friend – as correction for the original and ongoing choice for the ego's thought system of separation, sin, and hate. Thus does the Holy Spirit's Love become the basis for our judgment of God's Son as sinless, the certain means for our returning home along the path of forgiveness, and the way we remember that God's Name is ours – our inheritance as His beloved and unified Son. Thus we say to our innocent brother, in the words of Helen's poem, "God's Likeness":

> How holy are you, Son of God! How pure
> Your thoughts; how innocent your mind. In you
> I see the Host of God; His Love, His Joy,
> His one creation, indivisible.

**Lesson 351**

You are as like to God as I to you,
And being like to you, I am like Him.

*(The Gifts of God,* p. 17)

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 352**

**Judgment and love are opposites. From one**
**Come all the sorrows of the world. But from**
**The other comes the peace of God Himself.**

As long as we are afraid of God's peace – within which our individuality, based on conflict and unhappiness, will disappear – we will choose to defend our self. Judgment – perceiving someone else as sinful – is the ego's perfect way of carrying out this defense.

**(1:1)** ***Forgiveness looks on sinlessness alone, and judges not.***

We are asked first to recognize how we look on sinfulness in others and ourselves, and then ask Jesus for help. He reinterprets our perceptions so that we realize that acting sinfully comes from fear – "frightened people can be vicious" (T-3.I.4:2) behind which is the call for love we do not believe we deserve. In that realization are sins forgiven, because they are looked at differently. The key idea, as we have seen throughout our journey with the workbook, is that when we look with Jesus at what goes on in the world and in our relationships, we refrain from judging – judgment is the problem; forgiveness the answer.

**(1:2)** ***Through this I come to You.***

It is through our forgiveness that we return to God. Remember that these prayers are addressed to God as correction for our ego's prayers to its gods of judgment and punishment.

**(1:3-4)** ***Judgment will bind my eyes and make me blind Yet love, reflected in forgiveness here, reminds me You have given me a way to find Your peace again.***

Again, the way to find God's peace, return home, and remember our Identity as Christ is to forgive. When we hold on to grievances and withhold forgiveness, it is because we do not want to awaken from the dream, losing our self to find our Self.

**(1:5-6)** ***I am redeemed when I elect to follow in this way. You have not left me comfortless.***

It is our decision alone to follow His way. In the very last words of the workbook we will be reminded of this lovely thought – we have not been left comfortless.

**(1:7)** ***I have within me both the memory of You, and One Who leads me to it.***

As we have seen in other lessons, means and end are one. Thus I have within me the end or goal, which is remembering Who I am as God's Son. I also have within me, through the Holy Spirit, the means of remembering. Both means and end are present in my mind, for the Idea of God's Son has never left Its Source.

**(1:8-9)** ***Father, I would hear Your Voice and find Your peace today. For I would love my own Identity, and find in It the memory of You.***

This is the central idea. We do not love our own Identity as Christ because we

love our individual identity more. Crucial to our daily practicing, then, is vigilance for how much we cherish this special and unique self. We would even go so far as to kill in order to preserve it. Yet when we finally realize the loss to *us,* we choose to listen to the Voice of sanity and return to our true love – our Self and our God.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 353**
**My eyes, my tongue, my hands, my feet today**
**Have but one purpose; to be given Christ**
**To use to bless the world with miracles.**

Lessons 353 and 354 also share a common theme – helping us recognize the difference between Christ and the ego. We awaken each morning, still in the body, but now with a different purpose: to have our daily experiences be the classroom in which the Holy Spirit – here the Teacher is Christ – can teach us. In conjunction with this thought, both lessons remind us that we need to recognize how much we cherish what we believe is ours. We do not want to lose our individual identity – our self, body, and personal interests – which we believe is sacred. To the ego, of course, it *is* sacred, for this special self preserves the religion of individuality.

**(1:1-2)** ***Father, I give all that is mine today to Christ, to use in any way that best will serve the purpose that I share with Him. Nothing is mine alone, for He and I have joined in purpose.***

Anything you believe is yours alone is of the ego, and therefore illusory – a dream without reality. The only thing within the dream that reflects reality is the recognition of common purpose. Therefore, once caught in defining yourself and your world – name, body, desk, clothing, car, home, religion, or country – you are in the world of illusion, which can only bring you pain. From the moment you open your eyes in the morning, therefore, dedicate your day to learning that to cherish anything as your own results in pain, and only when you relinquish investment in yourself and in what is yours alone, will you realize what is truly yours – the purpose and identity that can be shared with everyone else. Everything else is of the ego and so belongs to no one, for the ego is nothing. Recall this passage from the manual about the right-minded use of the body:

> Yet what makes God's teachers is their recognition of the proper purpose of the body. As they advance in their profession, they become more and more certain that the body's function is but to let God's Voice speak through it to human ears. And these ears will carry to the mind of the hearer messages that are not of this world, and the mind will understand because of their Source. From this understanding will come the recognition, in this new teacher of God, of what the body's purpose really is; the only use there really is for it. This lesson is enough to let the thought of unity come in, and what is one is recognized as one (M-12.4:1-5).

**(1:3-4)** ***Thus has learning come almost to its appointed end. A while I work with Him to serve His purpose.***

Jesus is not saying we are now going to disappear into the Heart of God. This is our ultimate goal, but he is telling us here that we still have work to do in the classroom of our lives, in which his love will teach us to forgive.

**(1:5)** ***Then I lose myself in my Identity, and recognize that Christ is but my Self***

This is the ego's fear, and ours who identify with its thought system of separation

and specialness. We do not want to lose our identity as individuals, and that is why we are so tempted to bring Jesus and the Holy Spirit into the dream to interact with us. By making Them dream figures along with us, we keep our identity as individual selves intact, reinforced by our continual judgment of others.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 354**
**We stand together, Christ and I, in peace**
**And certainty of purpose. And in Him**
**Is His Creator, as He is in me.**

What follows reiterates the point of the last lesson:

**(1:1)** ***My oneness with the Christ establishes me as Your Son, beyond the reach of time, and wholly free of every law but Yours.***

We are not asked within our experience here to go beyond time, nor to identify with God's law of love as it truly is, which only involves the unified spirit that is totally beyond the world of separation. Rather, we are asked to identify with a different use of time, reflecting God's law – what I give to my brother I give to myself, because we are one. We thus shift our purpose by joining with the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, and then remember our Oneness in Heaven, which is beyond all laws but Heaven's law of love.

**(1:2)** ***I have no self except the Christ in me.***

Spend some time reflecting on that thought. If you think about it, you may indeed break into a cold sweat, accompanied by anxiety and palpitations. The self reading these words is very real to you, and you do not want to let it go. That is why you are tempted to bring the truth into your illusion, rather than the illusion of your self to the truth of Christ that lies beyond all words.

