**Healing the Dream of Sickness**

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

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**Part I**

I thought I would begin by talking about the dream, since in a sense that goes to the heart not only of what we will be discussing in this workshop, but of the entire Course. When one speaks about dreams it is always appropriate to invoke Sigmund Freud, without whom, as I have said many times, we would not have *A Course in Miracles*. His work on dreams stands not only as the centerpiece of the entire body of his work, but actually of all psychology in the 20th century, and now into the 21st century. His first major book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1900, was devoted to dreams, obviously; but he used that study as a springboard for understanding how the whole psyche works. He wrote that at a time when most dream researchers or people who wrote about dreams tended to denigrate them, viewing dreams as basically silly and having no meaning. One of the most important points to come from this initial work of Freud's was to show us that dreams indeed were quite meaningful and purposive. *Purpose*, as you know, is a significant term in the Course. Jesus speaks about it over and over again, and if we are to understand anything in this world, we must understand the purpose it serves, both in terms of the ego's thought system and then the correction of that through the Holy Spirit's thought system.

When Freud spoke about the purposive nature of dreams, he spoke specifically about their capacity to fulfill a wish, usually known as "the wish-fulfillment theory." Generally speaking, dreams keep us asleep. Thus, at night when we are asleep our defenses tend to relax somewhat and all of the fiendish unconscious material threatens to surface and consequently wake us up. The purpose of the dream is to tame these wild forces (as Freud thought of them) in our unconscious and make a compromise with them—in effect, to allow them to exist and to help them reach some kind of resolution or fulfillment. This is the more specific idea of *wish*: to fulfill all these instinctual drives, but primarily so that we would remain asleep. Overall we thus would say that dreams exist to fulfill the wish of remaining asleep, and secondarily to fulfill the wishes generated by these instinctual forces that always have to do, ultimately in Freud's theory, with infantile sexuality. It was in helping us understand that dreams serve a purpose that he made one of his most lasting contributions.

When we look at the Course's view of dreams, seeing through the Freudian lens in terms of this more general purpose of fulfilling a wish, then we can suddenly understand why the dream has occurred, and specifically why the dream that we call the physical universe and the individual dreams we think of as our lives have occurred the way they have occurred. There is a method in the ego's madness and this method is the *fulfillment of a wish*. We learn from our study of *A Course in Miracles* that the wish that the world fulfills for us, and specifically the wish that our individual lives in this world fulfill, is the wish to keep ourselves asleep, just as Freud taught. However, seen in the metaphysical context, this means keeping the wish to be separate from God alive. That is the sleep of separation. The Course tells us that we are at home in God yet dreaming of exile (T-10.I.2:1). The exile of course is generated by the idea that we have indeed pulled off the impossible and have separated ourselves from the Love of God. That is the origin of the dream, and that is what Jesus means when he says, as he does in several places, that the content of every dream is fear (T-18.II.4; "The Gifts of God," pp. 115-117). It is the fear that somehow God will retaliate and punish us for our sin of separating from Him. Thus, the overriding purpose that the ego's dream serves is that it keeps us asleep. It keeps the sleep of separation real so that we do not awaken from the dream and recognize that the entire thought system of the ego is the dream.

Near the end of Chapter 27 Jesus makes the distinction between two levels of dreams: the secret dream and the world's dream (T-27.VII.11-12). On the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-i/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) (see Below), the first level is represented in the wrong-minded box. This is the dream that hides the wish and the thought to be separate. It is the birthplace of the unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear. The ego tells us that our separation from God was a sin, that we killed God so that we would live—it is one or the other. We are then taught that we should feel guilty for this egregious sin of destroying the love of Heaven; and since in the ego's system guilt always demands punishment, we then become afraid of the punishment that we believe is inevitable and deserved—we deserve to be punished by the object of our sin, namely God. That is the secret dream, the original battleground where the ego sees us at war with God.

Since this constellation of thoughts is so horrific and so fraught with pain and terror, the ego counsels us that we can be free of the pain of our guilt and escape the terror of our annihilation at the hands of this vengeful, maniacal God by leaving the mind, making up a world and hiding in that world. Specifically, we will hide our thought system, our image of ourselves, in a body. This is the beginning of what Jesus refers to as the "world's dream," represented on the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-i/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) as the box at the bottom: the world and the body. This is the second part of the ego's wish-fulfillment: the making of the world and all the fragmented thoughts, each of which seems to be encased in a body. In the ego's plan, the world enables us to keep this individual existence, this special self as our identity—unique, autonomous, independent, and free; but we can give away all responsibility for it.

Briefly summarized, the ego's purpose for the dream of the world and the body is to keep the separation that we believe we stole from God, but to give away the sin associated with it. When we talk about giving sin away we are talking about *projection*, another term for which we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Freud, because it was Freud who first described this incredibly important dynamic. Something I do not like in myself I reject, deny, and repress. Whatever I repress and becomes unconscious, I automatically project. That is the law of the split mind: what I repress I inevitably will project. I first push it down so that I am not aware of it, and then I push it out. I need bodies or objects onto which I can push this guilt. That is why the world was made. It was made to house all these billions and billions of fragments that we call bodies or forms, because they come in all varieties of shapes and sizes, both animate and inanimate. However, we learn in the text that nothing is really inanimate or animate, everything is the same (T-23.II.19). Everything is literally nothing, that we believe is something. We take the guilt over our responsibility for the separation that is in our minds and we say it is no longer in me; I am not responsible for the separation, someone or something else is, and the world arises to meet that need or to fulfill that wish.

That is the purpose of all dreams. They begin with the secret dream, as stated for example at the beginning of Lesson 93—"You think you are the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1). The world arises to protect us from the awfulness of that thought; and then everyone *else* becomes "the home of evil, darkness and sin." If I happen to have a particularly negative image of myself, I will still believe it is not my fault. I am this awful, inadequate, inferior person because I was made this way: my genes, my upbringing, all the forces in the world that impinge on me and have formed me and made me what I am. No matter what we think of ourselves in this world, it ends up not being our fault. Again, the ego gets to have its cake and eat it too. We keep the separation that we believe we successfully stole from God, but we give the sin away—sin being the belief that we have done this. Now I have my separated self with no knowledge, awareness, or memory of where it came from; namely, I and the I's of all of us, because we begin as one Son and we separated as one Son. The secret dream is shared by all of us equally, because it is all one. The fragmentation into billions of seemingly separated selves does not occur until the second dream begins to emerge with what the beginning of Chapter 18 talks about: the first projection of error (T-18.I.4-6). The original error is what we all share as one—the secret dream. The world's dream arises as a defense against that. Its purpose is to keep the separated self intact, but to make someone, or everyone and everything, including the God we made up—to make all of these figures responsible. That is the dream.

What we find discussed throughout the Course, as well as the two companion pamphlets, is the idea of splitting off effect from cause, so that effect now appears to be a cause. In the upper left-hand part of the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-i/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) is the word *cause*, meaning the split mind is the cause of the world, the world therefore being nothing more or less than the effect. Once we project out the belief in separation—the thought of sin, guilt, and fear—from our minds and see it elsewhere, then what we have projected onto becomes the effect. That effect is caused by the thought in the mind that is animated and energized by the dynamic of projection. The world is the effect and the mind is the cause. When we split off effect from cause, we forget the cause. Notice also on the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-i/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) the solid line, which we refer to as the "veil of denial" or the "veil of forgetfulness" separating the mind from the world. That veil falls across our minds so that we forget where the world came from, and with no awareness of the cause, we just see the effect. Then we have to make up some cause: Where did the world come from? How did we get here? What is the purpose of the world? Then we believe that *the world causes us*. This self I believe I am I believe is caused by the world of forces beyond my control, beginning with the union of a sperm and an egg. Whether it is done in the bedroom or in a test tube makes no difference; my physical life and my psychological life I believe begins when the sperm and the egg join. Or in the context of past lives I could say that who I am today is the effect of many sperms and many eggs joining over a period of centuries or millennia. Any way that you seek to understand it, it boils down to the same content: I am here not by my own decision, but because of something outside myself that caused me.

When we split effect from cause and repress the cause, we no longer have any knowledge of it. In other words, we become mindless, because the cause is the mind. Then we are left with the effect that we now believe is a cause. As we will see later, sickness is understood in this framework. When we think of sickness, whether mental or physical symptoms, what we label as *sick* or as *ill* is nothing more or less than the effect of the cause. A very important principle in the Course, which we come back to over and over again because it is so central, is the principle that *ideas leave not their source*. The idea of a physical universe—literally a physical universe, not just the world we perceive—is the idea that has never left its source in the mind. This means there is literally no world outside our minds because *ideas leave not their source*.

On the microcosmic level, for example, when I seek to get rid of my guilt, project it onto you, make you guilty, find fault, judge, blame, criticize you, etc., I have the magical hope that I have gotten rid of my guilt, my self-hatred, this awful judgment on myself by now placing it onto you and making you the home of evil, darkness, and sin. The guilt and the sin rest on you; they no longer rest within me. That is the magical hope. That does not mean I feel any less guilty. In fact what such attack does is *reinforce* my guilt, because there is some part of me that knows that I have attacked you falsely. No matter what you have done, no matter how reprehensible or vicious your actions may be in my eyes or the eyes of the entire world, that still does not make you responsible for how terrible I feel, or the distress, the disquiet, or the dis-ease that I feel within me. No matter how I try to project my guilt and make someone else responsible for how terrible I feel, it does not change the fact that the guilt still stays within me, because *ideas leave not their source*. The source of guilt in my mind has never left me simply because I indulged in the magical idea of thinking I could throw it away by placing it in you and then finding fault with you.

The principle that *ideas leave not their source* also operates in Heaven. We are an idea in the Mind of God and that is what Jesus means in the Course when he speaks about our being *thought*. We are *thought*; we are not flesh. We are a *thought* in the Mind of God. Putting that together with the principle that *ideas leave not their source* is a restatement of the Atonement principle that says the separation from God never happened. We are free within our insane dreaming to believe that we have pulled off the impossible, but that does not mean that we have, because *ideas leave not their source*. The *idea* of God's Son has never left its source in God. The idea of guilt has never left its source in my mind when I seek to project it out onto you. The sickness of believing I could destroy God, get away with it and then be happy has never left its source, even though I have made up a body and made it to be sick. Sickness has never left its source; guilt has never left its source; love has never left its Source.

The ego of course teaches exactly the opposite. The entire thought system of the ego begins with the proposition that *ideas****do****leave their source*. Again, once the idea leaves its source, we believe the source has been rendered nonexistent. And then once I begin the ego's secret dream, which is the home of guilt, the ego tells me ideas *do* leave their source: I can get rid of my guilt by making up a world housed with separate bodies, onto each of which I am now free to project my guilt. Therefore I am done with it and someone else will pay the price of my sin, not me. In fact, one of the causes and purposes of sickness is that it enables me to say you did this to me. You have made me sick. And it does not matter whether I define the pathogen as you (my mother, my father, my siblings, my lovers, my spouse, my children, etc.), or I define the pathogen as a bacteria or virus. In any occurrence, I am still saying the reason I am feeling so miserable, so dis-eased, so uncomfortable is that I have been invaded by a power or force outside my control. That is the purpose sickness serves, and we will come back to this over and over again.

But what is critically important, which in a sense forms the metaphysical backdrop for everything we will be discussing, is to really understand that there is no body, there is no sickness, there is no world—*ideas leave not their source*. There are only sick thoughts within our minds. That is the sickness. A sick body can be defined any number of ways: by a physical symptom, what we usually think of as mental illness, or just being upset about something, a transient emotional state. All of these are nothing more or less than the ego's attempt to fulfill the wish of its dream to keep us separated and believing that we have an identity separated from God. That thought then gets housed in a body, which then defines itself in terms of the differentiation between itself and other bodies. That is the sickness—the belief that that is who I am.

Again, the ego's secret wish is to keep the separated self intact but to blame someone or something else for it. Interestingly, the word *pathogen* comes from the Greek *pathos*, meaning disease or illness, and *gen*,meaning cause or what produces something. In our world, we tend to think of pathogens—as do most biologists and medical people—as being organisms such as bacteria or viruses that cause disease. When we study *A Course in Miracles*, we understand that the true pathogen is *guilt*. That is the cause of disease; and even more specifically, it is our *decision for guilt*, because guilt does not exist outside of our belief in it and our wish for it. We wish for guilt because guilt says I have sinned. Sin says I have separated from God, which means that this separated self that I am now indulging myself with is real, but I do not want to get punished for it. That is why we have the second dream, the world's dream, which seeks to complete the ego's wish by fulfilling it—by finding fault with everyone and everything else, and labeling everything in the world as a potential or an actual pathogen. I am filled with disease not because of *me*, but because of someone or something else. That is why there is a world. Remember, again, you must understand *purpose*. If you are to understand anything about this world, and above all understand anything about this course, you must recognize the only purpose the body and the world serve, which is to have this capacity to fulfill the wish to keep my sin and my separated self intact, both of which are in my mind, but then to magically believe I can get rid of all responsibility for my sinfulness and for my self by blaming other people. That is why there is a world of bodies. As the workbook says, “Thus were specifics made” (W-pI.161.3:1). There must be something that I hate. I need something out there as a means of getting rid of my hate, the hatred of myself.

As we will see later, the Holy Spirit has a different use for the body: to correct our confusion of cause and effect. We see bodies as being both effects and cause: your body has caused the effect, which is my body in pain. The Holy Spirit helps us recognize through our misperceptions of the body that the only purpose the body serves is to bring our attention back to the real cause, which is the choice for guilt in the mind. *That is the sickness*.

**Part II
"The Cause of Sickness" (S-3.I)**

Let us turn now to The Song of Prayer pamphlet, the first section in Chapter 3, "The Cause of Sickness" (S-3.I). We will read just the first three paragraphs, which present very clear statements of the cause-effect principle we have already seen. Remember, in the Course sickness is the belief in separation—that is where the guilt comes from. This will become quite important when we discuss the nature of healing later.

**(S-3.I.1:1) Do not mistake effect for cause...**

In other words, don't mistake the symptom—the sickness as it manifests itself in the body psychologically or physically—for the cause, which is the decision in our minds to believe the ego instead of the Holy Spirit: to choose separation over unity, guilt over love.

**(1:1) ...nor think that sickness is apart and separate from what its cause must be.**

This is our old friend, the principle ideas leave not their source. Here Jesus is referring to the symptoms. Sickness is not apart or separate from its cause, which is in the mind and only in the mind. That is why it is so important always to have an underlying understanding of the metaphysics of A Course in Miracles; otherwise you will mistake everything it says about the world: its purpose and seeming reality. You will think forgiveness and healing have to do with the world or bodies. These mistakes will just get you off track. There is literally no world because ideas leave not their source.

**(1:2) It is a sign** [sickness, bodily symptoms]**, a shadow of an evil thought that seems to have reality and to be just, according to the usage of the world.**

This idea of shadow is an important one in the Course, and it is found throughout the material. The world is nothing but a shadow of our guilt. Many of you are aware of the important section "The Two Worlds" at the end of Chapter 18 (T-18.IX), where Jesus talks about the world and the body as guilt's shadows—they simply do what guilt tells them to do. We know from our everyday life that a shadow has no substance. You are walking outside and see the shadow of a tree on the ground. We can regard the tree as the reality within the world, and then the shadow would simply be the absence of light caused by the tree itself. The shadow has no substance; it is nothing. That is why Jesus uses the term shadowthroughout the Course and here in the pamphlet.

