

Miracles versus Magic

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
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Part IX

"How Should the Teacher of God Spend His Day?" (M-16)

Let us look at a passage from "How Should the Teacher of God Spend His Day?" in the teacher's manual (M-16). It is a wonderful section, which deals with everything we have been talking about: form and content, as well as magic. We will start in the middle of the section, paragraph 6.

(M-16.6:1-2) There is one thought in particular that should be remembered throughout the day. It is a thought of pure joy; a thought of peace, a thought of limitless release, limitless because all things are freed within it.

Jesus is talking about what the whole point of the workbook is, and that is to learn how to generalize. You are going to take this thought, which we will see in a moment, and then bring all of your concerns throughout the day to that thought. What underlies this is the beginning of the Course, the first principle of miracles: "There is no order of difficulty in miracles" (T-1.I.1:1). What that means is that all problems are the same. *All problems are the same*. And what that means is that none of them, on the level of form, should be taken seriously, because the form conceals the underlying content, which is always one. The form could be the belief that I am better off being separate from God, or the belief that special love is better than God's Love. Whatever the form, the content is the problem. Everything here is simply a variation, a shadowy fragment of that problem, which means every problem is solved the same way. We bring it to the truth of the Atonement that says: Not only did you not separate from the Love of God, not only did you not destroy Heaven, but you could not have destroyed Heaven. Therefore, why be upset? Not only did you not do it, you could not do it. You never could. The impossible cannot happen, by definition. So, what is the big fuss about?"

Recall the passage about the Holy Spirit not looking to effects (T-27.VIII.9:1). He has judged their cause in gentle laughter, the cause being that we believe we could do the impossible; we believe we *did* the impossible. But in truth, we cannot. Therefore, it was not done; therefore, there is no guilt; and therefore, there are no effects. That is how everything is healed.

Now that is what this thought is:

(M-16.6:3-5) You think you made a place of safety for yourself. You think you made a power that can save you from all the fearful things you see in dreams. It is not so.

That is it. Whenever you get upset during the day, whenever you get serious about something—whether it is in the world at large or in your personal world—just let Jesus say to you, "It is not so." There is a similar line in the text where Jesus describes the insane and warlike nature of the ego and says, "And

God thinks otherwise" (T-23.I.2:7). That's it! If God thinks otherwise, what we think is not so. Therefore, why be hot and bothered by it? Why be serious about it? Why try to solve it or fix it? Why try to heal it?

(M-16.6:5-8) It is not so. Your safety lies not there [in the ego]. What you give up is merely the illusion of protecting illusions. And it is this you fear, and only this.

"What you give up is merely the illusion of protecting illusions." That is what magic is. That is what we have been talking about throughout this class. The world is an illusion protecting the illusion of guilt, which actually comes from the illusion of believing we can be separate from God. That is why nothing here should be taken seriously. It is an illusion protecting an illusion. When you try to change the illusion, when you struggle against the illusion, when you agonize over the illusion, when you hold a calendar up to the illusion, you are obviously making it real. You are giving it power over you. You are giving it power to take the peace of God away from you. That is the mistake and the only mistake.

(M-16.6:8) And it is this you fear, and only this.

Why? Because you are the child of the illusion, the magical baby. Take away the magic, and you are no one. That is why we cling to our ego scripts, our defenses, and to our belief in magic. That is why we cling to our past—our past of abuse, victimization, and hurts—because that is what defines us. All the defenses we have erected since the time we were very little in order to protect ourselves and guard against pain, threat, and danger all now become our identity. Then we adopt all kinds of magic to fix the identity.

Q: How does this happen without turning into a blissniny?

A: The key to not being a blissniny is to look at all this. Remember the passage from "The 'Dynamics' of the Ego" that I read earlier, where Jesus says that we look together at the ego so we can move beyond it (T-11.V.1:5). Blissninnies never look at the ego. Blissninnies would say, "What ego?" If you do this right, you do not say "What ego?" initially. You first *look* at the ego. That is the difference.

(M-16.6:8-10) And it is this you fear, and only this [the fear of giving up the illusion]. How foolish to be so afraid of nothing! Nothing at all!

You will not know how foolish it is as long as you think it is something, and you will not know it is not something until you first look at it. Looking takes no effort. It is not hard work. You just look. You do not fix, change, study, or analyze. You just look. "All that is needed is you look upon the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up" (T-27.VII.2:2). All you have to know is that you took off your shoe so you would not have to look at the truth. You do not bother worrying about why the shoe is off. All you have to know is that you were born into this world so you would not have to look at the truth, and that all the situations that go on in your life that promote pleasure or bring pain, on all levels, were made so you would not have to look at the truth in your mind.

What that will help you do is not take the specifics of your life or anyone else's life seriously anymore. If everything is the same, then what difference does it make what color it is, what size it is, its magnitude, or the way it looks—whether it is pretty or ugly, sick or well, alive or dead? What difference does it make? Then watch how you want to make it important, how you want to make the differences important. Just watch yourself do it. Don't change it. Don't fix it. Just watch what you are doing. See how quickly you are going to move away from that simple looking and want to do something. The ego always

wants to do something. I cannot tell you how many people over the years have complained about this course—that it is not practical. They are going to write a better Course or write a better book that will make the Course more available and easier for people. The Course is very easy. It does not need anything more. I remember Bill Thetford used to say as a joke—but he was somewhat serious—if it is not in the workbook, don't do it. It is all here. You do not need anything else. Everyone wants to do something else, because this is so simple, so threatening. All you have to do is look. You do not have to do anything, and you do not have to practice anything else.

