

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM Text, Section 2.VII

### Cause and Effect

This section, with its discussion of our responsibility for controlling our fear by guarding our thoughts, is an obvious continuation of the previous sections.

#### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>You may still complain [Ur: all the time] about fear, but you nevertheless persist in making yourself fearful [Ur: most of the time]. <sup>2</sup>I have already indicated that you cannot ask me to release you from fear. <sup>3</sup>[because] I know it does not exist, but you do not. <sup>4</sup>If I intervened between your thoughts and their results [fear], I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect; the most fundamental law there is [in this world]. <sup>5</sup>I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking [by depriving it of results]. <sup>6</sup>This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course. <sup>7</sup>It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough [Ur: at all carefully, except for a relatively small part of the day, and somewhat inconsistently even then]. <sup>8</sup>You may feel that at this point it would take a miracle to enable you to do this, which is perfectly true. <sup>9</sup>You are not used to miracle-minded thinking, but you can be trained to think that way. <sup>10</sup>All miracle workers need that kind of training [Ur: have to be trained that way. I have to be able to count on them.].

#### • Study Question •

1. *What reason does Jesus give to explain why he cannot interfere with our minds and take away our fears?*



Jesus reinforces the idea that, although we “complain about fear” (1:1), we are the ones making ourselves fearful. Our minds are the source of fear, not anything outside of our minds, and only our minds can control it. Not even Jesus can release us from fear! (1:2) How could he “release” us from something he knows does not actually exist? (1:3)

Our fears are the result of our thoughts. If, somehow, Jesus or God were able to cancel out our fears *in spite of* our thoughts, they would be violating “the most fundamental law there is” (1:4), namely, the law of cause and effect. On top of that, by overriding the effects of our minds, they would be depreciating the power of our thinking, both in devaluing it and in belittling it.

To make light of our mind’s power “would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course” (1:6). That tells us something very interesting about what the purpose of this Course *is*: One purpose of the Course is to restore our awareness of the power of our minds. This has been another thread of meaning that runs through the whole chapter. In T-2.III.4:6, we were told that by looking past error to the Atonement,

spiritual vision reestablishes the power of the mind. In T-2.IV.3:13, we were advised against denying the mind's effects (the existence of the body) because that also denies the mind's power. In T-2.VI.9, Jesus told us we need to *fully realize* just how powerful the mind really is. In fact, that paragraph also told us that we have *chosen* to see the mind as weak because we are afraid of our thoughts and their power! If Jesus were to take away our fear and depreciate the mind's power, he would actually be reinforcing the ego's deception and *strengthening* the cause of our fear!

Instead, he reminds us that we don't guard our thoughts carefully enough, which is the same thing he said back in T-2.VI.4:6 about "mind wandering." At this point, we encounter one of those uncanny instances in the Text where Jesus seems to know exactly what we are thinking in reaction to what he just said. In this case, what nearly every student thinks when they read that we need to guard our thoughts and to keep our minds from wandering is, "Yeah, sure! Fat chance, with *my* mind!"

The Buddhists speak of our "monkey mind," which jumps wildly about when we try to sit quietly in meditation. Not just to any monkey, but to a monkey who is drunk and has been stung by a scorpion!

In a meditation group I was in, one woman declared, "My mind is more full of chatter than anyone's!" Of course she was wrong. *All* of us have monkey minds. If we cannot control our minds when we hunker down to meditate, focusing our full attention on stilling those wild, insane thoughts, what hope do we have of guarding our thoughts in the thick of life? Why, it would take a miracle, right? And, as Jesus humorously points out, that "is perfectly true" (1:8). It *will* take a miracle, but this is a *course* in miracles! We aren't used to thinking in terms of miracles, but we can "be trained to think that way" (1:9). That is exactly the kind of training we need as miracle workers (1:10), and it is exactly the training this course is offering.