Our sickness is a shadow. It is a projection of the evil thought that seems to have reality, and that evil thought is the belief that we are evil—"the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1)—because of what we have done. We have selfishly and thoughtlessly destroyed God, crucified His Son, Christ, so we could have what we want. When you think of the word sin, it is helpful to equate it with selfishness because that is something we are all acquainted with in our everyday lives. Sin is basically saying: "I don't give a damn about God, I want my life. And if my life has to be purchased at God's expense, so be it! I am going to have what I want. I want my separate existence. I want to be free of Him. I want to be autonomous. I want to be independent. I want to have thoughts that are mine, not tied in with Him. I want to love on my own, according to my terms. I don't want it tied in with Him. I don't like this ideas-leave-not-their-source business. I like having my own identity. And I don't care what havoc it wreaks. I don't care if it destroys Heaven. I will get what I want because I want it!"

That is the sin of selfishness, and that is how we all live here. It goes to the heart of specialness. I don't care how I use other people as long as my needs—my physical needs and my emotional needs—are met. Of course it is much better if I can dress all this up in spiritual or religious terms and give it a kind of context. But all that I am doing is trying to disguise what I am really up to. It is my selfish cannibalism that wants to take from outside and bring it inside, because that is what I need and that is what I want. And I don't care who suffers; all I care about is that I get what I want. That is the real guilt. That is the thought we label as evil and sinful. And so that is what sickness is: a shadow of that thought.

**(1:3) It is external proof of inner "sins," and witnesses to unforgiving thoughts that injure and would hurt the Son of God.**

We can see here, as we will see again and again—and of course on any page in the Course—how Jesus is redefining the problem. He is saying it is not outside; it is within our minds. We want to think it is outside, and so we have brilliantly, over centuries and millennia, defined sicknesses and come to understand disease: where it comes from, why it comes, how it comes and how to treat it—which is exactly what the ego wants. So all of our attention is rooted in the world and the body—you see the word sickness at the bottom line of the WORLD OF SEPARATION – PERCEPTION box on the **chart**. All of this is a very craftily and cleverly disguised way of protecting what A Course in Miracles refers to as "the secret dream" (T-27.VII.11), which is the real sickness. That is where the guilt is—where the seeming evil is in our minds. And only when we bring it back to its source in our minds can we realize what is in our minds, and that it is all made up.

Again, we are defining sickness loosely as being anything that causes me to be in a state of disquiet and not to be at peace, whether it is because I have a diseased organ, my body aches or my psyche aches because of something that a person did, or because of a memory or some interpretation of an event or a relationship. All these are proof that I have done a bad thing for which I deserve to be punished. Remember, the ego thought system rests on that secret dream that says God will exact His vengeance on us because of what we did to Him. And we carry that guilt with us into the world's dream. We think we keep it buried in our minds, but what we bury in our minds comes with us. Freud helped us to see that these demons are not nonexistent; they exist within us, and as much as we try to cover them over they are still there. So we will never be happy or at peace until we unearth the demons and tame the "wild beasts," as Freud saw them, to borrow Plato's analogy of the wild steeds.

So we carry this guilt with us—the thought that says we deserve to be punished. Then when we get sick, or something goes wrong with our bodies or with our lives, our ego will interpret it as God's punishment. John Calvin built a religion on the idea that God punishes those people who are sinners. And you know you are a sinner by the fact that something goes wrong in your life—that you are not wealthy, for example. New Age people do the same Calvinistic-type thing. They say there is something wrong with you if you are sick. What they don't realize is that, sure, there is something wrong with you if you are sick, but everyone is sick. Sane, healthy people don't come here. Sick people come here because their sickness is a belief that they are separate from God. Rather than single out certain members of the species as being sinners, failures, or bad people because things are wrong with them or their lives, we should expand that to realize that there is something wrong with everyone, whether your life goes well or not, according to society. Bodies are neverhealthy. Bodies always die. Freud also said that from the moment you are born you are preparing for death. He meant that biologically as well as psychologically. So everyone here is sick no matter how well you think your body is. A body cannot be healthy, because a body is nothing, as we will see shortly.

Sickness is not in the body. It is not the body that has to be healed. The belief in death is the problem, not the fact that the body dies. The body doesn't die, because the body doesn't live. That does not mean, though, that it is immortal. It doesn't live! How can nothing live? How can nothing die? Death is a thought, as A Course in Miracles teaches us over and over again. It is a thought that has its origin in the belief that God died so I could live, and now I will have to die so He can live. That is the ego's interpretation of physical death: it is God's vengeance. But whether the body lives or dies, the thought of death is with you anyway. It is not the body that has to be appealed to; it is not the body that has to be healed; it is not the body that has to be helped. It is the mind that has to be helped, but you cannot help a mind that you don't believe exists.

That is the only positive thing one can say about a sickness. It calls your attention to a problem, and when you really ask Jesus to help, he will help you understand that the problem is not in the body—it is not because of another person or what a pathogenic agent has done to hurt you or make you sick. The problem is your decision-making process. It went awry; you made the wrong choice. That is the problem. Once we recognize that there is a problem and we cannot blame other people for it or seek a solution for it outside ourselves, the body becomes a very helpful instrument—but not because the body is anything great. It is not anything great. It is not anything terrible. It is nothing. It is simply a device that we project onto, and once we project onto it, we can remember that the ego speaks first and is wrong (T-5.VI.3:5; 4:2). Thus, we recognize there is a problem for which we need help, and that help consists of going within our minds, where Jesus or the Holy Spirit are. The help They offer is what healing is, which is to teach us that the sick body—the diseased organism that we identify with as ourselves—is simply a shadow of a belief in evil that we have made real in our minds. Understanding that, we now can do something about the problem, because we realize the problem is not outside; the problem is inside. As the beginning of Chapter 21 states, the world is "the outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5). What is outside tells us what is inside. We have a teacher in our minds who will guide our vision from outside—where our sensory organs put it—back to what is inside, in our mind. That is what Jesus is talking about here. Again, when the body is ill or when there is pain, our ego speaks first and interprets that as: you are getting what is due you!

When Jesus describes the world's dream, as he does near the end of Chapter 27, he talks about there being a murderer out there who wants your death to be "lingering and slow" (T-27.VII.12:1). That is what the body does and how it dies. From the moment we are born, our death is inevitable, but it is slow. That is what a torturer likes to do. He does not want to snuff out your life just like that; he wants you to pay for your crime, your sin, your injustice. And that is what we believe God is doing when we believe He made the body. He plots our death, but it will be lingering, slow, and very painful. Of course what we do with all that is say it is not God Who did it. You did it—someone or something else is responsible for my disease. So I am not being punished for my sin, it is your sin that is trying to make me suffer. Once I perceive it that way—and we were born to perceive it that way—I will gladly suffer. I will gladly be abused and victimized. I will embrace, cherish, and hug tightly to my heart how I have been abused, misunderstood, and unfairly treated throughout my life. I will gladly suffer so I can say, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die" (T-27.I.4:6). And that means God will punish you when He sees my suffering, abused, and victimized body—both mentally and physically. That suffering is pointing an accusing finger at someone and saying, "You did this!" And in my magical, insane thinking I believe God will listen to me and follow my accusing finger that will point directly at you. Then He will punish you.

Thus, sickness, disease (dis-ease), discomfort, are shadows. They are a red flag that says there is sin here, and following the ego's purpose in making up the world—its wish fulfillment—I will see sin as resting in you or something, some agent outside, rather than in me. This is why:

**(1:4-5) Healing the body is impossible, and this is shown by the brief nature of the "cure." The body yet must die, and so its healing but delays its turning back to dust, where it was born and will return.**

That is why people like to have life last longer and longer. And in our society now it is a premium. It used to be that if you lived to be forty or sixty it was a big thing. Now eighty is nothing. People want to be a hundred or a hundred and ten, even a hundred and twenty. People want to live forever and ever. Why? Because we want to cheat the Reaper. We want to cheat God. And all we are doing is making death real because we are trying to cheat it. We are making guilt real by trying to deny that there is any guilt, because if I don't die, that means God has not found me and so I stay in this body. Why would anyone who is sane want to stay in this body? This is not home. As the Course says, this is a travesty, a parody of the marvelous creation of God: Christ as spirit, not as body (see T-24.VII.1:11; 10:9). The body is the home of guilt, not of love. That is what Jesus is saying here. The “brief nature of the ‘cure’” refers to our apparent cure of a disease; but in the end the body dies—as proof that the ego's thought system of sin, guilt, and fear is alive and well, and, above all, true

**Part III
"The Cause of Sickness" (S-3.I) (cont.)**

**(2:1) The body's cause** [the body is the effect] **is unforgiveness of the Son of God.**

Jesus is not even talking here about a diseased body, in the sense of what we usually label disease. The body itself is caused by unforgiveness of the Son of God. What is unforgiveness? Guilt and attack. I project my guilt and thereby withhold my forgiveness from every living thing. That's attack. And that is the cause of the body. Once again, ideas leave not their source. The body is the embodiment of a thought system of sin, guilt, and fear—the expression of the thought of separation. It has no existence outside that thought. The body is a shadow, and since shadows have no substance, it is a shadow of nothing.

Yet, little children can make shadows into something real. A little child in bed at night might hear the wind rustling in the trees, or see shadows caused by the branches of the tree waving in the wind. The child projects all its fear and guilt onto the shadows and then thinks there are robbers out there, or killers, or aliens. This is very, very real to the child. But shadows are not real. They are nothing, but onto that nothing we project something we think is real and has substance. We take the guilt in our mind that comes from the belief that we separated from God, and we project it into a body. So all of a sudden the body becomes the embodiment of the thought of separation. It is the thought of separation given form. And it is a thought of sin and guilt. So I take the sin and guilt in my mind that manifests itself in the shadow of my body and I quickly get rid of it by projecting it. That is why, when we made up our collective dream—which we all did as one Son—we made it so that there would be parents. (We won't deal with the other species or so-called forms of "life," nor with forms of "non-life." We will stay just with homo sapiens.) Why did we make up our dream with parents? It was our dream, so we did not have to have parents. But we made it up that way because we needed some bodies that we could project our guilt onto. So my body and its condition now become the effect of your guilt and sin, not my own. That is what Jesus is talking about here.

**(2:2) It** [the body] **has not left its source** [the unforgiveness, the guilt in the mind] **and in its pain and aging and the mark of death upon it this is clearly shown.**

Why do you think people want to get old? Why do you think people want to undo pain, aside from the obvious reason of not wanting to be in pain? It is to show that my body lives on; and if my body lives on and on, and I am free from pain, then I can show that there is no guilt. But all that I have done, since ideas leave not their source, is bury the guilt. I put another veil over the secret dream so I will never get anywhere near it. It is all part of the ego's strategy to keep the thought of separation intact but to give the guilt away so someone else will be held accountable and responsible for it, meaning someone else will be punished for my sin. What is so interesting when one looks at relationships in the world is to see that we all do the same thing with each other, desperately trying to pretend that we are not doing that at all. We are all trying to see ourselves as the innocent victims of other people's sin.

Thus, I keep my separated self, and I gladly suffer abuse and victimization so that I can point an accusing finger and say, "You did this to me." I do this to you, you do this to me, and that is the special relationship that Jesus talks so much about in the text. These types of relationships are not very nice, obviously. We try to dress them up with pretty ribbons and wrapping paper, but they are not very nice, because they are all about stealing, cannibalizing, and selfishly trying to extract from someone else the life we believe we lack. That is what we did originally with God, and that is what we do each and every time we meet another body. And part of our dream calls for microorganisms (viruses or bacteria) that we can blame for invading our space and cannibalizing our flesh.

Remember, this is all a dream, and Freud helped us to understand that dreams are purposive. They don't just happen. In the first part of The Interpretation of Dreams, he gives an historical overview of how people have regarded dreams. He shows us that dreams fulfill a purpose. Expanding upon all of this on the macrocosmic level, we can see that the dream of the physical universe—the entire cosmos—serves a purpose. A Course in Miracles helps us understand, as no other spirituality has ever done, the purpose that the physical world serves, therefore the purpose that our individual birth and life in the physical world serves. It is not a very nice purpose. It is to keep what we stole, and have someone else be blamed for it and held accountable for it, and ultimately punished for it.

Another highly important ego principle that fits in with all this is that of one or the other. It is either God or me. If God lives, I do not, because in God I have no independent life. If all there is is God—Love and Oneness—then how could there be an individual, special, unique, autonomous, free, independent being? There cannot be. Therefore, if I am going to be this special, individual, unique, autonomous, free, and independent being, God's Oneness has to be sacrificed. It isone or the other. That is the basic principle and template upon which the entire world was formed. Our lives are based on one or the other. I want to survive, and that means it must be at your expense. If I am to keep my separation but be sinless, then you must be sinful. What I give you I no longer have; you have it. That is the nature of the world, and that is what Jesus is talking about here.

Again, "It [the body] has not left its source, and in its pain and aging and the mark of death upon it this is clearly shown." Jesus is saying not to make the body into something wonderful, glorious, and holy. It is not. God had nothing to do with it. The Holy Spirit uses the body to serve a holy purpose, but the body itself is nothing. It was made to be the home, in form, of evil, darkness, and sin (W-pI.93.1:1), and that is exactly what he is saying here. The body was made to be the final proof that the separation from God happened.

That is why no one really likes this course, despite what students say. How could you like a course that tells you that not only do you not exist, but in the feeble, fragile existence you think you have, you are a vicious, cannibalistic murderer? That does not make you a very nice person. How could you possibly like a course that tells you that? And you have to get through that part of the Course to get to the ultimate end, which is to realize, as workbook Lesson 93 says, "Light and joy and peace abide in me." You cannot get to light and peace and joy until you go through the evil, darkness, and sin. Then you will like this course. In fact, at that point you will not need the Course anymore.

**(2:3) Fearful and frail it** [the body] **seems to be to those who think their life is tied to its command and linked to its unstable, tiny breath.**

Despite what all the metaphysicians in the world of A Course in Miracles think, what we really believe is that our lives are very much tied up with this body. Just see what would happen if your oxygen supply were turned off for a minute. All your spiritual ideas would go out the window very quickly. So what Jesus in effect is saying to us here, as in many other places in the Course, is that we should not pretend that we are not bodies: "Don't tell me you really believe what I am telling you. To truly believe it means you are at the end of the journey, at the top of the ladder. But for now you think you are a body; so let's treat you as if you are a body. Try not to deny what your body is."

**(2:4-6) Death stares at them as every moment goes irrevocably past their grasping hands, which cannot hold them back. And they feel fear as bodies change and sicken. For they sense the heavy scent of death upon their hearts.**

This is a literary way of saying what Freud and many other people have said: that from the moment we are born we are preparing for death. Later in life, Freud began to talk about a death instinct, because he recognized that there was something missing in his theory.

So what Jesus is doing here is helping us recognize what the body really is. As many of you know, The Song of Prayer was written after the Course was first published and was meant to be a correction for the egregious mistakes students were already making. The primary misunderstanding that this pamphlet was originally written to correct had to do with what it means to ask the Holy Spirit—what prayer really is. That is the focus of the first chapter. The second chapter deals with forgiveness and uncovers the ego's plan of forgiveness-to-destroy, which is spoken of throughout the Course, although that term is never used except in this pamphlet. He tries to help us realize what forgiveness really is and what it is not, and he does the same thing here in the third chapter on healing.

Many students in those early days asked, and students these days (which of course can still be thought of really as part of the early days of the Course) are still asking the Holy Spirit to heal them. Jesus is trying to explain: "Don't ask me to heal the body. How can I heal something that doesn't exist? Don't make me as insane as you. Ask me to help you heal your mind, because that is the problem." And don't try to deny the purpose for which the body was made. It came from a thought of death and therefore it is a thought of death: ideas leave not their source. Bodies change and they weaken, deteriorate, and die because they come from the thought of guilt. We believe we killed God and that He is going to punish us. It is that thought that has to be undone, not the body.

