**The Happy Dream**

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**Part I**
**Introduction**

Our topic is the happy dream, which is also the title of a section in Chapter 18 in the text. The *happy dream*, like any number of right-minded terms, is frequently misunderstood. Terms such as *miracle, holy instant, holy relationship, forgiveness, redemption, salvation,* and *resurrection* all tend to be confusing for people who work with *A Course in Miracles*, even those who work with it over many years. The reason for that is what Jesus refers to early on in the text as level confusion. He discusses this in Chapters 1 and 2, although the theme recurs throughout. He talks about it specifically in "Principles of Miracles" when he first introduces the theme, and then in the section on healing in Chapter 2 (section IV) when he talks about sickness and healing. The confusion of levels has to do with people thinking that sickness and, therefore, healing are at the level of the body, as opposed to where the sickness really is, which is in the mind. And since sickness is in the mind, that is where the healing is as well.

Later on, this idea of level confusion changes into a more sophisticated discussion of form and content, and the confusion of form and content. Form is anything external, anything in the world or of the body, and content is one of two thoughts that are in the mind: the thought of fear, hate, or guilt, and the thought of forgiveness or healing. Still another way of talking about the confusion of levels is cause and effect, which is an even more sophisticated treatment of the topic. Cause is anything in the mind, and effect is anything outside the mind, which would be anything of the body or in the world. Typically, almost all spiritualities and certainly all formal religions have this confusion, expressed in the belief that the body is not only real, but is the problem, and therefore the means of salvation. In Christianity sin is seen as localized in the body and is redeemed and atoned for by the sacrificial death of Jesus' body. Then it is Jesus' body that is resurrected and ascends into Heaven, etc.

The same confusion occurs with the term the *happy dream*. It comes from the lack of awareness that the Course talks about dreams on two levels: the level of the mind and the level of the body. Later on we will look at a number of passages that make this very clear. Indeed, the dream level expressed in the body is a defense against the dream that is really in the mind, and as we will see, is *only* in the mind. So let us begin by first discussing what these two dreams are, because until we understand this, we will not understand what the concept of the *happy dream* refers to.

To spell this out a little more clearly, the happy dream does not refer to one's life in this world. When Jesus talks about the happy dream, when he talks about the Holy Spirit's happy dreams, and when he says the purpose of this Course in one sense is to have our nightmare dreams be turned into happy ones, he does not mean that our lives here will get better. He does not mean that they will get worse either. He is telling us that our lives here as we experience them, as physical and psychological creatures, are totally irrelevant because ultimately, as we learn in the Course, we are not even here: "There is no life outside of Heaven" (T-23.II.19:1). So what we call life here is really non-life and basically constitutes a projection of the thought of non-life. And when we talk about thought, obviously we are talking about the mind, not the brain. The thought of non-life in the mind is the thought of separation, the belief that we could separate from life. When we separate from life, we are no longer a part of life, i.e., non-life.

That thought in the mind, as we will see, is a most unhappy thought because it separates us from our true happiness, which is being part of God, part of His Love and His Will. This unhappy thought that constitutes the first dream then gets projected out into the unhappy dreams that we think of as our lives here. And our lives, when we look at them objectively from above the battleground, are really lives of pain, suffering, and loss that always culminate in death. Again, most unhappy. Since that is not the true dream, when Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit's correction, which is the happy dream, he is not talking about a shift in our lives here. He is talking only about a shift in the mind.

What makes these ideas of happy dreams, forgiveness, the miracle, and healing so difficult and so prone to confusion is that we all identify ourselves as bodies. We all had to get dressed this morning, we all had to eat, we all had to get our bodies here, and so our whole identification is with the body. It is almost inconceivable to us that healing would be of anything other than the body, or that the happy dream would refer to anything other than our life here in the world.

Thus, the ultimate purpose of this course, as I say over and over again, is to shift our awareness from mind*less*ness, the state of being without a mind—the body—to the state of mind*ful*ness where our full attention is placed on the mind because that is where the problem is, and therefore that is where the answer is. So we are taught in the Course that the Holy Spirit's goal for us are the happy dreams of forgiveness, whereby we change our thinking, which really means we change our teacher from the ego to the Holy Spirit or Jesus. And this has absolutely nothing to do with what we consider to be our lives. It has nothing to do with our physical life, our psychological life, our jobs, our relationships, our health, or any of those areas in terms of other people. It certainly has nothing to do with the planet becoming a happier place or a place of peace. It has to do only with the state of mind, because that is all there is.

The concept of the happy dream is meaningless if we do not know what it is the correction for. So again, as I frequently say, if as we are taught in the Course the Holy Spirit is the Answer, He is the Answer to a question or the solution to a problem. If you do not know what the question is, if you do not know what the problem is, then no matter how brilliant the answer, it will be totally meaningless to you. So Jesus' great burden in this course as our teacher is to have us recognize, understand, and accept what the problem is, which means *where* the problem is. Now the ego is no one's fool, and of course, the ego is really the part of us that likes being on its own and being independent and separate. The ego knows that *it* is the problem, or even more to the point, that the Son of God's *decision* for the ego is the problem, and that the answer is the Son of God's ability to choose the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. All of this is taking place in the mind, so the answer is really where the problem is—in the mind.

In order to keep the problem unsolved, which means in order to keep the ego in existence, the ego takes the problem from the answer and puts it as far away as possible. If the answer is in the mind and the problem is in the mind, and the ego can succeed in bringing the problem into a world and a body, and then close off the mind for all intents and purposes by having us forget we have one, then the problem is so far away from the answer that it can never be solved. And since we all are so identified with the ego's thought system of separation, individuality, autonomy, individual existence, not to mention specialness, we all then are very much identified with the ego's strategy of keeping the problem from the answer. This is why we want to see the answer as somehow being involved in the world, because if the answer is somehow in the world, if it has a worldly expression, then it means the problem must be there too. But the problem is not there; the problem is in the mind.

So we are continually seeking the answer to a problem where the problem does not exist, which ensures that the real problem in the mind will never be addressed and never be undone, which means our individual existence, which is the problem, will never be undone. And again, to the extent that we identify with our individual existence, to that extent we will identify with the ego strategy of keeping the problem as far away from the answer as possible, and that is what we do. That is why this level confusion is so rampant, not only in *A Course in Miracles* circles, but in almost every other religious or spiritual circle as well. That is why people are so invested in bringing the Holy Spirit or Jesus into the world's dream and having Them solve the problem here. That is why people will interpret forgiveness as being between two bodies, because the real source of unforgiveness, for which forgiveness is the answer, is in the mind. So as long as we think it is something that goes on here in the world, as long as we think that sickness is something that occurs in the body, physically or psychologically, there is no way the real problem will be healed, which means there is no way our individuality will ever be questioned, let alone undone. That is what we all like. We all love to have spiritual systems and spiritual or religious teachings focus on the body in the world, both as the source of the problem and as the means of undoing the problem. All the while, the real problem remains unknown, which means the real answer is totally unavailable to us. And to the extent that it is unavailable to us, we will never seek it, because we think we actually have sought and found it in the body.

All this is a way of introducing the theme that before we can meaningfully choose the happy dream, we first have to know why we are choosing it. Again, if we think the problem is our unhappiness here, then the happy dream will be understood by us as something that will change in the world and in our lives. So people start the Course with the magical hope that somehow their lives will get better—they will have better relationships, better jobs, healthier bodies, etc. None of this is bad, but none of this is good either. It is just totally irrelevant to the real issue. The source of our unhappiness as we experience it in this world is the decision for guilt in the mind. That is the only problem. That is where Jesus is; that is where the Holy Spirit is; that is where the memory of God is; that is where the Atonement is; that is where forgiveness is; that is where the miracle brings us; that is where healing is. Thus, we first have to be instructed that we are a mind, not a body, and that the mind is the source of the unhappy dream. For only then will we be motivated to find the real solution for the unhappy dream, which is the happy dream of forgiveness that, again, is the change of mind or the change of teacher.

