

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
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Part XXI

How Is Correction Made? (M-18)

We continue with our discussion of anger and magic thoughts. We will read two sections that deal with these issues. The very next section in the manual, "How Is Correction Made?" (M-18), which we will read now, addresses the temptation of wanting to correct others' mistakes or magic thoughts. We will then read a parallel section from the text called "The Correction of Error" (T-9.III).

As with everything in the Course, these sections are talking about *content* and not *form*. Jesus is not saying that we should not, on the level of form, correct someone else's mistakes. He is talking about an *attitude of judgment and condemnation*, based on the premise that the other person is wrong. And not merely wrong in terms of giving a wrong answer on a test, for example, but wrong simply by virtue of his own sinfulness. That is what this is addressing. So the issue is not correcting mistakes on the level of form. The whole purpose of *A Course in Miracles*' is to correct our mistakes, so obviously Jesus is not saying mistakes should not be corrected on that level. But none of us working with the Course—unless we are really projecting—would believe that Jesus is attacking or condemning us for making a mistake.

If we read Jesus' words carefully, opening up our minds and our hearts, we can feel his gentle love through everything he is saying, even when he is making rather forceful statements about the various mistakes that the world has made. And even more to the point, when he is correcting two thousand years of Christian teaching, saying Christians have misunderstood what he taught, on the level of form he obviously is correcting errors or mistakes. But he is not doing it in a spirit of judgment, attack, condemnation, or separation.

As in all things, the Course is saying that we should not attempt to correct someone's mistakes without first unifying our mind with the Holy Spirit's Love. Then when we speak, regardless of what we say, we will only be expressing love. So, again, these sections are not saying we should not correct people's mistakes on the level of form.

(1:1) Correction of a lasting nature,--and only this is true correction,-- cannot be made until the teacher of God has ceased to confuse interpretation with fact, or illusion with truth.

"Correction of a lasting nature" is correcting the one basic error or mistake, namely, that we are an ego and that the separation is real. And this mistake is undone or corrected simply by demonstrating that its fundamental premise is untrue. If the fundamental premise is that we are separate from God, then the correction or the undoing of that would be expressing and experiencing the Love of God. If I am expressing the Love of God, I cannot be separate from Him. If I am experiencing the Love of God, I cannot be separate from Him. That is correction of a lasting nature, which is what this is talking about.

Another way to say that "the teacher of God has ceased to confuse interpretation with fact, or illusion with truth" is that we no longer confuse form with content. The form may be that a person says something insulting or that a person has cancer. Those are facts within this world—that is the form. The *interpretation* would be that this is a terrible thing, that it is an expression of sin and guilt that should be attacked and corrected. That is the interpretation. As we discussed earlier, the basic ego interpretation of everything is based on the reality of victimization: what you have done is a personal attack on me or the people with whom I identify. Or my self, as a Son of God, is attacked and diminished when I am sick. These are all interpretations.

(1:2) If he argues with his pupil about a magic thought, attacks it, tries to establish its error or demonstrate its falsity, he is but witnessing to its reality.

So, for example, I find myself teaching a class in *A Course in Miracles* and I end up arguing with you because you do not share my view of the Course. I am making the difference real. This is not to say that I have to agree with what you are saying. But when I find myself in a position of arguing, of wanting to demonstrate that I am right and you are wrong, then I know that my ego has gotten in the way. All I am doing at that moment is reliving that ancient instant when the ego believed it was at war with God.

I am usurping the role of God, Who is perfect and knows the truth, and I am attacking you, whom I am seeing as an ego. This is true any time we get into an argument or a debate with anybody, or in a situation where it is important to us that we be proven right. As we have seen, this always represents a choice to be right rather than happy. Now I do not have to agree with what you say if I think the *form* of what you are saying is wrong. But we are talking about an underlying feeling or attitude in which I want to be right, where I have an investment in demonstrating to myself, to you, and to anybody else who is around, that I am right and you are wrong. At that point, of course, I am wrong because I am seeing separation as real. I am confusing form with content, interpretation with fact, illusion with truth.

