

Chapter 31

The Final Vision

Introduction

In this last chapter, many of the major ideas of the Course are presented by way of a final review. The journey ends where it began. We never went anywhere. It has all been a dream, a journey without distance to a goal that never changed, to a Home we never left. Our whole way of thinking was created by a “the tiny mad” idea that it was possible to separate ourselves from God and create our own world. This is an impracticable idea that every mind must inevitably dismiss as unworkable.

We end where we began at a decision-point in the mind with greater wisdom and a willingness to choose once again finally and rightly and to maintain our hold on our corrected vision. We now affirm – “the tiny mad idea” never happened. We never left home and only God is Real.

Helen once complained to Jesus that the Course was too difficult.

And Jesus said:

it is not difficult if you want to learn it.

I. The Simplicity of Salvation

How simple is salvation!

**All it says is what was never true is not true now,
and never will be.**

T-31.I.71-2

Can this be hard to learn by anyone who wants it to be true?

Only unwillingness to learn it

could make such an easy lesson difficult.

**How hard is it to see that what is false can not be true,
and what is true can not be false?**

Why, then, do you persist in learning not such simple things?

T-31.I.7-10

An untrained mind CAN accomplish NOTHING. (W-in.1)

A Lesson in Learning

To learn this Course we must first get in touch with that part of our mind which does not want to learn this Course. What is being asked of us is not that difficult. It only seems difficult because we are so identified with our own self-concept and we do not want to give it up. We have created a whole artificial world devoid of God.

**The lessons you have taught yourself
have been so overlearned and fixed
they rise like heavy curtains to obscure the simple
and the obvious. Say not you cannot learn them.
For your power to learn is strong enough
to teach you that your will is not your own,
your thoughts do not belong to you,
and even you are someone else.**

T-31.I.3.5-6

Overlearning

When we awake in the morning, the dream we were having the night before disappears. In the same way, were we to fully awaken our whole distorted self-image would also disappear. **Overlearning** simply means that we learn something over and over again so much so that it becomes reinforced and we think we cannot break free of this particular way of thinking. We are so addicts to our thoughts that they have become completely habituated. We are so good at creating illusions we don't realize how illusory the world is.

**The Course is practically pleading with us to realize:
We have a mind. That mind is very powerful. That mind can be changed.**

**What has been given you?
The knowledge that you are a mind, in Mind and purely mind,
sinless forever, wholly unafraid,
because you were created out of love.
Nor have you left your Source, remaining as you were created.
This was given you as knowledge which you cannot lose.
It was given as well to every living thing,
for by that knowledge only does it live.**

W-158.1:1-5

To say that *even you are someone else*, means that we have taken the truth of our reality as a Child of God and distorted it into something which is not of God. We attack and attack again and believe our attacks are justified. All of it says the Course is a covering over of our unwillingness to look at the guilt within.

We have taught ourselves that we are something other than who we are in truth. We are convinced that we are bodies with specific histories. We believe our prejudices, opinions, points-of-view, belief systems and attitudes are real. We have so buried the truth of our identity as a Child of God that we think we are completely on our own – in this often confusing world. Truth is, we were created to create the good, the beautiful and the holy but we must first see that goodness and beauty within, before we can share it with the world.

Projection makes perception and perception is a choice. Another way to say this is:

WYSIWYG

From 1981-1988 I owned a graphic arts studio called, High Rock Graphics which led to the production of *Miracles* magazine. Our first computer was a Comp/Set 510 II, about the size of a modern refrigerator. I did not have a built in spell checker and although the words we typed were the words we got, we had to type in codes to indicate type size and style, etc. Only by printing out what we had typed could we see if we had entered the proper codes. In other words, it was not a **WYSIWYG** (wiziwig or WIZ-ee-wig) system, WYSIWYG is an acronym for “what you see is what you get.”

The phrase "**what you see is what you get**," from which the acronym was derived, was also a catchphrase popularized by black comedian and actor, Flip Wilson's (1933-1998) drag persona, Geraldine. The phrase was a statement demanding acceptance of Geraldine's entire personality and appearance. The phrase, “What you see is what you get,” could be applied to the Course's statement **projection makes perception**. We see what we expect to see. Another way to say this is, *if you go looking for trouble, you will find trouble*. In the same way, if we go looking for innoce we will find innocence. If we go looking for God we will find God.



***We should be in all things a God Seeker
at all times a Gof finder, at all times and and in all places***

Christian Mystic, Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)

Our real task is not to create an artificial person, rather we are to seek to discover the Truth of who we really are as a Child of God. The Course is trying to help us re-align our mind with the Christ Mind which is aware of the *knowledge* that lies beyond perception.

Paul be sure to include

**You have continued, taking every step, however difficult,
without complaint, until a world was built that suited you.
And every lesson that makes up the world
arises from the first accomplishment of learning;
an enormity so great the Holy Spirit's Voice
seems small and still before its magnitude.**

T-31.I.1-4

The world we have created, the belief structures and systems of certainty have been so deeply cemented into our minds, it is inevitable that we think they are real - though there is always some underlying awareness, some existential angst which says, that “this is not it.” We have not yet reached the truth.

**Learning is an ability you made and gave yourself.
It was not made to do the Will of God
but to uphold a wish that it could be opposed,
and that a will apart from it was yet more real than it.**

T-31.I.5:1-2

The Holy Spirit Can Use Anything the Ego created for Greater Good. The insanity of this world is the thought that it is possible to think outside of the Mind of God. It's not possible nor would we want think other than in alignment with the Mind of God. The good news is that the Holy Spirit can use anything the ego has created for a greater good – namely, as a tool to help us get back to God. Thus, we can reverse the learning of the ego by unlearning its lessons and learning instead how to return Home. This is why we have “a course” in Miracles, with a textbook, a workbook, and a teacher’s manual. Learning is still an illusion. but it is an illusion which can free us from the ego, its persistent anger and insistence on hate and war.

