

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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Part XVI

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

(10:1-2) There is no substitute for the Will of God. In simple statement, it is to this fact that the teacher of God devotes his day.

The ego, of course, says there is a substitute, and magic is a major witness for its assertion. So as a teacher of God, as someone who is following *A Course in Miracles* as a spiritual path, I go through my day having a kind of double vision, regardless of what happens. One part of my mind is paying attention to the world outside and the various roles and classrooms that I have chosen for myself. But another part of my mind remains joined with the Holy Spirit. And so, in a sense, I am looking out, but I am also looking in. And the looking out is an extension of what I have seen when I have looked within. That means that I pay attention to everything in the world, just as everybody else does, but I recognize that nothing is really out there. And what appears to be out there is simply my classroom. My function then as a teacher of God, which is another term for *miracle worker* or *healer*, is simply to be a reminder to everyone, including myself, that what is out there is not the issue. The only issue is what is within my mind. And that is all a teacher of God does.

As my mind is healed, the Love of the Holy Spirit works through me and guides me in everything that I do. Once we get the general idea, practicing this Course is very simple. We become increasingly sensitive to when we are becoming upset, anxious, guilty, angry, annoyed, fearful, etc., recognizing our ego as quickly as possible. How quickly we can recognize it is a measure of how we are advancing in the curriculum. Almost as quickly as the upset begins, I want to remember that I am upset because I have forgotten Who my real Teacher is, choosing the ego rather than the Holy Spirit. So then the problem is never what I believe I am upset about. The problem is that I have forgotten. When I remember to go back within my mind and identify with that place of love and peace within, then once my attention is focused outside again, I will be peaceful. And then, whatever in my world needs attention will be attended to without effort, anxiety, or tension, and with total love.

(10:3-4) Each substitute he may accept as real can but deceive him. But he is safe from all deception if he so decides.

Everything the world offers to us as important, holy, pleasurable, etc., will deceive us. Nothing in this world lasts. Everything in this world was made literally to be a substitute for God. So to invest energy in anything of the world, whether to acquire it because I judge it as desirable or to avoid it because I judge it as painful, is really to direct myself away from God and, in fact, *against* God. Therefore each substitute will become a symbol of sin and guilt.

(10:5-6) Perhaps he needs to remember, "God is with me. I cannot be deceived."

In other words, the reason I am deceived by anything of the world (being deceived means that I believe acquiring it will bring me pleasure or Heaven, or avoiding it will bring me peace) is that I have forgotten about God. And so when I remember who I am as a child of God, then nothing in this world can deceive me, because I will not seek in the world for a substitute for God. When my mind is focused on the Love of the Holy Spirit, then everything in the world is seen as exactly the same: not as an object that I covet or crave or want to avoid, but rather as a learning opportunity and a classroom.

(10:7) Perhaps he prefers other words, or only one, or none at all.

It does not matter what I say in my mind or what my individual process is, so long as the content remains the same: namely, I do not take anything in this world as real or as having any importance for me, other than serving as a vehicle to help me awaken from the dream.

(10:8) Yet each temptation to accept magic as true must be abandoned through his recognition, not that it is fearful, not that it is sinful, not that it is dangerous, but merely that it is meaningless.

We saw the same idea in the previous paragraph. Any time anything in this world captures our attention, we have made it meaningful. Otherwise, we would not invest our attention in it. If anything in this world upsets or concerns us, that is a trap. We have forgotten that everything in this world, without exception, is equally meaningless. The purpose of the early lessons in the workbook, which seem very simple-minded but are quite the opposite, is to begin the process of alerting us to the fact that everything in this world lacks meaning. *We* are the ones who have given meaning to everything, and that meaning is to be a weapon against God.

Everything in this world can have meaning when the Holy Spirit assigns the meaning. The meaning that everything would have then is simply to be a classroom for us. But in and of itself, nothing in this world has any meaning. In and of itself, everything in this world is nothing, being made simply to be a veil drawn over the guilt and sin in our minds, which in turn is a cover to hide the Love of God from our awareness. This point has come up over and over again in this workshop, as it also does in the Course.