**(1:3-5)** ***I have no purpose but His Own. And He is like His Father. Thus must I be one with You as well as Him.***

We are Christ, united as God's Son, as Christ is united with God. When we truly understand these words, we realize that these very terms – *God* and *Christ, Father* and *Son* – have no real meaning. They are dualistic symbols that reflect a state of unity far beyond our ability to understand. Recall these words from the text on the true state of the Trinity:

> Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth. Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding, in the part of you that shares His Father's Will. The Holy Spirit links the other part – the tiny, mad desire to be separate, different and special – to the Christ, to make the oneness clear to what is really one. In this world this is not understood, but can be taught (T-25.I.5:3-6).

This oneness is taught through forgiveness – the undoing of the barriers we placed between ourselves and our brothers; shadows of the barrier we placed between ourselves and God.

**(1:6-7)** ***For who is Christ except Your Son as You created Him? And what am I except the Christ in me?***

By choosing against the ego's false self, we make room for the memory of our true Self to dawn upon our healed minds, as we read again in this important statement

near the end of the text:

*I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.*

Yet in this learning is salvation born. And What you are will tell you of Itself (T-31. V.17:7-9).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 355**
**There is no end to all the peace and joy,**
**And all the miracles that I will give,**
**When I accept God's Word. Why not today?**

Remember the question Jesus posed earlier: "Why wait for Heaven?" (W-pI.131.6:1; W-pI.188.1:1). Here he implores us: "Why continue to be upset and in pain? All you need do is listen to me, take my hand, and let me teach you how to look at the world differently. You will then certainly experience my peace and joy."

**(1:1-2)** ***Why should I wait, my Father, for the joy You promised me? For You will keep Your Word You gave Your Son in exile.***

His Word, again, is the Atonement. When we fell asleep and dreamt of exile, we took with us into the dream the memory of our Identity as God's Son, Who never left His Father. This memory is the Word that guarantees our eternal joy because it undoes the belief in separation that is the cause of sorrow.

**(1:3-6)** ***I am sure my treasure waits for me, and I need but reach out my hand to find it. Even now my fingers touch it. It is very close. I need not wait an instant more to be at peace forever.***

The memory of God's Love is already present in us. It is as close to us as anything could be, because it is the thought of our Self – the Idea of God's Son that never left its Source. The holy instant restores the treasure of our Identity to awareness, the right mind that has waited patiently for our return to sanity:

> What God has willed for you *is* yours. He has given His Will to His treasure, whose treasure it is. Your heart lies where your treasure is, His does. You who are beloved of God are holly blessed (T-8.VI.10:1-4).

**(1:7)** ***It is You I choose, and my Identity along with You.***

This can be our choice, as Jesus continually reminds us. Our making the right choice is guaranteed when we realize that our choices, always based on what we think we want, brought us nothing but unhappiness and pain. The choice for God, however, ensures our peace and joy, the core of our Identity as His beloved Son.

**(1:8)** ***Your Son would be Himself, and know You as his Father and Creator, and his Love.***

By choosing against our self – the ego's son – we choose for our Self – God's Son – the blessed Christ of our loving Creator. This choice occurs as we change our perceptions of our brothers, Sons of the same loving Father:

> Do not perceive anything God did not create or you are denying Him. His is the only Fatherhood, and it is yours only because He has given it to you.... Yet the real Fatherhood must be acknowledged if the real Son is to be known.... Only if you accept the Fatherhood of God will you have anything, because His Fatherhood gave you everything. That is why to deny Him is to deny yourself (T-

10.V.13:1-2, 5, 7-8).

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 356**

**Sickness is but another name for sin.**
**Healing is but another name for God.**
**The miracle is thus a call to Him.**

The miracle, as we know, is nothing but a correction. We chose sin as our identity, and from that insane base, sickness arose. When we choose the Holy Spirit's miracle instead, the belief in separation is undone, which in turn removes the foundation for all pain. This change in teachers is the heart of healing, since in our dream of sin the Holy Spirit is another name for God, and thus our choosing Him as our Teacher opens the gate for our return home.

**(1:1-3)** ***Father, You promised You would never fail to answer any call Your Son might make to You. It does not matter where he is, what seems to be his problem, nor what he believes he has become. He is Your Son, and You will answer him.***

In other words, nothing has changed God, nor His loving Answer. It does not matter where we are in the dream – a dream is a dream is a dream – it has no effect on our reality. That is why there can be no hierarchy in illusions and no order of difficulty in miracles. All illusions are the same, for they are undone with the one Answer, as Helen's poem "Before We Ask" points out to us:

> Let us not question, but be still a while.
> There is an answer given us before
> We ask the question; a solution to
> All strife and pain and turbulence; a door
> To silence and to absolution.
>
> God's Son is answered. Wearily at last,
> He calls upon his Father's Name again.
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 34)

Our Father's Name is the answer to all problems and concerns, as we now see:

**(1:4-6)** ***The miracle reflects Your Love, and thus it answers him. Your Name replaces every thought of sin, and who is sinless cannot suffer pain. Your Name gives answer to Your Son, because to call Your Name is but to call his own.***

Recall our earlier discussions about the *Name of God* (W-pI.183,184), where we discussed how Jesus' use of that term symbolized the right-minded thought system that we now choose instead of the little names the ego has made in its place: sin, individuality, and specialness. The miracle replaces our desire to be special and unique, and thus calling upon the Name of God is to call upon the Name of our Self – hearing God's answer of love when He created us one with Him as His one Son:

> The miracle but calls your ancient Name, which you will recognize because the truth is in your memory.... Your ancient Name belongs to everyone, as theirs to you. Call on your brother's name and God will answer, for on Him you call. Could He refuse to answer when He has already answered all who call on Him? A

> miracle.... make[s] what always has been true be recognized by those who know it not; and by this little gift of truth but let to be itself, the Son of God allowed to be himself, and all creation freed to call upon the Name of God as one (T-26.VII.16:1; 20).

separated self is an illusion. At present, our bodily selves are the classrooms in which

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 359**

**God's answer is some form of peace. All pain**
**Is healed; all misery replaced with joy.**
**All prison doors are opened. And all sin**
**Is understood as merely a mistake.**

This is the happy result when we realize we are the ones who were mistaken all along, and the Holy Spirit was right.

**(1:1)** ***Father, today we will forgive Your world, and let creation be Your Own.***

God's world, as we have seen, is the real world. We forgive it in the sense that we now accept it as what we want, with no further desire to attack it, which we were compelled to do in self-defense when we chose to retain our identity as an individual self, seemingly at home in the ego's world of specialness and death.