**Part II**
**Two Levels of Dreams**

We are going to discuss a passage in the text and a parallel passage in "The Gifts of God" prose poem, a series of messages Helen took down in 1978, which constitute a wonderful summary of the whole gamut of the Course's teachings, with incisive discussion on these two levels of dreams. I will talk a little before we actually look at these passages. The dream begins with the idea that we could be separate from God. That is what the Course refers to as the tiny, mad idea that we remember not to laugh at, which means we take it seriously (T-27.VIII.6). That automatically leads us to labeling the tiny, mad idea, the thought of separation, as sinful. This is the beginning of the ego's dream, referred to in "The Gifts of God" as the first dream. In the text, it is referred to as the secret dream (see T-27.VII.11). It is the dream in the mind that is founded on the unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear. Sin says we have sinned against God; guilt says we feel overwhelmed by the enormity of our sin, so much so that we not only believe we have sinned, but we end up believing we aresin. That is the worst experience of all. It is not only that we have done something wrong, we aresomething wrong. Every fiber of our being reeks with this "wrongness," with this sinfulness, so much so that the only thing that can result from this is our punishment. Further, since it is our very self that is wrong and sinful, a self that we stole from God, having taken His life and appropriated it for ourselves, it is that self that will be defeated. It is the life we stole from God that God will now take back, and that instills a tremendous fear in us, let alone terror, the terror of our own annihilation—that we will be annihilated and disappear into oblivion.

That is the ego's dream of sin, guilt, and fear, which is awful. All of our worst nightmares here in this world, all of the worst horror movies, all of the worst things that go on in the world cannot hold a candle to the amount of self-hatred and terror that is contained in that original dream. It is so awful that there is no way we can tolerate it, no way we can remain in the presence of those thoughts, because what those thoughts are really saying is that to meet our own selfish, self-centered needs, we destroyed love. God did nothing wrong. We pretended He did something wrong. All that happened was that we believed God's Love was not enough for us and we wanted more, more than Everything, more than the All, more than total, all-encompassing Love. And so we went about getting it—or so we thought—thereby destroying Heaven's Love and crucifying God's Son by taking the Christ Self and saying this self of ours is Its substitute and now stands in Its place. The guilt over that, once again, is extraordinary, as is the fear of our inevitable punishment.

So the ego has turned this first dream in our mind into a battleground where we are pitted against God, and we do not stand a chance. That is when the idea of a second dream comes into existence. The second dream is the ego looking out for us, or so it tells us. It tells us that the way we can escape from this terror, from this instant annihilation, is to leave the battleground entirely and hide where God will never find us. So with that the Course's version of the Big Bang occurs and we find ourselves catapulted out of the mind, ending up in a physical universe. The original thought of separation, now crystallized as sin, guilt, and fear, fragments into billions and billions of pieces to reinforce the idea that we are separate individuals, and each of those little pieces of a thought now becomes encased in a form that we call a body—we will just stay with *Homo sapiens*, even though the form could be anything, and is everything and anything: animate or inanimate, large or small. As one passage in the text says, as infinitesimal as a grain of sand is, that grain of sand is still part of the Sonship (T-28.IV.9:4). We are not talking about form, only the content or the thought, but we will just focus on the particular group of forms called bodies, specifically belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*.

We find ourselves now in a body, in a world, and the ego causes a veil of amnesia to fall between the mind and the body, so we have no recollection of where we came from. All we are aware of is that we are now mindless, although we do not call it that because we do not even know there is a mind not to have. All we know is that we now are in a body ruled by a brain with a genome that governs how we are, how we live, how we look, our state of health, etc. This is what now determines who and what we are, along with all the environmental influences that play a part.

This then is the second dream, the world's dream. This is a dream that is not secret. It is a dream that we are fully aware of, except forgetting its origin, we are not aware that it is a dream—just as when we are asleep at night having a dream, we are not aware that we are dreaming, unless we are a lucid dreamer. It is only when we awaken that we think back on what we have just experienced and say it was all a dream; we never left our bed or house, and we are still where we were when we fell asleep. But while we sleep, we are not aware that it is a dream. Well, as Jesus explains to us over and over again, we are not aware that this entire universe, let alone our individual lives here, are all part of a dream. And the individual dreams that we think are so individual to us are really split-off parts of one colossal collective dream. Each fragment of that collective dream thinks it is its own dream. That is part of the arrogance of being in the world of separated form.

Now what is important to understand about the world's dream is its purpose. We are told over and over again in the Course that purpose is everything. In one place Jesus says the only question to ask of anything in this world is what it is *for*(T-17.VI.2:1-2). Understanding the purpose of something will give you its meaning. Well, the world's dream, our lives here as a species (organisms within the entire cosmos) and our individual lives are all purposive. The purpose is to conceal the secret dream, thereby ensuring that it remains secret. And since we are also taught in the Course that ideas leave not their source (see for example, T-26.VII.4:7; T-26.VII.13:2), the idea of the secret dream of sin, guilt, and fear has never left its source in the mind.

That means that the world's dream is not really the world's dream. In a sense, it is simply part of the secret dream that we believe has split off and now has its own existence. That is why Jesus tells us there is no world (W-pI.132.6:2); that is why he says the world is an illusion; that is why he says the world was over long ago (T-28.I.1:6); that is why he says there is no body. They are simply projections of what is in the mind, but what is projected from the mind does not leave the mind because ideas leave not their source. That is one of the most important principles in the Course. The ego says ideas leave their source, which is the ego's way of responding to the truth that ideas do not leave their source. The ego says the secret dream can leave its source and seem to have an independent existence outside the mind, i.e., in the world.

Once this veil of amnesia falls and we forget the origin of the world's dream, the secret dream, all we know is the world's dream. All we know are our own experiences here in a body. All we can ever study, analyze, and seek to understand is the world, the body or brain, and how this all works: how the cosmos works macrocosmically and how our individual lives work microcosmically. The greatest brains throughout history have all studied the different aspects of both the collective world and the individual world from all levels: theology, philosophy, psychology, chemistry, biology, astronomy, astrophysics, physics, and on and on. These are all different ways of trying to account for what we call life here, and they never realize that what they are studying is a projection of what is in the mind, because once we are in the world (in the dream) we become mindless.

Another way of understanding this distinction between mindlessness and mindfulness is that Jesus is trying to move us from the world's dream to the mind's dream; from the external dream to the internal dream. But as long as we think the external dream is real and is the only game in town, the only dream in town, that is where we will think the problem is, because we all experience pain, suffering, and unhappiness here on all levels, both individual as well as collective. Therefore, we will think that this course, or any spirituality, has as its purpose to make us happy here, to forgive us here, to save us here so that the world's unhappy dream will become a happy dream.

Thus, when we read the Course, we believe our bodies' eyes are actually reading with our brains interpreting what our eyes read, and we will then automatically think of what we read in terms of bodies. That is what is in back of that very important line that says, “You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize" (T-18.VIII.1:7). Of course we think of God as a body, because we think we are a body, and projection makes perception (T-13.V.3:5; T-21.in.1:1).

What we think we are is what we will perceive. Well, the principle also works with the statement "You cannot even think of this course without a body, or in some form you think you recognize" for the same reason. We all actually think we are bodies reading, studying and applying this course. We think we read it with our eyes. We actually think we are readingsomething, and then we think we are thinking about what we have read. Then we think we are physically applying what we have read in terms of our relationships and situations. That is the height of the ego's arrogance, and you can see how well it works. All you have to do is think of yourself and everyone who does this with the Course. We actually believe Jesus is talking to us, the bodies we see every morning in the mirror; the person that we and other people relate to, which some people like and some people do not like. We think this is what all this is about. We think this is all about fixing the external dream, except it is all about the exact opposite.

The true happy dream begins when we recognize that the world's dream is simply a projection of the secret dream, and it is the secret dream that is the problem. Even more specifically than that, it is the dreamer of the secret dream that is the problem, and the dreamer of the dream is not the I that I think I am. The dreamer of the dream is what we refer to as the decision maker, a term that the Course never uses in this context, but that is what Jesus is talking about all the time. We have a choice between two dreams, between two teachers, between crucifixion and resurrection, between miracles and grievances. Throughout this course, Jesus is appealing to the decision-making part of our mind, also known as the dreamer.

