

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 21, Section V

Reason as the Undoing of Insanity

Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's *Complete and Annotated Edition* (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is exactly the same as the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often quite different in the CE, which results in different reference numbering as well. I will try to give references to both the CE and the FIP versions when they differ. Footnotes are from the CE unless indicated:

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font.

Overview of the Section

This section highlights the crucial importance of *reason* as a tool in our awakening.

Paragraphs 1 & 2

Perception selects, and makes the world you see. ²It literally picks it out as mind directs it. ³The laws of size and shape and brightness would hold, perhaps, if other things were equal. ⁴They are *not* equal. ⁵For what you look for you are far more likely to discover, regardless of its color, shape, or size, than what you would prefer to overlook. ⁶The still, small Voice for God¹ is not drowned out by all the ego's raucous screams and senseless ravings, to those who *want* to hear.

¹. 1 Kings 19:11-12 (KJV): "And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

2 Perception is a choice and not a fact. ²But on this choice depends far more than you may realize as yet. ³For on the voice you choose to hear and on the sights you choose to see depends entirely your whole belief of what you *are*. ⁴Perception is a witness but to this, and never to reality. ⁵Yet it can show you the conditions in which *awareness* of reality is possible, or those where it could never be. ⁶Reality needs no cooperation from you to be itself. ⁷But your awareness of it needs your help, because it is your choice.

• **Study Question** •

1. *Paragraphs 1 & 2. Which of the following statements seems to best summarize the main points of these paragraphs?*
 - A. *The ego's loud screams cannot drown out the still, small Voice for God.*
 - B. *What we see with our physical senses shows us, not reality, but what we have chosen to see as true about ourselves.*
 - C. *Perception can show us either the conditions in which awareness of reality is possible, or the conditions in which such awareness is impossible.*

The first paragraph begins by repeating what has so often been said earlier in the Text: The world we see is determined by our perception of it, which selects among its parts and only shows us what we want to see (1:1–2). You'd think that larger, more distinct, or brighter things would be the first things we see, but no! We see what we are looking for, and overlook what we'd rather not see, regardless of “color, shape, or size” (1:3–5). The good news is that, if we *want* to hear the “still, small Voice for God,” we *will* hear it, no matter how loudly the ego tries to shout it down (1:6).

One line we really should all memorize and integrate into our understanding is, “Perception is a choice and not a fact” (2:1). Recently I observed two members of a family arguing, when one said to the other, “Are you doubting my perception?” I wanted to say, “Of course she is! Perception is your choice, and your perception of anything *is not a fact.*” It would have been inappropriate for me to interrupt, but it made me aware of how often people believe their perceptions *are* facts, and thankful that I've learned the difference from the Course. “Perception selects” (1:1). We choose to see flaws and wrongs in one another, but the good news is that we can choose a different kind of perception. We can choose to listen to the Voice for God, and see with His eyes, He Who sees holiness everywhere.

What we don't realize when we choose to see “sin” in others is that it profoundly affects how we see *ourselves*; in fact, our belief of what we are is “*entirely*” dependent on which voice we listen to, and which sights we choose to see (2:2–3). That is so, I believe, because the choice of how to see others and the choice of how we see ourselves is actually the same, one choice. Perception of sin or of holiness depends entirely on our choice, and perception will never show us reality (2:4). If we take seriously what the

Course is telling us here, we will stop thinking that perceptions can tell us *anything at all*. Perceptions do not tell *us*; we tell *them*. We choose what we want them to convey to us. They *never* report facts, and we cannot depend on our perceptions to reveal the truth to us! This is why we are told to recite the words, “I do not know what anything, including this, means” (T-14.XI.6:7, CE/FIP), and to ask the Holy Spirit to give us a right perception.

But even the right perception does not show us reality (2:4). Reality is reality whether we choose to be aware of it or not (2:6); our choice does not affect *what* is real, but it does affect our *awareness* of what is real (2:5). If we choose to listen to the ego, we will see and experience certain things, especially things about *ourselves*; things that are *not* real. If we choose to listen to the Holy Spirit, we will see things that *reflect* reality, and that foster our *awareness* of reality. To be aware of reality requires that we *choose* to see its reflection; our choice is key (2:7).