**(1:2-3)** ***We have misunderstood all things. But we have not made sinners of the holy Sons of God.***

In the insanity of the separation, we believed in the reality of our existence. Yet this belief did not give us the power to make the Son of God a sinner. *Ideas leave not their source,* and the truth is that we are a sinless Idea in the sinless Mind of God, our Source.

> The Son of God can be mistaken; he can deceive himself; he can even turn the power of his mind against himself. But he *cannot* sin. There is nothing he can do that would really change his reality in any way, nor make him really guilty (T-19.II.3:1-3).

**(1:4-6)** ***What You created sinless so abides forever and forever. Such are we. And we rejoice to learn that we have made mistakes which have no real effects on us.***

We again see our joyous gratitude in being wrong, seeing that our delusional mistakes of betraying love – rejecting, attacking, and destroying it – accomplished nothing. God loves us; Jesus loves us; nothing has changed, for the Christ in us remains sinless forever, with our mad dreams of sin having no effects upon reality. See these two statements from the text:

> Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken (T-10.V.6:1).

> Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear (T-21.II.2:7).

**(1:7-9)** ***Sin is impossible, and on this fact forgiveness rests upon a certain base more solid than the shadow world we see. Help us forgive, for we would be redeemed. Help us forgive, for we would be at peace.***

Forgiveness allows us to recognize the impossibility of sin. It rests on a solid base

– the reflection of God's Love in our right minds – while our perceptions of bodily sin, attack, and pain rest on no base at all. They are all illusory, their purpose being to defend against the mind's illusion of sin and separation. Yet illusions bring us no peace, and so we happily choose the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, the doorway to the real world of light, peace, and joy – our home away from home.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 360**

**Peace be to me, the holy Son of God.**
**Peace to my brother, who is one with me.**
**Let all the world be blessed with peace through us.**

This lesson is a lovely rendering of the oneness of God's Son.

**(1:1)** ***Father, it is Your peace that I would give, receiving it of You.***

If I am enamored of my personal self – the self that is founded on conflict – I will continually try to attack peace and withhold it from myself and everyone else. Yet when the pain becomes too great, we gladly choose the Atonement that alone washes away all pain and restores God's peace to our grateful awareness.

**(1:2)** ***I am Your Son, forever just as You created me, for the Great Rays remain forever still and undisturbed within me.***

This is the only place in the workbook where Jesus uses the phrase *Great Rays.* These are nothing visual or perceptual, nor are they associated in any way with the rays of light of which other metaphysical systems speak. As used in *A Course in Miracles,* the term is a symbol for the Light of Christ that is our true Self. God, then, would be the "Sun" – the Source – and we the emanations or extensions – the Rays – of that Light. In the text, Jesus speaks of the little spark of the Great Ray that exists in all of us – the memory of that great Light, held for us in our right minds by the Holy Spirit, and found fully present in all the seeming fragments of the Sonship:

> In many only the spark remains, for the Great Rays are obscured. Yet God has kept the spark alive so that the Rays can never be completely forgotten. If you but see the little spark you will learn of the greater light, for the Rays are there unseen.... But the spark is still as pure as the Great Light, because it is the remaining call of creation. Put all your faith in it, and God Himself will answer you (T-10.IV. 8:1-3, 6-7).

**(1:3)** ***I would reach to them in silence and in certainty, for nowhere else can certainty be found.***

I reach for the spark of that Great Ray in everyone, in recognition of our inherent oneness as God's Son. Jesus encourages us to ask for help to perceive the Light of Christ – instead of the darkness of the ego – shining in everyone. By "hearing" the ego's silence in our brothers, we hear the Holy Spirit's Voice answering our prayers for peace with His certainty – the reality of God's one Son, in whom we put our faith:

> If you would know your prayers are answered, never doubt a Son of God. Do not question him and do not confound him, for your faith in him is your faith in yourself (T-9.1I.4:1-2).

**(1:4-7)** ***Peace be to me, and peace to all the world. In holiness were we created, and in holiness do we remain. Your Son is like to You in perfect sinlessness. And with this thought we gladly say "Amen."***

**Lesson 360**

Again, we are all one, and if I wish to remember my Oneness as Christ, I cannot exclude any of God's Sons from the vision of holiness – nor would I want to, knowing its tremendous cost to me of losing my Self.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles* by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 361**

**FINAL LESSONS**

**Introduction**

We come now to the Final Lessons. Lessons 361 to 365 are combined in one, the theme of which, appropriately, is the Holy Spirit. He is also the theme of this lovely Introduction. At the workbook's conclusion, Jesus leaves us in the Holy Spirit's charge to continue our journey, as he has throughout. In addition, embedded in this final theme is the reminder that our purpose in the world is forgiveness, through which the memory of God returns to our minds.

**(1:1-2) Our final lessons will be left as free of words as possible. We use them but at the beginning of our practicing, and only to remind us that we seek to go beyond them.**

Jesus is continually reminding us of our purpose, which is reflected here in not making words into reality. Thus the words of *A Course in Miracles* are not sacred, but their source – the love that inspired them – most certainly is. That love is in all of us, and so we need to be reminded again and again as we go through our day that our purpose is to learn forgiveness – the means of undoing guilt and returning with our brothers to the home that lies beyond all words and symbols.

**(1:3-4) Let us turn to Him Who leads the way and makes our footsteps sure. To Him we leave these lessons, as to Him we give our lives henceforth.**

The purpose of this one year of practice has been learning to be secure in the awareness that the Holy Spirit is the only true Teacher. Thus it is His lessons, guidance, and Love we would follow. When we are tempted to be upset, sick, angry, or otherwise preoccupied with our specialness, it is because we first pushed Him away and chose the ego instead. That is why our vigilance needs to be focused on the ego's lies as the means of remembering the Holy Spirit's truth. It is our minds that need vigilance, to choose against believing in the ego and choosing for God and His Kingdom – the third of the Holy Spirit's three lessons. Thus does our corrected belief undo the ego's doubt, allowing us to move beyond all belief to the Certainty of God:

> The third step is thus one of protection for your mind, allowing you to identify only with the center, where God placed the altar to Himself. Altars are beliefs, but God and His creations are beyond belief because they are beyond question. The Voice for God speaks only for belief beyond question, which is the preparation for *being* without question. As long as belief in God and His Kingdom is assailed by any doubts in your mind, His perfect accomplishment is not apparent to you. This is why you must be vigilant on God's behalf. The ego speaks against His creation, and therefore engenders doubt. You cannot go beyond belief until you believe fully (T-6.V-C.7).