**Part III**
**Dreamer vs. Dream Figure**

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

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

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

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

One of the ways Jesus helps us as our therapist is by having us look over the course of our lives and realize everything is the same. Therefore, why do we have to bother analyzing each and every segment of our lives, each and every relationship? It is all the same. It is all an attempt to prove God wrong and the ego right. That is what everything boils down to. Separation is reality, victimization is reality, and Oneness is the lie. Very simple. To say it another way, everything in our lives expresses either the ego's belief in separate interests where you and I are always at odds, or shared interests where we are all alike.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Part IV**
**"The Happy Dream"**
**"The Dreamer of the Dream"**

We will now look at a number of passages that will allow us to elaborate on these ideas. We will start with the first paragraph of "The Happy Dream" in Chapter 18 of the text.

**(T-18.V.1:1-2) Prepare you now for the undoing of what never was.** [That is the metaphysical position of the Course; that we are undoing the ego, the illusion, the dream that never happened.] **If you already understood the difference between truth and illusion, the Atonement would have no meaning.**

In other words, if you already knew that all this was a dream, an illusion, then you would not need this course and you would not need the Holy Spirit. *The Atonement* is the Course's term for the Holy Spirit's correction—that the separation from God never happened.

**(T-18.V.1:3) The holy instant, the holy relationship, the Holy Spirit's teaching, and all the means by which salvation is accomplished, would have no purpose.**

"If you already knew what I am teaching you," Jesus is saying, "then you would not need me to teach you; you would not need the correction." All of these terms represent the correction. If we knew the error has already been corrected because we recognize that the error never happened, that all of this is a dream, we have never left home and are still at home in God, then we would not need this course or any of the aids that Jesus provides for us.

**(T-18.V.1:4) For they are all but aspects of the plan to change your dreams of fear to happy dreams, from which you waken easily to knowledge.**

Knowledge in the Course is a synonym for Heaven, so we go from dreams of fear, wrong-minded dreams, to happy dreams of forgiveness, right-minded dreams. When the happy dreams of forgiveness totally undo the dreams of fear, all dreaming ends and we are right back where we never left.

**(T-18.V.1:5) Put yourself not in charge of this, for you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat.**

We can understand this and the next sentence to mean that we get confused between form and content, body and mind, the world's dream and the secret dream of the mind, because we always try to evaluate our progress and other people's progress based on what we see and understand. For instance, we are quick to say that spiritual people do not speak like this, they speak like this; they act like this, dress like this, etc. But that is because we do not understand the difference between form and content. We think the form is important. We think behavior is important. We think what our eyes see and our brains understand is important. The fact of the matter is that none of it is important, and there is no way we can understand this. That is the whole point of this first paragraph. We need a thought system, a teacher to move us from the mindlessness of the ego that is the world's dream—the body—to the mindfulness of the Holy Spirit, which is the secret dream. That is why Jesus continues:

**(T-18.V.1:6) Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success.**

In other words, we do not know which end is up. This is Jesus' nice, gentle way of telling us not to even try to understand where we are on the ladder or where we are on the journey, and to please not try to judge where other people are. This is because we will be looking only through the perspective of our body looking at others' bodies with some pre-conceived notion that has nothing to do with what spirituality truly is. That is what he is talking about here.

We do not know the difference between the world's dream and the secret dream, because we do not know anything about the mind, and therefore how can we possibly judge where people are on their Atonement path, especially when the Atonement path and the undoing of the ego does not occur in time and space? It is not linear because linearity is the world's dream. Linear time is the projection into form of sin, guilt, and fear, which are timeless, not timeless in the sense of eternity, but time-less, meaning not part of time. The mind is outside time and space. So how can we possibly know what the meaning of a person's life is, or the meaning of a person's occupation, or relationship, or state of body?  We do not know where that fits into anyone's overall Atonement path. There is no way we can know that about ourselves or anyone else. So Jesus is saying to please not even try. All we need to know is that the happy dream is the correction of the ego's fear dream. It has no meaning other than as the correction.

**. . . . . . .**

This next section, "The Dreamer of the Dream," is the section I referred to earlier when I was talking about the two dreams.

**(T-27.VII.11:6) The dreaming of the world is but a part of your own dream you gave away, and saw as if it were its start and ending, both.**

"The dreaming of the world" is the world's dream; that is our experiences here as a body. This embraces the entire cosmos from before the Big Bang to the time when it will disappear into one large black hole of forgiveness, and everything that goes on between those two poles. Yet it is but a part of "your own dream," which is the mind's dream we that we gave away, that we projected out. And once we projected it out, we believed the world's dream was self-contained. It had its own beginning and will have its own ending. It existed purely on its own, having nothing to do with the mind that now has been rendered inaccessible. The entire cosmos is a state of mindlessness, and since there is no hierarchy of illusions, it does not matter whether we are talking about a mindless body or a mindless cosmos. An illusion is an illusion is an illusion.

So:

**(T-27.VII.11:7) Yet was it** [your life here as a body] **started by your secret dream, which you do not perceive although it caused the part you see and do not doubt is real.**

Even though the mind's dream is the cause of the world's dream, because of the veil of amnesia, the veil of forgetfulness, we do not know it is there and do not doubt that the external world is real, even though it is caused by the mind, and ideas leave not their source. The external world has never left the internal world because there is no external world. The words inner and outer basically have no real meaning. They are both illusory states. The word inner means there is an outer; the word outer means there is an inner. There is no outer, therefore the word inner has no meaning, really.

There is only the mind. There is nothing else—just as when we are asleep at night in our bed, there is only the body that is sleeping in bed. What is going on in the brain of the dreamer is irrelevant to the physical fact within our world that there is a body asleep in bed, even though the brain is dreaming that it is in different places. Thus, even though we are dreaming that we are living in this world as a body doing all kinds of things with our body and with other bodies, the fact of the matter is that we are still in the mind, in that secret dream.

**(T-27.VII.11:8) How could you doubt it** [that the external dream is real] **while you lie asleep, and dream in secret that its cause is real?**

We are still asleep, but we are dreaming this; and while we are dreaming and asleep, we are dreaming that this external world, this life as a body is real. That is the problem. That is what makes this course so difficult to understand, let alone apply, because we are reading it as a body, believing it is about the body. Even though practically every passage tells us we are not bodies, those words go right past us. They do not register in our brains because our brains were programmed not to have them register. "I am not a body, I am free" (W-pI.199), the workbook says over and over again. This does not compute. It is rejected even though our brains and our mouths repeat the words, because we forget that we are asleep. And as long as we are asleep, we think that the outer world is real; it has power and effects.

**Part V**
**"The Dreamer of the Dream" (cont.)**

Now here is the world's dream:

**(T-27.VII.12:1) A brother separated from yourself, an ancient enemy, a murderer who stalks you in the night and plots your death, yet plans that it be lingering and slow; of this you dream.**

That is everybody's paranoid fantasy, and we are all paranoid. That is how we live. We are always being stalked, and in the end we will die. The ultimate "brother" here is God, because as Freud taught and as many other people have said, from the moment we are born we are preparing to die. But it is lingering and slow. Usually our lives last decades, but the end is sure. That is our life here; that is the projection of sin, guilt, and fear.

The beginning of Chapter 13 has one of the most telling descriptions in *A Course in Miracles* of what life in the body is really about. It is awful. The second paragraph in the Introduction describes life in the body as filled with suffering, pain, deprivation, and lack. The discussion culminates in the line: "If this were the real world, God *would* be cruel" (T-13.in.3:1). The clear implication is that it is not the real world. It is the illusory world, and God knows nothing about it. That is what this world's dream is about. It is the projection of our guilt (the secret dream we are not aware of) onto the world, and now the world is going to punish us: I am not the sinner, I am the sinned against. I am not the victimizer who has destroyed Heaven's Love, killed off God, and crucified His Son; everyone else is. I have taken my sin and my guilt and projected them out. Now I see the world doing to me what I secretly (in my secret dream) believe I did to God and to love and to truth.

