



Understanding A Course in Miracles

A clear and concise introduction to the Course channeled through Gary by Arten and Pursah.

The following slightly edited article is also the Foreword to my 4th book, [The Lifetimes When Jesus and Buddha Knew Each Other: A History of Mighty Companions](#), which was originally published by Hay House in late 2017. Titled "A Clear Explanation of A Course in Miracles: What it Teaches and its Relevance to Jesus and Buddha," the article will serve as a time saving Introduction to the Course, or a refresher for anyone.

I'm making it available here for free. I've been told by some that the book itself includes the best writing of my four books. Of course my first book, "The Disappearance of the Universe" will always be the "go to" book when it comes to understanding the Course, but what follows here explains the Course the best way possible in a short period of time, and also shows the Course's relevancy to the two great Masters. It was channeled through me by my Teachers, Arten and Pursah. Enjoy!

Foreword

A CLEAR EXPLANATION OF A COURSE IN MIRACLES: WHAT IT TEACHES, AND ITS RELEVANCE TO JESUS AND BUDDHA

The purpose of this Foreword is to explain some of the core concepts of *A Course in Miracles*, how they relate to the subject of non-dualism, and how they are thus relevant to the enlightenment of spiritual Masters like Jesus and Buddha. This will make it easier for the reader, experienced and unexperienced alike, to understand and enjoy the conversations in this book. This book is not meant to be a substitute for the Course, and even a true, non-dualistic understanding of the Course, which is rare, will not result in enlightenment. It's only by practicing and applying the teachings in your everyday life, such as in your relationships, your experiences, and even the events you see on television that enlightenment will happen. With that in mind, let's proceed.

ACIM was channeled by a research psychologist who heard the Voice of Jesus. Her name was Dr. Helen Schucman, and she was helped enormously by her colleague, Dr. William Thetford. He would type out the words of the Course as Helen read them to him from her shorthand notebook. The two of them had a strained relationship, and they worked in an environment that Helen herself described as "depressing." Then one day Bill told Helen he thought there must be "another way." She agreed, and together they decided to find it. It's apparent that the Course came as a result of that decision.

The story of ACIM is fascinating, but long, and has been told in several books. For the purpose of this brief Foreword I'll mention that it took seven years for Helen to channel the Course, but that she continued to hear what she called "The Voice" for at least five years after that. Helen channeled two sections that were added to the Course later. It's clear that J (Jesus) never stopped working with her. It's also clear that because of this continuity J was the editor of the Course from beginning to end. He corrected Helen's mistakes, mostly in the first five of the thirty one chapters of the Text, (there is also a Workbook and a Manual for Teachers) and he was totally responsible for its consistency throughout a half million words. For your convenience and later study, direct quotations from the Course are noted and listed in an Index in the back of the book.

Three other major players in the history of the Course were Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, Judith Skutch Whitson, and Bob Skutch. With Helen and Bill, the five of them eventually formed The Foundation for Inner Peace, which became the publisher of the Course in 1976. Dr. Wapnick went on to become what my Teachers described in my first book as "the Course's greatest teacher."

ACIM is a self-study Course. It's not a religion. Although people meet in study groups and start churches they say are based on it, at the end of the day the Course, like spirituality, is meant to bring about an experience that will not be found in the world, but in a certain way of looking at the world. This comes from within.

My role, as a student of the Course since early 1993, is to clarify and explain the Course in such a way that students are able to apply it. I can only do this because of my Teachers. Without serious help I would not have been able to understand ACIM.

Part of the style of the Course is ingenious repetition. It would be impossible to learn the Course without being exposed to its ideas over and over again. This is how the thought system is learned, which makes the Course's brand of true forgiveness possible. You'll find repetition in this book. This will help you if you use it for its intended purpose. Repetition is not only acceptable in teaching and learning the Course, it's mandatory.

The approach of the Course is to undo the false you that is referred to as the ego, thus leading to the experience of your Divinity. That will be discussed shortly. But first let's point out that there's a difference between real spirituality and what has become accepted as spirituality in the last few decades, namely the self-help movement.

It's not my intention to put down the self-help movement. I'm not a hypocrite. I've used the self-help movement successfully in my life. It's just that I know the difference between that and the real deal, and what my Teachers give me is

the real deal.

