

Chapter 20

The Vision of Holiness

Chapter 19 was kind of weighty. It included some of the most extreme language in the Course, talking about *the hungry dogs of fear* and *the savage search for sin*. Chapter 20 is a bit lighter, though it still points out what an insane world it is that we have made and then how we unsuccessfully try to adjust to sin as our everyday reality. On the more positive side, Chapter 20 also speaks of the *power of the mind*, *right-minded thinking*, *vision*, *forgiveness*, the importance of *decision making*, the importance of *purpose* (one of Ken's favorite themes), and *the difference between the ego's and the Holy Spirit's use of the body*.

To communicate is to join and to attack is to separate.

*How can you do both simultaneously
with the same thing and not suffer?*

T-8.VII.12:1-2

The only "proper" use of the body is for communication.

*Remember that the Holy Spirit interprets the body
only as a means of communication.*

*Being the Communication Link between God
and His separated Sons, the Holy Spirit interprets
everything you have made in the light of what He is.*

The ego separates through the body.

The Holy Spirit reaches through it to others.

T-8.VII.2:1-4

I. Holy Week

This week we celebrate life, not death.

And we honor the perfect purity of the Son of God, and not his sins.

***Offer your brother the gift of lilies, not the crown of thorns;
the gift of love and not the "gift" of fear.***

***You stand beside your brother, thorns in one hand and lilies in the
other, uncertain which to give.***

***Join now with me and throw away the thorns,
offering the lilies to replace them.***

***This Easter I would have the gift of your forgiveness
offered by you to me, and returned by me to you.***

T-20.I.2:1-8

*Easter is not the celebration of the cost of sin, but of its end.
If you see glimpses of the face of Christ behind the veil,
looking between the snow-white petals of the lilies
you have received and given as your gift,
you will behold your brother's face and recognize it.*

*I was a stranger and you took me in, not knowing who I was.
Yet for your gift of lilies you will know.*

*In your forgiveness of this stranger, alien to you and yet your ancient
Friend, lies his release and your redemption with him.*

*The time of Easter is a time of joy, and not of mourning.
Look on your risen Friend,
and celebrate his holiness along with me.*

For Easter is the time of your salvation, along with mine.
T-20.I.4:1-8

Jesus tells us that as we recognize the innocence in our brother so will we recognize him. When Jesus says *when I awoke from the dream of death you were there with me* (T-12.II.7:2), he means that we have all already awakened from the dream of death (illusion). It is in the awakening from the dream of death that we realize that we are all one. The ego, on the other hand, believes in separation and sees everyone else as different from us.

II. The Gift of Lilies

*Look upon all the trinkets made to hang upon the body,
or to cover it or for its use. See all the useless things made for its eyes
to see. Think on the many offerings made for its pleasure, and
remember all these were made to make seem lovely what you hate.*

*Would you employ this hated thing to draw your brother to you,
and to attract his body's eyes? Learn you but offer him a crown
of thorns, not recognizing it for what it is, and trying to justify
your own interpretation of its value by his acceptance.*

*Yet still the gift proclaims his worthlessness to you,
as his acceptance and delight acknowledges
the lack of value he places on himself.*

T-20.II.1:1-6

*It will adorn its chosen home most carefully, making it ready to
receive the gifts it wants by offering them to those who come unto its
chosen home, or those it would attract to it.*

Vision, a Miracle, and Forgiveness are all the same thing.

It simply means that there is a correct means of seeing. Our vision is then changed into happy dreams. We awaken slowly – shifting from nightmares to happy dreams.

*These gentle sights and sounds are looked on happily,
and heard with joy.*

*They are His substitutes for all the terrifying sights and screaming
sounds the ego's purpose brought to your horrified awareness.*

*They step away from sin, reminding you that it is not reality which
frightens you, and that the errors which you made can be corrected.*

T-20.VIII.10:5-7

The problem is never the sin in someone else. The problem is the misperception in my mind. It is unlike that when I forgive. The external world will not change in any way, whatsoever.

*When you have looked on what seemed terrifying,
and seen it change to sights of loveliness and peace;
when you have looked on scenes of violence and death,
and watched them change to quiet views of gardens under open skies,
with clear, life-giving water running happily beside them
in dancing brooks that never waste away;
who need persuade you to accept the gift of vision?
And after vision, who is there who could refuse what must come
after? Think but an instant just on this;
you can behold the holiness God gave His Son.*

And never need you think that there is something else for you to see.

T-20.VIII.11:1-4

The above is all a metaphor. Jesus is not speaking of some actual place or event. He is talking about an experience, using concrete terms. The minute we can change teachers, the desert starts to bloom. All that is being described is a shift in perception that is the result of our choosing a new way of seeing. It is by changing what the mind wants (wishes) (desires) that everything changes.

*What I see in my mind is what I see in the world
and there is no world outside of my mind.*

Amen -- Jon

*each different and with different values. Yet they are all the same.
Again there is no order; only a seeming hierarchy of values.*

T-20.VIII.8:6-10

Every problem in this world is the same problem. We have chosen the ego and failed to recognize the Holy Spirit's offering of the Atonement – i.e., the separation never happened and we are still Home in God.

Only two purposes are possible.

And one is sin, the other holiness.

Nothing is in between,

and which you choose determines what you see.

It still is true that nothing is without.

Yet upon nothing are all projections made.

For it is the projection that gives the "nothing"

all the meaning that it holds.

T-20.VIII.9:1-3 & 7-9

If I get upset or feel like attacking someone, I need to remember I am the one who is seeing the problem. This does not mean there is no problem – objectively speaking. A student called me one day upset over how much another student had dominated a previous class discussion. It was true that the other student had talked a lot in a previous class. Still, I tried to help the student who had called me to try to understand why she was so upset. The ego always empathize problems. The ego cannot let things be as they are. As long as I am holding on to **an unforgiving thought, it protects the projection.** Remember, we always look within first before we look outside.

What has no meaning cannot be perceived.

And meaning always looks within to find itself, and then looks out.

All meaning that you give the world outside

must thus reflect the sight you saw within; or better,

if you saw at all or merely judged against.

