LEAVING SHADOWLAND

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The ego’s world of shadows

A darkened mind cannot live in the light, and it must seek a place of darkness where it can believe it is where it is not. [T-13.III.11]

Shadowland

Shadows dwell in Shadowland and you can never understand their shadow talk and shadow deeds, their shifting thoughts and shadow needs. They tell you all about their hurts, how they are victims of this world. They search for other ghosts to blame the ones who caused them so much pain in Shadowland, so sad and desolate; Shadowland, where all are separate, where nothing lives and nothing dies. Nothing is. There’s only lies in Shadowland.

Pain and pleasure, guilt and sin: the bait they use to pull you in. From God they say you’ve gone apart, and He has cast you from His heart. Shadow figures from the past steal the moments from your grasp, hide the lovely and the real, fill your mind with spiteful dreams of Shadowland, so sad and desolate; Shadowland, where all are separate, where nothing lives and nothing dies. Nothing is. There’s only lies in Shadowland.

Let them go. Turn to the Light. Shadows cannot bear the sight, the Face of Christ that is revealed when you let your mind be healed. Although they seem to really live, they’ll disappear when you forgive to be replaced with happy dreams where only peace and love are seen.

No more Shadowland, sad and desolate. Let go of Shadowland, and be not separate. In joy you’ll live, and you can never die, when you forgive, laugh at the lies of Shadowland.

ACIM forgiveness: removing projections
Shadowland is the ego world, “sad and desolate.” There is no hope here. Every shadow figure is a projection of our own guilt. We can’t leave Shadowland until we have pulled our projections off of those around us and stopped blaming them for how we feel. This is the Course’s version of forgiveness.

To forgive is merely to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on your selection. For the shadow figures you would make immortal are "enemies" of reality. Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did not do. The shadow figures are the witnesses you bring with you to demonstrate he did what he did not. Because you bring them, you will hear them. They represent the evil that you think was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and not harm yourself. [T-17.III.1]

Love Must Come

Where fear has gone, there love must come. It’s waiting now to flow into your holy mind if you’ll allow.
Forgive, forgive, Love calls to you: Forgive.
Forgive, My child, the dreams that have not been.

Share not your brother's dreams of pain or they'll be yours.
Release him from the hell he made. Open Love’s door.
Forgive, forgive, Love calls to you: Forgive.
To live, My child, turn to the light within.

Your body’s eyes, they cannot see. Trust not in them.
Let Love reveal reality, joy without end.
Forgive, forgive, Love calls to you: Forgive.
Light springs, My child, from miracles you give.

There is no world, just ancient dreams within your mind.
Love can loose your chains of fear, death's grip unbind.
Forgive, forgive, Love calls to you: Forgive.
God is, My child. As Love in you He lives.

Where fear has gone, there love must come. It’s waiting now to flow into your holy mind if you’ll allow.
Forgive, forgive, Love calls to you: Forgive.
Forgive, My child, the dreams that have not been.
We have been conditioned since birth, by the prominence of the Bible in our culture, to believe that forgiveness means “turning the other cheek”: yes, you did something heinous or thoughtless or unkind, but I’m such a good person that I will let you off the hook and “forgive” you. This is what the Course refers to as “forgiveness-to-destroy.” There is nothing loving about it. It makes the other’s “sin” real; it says, I will forgive, but not forget. And so, we are still stuck in Shadowland. The shadow figures seem entirely real and believable.

It is these shadow figures that would make the ego holy in your sight, and teach you what you do to keep it safe is really love. The shadow figures always speak for vengeance, and all relationships into which they enter are totally insane. Without exception, these relationships have as their purpose the exclusion of the truth about the other, and of yourself. This is why you see in both what is not there, and make of both the slaves of vengeance.

Come Out Of Hell

*Hey there, come out of hell. It's not where you're meant to dwell.*
You have not sinned. You can choose love again.
*Hey there, come out of your hell.*

Hell is a black state of mind where others are seen as unfair, Judgments have rendered you blind: If you wish someone hell, you are there.

*Hey there, come out of hell. It's not where you're meant to dwell.*
You have not sinned. You can choose love again.
*Hey there, come out of your hell.*

Hell lies in guilty regrets and terror of more hurt to come. Hell turns your life into death, but with Spirit it can be undone.

*Hey there, come out of hell. It's not where you're meant to dwell.*
You have not sinned. You can choose love again.
*Hey there, come out of your hell.*

Heaven or hell is your choice at each fork in the road. Hear in your brother love's Voice, and to heaven together you'll go.

*Hey there, come out of hell. It's not where you're meant to dwell.*
You have not sinned. You can choose love again.
*Hey there, come out of your hell.*

Specialness makes life a hell because of all it excludes. All brothers are part of one Self. Heaven is knowing this truth.

*Hey there, come out of hell. It's not where you're meant to dwell.*
You have not sinned. You can choose love again.
Hey there, come out of your hell.