Now the underlying dream:

**(T-27.VII.12:2) Yet underneath this dream is yet another, in which you become the murderer, the secret enemy, the scavenger and the destroyer of your brother and the world alike.**

We all carry within us this horrid, horrid belief that we are the killer and everyone around us ought to watch out. We therefore try to pretend that we are civilized. Sometimes we try to pretend that we are nice, kind, sweet, and loving, but within us we are the scavengers; we are the cannibals stalking our prey, waiting to seize upon whatever our specialness demands. We are overwhelmed with guilt, and the more overwhelmed we are, the less we are aware of it. When we are unaware of guilt, we project it, and that just reinforces the secret dream.

**(T-27.VII.12:3) Here is the cause of suffering, the space between your little dreams and your reality.**

The cause of suffering is not the world's dream, not what happens to my body, not what happens within my body, not what my body does to other bodies. The cause of suffering is in the secret dream—the mind's belief it has sinned against God and has separated from Him. It is the gap, the separation between the little "s" self and the capital "S" Self, which I believe I have destroyed.

**(T-27.VII.12:4) The little gap you do not even see, the birthplace of illusions and of fear, the time of terror and of ancient hate, the instant of disaster, all are here** [not in the world].

The world's dream is nothing more or less than the projection of the sleeping dream, the secret dream in the mind. The cause of all suffering lies within the original dream.

**(T-27.VII.12:5-6) Here is the cause of unreality. And it is here that it will be undone.**

That last sentence is the most important of all: "And it is here that it will be undone." It will not be undone in the world. It makes no sense to try to change an unreal world, to try to correct a dream that does not exist. It is a projection of the dream that we believe exists, which is in the mind and has nothing whatsoever to do with the body. It is here that it will be undone. It will be in the secret dream that the answer is found. There is a wonderful line in the previous chapter of the text that says, "In crucifixion is redemption laid" (T-26.VII.17:1). The crucifixion of God's Son does not occur in the body. It did not occur on Calvary. It has nothing to do with what one reads in the New Testament. The crucifixion of God's Son is the secret dream, what we believe we did to Christ, and what we continually relive and project. We believe it is being relived, and we are the victims.

Again, the gap is the separation between my Christ Self and my ego self, the one mind and the split mind. That is when the tiny, mad idea is taken seriously. Basically it is the thought of separation made real. That is the gap, and that is the problem. Even more specifically, the problem is that my decision-making mind chose the ego's way of looking at that gap, the tiny, mad idea, as opposed to the Holy Spirit's. The ego's way of looking at that gap is to say it is sinful and it is serious. The Holy Spirit's way of looking at that gap is to say, what gap?—nothing happened. But within that little gap the entire world arose, because that little gap is the secret dream. That little gap taken seriously gets blown up into this monstrous thought that we destroyed Heaven, which then becomes so terrifyingly real that the only way to escape from the burden of guilt inherent in that thought is to project it and get rid of it.

Therefore, we make up a world that is nothing more than a little blip, a little thought in a gap that never even happened. But within that little gap, we believe everything has happened, and we believe everything is gargantuan, monstrous, and terrible. All the pain and suffering are found in that little gap, except there is no pain and suffering because there is no gap. Thus, the problem is that we believe there is a gap; we believe there is separation, and therefore that there is pain and suffering. So the problem is not the pain and suffering, and it is not the little gap or the separation. The problem is that we believe it is there. But that belief then gets so covered over with our guilt and fear, and then covered over by the world's dream, that there is no way of getting back to it, which is why time, as the manual says, winds on wearily (M-1.4:4-5). The world is getting very, very tired because we are just recycling the same hate and guilt, and nothing ever changes. Nothing will ever change, unless one gets past the world's dream to the secret dream.

It is most important to recognize how terrified we are of doing that, and how great our resistance is to moving past the world's dream to the secret dream. That is really one of the major points of this class. It is really important to get in touch with how resistant we are to doing that. That is why we think Jesus is talking about bodies, and why people think that Jesus wants people to bring this course into the world. What world? What world is there to save? That is the world's dream. The ego wants us to save the world. The ego loves it if people put spiritual books in every motel room. The ego wants us to believe bodies have to be saved, and the greater the number, the greater the salvation.

But the secret dream happens in one mind, and each of us is a fragment of that one mind. When our fragmentary mind is healed, we are that one mind that is healed, but the resistance to taking that step is enormous. And again, the reason for this discussion is to help people avoid making that mistake with this course. This is not about bodies; this is not about the world's dream. *A Course in Miracles* is part of the world's dream, where the source of this course is the happy dream in the mind we call by the name of Jesus. But the real source of this course is the thought of Love that is in everyone's mind. We give it a name because we think we have a name, so this course plays the game with us until it helps us realize that there is a truth beyond the game. And that truth is in the mind; it is not in the body. It is not in a set of pages and a group of words; it is not in a person who is said to be the author. That is a fairy tale. It is a nice fairy tale, very meaningful to us, but if you just stay with that and do not get beyond the symbol to the source, you make the world's dream real.

Remember, what the ego loves to do and is so expert at doing—almost better than anything else it does—is to spiritualize the world's dreams. It brings religion and spirituality into the world, into the body, into the presence of gurus, spiritual teachings, spiritual texts, holy places, holy books, holy relics—anything that makes the world and the body real, instead of seeing everything here, without exception, as a potential symbol that leads us back to the secret dream. The happy dream is the correction for the secret dream, so Jesus reinterprets the world's dream for us. He helps us understand it is a symbol, a projection of the secret dream. Once we get back to the secret dream of the wrong mind, we can then gain access to the right mind, because that is where Jesus is, and that is the happy dream. If you try to forgive the outer world, you are not doing anything. You are just rooting yourself in the outer world and you will never get back to the mind. As long as the mind is not healed, the mind's mistaken choice for the ego will never be looked at, and therefore will never be healed, which means our individual self will always be alive and well.

**Part VI**
***The Ending of the Dream***
***(The Gifts of God,*p. 119)**

I want to move along now by looking at a passage in "The Gifts of God," the prose poem found in the back of the volume of Helen's poetry called The Gifts of God. This material was originally a series of messages that came over a period of several weeks to comfort her during a time when she was going through tremendous anxiety and stress. We will look at the section called The Ending of the Dream, which was written during the second or third day of this trying time. What precipitated these messages was basically a non-event that ended within a day, but the messages continued. I collected and kept them, for they appeared to be all one piece. After Helen died, they were published as a prose poem (written as prose, but in blank verse).

As I mentioned earlier, this is a wonderful summary of the entire Course. The part we are going to discuss now has to do with the two dreams we have been discussing. We begin with the first dream, the mind's dream. This portion specifically addresses the mistake that I discussed briefly at the very beginning: confusing the happy dream with something external. This helps explain and elaborate on the idea as to why we do this.

The Ending of the Dream, The Gifts of God, the bottom of page 119:

**Illusions are made as substitutes for truth, for which no substitutes are possible.**

This is a way of saying that the tiny, mad idea of being separate from God was an attempt on our part to substitute for truth, but there can be no substitute for truth, which means there was no separation.

**Creator separate from creation was the first illusion, where all gifts of fear were born.**

All of the expressions of fear that we have, and have ever had since the beginning, are born in that original thought that creation can separate from its Creator; that ideas can leave their source.

**For now creation could not be like its Creator, Who could never leave what He Himself created part of Him.**

In other words, creation is now separate. It is no longer a part of Living Oneness; it is apart from Living Oneness. [Pardon the play on words.] If the Creator "could never leave what He Himself created part of Him," then the separation never happened.

**Now must there be a substitute for love, which cannot have an opposite in truth and, being all, can have no substitute.**

In the Course, the substitute for love is the special relationship. The original special relationship, and indeed the only special relationship, is our relationship with the ego. That is the original dream, the secret dream, and in reality, that is the only dream. All of our seeming special relationships here with each other as bodies are simply fragmentary projections into form of the original and only special relationship. That is the original substitute for love.