T-20.VIII.10:1-3

Vision is the means by which the Holy Spirit translates your nightmares into happy dreams; your wild hallucinations that show

you all the fearful outcomes of imagined sin into the calm and reassuring sights with which He would replace them.

T-20.VIII.10:4

*And there they will exchange their gifts,
offering and receiving what their minds judge to be worthy of them.*

T-20.II.2:1-6

Always, always, always, the mind is the cause. The body is the affect. Do we want the gift of forgiveness or the gift of guilt?

If I offer you guilt by attacking you then I want guilt.

If I offer forgiveness – that is what I want.

Acceptance or Does Difference make a Difference

One of the things we learn as we get older is that some of the things we thought were important are not so important. If I see a *difference* in a brother and I think that my brother has sinned, then it is inside me. When we don't see our differences as different, then we are set free.

Offer him (your brother) thorns and you are crucified.

Offer him lilies and it is yourself you free.

T-20.II.3:1-9

Offer our condemnation, our judgment, our attack thoughts and we crucify ourselves. Offer (lilies) forgiveness and we are set free. Everything we give is given back to us — and even more “good measure — pressed down and running over.

Give, and it shall be given unto you;

good measure, pressed down, and shaken together,

*and running over. For with the same measure that you
give it shall be given to you again.*

Luke 6:38

It is our attitude – the way we see, think, and thus, behave which determines everything. Thus it is that as we attack our brothers, so it is that we are attacking (crucifying) ourselves. We crucify ourselves insofar as there is no difference between us; therefore, in attacking my brother I am inevitably attacking myself.

We withhold forgiveness from ourselves by not forgiving our brothers and sisters. This reflects a line from Matthew where Jesus says, “*What you have done unto the least of these my brethren, you have done unto me.*” That is because we are all one.

*For he who offers thorns to anyone is against me still,
and who is whole without him?*

*Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven
and you may look upon the Son of God as whole.*

T-20.II.4:3-4

In the last judgment, we are all saved because there is just one of us here. No one is excluded. To exclude anyone is to condemn the entire Sonship. While our forgiveness may be directed toward a single individual, it inevitably includes everyone and this we discover by actually forgiving. **As I let my grievance against anyone go, so am I made whole. It is then possible to see that I can forgive anyone because I have been able to let go of my condemnation of one toward whom I held a major grievance.**

This is a remarkable quality of how forgiveness works. *When we let go of a grievance against anyone, we realize that we can release our grievances against everyone. This is the way the process of forgiveness works;* otherwise, it is not forgiveness. All of this occurs only within the mind. It may find some form of expression in the world – yet, it remains only in the mind. The thorns are gone when we realize there is no separation. It actually never happened.

*But look you first upon the altar in your chosen home,
and see what you have laid upon it to offer me.*

*If it be thorns whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light,
the body is your chosen home and it is separation that you offer me.*

T-20.II.4:5-6

*You look still with the body's (egos) eyes,
and they can see but thorns.*

*Yet you have asked for and received another sight.
Those who accept the Holy Spirit's purpose as their own
share also His vision.*

.....

*He sees no thorns but only lilies,
gleaming in the gentle glow of peace that shines
on everything He looks upon and loves.*

T-20.II.5:1-3 & 6

*What if you recognized this world is a hallucination?
What if you really understood you made it up?*

T-20.VIII.7:1-2

These questions are not questions. They are statements of fact. This is a world that we made up. A hallucination is something we see, hear, or feel, which is not there. Everyone hallucinates, thus, we are all always making up the world. This means that the self, which is reading this or listening to this, is also made up – not just the exterior world but the image I project on to the world.

*Hallucinations disappear
when they are recognized for what they are.*

T-20.VIII.8:1

I was talking with an acquaintance, a friend of a friend, who kept talking about all the weirdoes, crazies, creeps, and kooks in the world and how you never knew what they were going to do. This fellow was about as priggish and straight-laced as they come and I was thinking that those he called weird might very well see him as weird. Truth is, we're all the same. Scratch the surface a little and underneath it all were all just human beings. Souls wearing different clothes. No one is any better or any worse than anyone else. God has no favorite children. Dig deep enough and within anyone, the infinite can be found.

*This is the healing and the remedy.
Believe them not (the hallucinations) and they are gone.
And all you need to do is recognize that you did this.*

T-20.VIII.8:2-4

This sounds very much like what we find later on in Chapter 27, where it says,

*The secret of salvation is but this:
that you are doing this unto yourself.*

T-27.8:10:1

*One thing is sure; hallucinations serve a purpose,
and when that purpose is no longer held they disappear.*

*Therefore, the question never is whether you want them,
but always, do you want the purpose that they serve?*

This world seems to hold out many purposes,

*There is no problem, no event or situation,
no perplexity that vision will not solve.
All is redeemed when looked upon with vision.
For this is not your sight, and brings with it the laws
beloved of Him Whose sight it is.*
T-20.VIII.5:71-9

The ego's sight is judgment.

The Holy Spirit's sight is forgiveness.

In fact, the Holy Spirit's sight does not see a problem. Every problem is literally the same. Am I willing to see my brother sinless? Or, do I see a problem here. Remember again, the first principle of miracles; namely that, there is no order of difficulty in miracles. Every problem is the same because all problems are illusory.

*Everything looked upon with vision falls gently into place, according
to the laws brought to it by His calm and certain sight. The end for
everything He looks upon is always sure.*

*For it will meet His purpose, seen in unadjusted form
and suited perfectly to meet it.*
T-20.VIII.6:1-3

Going back to Section III of this chapter – everything the ego does is an adjustment and in that sense, it is a distortion away from the vision of Holiness to the sight of sin. When I forgive, the external world does not change in any way. The only thing which changes is my interpretation of what is seen.

*Judgment is but a toy, a whim, the senseless means to play
the idle game of death in your imagination.
But vision sets all things right, bringing them gently
within the kindly sway of Heaven's laws.*
T-20.VIII.6:8-9

Judgment really is a toy. When I forgive, nothing changes in the world. When a mind is healed, there is nothing which happens in the world of form. Nothing happens on the outside, because there is no outside. There is, after all, no way in which I can change an illusion. I can only change a misperception.