Hey there, come to the light. Come and be one in the Christ.
You are God’s all and He endlessly calls:
My dear child, come home to the light.
You are God’s all and He endlessly calls:
My dear child, come home to the light.

Evolvement: from shame to sane

I wrote these “Evolvement Verses” some years ago to make the distinction between our conditioned frame of mind when we start out—the wrong mind—and the right-minded thought system toward which the Course is leading us:

Evolvement Verses

(Wrong Mind)
I’m such a nice person, so loving and kind.
My perceptions are clear (though you are quite blind.)
I examine the facts and invariably find
that it’s not my fault.

Why did you do? Why did you say?
Why do you think you can treat me this way?
Why did you give me this problem to solve,
‘cause it’s not my fault.

You were the one. You did the deed.
I just tried to help and got kicked in the teeth.
My only mistake was in getting involved,
and it’s not my fault.

The government did it, my parents, my church.
They taught me all wrong and they made me a jerk
My conscience is broken. My scruples don’t work.
It’s all their fault.

Such a lousy Course student, I can’t seem to get it.
When ego takes over, forgiveness won’t cut it.
I’ll never be Helen or Bill, or like Ken.
It’s all my fault.

My body is loathsome, A creature of sin.
My guilt is so awful I can’t look within.
God’s out to get back what I stole from Him and it’s all my fault.

(Right Mind)
I look with the Spirit at all I have made, the projections of guilt, fear, pain, anger and hate. At each revelation I’m learning to see: It’s no big deal.

You aren’t the problem. How silly of me To think you could rob me of God’s holy peace. No matter what happened, it was my dream, And it’s no big deal.

I choose the light. I choose to be healed. I choose to let all foolish dreams be revealed. I made up an ego self, guilty, unreal but it’s no big deal.

The circular track; Exit signs

Hardly anyone leaves Shadowland all at once. Think of our ego world as a circular track. We go around and around, attacking, defending, judging, feeling unfairly treated, feeling justifiably angry. At frequent intervals (every single moment, if we are mindful) we see an Exit sign. Just beyond this doorway stands a Presence, silently calling us to freedom, silently urging us to withdraw our projections from the other and forgive. Each time we succeed in letting go of our made-up grievances, we are able to step into the passageway and move toward the Light; for a while we feel the peace, the relief of not carrying the heavy burden of resentments and fear.

This is threatening to the ego, whose very existence depends on our listening to it and believing in it. So the alarms go off—what the Course calls the ‘raucous shrieks’ of the ego. And we run back to the ego’s embrace—until the next time we are ready for a breath of freedom.

Sweet Nothings

You are something, you are someone, you’re a person oh so special. You are somebody to reckon with, a star. You are different and amazin’, fully individuated,
and to be congratulated. Yes, you are!
Ego’s whispering sweet nothings in my ear,
tells me all the things I love to hear.
So why is there no joy when I listen to its voice?

You are special, you are holy, an enlightened one. Your soul is so resplendent as you speak pure words of truth. You're selected and respected. In you heaven is reflected, and the only one I say this to is you. Ego's whispering sweet nothings in my ear. Still I can’t get rid of all this fear. Could there be some other choice in the messages I hear?

You are something really awful, cruel, evil and unlawful. Of all sinners in the world you are the worst! You're unworthy and so nervy to imagine that you were the holy child of God when you're forever cursed. Ego whispers guilty nothings in my ear. It says God hates me. His punishment is near. My innocence is lost. This world is all I've got.

Sometimes I hear a voice that's gentle with a love unsentimental and it tells me that my world is but a dream. It says I should be smiling at the ego's lies beguiling and restore my mind to peace and sanity. Ego cries out, “Don’t take another step! God just wants to wring your selfish neck. My dear, come back to me. I'll fulfill your every need.”

You are something, you are someone, you're a person oh so special. You are somebody to reckon with, a star. You are different and amazin’, fully individuated, and to be congratulated. Yes, you are! Yes, you are.

Correcting perception

The world you see does not exist, because the place where you perceive it is not real. The gap is carefully concealed in fog, and misty pictures rise to cover it with vague uncertain forms and changing shapes, forever unsubstantial and unsure. Yet in the gap is nothing. [T-28.V.7. ]

As “Sweet Nothings” tells us, there is always a Presence in our right mind that corrects our misperceptions. When the fear and upset diminish a bit, we can hear it; it tells us the world is not as it appears:
That’s Not The Reason Why

That’s not the reason why. That’s not the reason why. The problem’s not out there. You have to look inside. That thing that someone did. The words that seemed to hurt are only in your mind, and that’s where you must search.

Do not be deceived by what is on the screen. Your holy mind’s asleep and dreaming bitter dreams. The figures that you see are images, not real. Don’t blame them anymore if you would truly heal.

You haven’t really failed. You haven’t really lost. Your problems aren’t out there. They’re only in your thoughts. No secrets can be kept. Hold all things to the light, for secrecy is death. It lets the darkness hide.