**So fear was made, and with it came the need for gifts to lend the substance to a dream in which there is no substance.**

This is the dream of sin, guilt, and fear. Our sin was that we substituted for love, making our own version, thereby destroying it. We were overwhelmed with guilt and believed we deserved to be punished. That was the birth of fear. This is the basis of the world's dream. The world's dream gives substance, form, and specificity to the original belief that we can substitute for love. As a result, we become afraid of retribution from love. Now we have "the need for gifts to lend the substance to a dream in which there is no substance." The world seems to prove the separation happened, because we are all separate—our bodies tell us we are separate. That is the substance referred to.

**Now the dream seems to have value, for its offerings appear as hope and strength and even love, if only for an instant.**

This is our old friend, special love. We seem to have our needs met. We seem to have these moments of ecstasy, pleasure, and satisfaction where everything falls into place. Our needs are met, and once again, we have proven we are right and God is wrong. Remember, the purpose of the dream is to prove that we are right, separation is true, God is wrong, and oneness is a lie. The world's dream seems to witness to this. That is why we are so invested in making this world work, in making this world a spiritual place, in bringing A Course in Miracles and Jesus into the world so it will become a spiritual place. We are invested in all this because it would mean we exist. We cover over our guilt with a veil of spirituality: I am so holy and so spiritual because I am A Course in Miracles student, or a student and devotee of the Bible. I am such a loyal Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, or whatever, where the original vision very quickly deteriorates into form, ritual, and specialness.

**They content the frightened dreamer for a little while . . .**

Our special love dreams content us for a little while because they seem to work. What also contents us for a while are our special hate dreams where we love to hate, judge, find fault, and criticize. We feel so good when we have identified and then destroyed the enemy, whether we do it as a head of state declaring war on another country or group, or we do it as individuals where we declare war on people in our families, our circle of friends, our colleagues at work, and so on. This is when the special dreams, the world's dreams, seem to work, and they seem, at least for awhile, to make us happy.

Now here is the key:

**. . . and let him not remember the first dream which gifts of fear but offer him again.**

Our specialness gifts of fear in this world offer us the secret dream, but we do not remember it. What is the core of the secret dream? The core is that we get to keep our separation but someone else gets blamed for it. In the secret dream, that someone is God—God is the heavy. Once we project that out, we keep our separate existence as a body, and then all the other bodies in our lives—beginning with our parents and then others all the way through our lives—are responsible for us. They are the ones—and it does not matter who "they" are—they are the ones responsible. We get to keep our ego's cake of separation, eat it, and enjoy it, but everyone else will die from its poison. This one sentence gives us the purpose of the world.

**The seeming solace of illusions' gifts**[specialness]**are now his armor and the sword he holds to save himself from waking.**

What happens if I awaken? The dream is gone; my self is gone, and I am back with the God I never left. What tells me that I am not back with God? The secret dream. What protects the secret dream? The world's dreams of specialness. Remember, purpose is everything. The world's dreams, our tremendous investment in the body and every aspect of bodily life (physical and/or psychological), are all about protecting the secret dream, which protects us from recognizing the fact that we never left home, because the secret dream keeps us from looking at the Atonement thought in our mind that tells us nothing happened.

**For before he could awaken, he would first be forced to call to mind the first dream once again.**

Somewhere inside ourselves we recognize that the only way we can return home and awaken from this dream is to get back to that secret dream. We swore to the ego, to ourselves, that we would never do that, because if we look at that first dream with Jesus next to us, we will recognize there is no dream. It was all made up. It was nothing, and behind the nothingness of the ego is the shining light of the Atonement, and behind that is the Oneness of God. Accepting the shining light of the Atonement is the real world, not to be equated with the happy dream. The happy dreams are the stepping-stones toward the real world. They get us closer and closer to the Atonement. And as the Course says, we are in the real world but an instant, and then God reaches down and lifts us back unto Himself and everything is over (see T-17.II.4:4-5).

**It is not God Who asks a price of him . . .**

God does not believe in sacrifice. We do not have to suffer. We do not have to pay God back. Looking at the secret dream does not have to be painful.

**. . . but having drawn a veil across the truth, he**[all of us]**now must let the veil be drawn away so that its lack of substance can be seen.**

That is the happy dream. The happy dream is looking at the nightmare dream and realizing it is a dream. Do not confuse it with anything external. The world's dreams mask the secret dream. Jesus takes our experiences of the world's dreams—our bodily experiences and our special relationships—and uses them as a way of teaching us that they are but symbols and shadowy fragments of the secret dream. He brings us back within. That is what he does in this course. He just lifts the veil that the ego let fall between us and the mind so that we can look.

When you ask Jesus for help, that is what you are asking for—not for him to fix the dream or to make the dream better, and not to make you happier here in the illusion. You are asking him to help you lift the veil so you can look without fear at what the external dream is masking, which is the secret dream. When you look at that with his love beside you, you look beyond it to the light of the Atonement. But you cannot get to the light of the Atonement, recognizing that the separation never happened, without first looking at what you put there to conceal it. We are extremely terrified of that. That is why we need small steps. That is why we need the happy, gentle dreams that gradually, step by step, lead us from the state of mindlessness to the mind.

**Part VII**
**The Ending of the Dream (cont.)**

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

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

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

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

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

Unfortunately, as I have been saying, that is what many Course students do with this course. They want to make the world a better place. They want to make the dream better. They want to find hope in the world. Thus they would say how wonderful it finally is that A Course in Miracles came into the world. Now there is hope! If this is what you are thinking, you are not talking about A Course in Miracles. There is no hope in this world! There is no hope of making this a better dream. Why do you want to make a dream better when Jesus is asking us to let him help us awaken from the dream?

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

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

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

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

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

This course is all about seeing the oneness of God's Son, so what do Course students do? They make divisions and separations, they attack and they judge, all in the name of A Course in Miracles. No different from what two thousand years of Christianity has done. This is what keeps us in the dream. It is very important to understand the dynamics of this so we can begin to see in our everyday lives the resistance we have to learning and practicing what this course is teaching us. It will always help to keep uppermost in our minds that the purpose of this course is for Jesus to lead us on a journey from mindlessness to mindfulness. Mindlessness is anything to do with the body and the world, anything to do with separation or separate interests. This book is separate. It is the content of this book that we want, not the form. It is the content of Jesus that we want, not the form of his person, not his individual identity. The content of Jesus is the love that we all are, of which he is just a symbol. We need to always move from the symbol to the source, from the form to the content, from the world's dream to the secret dream to the happy dream.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Part VIII**
**"The Dreamer of the Dream" (cont.)**

Now back to "The Dreamer of the Dream" in the text:

**(T-27.VII.13:1-2) You are the dreamer of the world of dreams. No other cause it has, nor ever will.**

Note that the word "you" is italicized: "You are the dreamer." The you is the dreamer, not the dream figure. The dream figure is the person we think we are—the name we give ourselves, the bodies that we experience and perceive, etc. The you is the dreamer, the decision-making part of the mind. In other words, the world does not come from itself—the world is not its own beginning and its own ending. It is literally the projection of our mind—just as when we sleep at night, the dreams we have are literally the projections of our brains. They have no reality outside of that.

Here Jesus refers to the secret dream once again:

**(T-27.VII.13:3) Nothing more fearful than an idle dream has terrified God's Son, and made him think that he has lost his innocence, denied his Father, and made war upon himself.**

The use of the adjective "idle" is telling us that nothing is really happening. When we say something idles, we mean it is not going anywhere. If a car engine is running but it is not in gear, we say the car is idling—it doesn't go anywhere. Our mind's "engine" may be running, joining with the ego, but it does not go anywhere. Nothing happens. We never left Heaven. Thus, the secret dream of sin, guilt, and fear is an idle dream.