The Holy Spirit must see everyone as one because the separation never occurred except within some illusory nightmarish dream.

*The Holy Spirit's vision is no idle gift,
no plaything to be tossed about a while and laid aside.
Listen and hear this carefully, nor think it but a dream,
a careless thought to play with, or a toy
you would pick up from time to time and then put by.
For if you do, so will it be to you.*
T-20.II.6:1-7

Vision, in Course terms, does not mean physical sight. It means seeing beyond the body, beyond the outside all the way to Heaven – to Home – to the real world – to reality. **To have vision means to accept reality rather than project reality.** With vision, we are able to see that everything has already happened – we have already accepted the Atonement.

You have the vision now to look past all illusions.
T-20.II.7:1

Having vision does not mean that we do not see the insanity of this world – *it means we do not react to insanity as insanity.* Insanity is then seen as a call for help in which case it is our duty to help!

This is What Vision Is

*It has been given you to see no thorns,
no strangers and no obstacles to peace.
The fear of God is nothing to you now.
Who is afraid to look upon illusions,
knowing his savior stands beside him?*

.....

*For you have asked for and been given the strength to look upon
this final obstacle, and see no thorns nor nails to crucify
the Son of God, and crown him king of death.*
T-20.II.7:1-4 & 8

*Your chosen home is on the other side, beyond the veil.
It has been carefully prepared for you,
and it is ready to receive you now.*
T-20.II.8:1-2

It is ready to receive you now because now is the only time there is. Sometimes I'll ask at a workshop, how many of you would like to go to Heaven right now? Very few raise their hands. And yet we all really know that right now is the only time, the only eternity there is. No one wants to go to Heaven right now because everybody feels as though they have unfinished business. We would not want to go Heaven because we would miss those we love and yet the Course tells us that those with whom we are really connected not just here in this world but in eternity — that connection can never be lost.

*And another of his disciples said to him,
Lord let me first go and bury my father.
But Jesus said to him, Follow me;
and let the dead bury their dead.
Matthew 8:20-21*

Does that sound a bit cruel on Jesus' part? It just means the past is past. It is over. *Let the dead bury the dead.* Heaven is here and now if we can but see it – then we can know it.

*You will not see it (Heaven) with the body's eyes.
Yet all you need you have.
Your home has called to you since time began,
nor have you ever failed entirely to hear.
You heard, but knew not how to look, nor where.
And now you know.
T-20.II.8:3-7*

The place to look is inside – deep inside the mind itself. This is why being still is so important; anger is never justified and projections of all sorts are unnecessary. If you want to have success in the world, do not attack the world. If you do – it will attack back – Guaranteed. The first sentence in the preamble of UNESCO is “Wars begin in the minds of men.” If wars begin in the minds of men, it is pretty clear where they end.” Truly those who live by the sword do, indeed, die by the sword. Stop the war inside the mind. Allow only peace and peace will come. We cannot return Home if we exclude anyone.

*Would you not have your holy brother lead you there?
His innocence will light your way, offering you its guiding light
and sure protection, and shining from the holy altar within
him where you laid the lilies of forgiveness.*

*Why do you think the body is
a better home, a safer shelter for God's Son?*

T-20.VIII.4:6

The body serves the purpose of sin. This way we get to keep our separate identity while someone else gets blamed for it.

*Why would you rather look on it than on the truth?
How can the engine of destruction be preferred,
and chosen to replace the holy home the Holy Spirit offers,
where He will dwell with you?*

T-20.VIII.4:1-8

The engine of destruction is a heavy way of referring to the body. And yet, if you think about it, every body wears out. Every body is destined for deterioration and death. Just like with our cars, some of them, when taken care of, may last longer than others but unless they are pampered as antiques, they are all destined to be turned into scrap metal, melted down, and turned into another car or perhaps a refrigerator.

*The body is the sign of weakness, vulnerability and loss of power.
Can such a savior help you?*

T-20.VIII.5:1-2

There is no real power in the world. There is no power in all the armaments in the world – they were built for destruction. The only real power there is, is in the mind and the mind does not have a form.

Only the mind is indestructible.

*Would you turn in your distress
and need for help unto the helpless?
Is the pitifully little the perfect choice to call upon for strength?
Judgment will seem to make your savior weak.*

Yet it is you who need his strength.

T-20.VIII.5:3-6

Our brother's body is as much a projection as is our own. We have chosen something very little (the body) to be our home. To think of ourselves as bodies is to think of ourselves as though we were an ego. The ego, too, has no power in it – except insofar as we give it power. All egos are also destined to die because – a fantasy can never become a reality. They are all only figments of imagination.

Insofar as we have a problem with our sight of a brother's body, that problem exists only within the mind. It is never in the body. The *Holy Spirit does not do anything in the world. What happens only happens in the Mind* – not in the body. If I shut my brother out then I shut myself out. The ego sees everything as separate. The body's eyes will see separation. Christ's Vision is another matter altogether. If I can see my brother free from sin then I can see myself free from sin. The Atonement is then complete and I am Home with God.

Your question should not be,
"How can I see my brother without the body?"
Ask only, "Do I really wish to see him sinless?"

T-20.VII.9:1-2

All that is really required here is *the wish to see him sinless*.

VIII. The Vision of Sinlessness

Vision will come to you at first in glimpses,
but they will be enough to show you
what is given you who see your brother sinless.

Truth is restored to you through your desire,
as it was lost to you through your desire for something else.
Open the holy place that you closed off by valuing the
"something else," and what was never lost will quietly return.
It has been saved for you.

Vision would not be necessary had judgment not been made.
Desire now its whole undoing, and it is done for you.

T-20.VIII.1:1-6

What do you want to see in a brother? Vision will come to us at first in glimpses, (holy instances) in which we will see our brother whole no matter how much the body or the behavior may be distorted or broken. My task is still to see him as whole. It is possible to do this because the innocence is there buried deep within perhaps, but it is there, and my task is to seek it out. Again, what is required is to have the "wish" to see through the eyes of sinlessness instead of the eyes of sin.

