

## Miracles versus Magic

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
*Foundation for A Course in Miracles*  
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*Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.*

### Part VIII

#### The Mistake of Taking One's Spiritual Path Seriously

Once again, the body is not real. How many times in this course, in all three books, does Jesus say your eyes do not see, your ears do not hear, your brains do not think, your bodies do not feel; they are not born, they do not die, they do not get sick, they do not get well—they do nothing? That also means they do not learn *A Course in Miracles*. Bodies do not learn.

Think of a puppet. A puppet does not do anything. It cannot think, feel, or act. It is the puppeteer that makes the puppet move, speak, and appear to think. That is all we are. This has nothing to do with your body. The person you think you are, the person you see in the mirror does not study *A Course in Miracles*. It cannot. What are you reading, studying, or thinking about it with? You think you are doing it with your brain and your eyes, but eyes do not see. *The learning occurs in your mind*. The Course is just a projection, a symbol in form—a set of symbols that reflect the principle of the Atonement in your mind, which says the separation from God never happened. That is not a symbol, it is a thought. However, as long as we think we are bodies, then this simple thought that undoes the ego has to be expressed in a form that we can relate to. *A Course in Miracles* is one such form—there are thousands of others, and Jesus is one such teacher—there are thousands of others.

We have the illusion—the magical belief—that we are learning and studying this course. People get so crazy about this. They get crazy about the words—they think these are Jesus' literal words. How can he have literal words? He cannot speak a word. He does not have a mouth that speaks. He only says one word—"Love"—and that is not a word. This is not a holy book. This is pieces of paper, crushed-up wood, with markings on it. Recall the passage where Jesus gently pokes fun at our love of money, referring to "stacks of green paper strips and piles of metal disks" (W-pl.76.3:2).

Jesus would also make gentle fun of people's worship of this course. This book is a set of symbols that reflect the single content of love, of the Atonement, that is in our mind. When you study this course, you are reflecting a process going on in your mind, where you are turning away from your ego, and the ego's lies of separation, specialness, and sin, etc., and turning toward the Holy Spirit, Whose presence represents peace, love, healing, and the Atonement. All that is nonspecific, abstract, and does not occur in the body or in form, and does not have words. But that is the reality; and that is where the action is. Whatever action you might say there is within the illusion is *in the decision-making part of our mind that chooses against the ego or for the ego*.

The choice for the Holy Spirit, then, gets reflected by your being a student of this book or any other spirituality. As long as you are a body, you should do what bodies do. Thus, bodies read and study a book that they find important; they practice the book's lessons; and they think about it. But this book

will help you realize that you are not your body. Over and over again, *you are not your body*. Jesus means that very literally. The problem is that most students do not consider the fact that they are thinking about those lines with a brain that cannot think. The same book tells them that they do not think, their eyes cannot see, and their bodies are not real. So what happens? They end up taking their body very seriously as it studies and practices this very serious spiritual text. They also try to get other people to be very serious about it. After all, these are the words of Jesus.

For twenty-one hundred years people have been doing that with a different book. It does not work because it is magic. It is all form instead of the content. People are terrified of the content, so they gravitate to the magic, to the form. They magically think that if they practice this course, read it, study it, write about it, teach it, learn it, and do all these things, it makes a difference. The only place it would make a difference is in their mind, which has nothing to do with what they do in form. Perhaps what they do will flow from the love in their mind, but it is *the love in their mind that is important, not what they do*. If they are invested in what they do, then you know it is not love in their mind anymore; it is special love. They have a special investment in the special work that they do, the special person they are, teaching these special words to special people in a special way, using a special technique—special this or a special that. Then you know it is not love, because love does not care. Love is only itself. You can try to anthropomorphize love and say it wants something, but all that it really wants is that you rejoin it and be a part of it. Then your body will automatically reflect that love and will do whatever love does. It will say whatever it says, write whatever it writes, do whatever it does, but it will not make any difference to you, because you will know that what is seemingly being done is not what is really being done. What is truly being done is the identification with love in your mind. Everything else is magic.

So do not work hard at this. Do not even work hard at not working hard—that is a trap, too. Do not be serious about not being serious, but do pay attention. When you pay attention with the Holy Spirit, there will be that gentle laughter. Your life will get much easier—maybe not on the level of form, but you will not care about the form anymore. It will be much easier because there will be a quiet peace and a gentleness in you, and there will be a love that will embrace *all* people without exception. That is how you know that you have chosen the right teacher. If the only word in Jesus' vocabulary is "one," which is equated with love, and you can let that love extend through you and embrace all people as one without exception, then you will know you have chosen him instead of your ego. The Jesus you have chosen is not "a dream that comes in mockery" (*The Gifts of God*, p. 121). He is not a magical figure, nor a savior. It ends up that he is *you*, and you are he, because it is all one. You grow in that oneness as you learn not to see people as different or as separate from each other, as better or worse than some. You see everyone as the same. Despite all appearances to the contrary, you will realize everyone is the same.

Each day will be a joy to you because you will see each day as an opportunity of learning, by your reactions, which teacher you have chosen. As Jesus explains in one passage—you will begin to associate being miserable, unhappy, and disquieted with making differences real and choosing the wrong teacher. You begin to associate being really happy, peaceful, calm, gentle, and kind with choosing the right teacher. You will know which teacher you have chosen by just observing your perceptions, your interpretations of people, and your judgments. Then when you begin to recognize these judgments more and more quickly, you will learn to forgive yourself for making the judgments.

Do not work at giving up judgment; just be aware that you are making the judgments and why. If I can establish and justify the differences between you and me as important, then I am saying the separation

from God and me is important, too, and is real. Just as the differences between you and me are real, the differences between God and me are real, too. That is why I judge, and that is why I am always trying to push people away.

Whenever I can successfully justify my judgments, I proclaim again, with former President George W. Bush, "Mission accomplished. The war has been won." The war against God has been won. I have defeated the enemy. The problem, however, is that the enemy has not gone away. Just as the war has not gone away in Iraq, it has not gone away in our minds, either. The guilt stays, and there is always another war to be fought. There is always someone else to condemn and judge and hate. There is always another special love out there to conquer, triumph over, and cannibalize. There is always another, because the guilt stays. All that I have to do to have the guilt go away is to *look* at it. But I need a teacher to redirect my attention from the people out there that I think I hate, or the people I think I love, and bring my attention back to my mind. It is not my special relationship with you that needs healing; it is my special relationship with *me* that needs healing—the me that has identified with the ego. When I can do that and forgive myself for having chosen the ego, the guilt will go. I do not have to work at it, chip away at it, or keep to a time schedule. It will just go. It is not taking the spiritual path seriously that undoes everything. That is the greatest obstacle, because that is the mistake of remembering not to laugh at the *tiny, mad idea*.