Think about it a moment: Jesus is saying that at least one aspect of the miracle being offered by this course is instruction in how to guard our thoughts and rid our minds of the constant ego chatter that feeds our fear. Now, *that* is a training worth having!

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>I cannot let you leave your mind unguarded, or you will not be able to help me. <sup>2</sup>Miracle working entails a full realization of the power of thought in order to avoid miscreation [Ur: and real avoidance of miscreation]. <sup>3</sup>Otherwise a miracle will be necessary to set the mind itself [Ur: *itself*] straight, a circular process that would not foster the time collapse for which the miracle was intended. <sup>4</sup>The miracle worker must have genuine respect for true cause and effect as a necessary condition for the miracle to occur. [Ur: Nor would it induce the healthy respect that every miracle-worker must have for true cause and effect.]

• Study Question •

2. *Given the context up until now, in sentence 4, what are the “true cause and effect” for which we must have “genuine respect”?*

The same themes continue in this paragraph. Jesus says he cannot “let” us leave our minds unguarded, which sounds to me a bit like a teacher who refuses to let his pupil continue some undesirable habit. He is going to keep at us about this until we change our habits; he is going to pester us until we learn to guard our thoughts. If he does not do so, and we do not learn, we will not be able to help him in working miracles. There is a “necessary condition” (2:4) in which a miracle can occur, a prerequisite. As miracle workers we “must have a genuine respect for true cause and effect” (2:4), and “a full realization of the power of thought” (2:2). If we don’t, we may miscreate (2:2). Miscreation, or projection, often occurs when we deny the mind’s power and try to place the blame for our distress on something outside of our mind. A mind like that is not in a position to extend a miracle.

To me, what this is saying is much the same as has been said before: To offer a miracle the miracle worker must be in his or her own right mind, however briefly. If we are not, then a miracle is needed to set our own mind straight. I’m not sure I understand the part about this being “circular” and not fostering time collapse (2:3); what it seems to imply is that a purely internal miracle is a short-circuited miracle, not as effective at saving time as a miracle that is given to another. Why, I can’t say. It seems to underscore the importance of extension, and it does emphasize the great need to guard our thoughts so that we *can* offer miracles to others.

### Paragraph 3

3. [Ur: Miracles cannot free the miracle-worker from fear.] <sup>1</sup>Both miracles and fear come from [Ur: his] thoughts. <sup>2</sup>If you are [Ur: he is] not free to choose one, you [Ur: he] would also not be free to choose the other. <sup>3</sup>By choosing the miracle you *have* rejected fear, if only temporarily [Ur: Remember, we said before that when electing one person, you reject another. It is much the same in electing the miracle. By doing so, you have rejected fear.] <sup>4</sup>You have been fearful of everyone and everything. <sup>5</sup>You are afraid of God, of me and of yourself [Ur: and of practically everyone you know at one time or another. This can only be because] <sup>6</sup>You have misperceived or miscreated us, and believe in what you have made. <sup>7</sup>You would not have done this if you were not afraid of your own thoughts. <sup>8</sup>The fearful *must* miscreate, because they misperceive creation. [Ur: The vulnerable are essentially miscreators, because they misperceive Creation.] [Ur: You and Bill are willing to accept primarily what does *not* change your minds too much, and leaves you free to leave them quite unguarded most of the time. You persist in believing that when you do not consciously watch your mind, it is unmindful. It is time to consider the whole world of the unconscious, or unwatched mind. This will frighten you, because it is the source of fright.... The unwatched mind is responsible for the whole content of the unconscious, which lies above the miracle-level. {There follows here a lengthy discussion of the “basic conflict” in the human psyche from the stand-

point of different schools of psychotherapy, with Jesus pointing out good points and shortcomings in each school. See Appendix.} No one as yet has fully recognized either the therapeutic value of fear, or the only way in which it can be truly ended. When man miscreates, he *is* in pain.] <sup>9</sup>When you miscreate you are in pain. <sup>10</sup>The cause and effect principle now becomes a real expediter, though only temporarily. <sup>11</sup>Actually, "Cause" is a term properly belonging to God, and His "Effect" is His Son. <sup>12</sup>This entails a set of Cause and Effect relationships totally different from those you introduce into miscreation. <sup>13</sup>The fundamental conflict in this world, then, is between creation and miscreation. <sup>14</sup>All fear is implicit in the second, and all love in the first. <sup>15</sup>The conflict is therefore one between love and fear.

