

What Is Death?

As Defined by Raj Christ Jesus, ACIM, Lesson Book

Death is the central dream from which all illusions stem. Is it not madness to think of life as being born, aging, losing vitality, and dying in the end? We have asked this question before, but now we need to consider it still more carefully. It is the one fixed, unchangeable belief of the world that all things in it are born only to die. This is regarded as "the way of nature," not to be raised to question but to be accepted as the "natural" law of life. The cyclical, the changing and unsure, the undependable and the unsteady, waxing and waning in a certain way upon a certain path—all this is taken as the Will of God. And no one asks if a benign Creator could will this.

In this perception of the universe as God created it, it would not be possible to think of Him as loving. For who has decreed that all things pass away, ending in dust and disappointment and despair could but be feared. He holds your little life in his hand but by a thread, ready to break it off without regret or care, perhaps today. Or if he waits, yet is the ending certain. Who loves such a god knows not of love, because he has denied that life is real. Death has become life's symbol. His world is now a battleground where contradiction reigns, and opposites make endless war. Where there is death is peace impossible.

Death is the symbol of the fear of God. His love is blotted out in the idea, which holds it from awareness like a shield held to obscure the sun. The grimness of the symbol is enough to show it cannot coexist with God. It holds an image of the Son of God in which he is "laid to rest" in devastation's arms, where worms wait to greet him and to last a little while by his destruction. Yet the worms as well are doomed to be destroyed as certainly. And so do all things live because of death. Devouring is nature's "law of life." God is insane, and fear alone is real.

The curious belief that there is part of dying things that may go on apart from what will die does not proclaim a loving God nor re-establish any grounds for trust. If death is real for anything, there is no life. Death denies life, but if there is reality in life, death is denied. No compromise in this is possible. There is either a god of fear or One of Love. The world attempts a thousand compromises and will attempt a thousand more. Not one can be acceptable to God's teachers because

not one could be acceptable to God. He did not make death, because He did not make fear. Both are equally meaningless to Him.

The "reality" of death is firmly rooted in the belief that God's Son is a body. And if God created bodies, death would indeed be real. But God would not be loving. There is no point at which the contrast between the perception of the real world and that of the world of illusions becomes more sharply evident. Death is indeed the death of God if He is Love. And now His own creation must stand in fear of Him. He is not Father but destroyer. He is not Creator but avenger. Terrible His Thoughts and fearful His image. To look on His creations is to die.

"And the last to be overcome will be death." Of course! Without the idea of death, there is no world. All dreams will end with this one. This is salvation's final goal, the end of all illusions. And in death are all illusions born.

What can be born of death and still have life? But what is born of God and still can die? The inconsistencies, the compromises, and the rituals the world fosters in its vain attempts to cling to death and yet to think love real are mindless magic, ineffectual and meaningless. God is, and in Him all created things must be eternal. Do you not see that otherwise He has an opposite, and fear would be as real as love?

Teacher of God, your one assignment could be stated thus: accept no compromise in which death plays a part. Do not believe in cruelty nor let attack conceal the truth from you. What seems to die has but been misperceived and carried to illusion. Now it becomes your task to let the illusion be brought to the truth. Be steadfast but in this; be not deceived by the "reality" of any changing form. Truth neither moves nor wavers nor sinks down to death and dissolution. And what is the end of death? Nothing but this; the realization that the Son of God is guiltless now and forever. Nothing but this. But do not let yourself forget it is not less than this.