

Time, Death, Body, Mind, and Spirit

By Jon Mundy

*And the Lord God commanded
the man saying,
Of every tree of the garden
you may freely eat:
But of the tree of the
knowledge of good and evil,
you shall not eat of it:
for in the day you eat there of
you shall surely die.
Genesis 2:16-17*



*To you and your brother,
in whose special relationship the Holy Spirit entered,
it is given to release and be released
from the dedication to death.
T-19.IV.C.1:1*

Relinquishing Our Dedication to Death

According to Biblical scholars, there is more than one stream of thought and thus, different authors writing in the book of Genesis. There are two creation stories: one in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and a second in Genesis 2:4 through the end of Chapter 3. According to the second of these narratives, because Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil — something they had been forbidden to do — God cursed them and condemned them to death.

Since there is no mention of an apple in the book of Genesis, some anthropologists suggest the eating of forbidden fruit indicates early man's unintentionally ingestion of some kind of psychotropic plant, a mushroom perhaps, which produced this altered awareness, in other words, a split mind. Where there previously had been only one mind, there are now two possibilities: God's way, the straight-way, the clear way; and man's separated, egoistic, self-seeking and selfish way.

The second creation story sounds like one of those experiments where a psychologist puts a bowl of M&M candies on a table in front of a child and then tells the child not to eat any of the candy after the psychologist leaves the room. Of course, there is a two-way mirror in front of the child; the temptation to eat the forbidden candy is great, and, after all, who is going to notice if a few M&M's are missing?

*Adam's "sin" could have touched no one,
had he not believed it was the Father
Who drove him out of Paradise.*

*For in that belief the knowledge of the Father was lost,
since only those who do not understand Him could believe it.*

T-13.in.3:6-7

What Is Death?

According to the second creation story in Genesis, God punishes Adam and Eve, and therefore, all of mankind by giving us death as a consequence of our disobedience. But, what is death? Is it just the cessation of bodily existence? And does that end everything? Or, is the birth of “self-consciousness” (awareness of a separate bodily self) merely a temporal loss of the awareness of our innate communion with God? Also, is Adam’s *sin* our sin? Are we cursed because of what Adam did? Five times in Lesson 101 from the Course, we find the statement, “There is no sin.”

*For what the seeing look upon is sinless.
No one who loves can judge,
and what he sees is free of condemnation.*

T-20.VII.9:6-7

No matter how far we may wander away from Truth and/or bury the idea of God in our minds, we cannot remove from our minds something that is innate to the mind. Animals, indeed all of nature, know God without knowing what they know. God does not believe in reprisal and revenge. There is nothing we can do to hurt God. God is not a jealous God. God does not have an ego.

*God does not believe in retribution.
His Mind does not create that way.*

T-3.I.3:4-5

With the onset of the experience of a divided mind (“knowledge of good and evil”), our minds now seem to be directed by a strange ego factor, which exists in opposition to God. The ego’s version of justice is that sin is not error but a reality, which calls for vengeance. Sinners must, therefore, be punished. I once heard a televangelist say, “There must be a hell and sinners must go there; otherwise, it just wouldn’t be fair.”

*The Bible says that a deep sleep fell upon Adam,
and nowhere is there reference to his waking up.*

T-2.I.3:6

We have not hurt God. God does not have an ego. We have not sinned, rather we have fallen asleep, and we are having some disturbing dreams. Like Alice down the rabbit hole, we are in a strange world in which things *are* turned upside down, and we sense that something is wrong. How many of our night-time dreams are of this order? We are lost. We need to find our way back home, and we keep being thwarted in the process.

God is not angry or upset with us because we have pushed Him out of our minds. Indeed, God knows we will awaken, as he has planted in every mind the memory of eternity. And He has provided us with a Communication Link (the Holy Spirit), which bridges the gap between ourselves and God. We

have, in fact, already awakened. It's really a matter of our re-cognizing what we already know, as opposed to what the body's eyes tell us.

Opposition to God can only arise in a dualistic universe. In a non-dualistic universe, there is no good *and* evil. There is no other. There is no outside. There is only oneness. In a dualistic universe, we think that we can defeat God by not giving in to His Will. In reality, we already are and always have been a part of God.

