

Welcome to The Little Garden. We present classes in many formats to help with your study of *A Course in Miracles*. Our goal is to inspire students of *A Course in Miracles* to read and study the Course for themselves, and to practice it as written.

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#### IV. The Function of Time

T-13.IV.1. And now the reason why you are afraid of this course should be apparent. 2 For this is a course on love, because it is about you. 3 You have been told that your function in this world is healing, and your function in Heaven is creating. 4 The ego teaches that your function on earth is destruction, and you have no function at all in Heaven. 5 It would thus destroy you here and bury you here, leaving you no inheritance except the dust out of which it thinks you were made. 6 As long as it is reasonably satisfied with you, as its reasoning goes, it offers you oblivion. 7 When it becomes overtly savage, it offers you hell.

T-13.IV.2. Yet neither oblivion nor hell is as unacceptable to you as Heaven. 2 Your definition of Heaven *is* hell and oblivion, and the real Heaven is the greatest threat you

think you could experience. 3 For hell and oblivion are ideas that you made up, and you are bent on demonstrating their reality to establish yours. 4 If their reality is questioned, you believe that yours is. 5 For you believe that attack is your reality, and that your destruction is the final proof that you were right.

T-13.IV.3. Under the circumstances, would it not be more desirable to have been wrong, even apart from the fact that you were wrong? 2 While it could perhaps be argued that death suggests there *was* life, no one would claim that it proves there *is* life. 3 Even the past life that death might indicate, could only have been futile if it must come to this, and needs this to prove that it was at all. 4 You question Heaven, but you do not question this. 5 Yet you could heal and be healed if you did question it. 6 And even though you know not Heaven, might it not be more desirable than death? 7 You have been as selective in your questioning as in your perception. 8 An open mind is more honest than this.

T-13.IV.4. The ego has a strange notion of time, and it is with this notion that your questioning might well begin. 2 The ego invests heavily in the past, and in the end believes that the past is the only aspect of time that is meaningful. 3 Remember that its emphasis on guilt enables it to ensure its continuity by making the future like the past, and thus avoiding the present. 4 By the notion of paying for the past in the future, the past becomes the determiner of the future, making them continuous without an intervening present. 5 For the ego regards the present only as a brief transition to the future, in which it brings the past to the future by interpreting the present in past terms.

T-13.IV.5. "Now" has no meaning to the ego. 2 The present merely reminds it of past hurts, and it reacts to the present as if it *were* the past. 3 The ego cannot tolerate release from the past, and although the past is over, the ego tries to preserve its image by responding as if it were present. 4 It dictates your reactions to those you meet in the present from a past reference point, obscuring their present reality. 5 In effect, if you follow the ego's dictates you will react to your brother as though he were someone else, and this will surely prevent you from recognizing him as he is. 6 And you will receive messages from him out of your own past because, by making it real in the present, you are forbidding yourself to let it go. 7 You thus deny yourself the message of release that every brother offers you *now*.

T-13.IV.6. The shadowy figures from the past are precisely what you must escape. 2 They are not real, and have no hold over you unless you bring them with you. 3 They carry the spots of pain in your mind, directing you to attack in the present in retaliation for a past that is no more. 4 And this decision is one of future pain. 5 Unless you learn that past pain is an illusion, you are choosing a future of illusions and losing the many opportunities you could find for release in the present. 6 The ego would preserve your nightmares, and prevent you from awakening and understanding they are past. 7 Would you recognize a holy encounter if you are merely perceiving it as a meeting with your own past? 8 For you would be meeting no one, and the sharing of salvation, which makes the encounter holy, would be excluded from your sight. 9 The Holy Spirit teaches that you always meet yourself, and the encounter is holy because you are. 10 The ego teaches that you always encounter your past, and because your dreams were not holy, the future cannot be, and the present is without meaning.

T-13.IV.7. It is evident that the Holy Spirit's perception of time is the exact opposite of the ego's. 2 The reason is equally clear, for they perceive the goal of time as diametrically opposed. 3 The Holy Spirit interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for time unnecessary. 4 He regards the function of time as temporary, serving only His teaching function, which is temporary by definition. 5 His emphasis is therefore on the only aspect of time that can extend to the infinite, for *now* is the closest approximation of eternity that this world offers. 6 It is in the reality of "now," without past or future, that the beginning of the appreciation of eternity lies. 7 For only "now" is here, and only "now" presents the opportunities for the holy encounters in which salvation can be found.

T-13.IV.8. The ego, on the other hand, regards the function of time as one of extending itself in place of eternity, for like the Holy Spirit, the ego interprets the goal of time as its own. 2 The continuity of past and future, under its direction, is the only purpose the ego perceives in time, and it closes over the present so that no gap in its own continuity can occur. 3 Its continuity, then, would keep you in time, while the Holy Spirit would release you from it. 4 It is His interpretation of the means of salvation that you must learn to accept, if you would share His goal of salvation for you.

T-13.IV.9. You, too, will interpret the function of time as you interpret yours. 2 If you accept your function in the world of time as one of healing, you will emphasize only the aspect of time in which healing can occur. 3 Healing cannot be accomplished in the past. 4 It must be accomplished in the present to release the future. 5 This interpretation ties the future to the present, and extends the present rather than the past. 6 But if you interpret your function as destruction, you will lose sight of the present and hold on to the past to ensure a destructive future. 7 And time will be as you interpret it, for of itself it is nothing.

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