

Integrating Form and Content

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.

Part I

The integration of form and content is an extremely important theme in *A Course in Miracles*. It focuses on the necessity of applying what we learn through living the Course's principles. One of my favorite passages is Jesus saying to us: "Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you" (T-11.VI.7:3-4). The way we demonstrate that his love lives in us, which is the content, is by reflecting that love in our everyday life. That is the integration of form and content.

As you may know, one of the most significant principles in *A Course in Miracles* is *ideas leave not their source*. Jesus refers to this principle over and over, sometimes indirectly but many times very directly and explicitly (see, for example, T-26.VII.4:7). Understanding its meaning is crucial to understanding what this course is about as well as to living it. If *ideas leave not their source*, anything that is in the mind, the source of everything, remains in the mind, which is Jesus' argument for why there is no world and why the entire physical universe, the vast cosmos, is nothing more than a projection of the thought of separation in the mind of God's Son (W-pl.132.4-6; W-pII.3). Since *ideas leave not their source*, the cosmos is a projection that has never left the mind, which means there is no world out there. That is the profound significance of that principle.

This principle can be also be seen as expressing another key principle, the principle of Atonement that says that the separation never happened. If we are an Idea or a Thought in the Mind of God, we have never left our Source, which means there is no separation; and if there is no separation, there is no split mind and no guilt to make its home in the split mind. If there is no guilt, there is no projection because guilt is always projected, and if there is no projection, there is no world. Thus, if *ideas leave not their source* there is no world, no guilt, no split mind—there is nothing but a "Oneness joined as One" (T-25.I.7:1)—God's perfect Son, perfectly at one with His perfect Creator. That is the significance of that idea in the context of the Course's metaphysics.

The nature of the world and the relationship of the world to the mind, and even more specifically, the relationship of our lives as physical, psychological beings to the mind cannot be understood without recognizing that *ideas do not leave their source*. Whatever is in the mind will be projected out, which means that every single thing we do, think, say, and feel takes place only within the mind. Everything that happens here is a reflection of a decision that the mind makes.

I gave a workshop a number of years ago called "The Inner Voice," and one of the points I made was that people make a big deal about hearing an inner voice. Most people think that hearing an inner voice automatically means it is the Holy Spirit because He is the inner Voice. Well, yes, He is an inner Voice, but there is another inner voice. A major point I emphasized in that workshop is that everyone is channeling all the time. What is the big deal about channeling? We cannot help but channel, because every time we have a thought, utter a word, or do something, we are channeling.

The only issue is which voice we are channeling, which voice do we reflect: the ego's voice, which is

the voice of separation, specialness, guilt, hate, fear, and judgment, or the Voice of the Holy Spirit or Jesus, which is the Voice of peace, forgiveness, healing, kindness, and shared interests. We are always channeling and we are always integrating form and content. Always. We cannot help but do that because *ideas leave not their source*. Thus, everything that the mind decides comes down ultimately to one of two choices: the ego's thought system or the Holy Spirit's thought system, and what the mind decides is what the body will do and think. Therefore, whatever the body is doing reflects the integration of the content. The question is, which will be the content?

What all this boils down to on a purely practical level—and this course is meant to be practical; over and over again Jesus tells us this is a practical course (e.g., T-8.IX.8:1; T-11.VIII.5:3; M-16.4:1)—is that our focus, day in and day out, is not on what we do, not on what we think about things, certainly not on what other people do, or what we think about what other people are doing or should do. The focus is always on which teacher we are choosing, which voice we are choosing to listen to, which thought system we are identifying with. That is the only focus, which of course is exactly the opposite of how the world teaches us, because that is what we made the world to teach. The world teaches us that the world is important, bodies are important, how we get along with bodies is important, how we support this particular body that we think is our own is important. Therefore we think education, employment, and having families are important. We think relating to people is important, whom we elect to political office is important, what we do with the environment is important, and on and on and on. That is how the world teaches us.

In this sense, everyone is the same regardless of which side of the political fence we are on, regardless of what we believe about the environment, regardless of what we believe about people. These positions are always based upon something external, and as the Course explains to us over and over again, that is why we made the body—so that it would only see the world. The body has come equipped with an elaborate sensory apparatus that perceives the world around us, smells it, hears it, touches it, feels it, sees it. Then we have a brain that takes all this sensory data, all this input and interprets it for us. We all feel this is very, very important. Obviously, if we are going to survive as physical organisms in this world, it is important that we know how the world functions and know how to take care of ourselves, but this will not get us home.