*There is no stone in all the ego's embattled citadel that
is more heavily defended than the idea that sin is real.*

T-19.II.7:1

Sin is the most "holy" concept in the ego's thought system; therefore, interpreting sin as error is indefensible to the ego. In truth, however, the idea that God is mad at us because we have fallen asleep is indefensible.

*For the wages of sin "is" death,
and how can the immortal die?*

T-19.II.3:6

God never cursed anything, and He did not drive us out of the Garden of Eden. We left of our own volition. Having left Home, we have fallen into the dream of separation. Reality — God — being Love, knows only Love. God, being Life, cannot take Life away from us. Only the body — a false idol in the dream of separation — dies. God offers us only mercy and "Life" yet more abundant.

*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 body is the ego's chosen home, and the ego *is* dedicated to death. If we look around this dream of separation, duality, and matter, we see that all bodies die. There is no eternity in any body. Stars are born and stars die. It takes millions or even many billions of years for them to complete their life/death cycle, but all "things" die. Thus it is, there is no eternity in any "thing."

According to cosmology, the only thing that could go faster than the speed of light would have to be something which does not have mass. What does not have mass? Thought does not have mass. The mind does not have mass. Spirit does not have mass.

The word for *mind* in German is *Geist*.

The word for *spirit* in German is *Geist*.

The word for *mind* in French is *Esprit*.

The word of *spirit* in French is *Esprit*.

The word for *mind* in Dutch is *Geest*.

The word for *spirit* in Dutch is *Geest*.

I assume the same must be true in some of our other languages. Mind is invisible — it has no form. Spirit is invisible — it has no form. Love is invisible — it has no form. God is invisible. God has no form. We refer to God as “He” because we are so prone to thinking in terms of form that it is hard to think of God without a body (T-18.VIII.1:7). In some near-death experiences, especially those of children, God is seen as a grandfatherly being.

*We see in the beginning only what we can see
and we open our eyes slowly to eternity.*

You are not a body. All bodies die. All bodies disappear. In fact, in truth,

*At no single instant does the body exist at all.
It is always remembered or anticipated,
but never experienced just “now.”
Only its past and future make it seem real.
Time controls it entirely,
for sin is never wholly in the present.*

T-18.VII.3:1-4

Eat, Drink and Be Merry, for Tomorrow We Die

We are not to demean the body, do away with the body, or deny its *seeming* reality. Bodies are temporal learning devices that serve a function in time. They are a means — not an end. The ego, however, makes the body an end within itself, and the seeking of bodily pleasures is the ego’s greatest joy. Yet all bodily pleasures, no matter how great, are always temporal.

How do you wish to use the body? Would you like to devote your life to the pursuit of bodily pleasures? Or, would you rather find a way out of this muddled mess of separation, seeming sin, gruesome guilt, and the dreaded death?

*A body [ego] and mind [spirit] cannot both exist.
Make no attempt to reconcile the two,
for one denies the other can be real.*

....

*If you are spirit,
then the body must be meaningless to your reality.*

W-96.3:4-5, & 7

The body can be activated only by the mind. One day soon (not very long from now) our bodies, that is, physical being occupying space and time like other bodies, will disappear. If your body is cremated, your body turned to ashes and scattered to the wind — where are you then? Certainly, not in the ashes.

*The ego regards the body as its home,
and tries to satisfy itself through the body.
But the idea that this is possible is a decision of the mind,
which has become completely confused about what is really possible.*

T-4.II.7:8-9

The body is the belief in death because the body is destined to die. To make the body real is to make the underlying thought the body symbolizes real; namely, that it is possible to exist separated from God. Separation from God can occur only within a fantasy, and fantasy is not reality.

*What has the body really given you that justifies
your strange belief that in it lies salvation?
Do you not see that this is the belief in death?*

T-19.IV.B.2:4-5

What sacrifice is there in detaching from the body? None. What do we give up? Nothing. What do we lose? Nothing. How can something go missing which was never there? The Course is not asking us to give up the world. It is not asking us to do away with our bodies. It is simply asking us to give up our painful attachment to the *seeming reality* of the body and the world of separation.