**(1:5) For we would not return again to the belief in sin that made the world seem ugly and unsafe, attacking and destroying, dangerous in all its ways, and treacherous beyond the hope of trust and the escape from pain.**

We once made the mistake of believing the ego's lies of sin, and Jesus

encourages us never to make it again. From that one mistake the world of treachery, danger, and pain arose, and who in his right mind would ever choose its cause, when forgiveness gently beckons us to a world of peace and safety?

**(2:1-2) His is the only way to find the peace that God has given us. It is His way that everyone must travel in the end, because it is this ending God Himself appointed.**

*A Course in Miracles* is only one spiritual path; but whatever path we choose – regardless of its symbols – the only way we reach home is to relinquish belief in the self that believes in separation, anger, pain, and death. Through joining with the Holy Spirit in our right minds, we undo the faulty belief system we had accepted. Forgiving ourselves for our mistakes – born of fear, not sin – opens the certain way home, regardless of its form, as we read again:

> Forgive yourself your madness, and forget all senseless journeys and all goal-less aims. They have no meaning. You can not escape from what you are. For God is merciful, and did not let His Son abandon Him. For what He is be thankful, for in that is your escape from madness and from death. Nowhere but where He is can you be found. There *is* no path that does not lead to Him (T-3 1.IV.11).

**(2:3-4) In the dream of time it seems to be far off. And yet, in truth, it is already here...**

It is a fact that the peace of God is already here – in the presence of the right-minded truth of Atonement. Moreover, in the holy instant we are outside time and space, so there is no longer a journey to the peace that is ours. We find a similar expression in the manual for teachers, where Jesus speaks of the world's end: "When not one thought of sin remains, the world is over" (M-14.2:10). He continues:

> Certainly this seems to be a long, long while away. "When not one thought of sin remains" appears to be a long-range goal indeed. But time stands still, and waits on the goal of God's teachers. Not one thought of sin will remain the instant any one of them accepts Atonement for himself (M-14.3:1-4).

Since the Atonement is fully present within us – its very presence reflects its acceptance – the separation has already been undone. Recall these lines from the opening to Chapter 28:

This world was over long ago. The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a little while (T-28.I.1:6-7).

Thus Jesus reminds us that his peace is here, merely awaiting our choosing it – *again.*

**(2:4-5) And yet, in truth, it is already here; already serving us as gracious guidance in the way to go. Let us together follow in the way that truth points out to us.**

*Truth* is used as a synonym for the Holy Spirit, in Whose Love and Presence there is no time or space. Joined with Him in the holy instant, we no longer worry about how far we have to go, nor how long the journey's duration. Concerns about the ego being so strong that we can never get free of it are thoughts that occur only within the dream of linear time: past sins, present guilt, and future fear of punishment. When we are outside the dream with Jesus, we realize these thoughts, too, are just a defense against the truth that has guided us so graciously to itself.

**(2:6) And let us be the leaders of our many brothers who are seeking for the way, but find it not.**

Jesus does not mean we are to be leaders in any external or behavioral way. We lead simply by having chosen the Holy Spirit's Love. When that is our choice, we become the hand that reaches out, just as Jesus was the hand that reached for ours. We now can say to our brothers that the same choice we have made they can make, too; the journey we have embarked on welcomes them as well. Recall that in *Psychotherapy,* Jesus comments on the need for the therapist to be his patient's leader, even as he is being led by his Therapist:

> The psychotherapist is a leader in the sense that he walks slightly ahead of the patient, and helps him to avoid a few of the pitfalls along the road by seeing them first. Ideally, he is also a follower, for One should walk ahead of him to give him light to see (P-2.III.1:1-2).

**(3:1-4) And to this purpose let us dedicate our minds, directing all our thoughts to serve the function of salvation. Unto us the aim is given to forgive the world. It is the goal that God has given us. It is His ending to the dream we seek, and not our own.**

Our purpose is to learn the lessons of forgiveness so that we can help ourselves and others. God's ending is that we awaken *from* the dream, whereas ours is to become happier and pain-free figures *in* the dream. Thus we make the decision to accept God's function of forgiveness rather than our own; the Holy Spirit's rather than the ego's:

> Ask not to be forgiven, for this has already been accomplished. Ask, rather, to learn how to forgive, and to restore what always was to your unforgiving mind.... On earth this is your only function, and you must learn that it is all you want to learn.... Before you make any decisions for yourself, remember that you have decided against your function in Heaven, and then consider carefully whether you want to make decisions here. Your function here is only to decide against deciding what you want, in recognition that you do not know. How, then, can you decide what you should do? Leave all decisions to the One Who speaks for God, and for your function as He knows it (T-14.IV.3:4-5, 7; 5:1-4).

**(3:5) For all that we forgive we will not fail to recognize as part of God Himself.**

When I forgive, I realize you and I are one; in illusion and in truth – despite what

the ego's dreams have told us. Thus do we lift the veil of the ego's principle of *one or the other,* and happily see the sinlessness of God's one Son in all we meet or even think about:

> A dream has veiled the face of Christ from you. Now can you look upon His sinlessness. High has the ladder risen.... Now can you say to everyone who comes to join in prayer with you:
>
> *I cannot go without you, for you are a part of me.*
>
> And so he is in truth.... For you have understood he never left, and you, who seemed alone, are one with him (S-1.V.3:3-5, 8-10,12).

**(3:6) And thus His memory is given back, completely and complete.**

We forgive by seeing the face of Christ in our brothers, and then we remember God. Recall these words that nicely summarize *A Course in Miracles'* quintessential formula for healing:

> When brothers join in purpose in the world of fear, they stand already at the edge of the real world.... For when they joined their hands it was Christ's hand they took, and they will look on Him Whose hand they hold. The face of Christ is looked upon before the Father is remembered. For He must be unremembered till His Son has reached beyond forgiveness to the Love of God. Yet is the Love of Christ accepted first. And then will come the knowledge They are one (T-30.V.7:1, 4-8).

**(4:1) It is our function to remember Him on earth, as it is given us to be His Own completion in reality.**

This refers to our dual function: in Heaven it is to create, which means we are the completion of God; on earth it is to forgive, that we would come to remember our true function and Who we are as Christ. Thus Jesus helps us undo the ego's function of blocking God's, by teaching us to fulfill our function of forgiveness. Removing this block restores to our awareness the joy of creation – extending the Love of God from His Self to ours, knowing They are One. The following passage from the text summarizes the two functions – forgiveness removes the barriers of separation among the Sons of God, restoring to our awareness the completion of God's one Son as spirit and its extended fullness as Christ:

> The extension of God's Being is spirit's only function. Its fullness cannot be contained, any more than can the fullness of its Creator. Fullness is extension. The ego's whole thought system blocks extension, and thus blocks your only function.... The Kingdom is forever extending because it is in the Mind of God. You do not know your joy because you do not know your own Self-fullness. Exclude any part of the Kingdom from yourself and you are not whole. A split mind cannot perceive its fullness, and needs the miracle of its wholeness to dawn upon it and heal it. This reawakens the wholeness in it, and restores it to the Kingdom because of its acceptance of wholeness. The full appreciation of the

> mind's Self-fullness makes selfishness impossible and extension inevitable. That is why there is perfect peace in the Kingdom. Spirit is fulfilling its function, and only complete fulfillment is peace (T-7.IX.3:1-3; 4).