Magic is thus anything in this world that we believe will give us pleasure, happiness, peace, freedom from pain, etc. Anything in the world that we value becomes a form of magic. However, in the larger sense, everything in this world is a form of magic because it is part of the ego's magical defense against God. From a metaphysical point of view, the entire physical world is a magical solution to a nonexistent problem. It is the ego's solution to the made-up problem of God's vengeance. The ego tells us the world is going to protect us from that vengeance. On the other hand, the miracle—the Holy Spirit's solution to the problem of God's vengeance—involves looking at the problem. When we look at it, we realize the whole thing is preposterous and so it disappears. The ego, as we have seen, makes the problem real, puts it in a vault in the mind, shuts it tight, and says, "We must never go near there. And to ensure that we do not, we'll build a fortress around it. And that will solve the problem of God's vengeance." So the fortress—the world—is magic.

In other words, magic is an attempt to solve a problem without really solving it. The whole world was made to be that, at the metaphysical or the cosmic level. On an individual level the world is neutral; it has no value whatsoever. The ego then projects value into the world, and that is magic. So I look to the world to make me happy. God can't make me happy, but the world can! God can't take away my pain,

but this pain-killer can! That is magic. The Holy Spirit extends His purpose into the world and it then serves the purpose of the miracle. The world becomes a classroom in which I learn that my guilt is not out there, my problem is not out there. It is back within my mind.

(10:9-10) Rooted in sacrifice and separation, two aspects of one error and no more, he merely chooses to give up all that he never had. And for this "sacrifice" is Heaven restored to his awareness.

In other words, both sacrifice and separation are forms of the same mistake. The big problem, the ego tells us, is if we let go of our investment in the things of this world, if we let go of our thought system of attack and sacrifice, then we will have nothing. We will just disappear into oblivion. Part of the Course process then is to systematically break down our fear of really looking at the ego thought system, so that eventually we will be able to realize that suffering, sacrifice, and attachment to the things of the world are not going to bring us peace. And so we let go of the illusion that these things are meaningful, that these things will bring us Heaven. Basically, we end up letting go of nothing.

A wonderful line in the text, in the section "The Bridge to the Real World" (T-16.VI), says that when we cross over the bridge and are in the real world, "you will think, in glad astonishment, that for all this you gave up *nothing!*" (T-16.VI.11:4). But when we are still on this side of the bridge it looks as if we are being asked to give up everything. And so we still hold on to our ego thought system. A part of our mind still believes what the ego told us right at the beginning: We need the world as a defense against God's wrath. As long as a part of us still believes God will punish us, then we still believe that we need this world and all that comes with it—pain, suffering, sacrifice, attack, etc. And so we hold on to all our silly suffering, because we believe the pain that we are undergoing is better than the pain we will experience later on when God destroys us.

(11:1-2) Is not this an exchange that you would want? The world would gladly make it, if it knew it could be made.

We hold on to our insanity of believing that sacrifice and suffering will bring us happiness, because we do not believe there is any other choice. So one of the Course's major purposes is to help us realize there *is* another choice. It painstakingly draws out in great detail what the ego thought system is, so we can really understand how insane it is. Then it is set side by side with the Holy Spirit's thought system, and Jesus basically says, "Now look at both of these, open-eyed, with honesty, with me next to you. Is the choice difficult?" But the choice is not only difficult, it is impossible if we are not aware we have a choice.

(11:3-4) It is God's teachers who must teach it that it can. And so it is their function to make sure that they have learned it.

So as God's teachers, we want to teach the world that there is a choice. And we do not teach it by our words or our actions. We teach it by letting go of the interferences to the Holy Spirit's teaching it. He is the Teacher. We are the instrument and He is the Teacher. We are the form. He is the content. Our only function is to get our egos out of the way, which is another way of saying that our only function is to accept the Atonement for ourselves. There is nothing else.

(11:5) No risk is possible throughout the day except to put your trust in magic, for it is only this that leads to pain.

