

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM Text, Section 2.V

The Function of the Miracle Worker

We have more than twice the number of paragraphs in this section, so we will need to condense our study considerably in order to complete the section in a single class. Study groups may want to consider breaking this section into two parts.

Section V is divided into two parts. The main part talks of the function of miracle workers, whose only responsibility is to accept the Atonement for themselves. Doing so releases their minds from fear, enabling them to heal others. The second part talks of “Special Principles of Miracle Workers,” which is a collection of aphorisms or isolated thoughts particularly applicable to people engaged in helping others—which is something we are all meant to do.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Before miracle workers are ready to undertake their function in this world [Ur: Before it is safe to let miracle workers loose in this world], it is essential that they fully understand the fear of release. ²Otherwise they may unwittingly foster the belief that release is imprisonment, a belief that is already very prevalent. ³This misperception arises in turn from the belief [Ur: the attempted protection device] that harm can be limited to the body. ⁴That is because of the underlying fear [Ur: the much greater fear (which this one counteracts)] that the mind can hurt itself. ⁵None of these errors is meaningful, because the miscreations of the mind do not really exist. ⁶This recognition is a far better protective device than any form of level confusion, because it introduces correction at the level of the error [which is the mind, not the body]. ⁷It is essential to remember that only the mind can create, and that correction belongs at the thought level. [Ur: Implicit in this is the corollary that correction belongs at the thought level, and not at either level to which creation is inapplicable.] ⁸To amplify an earlier statement [Ur: and also to extend it somewhat], spirit is already perfect and therefore does not require correction. ⁹The body does not exist except as a learning device for the mind. ¹⁰This learning device is not subject to errors of its own, because it cannot create. ¹¹It is obvious, then, that inducing the mind to give up its miscreations is the only application of creative ability that is truly meaningful.

Having talked about the release from fear in the last section, Jesus now switches to talking about “the fear of release” (1:1). This may be one of those subtle plays on words that Jesus says he used because Bill Thetford loved them. The thought here is that people who wish to function as healers *must* be aware (“it is essential”, 1:1) that people are *afraid of being healed*. He says the same in at least one other place (T-27.II). If we don’t understand that people fear healing, we may do unintentional damage by trying to force a healing on them they are not ready to accept. This person sees salvation in his sickness. He thus perceives being released from his sickness as being put in a kind of prison (1:2, compare with 2.IV.4:9 and M-5.I.1–2).

We saw in the previous section that healing is release from fear, and that sometimes a compromise approach is necessary due to the level of fear in the patient. This is continuing that same thought, focusing now on the responsibility of the miracle worker to be clear about the existence of such fear, so as to avoid fostering the very fear he is trying to heal.

• **Study Question** •

1. *In 1:2–4, Jesus attempts to explain the sequence of deluded thoughts that leads to the rather bizarre fact that people are afraid of healing, or believe that “release is imprisonment.” He refers to two “beliefs” and a “fear,” which he presents in reverse order. That is, he says we fear healing because we believe C; we believe C because we believe B; and we believe B because we fear A. What are these three beliefs, and how does each lead to the next? (Note that “the fear that the mind can hurt itself” is basically the same thing as the fear that comes from believing we can usurp God’s power; see 2.I.4:1 and 2.I.1:9–12.) This question may require a lot of thought.*



Why would someone fear healing? The sequence of thought runs something like this:

Somehow, he must see salvation in sickness. Deep in his mind, the sick person believes that his mind's errors can hurt his mind. He believes he has sinned, and thus corrupted his very being—a belief that is extremely frightening. He tries to defend himself against just punishment by deflecting the guilt away from his mind, onto his own body. There, it takes the form of illness. He deceives himself into thinking his mind is safe; the harm is limited to the body.

What will happen now when his body is healed? His body was his defensive shield, and its sickness told him the problem was in the body, not the mind; now, that is taken away. Nothing is left to divert him from his belief that he has hopelessly corrupted his mind's nature. He is left face-to-face with what he thinks he has done to ruin his soul.

None of the errors in the ego's thought sequence is meaningful, we are told, “because the miscreations of the mind do not really exist” (1:5). That is wonderful news! That recognition, as the next sentence implies, is identical to accepting the Atonement. It is a “protective device” which “introduces correction at the level of the error” (1:6), which is exactly what has been said about the Atonement (T-2.II.2:1–2; T-2.IV.2:1–3). The Atonement *is* the thought that the miscreations of my mind do not exist; the separation never happened. Atonement is what T-2.II.1:1 called “true denial,” which means to “deny any belief that error can hurt you.” Applying that truth to a particular ego thought in my mind is what it means to accept the Atonement in that respect. It is what it means to bring the darkness to the light, the illusion to the truth. Jesus reminds us that this correction of *thought* is the only correction worth its salt, because spirit is already perfect and the body is just a reflection of the mind, incapable of either creation or error (1:7–11).