Basically, *A Course in Miracles* is not for the immature—it is not for people who are just setting out in life. There are always exceptions, but typically the Course is for people who, to some degree, already have learned how to maneuver and navigate in the world and who then suddenly recognize the world and their lives are not what they thought. So they do not have to prove anything. They have already realized that everything that they have proven about themselves does not work, in the sense that it does not make them happy and does not bring them peace.

It is obvious if one just listens with even half an ear that everyone lies. Not only do people in public office lie, *everyone* lies because everyone is coming from his or her own agenda, and that agenda is: How can I survive in this world and escape all responsibility for what happens to me? Everyone has the same agenda. We want to survive in this world as individual entities and we want to assume no responsibility for what happens to us. That is why when we made the world right at the beginning we made things like microorganisms—viruses, bacteria, fungi, etc.—because all of that provides proof positive that we do not get sick because of our mind's election. We get sick because we have been invaded. Our body's fortress has been invaded by these tiny virulent organisms who come in and attack us, gnaw away at us, eat up our flesh, snuff out our life.

We also made all the big organisms or the macroorganisms such as people, who always prey on us, betray us, lie to us, deceive us, take advantage of us, cannibalize us, attack us, judge us, and reject us—and we made all this so we could survive in this world and not be held accountable for it. That is

why the body was made. The body was made not only to receive sensory input and a brain to interpret it; the body was also made vulnerable to being hurt. The body is incredibly vulnerable as we know, both our physical body and our psychological body. You look at someone funny and that person can be devastated, or you smile and the person feels a step away from Heaven. And, of course, physically we are very vulnerable.

We made the body not only to perceive what is around us, but to perceive hate, treachery, and danger around us and accept no responsibility for it. Moreover, the body was made in such a way that not only does it only look outward, but it cannot look inward. It only looks outward so there is no awareness that there is a mind. Therefore the idea that *ideas leave not their source* is absolute nonsense to us. What source? We don't know we have a source—and I am not even talking about God at this point. Once we believe, as the ego told us, that *ideas do leave their source*, that projection works, that I can project myself from my mind into a body, we all joined in conveniently forgetting that we have a mind. That is what we sometimes refer to as the "veil of forgetfulness." A veil fell across our mind so we forget we have a mind. Well, if I don't have a mind, if all I am is a body—which in the Course means being in a state of mindlessness—then I am here because of something that was done to me. We all know the mythology of birth. There was a sperm and an egg, and before you know it, there I was. Well, that is not what happened. That's the myth.

Because we do not know about a mind, we think that myth is not a myth—it is reality. We can study it in a test tube. We can see a sperm enter an egg and then there is a zygote, and then it multiplies, dividing through mitosis, and then one fine day out comes a baby. Some people think that is a miracle, something holy and sacred. It is a made-up story, and not only is it a made-up story, it is a purposive story to reinforce the fact that we do not have a mind.

The ego not only tells us that *ideas leave their source*, it then obliterates all memory of a source, and so all we are left with is an idea that now is solidified in a body. In other words, we have obliterated the content and we have only the form. We are not aware that we are a walking integration of the ego's content, which is separation, specialness, guilt, hate, judgment, fear, suffering, and death, and that we have taken that thought system, the content, and integrated it in a form called the body and our lives, with no awareness that our minds have done that. We actually think that there is a body, "my body," that interacts with other bodies, and that we are, to quote a line in the Course, "at the mercy of things beyond you, forces you cannot control..." (T-19.IV-D.7:4)—at the mercy of our birth, our genetic inheritance, our environment, our parents' neuroses, the world's neuroses or psychoses, the weather, political decisions, war, and on and on and on.

All this makes perfect sense to everyone here because we all have fallen into this state of sleep. There is a reference to the "sleep of forgetfulness" (T-16.VII.12:4). We are all asleep and have forgotten that we are sleeping, so that we think what we are dreaming is reality, which is what our typical experience is every night. While we are asleep, we think the dream we are dreaming is reality because we have all the "normal" responses to what goes on in the dream, which are all perfectly appropriate for a dream—very inappropriate, though, if nothing is really happening. For instance, you are having a nightmare and are terrified; you start to sweat and thrash around and scream out, and all that makes perfect sense in the context of the dream, but no one is chasing you. You are still in your bed, very safe. It makes sense within the dream. It does not make sense in terms of reality.

Well, that is Jesus' point for everything here. It all makes sense within the dream—our sufferings, pains, angers, special loves, special hates, etc. They all make sense within the dream, but outside the dream—which is where he is and where he is saying we are, too, but we have forgotten we are there—this makes no sense: *ideas leave not their source*.