There is no danger, no threat, no risk in the day, if I am focused on God, Jesus is my teacher, and I am identified with his love. I can never be afraid. The risk, the danger, the threat, the pain come when I forget about him. I choose to put him aside, and I put my faith in some kind of magic. That is the cause of the pain. All pain then, without exception, comes because I have chosen to put Jesus away in my mind. It is as if I have locked him up in a closet, and I say: "I'm going to do it my way." That is the cause of the pain, and the pain will be instantaneous.

I may not experience the pain instantaneously, but it will surely follow, except I will not remember where it has come from. I will believe the pain must be coming from something in my body, or from what another person has done to me, or from anything else in the world. I will forget that the pain has come because, on another level that I have now successfully denied, I have chosen to put distance between myself and the Holy Spirit or Jesus. That is the pain. This is what the Course calls the "little gap," a symbol or reflection of the original gap, the gap I placed between myself and God. As the Course says, the seeds of sickness are held and grow in that gap (T-28.III.4:2-5;5:5). The gap is the separation of my ego self from my true Self. The mind is where it is experienced, and that is the only place it can be healed.

But the ego's defensive system is so clever that we do not come anywhere near our minds, and the whole dynamic gets denied and projected out, as it is displaced onto everything else. So I think I am upset because of all the things in the world. And of course, all the sources of pain are seen, in one way or another, as related to the body, whether it is my body or another person's body. But the problem has nothing to do with the body at all, as we have been seeing over and over again. It is in that little gap in my mind where I have told Jesus and the Holy Spirit, "Get lost. I'm going to do it myself." That is the pain.

The miracle brings the pain from the world back within, to that little gap. I can do something about the pain because now I am back to the point where I made the choice. Magic says, "The problem is not in your mind. It's out there in the world. We're going to fix it up, and here's a band-aid. We'll use this and we'll use that, and that will take care of it." And, of course, nothing ever actually gets healed that way.

It is my function as a teacher of God to point to that little gap. Not by anything I say or do, but simply by the love that comes through me, which acts as a reminder and shines like a light into the darkness in your mind and says: "This is where the problem is." But I do not do it, I do not have to say or do anything. I may do what everybody else does, whatever the situation happens to be; but the love and peace and defenselessness within me is the teacher.

Jesus taught, not by what he said or did. The pure love that came through him is what taught. People were attracted, not to his words, not to his person, and not to his seeming healings—whatever he did or did not do. People were attracted to the purity of the love that came through him. That also is what people attacked. It is never what a person says or does or looks like that really attracts us or upsets us. It is something else, but none of us knows what the something else is because we screen it all out. We not only want to screen it out in others, we want to screen it out in ourselves. And that something else is the place of love in our minds.

(11:6) There is no will but God's.

This is another way of stating the Atonement principle. The ego says there *is* another will besides God's: mine! And my will is alive and well and very powerful. The Atonement principle says:, "That's silly. How can there be anything other than God? Any other thought is simply a dream."

(11:7) His teachers [God's teachers] know that this is so, and have learned that everything but this is magic.

Everything else in the world is made up as an attempt to keep this single, simple truth from our awareness.

(11:8) All belief in magic is maintained by just one simple-minded illusion;--that it works.

We all believe that. Otherwise we would not be so invested in the world and the body. We believe magic works because it keeps the Love of God away from us. It is that pure and simple. And within the ego's world, obviously, it does.

(11:9) All through his training, every day and every hour, and even every minute and second, must God's teachers learn to recognize the forms of magic and perceive their meaninglessness.

As I come face to face with the various forms of magic in my life, whether it is a particular person or personal situation or something going on in the world at large, I must recognize they are all magic. If I find myself getting upset, anxious, guilty, feeling sorry for someone, etc., it is because I have forgotten that everything here is magic. This makes everything very, very simple.