The self-help movement is about getting what you want, making things happen in the world, attracting things to you that are outside of you, and achieving your goals. That approach is based on a false premise. The premise is that if you get what you want it will make you happy. The truth is that if you get what you want it will only make you feel good for a short time. Then you'll want something else. It's like a carrot and a stick, designed by ego. The ego thought system is based on the idea of separation; the idea that somehow we have separated ourselves from our Source, which is God, as well as from each other. And if your happiness and peace of mind is dependent on what happens in this world, you're in trouble, because the only thing you can depend on in this ego illusion of a world is that it will shift and change. That's what it does. It's fleeting and transitory, offering only temporary satisfaction at best.

But what if it didn't matter what happened in the world? That's heresy to the ego, but what if it really didn't matter? What if you could be happy, strong and peaceful *regardless* of what happens in the world? That would be real power; it would be real strength and freedom, and it would be real spirituality.

Having taught all over our country and the world for twenty years, in 44 states and 31 countries, I couldn't help but notice from many of the questions I'm asked that there is a tremendous feeling of scarcity everywhere. People then attempt to fix that scarcity on the level of form, or what you could call the screen we think is our lives, by getting something, whether it's a material thing or a relationship, that will somehow erase that sense of lack. However, they're looking in the wrong place. The lack is within, not without, and it's not caused by what most people think. As *A Course in Miracles* puts it, "A sense of separation from God is the only lack you really need correct."¹

The ego is the false you, but there's another you; the real you. The real you is something that has nothing to do with this world, or the body. Your body is simply a symbol of separation. The real you is something that is immortal, invulnerable, constant and unchanging, inseparable and whole, something that can't be touched by anything in this world; something that can't be threatened in any way.

When the Course starts off by saying, "Nothing real can be threatened,"² that's what it's talking about. It means the real you. When it goes on to say, "Nothing unreal exists,"³ it's talking about *anything* else, anything that is not this immortal, changeless, invulnerable self. That's why the Course is a purely non-dualistic spiritual thought system. It's saying that of the two worlds, the unseen world of God and the falsely seen world of man, only the world of God is true, and nothing else is true.

The world of God cannot be seen with the body's eyes, except once in a while in temporary symbols, because the body represents a limit on awareness. However, your perfect oneness with your Source can be *experienced*. Even while you appear to be here in a body it's possible to experience the real you. And spiritual experience is very important. In fact, it's the only thing that will ever make you happy. Words won't do it; my words won't do it. As the Course says, "Words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality."⁴ And when you think of it, how is a symbol of a symbol ever going to make you happy? How's it ever going to make you feel full, whole, complete, and satisfied? Even a description of the reality of the world of God won't do that. It's still just words. But an *experience* of reality, an experience of what you really are and where you really are will make you happy, because it *is* full, and whole, and complete, and satisfying.

The Gnostics referred to this direct experience of God as "Gnosis," which means knowledge. But it doesn't mean intellectual knowledge or information. When the Course uses the word knowledge it often uses a capital K, because like the word Gnosis, it is referring to direct experience, or Knowledge of God.

How does one get to this experience, which blows away anything this world has to offer? This is accomplished by undoing your ego. As ACIM succinctly puts it, "Salvation is undoing."⁵ And that's a brilliant approach, because if you could really do that; if you could completely undo the false you, then eventually the real you would be all that's left. And you don't have to do anything about the real you! The real you is already perfect; it's already exactly the same as its Source. In order to experience that perfection, what you have to do is remove the ego within your unconscious mind; the walls of separation that block your experience of this perfection. The Course takes you through a process that undoes the false you that incorrectly believes it has taken on an individual and personal identity, a separate existence from God. As we'll see in this book, that's not something you can do on your own.

This begs another question: How do you play your part in undoing the ego? This is achieved through a certain kind of forgiveness, but not the kind of forgiveness that most of the people in the world think of, if they think of forgiveness at all. The traditional form of forgiveness makes the illusory world real to your mind, thus keeping it, and the ego intact *in* your mind. But true forgiveness does not make the illusory world real, and does not keep it and the ego, intact.