• **Study Question** •

3. *As he so often does, Jesus tells us that we have been "fearful of everyone and everything" (3:4), and in particular, "of God, of me and of yourself" (3:5). Examine your own mind and try to identify specific ways in which you are, or have been, afraid of Jesus, of God, or of yourself.*

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Having said that we need to respect true cause and effect (2:4), Jesus goes on to point out that thoughts, as a cause, can have one of two effects: fear, or miracles (3:1).

There is no more self-contradictory concept than that of "idle thoughts." What gives rise to the perception of a whole world can hardly be called idle. Every thought you have contributes to truth or to illusion; either it extends the truth or it multiplies illusions (W-pI.16.2:1-3).

As the last section said, "There are no idle thoughts" (T-2.VI.9:13). Every thought produces fear or miracles; which outcome we experience depends entirely on what we choose. This is why guarding our thoughts is such an important part of our training.

We may wish it was not possible to choose fear. If we were not free to choose fear, however, we would not be free to choose miracles (3:2). We only need to do one thing—choose a miracle; the choice for one is the choice against the other (3:3). It's just like an election, where a yes vote for one candidate is a no vote for the others. Our choice may only be temporary (3:3); we may swing back into ego rather quickly. Still, choosing a miracle is all we need, and just for an instant.

We are not really aware of how thoroughly fear has dominated our minds. Jesus says we have been afraid of "everyone and everything" (3:4), including "God,...me [Jesus] and...yourself" (3:5), and "practically everyone you know" (Urtext). I found it informative to look at ways in which I have, now or in the past, been afraid of God or of Jesus. We tend to imagine God judging us as we judge ourselves. As the Course says of Jesus in a later passage, "Some bitter idols have been made of him who would be only brother to the world" (C-5.5:7).

Why have we become afraid of Jesus, God, other people, and ourselves? Because we have "misperceived or miscreated" (3:6) them, and we have believed our images to be real. Perhaps we have seen ourselves as guilty, God as vengeful and punitive,

and Jesus as God's hatchet man. Perhaps we felt the abuse coming from others was well-deserved. Perhaps we thought God was vastly huge and indifferent to us, and no more concerned with what happens to us than we are concerned about a mosquito. But there is nothing about God, Jesus, or even about ourselves that is fearful.

What causes these misperceptions? It is because we were afraid of our own thoughts! (3:7) Towards the end of the last section (T-2.VI.9:10), we were told that fear of our own thoughts is the fear at the root of all our other fears. It all points back to what was said in the first section of this chapter: All our projections grow out of the insane notion that we can *and have* distorted God's creations with the power of our minds (T-2.I.1:7–12). That makes us afraid, and "The fearful *must* miscreate" (3:8). That leads to pain (3:9).

When Jesus speaks of the cause and effect principle becoming "a real expediter, though only temporarily" (3:10), I think he is referring to the idea that discomfort or pain *do* serve the purpose of alerting us to the need for healing, and therefore act like a governor to set a limit on our miscreation. This is what he means by "the therapeutic value of fear" (Urtext). He covered the same line of thought recently in T-2.V.7:8, T-2.III.3:4–6 and 4:6–8. When we suffer the inevitable consequences of our miscreation, we realize there must be a better way! We learn to associate cause with effect: Listening to the ego brings pain.