**(4:2) So let us not forget our goal is shared, for it is that remembrance which contains the memory of God, and points the way to Him and to the Heaven of His peace.**

In this world goals are not shared, because it is a world ruled by the principle of *one or the other.* Thus, I will get to Heaven – my Heaven – standing on your shoulders, pushing you down: as you descend, I ascend. The essence of forgiveness is realizing we – reflecting Heaven's Oneness – share the same purpose, goal, and need. That is why remembering our shared goal contains the memory of God. Recall this important passage on remembering God through perceiving the common mind uniting the Sonship, despite the ego's fog of guilt that would keep us divided:

> The light in them [our sick brothers] shines as brightly regardless of the density of the fog that obscures it. If you give no power to the fog to obscure the light, it has none. For it has power only if the Son of God gives power to it. He must himself withdraw that power, remembering that all power is of God. You can re- member this for all the Sonship. Do not allow your brother not to remember, for his forgetfulness is yours. But your remembering is his, for God cannot be remembered alone. *This is what you have forgotten.* To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember (T-12.11.2).

**(4:3-5) And shall we not forgive our brother, who can offer this to us? He is the way, the truth and life that shows the way to us. In him resides salvation, offered us through our forgiveness, given unto him.**

John's gospel has Jesus say: "I am the way, the truth and life" (Jn 14:6). Yet here Jesus says: Yes, I am the way, the truth, and the life, but so are you as part of God's one Son. Learning to forgive someone you perceive outside you – realizing he is the Son of God along with you – is the way you return to the truth and the life.

The Holy Spirit teaches one lesson, and applies it to all individuals in all situations.... When I said "I am with you always," I meant it literally. I am not absent to anyone in any situation. Because I am always with you, *you* are the way, the truth and the life. You did not make this power, any more than I did. It was created to be shared, and therefore cannot be meaning- fully perceived as belonging to anyone at the expense of another (T-7.III.1:1, 7-11).

**(5:1) We will not end this year without the gift our Father promised to His holy Son.**

God's gift to us is forgiveness, which, as we now see, brings with it the happy realization we were mistaken – about ourselves, our brothers, and our Source.

**(5:2-7) We are forgiven now. And we are saved from all the wrath we thought belonged to God, and found it was a dream. We are restored to sanity, in which we understand that anger is in- sane, attack is mad, and vengeance merely fool- ish fantasy. We have been saved from wrath because we learned we were mistaken. Nothing more than that. And is a father angry at his son because he failed to understand the truth?**

Jesus is reminding us again of the importance of humility, of being able to say with sincerity and gratitude that we have been wrong. We need be humble enough to acknowledge that the insanity he just described is present in practically every thought, behavior, and goal we have during the day. Yet we need also accept that God is not angry because we believe we attacked Him – our Father never even saw the "attack." Jesus uses this symbol of a father because it is such an important one for us. Thus the symbol of the angry father the ego has made is corrected to the Father Who never ceases to love His Son. Recall the discussion in "Atonement without Sacrifice" (T-3.I.1-2), in which Jesus says the following of God, in the context of the traditional Christian belief that he suffered and died for our sins:

> If the crucifixion is seen from an upside-down point of view, it does appear as if God permitted and even encouraged one of His Sons to suffer because he was good. This particularly unfortunate interpretation, which arose out of projection, has led many people to be bitterly afraid of God. Such anti-religious concepts enter into many religions.... In milder forms a parent says, "This hurts me more than it hurts you," and feels exonerated in beating a child. Can you believe our Father really thinks this way? (T-3.I.1:5-7; 2:7-8)

In truth, of course, there is no Father and Son. There is no separation at all, and so the belief in sin, guilt, and fear – the foundation for believing in the wrath of God – does not exist The Father has never ceased to love His Son.

**(6:1) We come in honesty to God and say we did not understand, and ask Him to help us to learn His lessons, through the Voice of His Own Teacher.**

Honesty says, "I am mistaken." How frequently Jesus comes back to this pivotal theme! Again, you want to practice this honesty in the very specific events of your life. Try to catch yourself adamantly insisting you are right, which but demonstrates you are wrong – proclaiming your superiority in being right implicitly makes someone else inferior. This means you are seeing differences and separation, winners and losers – the hallmarks of the special relationship. Thus the need for honesty in realizing you understand nothing about love – between brothers, and between God and His Son – and that the idols of specialness have brought you nothing but misery and pain:

> Be speeded on your way by honesty, and let not your experiences here deceive in retrospect. They were not free from bitter cost and joyless consequence.
>
> Do not look back except in honesty. And when an idol tempts you, think of this:
>
> *There never was a time an idol brought you anything except the "gift of*

> *guilt. Not one was bought except at cost of pain, nor was it ever paid by you alone.*
>
> Be merciful unto your brother, then. And do not choose an idol thoughtlessly, remembering that he will pay the cost as well as you (T-30.V.9:11-10:6).

**(6:2-3) Would He hurt His Son? Or would He rush to answer him, and say, "This is My Son, and all I have is his"?**

This is an interesting passage, based on the gospel parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), wherein the errant son returns to the father who rushes gladly to meet him. The eldest son, who remained faithfully at home with his father, complains about his brother being given such a royal welcome, including a feast to be held in his honor. The father essentially replies to him: "I love both of you, and all I have is yours." In other words, neither brother loses anything by the father's love: the father loving son A does not preclude his loving son B. Comparisons are always of the ego, for love makes none (T-24.II.1:1) and we are loved equally by our Father. In this one workbook sentence, therefore, Jesus combines into one the responses the father makes to the prodigal son who returns, as well as to the son who remained. Needless to say, having split minds, we are both sons.