Paragraphs 3 & 4

3 Listen to what the ego says and see what it directs you see, and it is sure that you will see yourself as tiny, vulnerable, and afraid. ²You will experience depression, a sense of worthlessness, and feelings of impermanence and unreality. ³You will believe that you are helpless prey to forces far beyond your own control and far more powerful than you. ⁴And you will think the world you made directs your destiny. ⁵For this will be your faith. ⁶But never believe, because it is your faith, it makes *reality*. ⁷There is another vision and another Voice in which your freedom lies, awaiting but your choice. ⁸And if you place your faith in them, you will perceive another self in you.²

4 This other self sees miracles as natural. ²They are as simple and as natural to it as breathing to the body. ³They are the obvious response to calls for help, the only one it makes. ⁴Miracles seem unnatural to the ego, because it does not understand how separate minds can influence each other. ⁵Nor could they do so. ⁶But mind cannot *be* separate. ⁷This other self is perfectly aware of this, and thus it recognizes that miracles do not affect another's mind, only its own. ⁸They always change *your* mind. ⁹There *is* no other.³

². This “other self,” which is the source of miracles and the home of reason (see the next two paragraphs), seems to be the same thing as the previous section’s “other part” of your mind. This means that it too would be what the early dictation calls the “Soul.”

³. This means that when your mind influences another mind by giving a miracle, that other mind is not really *other*. Like you, it is part of the one Mind.

• **Study Questions** •

2. Which of the following is **not** listed here as a result of listening to the ego?
(More than one)
 - A. Seeing ourselves as tiny, vulnerable and afraid
 - B. Experiencing depression
 - C. Really being separated from God
 - D. Feeling worthless, impermanent and unreal
 - E. Thinking we are helpless before forces beyond our control
 - F. Thinking that the world controls our destiny
 - G. Our faith in all these things will make them real

3. Our power to choose does have another option besides the ego: God's Voice and the vision given by Him. This other vision will show us a different "self." What things below are **not** true of this other Self?
 - A. It sees miracles as natural and as simple as breathing
 - B. It responds to all calls for help with miracles
 - C. It cannot understand how separate minds can influence one another
 - D. It is aware that minds cannot be separate
 - E. It knows that miracles do not change another's mind, only its own

Carrying on with the thought that how we choose to perceive others and the world determines how we see ourselves, Jesus asserts that if we listen to what our egos say, and see what it *directs* us to see, we will inevitably see ourselves "as tiny, vulnerable, and afraid" (3:1). If that isn't bad enough, it gets worse! You will be depressed, and feel unworthy, impermanent and unreal (3:2). You will believe that you are the victim of the world, unable to escape powerful forces that you cannot control (3:3). You will believe that the world you see determines the course of your life (3:4). Our egos *want* us to see the world as terrifying and dangerous, and to see ourselves as helpless victims of it. And, if we're honest, a lot of the time we *do* feel that way. The world seems a fearful place, and we feel helpless when confronted with the immensity of its dangers.

That picture of things is where we have placed our *faith*. It's what we *believe* to be true. But our faith in the world as powerful and ourselves as helpless victims *does not make that reality* (3:6). We have another choice about how to see the world and the Voice we want to listen to (3:7). If we place our faith in that vision and that Voice, we will see "*another self*" in us (3:8).

The basic principle is, how we choose to see the world and the inner voice we listen to determines how we see ourselves. See the world as sinful and fearful, listen to the ego's voice, and we will see ourselves as tiny, vulnerable, and afraid. See the world as holy, listen to the Voice for God, and we will see ourselves as a completely different Self. Paragraph 4 goes on to describe this other self.

Think about how you normally think about breathing: You *don't* think about it! It just goes on without any thought or effort. To the "other self," that's what miracles are like.

As natural as breathing (4:1–2). They just happen all the time, time after time. You do not see attack, you see a call for help, and you instinctively, without thought or effort, respond with a miracle—always (4:2). It never occurs to this other self to respond with anything *but* a miracle (4:3). The “miracle” being referred to here, of course, is the miracle of forgiveness, the miracle of seeing others as sinless that evokes their own sense of innocence.