**Part IV
"The Cause of Sickness" (S-3.I) (conclusion)**

**(3:1) The body can be healed as an effect of true forgiveness.**

Now Jesus is not talking about the physical body here. In other words, the symptoms will disappear when the guilt goes; but it is possible in principle for the guilt to go and yet still have physical symptoms present. However, they are no longer "sickness," because the symptoms now will serve a different purpose, whatever that purpose would be. Don't define sickness by the symptom. What you want to focus on is not the amelioration of your symptom as proof that this course works. What you want to focus on is the amelioration of your guilt, which could happen only when you recognize that guilt is your choice and understand why you chose it, so you can then make a more balanced choice—against the guilt and for the Atonement. The body is healed when you no longer project your guilt onto it.

**(3:2-4) Only that can give rememberance of immortality** ["rememberance" is spelled with an extra e because Helen needed it for the meter. That's poetic license. Shakespeare "cheated," too]**,** **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, among which sickness should be seen as one. Nothing but that** [don't see sickness as anything other than a shadow]**;the sign of judgment made by brother upon brother, and the Son of God upon himself.**

I first place judgment on myself. I judge myself as guilty because of what I have done to God. I then project that guilt out and now I judge you and blame you for what I cannot accept responsibility for in myself, which is the decision to be separate.

**(3:5) For he has damned his body as his prison, and forgot that it is he who gave this role to it.**

This is a very, very important line. The "he who gave this role to it" is not the "I" that I think I am. It is what we refer to as the decision maker. It is the decision-making part of my mind that chose to believe in the ego's interpretation of separation instead of the Holy Spirit's; and then what followed step by step is that everything the ego told us we accepted as gospel truth: Not only did I separate, but I sinned; not only did I sin, but I should feel guilty; not only am I guilty, but I should be punished for my sin. And to escape that punishment, the ego says quickly: "Leave the mind, project the guilt out, make up a world and a body; keep your separation, forget where it came from and give the guilt to everyone else." And then I forget that I did that. That is why we talk about that veil of forgetfulness. I now believe I am caught in this body as a prison. I am trapped here. And if I believe I am trapped in my body, I will believe that release and freedom will come when I leave the body. That is why there is that very, very important line, also in Chapter 27: "There is a risk of thinking death is peace" (T-27.VII.10:2). People think, "When I am free from my body when I die, then I am free, I am liberated." Well you are no such thing. You are in the same prison of guilt you were in before you "died." Or sometimes it takes the other form: "Yes my body is a prison, but I could dress it up nicely. I could put flowers on it and paint the bars and make all kinds of nice things, and I could turn this prison into something wonderful—so wonderful that I never want to leave it." All this is simply an attempt to cover over the guilt in my mind so I never go back within and uncover it.

Asking Jesus for help is asking him to look at the guilt in you, not in someone else where you placed it. Bring the guilt back into your own mind; recognize finally that you have a mind; understand the purpose the split mind serves; understand the purpose that guilt serves; understand the purpose your world serves. Only then will you be able to change the purpose from guilt to holiness, from sin to salvation, from hate to love, from the ego to God, from the world to Heaven, from the body to spirit—all different terms for describing the same process.

And going back to the third sentence: "Forgiveness must be given by a mind which understands that it must overlook all shadows on the holy face of Christ, among which sickness should be seen as one." That forgiveness can only occur through my understanding the purpose that unforgiveness served in my life, both in keeping the separation thought real, as well as in protecting it from any undoing by projecting it onto other people.

The world is literally a shadow of the thought of guilt in our minds. Our individual bodies are literally shadows of the thought of guilt in our minds. It is not the shadow that has to be healed. It is not the shadow that has to be changed. It certainly is not the shadow that has to be attacked. It is the guilt that has to be addressed in our minds. The only value that the world and our life in a body serve is the value of recalling our attention back within. So again, we recognize that the world is an outside picture of an inward condition (T-21.in.1:5). I need the world because I don't know that there is an inward condition. I need the world as the only vehicle I have—what Freud referred to in terms of the sleeping dream as "the royal road." He said the dream is "the royal road to understanding the activities of the unconscious mind." Jesus would say the same thing. The dream that is the world, the dream that is the body, is "the royal road" to understanding the activities of the unconscious mind. And what are those activities? They are the ongoing decisions for separation and guilt.

So by my coming to understand how I am separating myself from you—I am using my sickness to fulfill the secondary gain of making you responsible for me, of manipulating you to take care of me and feel sorry for me, to feel guilty—by understanding all the purposes I have used the body for, and specifically used sickness for, I could then recognize that all of these were the projections of an inner purpose: the inner need to see myself as separated. That is the original sickness, but I want to blame everyone else for it.

So when you begin to address sickness either in yourself or other people, you want to see it within the greater context of the ego's purpose for dreams of victimization. We made the body to fail, just as manufacturers build cars to fail so you always have to bring them in to be serviced. If we can put a man on the moon, you would think that we could make a car that doesn't have to be serviced, but we don't. So, we made the body to fail. And it is obvious the body fails if you don't feed it, give it water, clothe it, recreate it, etc., etc. Why did we make a body that way? It is a dream. You can make a dream any way you want—we do it every night. We made our dream that way because we want the body to be the instrument of victimization at the hands of someone or something else—the aforementioned powers and forces beyond our control.

You must understand your life in a body, and specifically the sickness of your body, in the context of this larger metaphysical perspective that helps us understand purpose: the purpose that the world serves, and the purpose that the body serves as well as everything that goes on with the body. To state it another way, sickness—physical or psychological symptoms—represent special relationships. I have a very special relationship with my sick body and with my sick psyche. I love them because they enable me to get what I want. I use my special relationship with my body to further my special relationships with other bodies. I use my body to make other bodies feel guilty so I get them to do what I want.

Every kid knows the secondary gain of getting sick: you miss school; you get a lot of attention; sometimes mommy will stay home with you if she is not home otherwise. As an adult, if you don't like your job at work, get sick. If you feel you need a day off, but you want to be paid for it, get sick. There is tremendous secondary gain in getting sick. If you want people to feel sorry for you, get sick, get hurt, do what the world calls an heroic act, and everyone will say: "You poor, poor thing; look how you suffered; you lost your limb, but look at the wonderful thing you did." We make heroes out of martyrs. We make heroes out of victims. There is tremendous secondary gain.

There is a reason for what happens to the body. Nothing happens accidentally. It is our dream. We made the body to fail, to be victimized by powers and forces beyond our control. That the body is that way is not an accident. You must get from the effect, which is the sick body, to the cause, which is the sick mind, and you will understand the cause by understanding purpose. We want to keep the separation we stole from God, but we want to give the sin and guilt away, and one of the nicer ways of giving sin and guilt away is to get sick: "There is this virus that attacked me, and that is why I am sick."

Now this does not mean that within the level of the world you deny that there are viruses and bacteria. There certainly are, but they are there by design. They are part of the same sick Sonship we all are a part of. We all take the role of victims because we are all secretly victimizers. We all take the role of victimizers because we are all secretly victims. It works both ways. We are all victimizers, but someone made us this way, therefore we are the victim of someone else's victimization, and on and on it goes.
. . . . . . .

**Q:** I want to leave here today with some new realities and I feel that will happen, but I am just thinking how about lightening up about the failure of the body—not making a big deal about it.

**A:** One of the reasons I think it is important to be a little serious—why it is important to talk about the body that way—is that most people don't like to talk about it that way. And I think that Jesus takes the gloves off in this course and tells it as it is because there is such a strong tendency in the world not to understand the ego. And he really wants us to understand it, because otherwise we won't be able to make a meaningful choice against it. Now the body in the end is nothing. That is the "lightening up" of it: the body is really nothing. But we have made it into something awful because we first made ourselves to be something awful, and we cannot understand that the awfulness we made is nothing until we first look at the awfulness of what we thought. The Course says that you must look at the hate. Jesus says that in a number of places. You must look at the hate before you can look at the love. You must look at the hate not because the hate is real, but because you have made it real; and then you made the hate so hateful and so fearful that you don't want to look at it. Then the world and the body become a defense against looking.

**Part V
"The Process of Illness"**

Let us turn now to the Psychotherapy pamphlet, the section called "The Process of Illness" (P-2.IV). The context of this pamphlet is, of course, psychotherapy and its practice. But one does not have to be a professional therapist to benefit from it, although that is for whom it was specifically written. It is a wonderful summary of the Course's principles of healing (which we have already seen and will see again), basically, that all sickness is some form of unforgiveness and therefore all therapy is really some form of forgiveness.

**(1:1) As all therapy is psychotherapy, so all illness is mental illness.**

When Jesus says "all therapy is psychotherapy," he means all therapy is of the mind because all illness is of the mind—"all illness is mental illness." Stated another way, all of our problems are shadows of our guilt—as we saw when we discussed the Song of Prayer passage earlier—and therefore, all therapy, all healing, is the undoing of guilt, which comes through forgiveness. Stated still another way, all sickness is some expression of the belief that my interests are separate from yours. A corollary to this idea is the concept of one or the other: I do not care about you; I care only that my needs are met. That is, of course, the core of any special relationship and it is based on the idea that we have separate interests. Another aspect of this corollary is the idea that I can escape from what my ego tells me is the source of my pain by dumping my guilt onto you, thereby making you sinful and me sinless. That is one or the other: you have the sin and I do not. My interests are separate from yours. I do not care about you at all; I only care that I get rid of my sin.

Another way of understanding sickness is that it is perceiving separate interests, which began with the original belief that my interests were separate from God's. I do not care about God and I do not care about Christ. I care only about me—my interests come first. I want my life, and if that means God has to be sacrificed and His Son crucified, well, that is just how it goes; but I will have my life. If we define sickness as the belief in separate interests, then we could define healing as the belief in shared interests, namely that we have shared goals. I cannot be sinless unless you are sinless, too. If I believe I am sinful then I will make you sinful, and if I believe you are sinful then I am reinforcing my own belief in sinfulness. But if I truly want to remember my innocence as Christ, as God's true Son, then that innocence has to be perceived in everyone, because God's Son is one.

Again, this first sentence means that all illness is guilt, which comes from our belief in separate interests. All therapy, all healing, is of the mind, because that is where the belief is. Healing corrects the belief in separate interests by substituting it with our recognition that our interests are shared. The text says that we go home together or not at all (T-19.IV-D.12:8), and the ark of peace is entered two by two (T-20.IV.6:5).

**(1:2) It is a judgment on the Son of God** [that is the illness]**, and judgment is a mental activity.**

Jesus is talking about the mind, which, almost always, is not what psychologists are talking about. Even when Freud spoke about the psyche he always had a biological model in mind. He began as a neurologist and researcher, and wrote a classic monograph on aphasia before he began his psychological work. Near the end of his life he stated that sometime in the future, all of his research, investigations, and everything that he brought to the surface would be understood electrochemically. When psychologists talk about the mind, they are not talking about it the way A Course in Miracles does. They are talking about it as some aspect of the brain. Again, when Jesus talks about "mental activity," he means literally "of the mind," which is totally outside the body and the brain.

**(1:3-5) Judgment is a decision, made again and again, against creation and its Creator. It is a decision to perceive the universe as you would have created it. It is a decision that truth can lie and must be lies.**

These are all different ways of describing what went on in that original ontological moment when the "tiny, mad idea" appeared to arise in the mind of God's Son, and the Son had a choice between listening to the Holy Spirit's truth or the ego's lie. The Holy Spirit's interpretation of the "tiny, mad idea" was that the separation never happened—there is no "tiny mad idea." That is what A Course in Miracles refers to as the principle of the Atonement. The ego's lie is that the "tiny, mad idea" not only occurred but is real, sinful and justifies our guilt, which then makes us deserving of punishment. We chose the ego's lie to take the place of the Holy Spirit's truth.

Inherent in all of this is judgment, judgment, judgment. First we judged against God—that His Love was not enough for us. We then went off and made our own inner world, and later a physical world, where we believed we would find love, happiness, peace, and joy in our independent, individual existence. We then judged against ourselves because we felt so guilty over what we had done—we told God to get lost, that His Love was not what we wanted and It was not enough; and if that meant He had to be extinguished, so be it! Then, of course, we took the judgment we made on ourselves, we projected it out, and now we judge everyone else. That is what Jesus is speaking about here. The universe we now perceive as we have created it—which really is as we miscreated it—is the universe of separation, judgment, guilt, punishment, suffering, pain, and ultimately death. That is the universe of the wrong mind. Because it is the universe within our minds, it is the universe that arises when we project it out. Again, it is a world of suffering, sin, separation, specialness, and death.

**(1:6-7) What, then, can illness be except an expression of sorrow and of guilt? And who could weep but for his innocence?**

That is a wonderful line that I quote very often. All of our tears, sorrow, sadness, loneliness, and all of our aching inside has only one cause: our belief that we threw away the innocence of God's Son when we separated from God, and we will never ever get it back. All of our tears are for this innocence. And even if it could be returned, we feel we do not deserve it because we first decided to destroy it. That is what our guilt tells us. Jesus is saying that all illness, regardless of the form in which it is expressed and in which we experience it, is nothing more than a shadow: an "expression of sorrow and of guilt." Again, all the loneliness, sadness, and anxiety we all feel from time to time in our lives has as its only cause the decision that we made once, and continually reinforce, to push the Love of God away.

Very often the way we experience this here is that we push the Love of Jesus or the Holy Spirit away by telling Them that Their Love is not enough for us: I want the love of this special person; I want the comfort of this special substance; I want anything that the world can give me other than You. All that we do when we push Jesus away is reinforce the original guilt when we pushed God away and told Him to get lost because His Love was not enough. That is what we do over and over and over again.

Remember, there is no world out there except as a shadow or a projection of the inner world. In the inner world there is no time and space. The world of linear time and space did not arise until the projection of the error. In the mind, everything is timeless, not in the sense of eternity, but in the sense that there is no time. The thought of sin, guilt, and fear projected out gives rise to linearity, to past, present, and future.

Again, what you want to be able to understand is that everything you are feeling in your present life, in your present moment—memories of pain in the past, or things you are anticipating in the future—is not what you think. They are simply, as I explained earlier, ways of keeping your separation, and putting the blame or responsibility for it onto something or someone outside yourself.

**(2:1) Once God's Son is seen as guilty…**

All of this occurs before time and before the world. It occurs in the mind, but it is still going on. That is why it is so important to see that the ego thought system is beyond time. We just project it out into time and we think of it in terms of sequence, but it is always there and will always seek expression.

**(2:1-2) Once God's Son is seen as guilty, illness becomes inevitable. It has been asked for and will be received.**

It is impossible not to have some form of illness once guilt is made real in the mind. As long as we believe we are here in this world and that we are a body; as long as we believe we are the personality we have; as long as we believe this self is who we really are, we will be guilty. This self could have emerged only from the prior belief that we could be separate from God, that we have pulled off the impossible, for which our feelings of self-hatred and self-loathing are more than justified. To escape from those feelings of self-loathing, we then believe our only recourse is to project them out and find fault with everyone else. That is what Jesus means by "It has been asked for and will be received."

**(2:3) And all who ask for illness have now condemned themselves to seek for remedies that cannot help, because their faith is in the illness and not in salvation.**

Here Jesus is referring to magic. If you look on the bottom line of the WORLD OF SEPARATION – PERCEPTION box on your [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-v/javascript%3Avoid%280%29), you will see solutions/magic. Any attempt to solve a problem on the level of the world and the body the Course calls magic, because it will not be successful. Anything that attempts to solve the problem on the level of the mind the Course calls a miracle. That is why there is a line on the right-hand side of your [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-v/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) going from the world back to the decision maker. That arc denotes the process of taking our attention away from the world—where the ego put it so we could blame everyone—and bringing it back to the mind that we sought to hide from.