This is not *true* Cause and effect, however; those terms apply only to God and His Son or His creation (3:11–12). When we speak of the effects of miscreation (pain), we have to remember that these effects have no existence except within our minds, in the world of our dreams.

In this world—the world we seem to be living in—the basic conflict is between creation and miscreation, or between love and fear (3:13–15). The choice between creation and miscreation *is* the choice between love and fear, because to believe in God's unique creation is to know we are loved, and are extensions of love, while to believe in our miscreations is to think God is angry, and that we have been damaged by our own thoughts.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>It has already been said that you believe you cannot control fear because you yourself made it, and your belief in it seems to render it out of your control. <sup>2</sup>Yet any attempt to resolve the error [Ur: the basic conflict] through attempting the mastery of fear is useless. <sup>3</sup>In fact, it asserts the power of fear by the very assumption that it need be mastered. <sup>4</sup>The true [essential] resolution rests entirely on mastery through love [Ur: the mastery of love]. <sup>5</sup>In the interim, however, the sense of conflict is inevitable, since you have placed yourself in a position [the strangely illogical position] where you believe in the power of what does not exist.



• Study Question •

4. *When fear arises we often want to make it go away, but this paragraph advises us that we should not try to “master fear.” If we can’t take control of fear and conquer it, what should we do with our fears? (You may find it helpful to refer to paragraph 5.)*
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Fear *seems* to be out of our control because we made it and believe in it (4:1). This is an application of a principle stated previously in T-1.VI.4:2: “You can never control the effects of fear yourself, because you made fear, and you believe in what you made.” As we have seen, we really *are* responsible for our fear. You might therefore think, “Okay. I made my fear. Now I need to take control of it and make it go away.” And yet the Course tells us that trying to remedy our fear by mastering fear “is useless” (4:2)! In fact, trying to “do something” about our fear actually asserts that fear is a powerful force. If it needs to be “mastered” then it must be something real (4:3). As the “est” training used to teach, “What you resist persists.” By active resistance to fear, we actually give it strength.

“The true resolution rests entirely on mastery through love” (2:4), or as the Ur-text had it, “the mastery of love.” The word “mastery” occurs only in this section and in M-4.IX.1:10, which quotes this section. It seems to mean mature spiritual development. This sentence, to me, is saying that the final answer to fear is having my mind wholly given over to love, becoming a master of love, a mature worker of miracles, an advanced teacher of God. In other words, fear will not be beaten down; it will be displaced by love.

Suppose you were given the job of getting all the air out of a bottle. If you approach the job directly, trying somehow to suck out all the air, it becomes a very difficult job. However, if you simply pour water into the bottle, the water replaces the air effortlessly. If we open our hearts to love, fear will be replaced without any struggle.

“In the interim,” that is, the interim between our current state and spiritual mastery, “the sense of conflict is inevitable” (4:5) because we have believed in the power of fear—something that actually does not exist. This necessitates a temporary compromise approach. What is “strangely illogical” is that, although fear does not exist, we still must take it into account, and we still experience conflict over fear, *because we believe in it*. That’s what the next paragraph begins to talk about.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>Nothing and everything cannot coexist. <sup>2</sup>To believe in one is to deny the other. [Ur: To whatever extent one is believed in, the other *has been* abolished.] <sup>3</sup>[Ur: In the conflict,] Fear is really nothing and love is everything. [(This recognition is really the basis for the castration complex.)] <sup>4</sup>Whenever light enters darkness, the darkness is abolished. <sup>5</sup>What you believe is true for you. [This line was inserted by the editors to make for a transition to the next block of material. Originally, what occupied this space was a discussion of the Oedipal complex and castration anxiety from the standpoint of the Course. This discussion ended with these sentences: “The oedipal complex is a miniature of the true Separation fear, and the castration complex is a way of denying