If this sounds idealistic—well, it *is* the ideal, the truly higher self we all aspire to be. We *are* that self. All our belief that we are less than that is due to our choice, conscious or unconscious, of listening to our egos and seeing as it wants to see. The ego cannot understand miracles, “because it does not understand how separate minds can influence each other” (4:4). And of course, *separate* minds could *not* influence each other—but minds are *not* separate (4:5–6)! Therefore, as the Course says elsewhere:

The miracle comes quietly into the mind that stops an instant and is still. It reaches gently from that quiet time, and from the mind it healed in quiet then, to other minds to share its quietness (T-28.Int.11:1-2 (FIP), T-28.I.11:12 (CE)).

You *have* done miracles, but it is quite apparent that you have not done them alone. You have succeeded whenever you have reached another mind and joined with it (T-16.II.4:1-2).

The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to deny the denial of truth*. The sick must heal themselves, for the truth is in them. Yet having obscured it, the light in *another* mind must shine into theirs because that light *is* theirs (T-12.II.1:5-7 (FIP), T-12.II.6:5–7 (CE)).

The quotes above all refer to “other” minds or “another” mind, but here, in 4:6–9, the Course is quite emphatic in correcting its own terminology! It declares that the reason minds cannot *be* separate is that there is only *one mind*. Miracles always change *your* mind, and, “There is no other.” Our seeming experience of separate minds is part of the illusion.

Paragraph 5

5 You do not realize the whole extent to which the idea of separation has interfered with reason. ²Reason⁴ lies in the other self you have cut off from your awareness, and nothing you have allowed to stay in it is capable of reason. ³How can the segment of the mind devoid of reason understand what reason is, or grasp the information it would give? ⁴All sorts of questions may arise in it, but if the basic question stems from reason, it will not ask it. ⁵Like all that stems from reason, the basic question is obvious, simple, and remains unasked. ⁶But think not reason could not answer it.⁵

• Study Question •

4. (a) Which of the following statements about reason are true, according to this paragraph, and which are false?
- A. The separated mind or ego is incapable of reason; reason lies in the “other self” of which we have lost awareness
 - B. The ego does not have reason, but can understand reason when it hears it
 - C. Reason can answer “the basic question”
- (b) What is “the basic question” being referred to, also called (10:2 (FIP); 12:2 (CE)) “the question the ego will never ask”? (Hint: see Section IV, paragraphs 2 and 3 (FIP), paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 (CE).)

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If the notion that there is only one mind seems hard to swallow, it is clear evidence of the truth of 5:1: “You do not realize the whole extent to which the idea of separation has interfered with reason.” Our assumption of separate minds just demonstrates how completely our thinking has been distorted by our belief in separation.

This paragraph reintroduces the concept of *reason*, first mentioned in IV.4:3–4 (FIP), IV.3:6–7 (CE), which will dominate the rest of this chapter, and carry over to Chapter 22. First of all, notice how the first three paragraphs contain frequent references to faith,

⁴. *Reason* is the mind’s capacity to think logically based on the facts and thus arrive at sound conclusions, bringing beliefs into conformity with reality. This goes much further than logic, which merely means thinking in a manner that is consistent with one’s premises. If premises are false, then applying them consistently will yield false conclusions. Along these same lines, the Course says that the ego is “perfectly logical, though clearly insane” (T-7.V.3:4), because the ego applies logical thinking to insane premises. Its conclusions, therefore, are totally discordant with reality. Reason, in contrast, applies logic to *true* premises and thus arrives at true conclusions. You can see what this looks like in paragraph 6 in this section, where sane conclusions (like the idea that God’s plan “must have been accepted by the Son of God”) are obtained by reasoning from sane premises (like “what God wills for him he must receive”).