There are people who will teach you that you should "make friends with your ego." But I've got news for them. The ego is not interested in being your friend. Your ego wants to kill you. Because if you can be hurt or killed then you're a body. And if you're a body, then the entire ego thought system of separation is true. The only thing you can really do with your ego is undo it. *A Course in Miracles* is about undoing the ego, or the false you that has come to identify itself with the body and separation. But the real you has nothing to do with the body or separation. As the Course says many times, "I am not a body, I am free. For I am still as God created me."⁶ And God created you to be exactly like God, the same as its Source forever, completely and eternally in a state of oneness.

This seemingly separate existence is actually a dream. The teaching that the world and the universe are an illusion is thousands of years old, but the Course refines that teaching into the idea that this world is a dream that you will awaken from, and it's that awakening that *is* enlightenment. This is what Buddha meant when he said, "I am awake." Today, most spiritual students think that when Buddha said, "I am awake," he meant he felt amazingly alert and ready to manifest like hell. Indeed, that's what passes for enlightenment in most of the spirituality of today. But Buddha didn't mean he was more awake *in* the dream, he meant he had awakened *from* the dream. And that's not just a minor distinction. It's everything. Buddha realized that he was not the dream, but the dreamer. He was not actually in the dream at all. The dream was coming from him, and he was not an effect of it, but the cause of it.

This is why ACIM is completely relevant to J and Buddha. You cannot attain enlightenment without a total shift from being at the effect of the dream to being the dreamer; to being the cause. Then it becomes possible to awaken. And in order to do *that*, the ego, which is keeping you blocked in a dream state of separation, will have to go.

We can't awaken from this dream without help that comes to us from outside of the dream, from outside of the system. An analogy I like to use is this: Let's say you have a three year old daughter and she's in bed at night sleeping. You peek in on her and you can see she's having a bad dream; she's tossing and turning and has an unhappy look on her face. What do you do? You don't go over there and shake the hell out of her; that could make her even more afraid. So perhaps you'll intuitively sit on the side of the bed and whisper to her. You might softly say something like, "Hey, it's only a dream. You don't have to worry. What you're seeing is not true. In fact, you made it up, and then you forgot you made it up. But you're seeing this with your mind." And when you think about it, what is she seeing that dream *with*? Her eyes are closed! And you continue whispering to her, saying things like, "Everything's all right, I'm here with you, and I'm going to take care of you." Then an interesting thing happens. Your daughter can start to actually hear your voice in her dream. The truth can be heard in the dream. The truth is not *in* the dream, ever, but the truth can be *heard* in the dream. And if your daughter listens to the right voice instead of the voice that speaks for the reality of the dream, she starts to relax. Maybe she begins to think that this dream she thought was so important isn't that big a deal after all. Then when she's ready to wake up without being afraid, she wakes up. And when she wakes up she realizes she never left the bed. She was there the whole time. It's not that the bed wasn't there, it was just out of her *awareness*.

And when we woke up this morning from the dreams we were having in bed last night, all we awakened to was a different form of dreaming. *A Course in Miracles* says, "You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality." ⁷ And into *this* dream, which is not reality, the Holy Spirit is whispering the same kinds of things to us that we might whisper to a three year old who's having a bad dream in bed at night. The Holy Spirit is saying to us right now, "Hey, it's only a dream. You don't have to worry. What you're seeing is not true. In fact, you made it up, and then you forgot you made it up. But you're seeing this with your mind." The Course tells us we are, "reviewing mentally what has gone by." ⁸ In addition, it makes the uncompromising statement, "All your time is spent in dreaming." ⁹