Healing the body, then, cannot be the primary aim; healing the mind's errors must take precedence. If someone is afraid of physical healing, you don't push physical healing on them; you do what you can to alleviate their fears. You seek to bring healing to their mind, which is the *only* level on which healing is meaningful.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Magic is the mindless or the miscreative use of mind. ²Physical medications are forms of “spells,” [Ur: In one way, they are a more benign form, in that they do not entail the possession fallacy which does enter when a mind believes that it can possess another. Since this is considerably less dangerous, though still incorrect, it has its advantages. It is particularly helpful to the therapist who really wants to heal, but is still fearful himself. By using physical means to do so, he is not engaging in any form of enslavement, even though he is not applying the Atonement. This means that his mind is dulled by fear, but is not actively engaged in distortion.] but if you are afraid to use the mind to heal, you should not attempt to do so [Ur: are right in avoiding it]. ³The very fact that you are afraid makes your mind vulnerable to miscreation. ⁴You are therefore likely to misunderstand any healing that might occur, and because egocentricity and fear usually occur together, you may be unable to accept the real Source of the healing. ⁵Under these conditions, it is safer for you to rely temporarily on physical healing devices, because you cannot misperceive them as your own creations. ⁶As long as your sense of vulnerability persists, you should not attempt to perform miracles [Ur: As long as their own vulnerability persists, it is essential to preserve them from even attempting miracles.]

• Study Question •

2. *Based on what is said here, is it sometimes acceptable to use physical medications, even though they are “forms of ‘spells’” or “magic”? If so, when and why?*

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What is remarkable here is that, while the first paragraph seems to be talking mainly about fear in the patient, as was the case in the previous section (T-2.IV.4:6-9), this paragraph quite clearly is talking about fear *in the healer* (2:2; 2:6). It ends with saying that we should not attempt to perform miracles while we feel vulnerable, so it is talking about the miracle *worker's* fear, not the miracle *receiver's*. This brings back a theme begun in T-2.II.1:3 (where we were told miracles could not be performed in a spirit of fear), and carried on in T-2.IV.1:7-8:

All healing is essentially the release from fear. To undertake this you cannot be fearful yourself.
(T-2.IV.1:7-8)

Where fear is, there is the ego, so when we are fearful we are prone to see from the ego perspective and mistake the Source of healing (2:4). We think *we* are the source of healing, or (if we are the patient), the healer is the source. We may believe that our “powerful” mind has taken control of the patient’s “weaker” mind. Under these circumstances, it’s better to use “physical healing devices” (5) such as medicines, whether traditional or alternative. All are magic, but using them is better than feeding our egos directly. In simple terms: If we are “afraid to use the mind to heal,” use some physical form of medication.

Paragraphs 3 & 4

3. ¹I have already said that miracles are expressions of miracle-mindedness, and miracle-mindedness means right-mindedness. ²The right-minded neither exalt nor depreciate the mind of the miracle worker or the miracle receiver. ³However, as a correction, the miracle need not await the right-mindedness of the receiver. ⁴In fact, its purpose is to restore him *to* his right mind. ⁵It is essential, however, that the miracle worker be in his right mind, however briefly, or he will be unable to re-establish right-mindedness in someone else.

4. ¹The healer who relies on his own readiness is endangering his understanding. ²You are perfectly safe as long as you are completely unconcerned about your readiness, but maintain a consistent trust in mine. [Ur: (Errors of this kind produce some very erratic behavior, which usually point up an underlying unwillingness to co-operate.) These errors inevitably introduce inefficiency into the miracle worker's behavior, and temporarily disrupt his miracle-mindedness. ...We have established that for all corrective processes, the first step is know that this is fear. Unless fear had entered, the corrective procedure would never have become necessary.] ³If your miracle working inclinations are not functioning properly, it is always because fear has intruded on your right-mindedness and has turned it upside down [Ur: and has literally upset it. (i.e. turned it upside down)]. ⁴All forms of not-right-mindedness are the result of refusal to accept the Atonement for yourself [Ur: for yourself]. ⁵If you do accept it, you are in a position to recognize that those who need healing are simply those who [Ur: have not done so] have not realized that right-mindedness *is* healing. [Ur: The reason you felt the vast radiation range of your own inner illumination is because you were aware that your Right-Mindedness is healing.]

• Study Question •

3. *Paragraph 3 talks about right-mindedness and miracle-mindedness, which are the same: a mental state of healed perception. (a) When we wish to give a miracle to another, is it necessary to wait for that other person to be right-minded (3–4)? (b) Is it necessary for you to be right-minded (5)?*

When in our right mind, we properly value both our own mind and that of the recipient of our miracle; we “neither exalt nor depreciate the mind” (3:2). From what is said elsewhere, I think this means that we do not think the mind is helpless, yet neither do we think that it can do anything without God. As a line in the Workbook says, “My thoughts are meaningless, but all creation lies in the thoughts I think with God” (W-pI.51.4:8).