While it should not be taken as a strict rule, several passages in the Course suggest that when we awaken in the morning, we should remember our goal for the day as soon as we can (e.g., T-30.I.1:5, M-16.4). When we are doing the workbook, that is easy because the workbook reminds us. But the idea is to generalize so that we do not need a book to remind us of our goal. And our goal is to learn to recognize all the forms of magic and not to be taken in by them. And so, as soon as we can when we awaken, we want to remember that goal, so we can learn to recognize all the illusions, all the forms of magic in the world, and realize that they are not what we want to choose. To keep that in mind means—if we set that goal in the morning—we will then see everything that happens to us during the day as a way of helping us recognize that.

Let's say when I awaken in the morning I remember that I have an important meeting later in the day that I am very anxious about, for whatever reason. Or some situation is going to come up during the day that I am very frightened of or guilty about. If I remember my goal, then I can step back, look at the situation differently, and say, "Well, this is a way for me to learn that I don't have to be anxious. I don't have to be afraid, and I don't have to be in control." And then I can see that this very meeting or circumstance that I am feeling so anxious and upset about is nothing more than a classroom that I have chosen. And if I continue to be anxious, guilty, or fearful, it is because I have chosen the ego as my teacher. It is only the ego that teaches through anxiety, guilt, and fear.

But if I choose the Holy Spirit I will be peaceful and calm, and I will learn the lesson, regardless of the outcome. If I continue to feel anxious during the day as the meeting draws near, it is because I have chosen the wrong teacher. At that point I do not want to fight against my anxiety or my guilt. I just want to remember that I am anxious because I chose the wrong teacher, which means I am still afraid of being

peaceful. And I want to be very clear within my mind what I am doing. That is all I have to do. So I can go into the meeting and feel guilty, and be anxious and angry, and stomp and throw a temper tantrum. I can do whatever I want to do, just as long as I am in touch with that part of my mind that knows that I am doing it to defend myself against God's Love and that at that particular moment I am choosing against God's Love and peace. That is not sinful. It is a little silly, but it is not sinful.

That is all that I do. I don't fight against it. I can let my ego go to town, but I will have a little part of my mind sitting back in the audience with Jesus, looking at my ego throwing a tempter tantrum, or being terribly frightened or very guilt-ridden. I want to be aware of what I am making real and why I am making it real. Jesus is whispering to me: "This is a comedy. Let's laugh at it together." But I say, "No, it's not a comedy. It's very serious and I'm choosing to go against what you are telling me because I'm too afraid of what you are saying." We just want to be aware of it. And when we can do that:

(11:10) Fear is withdrawn from them [the forms of magic], and so they go.

This is saying that what holds the forms of magic as reality for us is our fear. If we can look at what we have made real, with Jesus next to us, then there is no fear and the forms disappear. In the text, Jesus says: "Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other" (T-4.III.8:1-2). He is asking us to be very honest as we look at our ego thoughts, and that we should look *with him*: "Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other." And so this means that if I am fearful, anxious, angry, or whatever, I am excluding Jesus. But if I can join with him and look at my ego thoughts with him, that will take all of the wind out of the ego's sails. Jesus continues, "If you will really try to do this, you have taken the first step toward preparing your mind for the Holy One [God] to enter. We will prepare for this together, for once He has come, you will be ready to help me to make other minds ready for Him. [And that is what a teacher of God does.] How long will you deny Him His Kingdom?" (T-4.III.8:3-5). God is not denying us His Kingdom. We are denying ourselves His Kingdom because our ego has taught us not to value it. And so we have thrown away God's Kingdom, and in exchange have adopted the ego's kingdom as our home.

(11:11) And thus the gate of Heaven is reopened, and its light can shine again on an untroubled mind.

Once we open up the locked vault of our minds, the light of Heaven simply shines on it. All we are asked to do as a teacher of God, therefore, is to bring our minds in unity with Jesus or the Holy Spirit. That is all we do. Their Love will flow through us. Very often it may take the form of words or actions or behavior. But at that point our ego is not involved at all and we are not the one who is doing it. In the text, Jesus speaks of how we will see the miracles he has done through us and we will realize that we have not done them. But Something in us has done them (T-11.VI.9:3; T-16.II.2:4-8).