And place no value on your brother's body,
which holds him to illusions of what he is.
It is his desire to see his sinlessness, as it is yours.
And bless the Son of God in your relationship,
nor see in him what you have made of him.

T-20.VIII.3:4-6

Let him be to you the savior from illusions, and look on him with the
new vision that looks upon the lilies and brings you joy.
We go beyond the veil of fear, lighting each other's way.
The holiness that leads us is within us, as is our home.
So will we find what we were meant to find by Him Who leads us.

T-20.II.9:1-6

The holiness that would lead us is within us and is our Home.

Who dies?

Reflecting the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the question remains, *how can the immortal die?* If we believe in the veracity of sin – death is unavoidable. However, as there is no sin, there is no death — all there is, is Heaven. *Sin can only occur within an illusion.* Illusions are not real. They are illusions. *If there is no separation, there is no sin.* According to the ego, sin is punishable by death – therefore, we *hide out* in the body, which has no reality except in time. And time, the Course says, is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go as if by magic (W-158.4:1).

Walk with him now rejoicing, for the savior from illusions
has come to greet you, and lead you home with him.

T-20.II.10:3-5

The Dream of Death

Our savior is our brother because we have projected our guilt on to him and it is by removing that projection that we are saved. Attack is *always* made upon oneself. Hitler killed more than 6 million Jews, but he also was killed by those who followed him down the insane path he led them on — more than 55 million German citizens and 25 million soldiers. All total, more than 80 million Germans.

All I have to do to be saved is reverse the decision I made to see
my brother sinful and see his innocence instead – it is, thus, that I find innocence within. It is, thus, that I am set free. The thought system of the ego is actually lifeless. Thus, it is our task to awaken from what the Course calls, "the dream of death." It is this world, the world of separation, which is the dream of death.

Our brother becomes our savior because we have projected our guilt on to him and it is by removing that projection that we are saved. Again — if I attack my brother, I attack myself. All I have to do is to reverse the decision I made to see my brother’s innocence instead of his sin. The thought system of the ego is actually lifeless. Thus, it is our task to awaken from what the Course calls, “the dream of death.”

*You look for permanence in the impermanent,
for love where there is none, for safety in the midst of danger;
immortality within the darkness of the dream of death.
Who could succeed where contradiction is the setting of his
searching, and the place to which he comes to find stability?*

W-131.1:2-3

III. Sin as an Adjustment

The belief in sin is an adjustment.

*And an adjustment is a change; a shift in perception,
or a belief that what was so before has been made different.*

*Every adjustment is therefore a distortion,
and calls upon defenses to uphold it against reality.*

*Knowledge requires no adjustments and, in fact,
is lost if any shift or change is undertaken.*

For this reduces it at once to mere perception;

a way of looking in which certainty is lost and doubt has entered.

*To this impaired condition are adjustments necessary,
because it is not true. Who need adjust to truth,
which calls on only what he is, to understand?*

T-20.III.1:1-7

We do not need to adjust to truth — truth is natural. *Love is natural, miracles are natural. The abundance of Christ, the Course says, is the natural result of choosing to follow Him. True vision is natural, communion is natural, peace is natural, joy is natural and Heaven is naturally our Home.*

As our real Home is Heaven and our *natural* way of thinking is in line with the Mind of God, seeing ourselves as separated and sinful or capable of *thinking outside of the Mind of God is unnatural* and requires a false adjustment in our mind. We’ve got what is natural and what is unnatural all twisted around the wrong way. That is why the Course says we need a reversal in thinking.

while the end is cherished.

Seeing adapts to wish, (projection makes perception)

for sight is always secondary to desire.

And if you see the body, you have chosen judgment and not vision.

For vision, like relationships, has no order. You either see or not.

T-20.VII.5:3-9

The decision-maker wants to make the ego real. In vision, we choose the Holy Spirit, in which case, we do not see bodies in line with the ego’s purpose. In judgment, we see bodies and we judge against them. The ego seeks to make the separation real by blaming sin on another.

*Who sees a brother's body has laid a judgment on him,
and sees him not. He does not really see him as sinful;
he does not see him at all.*

T-20.VII.6:1

Most folks are familiar with the Joseph Merrick (1862-1890), an Englishman whose body was so distorted that he was called “The Elephant Man.” Though the body was deformed, the soul inside was beautiful. It’s the soul not the body which matter. If we see each other as bodies, we are not seeing each other as God sees us. Indeed, the Holy Spirit does not even see the body, knowing only Spirit. God sees only Spirit, which He created. To see a body is to see a separate individual. Seeing is directed outward and this kind of seeing is what special relationships are all about.

*His vision (Christ the Holy Spirit) cannot see the body because it
cannot look on sin. And thus it leads you to reality.*

*Your holy brother, sight of whom is your release, is no illusion.
Attempt to see him not in darkness, for your imaginings about him
will seem real there.*

You closed your eyes to shut him out.

*Such was your purpose, and while this purpose seems to have a
meaning, the means for its attainment will be evaluated as worth the
seeing, and so you will not see.*

T-20.VII.8:1-10

to let go of, we are simply demonstrating resistance to awakening from the dream. We want to keep the dream of separation and death alive.

**To see a sinless body is impossible,
for holiness is positive and the body is merely neutral.
It is not sinful, but neither is it sinless.
As nothing, which it is, the body cannot meaningfully
be invested with attributes of Christ or of the ego.
Either must be an error,
for both would place the attributes where they cannot be.
And both must be undone for purposes of truth.**

T-20.VII.4:5-8

To see sin as real is to see the body as real. The Course is asking us to see each other not as bodies but to see the Christ (love) within. This was made real to me as a parish minister where I had to minister to a number of older folks whose bodies were often broken; and yet, they radiated such beauty and the greatest love. Sometimes the smile alone said it all. Again, it is never what is on the outside that matters. Time and again the Course says, “*perception is an interpretation, not a fact.*”

***The body is the means by which the ego tries to make
the unholy relationship (the special relationship) seem real.***

The unholy instant is the time of bodies.

T-20.VII.5:1-2

In the holy instant, we chose Atonement instead of separation. **In the holy instant there is actually no body at all**, that is, **there is nothing physical which can bar our way**. A body is the belief in separation. The purpose of the body here is to make sin real.