Similarly, if I am a schoolteacher, part of my job obviously is to give exams and correct mistakes. I can do that either in a spirit of love or a spirit of attack. If I find myself trying to prove that your magic thought is wrong, I must believe that what you are saying is real. Otherwise I would not be trying to attack it and shout you down.

In the Course, Jesus speaks the truth without attacking anything or anyone else. He simply says, "This is the truth." The reader is free to accept it or not. So, if I am teaching the Course, I want to reflect the same attitude. I want to present the Course and its truth as I understand it, but without any attempt to impose my beliefs on anybody else. That can be a very helpful classroom for recognizing when my ego does become engaged and I make separation real.

In other words, I want to recognize that you and I are united in the Love of God and that is the only reality. The fact that the forms we use are different does not make any difference. The forms are irrelevant. But when I argue with you and I want to prove that you are wrong and I am right, I am making the forms into reality and I am saying we are separate.

(1:3) Depression is then inevitable, for he has "proved," both to his pupil and himself, that it is their task to escape from what is real.

Once we establish the error as real, once we establish the ego and the world and any thoughts in this world as real and important, there is no way to escape. And then depression enters in. We can have real

joy and avoid the pain and depression only by recognizing that we do have the power to leave this world simply because it is not true. But if I make it real, I cannot escape from it.

(1:4-7) And this [namely, to escape from what is real] can only be impossible. Reality is changeless. Magic thoughts are but illusions. Otherwise salvation would be only the same age-old impossible dream in but another form.

Almost all of the dreams of salvation in the history of the world have been just the same old ego attempt to solve a problem by not solving it; i.e., by first making the ego, the world, and sin real, and then trying to devise ingenious ways—theological, economical, political, social, etc.—to escape from it. But I cannot escape from something once it has become real to me. I can escape only by stepping back and seeing myself above the battleground, or by leaving the stage and going into the audience with Jesus, looking back on the stage and saying, "This is simply a dream, and I can awaken from a dream." That ends it. That is true escape. But I cannot escape from something once I have established it as real, because there will always be a nagging thought somewhere inside me that it is going to catch up with me.

(1:8-9) Yet the dream of salvation has new content. It is not the form alone in which the difference lies.

Salvation is a dream also, but as the Course says, it is a happy dream (T-18.IV.7:1-2). So I do not simply change or manipulate the forms. I change the *content*. The content for the ego's "salvation" dreams is that sin is real and there are magical ways to escape from it. That is its fundamental content. The Holy Spirit's content is that sin is unreal, and recognizing its unreality constitutes the escape from it.

But whenever we react to anything in the world as if it were real, important, valuable, or threatening, we are making the error real; we are making magic real; and we are forgetting that it is all a dream. So fighting against sickness, for example, is a way of making it real. Arguing with someone about the correctness of your position is another way of making the difference between us real.

(2:1) God's teachers' major lesson is to learn how to react to magic thoughts wholly without anger.

In fact, we could even say it is the *only* lesson.

(2:2) Only in this way can they proclaim the truth about themselves.

When Jesus talks about proclaiming truth, he does not mean standing up on a soap box. Proclaiming the truth simply means *letting the truth extend through us*. Our voice does not speak the truth; the voice of Jesus speaks it through us. Our bodies do not demonstrate and give the truth; it is done through us.

(2:3) Through them [God's teachers], the Holy Spirit can now speak of the reality of the Son of God.

Again, we are not the ones who speak the truth. The truth is not the principles of *A Course in Miracles*. The truth is the love that inspired *A Course in Miracles*. That same love has inspired thousands of other spiritualities as well. That love is the truth, and it is not spoken. Once we speak of the truth, it stops being the truth. I use the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* if that is my particular path, but I use them simply as a vehicle for allowing the Love and the truth of the Holy Spirit to extend through me. So when the Holy Spirit speaks of "the reality of the Son of God," He speaks not in words, not the words or the teachings of *A Course in Miracles*.