⁵. “The basic question” is quite likely the question that the previous section says the ego will never ask: “What if you looked within and saw *no* sin?” (T-21.IV.2:6). However, it may refer to any truly basic question, such as the one mentioned a few paragraphs later in the current section: “But it *is* meaningful to ask why you are unaware of what is so” (8:2).

belief and perception, carrying on the theme of Section III, “Faith, Belief and Vision.” We will be looking at the way that reason can redirect faith and belief to produce true perception, which leads to vision, instead of being the tools of the ego to produce wrong perception.

Reason is a characteristic of the “other self” (5:2). The ego is incapable of it, although the ego *can* use logic (5:2; see Footnote 4). The ego *is* a lie, and is wholly based on lies that fly in the face of reality. It cannot begin to understand reason or reason’s results (5:3). It cannot even accept a reasonable *question* (5:4)! That’s why it never asks the reasonable, obvious, simple question, suggested in the previous section: “What if you looked within and saw *no sin*?” (5:5) That *is* a reasonable question. If I look at myself and, at first blush, decide that what I see within means I must be sinful, it would make sense to wonder, “What if I’m wrong? What if I take a closer look and discover there is really no sin there?” The ego can’t even conceive of that question. Reason, however, can not only *ask* the question, but it can also *answer* it (5:6). Jesus proceeds in the next paragraph to apply reason to come up with an answer.

Paragraph 6

6 God’s plan for your salvation could not have been established without your will and your consent. ²It must have been accepted by the Son of God, for what God wills for him he must receive. ³For God wills not apart from him, nor does the will of God wait upon time to be accomplished. ⁴Therefore, what joined the will of God must be in you, and must be in you *now*, being eternal. ⁵You must have set aside a place in which the Holy Spirit can abide and where He is. ⁶He must have been there since the need for Him arose and was fulfilled in that same instant.

• Study Question •

5. *The Holy Spirit, joined with God’s Will, must abide in us eternally. What is it that will tell us this if we listen?*
- A. Reason
 - B. The Holy Spirit
 - C. The Son of God
 - D. All of the above

As I said, this paragraph is an application of logic based on true premises. God has no will apart from ours. Our Creator implants His Will in us. We are created as extensions and expressions of God’s Will. We cannot refuse this will because we share His nature. Therefore, we *must* have accepted God’s plan for us. It was also our will, and we consented to it (6:1–3). Furthermore, God’s Will is *instantly* accomplished; it does not “wait upon time to be accomplished” (6:3). *Therefore*, the Holy Spirit, Who has joined with the Will of God, “must be in you *now*, being eternal” (6:4). When need for the Holy Spirit first arose, He was *instantly* there, within us, in a place we willingly set aside for

Him. Since He is eternal, He *must* still be there *now* (6:5–6). That is what reason must tell us.

How reassuring to know that this “other self,” where the Holy Spirit resides, eternally joined with the Will of God and with God’s plan for us, *must* be within us. Must be, in fact, *us*. We do not have to wait for some future time to “receive the Holy Spirit.” He took up residence long, long ago, before time had a chance to begin, the very instant the tiny, mad idea of separation popped up in our mind, and He has been there ever since. Always.

Paragraph 7

7 Such would your reason tell you, if you listened. ²Yet such is clearly not the ego’s “reasoning.” ³Its alien nature to the ego is proof you will not find the answer there. ⁶Yet if it must be so, it must exist. ⁵And if it exists for you, and has your freedom as the purpose given it, you must be free to find it. ⁶God’s plan is simple, never circular and never self-defeating. ⁷He has no thoughts except the self-extending, and in this your will must be included. ⁸Thus, there must be a part of you that knows His will and *shares* it.

• Study Question •

6. Which of the following things “must be so” according to his reasoning here? (More than one)
- A. Our will is included in God’s as part of His Self-extension
 - B. A part of us knows His Will and shares it
 - C. God’s plan is complete because He is complete
 - D. All of the above

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If we listened to our own reason, we would know all of this is true (7:1). The ego will never hear it, never consider it, and—given that reason is alien *to the ego*, we can be sure the ego will never, ever look within to find, not sin, but this holy Resident (7:2–3). But, according to the logic just presented, this secret place of the Most High within us *must* exist (7:4). Because that is so, and because the purpose of this Presence within is our freedom, *we must be free to find it* within us (7:5). (Notice all the recurring uses of “must” and “therefore.”)