We do not learn the Course because we don't want to. We have learned how to create our own little world and we have created a self-concept that has nothing to do with the discovery of our true identity as an Awakened Being – The Christ – The Son of God we've always been and are forever meant to be.

**God willed not His Son forget Him.
And the power of His Will is in the Voice that speaks for Him.
Which lesson will you learn? What outcome is inevitable,
sure as God, and far beyond all doubt and question?
Can it be your little learning, strange in outcome and incredible in
difficulty will withstand the simple lessons being taught to you in
every moment of each day, since time began
and learning had been made?**

T-31.I.6.

Learning was made when time began. Before that, there was no need for it. Eternity is eternity and cannot break away from itself – we merely dream a dream we think is real. There is a small voice inside each of us which holds the end of the dream. Here is the memory of who we are as Christ. We have been listening to the wrong voice. The self we made up – a self which never existed now ceases to be. Trying to create our own world, we come to know in despair that no matter how real this world may seem to be, it remains a dream.

**The lessons to be learned are only two.
Each has its outcome in a different world.
And each world follows surely from its source.
The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty
is the world you see.
It is a world of terror and despair.
Nor is there hope of happiness in it.**

**Be innocent of judgment,
unaware of any thoughts of evil or of good
that ever crossed your mind of anyone.**

T-31.I.13.1

Our first step in unlearning is to understand that we have created a self that is not real and along with it a world that is not real. Only then can we begin to awaken to the truth.

We have made up a world based on an intricate thought-system of kill or be killed. All you have to do is to study history and politics just a little to see that this is true. We made a God of love into a God of hate. We took what God created and so abused and misused it, we actually *seemed to have succeeded* in the creation of a world in which love is either absent or appears only now and then, but only momentarily.

There is no greater power in the world.
The world was made by it, and even now depends on nothing else.

T-31.I.3.3-4

Few appreciate the real power of the mind,
and no one remains fully aware of it all the time.
However, if you hope to spare yourself from fear there are some
things you must realize, and realize fully.
The mind is very powerful, and never loses its creative force.
It never sleeps. Every instant it is creating

T-2.VI.9:3-7

We have extremely powerful minds. In fact, The Mind of which we are a part is the greatest power in what the Course calls the universe of universes (T-19.IV.1:4).

Let us be glad that you will see what you believe,
and that it has been given you to change what you believe.
The body will but follow.

T-31.III.6.1-2

I have a friend who has a very strong mind. She is 71 years old and she has never been in a doctor's office or a hospital in her life. She also holds a record with United Airlines where she works as a flight attendant. She began working for United in 1969. She still works for them and she has not missed a day of work since she began. Being at the top of the ranking of flight attendants, she can go anywhere in the world she wants – whenever she wants.

Our minds have built an incredibly complex and increasingly more complicated world. For this reason, learning to make our way through the world is very difficult. The body is very complicated and requires lots of attention; establishing a career, earning a living and paying bills is complicated, dealing with governmental agencies is complicated, and then there comes learning how to live with other egos, which is perhaps the most

complicated thing of all. **If we can learn how to deal with this complicated world, we can learn the simple lessons which lead us to the door of Heaven.**

Principle Number 34 from the 50 Miracle Principles says that the purpose of the miracle is to restore the mind to its fullness.

As it is, we have barely begun to use our minds because they have not yet been restored to FULLNESS. What we have allow our minds to get caught in habituated patterns of thinking, which blocks the incredible depth open to us. Two primary block are:

First, our own defensiveness and

Secondly, projecting our negativity out on to the world without first making any attempt to correct our own thinking.

The Christ Mind (our true mind) **extends only Love.** The ego mind is pessimistic and condemnation. It is reactionary and without any self-analysis simply attacks anyone that seems to oppose it. It attacks whomever it can. It does not want to look inside and realize that “Projection makes perception, the world is what we make it and we attack what we make real.” When we say something like, “What is this world coming too?” we are not only projecting our own prejudice, we actually assist in the promotion of an illusory world.

II. Walking with Christ

**An ancient lesson is not overcome
by the opposing of the new and old.
It is not vanquished that the truth be known,
nor fought against to lose to truth's appeal.
There is no battle that must be prepared; no time to be expended,
and no plans that need be laid for bringing in the new.
There “is” an ancient battle being waged against the truth,
but truth does not respond.
Who could be hurt in such a war, unless he hurts himself?
He has no enemy in truth. And can he be assailed by dreams?**

T-31.II.1.1-7

***You do not change the old by opposing it.
You change it through superior methodology***
American inventor, Buckminster Fuller (1889-1983)

**Let us review again what seems to stand between you
and the truth of what you are.
For there are steps in its relinquishment.
The first is a decision that you make.**

Steps in Spiritual Evolution

Let's keep in mind as we talk about steps that there is no time and taking steps is something which can only happen in time, so we are looking to propel ourselves out of time. The world the "I" sees is not reality. The blind become accustomed to their world by adjusting to it. Likewise, we come to believe in the world we see by adjusting to it. I become a Catholic or a Jew by adjusting to Catholicism or Judaism. The Course is asking us to throw off unhealthy and, therefore, unhelpful "old patterns," we've been hanging on to, in good part, out of tradition.

**The answer that I give my brother is what I am asking for.
And what I learn of him is what I learn about myself.**

T-31.II.6:2

**Then let us wait an instant and be still,
forgetting everything we thought we heard;
remembering how much we do not know.
Because he is your equal in God's Love,
you will be saved from all appearances
and answer to the Christ Who calls to you.**

T-31.II.6:3

Be still and listen. Think not ancient thoughts.