This is true of any spiritual path. The truth is the love that inspired the teachings of the spiritual path. If we look at the history of the world, with all the conflicts both among and within religions and spiritualities, we see the confusion of form with content, one of the primary, fundamental mistakes of the ego. The form does not heal or save, because it is an illusion. The Course says that. The Course also says that it comes within an ego framework (C-in.3:1). It has to, for otherwise we could not understand it. But the words are not what is holy. The three books are not holy. *The love that inspires them is holy*, and that love is abstract. And that same love, that presence of Jesus, is inside everyone. So that same love can be expressed if I am standing up in front of a group reading from a telephone book. What difference does it make? It is only form.

So the Course is *in* the world, but it is not *of* the world. Again, it comes within the ego's framework. So to get into an argument or debate with somebody about whether it is true or not misses the whole point. If it is true for me, that is all I have to know. If I defend it, I am saying that the Course is vulnerable, a wonderful way for the ego to reestablish its own position. The basic assertion of the ego is that God is vulnerable. That insanity and arrogance—that the ego has the power to attack God—started the whole thing. If I believe the Course is God's Word and that His Love inspired it, and I also believe it can be attacked and I have to defend it, then I am doing the same thing all over again. Truth does not need defense. Love does not oppose. "We say, 'God is,' and then we cease to speak" (W-pl.169.5:4) because there is nothing else to say.

(2:4) Now He can remind the world of sinlessness, the one unchanged, unchangeable condition of all that God created.

This, of course, is the creation of spirit, which is in Heaven. The reminder is simply my demonstrating, by my own attitude of defenselessness and peace, that I am not sinful. If I am argumentative, defensive, anxious, or guilty, I obviously must believe that I am sinful. All these other characteristics come from the belief that I am sinful and separated. If I am sinful, then I must feel guilty. I must then project that guilt onto others and attack them. I must then also believe that others are going to attack me back, since guilt demands punishment. And so I become afraid of what is going to happen to me and believe I have to protect myself as a result. All the attributes of the ego stem from that one basic thought or premise that I am sinful.

The Holy Spirit reminds the world of sinlessness through me, not by my actions or my words or my behavior, but simply by the love that is expressed through me, as my life demonstrates the characteristics of a teacher of God. My part is simply to let my ego's interferences be removed and to make another choice. And then the love and the light that are already within me and everyone else simply shine out. That is all we have to do.

(2:5) Now He can speak the Word of God to listening ears, and bring Christ's vision to eyes that see.

The "Word of God" again is basically the expression of the Atonement principle: the separation has never occurred. Those who are open and ready to accept those words and that truth will hear it. If they do not hear it through me, then they will hear it through someone else. It does not matter who the teacher of God is nor what the spiritual path is. As it says earlier in the manual, when the teacher is ready to learn, the pupils appear (M-2.1).

The form in which the message is delivered is not important. I am ready for my role as teacher when I have—at least for an instant—set aside my blocks and allowed the love and the light to shine out. And those who have been waiting for that particular expression in form of love and light will then come. But to repeat, it is not the *form* that heals or saves; it is the *content*.

(2:6) Now is He [the Holy Spirit] free to teach all minds the truth of what they are, so they will gladly be returned to Him.

The Holy Spirit's Love is not free to extend through us so long as we believe we are sinful and guilty, so long as we are angry and listen to the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. Not that the Holy Spirit is imprisoned, but the extension of His Love is blocked by the barrier of our anger and guilt. Our job then is simply to end the imprisonment of this Love by removing the impediments to its extending and flowing freely through us. I mention this repeatedly, as does the Course itself, because it is absolutely essential that we understand that we do not have to *do* anything. We simply are involved in the process of undoing the barriers that we have placed between ourselves and the Holy Spirit.

(2:7) And now is guilt forgiven, overlooked completely in His sight and in God's Word.

Guilt was forgiven in the instant that it arose, because in that same instant the memory of God in the Son's mind undid it. His light totally dissolved the darkened thoughts of sin and guilt. The problem is that we blotted out the Holy Spirit's Voice. So guilt or sin is forgiven simply by removing the blocks to the forgiveness that has already occurred within our minds. The Course continually emphasizes that forgiveness does not do anything; it undoes. Forgiveness is already perfect in us; it has already been accomplished. The only problem is that we have screened it off. So guilt is forgiven as we simply remove the interferences or the veils that have kept us separate from that forgiveness.