*Where can guilt be, when the belief in sin is gone?
And where is death, when its great advocate
is heard no more?*

T-19.IV.B.7:8-9

The ego advocates for death because the ego advocates for the body and calls it reality.

Time Is a Boundary

Einstein believed that the universe was eternal. Then along came Edwin Hubble (1889-1953). He looked down the lens of the then newly installed 100-inch Hooker telescope at Mount Wilson Observatory in California, and he discovered a limit called time. The universe has an age. It is, give or take a few million years, about 13.6 billion years old. Age is a boundary. There is a beginning and there will be an end. Our sun is about 5 billion years old, and it is destined to die. The body is bound by time, and it is destined to die. There is a point of birth and a point of death. All bodies end and when they do, they are turned into ashes, or they return to the earth as food for other organisms. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, after the death of Polonius, we read in Act 4, Scene 3.

Claudius: *Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?*

Hamlet: *At supper.*

Claudius: *At supper? Where?*

Hamlet: *Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes, but to one table.*

That's the end.

Claudius: *Alas, alas!*

Hamlet: *A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.*

Although time and space are limits, ultimately, Einstein is correct in his belief that the universe is eternal. Eternity is reality; however, it is the non-temporal, non-physical Universe of God that is eternal and, therefore, real. Eternity is not limited by temporality because eternity — Reality — does not have form.

*Nothing so blinding as perception of form.
For sight of form means understanding has been obscured.*
T-22.III.6

The outside is a gigantic distraction. It's what's on the *inside* that matters. The Kingdom of Heaven is inside, yet we look without for our definition of reality. God is not angry because we look outside. Looking outside for answers is just a form of dreaming, and dreaming can only occur when we are sleeping. We are unhappy insofar as we think reality lies within the dream. Reality, however, appears in our awakening.

*“Now” is the closest approximation of eternity
that this world offers.
It is in the reality of "now," without past or future,
that the beginning of the appreciation of eternity lies.*
T-13.IV.7:5-6

Similar to time and the body when used for awakening, Miracles (shifts in perception) are learning aids. Ultimately, neither the body, space and time (the world) nor miracles are necessary. Miracles are reparative (shifts from unreality to Truth) and, therefore, exist only in time. There are no Miracles in eternity. In Heaven, miracles are no longer needed. God, Who knows nothing of sin or death created neither sin nor death and wills not that we be bound by them.

*The body no more dies than it can feel.
It does nothing.
Of itself it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible.
It “is” nothing.
It is the result of a tiny, mad idea of corruption
that can be corrected.*
T-19.IV.C.5:2-7

A body does not die because no “body” lives. Having a body is not what gives us Life. The body is a tiny, mad idea that has never left its source in the mind. We cannot correct the body, which in Truth does not exist, but we can correct the mind. Death, were it possible, would be the final and complete disruption of communication between ourselves and God.

*Those who fear death see not how often and how loudly
they call to it, and bid it come to save them from communication.
For death is seen as safety, the great dark savior from the light of truth, the answer to the Answer,
the silencer of the Voice that speaks for God.*

T-19.IV.C.7:1-2

*You recognize, however dimly, that God is an idea . . .
What you find difficult to accept is the fact that,
like your Father, "you" are an idea.*

T-15.VI.4:4-5

God Is an Idea and You Are an Idea.

Jesus asks that we join him in "the idea of peace" for "in ideas minds can communicate" (T-15.VI.&:2). We are learning how to realign our minds with The Mind and, thus, move from *mindlessness* to *mindfulness*. We keep ourselves mindless with habituated unconscious activities: with television, sleep, alcohol, food, and drugs. We have to have food, but we easily overdo eating. According to JAMA (*The Journal of the American Medical Association*), 35 percent of Americans are overweight and 34 percent are obese. That adds up to 69 percent of the population. Eating is literally a decision, and unconscious eating literally weighs us down.

*Appetites are "getting" mechanisms,
representing the ego's need to confirm itself.*

*This is as true of body appetites
as it is of the so-called "higher ego needs."*

Body appetites are not physical in origin.