T-31.II.7.1-2

**Be very still an instant.
Come without all thought of what you ever learned before,
and put aside all images you made.
The old will fall away before the new
without your opposition or intent.**

T-31.II.8.1-3

**Forgive your brother all appearances,
that are but ancient lessons you have taught yourself
about the sinfulness in you.**

T-31.II.9.1-7

One of the insight of Freud and Jung was the profound depth of the unconscious mind which has barely been mined. There is so much buried deep within we're not aware of most of it, therefore it behoves us to look at any darkness within.

III. The Self-Accused

**Only the self-accused condemn.
As you prepare to make a choice
that will result in different outcomes,
there is first one thing that must be overlearned.**

T-31.III.1.1-2

**It must become a habit of response so typical of everything
you do that it becomes your first response to all temptation,
and to every situation that occurs.
Learn this, and learn it well, for it is here delay of happiness
is shortened by a span of time you cannot realize.**

T-31.III.1.3-4

**You never hate your brother for his sins, but only for your own.
Whatever form his sins appear to take,
it but obscures the fact that you believe them to be yours,
and therefore meriting a "just" attack.**

T-31.III.1.5-6

The last part of this quotation can be very difficult to hear. **We never hate our brother for "his" sins but for our own.** What I hate in you is a mirror of what I hate in myself. The Christ in us hates no one our self-included.

The Role the Body Plays in the Ego's Strategy

According to the ego – we are all sinners and *we will* be punished for our sins. We have split off from the Mind of God, to hide in a world of our own making, a secret, camouflaged world where pray that God will not be able to find us. And yet, deep down we know it's impossible to hide from God – we can, therefore, only pretend we have succeeded in putting God off long enough so we can carry on our own little story without His interference.

We have split off the mind into billions and billions of separated pieces. We then take this "secret" hidden sin (our guilt) and project it out on to the world. The core of the ego's strategy is "one or the other." I get

rid of my sin by projecting it out on to you. You are the miserable sinner – not me. By bearing testimony to your sin, I am now free of it. Of course this does not work. It actually always backfires as I am now the projector and, therefore, the “possessor” of sin simply because I am the one who sees it so clearly.

**Why should his sins be sins,
if you did not believe they could not be forgiven in you?**

T-31.III.2:1

Make Believe

Did you ever play make believe as a kid? Maybe it was a game of playing “grow up,” as in “playing house,” or “doctor,” or when I was a kid – we played “cowboys and Indians.” In 1958, Country Music Singer, Conway Twitty (1933-1993), had a number one hit song titled, *Make Believe*, in which he bemoaned the fact that all the hopes and dreams he had about a possible love relationship were – *only make believe*, only a dream and nothing more.

In a similar way, the ego plays the game of make believe. It tells us that although our sins are unforgivable we can escape them by simply *making believe they are not there*. That is, we repress our “secret sins and hidden hates” so deeply that we do not allow them to come into our conscious awareness where we can recognize them for what they are – foolishness. God, the Course says, knows not of our plans to change His Will – knowing all such dreams must be make believe they are also not real.

**Why are they (someone elses sins) real in him,
if you did not believe that they are your reality?
And why do you attack them everywhere
except you hate yourself? Are “you” a sin?
You answer "yes" whenever you attack,
for by attack do you assert that you are guilty,
and must give as you deserve.**

T-31.III.2:1

The Sin We See

This is very strong teaching. If we can look deep enough, we will see that **we can only project what we first make real**. If we make sin real outside, we must think it is real inside. There is a great line in the movie, *Working Girl*, where the star, Melanie Griffin, tell her co- star, Harrison

Ford, that she has “**a mind of business and a body for sin.**” Bodies cannot sin. Bodies can do nothing without direction from the mind. Sins are not of the body. The purpose of sin is to get us to leave the mind by seeing the problem in the outside world. The body is not the problem. Our problems are a projection of what we do not want to see in ourselves.

**The body thinks no thoughts.
It has no power to learn, to pardon, nor enslave.
It gives no orders that the mind need serve,
nor sets conditions that it must obey.**

T-31.III.4.2-4

For good or ill, we use the mind to program the body to get it to do what the mind commands. The body is a learning device, a communication device, a vehicle, a computer, a tool. In and of itself, it is nothing. Nothing happens on the level of the body except as directed by the mind. The body does not contain any eternity in it. The body cannot make us do anything – though we may place a lot of blame on the body. It is not the body which is the problem.

**Learning is all that causes change.
And so the body, where no learning can occur,
could never change unless the mind preferred the body change
in its appearances, to suit the purpose given by the mind.
For mind can learn, and there is all change made.**

T-31.III.4.2-5

Learning is a major theme in the Course – learning is why we are here. What we’re learning is how to get out of here, not the world – we’re learning how to get out of the illusion. We’re trying to learn how to be free of insanity. Bodies cannot learn. It is the mind which learns and can, therefore, change.

There is no “I” in Heaven

Real joy and freedom can only come when there is no “I” which can have a problem. In true joy and freedom, there is no ego. It is admittedly very difficult to talk without using the word “I” which seems to imply a separated self. So we’ll have to go on using the word at the same time we realize that there is no separate separate-self.

The solutions to our questions are not in the world or the body. We cannot find what we are looking for on the outside. The Kingdom of

Heaven is “inside” you. Heaven is where God is and Heaven is in the Mind. The **outside** is a place of politics, competition and battles. Among the dictionary definitions for politics is *the use of intrigue or strategy in obtaining any position of power or control.*

This is heavy duty metaphysics but – ***the world can never be healed precisely because there is no world.*** This is “the” central lesson this course attempts to teach. (W-132.6:2-3). It’s not what is happening on the outside that matters. It is what is happening on the inside that needs matters – if I am peaceful, the world can be peaceful. If I am angry and on the attack, I simply add to the insanity of the world.

IV. The Real Alternative

The purpose of this section is to show us that the world offers us no real valid and effective choice. As lesson 128 says,

The world I see holds nothing that I want.