I have a head for business and a body for sin.

Is there anything wrong with that?

Tess McGill (actress Melanie Griffith in the movie *Working Girl*)

It “seems as though” our lives are all about the body and the purpose of the relationship is to serve the goal of sin.

But the purpose here is sin.

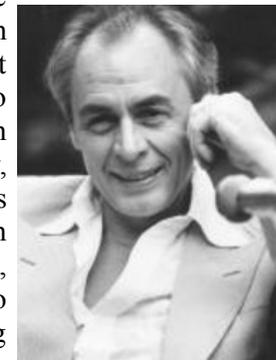
***It cannot be attained but in illusion, and so the illusion of a brother
as a body is quite in keeping with the purpose of unholiness.***

Because of this consistency, the means remain unquestioned

*“Our ‘normal’ ‘adjusted’ state is too often the abdication of ecstasy,
the betrayal of our true potentialities.”*

Scottish Psychiatrist R.D. Laing (1927-1989)

According to R.D. Laing, much of what we call insanity is the result of trying to adjust to an insane world. People are put in difficult situations, where they are unable to conform to the conflicting, unnatural, and often contradictory expectations from parents, society, the church, and more. We are lied to, information is withheld, and we are told that it is for our own good. Unable to cope with an unjust, insane world, some people just *mentally check out*, leading to distress for everyone else concerned. According to Laing, the church, with all of its outlandish laws and society with all of its mad constructs, makes it very difficult for people to be normal.



Our true reality is Knowledge. As it is, we have shifted to the ego’s world of perception. *Perception, by its very nature, is a world of separation.* Once we have a subject – object, we have judgment – we have separation. There is no subject – object in God. There is just God.

Beliefs are of the ego. Knowing is of God.

It is one thing to “believe” in Heaven.

It is another matter to Know Heaven.

Belief is an ego function. Beliefs are weak and changeable.

Heaven is Knowledge. Knowledge is Heaven.

This Knowledge is an awareness of our Oneness and our reality as Christ.

You make the world and then adjust to it, and it to you.

***Nor is there any difference between yourself and it
in your perception, which made them both.***

T-20.III.3:6-7

This reflects an often repeated theme in the Course namely that *Projection makes Perception.* Or, another way to say this is that:

**We don’t see things as they are. We see things as we are. Or,
We don’t see the world as it is. We see the world as we are.**

The Son of God chose the ego and then made up a world of sin. It may seem as though we are tossed into the world and then we have to adjust to it. Truth is, we make up the world and then we have to try to adjust to what we have made. Knowing underneath that this is insanity but not knowing how it all got created drives us crazy.

*This "is" an insane world,
and do not underestimate the extent of its insanity.*

T-14.I.2:6

*Insanity – a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world.
Scottish, Psychiatrist R. D. Laing (1927–1989)*

Another way to say this is there is no difference between the inner and the outer – it's all a matter of what I choose to see. All the ego knows is a hostile world – a world of its own creation.

A simple question yet remains, and needs an answer.

**Do you like what you have made?—a world of murder and attack,
through which you thread your timid way through constant dangers,
alone and frightened, hoping at most that death will
wait a little longer before it overtakes you and you disappear.**

You made this up.

T-20.III.4:1-3

You may say, "Well, "I" did not create a world of murder and attack and yet we remain constantly on the attack with our minds and with our mouths and sometime our fists and sometimes with guns.

*We are all murderers and prostitutes – no matter to what culture,
society, class, nation one belongs, no matter how normal,
moral, or mature, one takes oneself to be.*

R.D. Laing

***It is a picture of what you think you are; of how you see yourself.
A murderer is frightened, and those who kill fear death.
All these are but the fearful thoughts of those who would adjust***

***themselves to a world made fearful by their adjustments.
And they look out in sorrow from what is sad within,
and see the sadness there.***

T-20.III.4:4-7

officials warned that an invasion of Iraq would lead to increased terrorism throughout the world. And, that is exactly what happened. When will we ever learn that attack breeds hatred, revenge, and more attack. Only I can learn that in my relationship with you. Arrogance will not listen to reason – only Spirit can do that.

***This course requires almost nothing of you.
It is impossible to imagine one that asks so little,
or could offer more.***

T-20.VII.1:4-8

The Course asks very little of us. It asks for nothing other than a decision, a little willingness to let what is true be true. All it asks is that we change our minds – move away from projection, defensiveness, and attack and move instead to forgiveness and acceptance. It asks only that we learn to see things differently. The Course is not inconsistent. It is we who are recalcitrant, obstinate, and withholding in our love. As long as we want to find evil in the world, we will find it.

You recognize you want the goal.

Are you not also willing to accept the means?

If you are not, let us admit that you are inconsistent.

***A purpose is attained by means, and if you want a purpose
you must be willing to want the means as well.***

***How can one be sincere and say, "I want this above all else,
and yet I do not want to learn the means to get it?"***

T-20.VII.2:3-7

If we really want peace, we must realize that the problem is not outside of the mind which longs to find error in my brother but that it is inside me not in the world. To the degree to which we remain angry and attacking, we do not want the goal of peace.

To obtain the goal the Holy Spirit indeed asks little.

He asks no more to give the means as well.

***The means are second to the goal. And when you hesitate,
it is because the purpose frightens you, and not the means.***

T-20.VII.3:1-4

Jesus is asking us to be honest. When a situation causes us problems, it is because we are afraid of where the acceptance and forgiveness is leading us. When we find a special relationship difficult

*And this unholy instant seems to be life; an instant of despair,
a tiny island of dry sand, bereft of water
and set uncertainly upon oblivion.
Here does the Son of God stop briefly by,
to offer his devotion to death's idols and then pass on.
And here he is more dead than living.*

T-20.VI.11:3-5

This is not a pretty picture of the body, the thing we hold in such high regard. The body is actually nothing, as the thought which gave rise to the body is actually nothing more than the thought of separation, sin, and death. We do not see that death is a thought that we chose. Only in our relationship with God is there any eternity. I learn to see the innocence in you by withdrawing the guilt I put on to you. This is a reciprocal process, for as I withdraw the guilt I would put on to you, I automatically withdraw it from myself.