Magic is an attempt to solve a problem where it does not exist: namely, in the body and the world; whereas the miracle solves the problem where it does exist, which is in the mind. We continually seek for remedies for our pain on levels that will never help, because they were designed not to help. Remember, the ego's fundamental strategy is to keep us from ever changing our minds about the ego. The ego thought system is a carefully contrived and thought-out strategy; it is absolutely brilliant. The ego's fear is that at some point we will wake up to what we have done, and recognize our mistaken choice and change our minds. And the instant we choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit, the ego will disappear, because everything in the wrong mind and in the world literally has no meaning, no substance—it is not real. It has the appearance of reality only to the extent to which we believe in it.

In the text Jesus talks about faith, and he does not mean faith in the usual sense of the word. He is talking about putting faith in the ego or the Holy Spirit (T-17.VII). Putting our faith in the ego is what he describes as faithlessness, because we are putting our faith in nothing. But once we do so, we invest our belief in the ego and at that point the ego seems real—so real and monstrous, in fact, that we then have to project it out and make up a world that we think is real. But as King Lear says, "nothing will come of nothing." The world is nothing because it comes from nothing, but we believe it is everything—solid, real, and very painful because we believe in it. When we withdraw our belief, we withdraw our faith and the ego collapses like a balloon that has had all its air let out. The ego is afraid of that eventuality; therefore it concludes that the way to escape from the inevitability of our changing our minds is to make us mindless. That is why there is a world.

That is another way of understanding the purpose of the world. The purpose of the world is to have us forget that there is a mind. Again, to go back to what we discussed earlier, we forget that the mind is the cause and the world is only the effect. By making us mindless—which means that an opaque veil falls across our minds—the ego ensures we have no remembrance of the mind and will stay forever mindless because we have forgotten about the cause. All we know is: my body is sick and I need help; my psyche hurts and I need help; I feel lonely and isolated, and need another body to hold so that I feel comforted; my stomach feels empty and is making growling sounds, so I have to fill it with something from the outside; I have a bad headache, so I need to take a pill that will help unconstrict my arteries so that the pain will go away; and on and on and on. But none of these remedies will work because they do not undo the cause. They just fool around with the shadow, but the cause of the shadow remains exactly what it was.

That is what Jesus is talking about here. We put our faith in the illness because we do not want to be saved. A part of us that likes our individual identity, likes being unique, likes being a person, does not want to be saved. Salvation means, in the context of A Course in Miracles, that we are saved from our belief in the ego's thought system—a thought system of individuality, separation, specialness, etc.

What Jesus tries to do in this pamphlet, just as he does in the Course, is to have us recognize exactly what we are doing and why we do it; why we so stubbornly insist on being right and that we know and the Holy Spirit does not know, or that what the Holy Spirit knows is what we teach Him. The world has worshipped the Jesus we made up in our own image. This is the Jesus who confirms our thought system of separation, sin, salvation through suffering, death, bodies, etc.; but we are terrified of what the real Jesus teaches because we do not want to be saved the way he wants us to be saved. We want to be saved from our pain by having someone else pay the price for it.

**(2:4) There can be nothing that a change of mind cannot effect, for all external things are only shadows of a decision already made.**

Decisions are made only in the mind and that is why we speak about a decision maker. By "all external things" Jesus means everything here: the entire physical universe as well as our personal universe. "All external things" are only shadows of a decision that has already been made in the mind—a decision to be separate and, once again, to keep our separation intact by projecting the cause out and blaming everyone else for it.

**(2:5-6) Change the decision, and how can its shadow be unchanged? Illness can be but guilt's shadow, grotesque and ugly since it mimics deformity.**

The deformity Jesus is talking about is the deformed thought that says I am a Son of God, independent of my Creator and Source; this ego self—the home of evil, darkness, and sin—is who I am. That is the deformity. Once you have a deformed thought, how could its shadow be anything but deformed? Even when your body seems to work perfectly it is deformed. It is deformed because it is a grotesque parody and travesty of Who we really are, because our bodies keep us separate from every other body. Our bodies change, let alone fail and die, and this is what we proclaim to be the glorious Son of God. As if that is not bad enough, when you look at the body in the context of the Bible, it gets even worse, because God then becomes the Creator of this deformity. This, of course, makes God just as deformed as we are.

**(2:7) If a deformity is seen as real, what could its shadow be except deformed?**

All Jesus is saying here, in very strong language, is that the world and the body are the effect of the cause, which is our mind's decision to be separate and then to feel guilty. What we call illness is not the only form of deformity. The body itself is a deformity. The world is a deformity. Anything that seems to exist in this world, anything that changes, grows, withers, deteriorates, and dies is a deformity, because it is a shadow of the original deformed thought that says I exist outside Heaven and have an individual identity that keeps me separate and differentiates me from Him, and eventually keeps me separate from everyone else. How could this possibly be love? How could this possibly be real? This identity's purpose is to prove that love is the lie and reality is the illusion; or, in other words, that illusion is the reality and special love is the truth. Special love is always about separation, separate interests, and bargains. It is always exclusive, meaning it does not include the whole Sonship.

You can see that Jesus is transforming the idea and understanding of sickness from the limited view of the world and the body to the mind. He is saying that anything that happens here is a shadow. Therefore, what you want to do is get back to the source of the shadow. That is what has to be changed and undone.

**Part VI
"The Process of Illness" (cont.)**

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

This is what Jesus talks about in A Course in Miracles as the mad course into insanity (T-18.I.7). He also refers to it as the ladder that separation led us down (T-28.III.1:2). This is depicted on the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-vi/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) with God shown at the top—the God we believe we left. Then there is the decision-making part of the mind that makes the wrong choice and seeks to obliterate the Holy Spirit. Now our self is no longer a Self or even a decision-making self; it is now an ego-self, little and tiny, pretending in its grandiosity to be something important. From that we descend finally into the level of the world. That is what Jesus is talking about in this passage.

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

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

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

The good news is that:

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus has to motivate us to look again at this world and the body. That is his purpose in all the material, the text, workbook, manual, the two pamphlets, and Helen's poems. But we are so tempted to say that Jesus does not really mean the world is wrong, and that he means instead that the way we perceive the world is wrong. But he does not mean that. Jesus means the world is wrong because it was made to be a defense against what is right, which is the Atonement principle in our minds. You must understand that; otherwise your work with this course will be severely limited. You could put a very tight band around it so that it says only what you want it to say, which is how you can live better in this world and feel better in this body. Jesus is saying you cannot feel better in a body because there is no body, but let me help you feel better in the mind by teaching you that the ego lied to you. The mind is not a dangerous place. There is no wrathful, venomous God, hell-bent on destroying you. There is no sinful, guilty, vicious, evil person named you in your mind. The whole thing is made up. The mind is the only thing that can save you, because the mind is the only thing that could damn you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Part VII
"The Process of Illness" (conclusion)**

**(6:1) Illness of any kind may be defined as the result of a view of the self as weak, vulnerable, evil and endangered, and thus in need of constant defense.**

Again, this broadens our understanding of illness. Students of A Course in Miracles love to point an accusing finger at other Course students who get sick, saying, "You are not doing the Course correctly; don't you know that 'Sickness is a defense against the truth' (W-pI.136)!"—and on and on and on. Jesus is not just talking about a symptom, but he is saying illness is any experience in the body. When you are hungry, that is an illness. When your lungs are empty and you have to take a breath of oxygen, that is an illness. Anything that is wrong with the body, whether it is oxygen loss, food loss, or what we call a disease is illness. And illness demands a magical solution. Loneliness is a sickness, and wanting another person with you is a magical solution. Everything here is a sickness, and there is no hierarchy of illusions—contrary to the ego's first law of chaos. So be kind and gentle to your friends and to yourself.

"Illness of any kind may be defined as the result" means illness is the effect and the cause is the perception of oneself as "weak, vulnerable, evil and endangered." This is the perception of sin, guilt, and fear—we believe we are "the home of evil, darkness and sin" (W-pI.93.1:1), and that is the cause of our feeling so vulnerable and naked next to a wrathful God Who is about to descend upon us and destroy us. That vulnerable self needs a defense, which is the world, and the world then becomes a defense against our guilt and our perception of ourself as "weak, vulnerable, evil and endangered." This perception of our self is in turn a defense against the glorious Self that God created, of which the Atonement principle is a reminder.

The entire thought system of the ego is encapsulated in this one sentence—and understanding that thought system is the ego's undoing. Implicit in the wrong-minded view is the right-minded correction, because when we really look at what the ego is doing, it will disappear. That is why you have to read each sentence very carefully.

**(6:2) Yet if such were really the self, defense would be impossible.**

Which, of course, it is. The world does not work. Look at how clever the ego is and how insane we are in believing it. The ego convinces us that our self in the mind is weak, vulnerable, evil, and endangered, and needs the protection of the world and the body. So we make a body, but it, too, is weak and vulnerable. If someone looks at your body in a funny way, you are decimated. This just shows how weak and fragile your perception of yourself is. And if you are hit by a car while crossing the street, you are decimated in another way. As we have seen over and over again, the body was born to die. From the moment of birth, cells start dying and eventually we all die. So how does this work as a defense?

There is a wonderful passage early in the text where Jesus explains the ego's insanity and how its defense does not work (T-4.V.4). Jesus has us confront the ego with a question that is basically: "What gives? You told me to make up a body because I needed help and protection, and now my body needs help and protection. No matter what kind of help it gets, it is still going to die in the end. What kind of help is this?" Jesus says the ego responds by obliterating the question—it causes a veil to fall across our mind that obliterates any memory of what all this is about. We are no longer aware that the ego's defense—the body—does not work because we are no longer aware of what it was a defense against in the first place, which was the pain in our minds. We forget that being born in a body is a defense and now think it is a reality—we think it is God's gift.

That is why we need a course that exposes the ego for what it is. Jesus lifts the veil and says, "Let me help you look at what you have been covering up. You will want to turn away from the stench and grotesque shapes that you see in your mind, but I will stay there with you and help you look. Then you will realize that the whole thing was literally a fantasy, an hallucination, a delusion, and then it will disappear. But you will not know that until you look at your mind." Jesus is helping us understand that if we want to see what is in the mind, we should look at the world as it really is. It is not a place of life; it is a place of death. That is why Jesus says in the workbook, "The world was made as an attack on God. . . . [it] was meant to be a place where God could enter not . . ." (W-pII.3.2:1,4).

**(6:3) Therefore, the defenses sought for must be magical.**

They are magical because they do not solve anything. In our everyday world, magic is associated with illusion—we think we see things that have not really happened. Well, the world has not happened, and sickness is just one of the defenses or forms of magic the ego uses to protect us from the real sickness, which is in our minds. That is the whole point of Lesson 136, "Sickness is a defense against the truth" (W-pI.136), where Jesus describes sickness as a defense the ego uses to keep us from awakening to the truth that our reality is spirit. Jesus specifically describes the defensive strategy of the ego, pointing out that it is not something that just happens. We are not innocent victims of forces or pathogens beyond our control. It is our dream and it serves a mighty purpose from the ego's point of view: namely, to fulfill the wish of keeping our separation, but blaming someone else for it.

**(6:4-5) They** [defenses] **must overcome all limits perceived in the self, at the same time making a new self-concept into which the old one cannot return. In a word, error is accepted as real and dealt with by illusions.**

This idea of trying to build a different concept of the self has been prominent in our world since the Second World War. There is a branch of psychological theory called "self theory," with Rogers, Allport, and Maslow among the more famous self theorists. This theory is about making a new self-concept that is stronger, less vulnerable, and that feels better—without having to deal with the ego's underlying concept that we are "weak, vulnerable, evil and endangered." Instead of looking within at this self-concept, we just put another veil or cover over it by making a better self—a better physical and psychological body in the world. We do not realize that we are just making shadows, seemingly loving and light-filled selves that are bigger, better, and more beautiful, but still shadows that we use to cover over the darkness that is our horrifying belief about ourselves.

**(6:6) Truth being brought to illusions, reality now becomes a threat and is perceived as evil.**

That is what the ego does. The true God is now perceived as a threat, and those who believe in Him are seen as evil heretics, pagans, and non-believers because they do not subscribe to the ego thought system that makes the world, the body, the individual, the ego's God, and the ego itself real. Again, this is why no one likes this course. Most Course students would not call it evil, but they shun what it says as if it were the devil, all the while thinking they are practicing the Course when they are actually covering it over. They think it is about making a more forgiving, more loving, more peaceful and kinder self here. My ego tells me that if I do the Course "right," I will never get sick, because what I want is a better, healthier self here. This mistake is exactly what Jesus is referring to here.

**(6:7) Love becomes feared because reality is love.**

The reason love is feared is that real, true love is total oneness and total inclusiveness, but not on the level of form. This is not saying that you should make love to the whole world, but on the level of the mind, your love for someone should not exclude anyone else. It does not choose sides; it does not say one or the other. Your love is a love that embraces the entire Sonship as one because the Sonship is one. The ego would have us believe it is fragmented and therefore we have to heal all the separated fragments. You only have to heal the one fragment that you believe you are. When your mind is totally healed, you will know the Sonship is one.

**(6:8) Thus is the circle closed against the "inroads" of salvation.**

When you bring the Course's truth and Jesus the teacher of truth into the world's illusion, you have built a barricade against real salvation, which is in the mind.

**(7:1) Illness is therefore a mistake and needs correction.**

In the Course, "mistake" and "correction" apply only to the mind. You want to correct the mistaken choice for the ego, the mistaken belief that you could do this on your own. This idea is discussed further in paragraph 5, which I have not included in my commentary here.

**(7:2) And as we have already emphasized, correction cannot be achieved by first establishing the "rightness" of the mistake and then overlooking it.**

In The Song of Prayer pamphlet, Jesus refers to "forgiveness-to-destroy" and in effect praying-to-destroy and healing-to-destroy, all of which are expressions of this same idea. These are ways of making the problem real and then seeking to solve it by either saying this person has sinned against me and others but I forgive him anyway, or by praying to Jesus to help solve my problem with you in the world, or to heal a body which I say is sick.

**(7:3-4) If illness is real it cannot be overlooked in truth, for to overlook reality is insanity. Yet that is magic's purpose; to make illusions true through false perception.**

That is what magic does. My sick body is a magical solution to my guilt; but then my symptoms require their own magical solution, whether it is something medical or something we think of as spiritual, such as prayer or this course. This is not a course in alleviating sickness or symptoms; it is a course in removing the cause of the sickness or symptoms. This is a course in changing your mind and not the behavior, as expressed in that very important line in the text, "This is a course in cause and not effect" (T-21.VII.7:8).

**(7:5-6) This** [magic] **cannot heal, for it opposes truth. Perhaps an illusion of health is substituted for a little while, but not for long.**

We all do this. We have an illusion of physical health after we have had a period of illness, or an illusion of emotional health after a period of emotional turmoil or distress. But it does not last. Remember, the body was obviously made to break down; it cannot function perfectly because ideas leave not their source. Only spirit functions perfectly. The body comes from a separation thought that is already a disease, a deformity that does not work. Beware of the temptation to make the body real by trying to make it better physically or psychologically. Use the body merely as a classroom in which you see it as the screen onto which you project your own "secret sins and hidden hates" (T-31.VIII.9:2). You can then recall what you have projected out and bring it back inside, allowing yourself to realize that the separation thought was your decision. Now you can forgive yourself for it by making another choice.