The only thing here which is of any lasting value is lov transcends ever dimension of this world.

There is a tendency to think the world can offer consolation and escape from problems that its purpose is to keep.

T-31.IV.1.1

Stip The world hold no consolation, no matter our wealth or health or status in the community. There can be no peace in this world precisely because **the purpose of the world is to keep the real problem hidden and, therefore, unsolved and unsolvable.** It seems as though within this world, **the choice among illusions is the only choice.** Very often, the choice in politics is one of choosing between the lesser of two evil – which means there is really no right choice in the world. We are, each of us, in control of the outcome of our choosing. The only choice, which will ever bring us peace, is to choose the Holy Spirit rather than the ego as our teacher.

**Thus you think, within the narrow band from birth to death,
a little time is given you to use for you alone;
a time when everyone conflicts with you,
but you can choose which road will lead you out of conflict,
and away from difficulties that concern you not.**

The ego solution to problems is simply to kill off, mentally or physically the one who is responsible for my problem. Therefore, we

quickly go to war psychologically or physically. War, of course, always exacerbates our problems. We attempt to solve our problem by getting rid of problem, which seem to be outside. The world offers us a host of possible solutions, none of which will work. It is only dealing with the darkness lurking within that I have a real chance of finding freedom, and thus, true happiness.

The purpose of the world is to keep us tied to the world by seeing the problem in the world external to ourselves. According to the Course, the only problem in the world is separation and the only solution is to look with love and mercy on all I see.

**Real choice is no illusion.
But the world has none to offer.
All its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death.
There is no choice in its alternatives.
Seek not escape from problems here.
The world was made that problems could not “be” escaped.**

We can never ever escape from our guilt unless we are truly willing to look at it. The problem is that we think the problem is someone else’s guilt, not our own. Therefore, we repeatedly project our problems on to others – “if only you could change, everything would be okay.” All the while we fail to see, “if only I could change, all my problems would disappear.”

**They have but one end. And each is but the means to gain that end,
for it is here that all its roads will lead,
however differently they seem to start;
however differently they seem to go.
Their end is certain, for there is no choice among them.
All of them will lead to death.**

T-31.IV.2.6-11

**There is no choice where every end is sure.
Perhaps you would prefer to try them all,
before you really learn they are but one.
The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number,
but the time must come when everyone begins to see
how like they are to one another.
Men have died on seeing this, because they saw no way
except the pathways offered by the world.**

The Course tells us over again that the world offers us nothing. Material wealth, fame, fortune – all is fleeting and of no eternal value. Hopefully, when we realize there is nothing out there, we might look inside for a yet deeper meaning. The only way we can find our way Home is to go back to the decision-making mind. When we learn that the world offers us nothing, we can go back to the point where the world came from; namely, from a projection of the mind. Otherwise, we may conclude that there simply is no hope here.

Existentialism

This meaningless and absurdity of life was seen by existentialists like Soren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Frederick Nietzsche, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Some of the existentialists claimed that life had either no meaning or others like Soren Kierkegaard claimed that the only meaning in this life is the meaning we give it.

Life has no meaning the moment you lose the illusion of being eternal

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

Thing is Jean-Paul, Eternity is Reality and there is nothing to lose.

Albert Camus (1913-1960), whose views contributed to the rise of the philosophy known as absurdism – seeing the meaninglessness of life claimed that “*there is only one serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide.*” That is, whether it was better to commit suicide than to try to live within a meaningless world. If you think there is no meaning, then suicide is the only option within the context of a meaningless world. Fortunately, Camus concluded that whether there is a God or not, it was better to live as though there is a God.

The purpose of the world is to learn that there is no world.

Ken Wapnick, Ph.D.

***The world is an illusion.
Those who choose to come to it
are seeking for a place where they can be illusions,
and avoid their own reality.
Yet when they find their own reality is even here,
then they step back and let it lead the way.***

W-155.2:1-3

***What other choice is really theirs to make?
To let illusions walk ahead of truth is madness.
But to let illusion sink behind the truth
and let the truth stand forth as what it is, is merely sanity.***

W-155.2:4-6

The Course would agree with many of the existentialists who say that the world is hopeless. It is hopeless because it is the ego's world. To say that the purpose of the world is to learn there is no world simply means that there is no "purpose" here. To find the truth, we must transcend the absurdity of ego's world. The Course would agree even more with the Transcendentalists who say that meaning can be found in life by following not the world's laws but a deeper inner form of guidance which Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) referred to as one Inner Genius, i.e. the Holy Spirit.

Learn now, without despair, there is no hope of answer in the world.

But do not judge the lesson that is but begun with this.

**Seek not another signpost in the world
that seems to point to still another road.**

No longer look for hope where there is none.

**Make fast your learning now,
and understand you but waste time**

**unless you go beyond what you have learned to what is yet to learn.
For from this lowest point will learning lead to heights of happiness,
in which you see the purpose of the lesson shining clear, and
perfectly within your learning grasp.**

T-31.IV.4.1-8

The Power of Decision

The ego does not want us to get back to our mind, preferring to hide in a senseless dream. The ego holds to an existentialist view that the world is hopeless and meaningless and the best one can do for the sake of survival is to adjust to it. Atheists are hopeless. Believers filled with faith and hope can more easily turn in the direction of the Son. Pun intended.

To choose for the world is to choose a dream, by choosing Heaven we can awaken to Heaven. The power of decision has no power in the world because there is nothing to choose between, suicide or not suicide, kill or be killed are the only decisions open to the ego. The only real true choice is in the Mind and the only clear choice is to follow Jesus' lead and accept the Atonement for ourselves. There is nothing here more important that

love and God is Love. Hell is division. Hell is brokenness, and faithlessness. Heaven is Oneness and Unity.

War is hell.