**(6:4-5) Be certain He will answer thus, for these are His Own words to you. And more than that can no one ever have, for in these words is all there is, and all that there will be throughout all time and in eternity.**

Throughout all time, when we choose Jesus as our teacher he will reflect to us the Love of God and the abundance of His treasure, which we are – there can be no lack in God's Son. Throughout eternity, we remain a part of our Source – there is nothing else. The practice of this glorious message in our daily lives entails seeing how we manifest the scarcity principle that is opposite to abundance: the belief in lack, wherein we feel there is something missing in us. The ego takes this belief and teaches that what we lack someone has taken – the fourth law of chaos (T-23.II.9-10). Though not always in awareness, this *one-or-the-other* belief of winners and losers is present in our minds, and we need realize that in thinking that God plays favorites we assert He is insane. Yet this insanity is only in *our* minds, as is God's sane answer. His abundance is the response to the ego's scarcity, for how can we lose not only the love we *have,* but the love we *are?* Recall this passage from early in the text:

> In your own mind, though denied by the ego, is the declaration of your release. *God has given you everything.* This one fact means the ego does not exist, and this makes it profoundly afraid. In the ego's language, "to have" and "to be" are different, but they are identical to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows that you both *have* everything and *are* everything. Any distinction in this respect is meaningful only when the idea of "getting," which implies a lack, has already been accepted. That is why we make no distinction between *having* the Kingdom of God and *being* the Kingdom of God (T-4.III.9).

We are now ready for the final five days of lessons.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 361**

**LESSONS 361 to 365**

**This holy instant would I give to You.**
**Be You in charge. For I would follow You,**
**Certain that Your direction gives me peace.**

Again, Lessons 361 to 365 are one, and focus on the Holy Spirit. They reflect our having achieved the workbook's goal, which was to learn we have a split mind: we were mistaken in choosing the ego, and we correct that mistake by choosing the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this is how the lesson begins.

In the Introduction to the sixth review, Jesus told us he is placing us in the Holy Spirit's charge. Now *we* place ourselves in the Holy Spirit's charge. The clear implication is that we have learned Jesus' lesson and realized our mistake, knowing there is a principle of correction in our minds to which we can go, and which will bring us peace. We therefore undo the original error when we chose against the Holy Spirit and in the unholy instant asked the ego to be in charge. The world, then, is nothing but a projection of that original unholy instant. Now we happily change our minds, glad to have been wrong and grateful to be living in the Holy Spirit's holy instant of forgiveness.

**(1:1-4) And if I need a word to help me, He will give it to me. If I need a thought, that will He also give. And if I need but stillness and a tranquil open mind, these are the gifts I will receive of Him. He is in charge by my request.**

"He is in charge by my request" – this is most important. It is not that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to us; we actively choose Him. To make that choice is thus our goal throughout the day.

**(1:5) And He will hear and answer me, because He speaks for God my Father and His holy Son.**

We will see this same thought expressed in the Epilogue. As long as we believe we are bodies living in the world, we will experience the abstract presence of the Holy Spirit's Love as meeting us where we believe we are. We will think He is helping us in all the specific ways in which we experience our need, as we read in the clarification of terms:

> The Holy Spirit abides in the part of your mind that is part of the Christ Mind. He represents your Self and your Creator, Who are One. He speaks for God and also for you, being joined with Both. And therefore it is He Who proves Them One. He seems to be a Voice, for in that form He speaks God's Word to you. He seems to be a Guide through a far country, for you need that form of help. He seems to be whatever meets the needs you think you have. But He is not deceived when you perceive your self entrapped in needs you do not have. It is from these He would deliver you. It is from these that He would make you safe (C-6.4).

However, as we continue our journey home, after completing the journey through the workbook, we realize that help is not specific at all, for the only reality is the abstract Love of God. It is to this Love we make our certain way with our Guide, Teacher, and Comforter, Whose Love leads us to the peace of God and everlasting life.

***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 362**

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**

**Lesson 365**

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***Journey through the Workbook of A Course in Miracles*** **by Kenneth Wapnick**
**Lesson 365**
**EPILOGUE**

We come to the Epilogue, the end of the workbook for students. Its major theme is similar to that of its counterpart in the clarification of terms: the completion of a journey in which an ancient door swings open wide in welcome. We again see how Jesus seems to save his most beautiful words for the conclusions of his books: text, workbook, manual, and clarification of terms.

**(1:1) This course is a beginning, not an end.**

This is everyone's most un-favorite line. At the same time that Jesus gives us this glorious vision of the end and assures us that the goal is certain, he also makes it quite clear that we must continue our journey with the Holy Spirit. Thus we read that the end is already here with God waiting at the door for our return, and yet we still have work to do in terms of our daily practicing. The workbook is a one-year training program to put us in the charge of the Holy Spirit – by our choice – that we may spend the rest of our lives letting Him instruct us in the proper way of perceiving the world of our special relationships.

**(1:2-9) Your Friend goes with you. You are not alone. No one who calls on Him can call in vain. Whatever troubles you, be certain that He has the answer, and will gladly give it to you, if you simply turn to Him and ask it of Him. He will not withhold all answers that you need for anything that seems to trouble you. He knows the way to solve all problems, and resolve all doubts. His certainty is yours. You need but ask it of Him, and it will be given you.**

The way to solve problems and resolve doubts is to bring them to our Friend, in Whom they will disappear because they are but one problem: the belief we are separate from God's Love. The solution, therefore, is learning we are no longer separate, but joined with our Source through the Holy Spirit. Our minds, projected into specific brains, will experience this help in specific *forms,* but we should not be deceived by this specificity. Our focus should only be on the *content.* Using the imagery of the song, it is not the parts we want, but the song itself, as described in this lovely and familiar opening to *The Song of Prayer:*

> Prayer is the greatest gift with which God blessed His Son at his creation. It was then what it is to become; the single voice Creator and creation share; the song the Son sings to the Father, Who returns the thanks it offers Him unto the Son. Endless the harmony, and endless, too, the joyous concord of the Love They give forever to Each Other. And in this, creation is extended. God gives thanks to His extension in His Son. His Son gives thanks for his creation, in the song of his creating in his Father's Name.... You cannot, then, ask for the echo. It is the song that is the gift. Along with it come the overtones, the harmonics, the echoes, but these are secondary (S-1.in.1:1-6; S-1.I.3:1-3).

The parts of this glorious song – our forgiven relationships – are what our Friend sings to us to guide our footsteps along the journey to the Whole – the song of Love Itself.