**(7:7-8) Fear cannot long be hidden by illusions, for it is part of them. It will escape and take another form, being the source of all illusions.**

Freud was the first to talk about "symptom substitution." This is the idea that you cannot undo the symptom without undoing the cause, because if you do, the cause—our unconscious guilt—will automatically continue to project out and make new symptoms. Here Jesus is also saying that if you fix the sick body or psyche without undoing your belief in the reality of guilt—that guilt is good because separation is good—the guilt will just continue to generate more problems. Guilt is like a pump in the mind that constantly pumps out the filth of its own ugliness. It will continue to project out and make more and more shadows until we cleanse the mind by making another choice. Until then guilt, or fear (Jesus often uses sin, guilt, and fear synonymously), will always escape and take another form.

Again, the point of this discussion is to make it very clear that the body is not the problem or the solution. Once we say there must be another way or another teacher, the body's only purpose is to be a vehicle enabling us to get back into our minds, where the work has to be done. It cannot be done on the level of the body.

**Part VIII**

Often in a discussion of sickness and healing questions come up regarding the use of medicine and other forms of healing available in the world. I would like to address this by referring to "The Shift in Perception," the second subsection under "How Is Healing Accomplished?" in the teachers’ manual, beginning with paragraph 2.

**(M-5.II.2:1-2) 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.**

As we have said repeatedly, sickness has nothing to do with the body; it has to do with a decision in the mind for guilt instead of the Atonement. Once that decision is made, sickness is inevitable, regardless of the form it takes. Healing then brings the symptom back from the body—whether the emotional or physical level—to the mind, which is where the guilt is and where the healing or the remedy is. You bring the problem back to the answer, which is always in the mind.

**(2:2-6) And this is so for healing in all forms. A patient decides that this is so, and he recovers. If he decides against recovery, he will not be healed. Who is the physician? Only the mind of the patient himself.**

The physician is not the external person, and the so-called healing agent is not what heals. The physician is the mind, as Jesus says in this passage. It was the mind that made itself sick when it turned away from the Holy Spirit and toward the ego; therefore, it is only the mind that can correct itself. That is what asking Jesus for help is all about—it means going back into our mind and choosing a different teacher, which means choosing against the ego. Basically, we are the ones who make ourselves sick by choosing against the Holy Spirit and we are the only ones who can bring healing about by now choosing against the ego and for the Holy Spirit. That is the healing; that is the healer.

**(2:7-13) The outcome is what he decides that it is. Special agents seem to be ministering to him, yet they but give form to his own choice. He chooses them in order to bring tangible form to his desires. And it is this they do, and nothing else. They are not actually needed at all. The patient could merely rise up without their aid and say, "I have no use for this." There is no form of sickness that would not be cured at once.**

The "special agents" would be anything you take or do to alleviate a problem, anything external: an aspirin, or some other kind of drug, alternative medicine, homeopathic medicine, Chinese medicine, a special diet, special exercise, a special pillow for your back or your neck at night. It does not matter what it is; they all come under the category of "special agents." Jesus is saying that when we feel ill and take a pill or have a procedure done, or do anything else that alleviates the emotional or physical pain, we feel better only because our mind made a decision to let go of the symptom.

We elect a compromise approach because the fear of the power of our mind is still too great, based on the ego’s voice that tells us that if we go back into our mind and get in touch with its power, we will once again choose sin, and God will once again choose to destroy us. We choose to let go of the pain, but rather than seeing the power of our mind as the agent that lets go of the pain, we say it was the pill, the doctor, the procedure, the diet, etc. We all have our long list of things that help us. Not one of them is better or worse than any other. The unfortunate thing about people who use alternative approaches is they think they are better than people who practice traditional medicine. One will work for some people, one will work for other people. That does not mean you should not use an alternative method if that is what works for you, nor does it mean you should not follow traditional medicine if that works for you. But to think that your choice is better than anything else and that you are better because in your eyes you are doing something that is holy, pure, and natural rather than the awful stuff other people do is the arrogance of the ego. Why? Because you are excluding and separating; and above all you are falling into the first law of chaos: you are saying there is a hierarchy of illusions, that some magic is better than other magic. If Jesus believed in sin that would be the sin. That is why he stresses so much that we not make the error real.

You should pursue whatever works for you; just do not think it is any better than anyone else’s magic or that one form of magic is any better than another form of magic. If it works for you it would be silly not to use it. Remember, though, that you could be healed simply by changing your mind, by having a kind thought about someone. That could heal you. But the ultimate implication of such a healing is that it would bring you out of your world and your body, back into your mind. We all harbor tremendous fear about that, because, as we discussed earlier, the greatest threat to the ego is that we would exercise the power of our mind and choose against it. That is the fear. What drove us insane was believing the ego’s tale of sin, guilt, and fear; and then we became even more insane when we made up a world, and then defended against all that by forgetting what we did. There is a reason we made the world and continue to live here.

Never forget that everything occurs in our mind, and it occurs by our own choice. We all bought the ego’s song and dance right at the beginning. We never questioned it because the ego never gave us a chance to—no sooner did we choose the ego than it obliterated all memory of our mind; the mind, then, was just gone. In that same instant, the world was made and the body was born, governed by a brain with no awareness of the mind at all. We have an elaborate set of sensory apparatuses for a reason: our sensory organs were specifically made to look without, to taste, smell, and feel what is outside. And our own body is also outside. The brain then interprets all the sensory data and adds up two and two and gets four and three-quarters. It interprets what it sees as reality and tells us it is reality. And since there is no one else we can ask except other insane people, we believe in the lie. And we believe in it because we are terrified that if we go back into our minds we would lose this self, which we would. As Jesus says in Chapter 13, our fear is that we would leap into our Father’s arms and this world would disappear:

“You realize that, by removing the dark cloud that obscures it [separation], your love for your Father would impel you to answer His Call and leap into Heaven....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” (T-13.III.2:6; 4:3).

And so to preserve this identity, this separated individualized self, we continually have to choose to stay out of our minds.

This fear is why we elect a compromise approach—the use of "special agents." We do not really need anything to undo pain in our body, because there is no pain in the body. How can something that does not exist have pain? The pain is the guilt in our minds that we project or displace onto the body. Then we feel the pain in our body and try to do something with the body. It does not matter what you do. If something alleviates the pain and helps you feel better, by all means do it. Just do not think that is what healing is. You are simply choosing these agents or this form of magic in order to bring tangible form to your desires, your choice for healing. By no means does this mean you should not choose magic. A big mistake that students of *A Course in Miracles* make is thinking, "I am in pain, but it is all in my mind and I am not going to take anything." That implies that taking magic is evil. Jesus addresses this idea in Chapter 2:

“All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles. This is the first step in believing that the body makes its own illness. It is a second misstep to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents. It does not follow, however, that the use of such agents for corrective purposes is evil” (T-2.IV.4:1-4).

This is a very important passage. Jesus is not saying that we should not take an aspirin, go to a doctor, have surgery, or do whatever makes us feel better. He explains:

“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.IV.4:5-10).

This is the same idea we have been discussing: the ego’s strategy is to convince us that if we remain in our minds we will be struck dead. Therefore we can be safe only by fleeing the wrath of God through making up a world and choosing to be born into a body. Since we all obviously believe we are a body and take care of our bodies and care what other bodies think of our bodies, Jesus is saying not to pretend that we believe otherwise.

In saying "sometimes the illness has a sufficiently strong hold," Jesus is being a little kind because almost *always* the illness has a sufficiently strong hold, otherwise we would not have chosen it. We are terrified of the power of our mind—that is literally what made this world and sustains it. There is that little nagging voice that is always saying, "Don’t get back into your mind because if you do you will sin again." And so we all make ourselves totally inept, helpless, powerless, and mindless in the magical hope that will protect us from ever sinning again. Of course the coup degrâce of the ego’s system is that it takes that sin that we are so terrified of, projects it out, and then we see it in everyone else. So now we have a double protection: I am totally helpless and mindless so there is no way I can sin. How could God accuse me of that when I am so helpless? Not only that, the other person—the "sinner"—is the one with the power, not me. That person is the one who has hurt me.

Thus, making up a world, experiencing ourselves with a body, and experiencing pain, discomfort, and suffering in the body are all part of the ego’s strategy to keep us out of our minds—literally and figuratively—because we are all insane. It would be terrifying for us to know—not just intellectually—but to truly *know* that we made this up. Yet knowing this would heal us, because we would understand why we made it up; we would realize how stupid it was, and then we would make the other choice.

There is nothing wrong in the compromise approach. As a serious student of A Course in Miracles, if you become ill or something is wrong, use whatever form of magic helps you, but just be aware that it is magic. Do not try to force spirituality or metaphysical truth on yourself when you are still anchored in the world and the body. That is just silly. It is not spiritual and ends up making you an absolutely dreadful person to yourself and everyone around you. That is why I often make fun of Course in Miracles students—they can be awful in this regard. They have such a difficult time with this because while they may intellectually understand a metaphysical truth, they certainly do not live as if they believe it. That is why the image of a ladder that Jesus gives us in The Song of Prayer is so helpful (see S-1.II). The idea of prayer or forgiveness as a ladder means that it is a process, and only right at the top of the ladder do you understand that this whole thing is made up. You know, not just intellectually but experientially, that your self is outside the dream. This is what allows you to go through your days and months and years here without being affected by the world.

That is how Jesus was here. No one really knows how he was here, but whatever he looked like, and whatever his experiences were, we can be sure that he knew he was not here. That is what being in the real world means, but that does not happen until you reach the top of the ladder. Until you reach that point you are still bound here, and you still stagger into the bathroom every morning and see something in the mirror that you mistakenly think is your self. Some days you may like what you see, but most of the time—especially as you get older—you do not. Either way, you think that what you see is you. But do not pretend that you are not a body; and if you are ill, do whatever helps you get through the day and the rest of your life. As a good Course student, you could at least practice being aware that this is only a compromise approach, until you really know that it is all made up.

It is also true, as I have said in other classes, that when you are near the top of the ladder you do not need the book. The purpose of the book is just to get you up the ladder. When you are close to the top, you no longer need to hear about how ugly and awful the body is and how vicious and murderous special relationships are because you will know at that point that all of this is a dream. You do not have to be motivated to leave the world and the dream because you will already have left it. That is the purpose of this course—to instill in us the motivation to awaken from the dream.

The Course is a form of magic, just as pills are. People form the same special relationship with A Course in Miracles as they do with alcohol, food, people, or anything else. They feel they cannot get through the day without their daily workbook lesson, so they have to do a lesson every day for the rest of their lives—or something like that. The Course is meant obviously to be very helpful, but it is not meant to be a crutch. It is meant to be a mind-training device. There is nothing in this book that is any holier than anything else, but people form very special relationships not only with A Course in Miracles as a thought system, but with their*book*.

When you are aware of that in yourself, do not make a big deal about it; just say, "What else is new! Of course I am going to form a special relationship with it." Do not be fooled by your ego and do not think it is going to be any different. I like to remind people that the ego is a 100 percent thought system that does not diminish, just as the Holy Spirit represents a 100 percent thought system that does not diminish. The ego is what it is; it does not shrink. It is hate, murder, suffering, guilt, and pain, just as the Holy Spirit’s thought system represents forgiveness, love, and peace. What changes is the amount of time you spend there and the amount of faith that you place in the ego or the Holy Spirit. The ego itself does not change. Thus making progress in this course does not preclude your having massive ego attacks every once in a while. The difference would be that when you have them, you would recognize them for what they are; you would not be devastated by them and you would try not to devastate other people by them. Again, the ego does not shrink. What shrinks or changes is the amount of time, energy, and thought you invest in the ego’s thought system.

We can see the purpose of the Course as being to help us to recognize how much better we will feel not spending time with the ego, and how much better we will feel spending time with the Holy Spirit. That is what will motivate us. But that also is what makes the process of this Course long and difficult, because we are not so convinced that we will be better off without our egos. Guilt, seduction, manipulation, special relationships are very old friends and trusted allies; they have gotten us through a lot of miserable periods in our lives, and they even seem to have made us happy from time to time. But they do not bring the peace of God, the happiness does not last, and the love is not really love. But learning and accepting that takes a lot of time. As adults, if we go through a very fearful period, we will exercise what is referred to as regression, when we go back to an earlier stage. In fact, sometimes you see adults sucking their thumb—they have become very frightened and anxious and so they go back to the security that sucking their thumb provided them when they were children. When we are extremely upset we will go back to whatever earlier pattern got us through difficult situations, even though intellectually we know it does not work anymore. That is just standard for the species.

Well, when we get frightened we will go back to what has helped us in the past: the ego. This is powerfully expressed at the end of Chapter 19 where Jesus describes how frightened we become as we stand before the fourth and final obstacle, when the veil is about to be lifted (T-19.IV-D.6). This is the end of the ego, which means the end of this self we think we are. And instead of looking through the veil, our eyes look down remembering our promises to our friends. And who are our friends? Guilt, sin, fear, and death. And then we yearn to jump right back into their arms, not because they are so attractive in themselves, but because of what they offer us: the certainty that this individual self will survive. Thus we think, I don’t care how miserable I am as long as I am the one who is miserable. As painful as my sickness, my old age, my mental state, and all the pain that I am feeling may be, it is my pain; and I don’t want anyone, including Jesus, to take it away from me. So he has to wait. And the way he waits is to continually present to us the two choices. He says, “Look at what the ego offers you and look at what I am offering you”; and then he waits patiently. Fortunately he does not wait in time, so there is no danger of his running out of patience.

It is important to understand how fearful this course really is and for the healer to understand "the fear of release," which Jesus talks about in the section called "The Function of the Miracle Worker":

“Before miracle workers are ready to undertake their function in this world, it is essential that they fully understand the fear of release. Otherwise they may unwittingly foster the belief that release is imprisonment, a belief that is already very prevalent” (T-2.V.1:1-2).

Our fear is of being released from our guilt, our fear, and the ego thought system. If we do not understand this, we will become impatient and condemnatory with ourselves and others. It is very important to understand our fear of release from the ego’s prison because the ego teaches us that release is imprisonment and that imprisonment by the ego is really freedom. At the end of Chapter 7 (T-7.X) and the beginning of Chapter 8 (T-8.II), Jesus talks about the confusion of pain and joy and the difference between imprisonment and freedom. We do not know the differences, so we need a teacher who gently and patiently, with care and love, points them out to us so that we can make the choice ourselves. Jesus is asking us to be just as gentle, caring, and loving with each other as he is with us, and not to be impatient when people are frightened. When people do stupid or vicious things it is not because they are stupid or vicious, but because they are fearful. That is the Holy Spirit’s judgment and vision. He does not see sin. He sees expressions of love or calls for love, and calls for love are born out of fear. You can tell how you are doing by seeing how you are with others. Are you impatient and judgmental? If so, that is showing you your own impatience and judgment towards yourself, since the world is "the outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5). How we are with others shows us how we are with ourselves.

We do not accept what this course says, we do not accept the real source of healing, and we do not forgive and let go of our grievances because we are so terrified. We are terrified of the consequence of letting go of the ego thought system, which means we would go back into our minds. That is why we made the world and other people. We need them so that we can project our hatred of ourselves and our guilt onto them, which is why we hate everyone. You must understand that this is the purpose the world and specifically our bodies were made to serve. It will give you a much better appreciation for your own fear. What if you got up in the morning and looked into the mirror and literally did not see anyone, not just visually, but if you really knew there was no one there? That is terrifying, and no one would like that. Jesus asks,

“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).

If you are not careful, and if you do not go very slowly and gently, you could become psychotic, because the terror would be too overwhelming. That is why you need a teacher who will go with you very slowly. Jesus is more gentle with us than we would be with ourselves. You must have a proper appreciation of your own fear of release from the ego’s imprisonment.