The reason this dream seems so much more real than the dreams we have in bed at night is because of levels. There are no levels in Heaven, where there is only perfect Oneness and no differences. But the ego's world is full of levels and differences. This is a trick to make us believe that because this dream seems so much more real than the ones at night, then it must be reality. Yet even many physicists of today will tell you the universe has to be an illusion; that it can't possibly be here. Some are even becoming convinced this is all a simulation. But whatever you want to call it, the fact is you dream that you're born, you dream you have this strange life, you dream that you die, you dream that you have this in between period, you dream that you're born again, and it goes on and on. Our lifetimes are like serial dreams that occur one after the other, so we are always in an unreal state. The *form* of the dreams appear to change, but the *content* is always the same: separation. The Course teaches this is an unreal state, and in a state of unreality and confusion there is always an underlying anxiety, whether conscious or not. Yet if we have the willingness to listen to the right Voice that speaks for the reality of Spirit, instead of the ego voice that speaks for the reality of the dream, we start to relax. Maybe we'll begin to realize that all these things we thought were so important in the dream weren't such a big deal after all. Perhaps there is a greater reality that is just beyond the dream, and yet everywhere. It's not that it's not there, it's simply out of our awareness. This is why the Course talks about, "...removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance." ¹⁰ Your natural inheritance is nothing less than the Kingdom of Heaven, and you don't have to earn it; it was given to you as a present by God. You don't have to earn a present, but you do have to awaken to it if you think you are here. I love the question the Course asks us. "How else can you find joy in a joyless place except by realizing that you are not there?" ¹¹

The Course is a very BIG teaching, not the little one portrayed by most of its teachers. The Holy Spirit is Guiding us to awaken, not to be a better individual, but to be ALL of it; nothing less than One with God. And that doesn't happen overnight. We go through a process. Spirit is a higher life form than being a body. You have to be prepared for this higher life form, which has no form, or else awakening would be too frightening. Just as a butterfly goes through a cocoon process, we do so in order to awaken to what we really are. What facilitates that metamorphosis is the Holy Spirit's teaching of a certain kind of forgiveness. That forgiveness is the miracle that ACIM is talking about, and anyone who does it is a miracle worker. The Course tells us, "Forgiveness is the central theme that runs throughout salvation, holding all of its parts in meaningful relationships, the course it runs directed and its outcome sure." ¹²

There are three basic steps that make up the Holy Spirit's kind of forgiveness. Determined practice of them will eventually result in what the Course calls vision, and it will inevitably lead to your awakening from the dream of duality and opposites.

We can begin to do what *A Course in Miracles* says is necessary for the salvation of "the Sonship," which you could take to mean everyone and everything that appears to exist. J says, "Thus is all the thinking of the world reversed entirely." ¹³ You do your part in salvation, which is your only responsibility in this entire mess we seem to find ourselves in, by practicing the unique form of forgiveness the Course teaches. You don't have to save the world. That's the Holy Spirit's job. Your job is to *follow* the Holy Spirit instead of having to be the boss. Now, if you own your own business, you don't have to *tell* anybody you're not the boss, but in your mind you know who the real leader is. Many people think of Jesus as being the ultimate leader, but the truth is he was the ultimate follower. In the Course he says he just listened to one Voice. This is the Voice the Course wisely describes as "The Voice for God," ¹⁴ the Holy Spirit, rather than as the Voice of God. God does not interact with the world, because God is perfect Oneness, and we should be happy God is not responsible for this world. If He was He'd be just as crazy as we are. But because God is still Perfect Love, as both the Bible and the Course say, that gives us a perfect home to go home to.

In this dream, the Holy Spirit can and does see our illusions, but without believing in them. We learn to think like the Holy Spirit and thus awaken to Spirit, by following the Holy Spirit's counsel to forgive. The first step in doing this requires discipline; the kind of discipline it takes to make a choice you are not used to making when the stuff hits the fan.

As a personal example, let's imagine I'm driving down the freeway in L.A. where I live, and some guy cuts me off in traffic. We all know that cars bring out the best in men, and right at that moment I have a conscious *choice* to make between one of two interpretations of what I'm seeing. I can do what most people do and think with the ego. I can judge and perhaps

even react (a big mistake.) Maybe, if I'm having a bad day and I'm particularly upset, I'll give the person who cut me off the finger. This can lead to all kinds of problems. What if that person has a gun? I could be dead. There's nothing wrong with being dead. When your body appears to stop and die your mind keeps right on going, so you're never really "dead." But if you have things you still want to do here, there *is* another choice.