*The ego regards the body as its home,
and tries to satisfy itself through the body.*

*But the idea that this is possible is a decision of the mind,
which has become completely confused about what is really possible.*

T-4.II.7:5-9

Sleepwalking

We literally sleepwalk our way through life without being truly awake. This idea can make some folks angry with the defense: "I am perfectly awake." If we were perfectly awake, then we would not do unconscious things like engaging in compulsive eating or allowing ourselves to be caught in some other addiction, compulsion, or obsession.

*You are at home in God, dreaming of exile
but perfectly capable of awakening to reality.*

Is it your decision to do so?

*You recognize from your own experience
that what you see in dreams you think is real while you are asleep.
Yet the instant you waken you realize that everything that seemed
to happen in the dream did not happen at all.*

You do not think this strange, even though all the laws

*of what you awaken to were violated while you slept.
Is it not possible that you merely shifted from one dream
to another, without really waking?*

T-10.I.2:1-6

The ego says *you are a body*, a thing, a person; you have a name, a personality, a history, a resume, an identity; and if you let it go and surrender to the Will of God, you will disappear? This is nonsense. What do we lose when we lose an illusion? What is to be gained by dreaming? The ego disappears because it was never real to begin with. Who are we when the mask has been removed?

*The purpose of the Atonement
is to restore everything to you;
or rather, to restore it to your awareness.
You were given everything when you were created,
just as everyone was.*

T-1.IV.3:6-7

The ego is a broken splinter, a tiny segment of the mind. The purpose of the Atonement is to restore “everything” to our awareness. “Everything” means the awareness of Heaven. The perception of the body *seems* to say that the separation from God, from Heaven, has indeed occurred; and the experience of the body *seems* to prove that the separation is real. The ego actually makes up the body so we will forget that we have a mind.

*The ego made the body with eyes
so it could seek out the semblance of sin.*

Dr. Ken Wapnick

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is one of helping us learn how to use the body as a means for healing, rather than as a means of attack. For example, we may think when we overeat that we are giving pleasure to the body; over eating is, however, an attack on the body and everybody knows it. This produces guilt and depression as we blame ourselves for over-indulging and for not being more responsible.

The answer to what we’re looking for (the Peace of God) is not found in this world, and knowing that can lead to despair — unless we are willing to dive deep and uncover Life’s profound meaning. The good news is “Heaven is a decision we must make.” So let’s get on with making that decision.

*Mind creates all things that are,
and cannot give them attributes it lacks,
nor change its own eternal, mindful state.
It cannot make the physical.
What seems to die is but the sign of mind asleep.*

W-167.6:5-6

It is because we are an idea (and not a body) "that we can be in full communication with all that is." The ego would tell us that the body has won, that we are at the mercy of our appetites, hungers, cravings, and desires. But it’s not true. The mind is always in charge. The question is, who rules the mind?

The ego encourages us to see ourselves as something external to mind, as bodies only — which are fragmented, insubstantial, and in and of themselves not real. As long as we prefer to be something other than the Self that God created, we cannot remember the language of perfect communication, and we feel desperate because we are not in full communion with our True Self/the Sonship/God.

The body could be seen as a “reducer,” that is a means of “dumbing-down the mind.” In my 1976 death experience, I actually wanted my body back because I understood three dimensionality. I understood that the body was dumb and stupid. I had, figuratively speaking, stuck my head through a tunnel in time where everything seemed upside down and backwards. I now know it is the other way around. It’s the world — not reality — that is upside down and backwards. I had *temporarily* become too conscious, and I did not know how to reverse the process. We should be grateful for coming to awareness gradually.

*Enlightenment must come little by little
Otherwise it would overwhelm.*

– Sufi Mystic, Indres Shah (1924-1996) India

Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality.

*Time is kind, and if you use it on behalf of reality,
it will keep gentle pace with you in your transition.*

*The urgency is only in dislodging your mind
from its fixed position here.*

This will not leave you homeless and without a frame of reference.

*The period of disorientation, which precedes the actual transition,
is far shorter than the time it took
to fix your mind so firmly on illusions.*

*Delay will hurt you now more than before, only because you
realize it “is” delay, and that escape from pain is really possible.*

T-16.VI.8:1-6

Lovingly,

Jon