All the workbook exercises, if you really understand the content underneath them, are about looking at your ego and understanding there are two ways of looking. One is the ego's, which is not looking, but judging. The other is the Holy Spirit's, which is looking with a gentle smile. That is all you have to do. People want to make it easier, which means they want to make it more complicated. What could be easier than this: "I need do nothing"? Don't do anything. Don't work at it. Don't be serious about it. Everyone wants to change this book.

So many people feel they can do it better than Jesus, which is what underlies their wanting to change it. This was written down in the 1960s, and the world seems different now. Yes, certainly in form it is different, but the content is the same. This course does not need any changing. People want to change it because that reflects the underlying thought: I can do better than God. I know what love is; God does not know what love is. I know what happiness is; God does not know what happiness is. I can make up a world in which love is triumphant and love is all over, universal and wonderful. I can do better than God. That is one way of understanding what happened in that original instant, which never really happened at all, but we *thought* it happened. I can do better than God. I can do better than this course. I know what the world needs. Jesus does not. This course is not practical enough. I know. I will rewrite it so people will understand it.

Again, you do not have to understand every single sentence. Take out all the double and triple negative sentences you do not like. All you need is one sentence that you really understand. All you have to do is spend your life on the first principle of miracles, "There is no order of difficulty in miracles." You do not need anything else. If you understand any one sentence in this course perfectly, it would open up everything, so do not complain about how the Course is written. That is not your problem. The problem is what the Course says. You magically hope that if you change the language, if you change this or that, if you translate it into simple English, then it will be different. You will understand it, the world will understand it, and the world will be a better place. The problem underlying all that is that you *do* know what it says, and it terrifies you, because this course says you are *afraid of nothing*. "How foolish to be so afraid of nothing! Nothing at all!" The next line is also terrifying:

(M-16.6:11) Your defenses will not work . . .

Your life is your defense; your body is your defense; your personality is your defense. Forget about all the special things you do in your life, because now Jesus says: "Your defenses will not work . . ."; and then the second clause:

(M-16.6:11) . . . but you are not in danger.

That is not what our ego tells us. Within the confines of our individual lives our ego tells us when we are born that if we do not do something to get our needs met, we will be in danger, and so we have to make

our needs known. People have to feel our need and then do something about it to help us. We learn very early how to manipulate and seduce our parents, and then the parental surrogates around us so they will meet our needs; otherwise we will be in danger. Well, we ask, why do infants do that? It is because that is what the ego has programmed in all of us—in the mind, not the brain. We are all programmed to take our lives so seriously, then to demand that people around us take our lives so seriously, and fix things, fix us. The ego does not have to be fixed. The world does not have to be fixed. It just has to be looked at with that gentle smile. That will take you to what has to be fixed or changed, which was deciding for the ego instead of for God. That is the only problem. You do not even have to decide for God. You just look at your decision for the ego and realize how silly it is, how foolish it is to be afraid of nothing, which is all the ego is.

(M-16.6:11-12) Your defenses will not work, but you are not in danger. You have no need of them.

What psychologists tell you, which is why this line is in here, is that without defenses you become psychotic. One of the things you learn in providing therapy is that you do not take patients' defenses away. In one sense, of course, that is true, because you do not want to engender fear. However, the underlying principle is that without defenses you would be psychotic, so you need your defenses. That is certainly true in a magical world, but that is not true in reality. Defenses keep you from your safety, because your safety lies in your Identity as God created you. It does not lie in anything in the world or in the body. What you want to do is see how you want to change what this course says and mold it into some likeness you understand, some form of magic that you are comfortable with.

(M-16.6:13) Recognize this, and they will disappear.

Recognize that you have no need of your defenses, and they will disappear. Of course, that is what the ego tells us: I am my defenses. Remember, again, why we cling to magic. We are children of magic, the magic of the ego thought system of taking the *tiny, mad idea* seriously. Therefore, taking everything else seriously is woven into our DNA as separated individuals. The ego actually would agree with this statement: "Recognize this"—that you have no need of your defenses—"and they will disappear." Then the ego says: when your defenses disappear, bye bye to you, too; and then you are gone. That is the fear. The ego never bothers to read us the next line:

(M-16.6:14) And only then will you accept your real protection.

As you learn this course, you do not let your defenses go and just go poof into Heaven. You do not lose your self. It is only at the very end of the journey that your self disappears. What disappears as you go along is your anxiety, your anger, your depression, your fear, your phobias, your problems—all of those will disappear. Their place will be taken by your feeling more peaceful, your being kinder, more gentle, more loving, more caring. You will replace the ego's "vision" of separate interests with the Holy Spirit's vision of shared interests. You will still have your self. You will still recognize your shape in the mirror every morning. But as each day goes on, the face that you see in the morning will be a happier one, and will have a gentler, kinder smile. It is only at the very end that everything disappears.

Again, this is not something you have to work at. Just watch what you are doing, day in and day out, and watch the effects of choosing your ego. The pain will come from realizing that it hurts you to make judgments, hold on to grievances, be angry, and judge people all the time. That is what will motivate you to let it go, and you will let it go when you are good and ready. Remember, since Jesus exists in a

timeless state, he is not holding a stopwatch to you and he is not marking days off on a calendar. No one is urging you or pushing you. This is a very gentle, loving process in which no one will be hurt or lose.