**Lesson 365**

**(2:1-3) You are as certain of arriving home as is the pathway of the sun laid down before it rises, after it has set, and in the half-lit hours in between. Indeed, your pathway is more certain still. For it can not be possible to change the course of those whom God has called to Him.**

Even before the sun actually rises, we know it will do so. It is a certainty in our perceptual world and never subject to doubt. Jesus is telling us that our pathway home is even more certain than that. Recall Jesus' loving reassurance: "the outcome is as certain as God" (T-4.II.5:8). It cannot be possible that we could not or will not return home – we never left. Recall one more time the end to Helen's poem, "Song to My Self":

> I never left my Father's house. What need
> Have I to journey back to Him again?
> *(The Gifts of God,* p. 38)

**(2:4) Therefore obey your will, and follow Him Whom you accepted as your voice, to speak of what you really want and really need.**

Jesus is not saying we are to obey his will, but *ours.* This means we recognize that our will and his are one, and in that unity we realize our will and God's are one. Jesus is certainly not asking us to submit to his authority, nor is he trying to coerce us. He simply says: "Realize I am right and you are wrong. When you finally accept this happy fact, you will also accept that your will and mine are the same, for we are part of God's one Son, and he is part of God."

**(2:5-6) His is the Voice for God and also yours. And thus He speaks of freedom and of truth.**

Although we will eventually know that ours and the Holy Spirit's Voice are the same, while we still make our way we learn that the Holy Spirit speaks *for* us and not *against* us – He is not our enemy, nor does He want us to sacrifice or give up what we want. We thus learn that the Voice for God speaks for what is really in our hearts: the fervent desire to return home that is spoken of in the text as "your intense and burning love of God, and His for you" (T-13.III.2:8). Again, at the very end of the journey, we understand it is not only that the Holy Spirit speaks for us, He is us, as we are Him There is but one Voice, just as there is but one God. In that oneness, all differentiated forms disappear:

> The Holy Spirit, being a creation of the one Creator, creating with Him and in His likeness or spirit, is eternal and has never changed. He was "called down upon the earth" [a reference to Acts 1:8] in the sense that it was now possible to accept Him and to hear His Voice. His is the Voice for God, and has therefore taken form. This form is not His reality, which God alone knows along with Christ, His real Son, Who is part of Him (C-6.1:2-5).

Thus, though not real in the absolute sense, the Holy Spirit nonetheless reflects the reality of God's Love in the dream, a reflection that gently corrects our illusions with its truth.

## Lesson 365

**(3:1) No more specific lessons are assigned, for there is no more need of them.**

There is no further need for lessons, because the last lesson—the culmination of the workbook – is that we ask the Holy Spirit to be in charge. As long as we accept His guidance, we spend the rest of our days specifically asking for help when we are tempted to exclude Him and have the ego be our guide. Therefore, we no longer need words or lessons because we have learned we are wrong and the Holy Spirit is right, and we continually seek to reinforce that awareness. By choosing the Voice beyond words, which yet seems to speak in words, we let ourselves be directed as we practice our daily lessons of forgiveness. Nothing further is needed than this gentle guidance – always lovely to read – that teaches the sinlessness of God's Son:

> Yet there will always be this place of rest to which you can return. And you will be more aware of this quiet center of the storm than all its raging activity. This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent. For from this center will you be directed how to use the body sinlessly (T-18.VII.8:1-4).

**(3:2) Henceforth, hear but the Voice for God and for your Self when you retire from the world, to seek reality instead.**

In other words, Jesus asks us to go to the holy instant, the place of truth and peace in our minds. There we hear and integrate the truth, thus to return our attention to the world, but differently, as he now tells us:

**(3:3) He will direct your efforts, telling you exactly what to do, how to direct your mind, and when to come to Him in silence, asking for His sure direction and His certain Word.**

You will come to the Holy Spirit in silence when you realize you have no more specific needs. At the journey's beginning you need Him to tell you exactly what to do and say, where, and to whom. You ask the questions, and He seems to give the answer. Yet at some point it will dawn on you that this specificity is getting you nowhere. It will reinforce your being with the right Teacher, but will not bring you home. That is why you need to learn to come in silence, which means to realize that all problems are the same – aspects of the ego's raucous shrieking. You do not need help with a specific problem, but with undoing the source of the problem – your decision to hear the ego's chatter. It does not matter what the ego is saying; the problem is that you think you are hearing it. You need but say one word to the Holy Spirit: "Help!" This means: "I forgot You, and now want Your loving guidance back." Forgiveness – the letting go of judgment – is the means He uses to undo the blocks to our following His guidance and hearing His certain Word. Thus did Jesus specifically instruct Helen:

> Remember you need nothing, but you have an endless store of loving gifts to give. But teach this lesson only to yourself. Your brother will not learn it from your words or from the judgments you have laid on him. You need not even speak a word to him. You cannot ask, "What shall I say to him?" and hear God's answer. Rather ask instead, "Help me to see this brother though the eyes of truth and not

> of judgment," and the help of God and all His angels will respond.... by your side is One Who knows the way. Step back for Him and let Him lead you to the rest and silence of the Word of God *(Absence from Felicity,* pp. 381-82).

**(3:4-5) His is the Word that God has given you. His is the Word you chose to be your own.**

The ego's word of separation always attacks; God's Word of Atonement ends attack through forgiveness. Thus we choose the Word that will bring us the peace we want above all else.

**(4:1) And now I place you in His hands, to be His faithful follower, with Him as Guide through every difficulty and all pain that you may think is real.**

Jesus is not encouraging us to deny our experiences, but to choose a Teacher Who will help us realize that we are never upset for the reason we think. The source of our pain is not external, for pain comes only from the mind's choosing the wrong teacher.

**(4:2) Nor will He give you pleasures that will pass away, for He gives only the eternal and the good.**

Our egos want the Holy Spirit to make us feel good *here;* to solve our problems *here;* to bring an end to pain *here;* to give us things we want *here.* These are what we believe will give us pleasure and peace – e.g., a relationship that will not be abusive, a bank account that does not dwindle to nothing, a body that does not suffer pain. Jesus, however, is telling us that the Holy Spirit would not give us these things because they will not last; indeed, nothing of the body will. What He does give is the eternal Love of God. It is important, therefore, that we shift our figure/ground perception so that our specialness needs recede into the background and become the framework in which we learn forgiveness, now placed in the foreground. We then observe how quickly the ego jumps in and tries to shift our attention, pushing Jesus and our minds – the source of the dream – into the background, and the dream and its figures to the foreground once again.

**(4:3-4) Let Him prepare you further. He has earned your trust by speaking daily to you of your Father and your brother and your Self.**

It is interesting to note that Jesus here equates himself with the Holy Spirit. We usually think of Jesus as the "I" – the one who speaks to us through *A Course in Miracles. Yet* here he says that these are the Holy Spirit's words to us, which means his function is the same as the Holy Spirit's, as are Their Voices. This is not meant to be a topic of theological controversy. There can be only *one* Voice, as there is only *one* inner Teacher. To say that Jesus is the source of *A Course in Miracles is* to say the Holy Spirit is, too. The *forms* make no difference, since the *content* of truth remains the same. What is important is realizing that these words do not come from us as egos, but from a love and truth that are beyond this world.