that it ever occurred. Like all pseudo-solutions, this kind of distorted thinking is very creative, but false. The Separation *has* occurred.] <sup>6</sup>In this sense the separation *has* occurred, and to deny it is merely to use denial inappropriately. <sup>7</sup>However, to concentrate on error is only a further error. <sup>8</sup>The initial [Ur: true] corrective procedure [Ur: which has already been described as the proper use of the spiritual eye (or true vision),] is to recognize temporarily that there is a problem, but only as an indication that immediate correction is needed [Ur: mandatory]. <sup>9</sup>This establishes a state of mind in which the Atonement can be accepted without delay. <sup>10</sup>It should be emphasized, however, [Ur: It is worth repeating] that ultimately no compromise is possible between everything and nothing. <sup>11</sup>Time is essentially a device by which all compromise in this respect can be given up. <sup>12</sup>It only seems to be abolished by degrees, because time itself involves intervals that do not exist. <sup>13</sup>Miscreation [Ur: The faulty use of creation has] made this necessary as a corrective device. <sup>14</sup>The statement “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” needs only one slight correction to be meaningful in this context; “He gave it *to* His only begotten Son.”

• Study Question •

5. *We need to clearly recognize that when fear arises we have a problem in our minds; we should not inappropriately deny that we are fearful. Yet concentrating on the error is “only a further error” (5:7). What should we do without delay?*



The paragraph is continuing the line of thought from Paragraph 4 concerning the experience we have of engaging in a conflict with fear, attempting to master it. “Fear is really nothing” (5:3), no more than a lack of belief in love. But fear is true for us because of our belief in it (5:5). Really, fear is nothing, and love is everything; there can be no conflict between them *in* reality. When love enters, fear is abolished (5:4). We experience feelings of separation and fear, and despite their ultimate unreality, they *do* need to be dealt with; we cannot simply ignore them. Yet we do not want to *concentrate* on them, either; that is “a further error” (5:7). If we try to master fear by focusing on it, we end up making it stronger.

The parenthesized remark about castration complex from the Urtext is clearly an aside meant for the psychologists who were taking these notes, and, as is mentioned later, leads into a fairly lengthy discussion of the Oedipal complex and castration anxiety. I had to look up “castration complex” to see what it refers to: “in psychoanalytic theory, unconscious thoughts and motives stemming from fear of damage to or loss of sexual organs as punishment for forbidden sexual desires.” There is a line in this discussion in the Urtext that refers to “the unwillingness to be seen, or submit error to light,” which results in a subconscious fear of punishment. I think that is what is meant here: our unwillingness to bring our errors, our choice for separation, into the light for healing results in an experience of fear. Castration complex is an example of (“a miniature of”) this (meaningful to the psychologically educated), resulting from an unwillingness to confront and bring our forbidden sexual desires into the open for healing.

We attempt to repress or deny the fact that we *did* choose separation, and we think it is real. “In this sense the separation *has* occurred” (5:6). There is no use denying the fact that we experience it, we believe it to be true, and we suffer guilt over it. Denying it just causes more fear.

What is the proper corrective procedure when we experience fear? The *initial step* is recognizing that we have a problem (5:8), acknowledging the presence of fear and our belief in separation. But only “temporarily”; we do not want to linger in this stage of “I’ve got a problem.” Instead, see the problem as an indication that “immediate correction is needed” (5:8); we need to accept the Atonement “without delay” (5:9). Admitting the existence of the problem—taking responsibility for our egos—and realizing that the problem is indicative of a need for healing, shifts our state of mind so that we are now *ready* to accept the Atonement. Our mind’s miscreations have not harmed us; they do not really exist. We are okay; we are still at home in God. Merely opening to the light of Atonement will dispel the darkness of fear.