VII. The Consistency of Means and End

*We have said much about discrepancies of means and end,
and how these must be brought in line
before your holy relationship can bring you only joy.
But we have also said the means to meet the Holy Spirit's goal
will come from the same Source as does His purpose.
Being so simple and direct, this course
has nothing in it that is not consistent.*

T-20.VII.1:1-3

The Course only seems inconsistent, insofar as we do not want to learn what it says. If we are clear about the goal of the Course, which is peace and happiness, then we will see all of our relationships as a means to achieve peace and happiness. If the purpose is to keep the ego's insane dream alive, then of course, peace cannot be found. **In the hands of the ego, the purpose of the body and the world is to keep the sense of sin and separation going.**

War comes out of arrogance and selfishness. War is premeditated murder on a colossal scale which, on an individual level society will not permit, but on a collective level, we (the ego) will endorse. Germany invaded Poland in 1939, claiming that Poland was the aggressor and the US invaded Iraq in March 2003, to disarm Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was done despite the fact that numerous Pentagon

We look out upon the world from the framework of our own sadness and we find sadness in the world. We hide things from the world and wonder why so much is hidden. Our minds and mouths are filled with attack thoughts and words and we wonder why there is so much anger and attack in the world.

*Have you not wondered what the world is really like;
how it would look through happy eyes?
The world you see is but a judgment on yourself.
It is not there at all.*

T-20.III.5:1-3

This is only one of the many times in the Course that Jesus says there is no world. Only our belief in the world gives it its seeming reality. The real world is Heaven – this world is insanity. This is what we project; this is what we latch onto; this is what we see and call reality not seeing that it comes from our own insanity.

*Yet judgment lays a sentence on it, (the world)
justifies it and makes it real. Such is the world you see;
a judgment on yourself, and made by you.
This sickly picture of yourself is carefully preserved by the ego,
whose image it is and which it loves, and placed outside you in the
world. And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe this
picture is outside, and has you at its mercy.
This world is merciless, and were it outside you,
you should indeed be fearful.
Yet it was you who made it merciless,
and now if mercilessness seems to look back at you,
it can be corrected.*

T-20.III.5:4-9

The ego made the world so we could blame outside forces for what we are.

*Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his insanity.
There is a stranger in him, (the ego)
who wandered carelessly into the home of truth
and who will wander off.*

***He came without a purpose, but he will not remain before
the shining light the Holy Spirit offered, and you accepted.
For there the stranger is made homeless and you are welcome.***

***Ask not this transient stranger, "What am I?"
He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know.***
T-20.III.7:5-9

The stranger in each of us is the ego. *We have "descended" into the darkness of the ego and the world the ego has made for us – this is hell.* War is hell and what we have created is a world filled with righteous indignation and attack thoughts – a world of hell. It is the decision-making part of our mind that chooses to run away from Home and it is the decision-making part of our mind which can get us back Home again, i.e. to the memory of who we are as God's One Son.

"I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts."
W-23

What is insane about the ego's system of belief is that we have asked the one thing which does not know who we are to tell us who we are. We have given the ego the power to make the thought of separation and sin true. We ask the ego to tell us who we are and the ego has an answer. The ego says: You are your judgments, your prejudices, your intolerance, your bias and beliefs. You are your resume; you are the pictures you have of yourself; you are your job and your religion; you are where you live and what you do in the world — and all these things are the ways we make up the world, then seek to adjust to it and it to us — and it's all insane because it is all of the ego's making.

Spirit says that none of this is true – *You are love, you are a child of God, and your real Home is Heaven.* The only one who knows who we are is the Holy Spirit and we have so pushed this Holy Spirit out of our mind that we barely know that he is there. Yet, thank God literally, the little spark remains. It is an eternal flame and it can never go out.

***Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer that you would adjust.
This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and
so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth,
becomes your guide.***
T-20.III.7:7-8

***What God would have not be is here kept "safe" from Him.
But what you do not realize is what you fear within your brother, and
would not see in him, is what makes God seem fearful to you, and
kept unknown.***
T-20.VI.6:1-8

***Idolaters will always be afraid of love,
for nothing so severely threatens them as love's approach.
Let love draw near them and overlook the body.***

.....
***This place of darkness (the body) is not your home.
Your temple is not threatened.
You are an idolater no longer.
The Holy Spirit's purpose lies safe
in your relationship, and not your body.
You have escaped the body.
Where you are the body cannot enter,
for the Holy Spirit has set His temple there.***
T-20.VI.7:1-2 & 6-10

The temple is in the mind and that is where the Holy Relationship is – through the forgiveness of our special love or special hate. The body is not a temple nor is anything external. It all happened in an unholy instant.

***In that unholy instant time was born,
and bodies made to house
the mad idea and give it the illusion of reality.
And so it seemed to have a home that held together
for a little while in time, and vanished.
For what could house this mad idea against reality
but for an instant?***
T-20.VII.8:7-9

***The body is the ego's idol;
the belief in sin made flesh and then projected outward.
This produces what seems to be a wall of flesh around the mind,
keeping it prisoner in a tiny spot of space and time,
beholden unto death, and given but an instant in which
to sigh and grieve and die in honor of its master.***
T-20.VI.11:1-2

The Holy Spirit's temple is not a body, but a relationship.

Relationships are not between bodies. Our only real relationship is with the Holy Spirit, which is not in a body but in our mind. What I choose to make real in my mind is what I make real in the world.

***The body is an isolated speck of darkness;
a hidden secret room,
a tiny spot of senseless mystery,
a meaningless enclosure carefully protected,
yet hiding nothing.***

***Here the unholy relationship escapes reality,
and seeks for crumbs to keep itself alive.***

T-20.VI.5:2-3

Also, Jesus is talking here about the body. He is also subtly referring to the *tiny spot of senseless mystery*, that tiny wafer inside that tabernacle on the altar in the church, which has magically been turned into his body. The *crumbs* are again a reference to the wafer, which is supposed to be his body. How could love exist inside a wafer? Love exist in relationship.