Do not be deceived by what is on the screen. Your holy mind’s asleep and dreaming bitter dreams. The figures that you see are images, not real. Don’t blame them anymore if you would truly heal.

Forgiveness is the way to see the false as false. My child, no more delay, but answer Spirit’s call. The Christ beside you stands and holds a lamp of peace to light the way within where you will find release.

Your world is made of thoughts, of concepts and beliefs, the source of all your pain, your problems and your grief. With courage you must look at all your dreams of sin, and let them be dissolved by the light of love within.

That’s not the reason why. That’s not the reason why. The problem’s not out there. You have to look inside.

I do not understand anything I see. How could I understand what I see when I have judged it amiss? What I see is the projection of my own errors of thought. I do not understand what I see because it is not understandable. [W-pl.51.3.] I see only the past. As I look about, I condemn the world I look upon. I call this seeing. I hold the past against everyone and everything, making them my enemies. When I have forgiven myself and remembered Who I am, I will bless everyone and everything I see. There will be no past, and therefore no enemies. [W-pl.52.2.]
This need not be

When we suffer, feel lost and little, weak and alone, the Presence whispers: “This need not be.”

You can change your mind. When your mood tells you that you have chosen wrongly, and this is so whenever you are not joyous, then know this need not be. In every case you have thought wrongly about some brother God created, and are perceiving images your ego makes in a darkened glass. Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. [T-4.IV.2]

When you are sad, know this need not be. Depression comes from a sense of being deprived of something you want and do not have. Remember that you are deprived of nothing except by your own decisions, and then decide otherwise. [T-4.IV.3]. When you are anxious, realize that anxiety comes from the capriciousness of the ego, and know this need not be. You can be as vigilant against the ego's dictates as for them. T-4.IV.5. While you feel guilty your ego is in command, because only the ego can experience guilt. This need not be. [T-4.IV.4]

This Need Not Be

This need not be, your troubled mind.
To God's dear child, be not unkind.
The body self that you have made has done no wrong, deserves not hate.
When you are sad and filled with guilt, remember God Who loves you still.
His sleeping child but dreams of sin.
Let Spirit heal your suffering.
This need not be. This need not be.
What is not love—this need not be.

This need not be, the pain and tears repeated over and over through the years.
Depression comes when one's deprived, but joy or lack you do decide.
When you feel hurt, angry or lost, you have not heard the Voice for God.
But listen now and choose again.
Your self-inflicted pain can end.
It need not be. It need not be.
What is not love—this need not be.

Your spirit shines with holiness.
God's light in you was meant to bless.
You and your brothers are but one, created whole and only love. Do not attack what God creates with thoughts of judgment, fear and hate. As a pure altar tend your mind, with radiant thoughts born of the Christ, and you'll be free. You will be free. What is not love—this need not be.

Ego schmego: remembering to laugh

The Course tells us that a miracle is a shift in perception. Instead of seeing a shadow figure attacking me, I can realize that the behavior is a “call for love.” Since we are always looking in a mirror, it is really my own call for love seemingly placed outside of me. Every interaction I have in my daily life is an opportunity to be mindful that I am dreaming, to ask for help, to respond with kindness, to invite the miracle. A part of me learns to step back and view my own behavior and thoughts with kindness. This doesn’t mean condoning my anger, judgments, resentments, pettiness, etc, but to calmly realize this is simply my conditioning that I am holding up to the Light to be undone.

Practicing miracles enables me to spot the Exit signs more quickly and to take advantage of them. Every experience of forgiveness and peace helps me throw off the hold that Shadowland has on my mind. I lose my grimness and despair. I start to smile more often. And ultimately, I learn to laugh.

Laugh, Laugh

It seems like we’re broken in two, because there’s a me and a you. But our bodies aren’t us; they’re just water and dust. So there’s no need to moan and boo-hoo. Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream. Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.

We have the idea we left God, that we’re guilty and dirty and flawed. But that’s impossi - bull. Of much bull it is full! When you think it, shout Haw, Haw, Haw Haw! Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream. Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.

The ego cries, “Sin, guilt and fear! You must bow down and worship them, dear.” But Spirit insists that they do not exist. These three ghosties we should not revere.
Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream.
Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.

We imagine that God is real mad, and to squash us will make Him so glad.
But Love cannot hate; like Itself It creates.
By the ego’s tall tales we’ve been had.
Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream.
Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.

My guilt onto you I project, then accuse you of all my defects.
But we’re innocent both behind mirrors and smoke.
Are we really divine? Hey, you bet!
Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream.
Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.
Laugh, laugh! Remember to laugh. Remember it’s only a dream.
Ego, schmego, wake up, amigo! Stop crying and have a good laugh.

Every dream the world holds dear has suddenly gone by, and where it seemed to stand you find a star; a miracle of grace. The sick arise, healed of their sickly thoughts. The blind can see; the deaf can hear. The sorrowful cast off their mourning, and the tears of pain are dried as happy laughter comes to bless the world. [W-pl.183.3]