Instead of reacting with the ego, I can stop myself. That's not easy because it goes against everything I've been taught for as long as I can remember. Stopping yourself is particularly difficult for men. Men have a problem. It's called testosterone. If you push me, I'm going to push you back. It's built into the system. Men start wars. It seems that half of us don't know how to do anything constructive. Yet it *is* possible to make another choice. I can catch myself starting to think with the ego, and I can stop myself. That's the first step in true forgiveness, and that first step is the hardest. To take that first step on a consistent basis takes a firm decision to change, and a determined effort to get into the habit of thinking with the Holy Spirit instead of the ego.

Once you've learned to stop yourself from reacting with the ego, which takes the kind of discipline and mind training that is taught throughout the Lessons of the Course's Workbook, you can go on to the next step in forgiveness. Eventually, all three steps will blend into one, and you'll do them as a habit without having to think much about the steps. You'll just *know* the truth and think accordingly.* This is much like the Zen concept of knowing as unarticulated truth. But at first it's essential to learn and practice the steps so you know what you're doing, and so you know what it is you're choosing between. That's how the steps become a part of you, and you'll know they're a part of you when you miss forgiveness if you *don't* do it. One of the reasons for that is you'll know that *you* are the one who is actually getting the benefits of doing it.

If you can stop reacting with the ego, you can take the second step and start thinking with the Holy Spirit. This step involves what the Course calls the "Holy Instant." That's the instant you switch from thinking with the ego to thinking with the Holy Spirit. Now you've made the right choice. And you're always choosing, whether you like it or not. You can't think with the ego and the Holy Spirit at the same time. They represent two complete and mutually exclusive thought systems. If you choose wisely it leads to a totally different experience of life. It can even lead to a better outcome, but that's just an effect. Our focus is on the cause. If you take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The ego has been telling you that what you're seeing is real, that the body is real, that you have a real problem you need to take care of with real people in a real world. The Holy Spirit has a totally different story. What you're seeing is not true.

Aside from being a dream, the Course also describes the ego's illusory world as a projection that's coming from your own unconscious mind. Because you can't see your unconscious, you can't see you're the one that the projection is coming from. You've made a projection of bodies and a trillion forms of separation. But people are not bodies, they are still perfect spirit at home in God. This has merely been forgotten. The Course asks you, "What if you recognized this world is a hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal?"¹⁵ Eventually it would be impossible for you to ever react to the world the same way you used to, and in choosing the Holy Spirit you are taking the second of three steps that awakens spirit in yourself. As the Course teaches, "The term *mind* is used to represent the activating agent of spirit, supplying its creative energy."¹⁶ By choosing spirit you activate it in your own mind. The Course also teaches that miracles "heal because they deny body-identification and affirm spirit-identification."¹⁷

In *A Course in Miracles*, the "miracle" is the kind of forgiveness I'm describing; a kind of forgiveness that comes from a place of cause and not effect; the kind of forgiveness where you stop being a victim and start being responsible for your own projection. Native Americans have often said, "Behold the great mystery." A Course in Miracles says, "Behold the great projection,"¹⁸ because that's all the universe of time and space is. As some disciplines have taught for thousands of years, it's all an illusion. You may not be able to see where the projection is coming from, but you can undo any effects the projection has on you by withdrawing your belief in it. It's that belief which gives it power over you.

The dream is not being dreamed by somebody else. There is nobody else; only the projection. If anyone or anything in this world has the power to hurt you, it's because you've given it that power. Now it's time to take that power back, and put the power of belief where it belongs; in God. Over time, this changes everything. The Course says, "Miracles are habits."¹⁹ Your mind is being retrained to forgive instead of judge.

As for your experience, you can get to the point where the world cannot hurt you. As the Course says about the Holy Spirit's form of forgiveness, "It denies the ability of anything not of God to affect you. This is the proper use of denial."²⁰ By being at cause instead of effect, you are reversing the thinking of the world. Now forgiveness is justified. If all of this is real then forgiveness is not justified. But if it's your projection, forgiveness is totally justified. The more you get used to looking at the world as not coming at you, but coming from you, the more impossible it becomes to react to it the way you used to, and the more you realize that you're dreaming.