Union Army General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891)

To the ego Heaven is hidden. To Spirit Heaven is revealed. Heaven means being awake. In hell we dream nightmare dreams. Realizing there is no answer in the world we can begin to look elsewhere; namely, into the mind where the Kingdom of Heaven abides. It has always been there. It always will be. The world is a place of conflict. It has never worked. It is at best a training ground.

The learning that the world can offer but one choice, no matter what its form may be, is the beginning of acceptance that there is a real alternative instead.

T-31.IV.6.1

The only real alternative is to choose for the Atonement, that is to choose for Heaven by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Reason tells us that there is a way home. There is an answer to the riddle of life.

Think not that happiness is ever found by following a road away from it. This makes no sense, and cannot be the way. To you who seem to find this course to be too difficult to learn, let me repeat that to achieve a goal you must proceed in its direction, not away from it.

The reason we have trouble with the course is that we do not want to learn it and the attraction of guilt is yet stronger than is the attraction of God.

Teaching the Obvious -- Getting Back to the Mind

Everything happens on the level of mind – **Everything!**

What is happening on what we might call *the ordinary mind level* is happening within the context of an illusion. While reincarnation can be said to be true “in time.” Reincarnation is an illusion because it implies time and there is no time in Heaven. Heaven by definition is eternal and not finite.

The central task of the mystics is to look responsibly at the core of our thought processes and accept responsibility for our thoughts. By

understand the nature of the illusion thus do we also see a way to transcend it. In time, mysticism is an ongoing **process**. We see the blocks in order to see that it is an illusion and for that very reason we can transcend it.

Rather than getting deeper into the world the Course ask us to turn our focus ever more clearly toward Heaven. Thus do we get back to the place in our mind where learning occurs in order to change teachers. All we are asked to do is to stop listening to the ego and to start listening to Spirit. It's a matter of listening thus the importance of meditation.

**There "is" a choice that you have power to make
when you have seen the real alternatives.**

T-31.IV.8.1

When you know, the alternative is between Heaven and hell, the Holy Spirit and the ego. Which way shall we go?

Penitence and Sacrifice

Sacrifice as the opposite of the principle of Justice is a very important idea in the Course. To the ego, in order to receive God's Love, we must pay a price -- we must be *penitent*. The importance of penitence is central to Catholic doctrine. A *penitent* is someone who confesses their sins and submitted to a penance (punishment). We have to make a donation, pay a fine, or go to jail and/or having no money, we can resort to magic. We can say so many "Hail Mary's," and then can be freed of sin. Heaven, however, cannot be bought with money nor through rights of contrition. Justice is a system in which no one loses and everyone wins. Justice is the Holy Spirit's correction of injustice. All of God's Children are equally loved. Justice, is, *the rock on which salvation rests*. T-25.VII.12:7).

**If I intervened between your thoughts and their results,
I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect;
the most fundamental law there is.**

T-2.7.1:4

Cause and Effect

The most basic law there is in the universe is the law of cause and effect. *As we give, so do we receive*. As we pardon, so are we pardoned. The ego works backward, rather than win-win it goes for lose-lose. I will lose then so will you. Anger is never justified and war is the world's worst example of ego's in power. Hitler not only killed 6+ million Jews. He also killed 8 million Germans. Nobody ever wins a war. No war can be justified.

Living within the divide minds, we all share the same thought-system of the ego. We also all fortunately all share the same thought-system of the Atonement. Only from a position of guilt can I perceive guilt and sin. By the same token, if I see you as innocent, I must be aware of my innocence.

There “is” no path that does not lead to Him.

T-31.IV.11.7

V. Self-Concept versus Self

The Game of Selfishness – The Strategy of the Ego

The ego tells us that we are guilty and sinful. We have done something wrong, we have succeeded in breaking away from God. In essence, we said to God – *Your love is not enough, I'm sorry but my individual needs have to be met.* “Me first!” becomes part of my intolerable secret dream. I can only be free by keeping my separate identity or so thinks the ego. The way I hold on to my separate identity is by projecting all of the problems of the world on to you -- you (Democrat), you (Republican), you (Muslim), you (Mexican) – you are the bad one (not me) and someday God is going to get you.

**Concepts are needed while perception lasts,
and changing concepts is salvation's task.**

T-31.VIII.1:3

Let's remember that “Projection makes perception.” Everything depends upon how it is seen and who the “seer” is. If I am looking at the world through ego-glasses and I am projecting all my judgment and analysis on to the world, then I cannot see anything other my own projection. All concepts are illusory which is why the Course tells us that

The memory of God comes to the quiet mind.

T-23.I.1:1

**Let all this madness be undone for you,
and turn in peace to the remembrance of God,
still shining in your quiet mind.**

T-23.I.8:9

We must come to the quiet mind before we can begin to see. When someone is very upset over something, we naturally want to try to comfort them and to quiet them. If a baby is distressed, we will pick up the baby and try to sooth it. If anyone is upset for any reason, we will do what we can to ease their discomfort. Thus, the Course is trying to assure us that all of our fear and worries are so much nonsense and are ungrounded.

Jesus is not asking us to give up our self. He is asking that we change the concept of the self we have and realize that we are already the Christ. Yes, the old self must die but only so that something much great can come into Being. Rather than looking out on to a fearful world – where all of life is a matter of “kill or be killed,” we can begin develop the concept of a responsible, kind and forgiving person.

The learning of the world is built upon a concept of the self adjusted to the world's reality. It fits it well.

T-31.V.1.1

The building of a concept of the self is what the learning of the world is for.

This is its purpose;

that you come without a self, and make one as you go along. And by the time you reach "maturity" you have perfected it, to meet the world on equal terms, at one with its demands.