***The Holy Spirit does not build His temples where love can never be.
Would He Who sees the face of Christ choose as His home the only
place in all the universe where it can not be seen?***

T-20.VI.5:6-7

**You cannot make the body the Holy Spirit's temple,
and it will never be the seat of love.**

It is the home of the idolater, and of love's condemnation.

For here is love made fearful and hope abandoned.

***Even the idols that are worshipped here are shrouded in mystery,
and kept apart from those who worship them.***

This is the temple dedicated to no relationships and no return.

***Here is the "mystery" of separation perceived
in awe and held in reverence.***

T-20.VI.8:1-6

In the Catholic tradition, the body of Jesus and/or a bone perhaps of a saint is held in awe and reverence. And in various places, throughout the world these bones are worshipped. Truth is, a bone is a bone and the bone of a dog is of no more value than that of a man.

Making a Resume Reality

We have allowed the insane ego (the tiny, mad idea), the one thing that we are not, to become our guide through this world. We have turned our resume into reality. Ken liked to say that ***the world is a maladaptive solution to a non-existent problem***. The ego tells us what the problem is and what the solution is. The problem is sin, guilt, and fear and the answer is to run away and hide in a body in the world – there God cannot find you, and from that position you can safely blame all your problems on all the other idiots who occupy this insane world.

***To it (the ego) you turn to ask the meaning of the universe.
And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask,
"How shall I look upon the Son of God?"***

T-20.III.7:9-10

And the ego says – see him as guilty – see him as sinful – see him as dirty – see him as you're everything you are not.

Does one ask judgment of what is totally bereft of judgment?

And if you have, would you believe the answer,

and adjust to it as if it were the truth?

***The world you look on is the answer that it gave you, and you have
given it power to adjust the world to make its answer true.***

T-20.III.8:1-3

***Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated,
weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness
they remember not the light,***

do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free.

T-20.III.9:1

Neo-Platonism

The above passage is a direct reference to Plato's allegory of the Cave. The Course is part of the neo-Platonic tradition. **Plotinus** (205–270) is considered the father of Neo-Platonism, which is based on the teachings of Plato. It is a form of idealistic monism — all is one. According to Neo-Platonism, the Soul is real; the body is not. There is a World Soul, which is the Mind. Above the intellect is the One. The concept of the One is more clearly defined by Plotinus than it was by Plato. Upon death of the body, the soul returns to the Monad or One.

Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists were very influential among the early mystics of Christianity and Islam. St. Augustine (354-430), the world's first truly great Christian theologian, (he wrote more than any before him) was deeply affected by Plotinus, and through him, the western Church. The traditional Christian church, however, over time, rejected mysticism in favor of a dualistic philosophy, teaching the reality of Heaven and hell.

We live in a world of illusion and it takes a good bit of time for our eyes (minds) to adjust to the truth. **We literally want the darkness. We relish the illusion of separation.** We deliberately choose to remain in **the darkness of individuality.** The Course is gentle and slow because we are literally afraid of the dark, which means we are afraid of the separated self we have created — we hang on to it all the while knowing deep inside — it is not real.

*For what is Heaven but union, direct and perfect,
and without the veil of fear upon it?*

*Here are we one, looking with perfect gentleness
upon each other and on ourselves.*

*Here all thoughts of any separation between
us become impossible.*

*You who were a prisoner in separation
are now made free in Paradise.*

*And here would I unite with you,
my friend, my brother and my Self.*

T-20.III.10:3-7

Heaven is a state of Oneness – direct and perfect and without fear. The experience of the single *Will*, or Holy Instant, “which governs all thought,” is a mystical experience. The experience often occurs when we experience *clear insights* and great *synchronicities*. For example, open the Course to any page, close your eyes, point to a line, open your eyes, and see if it speaks directly to you. Synchronicities occur when we hear the exact thing we need to hear on the radio or when we pick up a magazine and there is an article we would do well to read.

*In your brother is the light of God's eternal promise
of your immortality.*

See him as sinless, and there can be no fear in you.

T-20.III.11:9

*in smiling welcome and in sincerity so simple and so obvious it
cannot be misunderstood.*

T-20.VI.2:4-7

Love hides nothing.

But idols do not share. Idols accept, but never make return.

They can be loved, but cannot love.

T-20.VI.3:1-3

Idols are worthless pieces of whatever they are made out of. *Krishnamurti* once said that if you took a coke bottle and put it on an altar and bowed and prostrated yourself in front of it every day, before long you would come to think of it as a holy object.

*Love has no darkened temples where mysteries
are kept obscure and hidden from the sun.*

T-20.VI.4:1

If, as a young person, you were to ask a priest or a nun how it is possible that the wafer turns into the body of Christ or how to explain any other piece of magic, you will always be told the same answer. “It is a great mystery.” Why did God create sickness? It’s a mystery. It doesn’t matter what the question is, when it comes to questioning the doctrines of the church, the answer is always that “It is a mystery.” It is a mystery because, no one can, in fact, know how something with is not true could possibly be true.

*Each temptation to accept magic as true must be abandoned through
his recognition, not that it is fearful, not that it is sinful,
not that it is dangerous, but merely that it is meaningless.*

M-16.10.8

It does not seek for power, but for relationships.

*The body is the ego's chosen weapon
for seeking power through relationships.*

.....

*Homeless, the ego seeks as many bodies as it can collect to place
its idols in, and so establish them as temples to itself.*

T-20.VI.4:2 & 7

Vision embraces all people as one. The ego always sees people with separate interests.

***Your brother's body is as little use to you as it is to him.
When it is used only as the Holy Spirit teaches, it has no function.***

For minds need not the body to communicate.

***The sight that sees the body has no use which serves the purpose
of a holy relationship. And while you look upon your brother thus,
the means and end have not been brought in line.***

***Why should it take so many holy instants to let this be accomplished,
when one would do? There is but one.***

***The little breath of eternity that runs through time like golden light
is all the same; nothing before it, nothing afterwards.***

T-20.V.5:1-8

The ego's goal is to keep everything separated. We try to bring time in to destroy eternity. Eternity is where the heart is. It is where the love is. It is our Home.