In 2003, shortly after the release of *The Disappearance of the Universe*, (which is often referred to simply as DU) an online study group formed at Yahoo about my book and *A Course in Miracles*. It went on to become the largest Course study group in the world. At the group we coined a phrase for "forgiveness opportunities." We started to call each one a JAF. This is an acronym for "Just another forgiveness opportunity." The phrase is born of the fact that there will always be forgiveness opportunities as long as you appear to be here. However, it's possible to get to the point where these forgiveness opportunities cannot affect you. When that time finally arrives on your spiritual path, these JAFs will be less challenging and your forgiveness will be more and more automatic, leading to a major change of experience.

I'm often asked various questions at my Workshops about what the Course means, and I usually start off by saying the best way to know what the Course means is to go by what it says. That may seem obvious, but the Course says a lot of things people don't want to hear, and there's tremendous psychological resistance to getting it. For example, it says, "There is no world! This is the central thought the Course attempts to teach."²¹ Most people don't want to hear that. They want the world, and desire the things in it they are attracted to; hoping at the same time that the bad things won't come to them, or at least not be too bad. Yet the Course also says, (with Jesus speaking in the first person) "I once asked you to sell all you have and give to the poor and follow me. This is what I meant: If you have no investment in anything in this world, you can teach the poor where their treasure is. The poor are merely those who have invested wrongly, and they are poor indeed!"²² The Course is talking here about your psychological investment. Its teachings are always done at the level of

the mind, not at the level of the physical. You prepare yourself to go home by undoing the ego and gradually letting the Holy Spirit become the dominant force in your mind, and in the end, the only force in your mind.

As you do this the Holy Spirit is healing your mind by removing a very deep, unconscious guilt, most of which you're not aware of. If you were aware of it, it wouldn't be unconscious. This terrible guilt can be traced all the way back to the original idea that we separated ourselves from God. Although that's not true, in our unconscious we believe it's true. Your mind will be healed and the guilt slowly but surely removed by the Holy Spirit every single time you practice the kind of forgiveness the Course is teaching. Without this healing the return of reality to our awareness is impossible.

The world we once believed in is a dream, and nothing more. William Shakespeare, who according to my Teachers was enlightened, was right on the money when he wrote these words in "The Tempest."

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,
As if you were dismayed: be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Those words would fit very comfortably into the Text of ACIM. The Course leads to lucid dreaming on a whole new level. Eventually you become aware that you're dreaming. Every JAFO is equally forgivable. You begin to relax. Real peace of mind is yours. Ironically, you function better in the dream because you can think more clearly, and you have the Guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to lead you.

To review the first step in forgiveness: you have to catch yourself thinking with the ego and stop it! That takes discipline, because the ego is very clever and will come up with a thousand different ways to convince you that you and others are bodies, which makes the whole thing true. Yet to repeat, the Holy Spirit has a totally different identity for you to remember: "I am not a body I am free, for I am still as God created me."²³ This also applies to others, and the second step in forgiveness involves an understanding that what you're seeing is not true, and you need to change your mind and think with the Holy Spirit instead of the ego.

If you make it that far, the Holy Spirit will give you the right minded ideas from the Course that are the best for you to apply to the situation or event you find yourself involved in. Or you may not have to think at all. You may simply find yourself at peace. Eventually, as the ego is undone and the Holy Spirit begins to dominate your mind, you'll be able to hear the messages and inspiration that comes from the Holy Spirit more clearly. You can even receive answers to the practical questions you have about how to proceed with your illusory life. A life lived with the Holy Spirit is a totally different experience than one lived with the ego. Now you're never alone, even if you're the only person in the room.

Your unconscious mind knows everything. It would have to because that's where the projection of a universe of time and space is coming from in the first place. And if it knows everything, it knows that there's really just one of us. And if it knows there's really just one of us, it will interpret whatever you think about the world or another person to really be about you. That's a pretty sobering thought. People wonder why they're depressed. Just look at the garbage they've been thinking about other people, not realizing it was really just going to them, and that it would determine how they feel about themselves, and ultimately, even establish their own identity. So another important aspect of the second step of forgiveness is that you understand you are forgiving the other person not because they've really done something, but because they haven't really done anything, because you're the one who made them up in the first place. So you're forgiving that person because they haven't really done anything. That's why they're innocent. This kind of forgiveness leads to a re-imagining of yourself. If they're guilty, you're guilty. But if they're innocent, you're innocent. There's no way around it. That's because of a very important law of the mind that is articulated in ACIM, "As you see him you will see yourself."²⁴