Does this acknowledgment—that what we believe is true for us (5:5)—mean that we should stop aspiring to a fear-free mind, and just accept that we will go on having various fears forever? By no means! “Ultimately no compromise is possible between everything and nothing” (5:10). The goal is mastery, to displace fear entirely with love. Time itself is just a way of “giving us time” to give up any compromise between the two (5:11). This process of giving up our belief in nothing seems to be happening “by degrees”—bit by bit—over a long interval of time, but “it only seems” that way (5:12). Time itself does not really exist. The appearance of intervals of time is nothing more than a corrective device made necessary by the nature of the error (5:12–13). Through this compromise process, a gradual relinquishment of compromise, we will eventually give up compromise entirely; that is the moment at which spiritual mastery truly begins.

The final sentence (5:14) seems out of place in this paragraph, even though Jesus says the Bible verse he quotes (John 3:16) “needs only one slight correction to be meaningful in this context.” One way it can be understood as fitting the context of paragraph 5 would be to understand “the world” to mean “the world of time,” so that overall the sentence means: God so loved the world of time we made that He gave it to His beloved Son as a corrective device, to be used to gradually emerge from his errors. There really is no “gradual” about it; there can’t be any compromise between everything and nothing. Often the Course will point out that God, or the Holy Spirit, does not attack or destroy any of the things we made; rather, they are transformed into gifts to be used for our healing.

Jesus continues to elaborate on this Bible verse in the next paragraph, drawing out the notion that there is only *one* Son, and that Son is either complete or not.

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>It should especially be noted that God has [Ur: *has begotten*] only *one* Son. <sup>2</sup>If all His creations are His Sons, [Ur: *and if...the Sonship is One, then*] every one must be an integral part of the whole Sonship [Ur: *Soul must be a Son of God, or an integral part of the Sonship. You do not find the concept that the whole is greater than its parts difficult to understand. You should therefore not have too great difficulty with this.*]



<sup>3</sup>The Sonship in its oneness transcends the sum of its parts. <sup>4</sup>However, this is obscured as long as any of its parts is missing. <sup>5</sup>That is why the conflict cannot ultimately be resolved until all the [Ur: all of the individual] parts of the Sonship have returned. <sup>6</sup>Only then can the meaning of wholeness in the true sense be understood. [Ur: The concept of minus [negative] numbers has always been regarded as a mathematical rather than an actual expedient. (This is a major limitation on mathematics as presently understood.) Any statement which implies degrees of difference in negation is essentially meaningless. What can replace this negative approach is a recognition of the fact that as long as one part (which is the same as a million or ten or eight thousand parts) of the Sonship is missing, it is *not* complete. In the Divine psyche, the Father and the Holy Spirit are not incomplete at all. The Sonship has the unique faculty of believing in error, or incompleteness, if he so selects.] <sup>7</sup>Any part of the Sonship can believe in error or incompleteness if he so chooses. <sup>8</sup>However, if he does so, he is believing in the existence of nothingness. <sup>9</sup>The correction of this error is the Atonement.

• Study Question •

6. *The final resolution of the conflict cannot come until everyone is returned to God (6:5). Why is that?*



The reference to negative numbers plays on the fact that such numbers are imaginary. You cannot really have, for instance, minus three apples. Whether one part of the Sonship is missing, or eight thousand parts, ten thousand parts, or a million parts, does not matter; it is not complete. So the “restoration” of the Sonship, which appears to take place gradually over time, is really an all-or-nothing thing.

If the world of time has become a gift of God to His Son, useful for our healing, making the process seem less drastic by appearing to extend over time, it is equally important to recognize that it is a gift to *God's one and only Son* (6:1). This world's only true purpose is the healing of God's Son, which is greater than any individual healing. There is only one Son, and yet this same paragraph speaks of “all His creations,” “His Sons” (plural), “every one,” and “all the parts of the Sonship.” There is some sense in which God created *many* sons, and yet only one Son, of whom the many sons are integral parts. Even while emphasizing there is only one Son, he says that the wholeness of the one Sonship cannot be completely understood until all its parts have been returned (6:5–6). To me a very inadequate example, yet still helpful, is to think of a vocal quartet; you cannot appreciate the quartet as a whole until every one of its four voices is properly singing its part. Likewise, you cannot understand the “wholeness” of the Sonship while any part (any individual mind) still believes “in error or incompleteness” (6:7). Thus, the *final* end to fear will only come when all minds have wholly been returned to love.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>I have already briefly spoken about readiness, but some additional points might be helpful here. <sup>2</sup>Readiness is only the prerequisite for accomplishment. <sup>3</sup>The two