T-31.V.1.4-7

“The Concept of the Self,” which we have created is not our “true self” – the loving being, the Child of God we were meant to be – rather it is a kind of *caricature or parody of who we are in truth*. Much of our conscious and unconscious angst, anxiety and misery arises because we know we are not being the Being we were meant to be – we have not yet completed the Atonement. We are not yet capable of doing what Jesus did. We cannot say, “I and the father are One.”

A concept of the self is made by you.

It bears no likeness to yourself at all. It is an idol, made to take the place of your reality as Son of God.

T-31.V.2:1-3

Here is how I explained this in my near-death experience of 1976. But first another quote from Chapter 3.

As you approach the Beginning, you feel the fear of the destruction of your thought system upon you as if it were the fear of death.

T-3.VII.5:10

The Fear of Death and the Collapse of the Ego

Again, I remember my ordinary identity and the brief statement I made in life. Then something says, “Oh, yeah! Jon Mundy.” Then there is a giggle, a roll of laughter, and I see how puny and insignificant that identity was. My striving, my worrying and working through problems, were all suddenly absurd—even funny.

There occurs now an element that is truly difficult to describe, a point of absolute insanity, in which the ego judges itself to death. This seeming reality was then seared, stamped out, excluded from existence. It is not that I become unconscious. Something becomes far, far more conscious than ever. The self I had created, however, was burned, not because it was bad, but simply because Jon Mundy, as I had known him, was unreal—or meaningless. Like a pair of old pants, no longer needed, that identity was now tossed away.

We are so afraid of losing our identity – we hang on to it so tenaciously and yet we’re grasping for straws. We try to hold on to a character we have made, afraid to let go of the truth of identity of who we really are as Children of God.

**The concept of the self the world
would teach is not the thing that it appears to be.
For it is made to serve two purposes,
but one of which the mind can recognize.**

T-31.V.2.1-2

**Beneath the face of innocence
there is a lesson that the concept of the self was made to teach.
It is a lesson in a terrible displacement,
and a fear so devastating that the face that smiles above it
must forever look away, lest it perceive the treachery it hides.**

T-31.V.5.1-2

If I put on a face of innocence, then I say to the world – I am an innocent victim. Therefore, you must be the sinful one. God is going to destroy you – not me. Underneath this means that I am the accomplice to God – I am the murderer because I am the one who has found you out.

The lesson teaches this:

**"I am the thing you made of me, and as you look on me,
you stand condemned because of what I am."**

T-31.V.5.3

What we are saying is, "I am a miserable, rejected person because of you. My wrath and anger are completely justifiable because of you. You should feel guilty because of what you have done."

On this conception of the self the world smiles with approval, for it guarantees the pathways of the world are safely kept, and those who walk on them will not escape.

T-31.5.4

The way we must deal with our guilt is to project it out. We actually like for others to suffer as that shows that God is getting them instead of us. This kind of thinking is spiteful, unkind, and insane.

Concepts are learned. They are not natural.

Apart from learning they do not exist.

They are not given, so they must be made.

T-31.V.7:1-3

Concepts are something that we make up. They are not given to us by God.

**Now must the Holy Spirit find a way
to help you see this concept of the self
(the one we have created) must be undone,
if any peace of mind is to be given you.
Nor can it be unlearned except by lessons aimed
to teach that you are something else.**

T-31.V.8.1-4

We are so wrapped up in the concept of the self that we cannot get back to the origin of the concept in order to undo it. True reality does not have a concept. Pure Being, pure Presence or Essence just is.

Stop Thinking

In order to have mystical awareness, there is something which must happen first. **First, we must stop thinking!** We have to stop interpreting, and analyzing. Here is how Douglas Harding (1909-2007), an English

Philosopher and mystic, had a profound mystical experience in 1961. He spent the rest of his life investigating the question of True Identity. His best known work is, *On Having No Head: and the Rediscovery of the Obvious*. For more information, go to www.headless.org.



*What actually happened was something absurdly simple
and unspectacular: I stopped thinking.
A peculiar quiet, an odd kind of alert limpness
or numbness, came over me.
Reason and imagination and all mental chatter died down.
For once, words really failed me.
Past and future dropped away.
I forgot who and what I was,
my name, manhood, animalhood, all that could be called mine.
It was as if I had been born that instant, brand new,
mindless, innocent of all memories.
There existed only the Now, that present moment
and what was clearly given in it.
To look was enough.
And what I found was khaki trouser legs terminating downwards
in a pair of brown shoes, khaki sleeves terminating sideways in a pair
of pink hands, and a khaki shirtfront terminating upwards in—
absolutely nothing whatever!
Certainly not in a head.*

The concept of the self has always been

**the great preoccupation of the world.
And everyone believes that he must find the answer
to the riddle of himself.
Salvation can be seen as nothing more
than the escape from concepts.**
T-31.V.14.1-6

What the ego has done is to keep our true self hidden by creating another self which seems quite real.

**Seek not your Self in symbols.
There can be no concept that can stand for what you are.**
T-31.V.15:2-3

Doctors, Reverends, Captains, Lieutenant, Your Grace, Your Eminence, Your Holiness – all such symbols are meaningless in Heaven. I once attended a workshop where a martial arts teacher insisted on being called “master.”

**If you can be hurt by anything,
you see a picture of your secret wishes.
Nothing more than this.**
T-31.V.15.8-9

Egos are easily hurt. Have you ever said you are “upset,” or “disappointed,” or “disgusted,” or “offended” because of what someone said. If so you buy into an illusion. Who is the “you” that can be hurt by an insult. If you can be hurt, then you are not yet aware of who you are in truth. You still think an illusion of yourself is real.

Of course your body can be hurt – but we are talking about the mind – only an ego can be hurt and YOU ARE NOT AN EGO. This is the most basic teaching of this Course – the thing which can be insulted, the thing which can be hurt, offended or upset is nothing. Christ could not be insulted and you are in truth cannot be insulted. There is no egos in Heaven. Jesus is on a cross in part to show that while his body could be kill as Eternal Spirit he could not be killed and so it is for everyone. There is no such thing as death. Egos also always fail because they never contained any reality. Dreams are dreams, illusions are illusions and nothing more. The ego likes to be hurt; it wants to be betrayed; it wants others to be insensitive as that is proof of it’s reality.