Yet it's vital at the same time that you *do not stop there*, as many students do. There's another very important part to all of this that most never consider. If it's true that as you see him you will see yourself, and if you go through life thinking the world and people are just illusions, your mind will interpret it to mean that you are an illusion. That will leave you feeling empty and meaningless, which is a pretty good description of depression. That's why *A Course in Miracles* is a lot more proactive than most people realize. It doesn't just describe the thought system of the ego, which is the thought system of most of the world; it completely *replaces* the thought system of the ego with the thought system of the Holy Spirit. So it's imperative that you combine the third step of forgiveness with the first two.

The biggest mistake *A Course in Miracles* students as well as other spiritual students make when it comes to forgiveness is that they don't go all the way with it. Their forgiveness is too limited. That brings up the third step in forgiveness, which is based on the Oneness of Spirit, rather than the chaos of an unstable and seemingly separate world. This is spiritual sight. You learn to see the way the Holy Spirit sees, and thus get in touch with what you really are. The Holy Spirit sees the love and innocence of Spirit everywhere. In fact the Course says, "Wherever He looks He sees Himself."²⁵ Thus the third step is what my Teachers call spiritual sight, and what the Course also describes not only as vision but as true perception. You change your own experience, and ultimately what you believe is your own identity, by changing the way you think about and identify other people. As the Course tells us in the final section of the Text, "Choose once again what you would have him be, remembering that every choice you make establishes your own identity as you will see it and believe it is."²⁶ This is why it's vital to remember that the Holy Spirit doesn't think in terms of separation. The Holy Spirit thinks in terms of the wholeness and the Oneness of Spirit. Spiritual sight involves the way you think. With spiritual sight you *overlook* the body,

as well as the idea of individuality, and think outside of the box. You think of that person as not just being part of the whole, you think of that person as being *all* of it.

It's possible to carry on a normal conversation with someone and still acknowledge in your mind what they really are, which is perfectly One with God, and where they really are, which is the perfect oneness of Heaven. And if you think about people that way often enough and long enough, eventually you can't help but experience that's what you really are and where you really are. That's the way the mind works. That's how Jesus got in touch with his own Divinity. That's how Buddha awakened from the dream. That's how some of the other Masters discussed in this book thought in different forms but with the same idea, that there exists the Oneness of Reality that's just beyond the veil of separation, and only this reality is true. That's non-duality. And being at cause they were not a victim of the dream, they were the author of the dream. Then, when the process of undoing the ego is complete, because all of your forgiveness lessons are complete, and with no guilt left in the mind, the time comes when you lay the body aside for the final time, and you are awake and at home in God for the timeless reality of eternity.

Forgiveness, when done correctly, leads to love automatically, because that is what you are. And love leads to peace. The practical application of these ideas by enough people can and will eventually lead not only to their enlightenment, but to world peace, and you can play your part in the healing of the collective mind of all beings.

The world has been trying to achieve world peace in the wrong place; out there on the screen. But by focusing in the right place, the time will come when world peace is finally achieved. That won't happen in our lifetime, but that doesn't matter. You can do your part *now*. Then you can awaken and go home.ii

In DU, my Teachers and I were talking about the prospects for world peace when they said something very interesting: *The people of the world will never live in peace until the people of the world have inner peace*. That's because the Course teaches us that what we're seeing out there on the screen we call life is really "the outside picture of an inward condition." ²⁷ In fact, the illusory world is just a symbolic representation of what exists in the one, large hidden mind, or what Carl Jung called "the collective unconscious." If what we're seeing is a reflection of that which is within, then as long as there's conflict in the mind there will always be conflict in the world, whether it be war, murder, crime, terrorism, mayhem or merely disagreements. But the day will come when enough people will attain inner peace through the type of forgiveness that undoes the ego. When *that* happens, it will change everything.