**(4:5) He will continue.**

Because you have finished the workbook does not mean the Holy Spirit will cease speaking to you. He will always be an inner Presence of Love, the memory that reminds you that all this is a dream.

**(4:6) Now you walk with Him, as certain as is He of where you go; as sure as He of how you should proceed; as confident as He is of the goal, and of your safe arrival in the end.**

We will increasingly share His certainty as we learn to let the world and everything in it recede into the background, and allow the goal – the *end* – and His Love – the *means* – come to the foreground.

**(5:1-4) The end is certain, and the means as well. To this we say "Amen." You will be told exactly what God wills for you each time there is a choice to make. And He will speak for God and for your Self, thus making sure that hell will claim you not, and that each choice you make brings Heaven nearer to your reach.**

When Helen was taking down the text, she would occasionally think – and hope – that it was coming to an end. Yet Jesus continued. At one point she asked: "How will I know this is ending?" and he replied: "When you hear the word, *Amen."* Recall the opening line of the text's final paragraph: "And now we say 'Amen'." This passage, therefore, alerts us to the conclusion of the workbook. Incidentally, Jesus does the very same thing in the manual for teachers, which concludes with the word *Amen.*

At the beginning of our journey – remember that the workbook is usually used, and basically meant to be used at the beginning of a student's work with the Course – we believe there are choices in the world that have to be made, and we are not yet aware that there is only one true choice: the Holy Spirit or the ego. What brings us to that awareness is asking the Holy Spirit's help for the specific choices we think we have, reflected in the above words. As we advance on the journey – which means we experience less guilt and have less attraction to specialness – we realize that each time there is a problem it is because we chose the wrong teacher. Period. Such a simple error requires a simple correction – forgiveness instead of attack, the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, Heaven instead of hell – and its success is certain, for both means and end are the Love of God.

**(5:5-6) And so we walk with Him from this time on, and turn to Him for guidance and for peace and sure direction. Joy attends our way.**

The real and only joy in this world is returning home, and we cannot return unless we undo the ego. Thus many students in their work with *A Course in Miracles* go through periods when things seem to get worse, where there is no joy, and all they know is the darkness of guilt. Yet that is a big step forward because they now recognize the mind's darkness. Before, they thought everything was wonderful, or that the darkness was in everyone else except themselves. However, pain erupts when they suddenly realize: *"I* am the devil, and evil is not outside me. Since I now see that the problem is my guilt, I am the one who has to change, not anyone else." Yet joy eventually comes as they realize there is a way of looking at the darkness and realizing the light shines beyond it. That is real joy and happiness, which do not come from the pleasure of indulging one's

specialness needs, but through realizing there is genuine hope: "Yes, I have an ego, but I also know it is a defense against a loving reality that is also in my mind." Only in the Holy Spirit's salvation, therefore, is there hope of true joy, which arises in gently undoing the ego's thought system of attack and pain, as we read in the fifth characteristic of the teacher of God, describing the joy of following the direction of his Teacher:

> Joy is the inevitable result of gentleness. Gentleness means that fear is now impossible, and what could come to interfere with joy? The open hands of gentleness are always filled. The gentle have no pain. They cannot suffer. Why would they not be joyous? They are sure they are beloved and must be safe. Joy goes with gentleness as surely as grief attends attack. God's teachers trust in Him. And they are sure His Teacher goes before them, making sure no harm can come to them. They hold His gifts and follow in His way, because God's Voice directs them in all things. Joy is their song of thanks.... How joyous it is to share the purpose of salvation! (M-4.V.1:1-12, 15)

**(5:7) For we go homeward to an open door which God has held unclosed to welcome us.**

I observed at the beginning of the Epilogue that we find this same lovely thought in the conclusion to the clarification of terms. There the open door is the ancient one we believed was forever closed when the mind chose against the Holy Spirit. Now that we return with Him and are at the end of the journey, we realize the door had not closed at all. This, by the way, is the same door Jesus holds open for us, as we have seen in the following passage from the text that emphasizes the need to leave all judgment behind, for otherwise we shall never know that the pathway home has remained open to us throughout eternity:

> Christ is at God's altar, waiting to welcome His Son. But come wholly without condemnation, for otherwise you will believe that the door is barred and you cannot enter. The door is not barred, and it is impossible that you cannot enter the place where God would have you be. But love yourself with the Love of Christ, for so does your Father love you. You can refuse to enter, but you cannot bar the door that Christ holds open. Come unto me who hold it open for you, for while I live it cannot be shut, and I live forever. God is my life and yours, and nothing is denied by God to His Son (T-11.IV.6).

The word *Amen* appears a second time:

**(6:1-2) We trust our ways to Him and say "Amen." In peace we will continue in His way, and trust all things to Him.**

This way of the miracle means the ego's undoing. We no longer make the journey through the world with a false guide, but with the Holy Spirit, Whom we have learned to trust more than our self. Our lives here now shine with the gentle glow of forgiveness, and all is made safe as we journey home in peace with the power of love by our side:

> The teachers of God have trust in the world, because they have learned it is not governed by the laws the world made up. It is governed by a power that is

> in them but not *of* them. It is this power that keeps all things safe. It is through this power that the teachers of God look on a forgiven world (M-4.I.1:4-7).

**(6:3-5) In confidence we wait His answers, as we ask His Will in everything we do. He loves God's Son as we would love him. And He teaches us how to behold him through His eyes, and love him as He does.**

If we need specific answers we will experience His love as a specific answer; but we will realize in time that His Love is the only answer, and has no specific form. It is this answer that informs our daily classrooms, as our Teacher instructs us in forgiveness whereby we learn to love God's Son as He does, that the light of Christ may shine equally on us all, without exception:

> Make way for love, which you did not create, but which you can extend. On earth this means forgive your brother, that the darkness may be lifted from your mind. When light has come to him through your forgiveness, he will not forget his savior, leaving him unsaved. For it was in your face he saw the light that he would keep beside him, as he walks through darkness to the everlasting light (T-29.III.4).

The closing lines of the workbook are beautiful and deeply moving, and I shall present them without comment. They end with the wonderful phrase from the last discourses in John's gospel, where Jesus tells his disciples: "I will never leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). As his final word here, Jesus reminds us that the Holy Spirit's Love has a specific form in us within the dream, and *he* is that form. While in his mind the journey is already over, Jesus does not demand our acceptance. As long we cling to our individual self we must journey on, yet it is not a journey we make alone, nor without the gentle comfort of God to guide us:

**(6:6-8) You do not walk alone. God's angels hover near and all about. His Love surrounds you, and of this be sure; that I will never leave you comfortless.**

To this we softly and gratefully say: Amen.