**. . . be you thankful that the learning of the world
is loosening its grasp upon your mind.
And be you sure and happy in the confidence that it will go at last,
and leave your mind at peace.**

T-31.V.16.6-7

**The world can teach no images of you unless you want to learn them.
There will come a time when images have all gone by,
and you will see you know not what you are.
It is to this unsealed and open mind that truth returns,
unhindered and unbound.
Where concepts of the self have been laid by
is truth revealed exactly as it is.**

T-31.V.17.1-9

**There is no statement that the world is more afraid to hear than this:
I do not know the thing I am,
and therefore do not know what I am doing,
where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.
Yet in this learning is salvation born.
And What you are will tell you of Itself.**

T-31.V.17.7-9

This chapter is all about learning. Learning only occurs in the mind. The body is a learning device. It is an instrument, a tool without the mind (spirit) – it is literally nothing.

VI. Recognizing the Spirit

**You see the flesh or recognize the spirit.
There is no compromise between the two.
If one is real the other must be false,
for what is real denies its opposite.**

T-31.VI.1.1-3

It is for this reason that the Course also says, *At no single instant does the body exist at all* (T-18.VII.3:1). The word (thought) literally cannot be made flesh. Spirit and the body are mutually exclusive. Heaven and the world are mutually exclusive. There is no lasting interface. The mind can do with the body whatever it will. It can turn its operation over to Spirit or to ego. It's a simple choice we all make a thousand time a day.

**If you choose flesh,
you never will escape the body as your
own reality, for you have chosen that you want it so.
But choose the spirit,
and all Heaven bends to touch your eyes and bless
your holy sight, that you may see the world of flesh
no more except to heal and comfort and to bless.**

T-31.VI.1.1-8

*The miracles does not awaken us from the dream.
It merely establishes the fact that we are dreaming.
And, what we are dream is not true.*

Dr. Kenneth Wapnick

**It is your world salvation will undo,
and let you see another world your eyes could never find.**

T-31.VI.3.1-6

I used the above quote in the description of what happened in what I call my near-death experience. I literally saw another world that under “normal” conditions my eyes would never have allowed me to see.

**Be not concerned how this could ever be.
You do not understand how what you see arose to meet your sight.
For if you did, it would be gone.**

T-31.VI.7-8

In essence, Jesus is telling us that we do not know how this whole world came into being or how the process works. We don't truly as yet know what mind or Spirit means. The good news is – if we pay attention to what we are learning, we will, indeed, eventually understand. In order to know the truth – first we must come to learn to forgive. We can learn how what we see on the outside is really on the inside. If can begin to learn these simple lessons, then we will get Home.

**The veil of ignorance is drawn across the evil and the good,
and must be passed that both may disappear,
so that perception finds no hiding place.**

T-31.VI.3.9

All that needs to be done is that we undo what has been done. All that we need to do is to let go of our illusions. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the

Miracle itself doesn't do anything – it undoes the complication. It is a process of purification – and as we let go of the unessential – truth will dawn on our minds.

VII. The Savior's Vision

Learning is change.

**Salvation does not seek to use a means
as yet too alien to your thinking to be helpful,
nor to make the kinds of change you could not recognize.**

Process

We do not just suddenly awaken from nightmares into reality. We cannot move from a self-concept (from a face of innocence with underlying guilt) into the idea of our self, which has no self-concept. The first step is to change the concept to one that is more kind, benevolent and right-minded.

**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.**

T-16.VI.8::1-3

Unlearning – Word Fasting

Our task then in doing the Course is to go through the day practicing “unlearning” of what the ego has taught us. We have not yet reached Heaven – but we are on the way Home. Think of the joy someone who is overweight begins to feel when they begin to lose the excess bulk which has weighed them down. The same thing happens to *A Course in Miracles* student as they begin to lose their illusion, their prejudices and projections which they have formerly place on to the world. We are literally becoming lighter by becoming “disillusioned.”

We all develop the concept of our “good self” at the expense of someone else’s bad self. What are we projecting when we throw our projections out on to the world other than – “I am the good one. You are the bad one.” This is the world seeking out the “evil-doers.” It is never me. It is always you. Thus it is, when we find the bad in someone else, we grab on to it.

**You could not recognize your "evil" thoughts
as long as you see value in attack.**

T-31.VII.2.1

Attack and Love cannot co-exist.

As we do not want to see our own evil, we choose to see it in other – in Muslims perhaps or Mexicans. We are aware of our own evil thoughts but we think our thoughts are justified. To attack someone else is to attack ourselves. There is no better way to keep Love away than to attack – whether that attack be placed on someone else or on ourselves. How then do we change our concept of ourselves? How do we bring our minds back to truth?

**But should “one” brother dawn upon your sight
as wholly worthy of forgiveness,
then your concept of yourself is wholly changed.**

T-31.VII.2.6

As we learn begin to see innocence in others, we begin to see it in ourselves.

**The concept of yourself that now you hold
would guarantee your function here
remain forever unaccomplished and undone.**

**And thus it dooms you to a bitter sense
of deep depression and futility.**

T-31.VII.6.1-2

The reason that the concept of our self remains forever unaccomplished and undone is that that it is not real. As Marilyn Monroe said, “*It’s all make believe – isn’t it?*” The self that we make up is not our true self. It is a pretense, a masquerade, a charade and deep inside we know it’s not who we are in truth. The only reality there is – that there ever can be – is the realization of the Self as God created us, not as a separate being but as one Self – United with our Creator.