There is nothing confused, contradictory or convoluted about God’s plan. It’s simple: It’s all about “self-extending” thoughts. Therefore, since we are examples of that self-extension of God, our will *must* share that drive to self-extension. “There *must* be a part of you that *knows* His will and *shares* it” (7:6–8).

⁶. Pronoun clarification: “Its [reason’s] alien nature to the ego is proof you will not find the answer there [in the ego’s ‘reasoning’].”

This idea that there is a “something” in us that *knows* is one of the biblical teachings that is not often repeated, except perhaps among Quakers, with their deep commitment to the “inner light” in all people. But it is there, in the Bible, if you know where to look.⁷

Paragraph 8

8 It is not meaningful to ask if what must be is so. ²But it *is* meaningful to ask why you are unaware of what is so. ³For this must have an answer if the plan of God for your salvation is complete, and it must be complete because its Source knows not of incompleteness. ⁴Where would the answer be but in the Source? ⁵And where are *you* but there, where this same answer is? ⁶Your identity, as much a true effect of this same Source as is this answer, must therefore be together and the same.⁸

• Study Question •

7. *This paragraph deals with our unawareness of what is within us.*
 - (a) *What is the question that must be answered?*
 - (b) *Where can the answer be found?*
 - (c) *Where are you in relation to the answer?*

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If I know for sure that a certain thing is so, it would make no sense to *ask* anyone if it *is* so. I already know because it *must* be so. Why would anyone ask, “Is the sun going to rise tomorrow?” But if there were a person who was *unaware* that the sun rises without fail every morning, asking, “Why don’t they know that?” would be a very pertinent question. Therefore, it is quite meaningful to ask why we human beings are *not aware* that there is a part of each of us that knows the Will of God and shares it (8:1–2). “Why don’t we know that?”

God is the Source of His plan for our salvation. God does not know of incompleteness. Therefore, His plan must be complete. If His plan is complete, an answer to the question of the reason for our unawareness *must* exist; if there were no answer, God’s plan would not be complete (8:3). So, where do we look for the answer?

Where else would one look for the answer but *in the Source* (i.e., God)? We, too, are in that Source (8:4–5). Our true Identity and the answer to the question about why we dissociate both come from God. Therefore, they are together (in God) and are the same as one another. Our Identity *is* the answer.

⁷ “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” (1 John 2:20, NIV). “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.” (1 John 2:27, NIV). “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26, NIV)

⁸. This perhaps means that your identity must be together with and the same as *the answer* (to the question of “why you are unaware of what is so”).

Perhaps you are wondering, “How is my true Identity the answer to the question of why I’m unaware of my true Identity? Isn’t that somehow circular? If I’m unaware of my Identity, how can I become aware of the answer?” It seems paradoxical at first glance. I think what the Course is getting at here is that, if we open to one, we will open to the other. They are the same thing. We just need to allow our minds to follow reason, to let it convince us that this part of us that already knows the truth *must exist*. Once we open that flood gate, all the rest will rush in. The fact of the matter is we *already know the answer* to the question. We already know *everything* (9:1).

Paragraph 9

9 Oh yes, you know this, and more than this alone. ²But any part of knowledge threatens dissociation as much as all of it, and all of it will come with any part. ³Here is the part you can accept. ⁴What reason points to you can see, because the witnesses on its behalf are clear. ⁵Only the totally insane can disregard them, and you have gone past this.

• Study Question •

8. What does “dissociation” mean, and what does it refer to in this context?

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Yes; we already know the answer, and more (9:1). If we let in any part of knowledge, like a hole in the dike, it threatens (from the ego’s perspective) to destroy the dike and let *everything* in (9:2). Just follow reason’s pointing finger, and see what it points to (the “other self,” the something we don’t know). As muddled as our minds are, we can see this. We can understand reason, and see what it points to, because we have clear evidence of its existence (9:3–4). We’d have to be “totally insane” to overlook the evidence—and we’ve gone beyond that kind of insanity if we are studying this Course (9:5).