**(T-27.VII.13:4-5) So fearful is the dream, so seeming real, he could not waken to reality without the sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear, unless a gentler dream preceded his awaking, and allowed his calmer mind to welcome, not to fear, the Voice that calls with love to waken him; a gentler dream, in which his suffering was healed and where his brother was his friend. God willed he waken gently and with joy, and gave him means to waken without fear.**

Jesus is describing the happy dream. We cannot go from nightmares to awakening because, as Jesus is explaining here, that would lead to "a sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear." The ego tells us that if we go back to God, He will destroy us. It is this fear of God's wrath that continually impels us to maintain a perpetual state of mindlessness. The way we preserve ourselves from certain destruction at the hands of God is to leave the mind, totally forgetting once we are in the world that we die here too. But since we forgot how we ended up here, we forgot that the ego told us to be here. This is why the ego's defenses are so important to understand—they work incredibly well. Since we forgot we have a mind, we have no memory of how we got here, which is that we listened to the ego's counsel: Leave your mind because God will destroy you. Go to the world and the body, and He will not destroy you.

Well, then we end up in the world and the body, and guess what? We get destroyed. But by this time, we have forgotten the secret dream, so that we are just here and have to make the best of it. Then we make up all kinds of fairy tales. We say, for example, that there is an afterlife, so we die but we do not really die. The bad people die, and they go to hell. But they do not really die either—they just get punished with everlasting hell while we enjoy eternal bliss. There is also the notion of many lives: I die but I come back, and come back, and come back. Isn't that wonderful!

It is not that these concepts may not be helpful, but they are all illusory. How could we come back to a place we were never in in the first place? Ideas leave not their source. The idea of God's separated Son has never left its source in the mind. We are not even in a body, so whether we live one lifetime or a thousand lifetimes, or there is an afterlife, it is all the same. It is not even an afterlife, it is an after non-life. What is the big deal about an after non-life? It is non-life after non-life that is a result of non-life. That is all this is, but we make up stories because we are so terrified.

Jesus makes up a story too, but his is a kind, gentle story: He says God loves us. He is not angry. Yes, God knows we left home and we separated, but He does not hold a grudge. He is not upset. God did not create the Holy Spirit to seduce us back to Heaven so He could destroy us. God loves us so much. He misses us, and is lonely without us. He cries without us; He weeps. He longs for us. He wants us back home. Well, this is all made up, but it is a nice, gentle story and it corrects the ego's dream of sin, guilt, and fear. Sin, guilt, and fear are all predicated on God's wrath because we attacked Him. Jesus' fairy tale, and it is a fairy tale, is that we did not attack God. Nothing really happened. Daddy is not angry, and the Holy Spirit is your Friend.

That starts the process of learning to forgive ourselves for what we did not do. Since what we did with what we believe we have done is project it onto others, our journey begins with our getting a different perception of them with a different teacher. In other words, we withdraw all the projections of our guilt that we put on others. We recognize that our external dream in which other people are the victimizers and abusers, at whose hands we suffered, is the world's dream. And the world's dream is the projection of the secret dream wherein we believe we are the murderers, scavengers, sinners, betrayers, and abandoners. But we now have a loving presence in our minds that is not fearful, not angry—a loving presence that tells us we made it all up. At the very end, therefore, we realize the ego's nightmare is made up, but the happy dream is made up too, and so both disappear, and all that is left is reality.

**(T-27.VII.14:1) Accept the dream He gave instead of yours.**

That is the dream that God gave (although it is not really God Who gives it). That is the happy dream. It is still a dream, but it is a happy dream, a dream of forgiveness.

**(T-27.VII.14:2) It is not difficult to change a dream when once the dreamer has been recognized.**

This is another very important line. What this is talking about is the process of lifting the veil of amnesia so that we recognize we are not a body but the mind that is a dreamer. The Christ Mind does not dream, but the split mind does. That is all it is: a dreamer. It is not difficult to change dreams once we realize we are the dreamer, and then we see clearly what the choices are. As the text says earlier, "Who with the Love of God upholding him could find the choice of miracles or murder hard to make?" (T-23.IV.9:8).

When you know you are the dreamer, and one dream is a dream of murder and the other dream a dream of a miracle, it is a no-brainer, a "no-minder." It's easy. But you have to know you are the dreamer. The resistance to that is enormous. I cannot say it often enough. That is what you have to recognize; otherwise you will get so off track with this course so quickly, and you will be sure you are right because you will quote chapter and verse and you will not understand a word that you are quoting. You must understand your resistance to realizing you are the dreamer, not the dream figure. You are a mind, not the body. Jesus is not talking to you as a person, by name, using words. He is a thought of love in your mind that is a light, which by its very presence just calls you to remember that you are the light also. This course is appealing to the decision maker, to the dreamer. Thus, from "Reversing Effect and Cause" in the next chapter:

**(T-28.II.7:1-3) The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions. No one is afraid of them when he perceives he made them up.**

Remember what this book is called: A Course in Miracles. "The miracle establishes you dream a dream." You are the dreamer, and what you are dreaming is not true. "This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions." What is the crucial step? Realizing that you are the dreamer. That is why this is a course in mindfulness, correcting the ego's mindlessness. Just keep that in mind and you will always be on the straight and narrow with this course.

This is never about the body. It is never about the world. It is never about your personality. It is never about your special relationship with another body. That is the context because that is where we think we are. Therefore Jesus uses the language of the dream to move us to the dreamer of the dream. No one is afraid of illusions. No one is afraid of all the dreams of the world. This is the same point that Jesus made in "The Gifts of God," as we saw earlier. Sentence 3 again:

**(T-28.II.7:3) No one is afraid of them** [illusions] **when he perceives he made them up.**

If I know there are no monsters out there, that I made them up, what is there to be afraid of? It is when we forget we made them up that we become afraid. When we forget that this is our dream, we become afraid of cancer, nuclear war, and pollution; we become afraid of all the bad guys out there, and of all the abusing people in our lives. We are all dying of cancer. It is mind cancer; it is the cancer of believing in separation. That is what you want to focus on, because that is the killer. That is where death comes from, but we focus on the body and on the diseases of the body. We keep focusing on building up the body's immune system, which is not a bad thing to do if you are a body, but we forget about the mind's immune system. That is the problem. The Atonement is the mind's immune system. That is what you want to build up; that is what you want to identify with.

**Part IX**
**"The Dreamer of the Dream" (cont.)**

Back to "The Dreamer of the Dream," paragraph 14:

**(T-27.VII.14:3) Rest in the Holy Spirit, and allow His gentle dreams** [the happy dreams] **to take the place of those you dreamed in terror and in fear of death.**

How do we rest in the Holy Spirit? We rest in the Holy Spirit by firing the ego, because it is one or the other. We do not choose the Holy Spirit until we first fire the ego. There are two lines in the text that I always like to bring together even though they occur several hundred pages apart: resign now as your own teacher, for you have been badly taught (T-12.V.8:3; T-28.I.7:1). We first have to resign as our own teacher recognizing we have taught ourselves badly before we can accept Jesus as our teacher. In this course, the way we say "yes" to the Holy Spirit is to say "no" to the ego. To say "yes" is to say "not no" (T-21.VII.12:3-4). Our task, Jesus tells us, is "to deny the denial of truth" (T-12.II.1:5). He does not say our task is to affirm truth.

The way we choose the true teacher is to look at the false teacher and say, I do not want to listen to you anymore. That is what it means to be in one's right mind, and that is what the happy dream is. It is looking at the nightmare and happily saying, I do not have to listen to you anymore. What could make us happier than to look at all of our nightmares, all of our tales of abuse, guilt, pain, anxiety, and terror; all of our concerns, preoccupations, and obsessions, and say we do not have to listen to them anymore, and meanit? That is how we rest in the Holy Spirit. We cannot rest in the Holy Spirit with our ego. Yet that is what everyone wants to do. That is the compromise game everyone plays with God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and, unfortunately, with this course.

It makes no sense and it is totally meaningless to talk about a happy dream unless we first talk about what it is intended to correct. It is intended to correct the ego's dreams of terror, cruelty, pain, suffering, guilt, and death, which means we must first get in touch with our ego's dreams. How do we do that? We pay attention to our world's dreams, to what our body is dreaming—not at night, necessarily, but what we are dreaming every day, all of our specialness thoughts. Asking Jesus for help in that context means asking him to help us look at them a different way, and the way he helps us look is by reminding us they are projections of what is in the mind. As he tells us in Chapter 21, they are "the outside picture of an inward condition" (T-21.in.1:5).