**Part IX**

Now let us talk about what healing really is. As with anything in the Course, whether it is healing, forgiveness, the miracle, salvation, or the Atonement, once you understand the problem, then the solution is very simple. You simply look at the problem where it is, and not where you think it is. There is a very important line in Chapter 27 where Jesus gives a one-sentence answer to the question of how to get past all suffering and pain in the world. There are other places where he makes a similar statement, but there he says, "All that is needed is you look upon the problem as it is, and not the way you have set it up" (T-27.VII.2:2). What could be simpler? This is why Jesus says this is a simple, uncomplicated course. Again, the way out of all suffering, pain, and sickness is simply to "look upon the problem as it is, and not the way you have set it up."

This can be seen clearly on the **chart**. We made up the problem to be in the world. We took the problem of guilt that came from our decision for guilt in our minds, projected it out, and then abdicated all responsibility for the decision. We abdicated our decision-making power and became helpless in the face of forces beyond our control. Thus, we no longer see the problem "as it is" (our decision to be sick first in our minds and then in our bodies), but instead we see it as we have set it up, which is to see the problem in the world and the body. And then we say, "it is not my fault": It was not my choice to come here; it was not my decision to be born; it was an accident. I could not choose my hair, eye, or skin color, or my genetic make-up that determined my abilities and intelligence. I could not choose my environment, the kind of relationship my parents had, their health, their financial situation. I could not help it if I was born in Afghanistan and my whole family was blown up; I could not help it if I was born a Jew in Nazi Germany. It is not my fault.

We set up the problem so that we are powerless and then see other people and forces as the cause of our pain. Jesus says all we have to do to get beyond this is to see the problem as it is and not the way we made it up. That is what healing is. He teaches that forgiveness "is still, and quietly does nothing . . . . It merely looks, and waits, and judges not" (W-pII.1.4:1,3). Also in the workbook he says, "It [the miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false" (W-pII.13.1:3). These statements basically say the same thing: "Simply look with me at the problem and let me help you look through my eyes; then you will understand, as I do, that your problem is not outside, because there is nothing outside. You put the problem outside so that you would believe it is outside. By looking through my eyes, you will recognize that the world is 'an outside picture of an inward condition' (T-21.in.1:5)."

By letting Jesus help you look at the world through his eyes instead of your own, you will begin to understand, again, that what you see outside is a projection and why you projected it. The reasons have to do with what we talked about earlier: the ego's strategy of making us mindless. You look at your decision to push God away and usurp His place on the throne; you look at your decision to destroy Heaven and to crucify God's Son, thereby psychologically (if not sometimes physically) killing him, and blaming everyone else for it. You look at all of this devastation and remember that it is not true; it is all made up; it is a bad dream. You look at what is in your thought system that you projected out, bring it back inside, and look at it in quiet, with patience and without judgment. This is looking at the problem as it is and not the way you set it up. That is all you have to do. There is nothing simpler.

The principles of the Course are very simple and very basic, but we do not follow them because we do not want to let go of the problem. This is what you must really appreciate and understand about yourself and everyone else. That is why people do such outrageous things—and the most outrageous things are usually done by people who are religious. A Course in Miracles students are not exempt from this. We use religion and spirituality as a defense against the hatred in our minds, our hatred of ourselves for what we believe we have done. We try to get rid of that by projecting it onto the infidels, pagans, heretics, non-believers, etc. When this is done in a religious context, it seemingly has God's blessing, which makes God as insane as everyone else. Whether it is the Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem, A Course in Miracles, or Christian Science God does not matter. They are all insane because they are seen as ways of justifying the ego thought system of their followers, and are used to condone judgment and sometimes even murder.

You must appreciate, with humility and kindness towards yourself, how fearful you are of this course, which means you are fearful of healing—not of the body, but of the mind. All you have to do to see the problem "as it is" is to bring it back from outside you, where you placed it, to the inside where you can look at it with the love of Jesus next to you. As he says at the end of 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). This means you cannot make this choice without his love guiding you (or the love of any other symbol you choose; it does not have to be Jesus). But you must actually see that the choice is between miracles (the Atonement principle) and murder. You must see that your existence has been built upon a coffin in which God rests. And you must see that you try to kill off everyone else and make them into the criminal so that they will be punished for the coffin on which you stand. That is what you have to see. The guilt over that is enormous.

To get a glimpse of the enormity of our guilt, just consider that the entire physical universe literally rests on the projection of the error of believing we separated from God. It was this guilt that literally drove us insane and out of our minds. The entire physical universe is simply a bad dream. As complicated as the cosmos is—appearing to be infinite; spanning billions and billions of years; containing galaxies upon galaxies, known and unknown, some in other time dimensions—it is all one dream. It all comes from one source: guilt. That gives you an understanding of how powerful our belief in guilt is. Almost every religion or spirituality that began on a very high level inspired by its founder ended up terribly. People become terrified of the non-dualistic truth that reality is non-material, non-temporal, and is all there is. It does not have any divisions. It is perfect oneness.

There has not been a religious or spiritual movement that has not experienced that. Hinduism began with the Vedas and the Upanishads—very high teachings—and it ended like the Roman Catholic Church: statues, rituals, hatreds, and other things foreign to its original inspiration. Christianity began with Jesus. You cannot get any better than that; but look how it ended up! And don't be surprised when the same thing happens to A Course in Miracles. That does not invalidate the inspiration that began a movement any more than it would the Course, but it simply says that people get frightened, and as the Course itself says, "frightened people can be vicious" (T-3.I.4:2). They can be very vicious. But underlying the viciousness is fear: Who would I be without my anger? Who would I be without my hatred? Who would I be without my judgment? Who would I be without me? That is the real fear.

What defines us is self-hatred, because that is our origin. The ego was born out of hatred for God, and then the self-hatred we experienced over what we believe we did to God. Following the laws of the split mind, whatever we believe about ourselves will be so awful and horrific that we will repress it, and whatever we repress we will project out. Since we all did this as one Son, when we made the collective as a collective we made the cosmos; then the one Son just fragmented into billions and billions and billions of pieces, with each little fragment containing the whole: the whole of the ego's insanity as well as the whole of the Holy Spirit's sanity that corrects and undoes the ego. Each of us carries that in its entirety, the full blown ego system and the full blown Holy Spirit's system. We all were born out of the same fear, so why should it be a surprise that everyone hates everyone else?

There is constant judging and criticizing going on—if not killing and maiming—because that is what the world is. It began with a killing; don't forget that. It began with the murder of God, and since ideas leave not their source, everything else is simply the shadowy fragment of that original thought. That is the sickness. Sickness has nothing to do with external symptoms. The sickness is the thought, "I did this, and not only that, but I will do it again." In fact, not only would we do it again, we are doing it again. Each and every moment we take a breath; each and every moment we think we are here; each and every moment we indulge specialness, we are killing God again. That is what Jesus means in Chapter 16 when he says, "If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you want it?" (T-16.V.10:1). And the awful truth is that even though he tells us it is a "triumph over God," we still want it. How many Course in Miraclesstudents have read that line over and over again, and still indulge all their specialness?

It is important to understand and keep in mind that everything we do here is a microcosmic shadow of what we believe we all originally did at the beginning. That is the guilt we are carrying around with us. If you don't understand this, the guilt will stay buried, and if it stays buried it will continually surface through projection. That is what has happened throughout the history of the universe. It certainly has happened throughout the history of what we know as homo sapiens. That is why everyone is always killing everyone else. Individuals do it, governments do it, races do it, and religions do it, because no one stops and looks within. That is why this course is such an important and impressive spiritual document. More than any other teaching that I know of, it documents the ego—and it is not a pretty picture. But the world was made to cover the ugliness of the picture.

You all probably know the section in the text called "The Two Pictures" (T-17.IV), where Jesus talks about the need to look at the picture of the ego, which is the picture of death, and not be taken in by the elaborate frame that the ego places around it. In that context, the frame is the special relationship. Do not be taken in by the glitter of what seems to be jewels in the frame. The purpose of the frame is to keep you from looking at the picture. It is a very important section, one of the most important ones in the book, because it speaks to the heart of the problem of the world, and all the religious problems in it. People are so taken in by the glitter of the special-relationship frame—especially when God can be plugged into it—that they do not see the ugliness and murderousness of the picture. Most religions and spiritualities either ignore the ego, or they sugarcoat it, or cover it over, saying, "Just let it go; give it over to the Holy Spirit. It is really nothing. Just choose love." Well, if it were that easy, this world would not exist, and there would be no need for a course that spends so much time talking about hate and murder and guilt instead of only love and peace. We need something that takes us through the muck.

As I mentioned earlier, that is what Freud did for all of us. He made a very important contribution, despite the silliness of a lot of what he said. More than anyone else, he was steadfast in insisting that people look at the ego. One of Jung's major criticisms of Freud was that he thought that all Freud wanted to look at was the ugliness and the dirt. Unfortunately, Freud was right and Jung was wrong, because Jung used all of his lofty spiritual ideas, or pseudo-spiritual ideas, as a way to subtly cover over what was inside. And Freud kept saying it is essential to look inside; what's there is not nice. Jesus in A Course in Miracles says the same thing: look at thepicture, it is in italics even in “The Two Pictures” section. Look at the picture. Forgiveness looks (W-pII.1.4:3). The miracle looks on devastation (W-pII.13.1:3). Look at the problem as it is, not as you have set it up (T-27.VII.2:2). That is what healing is; healing is looking.

**Part X**

In the first two paragraphs of "The 'Dynamics' of the Ego," Jesus explains the same idea, that healing involves looking. We will just go over the second paragraph.

**(T-11.V.2:1) What is healing but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge?**

Nothing about laying on hands; nothing about saying prayers; nothing about mantras, standing on your head, or reciting A Course in Miracles lessons. Healing is "the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge." How?

**(2:2-3,8-9) 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, then, to look upon fear, for it cannot be seen. Clarity undoes confusion by definition, and to look upon darkness through light must dispel it.**

This is what healing is. No different from what the miracle is, what salvation is, or what forgiveness and the Atonement are. Guilt, holding onto grievances, and sickness are all the same problem. Looking is the way we remove all that stands in the way of knowledge and everything that keeps us from remembering our Creator's Love and Who we are as God's true Son: "And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them directly, without protecting them?" The world is the protection.

These ideas are present throughout this material: the two pamphlets and the three books of the Course itself. Don't protect the illusion in your mind by insisting there is no mind, and that there is only a body and a world; there are people out there; there are sicknesses and relationships out there. That is exactly what the ego wants you to do. Looking at the illusion in your mind without protecting it through your special relationships is another way of saying the same thing. Jesus tells us not to be afraid because we are afraid. He knows whom he is dealing with. We are terrified. That is why he calls us "little children." We are terrified of the dark; we are terrified of the monsters we think are lurking in the closet, outside the bedroom window, and under the bed. We are like terrified little children. But he is telling us that there is nothing to be afraid of and to let him help us look. Jesus is saying that when you look at the source of fear, which is the belief that you attacked God and God will attack you in return, you will realize there is nothing to fear, because there was no attack. He is saying not to be afraid to look upon fear, because you cannot see fear—it is not there. There are no monsters hiding under your bed or in your closet. It is only your fear that puts them there.

We are no different from the little boy or little girl that has those fears and nightmares. That is what sickness is. Sickness is believing something is there that is not there. Healing is looking and realizing there is nothing there. But you must look upon the darkness and past it to the light, otherwise you will not dispel it. That is why this is a course in darkness. Jesus tells us right at the beginning in the Introduction: "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). That is what this is about. It is about blocks and obstacles. He is exposing the ego thought system. That is what healing is, and sickness is fighting against that. Sickness is excluding Jesus or the Holy Spirit so that you do not let in Their wisdom, vision, and love. And you do not let that in, not because you are a bad person but because you are terrified.

Again, the rock-bottom fear is: Who would I be without me? And we define ourselves by all kinds of things—usually by our victimization, our abuse, and our terrible stories. Everyone has terrible stories. There is no hierarchy of terrible stories—and there is no dearth of them either. We all have them, and we have them all the time. They differ in form, but the content is the same. The content is always some version of: I didn't do it; it is not my fault. It is not my fault that I was not loved. It was not my fault that I was rejected. It was not my fault that I did not have what every other child had. It is not my fault that I had no friends. It is not my fault that I was born ugly. And on and on and on. That is the mantra: It is not my fault.

That is why the ego wrote sickness into its dream, and why, when it assembled the cast of characters for its epic, by far the greater casting was done for microorganisms, viruses, and bacteria—much more plentiful than animals and human beings. Why? Because they are the "heroes." They are the ones that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is not our fault. We need microorganisms. We need pathogens. Anything will do as long as it is not guilt. Recall this important line from Chapter 27: "Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them" (T-27.VII.7:4). Sickness is believing "it is not my fault."

Look now at the beginning of Chapter 10:

**(T-10.in.1:1-2) Nothing beyond yourself can make you fearful or loving, because nothing *is* beyond you. Time and eternity are both in your mind, and will conflict until you perceive time solely as a means to regain eternity.**

Time is in our wrong minds because that is where sin, guilt, and fear gave birth to time. Eternity is in our right minds through the Atonement principle that says nothing happened and the separation never occurred.

You will believe that God and your ego are at war with each other. That is what Jesus means by time and eternity. Time represents the ego, and eternity represents the Holy Spirit or God. And they will be in conflict in your mind (obviously not in God's Mind, Who does not even know about time) until you see time as not existing in itself, as not being real, as not having any impact on you, but only as a learning device and a classroom in which you can learn the lessons that will free you from time entirely. Remember, since ideas leave not their source, time is connected to sin, guilt, and fear in our minds. Without sin, guilt, and fear, there would be no time. Projected out, our sins become the past, guilt becomes the present, and the future becomes the fear of God's retaliation. I sinned in the past, I am guilty in the present, and I am afraid of the punishment forthcoming in the future.

Until I recognize that you and I do not have separate interests, I will continue to believe in separation, which means that I will continue to believe in sin, guilt, and fear, which in turn means that I will continue to believe that I am a victim of the world of time. As I begin to undo that and learn that you and I are not separate—we share the same insanity, the same need, and the same goal of awakening from this insanity—then I am undoing the belief in separation. Without separation there is no sin, no guilt, no fear, and no time.

We thus see our experiences within the world of time simply as a learning instrument that Jesus uses to teach us that the problem is not outside, it is inside; and that the problem inside in the mind is one that we chose. Moreover, we can begin to understand that just as easily as we chose it, we can now choose against it.

**(1:3-4) You cannot do this as long as you believe that anything happening to you is caused by factors outside yourself. You must learn that time is solely at your disposal, and that nothing in the world can take this responsibility from you.**

This is not the only place where Jesus says this. We must learn that anything happening to us is not caused by factors outside us. That is very difficult, because our brains are programmed by the mind to believe just the opposite—that everything that happens to us is caused by factors outside ourselves. That is why we were born.

Don't forget about the idea of purpose. There is a purpose behind our being born. We were born so that we would learn that we are not responsible. Thus, I keep my separate identity and someone or something else gets punished for it. I am not responsible. Nothing in this world can take from me the responsibility for how I use time. It is my choice. Do I use time as a way of keeping me in the ego's world of hate, or do I use time as an instrument to help me remember what love is, by looking at the hate and then going beyond it? This course teaches that you cannot get to the light until you go through the darkness. Jesus asks us in a number of places to take his hand and then he will walk through the clouds of guilt with us. Specifically in Lesson 70 in the workbook he says, "If it helps you, think of me holding your hand and leading you. And I assure you this will be no idle fantasy" (W-pI.70.9:3-4). The clouds are the clouds of guilt—storm clouds, fierce-looking clouds, terrifying clouds—but they are nothing. We cannot walk through them by ourselves, but we can walk through them with a loving, kind, and gentle hand holding ours. We must be willing to go through them, which means there must be at least a part of us that is willing to say, "Nothing here works, and I want something that will really bring me happiness and peace." But we must be motivated by the desire to leave this dream. Once that motivation is present, we then begin the long journey; and it is a journey through the darkness, which gradually becomes lighter and lighter. That is what Jesus means when he talks about the happy dreams.