Paragraph 10

10 Reason is a means which serves the Holy Spirit’s purpose in its own right. ²It is not reinterpreted and redirected from the goal of sin, as are the others. ³For reason is beyond the ego’s range of means. ⁴Faith and perception and belief can be misplaced, and can serve the great deceiver’s needs as well as truth.⁹ ⁵But reason has no place at all in madness, nor can it be adjusted to fit its ends. ⁶Faith and belief are strong in madness, guiding perception toward what the mind has valued. ⁷But reason enters not at all in this, for the perception would fall away at once if reason were applied. ⁸There *is* no reason in insanity, for it depends entirely on reason’s absence. ⁹The ego never uses it, because it does not realize that it exists.

⁹. By calling the ego “the great deceiver,” Jesus seems to be likening it to Satan, who in Revelation 12:9 (RSV) is called “the great dragon” and “the deceiver of the whole world,” and in John 8:44 (RSV) is called “the father of lies.”

• **Study Question** •

9. *Why is reason such a potent force for ending our dissociation (our chosen unawareness of the truth about ourselves), and how is it unlike faith, belief, and perception? (More than one answer.)*
- A. *It isn't made by the ego and cannot be used by it.*
 - B. *Faith and belief are not reasonable.*
 - C. *Reason is powerful because it serves the purpose of the Holy Spirit.*
 - D. *Reason is not a recycled ego tool.*
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In the previous section we learned that faith, belief, and vision were all made by the ego as tools to deceive ourselves, but that the Holy Spirit is able to re-purpose them, using them to awaken us. Reason isn't like that; it is an aspect of God, and as such, it is perfectly compatible with the purpose of the Holy Spirit. It is not "redirected," as are the other three (10:1–2).

In the previous section we learned that faith, belief, and vision were all made by the ego as tools to deceive ourselves, but that the Holy Spirit is able to re-purpose them, using them to awaken us. Reason isn't like that; it is an aspect of God, and as such, it is perfectly compatible with the purpose of the Holy Spirit. It is not "redirected," as are the other three (10:1–2). Reason belongs to Spirit; the ego cannot use it (10:3). The ego is a lie and all its premises are lies ("the great deceiver"); reason uses only truth. Faith, perception and belief can be used by both ego and the Holy Spirit, but reason cannot be distorted to the ego's ends (10:4–5).

I find it interesting that the ego is referred to as "the great deceiver." As the footnote points out, the Bible refers to Satan as "the deceiver of the whole world." There are other places in the Text that conflates the ego with the devil: "The mind can make the belief in separation very real and very fearful, and this belief *is* the "devil." (T-3.VII.5:1 (FIP), T-3.XI.9:1-2 (CE)). Combine that with this: "The ego is the mind's belief that it is completely on its own" (T-4.II.8:4 (FIP), T-4.IV.5:5 (CE)), and we know the first line, too, is speaking of the ego. The mind's belief in separation is the same as the mind's belief that it is completely on its own, so if one "*is* the ego," both are.

So, in the cosmology of the Course, the devil is not some separate being who stands in eternal opposition and conflict with God. Rather, the devil is merely a symbol of the thought system we hold that is based on separation, what Cynthia Bourgeault, the contemplative scholar and author, calls "our binary operating system." Jesus was a transformer of consciousness, she says, whose whole message was that we need to upgrade our "operating system." The Course would agree.

In the madness of the ego, faith and belief are mighty tools that guide our perception to see whatever the mind values and wishes to see (10:6). But making what you see and then believing it is real is madness, not reason! If reason were allowed in, the false perceptions (such as seeing someone as sinful) would just vanish (10:7). The insanity of the ego depends on the *absence* of reason (10:8). The ego not only does not *use* reason; it "does not even realize that it exists" (10:9)!