I think it's very appropriate that the people who published *A Course in Miracles* called themselves "The Foundation for Inner Peace." The human race has been trying to achieve world peace for thousands of years, just in this cycle of history. So we try diplomacy, and when that doesn't work we try negotiation, and when that doesn't work we try war. But people get tired of war after a few years, so we try a League of Nations. But that doesn't work, so after the next war we try a United Nations, and occasionally we seem to have peace. But it's not *real* peace. As the Course puts it, "Mistake not truce for peace." ²⁸ Nobody ever forgets where the hatchet is buried. That's because we haven't dealt with the cause. But when a critical mass occurs where enough people in the world achieve inner peace, then outer peace will literally have to happen. As Shakespeare would say, "It must follow as the night the day."

You have an opportunity to make a real contribution to the healing of the unconscious mind, and thus the world, with your forgiveness and your achievement of inner peace. Historians may not put you in the history books, but so what? Most of the people in the history books were war makers. We're peace makers. As the immortal Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Perhaps Gandhi was not the first one to say that; it can be traced at least back to Buddha, and probably further. But Gandhi knew it was true, and he lived it. You can do the same if you are determined enough to attain your enlightenment and the peace of God. We do not have to be intimidated by the Masters who have come before us. As Jesus explains in the Course, "There is nothing about me that you cannot attain." ²⁹

Both Mary Baker Eddy and the Course said, "All are called but few choose to listen." ³⁰ Are you willing to listen? One of my favorite sentences in the Course appears in the final section of the Text called "Choose Once Again." It admonishes us to, "Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there." ³¹ There are many people who are afraid of the idea of going to hell. They don't realize they're already there. According to the Course's uncompromising metaphysics, any state apart from Heaven is hell. But it's possible to eventually change your experience to a higher life form; again, one that has no form. You can graduate from the experience of being a body to the Oneness of Spirit.

The world is full of many forgiveness opportunities, if we're willing to take advantage of them. If we have trust and perseverance, we can attain the attitude of J: "Let us be glad that we can walk the world, and find so many chances to perceive another situation where God's gift can once again be recognized as ours! And thus will all the vestiges of hell, the secret sins and hidden hates be gone. And all the loveliness which they concealed appear like lawns of Heaven to our sight, to lift us high above the thorny roads we traveled on before the Christ appeared." ³²

The Course doesn't claim to be the only way to get home to God, but it does claim to be a fast way. It says, "The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years." ³³ And there are two additional statements the Course makes that amplify what has been said in these pages. One is, "The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself." ³⁴ On the level of the dream you could think of atonement as being the correction of our misperceptions by the Holy Spirit. But on the macro level of the Course it says, "The full awareness of the Atonement is the recognition that *the separation never occurred*." ³⁵

If the separation from God never occurred then we never left Heaven. We're still there. That's why we're innocent. Nothing has happened, except in a meaningless dream. The truth hasn't gone anywhere. It's still here. It's just out of our awareness, waiting to be remembered as the blocks are removed. And if we're still there, then we are all Divine Creations of God. The way to remember Who we are is to give the truth to everyone in our mind, without exception. If you make an exception, you are not returning your mind to the Oneness of God.

We can play our part in bringing genuine peace not only to ourselves, but to the dream we call the universe, which will ultimately disappear the same way any other dream disappears when you wake up from it. We can achieve this by practicing true forgiveness and seeing with spiritual sight. That's our only responsibility, but it's an important one. It's the

natural profession of all those on the ladder to enlightenment. You're welcome to join in. The Holy Spirit will take care of the rest.

INDEX OF REFERENCES

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In the following Index, please follow the examples below to correlate the References to the numbering system used in *A Course in Miracles*.

- T-26.IV.4:7. = Text, Chapter 26, Section IV, Paragraph 4, Sentence 7.
- W-pl.169.5:2. = Workbook, Part 1, Lesson 169, Paragraph 5, Sentence 2.
- M-13.3:2. = Manual, Question 13, Paragraph 3, Sentence 2.
- C-6.4:6 = Clarification of Terms, Term 6, Paragraph 4, Sentence 6.
- P-2.VI.5:1. = Psychotherapy, Chapter 2, Section 6, Paragraph 5, Sentence 1.
- S-1.V.4:3. = Song of Prayer, Chapter 1, Section 5, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3.

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