That is what asking Jesus for help in our relationships is about. It is not asking that he fix our relationships, not that he tell us what to say or what to do, or where to go to get a job, or what lottery number to choose, or what stock to invest in. He does not know about any of those things. As I always like to tell people, Jesus cannot count past one. So don't ask him to tell you how much money you should make, where you should go, what lottery number you should pick, or what horse you should bet on (unless it is number one!). He does not know about specificity. He knows only about the oneness of God's Son, and so the oneness that his love represents automatically knits together all the fragments and makes them one. And what does that mean? It means realizing everyone here is the same: the abusers and the abused, the oppressors and the oppressed, the good guys and the bad guys. They all have the same split mind. They have the same ego, the same right mind—the Holy Spirit—and the same decision maker. Everyone without exception, that is the key. Learning that is the happy dream. But we first look at our ego's need and our investment in seeing separation, and in seeing special and separate interests.

**(T-27.VII.14:4) He brings forgiving dreams, in which the choice is not who is the murderer and who shall be the victim.**

That is the ego's dream. Who is going to win? Who is going to lose? Who is going to Heaven? Who is going to hell? Who is the real Course in Miracles student and who is not? Who is studying A Course in Miraclescorrectly and who is not? It is not either-or.

**(T-27.VII.14:5) In the dreams He brings there is no murder and there is no death.**

There is no winner, and there is no loser. There is only one; there is only oneness. How could there be a winner and a loser if there is only one? That means if I see you as a loser, I must be a loser too, because there is only one, which translates into sameness in this world of multiplicity. We are the same. If I make you the villain, if I make you the bad guy, if I make you "the home of evil, darkness and sin" and we are one, meaning we are the same here, then I am saying the same thing about myself.

If, on the other hand, I recognize that your ego is really a call for help, and that underlying all your hatred and your merciless cruelty is a little voice plaintively crying out, "Please show me I am wrong; please show me I do not have to do this in order to survive; please show me that I am loved despite the despicable person I have become," I will hear the same plaintive cry in myself. Whatever it is we see in another, we see in ourselves, because there is no other. But because we think there are others, we have to practice. So we practice in all of our relationships, beginning the process of learning that in the end we are all the same, and beyond our inherent sameness is our inherent oneness. As I was saying before, we are all fragments of the one split mind, and recognizing this helps us finally to awaken to the truth that we are all one as Christ. It is the forgiving dream, the happy dream of the Holy Spirit that leads us gently and surely down that path.

**(T-27.VII.14:6) The dream of guilt is fading from your sight, although your eyes are closed.**

We have not awakened yet, but we are on the journey to awakening. We still perceive separate bodies. We still believe we have separate relationships. We still believe there are situations in life, and that some are good and some are bad. We still believe the body changes and grows older. We still believe that one day our own body and the bodies of our loved ones will die. We are still asleep, but we are beginning to realize that all the figures in our dreams are the same. That is the key.

We are not asked to open our eyes because the light, the ego tells us, would blind us. The ego tells us not to look within because if we do, our eyes will light on sin and God will strike us blind (T-21.IV.2:3), which is a nice way of saying God will destroy us. We do not open our eyes yet because we have to learn first that the light is our friend. Indeed, the light is our Self, which means we have to learn to gradually de-invest in this self, because as long as we value this self, disappearing into the one Self of God is too terrifying. So we still keep our eyes closed, but we begin to open them just a little so that some light filters through. That is the light that teaches us we are all the same. Our closed eyes and our dreams still perceive differences because bodies are different. But our healing mind begins to understand that the differences do not make a difference, and that despite all of the perceptual differences our eyes show us, it is our mind's perception that says we are all the same.

We do not deny what the body says. We do not deny what our body sees, hears, smells, or tastes. We deny only the ego's interpretation. The Holy Spirit does not take away our dreams. He does not take away the figures in our dreams or our relationships with these figures. He gives us a different way of looking at them. That is the transformation. Thus, I am still in relationship with you, but now I am beginning to see that we are alike. My ego is your ego, the same ego. The correction of the Holy Spirit in me is the same as in you, and we both have the power to choose. We both are terrified of exercising that power to choose because of the little hateful voice that continually whispers, "If you get back to that power to choose, guess what? You are going to misuse it again. You are going to attack; you are going to indulge your selfish, self-centered needs and appropriate someone else's love and someone else's self and make it your own. Therefore, do not go anywhere near the power of your mind, because if you do, you will sin again."

And so we continue to make ourselves mindless, and we begin to see that is what everyone does. What's the big deal? After a while, all these dreams become boring because they are all the same. You know, you get some artists or writers who are not very inspired, and every painting, story, play, and movie is the same. You get hack composers and every composition is the same—boring. Well, in a right-minded sense, that is how we should begin to see our lives. Everything is the same. It will not be boring, however, because we will recognize that seeing everyone as the same is the stepping-stone toward helping us awaken from the dream. That is not boring, because now the purpose of our life here has changed markedly. It is not to get what we can or to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. It is to choose these happy dreams of forgiveness that will lead us further and further along, until one day we will not be afraid of the light, and we can open our eyes and realize we are not in our beds. We are at home in God. We were only dreaming of exile, and the dream is over.

**(T-27.VII.14:6-8) The dream of guilt is fading from your sight, although your eyes are closed. A smile has come to lighten up your sleeping face. The sleep is peaceful now, for these are happy dreams.**

We are still asleep; we are still in a body. Jesus is not saying we have to suddenly leave everything. He is not taking anything away from us. He is not taking our family, our pleasures, or our preferences away from us. He is just helping us recognize that everything and everyone here is the same. We are still asleep, but "a smile has come to lighten up your sleeping face." We can understand "lighten" in two ways: "lighten" in the sense of light or illumination, which ends the darkness, or in the sense of no longer carrying this heavy burden of guilt around with us. We are still asleep, but it is peaceful now. Nothing has changed except our recognition that we are the dreamer. Again, "The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true" (T-28.II.7:1).

This would seem boring only if we think peace and love are boring. To the ego this would be boring because the ego thrives on drama. Just think of the original separation thought. That is high drama. That is the stuff that mini-series are made of, right? We destroyed God and now God is coming after us. That is big-time stuff. The Bible is heavy drama, which is why it is such a popular book. It is a tremendous myth, and from the ego's point of view, anything other than that is boring. But from the right-minded point of view, this is tremendously joyful because this is what is going to lead us out of here, and at a pace that is gentle, kind, and patient, a pace that we are comfortable with. That is what is lovely and loving about this course.

Jesus is authoritative about what the truth is and what it is not; there is no room for discussion, but he is gentle, kind, and patient. He is saying that all of this is a dream, all of it is made up, but he is going to teach us to rest and sleep more comfortably until we are ready to open our eyes, and then everything will be over. So this peaceful sleep in which we dream that everyone is the same is not boring. It becomes wonderfully joyful because there is no longer any guilt. But to the ego looking in on it, of course it is boring because it is all even. We all thrive on the ups and downs, the highs and the lows. That is what makes for great drama, right? That is what captures our interest.

If we discover we actually do thrive on such chaos, we can get out of it by recognizing that it has not made us happy—that has to come first. Early in the text Jesus says (which is reminiscent of what happened with Helen and Bill originally), "Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way" (T-2.III.3:5-6). Everyone has a threshold of pain, and when we cross that threshold, we recognize that this does not pay us anymore; nothing works. The highs are great, but the lows are awful, and we begin to see we cannot have the highs without the lows. "What goes up must come down," so we need to recognize that our lives do not work. In Chapter 14, there is a somewhat parallel section called "The Happy Learner," which begins by Jesus saying the Holy Spirit needs us to recognize how miserable we are:

"The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery is happiness" (T-14.II.1:1-3).