VI. The Temple of the Holy Spirit

This section is meant to correct an important error in Christianity. The apostle, Paul, in I Corinthians 6:19 says, "know you not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." In the Course, the body is seen as a learning device, and as a communication device. Ultimately, all bodies turn to ashes or they simply return to the earth. In an of themselves, one body is no more holy than another, be it a man or an animal. **It is the relationship which is in the mind that is the temple.** It is the love that is there not the "thing" which is there that matters. This section on the Temple of the Holy Spirit is also meant as a correction for the Catholic misinterpretation that magically at the time of the Mass, the Eucharist – (wafer) is somehow supernaturally transformed into the body of Christ. It is all magic and make believe. During a Mass, this wafer is placed in a little box. When a Catholic bows upon entering a church, they are bowing to the wafer in the little tabernacle at the altar, which has somehow magically been transformed into the body of Jesus.

***Any relationship in which the body enters
is based not on love, but on idolatry.***

Love wishes to be known, completely understood and shared.

It has no secrets; nothing that it would keep apart and hide.

It walks in sunlight, open-eyed and calm,

If I am fearful, it is because I have projected my sin on to you. I then become afraid of your reprisal. In fact, the thing we are most afraid of is our own self image as someone who would attack and destroy.

IV. Entering the Ark

Nothing can hurt you unless you give it the power to do so.

Yet you give power

as the laws of this world interpret giving; as you give you lose.

T-20.IV.1:1-2

The world can only have power over the body if we give faith to the body. Spirit is invulnerable. According to the laws of the world, as we give, we lose. I have something. I give it to you. I don't have it any more – you do. According to the laws of Spirit, the more we give away, the more we have to give. Generosity is one of the basic characteristics of a Teacher of God. Like all the other attributes of God's teachers, generosity rests on trust. I trust that by being generous and helping my brothers, I will, in turn, be taken care of. To the world, generosity means "giving away" in the sense of "giving up." To the Teachers of God, it means giving away in order to keep.

***Your insane laws were made to guarantee that you
would make mistakes, and give them power over you
by accepting their results as your just due.***

What could this be but madness?

And is it this that you would see within your savior from insanity?

T-20.IV.3:1-2

Insane laws are the laws of guilt. What we see in another is always what we see in ourselves. If I see you as guilty, I offer you thorns. If I am willing to transcend my guilt then I will look past your supposed sins and see the innocence within.

***Ask not the sparrow how the eagle soars,
for those with little wings have not accepted for themselves
the power to share with you.***

T-20.IV.4:7

Who will I turn to as a teacher? Do not ask the ego. Symbolically here, (those who fly with the little wings of a sparrow) how to be happy? Ask, instead, the Holy Spirit who flies above the battlefield with the wings of the eagles and who, thus, remains free of the petty-fighting and insanity of the ego's little world.

The sinless give as they received.

See, then, the power of sinlessness within your brother, and share with him the power of the release from sin you offered him.

To each who walks this earth in seeming solitude is a savior given, whose special function here is to release him, and so to free himself.

In the world of separation each is appointed separately, though they are all the same.

Yet those who know that they are all the same need not salvation. And each one finds his savior when he is ready to look upon the face of Christ, and see Him sinless.

T-20.IV.5:1-6

Only when we get tired of our own incessant attack on others will we finally say, “There must be another way.” At that point, that individual (our special relationship) becomes our savior. We, thus, practice forgiveness daily with everyone we come into contact with – the members of our family, the people we work with, the ones who push our buttons – whom we need to forgive, etc.

The ark of peace is entered two by two, yet the beginning of another world goes with them.

T-20.IV.6:5

Salvation is a collaborative venture. Let’s not forget that there is no body, there is only the mind in relationship to what the mind perceives. We cannot enter the ark of peace if we exclude even one person. We all go in together. Completion is wholeness. If we really forgive just one person then we forgive everyone. We keep practicing forgiveness with everyone we meet until it gets so easy, it can be applied in each and every instant – where there is simply no judgment which needs to be made. We can see how readily we are to forgive by seeing how readily we are not to judge.

Think not that your forgiveness of your brother serves but you two alone. For the whole new world rests in the hands of every two who enter here to rest.

T-20.IV.7:1-3

The unity of God must embrace all people.

We cannot love God and hate our brother – that is impossible.

We are constantly being asked to shift our purpose from seeing the world outside to seeing the world inside, realizing that **whatever “fix” there is, which needs to be made, needs to be made within.** We have but one goal – to return Home.

V. Heralds of Eternity

Only in time can anything be lost, and never lost forever.

So do the parts of God’s Son gradually join in time, and with each joining is the end of time brought nearer.

Each miracle of joining is a mighty herald of eternity.

No one who has a single purpose, unified and sure, can be afraid.

No one who shares his purpose with him can not be one with him.

T-20.V.1:4-8

A Holy Relationship is a relationship in which we undo a special relationship by shifting from the goal of guilt – which we would put on another to the goal of forgiveness. Instead of seeing another as separate from us, we shift our goal and see the other through Christ’s Vision. We join with another by withdrawing our projections of guilt and hate on to them and join in the Atonement instead. The other does not have to share the purpose of joining with me. Indeed, I may be rejected by the other – but that does not mean that I have to join with them in that rejection by rejecting them in return. This all happens in the mind, whether or not there is any form.

Each herald of eternity sings of the end of sin and fear.

Each speaks in time of what is far beyond it.

Two voices raised together call to the hearts of everyone, to let them beat as one.

And in that single heartbeat is the unity of love proclaimed and given welcome.

Peace to your holy relationship, which has the power to hold the unity of the Son of God together.

You give to your brother for everyone, and in your gift is everyone made glad.

T-20.V.2:1-6

When we forgive in this way, our forgiveness embraces all people.

Vision or Judgment

What is in him (the brother who I forgive) will shine so brightly in your grateful vision that you will merely love him and be glad.

You will not think to judge him, for who would see the face of Christ and yet insist that judgment still has meaning?

For this insistence is of those who do not see.

Vision or judgment is your choice, but never both of these.

T-20.V.4:4-7