should not be confused. <sup>4</sup>As soon as a state of readiness occurs, there is usually some degree of desire to accomplish, but it is by no means necessarily undivided. <sup>5</sup>The state does not imply more than a potential for a change of mind [Ur: a shift of will]. <sup>6</sup>Confidence cannot develop fully until mastery has been accomplished. <sup>7</sup>We have already attempted to correct the fundamental error that fear can be mastered, and have emphasized that the only real mastery is through love. [Ur: The Correction was that *only* love can be mastered. When I told you {Helen} that you were "ready for Revelation", I did not mean that you had in any way mastered this form of communication. However, you yourself attested to your readiness by insisting that I would not have said so if it had not been true. This *is* an affirmation of readiness. Mastery of love necessarily involves a much more complete confidence in the ability than either of you has attained. But the readiness at least is an indication that you believe this is possible.] <sup>8</sup>Readiness is only the beginning of confidence. <sup>9</sup>You may think this implies that an enormous amount of time is necessary between readiness and mastery, but let me remind you that time and space are under my control.

• Study Question •

7. *This paragraph addresses the way we sometimes overestimate our spiritual maturity. Many people feel that they are sincerely "ready" to be enlightened, or saved, or transformed, and yet are distressed that it doesn't seem to be happening. How could you apply what this paragraph says to that state of mind?*



We may feel we are ready to be freed of our fears, or to achieve that spiritual mastery being spoken about. We may wonder, "Why do I need this long learning process?" Jesus advises us not to confuse readiness with mastery (7:3). The idea is simple. Being *ready* does not mean you have *arrived*, any more than a first year medical student who is ready to learn is qualified to perform brain surgery.

He says he has spoken of this before. On those occasions (T-1.I.43:1; T-1.III.1:8; T-1.III.7:1; T-2.V.1:1; T-2.V.4:1-2), he was referring to readiness to work miracles. Most likely Jesus is referring to the most recent reference:

The healer who relies on his own readiness is endangering his understanding. You are perfectly safe as long as you are completely unconcerned about your readiness, but maintain a consistent trust in mine (T-2.V.4:1-2).

This confirms our understanding of mastery as including not just mature spiritual development but also the ability to serve as a worker of miracles. Mastery means the only *true* mastery, the mastery of love.

Readiness is nothing but the prerequisite for accomplishment (7:2-3). You may have a strong desire to be at home in God, "but it is by no means necessarily undivided" (7:4). Your mind is not yet completely changed, and it *will* take time, during which your unwillingness will be abolished by degrees (7:5; 5:11). Readiness for change is only the beginning of confidence, not the fullness of it (7:8). However, it does indicate that you believe the mastery of love is possible. If it seems to us as if

making this unequivocal choice, or getting to the place of actually working miracles, will take “forever” (“an enormous amount of time” (7:9)), Jesus asks us to remember that time and space are under his control. We need to be patient with ourselves, and patient with the process.