Until we recognize how miserable we are and that our lives of special relationships have not worked for us, we will not be motivated to let them go and ask him for help. Therefore, what Jesus has to do is wait patiently in the wings until we get tired of the theater and the drama, and finally go to him and say: "You know, there must be another play. There must be another set of actors. There must be another playwright, because this is not working anymore. It is too painful." What he tries to do in this course is convince us of how miserably unhappy we are. That is why if you think your life is working for you, don't study this course. Save your money, because this course is for people who believe their lives are notworking, who are fed up with their dream and want to be taught something else. And, of course, what we are taught is that our dream—the world's dream—is a mirror of the secret dream, which is a defense against our choosing the Atonement.

**Part X**
**Conclusion**

**Q:** I feel as if I connect with what you are saying and agree with it, but I don't like it. . . . What is keeping me from just getting on with opening my eyes? If we all feel that way, why are we here?

**K:** It is because there is a part of us that likes being the figure in the dream, for the same reason that we believe we left Heaven at the beginning: we wanted to be on our own. There is a wonderful line in the text in Chapter 13, which means it comes before the discussion of special relationships that does not start until Chapter 15. The word *special* is used. Jesus says:

"You were at peace until you asked for special favor. And God did not give it for the request was alien to Him, and you could not ask this of a Father Who truly loved His Son. Therefore you made of Him an unloving father, demanding of Him what only such a father could give" (T-13.III.10:2-4).

The special favor we demanded of God was that He pay attention to us, that He notice us. I am an individual! I am a person! I am an entity! Pay attention to me! And God just looked right through, because there was nothing there to see. Now all of this is mythological. It does not mean it happened that way, but that is the content of our wanting to be separate. We wanted to be individuals. We wanted to be unique. We wanted to be special, which is impossible in Heaven. Perfect oneness, totality, and wholeness cannot have differentiation. One of the ways of describing Christ is that He is undivided, undifferentiated Oneness. There is no distinctiveness in Heaven.

Well, that is what we like. So here we are as distinct, special, unique, differentiated individuals studying a course that teaches us all this is made up and we are really part of perfect Oneness. And we say, as we used to say in the sixties [1960s]: "Hell no, I won't go! I want a Heaven that notices me! Remember, God? That is what got me into trouble in the first place. I am going to do it all over again. I want special favor. I want to be noticed!" And Jesus says, "Sorry, guy. God cannot notice you because there is no 'you' to notice." So we say: "All right, to hell with you, Jesus. I am going to make up another Jesus. I am going to make up a Jesus who tells me that every hair on my head is counted. I am going to make up a Jesus that tells me God loves me more than the lilies of the field. I am going to make up a God Who created me. I am going to make up a God Who gets furious at me, which means there is a *me*. I am going to get a God Who feels merciful. On alternate Tuesdays, He is merciful, and then He forgives me. Watch out for Thursdays. That is when He destroys you. But that is a God Who at least notices me."

So we like that Jesus; we like that God. That is what we do. We bring Jesus and God into the dream so They become woven into the dream. In *The Ending of the Dream* that I have been reading from Jesus says, "I am not a dream that comes in mockery" (*The Gifts of God*, p.121). Now what is he saying? He is saying he is not the biblical Jesus we thought of, who is part of our dream, who mocks his reality as Christ, as spirit. "I am not a dream that comes in mockery." I am not part of your dream—don't make me part of your dream. That is what people do with this course. They make Jesus part of the dream. Why? Because they want to be noticed. They want a Jesus who notices them. They like the idea of a God Who weeps over them, even though that obviously is symbolic and is not to be taken literally. They like a God Who misses them, Who is lonely without them. They like a Jesus who is a loving, older brother who is always there for them day in and day out, and continually infantilizes them so they never grow up, even though he tells them he wants them to become like him. We are all terrified of leaving the dream. We are terrified of ceasing to be who we are.

**. . . . . . .**

**Q:** I do not feel terrified. So why am I still here?

**K:** If you think you are still here, there must be an unconscious part of you that likes being you. This may not be a bad thing—you are a lovely person, I'm sure. But you are still a person, and we like to be persons. That is the bottom line, I'm afraid. But again, we do not have to leap from separation into oneness. We do not have to leap from personhood into Christ. The happy dream consists of the little steps we take in recognizing we are all the same. Everyone in this room has the same right mind, the same wrong mind, and the same decision maker. Everyone on this planet, everyone in the universe, every*thing* in the universe has a right mind, a wrong mind, and a decision maker. By learning that, we begin to become less frightened and less identified with our individual uniqueness. If we are all alike, no one is special. That is a thought we can at least begin to identify with, or at least think about.

It is still a little frightening because we really do not want to let go of our judgments quite yet, but at least we can begin to see we do not have to leap into Heaven. We can have a reflection of Heaven here, which is the happy dream, by realizing no one here is distinctive or special, despite the outward appearances, because we all have the same mind. "All my brothers are special," Jesus says (T-1.V.3:6). All God's Sons are special, which means the word "special" loses its meaning.

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**Q:** You said not to bring Jesus into the dream. There is a lesson in the Course that says I do not know what is in my best interest (W-pI.24). So I always thought I don't know what is best for me, like where to live or what job is best for me. I always thought that I was taught that it is okay to ask if I do not know what is in my best interest.

**K:** Yes, it is okay to ask. There is nothing wrong in asking. In *The Song of Prayer* pamphlet in the section called "The Ladder of Prayer" (S-1.II), asking for specifics is said to be the bottom rung of the ladder. There is nothing wrong with that, because at least we are on the right ladder with the right teacher. But if that is all we ever do, we end up only on the first or the second rung, and the whole point of what Jesus is saying is that we do not want the specific parts of the song. We do not want the echoes, the overtones, or the harmonics; we want the whole song. We do not want to ascend just one or two rungs. We want to go to the very top. But if we keep demanding that we have specific needs and that we want the Holy Spirit or Jesus to meet those specific needs, we are only going to stay at the bottom rung of the ladder, never learning that the real best interest we do not know we have is choosing the Holy Spirit, ultimately to be led to the top.

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**Q:** I have seen through this session this temptation of wanting to tinker with the form in me. The miracle looks at content and does not look at the form. Would you say that all you have to do is look with Jesus and say the content isn't true? The form can go on being the form and may never change . . . I recognize a thought as something that will get me into trouble and then I start to tinker with the thought, rather than say the content isn't true.

**K:** Right. Don't tinker with the thought, just tickle it. So instead of tinker, tickle—two-syllable words that start with "t." Tickling the thought is remembering to laugh at it. Tinkering with it is saying it is serious and we have to do something about it, at which point nothing we do will work.

In other words, what a lot of people have done with this course is simply substitute the ego for the devil and say the ego is bad: "That's the ego! Watch the ego!" This makes it into a big deal. So tickle therapy is very good. Remember, what the ego wants more than anything else is to be taken seriously.

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I want to go back to *The Gifts of God* at the end of the section we have been discussing. I will read the last two paragraphs of "The Ending of the Dream," page 122. The whole section is really wonderful, but the end of it is particularly beautiful and is a wonderful way of summarizing everything we have been discussing about moving from the world's dream to the first dream and looking at it with Jesus, which then turns it into a happy dream, and then moving beyond the dream entirely when we return home to the God we never left:

"There is a silence covering the world that was an ancient dream so long ago no one remembers now. Its time is done, and in the little space it seemed to own is nothingness. The dream has gone, and all its dreams of gifts have disappeared as well. The first dream has been seen and understood for merely an illusion of the fear on which the world was based. Beyond the dream, reaching to everything, embracing all, creation and Creator still remain in perfect harmony and perfect love. This is beyond the gate at which we stand. And shall we stay to wait upon a dream?

Your holiness is mine, and mine is God's. Here is His gift, complete and undefiled. It is Himself He gives, and it is this that is the truth in you. How beautiful are you who stand beside me at the gate, and call with me that everyone may come and step aside from time. Put out your hand to touch eternity and disappear into its perfect rest. Here is the peace that God intended for the Son He loves. Enter with me and let its quietness cover the earth forever. It is done. Father, your Voice has called us home at last: Gone is the dream. Awake, My child, in love."