This makes reason a very important and effectual tool for the transformation of consciousness. That's the main point of this entire section, which is titled, "Reason as the Undoing of Insanity." Remember, reason in the Course's terms is pretty much what we think of it being: establishing premises and using logic to yield conclusions based on the premises. The primary difference from the ego's use of premises and logic is that *real* reason uses *real* premises, not insane falsehoods. This kind of reason is sacred, and is a powerful means for elevating our spiritual awareness and experience. The exercises in the Workbook often make use of reason in this way. The lesson states a premise, its main theme, and then proceeds to lead us through logical deductions, arguing for what must be true of us if the premise is true. This kind of pondering of divine principles and logically applying them to our lives is one of the major practices the Course directs us to use.

Note here the relationship, or lack thereof, between the ego and reason. In the next paragraph, two other categories of people and how they are related to reason: "the partially insane" and "knowledge," or the right-minded. We'll discuss the three categories and contrast them below.

Paragraph 11

11 The partially insane have access to it, and only they have need of it. ²Knowledge does not depend on it and madness keeps it out. ³The part of mind where reason lies was dedicated by your will in union with your Father's to the undoing of insanity. ⁴Here was the Holy Spirit's purpose accepted and accomplished, both at once. ⁵Reason is alien to insanity, and those who use it have gained a means which cannot be applied to sin. ⁶Knowledge is far beyond attainment of any kind, but reason can serve to open doors you closed against it.

• Study Question •

10. In the last sentence of the preceding paragraph (10:9 (CE), 8:7 (FIP)) and the first two sentences of 11 (8:8-9 (FIP)), the Course gives us the relationship of reason to the ego's madness (or wrong-mindedness), the "partially insane" (i.e. split-minded), and to knowledge (one-mindedness). Match up the descriptions below to the proper state of mind that goes with them.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| A. Does not need to use reason | 1. Ego or wrong mind |
| B. Has need of reason and access to it | 2. Knowledge or one mind |
| C. Never uses reason, keeps it out, doesn't know it exists | 3. Partially insane or split mind |

11. What Course term might best describe "the part of mind where reason lies," which has also be referred to earlier as, the "other self you have cut off from your awareness" (V.4:2 (FIP), V.5:2 (CE)), "the part of your mind the ego knows not of" (IV.4:5 (FIP), IV.4:1 (CE)), "something else" that isn't the ego (IV.5:4 (FIP), IV.4:9 (CE)), "what joined the Will of

God” (V.5:4 (FIP), V.6:4 (CE)), “something that you do not know, but must belong to you” (V.10:3 (FIP), V.12:3 (CE)), and “a part of you that knows His Will and shares it” (V.6:3 (FIP), V.7:8 (CE))?

- | | | |
|----|----|------------|
| A. | A. | Christ |
| B. | B. | Right mind |
| C. | C. | Spirit |

•

You may want to read over and reply to question #10 above (no writing required) before you read on. I give away the answers in what follows.

The three different relationships to reason given here (last sentence of Paragraph 10 and first two of Paragraph 11) can be consistently categorized as states of mind: wrong-minded, split-minded, and right-minded. Each state of mind has a different relationship to reason. Wrong-mindedness, or the ego, never uses reason, keeps it out of awareness, and does not even know real reason exists. Split-mindedness *do* have access to reason, and it is the only state of mind that actually *needs* it. For the split-minded, or partially insane, reason is the tool that leads to total sanity. The right-minded, who exist in a state of *knowledge*, do not depend on reason for their understanding. They don’t need to reason things out; they simply *know* by direct intuition (10:9–11:2 (CE), 8:7–9 (FIP)).

Reason lives in the part of our mind that we’ve been unaware of. We chose before time began, in union with the Father, to dedicate this part of our mind to the undoing of our own insanity (11:3 (CE), 9:1 (FIP)). Reason is its tool. We need it, and, thanks to God and to our own primordial will, we have access to it. We need to *use* it. As we listen to reason, seeming to come from some other source—the Holy Spirit, angel guides, our higher self—we eventually come to realize we are hearing our own voice, unchanged since creation. The sanity that is the Will of God for us was accepted by us, and the goal was accomplished long, long ago—before time began (11:4 (CE), 9:2 (FIP)). If we are using reason, we cannot be caught up in the perception of sin (11:5 (CE), 9:3 (FIP)).