## Answer Key

1. He says that to intervene between our thoughts and their results would be tampering with the basic law of cause and effect; also, if he *was* able to just take away our fear despite the fact that we were still holding on to it, he would be depreciating the power of our minds, which would not be helpful for us.
2. The cause is the mind, and the effect is the result of thought in the world: behavior, bodily condition, and the whole visible world.
3. Answer depends on your own experience.
4. To respond to fear, replace it with love. Turn to God's love for forgiveness for our unloving thoughts (accepting the Atonement), and allow His love to flow through us to bring forgiveness to others (offering miracles).
5. Recognize the feeling of fear or separation as an indicator that immediate correction is needed, and then accept the Atonement.
6. We are not individuals, but all parts of the one Son. All the parts must be complete before the Sonship can be whole.
7. Being ready simply means you are ready to begin learning. What we are learning is to be single-minded (no compromise), and at the start we still have divided desires. We want to go home, but we also cling to our body and our specialness. It's going to take some time for that to change; that is what time is *for*. We therefore need to be patient with ourselves as we go through the learning process.

## Appendix

# Urtext Discussion of the Basic Conflict in the Human Psyche as Seen in Several Schools of Psychology

The unwatched mind is responsible for the whole content of the unconscious, which lies above the miracle-level. All psychoanalytic theorists have made some contribution to the truth in this connection, but none of them has seen it in its true entirety. (The correct grammar here is a sign of your better cooperation. Thank you.)

Jung's best contribution was an awareness of individual vs. collective unconscious levels. He also recognized the major place of the religious spirit in his schema. His archetypes were also meaningful concepts. But his major error lay in regarding the deepest level of the unconscious as shared in terms of CONTENT. The deepest level of the unconscious is shared as an ABILITY. As MIRACLE-MINDEDNESS, the content, (or the particular miracles which an individual happens to perform) does not matter at all. They will, in fact, be entirely different, because, since I direct them, I make a point of avoiding redundancy. Unless a miracle actually heals, it is not a miracle at all.

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The content of the miracle-level is not recorded in the individual's unconscious, because if it were, it would not be automatic and involuntary, which we have said repeatedly it should be. However, the content IS a matter for the record, which is NOT within the individual himself.

All psychoanalysts made one common error, in that they attempted to uncover unconscious CONTENT. You cannot understand unconscious activity in these terms, because "content" is applicable ONLY to the more superficial unconscious levels to which the individual himself contributes. This is the level at which he can readily introduce fear, and usually does.

Freud was right in calling this level pre-conscious, and emphasizing that there is a fairly easy interchange between preconscious and conscious material. He was also right in regarding the censor as an agent for the protection of consciousness from fear. HIS major error lay in his insistence that this level is necessary at all in the psychic structure. If the psyche contains fearful levels from which it cannot escape without splitting, its integration is permanently threatened. It is essential not to control the fearful, but to ELIMINATE it.

Here, Rank's concept of the will was particularly good, except that he preferred to ally it only with man's own truly creative ability, but did not extend it to its proper union with God's. His "birth trauma", another valid idea, was also too limited, in that it did not refer to the Separation, which was really a FALSE idea of birth. Physical birth is not a trauma in itself. It can, however, remind the individual of the Separation, which was a very real cause of fear.

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The idea of "will-THERAPY" was potentially a very powerful one, but Rank did not see its real potential because he himself used his mind partly to create a theory OF the mind,

but also partly to attack Freud. His reactions to Freud stemmed from his own unfortunate acceptance of the deprivation-fallacy, which itself arose from the Separation. This led him to believe that his own mind-creation could stand only if the creation of another's fell. In consequence, his theory emphasized rather than minimized the two-edged nature of defenses. This is an outstanding characteristic of his concepts, because it was outstandingly true of him.

He also misinterpreted the birth-trauma in a way that made it inevitable for him to attempt a therapy whose goal was to ABOLISH FEAR. This characteristic of all later theorists, who do not attempt, as Freud did, to split off the fear in his own form of therapy.

No one as yet has fully recognized either the therapeutic value of fear, or the only way in which it can be truly ended. When man miscreates, he IS in pain. The cause and effect principle here is temporarily a real expeditor. Actually, Cause is a term properly belonging to God, and Effect, which should also be capitalized, is HIS Sonship. This entails a set of cause and effect relationships which are totally different from those which man introduced into the Miscreation.