**Part XI**

Let us look at an important passage from "The Definition of Healing" in the Psychotherapy pamphlet. This is another of those remarkable places in the material where Jesus summarizes everything in one or two sentences. In this section he has been talking about sickness, and he ends up saying that all sickness is a form of unforgiveness, and therefore that simply understanding where the sickness is coming from—what the symptom basically means—isn't going to get you anywhere. This is because what heals an unforgiveness is just one thing: forgiveness. Then he says:

**(P-2.VI.6:1-3) This realization 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.**

That is healing. What is incredible about this statement is that it says absolutely nothing about the patient. It says nothing, absolutely nothing about the process of psychotherapy. Very simply, the way the goal of psychotherapy is reached and the way healing occurs is through the therapist forgiving himself. That is how you heal. That is how the dream of sickness ends. “The therapist sees in the patient all that he has not forgiven in himself.” This is a paradigm for what Jesus asks us to do all the time. I find myself in a situation or in a relationship in which I am angry, upset, guilty, depressed, fearful, or whatever. And of course I think it is all because of the situation or the relationship—the circumstances over which I have no control. Then, finally, I say to Jesus, "There must be another way of looking at this, because I have looked at this kind of thing all my life, I have dealt with it and coped with it all my life, and it has not made me happy. It might have made me rich, happy in terms of material things, and given me advancement, and other kinds of worldly things, but it has not really made me happy. Please help me."

Jesus does not help us by waving a magic wand to make the problem go away. He helps us by offering us his glasses so we can look at the situation his way. He helps us realize that what we are perceiving is "an outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5). Thus, the conflict is not between me and this other person, between me and my boss, or between me and my body. The conflict is between me and a nonexistent God—the ego's God. On the [**chart**](https://facim.org/online-learning-aids/excerpt-series/healing-the-dream/healing-the-dream-part-xi/javascript%3Avoid%280%29) in the wrong-mind box you see the term battleground. I take an internal conflict between myself and this made-up insane God and I displace it onto my body, either making myself sick or making myself sick because of other people who are making me sick. In other words, I take the belief in my own sin over what I believe I have done to God and I project it out and see it in you. I am not a victim of what I have done; I am a victim of what God is about to do to me. And that punitive God is now emerging as you, whoever you are. In our early years, of course, it is our parents; and then it becomes any authority figure, anyone who has power over us, anyone who has something that we want and need: someone's love, attention, kindness, understanding, someone's appreciation of our intelligence, our work—whatever it is. That person is simply a figure or a symbol of a punitive God who is going to punish us because of our sin.

Whatever I am seeing in the situation that is making me unhappy is a projection of what I believe about myself, and that is what Jesus means in saying, "The therapist sees in the patient all that he has not forgiven in himself." The value of my patient, my friend, my spouse, my children, my parents, or anyone else is that they offer me the opportunity of seeing without what I have been so terrified to see within. They become the screen onto which I project what I have desperately tried to keep repressed in my own mind. The ego tells me that if I look within, my eyes will light on sin and God will strike me blind (T-21.IV.2:3). So I do not look within because the guilt is so horrific. Rather than look within, I look without and see the guilt in you. I am so perverse in my insanity that one of the ways I can demonstrate how guilty you are is to make myself sick because of you. I will gladly suffer just so I can say once again: Behold me, brother; at your hand I get sick. Behold me, brother; at your hand I die. Behold me, brother; at your hand I lose my job. Behold me, brother; at your hand I lose my family. Behold me, brother; at your hand I lose my health. Whatever it is.

Thus, I do not know what is inside, so I keep projecting it out until one day I say, "Please help. There has to be another way of looking." And this is Jesus' answer, which is why no one likes him. This is not the answer that we want. I am thus given another chance to look at whatever it is I have not forgiven in myself and open it to re-evaluation. The instant we chose the ego, our minds closed shut like a steel trap. A heavy gate fell, and we made a vow to the ego that we will never look again at our decision to be sinful, which means we have never had the opportunity ever since then to look at it and say perhaps it was the wrong choice and that perhaps what we chose is really nothing. We have never had the opportunity to re-evaluate it because the ego closed the book. Finished! And so now we are given another chance to look at it.

**(P-2.VI.6:4) When this occurs, he** [the therapist] **sees his sins as gone into a past that is no longer here.**

That is the bottom line, and that is what Jesus means when he speaks about gentle laughter. We are desperately holding onto something that not only is not here, but it never even happened. At the beginning of Chapter 28 he says:

“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).

This entire world was built as a defense against something that does not exist. Now that is silly! You could not ask for anything more silly. We have literally built this entire massive defensive system to protect ourselves against an enemy that does not exist. That is why governments do such silly things—building up arms systems against enemies that do not exist. This whole course is about exposing the insanity and silliness of this. It does not make us sinful, but it certainly makes us very silly. We will defend this defense against anything. We will let no one take this world or this body away from us, not even Jesus. We will kill instead. We will destroy his message instead. But what we are holding onto is nothing. There is nothing there. That is what he is saying: "When this occurs, he sees his sins as gone into a past that is no longer here."

At the beginning of the paragraph Jesus says:

“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).

The miracle takes away the thought system of the ego. To re-quote the line from the workbook, "It [the miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false" (W-pII.13.1:3). It is false because it is not there.

“And what it takes away is long since gone, but being kept in memory appears to have immediate effects. This world was over long ago. The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them but for a little while” (T-28.I.1:5-7).

So much for this great wonderful cosmos—this world that we think is so glorious. It is not here. The thoughts that made the world, the thoughts of guilt are no longer there. They are no longer there because they were never there. We just thought they were there; and then we had to build this massive defense against a thought that never existed. Is that smart? Not smart! Homo sapiens is an oxymoron, since it means "wise man."

Skip to paragraph 2.

“All the effects of guilt are here no more. [The effects of guilt is everything in the world.] For guilt is over. In its passing went its consequences, left without a cause” (T-28.I.2:1-3).

This is why the world was over long ago. There is no world! It is as if we are looking at an after-image. Sometimes you turn off a television set and there is still a little juice left, so there is a brief after-image until the image fades. This entire world is an after-image. There is no more juice in the system. The set is turned off, but we still think we see something, and we react to what we think we see.

“Why would you cling to it in memory if you did not desire its effects?” (T-28.I.2:4)

That is a very important line. Why would you still hold on to the cause—the guilt—unless you wanted the effects—the world? Why do we want the world? Because the world proves that guilt is real; guilt proves the separation is real; the separation proves that I am real. I want there to be a world because I want to keep my identity and blame everyone else for it. I need a world for that. "Hate is specific" (W-pI.161.7:1) There has to be someone I can hate, so I have to make him up. We speak of psychotic people as those who hallucinate and make up people that do not exist. The movie A Beautiful Mind is about a man who makes up a world that does not exist, and then he reacts to it as if it were real. We all do that. That is why Jesus says this entire world is an hallucination (T-20.VIII.7:3). We are all hallucinating; but we act as if the world were real. We actually think we see something on that screen in front of us. That is sickness; that is the disease. It does not matter whether you have a physical symptom or not; the fact that you believe there is a world, a body, and guilt is the disease; that is the sickness, which means that that is what has to be healed.

Going back now to the passage in the Psychotherapy pamphlet, the way you heal is you recognize that what you are perceiving outside in another person, a relationship, situation, or circumstance in your own body is a projection of what you have not forgiven in yourself. Again:

**(P-2.VI.6:4-5) 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.**

I do not see the evil in me. I see it all around me. Everything and everyone is a potential pathogen, because they could all make me very dis-eased.

**(P-2.VI.6:6) The patient is his screen for the projection of his sins, enabling him to let them go.**

This is not just about psychotherapy. The same principle obviously applies to everything we do; to any person we are with, any person whom we are with in our minds because the person has died or is someone we are fantasizing about. Anything that we think about is a screen for us to project our sins onto. When we ask the right question of the right teacher, the world becomes—to use Freud's phrase—"the royal road" that leads us back inside so we can finally look at what is in our minds. Without these opportunities, without all these people in our lives, we would not have the chance of doing this, because our minds were sealed shut in that instant when the ego made guilt real. That motivated us to leave the guilt behind, vowing never to go back. This world, then, is the witness to that promise.

That is what Jesus means in the text when he says, "Swear not to die, you holy Son of God! You make a bargain that you cannot keep" (T-29.VI.2:1-2). We made a promise that we would die, because that is what the body does, and then we blame everything and everyone else for that death. But we cannot do it because it is all made up. We can think the ego is right, and we can think we can make up a world that proves the ego is right, but that does not make it real.

**Part XII
"The Cause of Sickness"**

Before continuing with our discussion of "How Is Healing Accomplished?" from the manual, let me address two questions that are frequently raised.

**1)** How do you get to the experience from the intellectual part of learning? My answer is that there is no real formula, because this is not something you do. The text is written on a very high intellectual level and requires a lot of hard reading, more so than the workbook and manual. The very process of struggling with understanding what the words are saying becomes part of the experience of learning it. That is part of the pedagogy of the Course. People complain that the text is too difficult to understand, but it really is not difficult to understand. A lot of the passages I have read are very clear and straightforward. The reason the meaning is not so immediately apparent is not the difficulty of the language; it is our fear and resistance that make the meaning elusive or obscure. It is as if our ego does not want us to understand what is written. Therefore a message is given to our brain not to understand what we are reading, and so we do not understand. The process of learning to intellectually master the material is really not an intellectual one, but rather a process of letting go of our resistance, and that just happens. It is much better if it happens without our trying to make it happen.

In a sense, the one-year training program of the workbook is a way of beginning the process of integrating what we understand with our brains with what we understand from within. The training program of the workbook has as its focus applying the principles of the lesson, which are based on the text, to our everyday life. We are asked to think of God every hour, every half-hour, or six times an hour, and to think of or use the lesson during the day whenever we are tempted to be upset. So there is an integration of what seems to be the intellectual understanding of the theory with the practical application. In reality, it is not really that clear-cut. The struggle of learning what the text says carries within it the inherent process of becoming what the text says. Again, the words are not that difficult. It is our fear and resistance that prevent us from really understanding what we are reading. Our study and practice of it over a period of many years is a reflection of our desire to learn and become what it says.

**2)** If you are stepping on my toe and I forgive you, does that mean it won't hurt? I could tell you many experiences that I had growing up in New York City riding the subways, which often would be very crowded, making it nearly impossible not to be jostled or have your feet stepped on. New Yorkers, somewhat deservedly, have the reputation of not really caring, although that is not always the case. But if someone steps on your foot and then quickly turns to you and apologizes, I guarantee you will feel less pain than if they not only stepped on your foot, but pushed you down to rush out the exit door.

When you go to your right mind and truly forgive, the experience in this holy instant is that you would not take personally what appears to be an attack, even though it may be meant as an attack by the other person. In that moment, you are a "healed healer"—until you get frightened and then go back again and become an "unhealed healer." In the context of psychotherapy, an unhealed healer would be someone in a healing profession who does not see the purpose as for his or her own healing. Thus, unhealed healers are those who try to be helpful to other people but do not see themselves as part of the process.

Let me just elaborate a little on the idea of not taking an attack personally. What it means to forgive, is that you do not make the connection that the ego would have you make—between the other person's attack, whether verbal or physical, and yourself. Helen had a number of experiences which I recorded in my book, Absence from Felicity. The classic one, which might have occurred before the Course started, happened when she lived in an apartment building in New York City. The bedroom in the apartment above hers was directly over her bedroom. The woman in that apartment had a very annoying habit from Helen's point of view. Around midnight, she would start walking around her bedroom in her high heels on the wood floor. Now Helen went to bed at a reasonable hour because she had to wake up early to get to the Medical Center, and she would be storming and stewing in her mind, really furious at this woman for being so insensitive, and thinking about all kinds of things she would do. At some point in the midst of her internal raging, she said to herself, the problem really is that I think there is a cord that connects her high heels to my head, so that I think she is stomping on my *head*. If that is the case, all I have to do is cut the cord. Being a very visual as well as an auditory person, Helen took out a scissors in her mind, cut the cord, and then went right to sleep.

The stories are not always so simple and clear-cut, nor do they all have a happy ending as that one did, but the principle is very clear. The problem was the interpretation she made; and what was really galling here, was not so much the sound of the heels on the floor, but the idea that this woman would be so insensitive, unthinking, and uncaring. That is what did it. It is the same thing in the example I gave about the crowded subway. If someone steps on your foot but apologizes quickly, it does not hurt as much as if the person were very callous and blamed you for it. In a sense, that is what forgiveness is all about—you restore the appropriate causal connection. The reason I am upset and am tossing and turning in my bed is not what the woman is doing or what this person did, or said, or anything else. It is that I am making a connection, a false causal connection, between that person and me. That is an interpretation, not a fact. The Course emphasizes that perception is an interpretation, not a fact (see T-21.V.1; W-pII.304.1:3; M-17.4:1-7). The interpretation is that she is doing this to me. If I change my perception, then I no longer see the cause of my distress as being her high heels or something outside me, but rather my own interpretation of what she is doing. Then there will not be a problem.

This is a good paradigm for what the process is like. You do not deny what the other person does. If a doctor says, "I am very sorry but that lump in your breast is cancer," you do not make believe and say it is all illusion and the breast was over long ago (T-28.I.1:6). That is silly. But you can look at it differently. You do not have to take it as a personal attack, either by the doctor, by something that you ate, by a pill you should not have taken, by your own body, by God, or whatever. In a sense, it is just another event in the world. The choice then is do I look at it through the eyes of my ego, which are the eyes of blame, hate, and fear, or do I look at it through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, Who will help me see this as another opportunity to learn that I am not my body, without denying the fact there is a problem that I have to take care of medically. That is how you walk through life. You do not try to change the external world. You change your mind about the external world. The beginning of Chapter 21 says, "....seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.in.1:7). The idea, again, is that you do not take what other people do or say personally. The ego would always have you take it personally.

Getting back to what we were talking about earlier, the purpose of the world's dream is for us to have one experience after another of justifiably blaming others, that someone else did it to me; and therefore, my immediate reaction would be, why did you do this to me!—how unkind, unthinking, unloving, uncaring, mean, vicious, cruel, murderous, etc. Instead, you realize that that is the ego's reaction, because that is why the world was made—so we could always blame someone and something else. Remember that very important principle, perception is an interpretation, not a fact. My physical eyes see perceptual or objective facts in the world, but my brain interprets those seeming facts, and the brain's interpretation is a direct reflection of the mind's decision. If I want to find people to blame I will find them without any problem. But I could just as easily see the attack, as the Course says, as an expression of fear, which is a call for the love that has been denied and that I do not feel I deserve, or that others do not feel they deserve. So the focus is never on what is outside, but is always on what is inside. Most of the time, I have no power over the world or the other people in the world. The only thing I have power over is my own mind. I will interpret the world either through my ego's eyes, which will always be in terms of winners and losers, victims and victimizers, or I will interpret it through Jesus' eyes, which will see us all as sharing the same interests, the same need, and the same goal.

**Part XIII**

Let us now return to what I read earlier from the teacher's manual, section 5 "How Is Healing Accomplished?" The second subsection under that is "The Shift in Perception," and we begin with paragraph 3.