**Your dark dreams are but the senseless, isolated scripts
you write in sleep. Look not to separate dreams for meaning.**

Only dreams of pardon can be shared.

They mean the same to both of you.

T-30.VII.6:15-18

**The concept of the self stands like a shield,
a silent barricade before the truth, and hides it from your sight.**

T-31.VII.7.1

This shield keeps us from going back to the decision-maker where a real change can be made. The world is one gigantic diversion which keeps us from looking at the truth. A major distraction is the body – its many pleasures and its many pains.

**All things you see are images, because you look on them
as through a barrier that dims your sight and warps your vision,
so that you behold nothing with clarity.
The light is kept from everything you see.
At most, you glimpse a shadow of what lies beyond.
At least, you merely look on darkness,
and perceive the terrified imaginings
that come from guilty thoughts and concepts born of fear.
And what you see is hell, for fear “is” hell.**

Everything here is hell when we choose to look at the world through the eyes of fear. And we choose fear because we are afraid of love.

**All that is given you is for release;
the sight, the vision and the inner Guide
all lead you out of hell with those you love beside you,
and the universe with them.**

T-31.VII.7.1-7

**Whatever form temptation seems to take,
it always but reflects a wish to be a self that you are not.
And from that wish a concept rises,
teaching that you are the thing you wish to be.
It will remain your concept of yourself
until the wish that fathered it no longer is held dear.**

T-31.VII.12.1-3

Basic Psychology of the Course

Wishing to be a self that we are not simply means wishing to be a separated individual rather than to recognize oneself as part of a greater whole. Seeing myself as separate also leads to feelings of guilt (because I have separated myself from the whole), and thus, the sense that something

has gone wrong – i.e., I am a sinner. Not wishing to see myself as sinful, I then project this sin on to you – that is, on to anyone.

We keep our separate self as an individual intact by staying away from the decision part of our mind that could choose correctly.

The Atonement is the final lesson (T-2.II.5:2). There is no learning in Heaven – Heaven being completion. The Sonship is a perfect creation and perfection is not a matter of degree. Having complete our lessons, having completed the Atonement we can now– rest in God. Once we graduate learning is no longer necessary as we now Know. Knowing and Heaven are synonyms. We have come Home – learning is no longer necessary. What we have instead is creation – that is the extension of Love.

The ego made up learning so we would keep ourselves from remembering by keeping ourselves preoccupied with “the problem,” whatever is the problem I must deal with today.

The Holy Spirit forgives everything because God created everything.

Do not undertake His function, or you will forget yours.

*Accept only the function of healing in time,
because that is what time is for.*

God gave you the function to create in eternity.

You do not need to learn that, but you do need to learn to want it.

*For that all learning was made
and what the solution is. Learning was created.*

T-9.III.8:1-8

**Be vigilant against temptation, then,
remembering that it is but a wish, insane and meaningless,
to make yourself a thing that you are not.**

T-31.VII.14.1

Temptation is simply a wish to make an illusion real. All temptation is a false attempt to substitute another will for God's. Let's take the temptation to over-eat, or to drink too much, in each instance we run the risk of overdoing it and thus becoming addicted and yet the Course tells us that bodily appetites are not physical in origin. Everything is a choice. It all comes from the mind.

“This” is temptation; nothing more than this.

**Can this be difficult to choose “against”?
Consider what temptation is,
and see the real alternatives you choose between.
There are but two.
Be not deceived by what appears as many choices.
There is hell or Heaven,
and of these you choose but one.**

T-31.VII.14.5-7

Why should we chose against ourselves? What makes it hard is that we think we are choosing against the self we have ourselves created, the self we daily seek to make real. We are afraid of losing the self we have created. Nothing could be better as we shall then attain the remembrance of who we really are. As we let go of the self we created, we find ourselves become more and more aware -- less and less angry, less judgmental, less dis-ease of mood or mind and more hopeful. Open to the truth of who we really are we find ourselves naturally being kind, patient and ever committed to the truth knowing that one day we shall give our mind fully gladly and forever back to God.

VIII. Choose Once Again

**Temptation has one lesson it would teach,
in all its forms, wherever it occurs.**

**It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body,
born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty,
and bound by what it orders him to feel.**

**It sets the limits on what he can do;
its power is the only strength he has;
his grasp cannot exceed its tiny reach.**

Time and time again, sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes in not so subtle ways, the ego would tempt us to think of ourselves as “bodies only.” Hardly anything is more ephemeral than a body, plant, animal or human. The body is not a prison and yet we lock ourselves into our bodies by abusing them, by literally not “taking care” of them.

**Would you be this,
if Christ appeared to you in all His glory, asking you but this:
Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of
the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there.
For He “has” come, and He “is” asking this.**

T-31.VIII.1.1-6

**How do you make the choice?
How easily is this explained!
You always choose between your weakness
and the strength of Christ in you.**

T-31.VIII.2.1-3

**Trials are but lessons that you failed to learn presented once again,
so where you made a faulty choice before
you now can make a better one, and thus escape all pain
that what you chose before has brought to you.
In every difficulty, all distress, and each perplexity
Christ calls to you and gently says,
"My brother, choose again."**

T-31.VIII.3.1-2

This is one of the most quoted parts of the Course. It is also among the hopeful passages in the Course. Time and time again, we are put in a position where we must choose. The ego is always thinking about meeting its needs.

**And now we say "Amen."
For Christ has come to dwell in the abode
You set for Him before time was, in calm eternity.
The journey closes, ending at the place where it began.
No trace of it remains.
Not one illusion is accorded faith,
and not one spot of darkness
still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone.
Thy Will is done, complete and perfectly,
and all creation recognizes
You, and knows You as the only Source it has.
Clear in Your likeness does the light shine forth
from everything that lives and moves in You.
For we have reached where all of us are one, and we are home,
where You would have us be.**

T-31.VIII.12.1-8