The state reason leads us toward is knowledge, and once we’ve regained that there is nothing more to be attained.¹⁰ And we don’t have to “get to” or attain knowledge (11:6 (CE), 9:4 (FIP)). It cannot be learned or attained; it can only be *remembered*. Reason does not create knowledge, it merely opens the mental doors we’ve closed to block it out. Reason causes our blocks to the awareness of knowledge to fall away, and then knowledge returns to remembrance, having never left. The knowledge is in us *now*.

Speaking earlier about *love*, the Course says much the same thing, asserting, “There never was a time in which you knew it not”; it ends by referring to “the knowledge of love,” implying, I think, that knowledge and love are virtually synonymous:

It is not for us to dwell on what cannot be attained. There is too much to learn. The readiness for knowledge still must be attained. Love is not learned. Its meaning lies in itself. And learning ends when you have recognized all it is not. That is the interference; that is what needs to be undone. Love is not learned because there never was a time in which you knew it not. Learning is useless in

¹⁰ T-8.I.1:5-6: “Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is.”

the presence of your Creator, Whose acknowledgment of you—and yours of Him—so far transcends all learning that everything you learned is meaningless, replaced forever by the knowledge of love and its one meaning. (T-18.IX.11:5-12:6 (FIP), T-18.VIII.13.4-9 (CE)).

What we are seeing in the current section is that reason is the way that “readiness for knowledge” can be attained. It is the tool that opens the closed doors of our minds.

Paragraph 12

12 You have come very close to this. ²Faith and belief have shifted, and you have asked the question that the ego will never ask.¹¹ ³Does not your reason tell you now the question must have come from something that you do not know, but must belong to you? ⁴Faith and belief upheld by reason cannot fail to lead to changed perception. ⁵And in this change is room made way for vision. ⁶Vision extends beyond itself, as does the purpose which it serves and all the means for its accomplishment.

• Study Question •

12. *Faith and belief have shifted; we have dared to ask, “What if there is no sin in me?” That question must have come from some part of ourselves we have not been aware of, where reason lives. If we listen to this reason, allowing it to guide or uphold our faith and our belief, what will it lead to? (More than one)*
- A. *Changed perception*
 - B. *We will make room for vision*
 - C. *Vision will carry us beyond itself*
 - D. *All of the above*

Jesus tells us that we have come very close to this opening of the closed doors (12:1 (CE), 10:1 (FIP)). We’ve shifted our faith and belief, away from sin toward holiness (12:2 (CE), 10:2 (FIP)). We’ve dared to ask the forbidden question: “What if you looked within and saw *no sin*?” (12:2 (CE), 10:2 (FIP)).

You *have* asked yourself that question, haven’t you? Perhaps even before you read it in the Course. Where did that question come from? What caused you to wonder if, just maybe, you are not as guilty as your ego has made you feel you are? Why did you doubt the religious system that told you that you were a miserable sinner?

Reason will tell you that that healthy doubt must have come from *somewhere*. Somewhere *in you*. That realization should be a great encouragement to you: “Something in me raised that question. I don’t know what it is, but it must belong to me” (12:3 (CE), 10:3 (FIP)). You’ve begun to access reason, and can use it now to guide your faith and belief. As your reason prods you to relocate your faith and belief, it “cannot fail to lead to changed perception” (12:4 (CE), 10:4 (FIP)). That’s what a miracle is. And as perception

¹¹. T-21.IV.2:6: “What if you looked within and saw *no sin*?”

changes, the way to true vision (inner seeing) opens up (12:5 (CE), 10:5 (FIP)). Once that happens, vision will extend to that which is beyond words and beyond description: the knowledge that is the direct and total unity with reality (12:6 (CE), 10:6 (FIP)).

Answer Key

1. B
2. C and G
3. C
4. (a) A. True B. False C. True
(b) The basic question is, “What if you looked within and saw no sin?”
5. A
6. D
7. (a) Why are we unaware of what must be so?
(b) In the Source, God
(c) Where the answer is, in God
8. Dissociation means “the separation of normally related mental processes.”
In this context, it refers to our unawareness of what is true about ourselves.
9. A, C and D
10. A=2 B=3 C=1
11. B
12. D