**(M-5.II.3:1-2) 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.**

We are talking specifically about sickness, but obviously this goes for any form of unrest, dis-ease, or upset. As Lesson 5 says, "I am never upset for the reason I think." You could plug in any word to that: I am never discouraged, angry, happy, ecstatic, excited, disappointed, or sick for the reason I think. That particular lesson does not go into any detailed explanation of what we are upset about, but obviously so many other places in the workbook, the text, and the manual do. Again, we are speaking specifically about sickness, but this can easily be generalized to anything that upsets us.

**(M-5.II.3:3-4) What does this recognition "cost"? It costs the whole world you see, for the world will never again appear to rule the mind.**

It literally costs the whole world, because the whole world will disappear along with you at the very end, but we are not at the very end yet. So while we are still making our way up the ladder, what changes is the way we see the world. We have seen the world as ruling us: we are the victims, the effects, of causes beyond our control. Looking at the world through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, or taking Jesus' hand and walking through the clouds of guilt does not mean that we no longer see the world through our eyes; it means, rather, that our interpretation shifts. We no longer are the victims of something done to us. That is the change. Again, the cost is "the whole world you see, for the world will never again appear to rule the mind."

**(M-5.II.3:5) For with this recognition is responsibility placed where it belongs; not with the world, but on him who looks on the world and sees it as it is not.**

Seeing the world "as it is not" can be understood on two levels. The immediate level that is being talked about here is that I no longer see the world as ruling me, as being the cause of my distress and unhappiness. When I get near the top of the ladder, I suddenly realize that I see the world as it is not, meaning that I see a world that exists, when the world does not exist at all—it is only a dream. But until I get to the point when I am able to realize the whole thing is literally a dream, and the person I call myself is simply a figure in that dream, I have what A Course in Miracles refers to as happy dreams, where I still experience the world as real, but I no longer experience it as attacking me. When Helen made the shift and cut the cord between the woman's high heels and her head (see the preceding excerpt), the woman's high heels were still stomping on the floor, and Helen was still lying in bed with her head on the pillow. The difference was that she no longer saw the connection the way she had previously seen it. That is the change. It is not that the world externally changes; what changes is your interpretation of the world: you no longer see it as having an effect on you.

**(M-5.II.3:6-7) He looks on what he chooses to see. No more and no less.**

This is basically the idea that projection makes perception. I look within and choose the ego or the Holy Spirit. Whichever teacher I choose will determine the way I perceive the world: either as a place of sin, guilt, fear, hate, and suffering; or as a classroom in which everyone, without exception, has to learn the same lesson. What unites us all is having the one interest and the one goal instead of separate ones.

**(M-5.II.3:8-9) The world does nothing to him. He only thought it did.**

On the level of the body, the world certainly does do things to us. Jesus is not suggesting that we lapse into denial, where we make believe the world has no effect on our bodies. It absolutely does. He tells us in Chapter 2 that to deny our physical experience in this world is a "particularly unworthy form of denial" (T-2.IV.3:11). He is not saying that we are to deny the world; he is simply saying that we should deny our interpretation of the world. "The world does nothing to him. He only thought it did."

**(M-5.II.3:10-11) Nor does he do anything to the world, because he was mistaken about what it is. Herein is the release from guilt and sickness both, for they are one.**

It is not only that the world does nothing to me, I have done nothing to the world, because my belief that people are attacking and victimizing me is a projection of my secret thought that I am the one who has victimized other people. I began with God, and then I made up a world so I could victimize it. But when I walk through these clouds with Jesus, I realize that what I perceive outside mirrors back to me what I made real inside, and what I made real inside has no effect either. That is the good news. Not only is my attack on you unjustified, regardless of what you have done; my attack on me is unjustified, regardless of what I have done. That is how guilt is undone. Guilt and sickness are one.

**(M-5.II.3:12) Yet to accept this release, the insignificance of the body must be an acceptable idea.**

Bingo! That is the problem. You just sail along on these wonderful words: Yes, I can do this, I can do that; and then suddenly, oops, I don't think I can do that. That is our fear of release. Do not deny your attachment to your body, yourself, your personality, or your history, because if you deny it, you will have no way of healing it and letting it go; but be aware of how very difficult this is. In the important section, "The Last Unanswered Question" (T-21.VII), there are four questions. The first three are relatively easy to answer. They are relevant here, because all three questions basically have to do with no longer seeing the world as victimizing us. The fourth question, the kicker, is: “And do I want to see what I denied***because***it is the truth?" (T-21.VII.5:14). That is the one we do not want to answer, because that is the one that changes our mind. The first three change our perception of the world. That is difficult enough, but we manage that after a while. The last one, which is the same as what Jesus is talking about here, is that I must look at what I chose to deny because it is the truth. If I look at it again because it is the truth, the illusion that is my self, which is why my body is insignificant, will disappear.

That is why Jesus says the problem with this question is that you do not understand. Yet to answer this question with a "yes" means to say "not no" (T-21.VII.12:4). By that he means that to answer "Yes, I want to see what I denied because it is the truth," means that you want to go back into your right mind and stay there. In order to say that and mean it, you must look at the ego's thought system, which is the "no," and say you do not want that anymore. That is the problem. The ego thought system that we embraced—indeed, we made it—is the self. We want to be separated, individual identities, special and unique. That self is who each of us is. And that is what we have to look at and say we do not want anymore. That is why that last unanswered question remains unanswered, because it means looking at the ego and saying we do not want it.

What you want to do with yourself, which is the beginning of the process of healing, is to be honest and realize that you are not sure you want to do this. "Yes, I think it is good for me to practice letting go of grievances; and I really do not want to hold onto the past and to blame other people for things that I am doing." That is all well and good, and very important. It will get you through the first four stages in the development of trust that the early pages in the manual talk about (M-4.I.3-6); but it will not get you through the fifth and the sixth stages, because the fifth stage is letting go of your sense of self, and the sixth is the attainment of the real world.

There are many places in the Course where Jesus says the same thing—that all you need to do is just be aware so that you do not deny your fear or your identification with the ego and your body, and that you do not try to pretty it over. You are simply saying that "Yes, that is where I am and I am not ready yet. Until I am ready to take those final steps up the ladder I can take a lot of the middle steps—like really learning to let go of my grievances. I can learn to ask Jesus for help whenever I find myself getting angry, annoyed, fearful, or guilty and realize that these are things I am choosing. I can learn not to blame other people and just be patient, kind, and gentle with myself as I go through this."

**Part XIV**

**(M-5.II.4:1-5) With this idea is pain forever gone. But with this idea goes also all confusion about creation. Does not this follow of necessity? Place cause and effect in their true sequence in one respect, and the learning will generalize and transform the world. The transfer value of one true idea has no end or limit.**

This notion of "transfer value" is a key idea in A Course in Miracles. This course contains a curriculum, and teachers always want their students to generalize what they learn. The Introduction to the workbook states this very clearly (W-in.4-7). The way that I begin to "place cause and effect in their true sequence" is to recognize my special relationship with another person. I begin to see that the other person is not the cause of my distress nor the cause of my salvation. Indeed the other person has absolutely nothing to do with my being upset or feeling happy. If I am happy it is because I chose the Holy Spirit as my Teacher; if I am upset, sick, disappointed, or guilty it is because I chose the ego. It is very simple. I return to my mind. There is a line in the text that says: "The miracle is the first step in giving back to cause the function of causation" (T-28.II.9:3). The cause is the mind. I begin to understand, just as Helen did, that the other person is not the cause of my distress (the effect). It is my mind's interpretation of the event, person, or relationship that is the cause.

What we all do instead, however, is bring in our past—what the text refers to as the "shadows of the past" (T-17.III)—to justify our reaction: People are always stepping on my head; they are always being unfair, unkind, and insensitive to me. My mother never thought about me; my father was never home, and he never cared about me. No one ever cared about me—I was always hurting and in pain, and no one cared. I bring all of this with me—forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty years’ worth—and then all of a sudden a woman walks with high heels on a wood floor above my bedroom and I start to get justifiably angry. And behind her stand a thousand more and a thousand more behind them, as the text says (T-27.V.10:4). I see them, and I see the world as the cause of my unhappiness.

Healing occurs when we reverse that and give cause back its function of causation. We return the problem to the mind, which is what the miracle does—it restores to cause its function of causation. The purpose of A Course in Miracles is to have us do that. The way we can practice this is by realizing that whenever we are looking forward to something, for example, we are giving it a power it does not have. We are always giving our power away. Why? Because the ego tells us that we once had that power, and look what we did with it: Heaven is darkened, God is destroyed, love has been conquered, and all because of what we did. That is how powerful we are! The guilt over this is so overwhelming that we will do anything so that we never do it again. So we give our power away. That is why we are born as helpless infants. We could have been born as fully grown adults—it is our dream. But nothing is as powerless as a little infant; and even as the infant grows up and begins to get worldly power, it is still at the mercy of a world greater than itself. That is another way of understanding why the world was made: so we could give away our power. To us, the power of the mind is the power of sin. So if I give you power over me, you then are the sinner, and God will strike you dead, not me. That is the sickness. It is a pretty sick thought, because what underlies it is the accusation, "Look what I did; I destroyed God! What does that make me? It makes me God." Talk about paranoid schizophrenia! That is why Jesus says we are all insane.

Thus, healing and forgiveness are about getting back the power—not the power to sin or destroy, but the power to love, and to learn that whatever we thought we did had no effect. That is how we heal each other. When I am in my right mind, I am totally at peace and I am not angry or blaming anyone. Then, from that holy instant I demonstrate to you that regardless of what is going on with your body or in your life, you can make the same choice I have made. I am saying the power of one's mind is love, not sin and hate. That is what healing is. That is why that wonderful passage I read from the Psychotherapy pamphlet (P-2.VI.6:3) says nothing about the patient, the patient's diagnosis, the course of treatment, and certainly nothing about HMOs. All that it says is that the therapist heals his or her own mind by bringing the problem back within, which is where the Holy Spirit becomes the therapist. That is how healing occurs. In that instant, the therapist mirrors for the patient the same choice the patient can make, regardless of what gets said in the consulting room, the brilliant insights the therapist might have, or the problems the patient brings in. All that is totally irrelevant to the real healing process, which is that the therapist looks at the patient through eyes that do not judge, because he has no longer judged himself. In fact, the pamphlet also says that healing occurs when the therapist forgets to judge (P-3.II.6:1).

The only way I can avoid judging you is to avoid judging me. However, I do not know that there is anything I have to judge and change in myself, because I do not know about the judgment. So I must therefore carefully watch my reactions to you, because of who you are in my life. My reactions will show me what I projected from my mind that I was totally unaware of. Once my attention is brought back from the outside to the inside and I look at whatever I am accusing myself of—all of my self-hatred and self-loathing—and I look at it with the love of Jesus next to me, it will disappear, when I really do it. At that point there is no judgment in me of me, because I recognize nothing happened. I realize that my grandiosity and my paranoid delusions of grandeur had no effect on anything; the Love of God has not been compromised; the Oneness of Heaven has not been shattered into billions of fragments. Nothing happened! In that instant, my guilt and judgment are gone, which means it is impossible for me to judge you. That is when healing occurs, because I am demonstrating to you that you can now make the same choice I made. Very simple. This applies whether you are talking about psychotherapy, a hospital room, a doctor's office, a lawyer's office, a family, or a business. It does not matter where you are, the process is always the same.

**(M-5.II.4:6) The final outcome of this lesson is the remembrance of God.**

The lesson is that the mind made up the world, and now we understand why the mind made it up. Our great fear is that we will remember God, because then there will be no me, no individuality, no specialness, no uniqueness—nothing except the Love of God.

**(M-5.II.4:7) What do guilt and sickness, pain, disaster and all suffering mean now? Having no purpose, they are gone.**

The important word here is purpose. It is incredible how often it appears in the Course (more than 600 times). The purpose of sickness, pain, disaster, and suffering is to prove that the separation is real, but that someone else did it, not me. Once I realize there is no guilt to atone for, then there is no guilt I have to get rid of by attacking you. If there is no guilt at all, then all sickness, pain, disaster, and suffering disappear, because their purpose is gone. I no longer have to hold in my memory a thought that was already undone and healed the instant it seemed to arise. I am no longer afraid of the memory of God. We all, as one collective Son, chose against this when we made the ego our teacher instead of the Holy Spirit, and that is what we can now correct. When we finally choose that, our mind is healed, which means God's Son is one again. That is what Jesus means in A Course in Miracles when he says we were with him when he arose (C-6.5:5). This has nothing to do with the physical resurrection, which is really silly from the Course's point of view. How could a body resurrect if it were never killed? And it was never killed because it never lived. In A Course in Miracles, resurrection is the awakening from the dream of death (M-28.1-2). Jesus is saying that when he awoke we were with him because we are all one, and in that oneness there is no Jesus, no Ken—there is no one. There is only God's one Son who has no name, because His Name is with a capital N, as Lessons 183 and 184 say ("I call upon God's Name and on my own"; "The Name of God is my inheritance").

**(M-5.II.4:9-11) And with them also go all the effects they seemed to cause. Cause and effect but replicate creation. Seen in their proper perspective, without distortion and without fear, they re-establish Heaven.**

The original Cause is God. He is the First Cause, there is no second, and Christ, His Son, is His Effect. That is the original Cause and Effect. The ego tells us that we split off from God, and that effect does leave its cause, because ideas do leave their source. Once we split off cause and effect, we continue to split it; the mind now is the cause and the world is the effect. But once we bring cause and effect back into alignment, we realize that ideas leave not their source. The world then, returns to its source, which is the guilt in our mind. We are now back in our minds to look at the guilt again, which disappears. Now all that is required is that we look within—that is what makes someone a healer, and that is how the dream of sickness is healed and undone. I do this first by looking outside through the eyes of my new teacher, who instructs me that what I see outside is a projection of what I have made real inside. Then I look within and start to laugh—with the "gentle laughter" that Jesus talks about. I laugh at the silliness of ever thinking that I could be God, that I would even want to be God, and that in order for me to exist and continue to exist, I have to continually kill God off, and then kill off everyone else in this almost endless soap opera of deceit, murder, pain, and death. The whole dream ends the instant that any of us suddenly recognizes what is happening.

As a close, let us turn to the two beautiful paragraphs near the end of Chapter 2 of the Psychotherapypamphlet. Jesus is talking specifically about the therapist's office, but we can easily apply what he says to any situation in which we are with another person. Remember that relationships do not occur in the body; they occur in the mind, so you can imagine this scene perhaps in terms of a dead parent whom you have not forgiven, or in terms of a public person with whom you have a special relationship but have never met. It does not matter, because it is all thought anyway. Therefore, whatever the nature of your relationship, it is nothing more than a projection of your relationship with God in your mind. That is the original conflict; the original special relationship; and rather than look at it inside, we project it out.

“Think what the joining of two brothers really means. And then forget the world and all its little triumphs and its dreams of death. The same are one, and nothing now can be remembered of the world of guilt. The room becomes a temple, and the street a stream of stars that brushes lightly past all sickly dreams. Healing is done, for what is perfect needs no healing, and what remains to be forgiven where there is no sin?

“Be thankful, therapist, that you can see such things as this, if you but understand your proper role. But if you fail in this, you have denied that God created you, and so you will not know you are His Son. Who is your brother now? What saint can come to take you home with him? You lost the way. And can you now expect to see in him an answer that you have refused to give. Heal and be healed. There is no other choice of pathways that can ever lead to peace. O let your patient in, for he has come to you from God. Is not his holiness enough to wake your memory of Him?” (P-2.VII.8-9).