It's wonderful to be told that we don't have to wait for the receiver to be in his right mind; if that was a precondition, we would hardly ever perform any miracles. The whole point of a miracle is to *restore* a person to their right mind, so how could you expect them to be right-minded *first*? It takes a miracle to get them there. However, the *miracle worker* has to be in his right mind, even if just for an instant.

Think of someone you are trying to help, or have tried in the past to help, and you have felt impatient with their slow progress or lack of any progress. Have you been waiting for *them* to become right-minded instead of focusing on your own right-mindedness, seeing them as healed and whole, and trusting that vision of your mind to extend to their mind and bring them the healing they need? It isn't your job to force them or even to help them become right-minded; your only job is to be in *your* right mind. Do that, and the power of your mind *will* radiate healing to the other person.

When one person is in their right mind, they can “re-establish right-mindedness in someone else” (3:5). To me, that is the definition of what happens in a miracle: one person becomes right-minded (and since it takes a miracle to achieve right-mindedness, that person must be receiving a miracle from God, or the Holy Spirit), and extends that to someone else, re-establishing that other person in their own right mind.

Though the miracle worker must be in his right mind, nevertheless we do not need, in ourselves, to be ready to perform miracles. It is enough to *receive* the miracle. We depend on the readiness of Christ. Actually, self-reliance in this respect is a major handicap; the recommended state of mind for a miracle worker is that she be “completely unconcerned” about personal readiness, and full of “consistent trust” in the readiness of Christ (4:1–2). “You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you” (T-31.VIII.2:3).

Now try to slip past all concerns related to your own sense of inadequacy. It is obvious that any situation that causes you concern is associated with feelings of inadequacy, for otherwise you would believe that you could deal with the situation successfully. It is not by trusting yourself that you will gain confidence. But the strength of God in you is successful in all things.

(W-pI.47.5:1–4)

If I am in fear, doubting my abilities, I can't perform miracles (4:3), and such fear is *always* due to my refusal to accept the Atonement for myself—instead, as we have seen over and over, I must recognize that my miscreations are powerless and cannot harm me, and that the separation has never occurred.

One application of this, for me, is that I do not need to let my ego stop me from extending love. I often doubt my own motives; I wonder if I am up to being as pure-minded as the situation seems to call for. That comes up for me even in writing these commentaries: “Who do you think you are to interpret Jesus's words to other people? Maybe you are just looking for people to tell you how great you are. You are not ready for this.” And I'm not; my ego *does* intrude and try to take credit. But Christ in me *is* ready, and that's all that matters.

When I can accept forgiveness for myself, I *am* ready to view other people who need healing properly: not as lesser beings who are somehow beneath me, but brothers and sisters like myself who “simply...have not realized that right-mindedness *is* healing” (4:5).

The unforgiven have no mercy to bestow upon another. That is why your sole responsibility must be to take forgiveness for yourself.

(T-25.IX.9:5–6)

Paragraph 5

5. ¹*The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself.* ²This means you recognize that mind is the only creative level, and that its errors are healed by the Atonement. ³Once you accept this, your mind can only heal. ⁴By denying your mind any destructive potential and reinstating its purely constructive powers, you place yourself in a position to undo the level confusion of others. ⁵The message you then give to them is the truth that their minds [Ur: *their minds*] are similarly constructive, and their miscreations cannot hurt them. ⁶By affirming this you release the mind from overevaluating its own learning device, and restore the mind to its true position as the learner.

• Study Question •

4. *Sentence 1 of this paragraph is one of the most frequently quoted lines in the Course, and one of the most frequently misunderstood. Many people try to make it mean, "All I need to be concerned about is my own healing; I am not responsible for anything else." Read the entire paragraph, think of the context of the discussion in this section so far, and in the light of this context, explain why this line cannot be interpreted in that way, but in fact is inextricably linked with our function of extending miracles to others.*

Recall the context of this section: its title is, "The Function of the Miracle Worker." It begins with the words, "Before miracle workers are ready to undertake their function..." (1:1), and says the key point is understanding "the fear of release." It is speaking about what qualifies us to be miracle workers, extending healing to others. It has pointed out that if we have fear in our minds we should not attempt to heal (2:2). It has told us that while we are in fear we are not in our right minds, and being right-minded is essential (4:3; 3:5). And in the preceding two sentences (4:4–5) it has told us that fear, or anything *other* than right-mindedness, is "the result of refusal to accept the Atonement for yourself." Given this context, the first line of paragraph 5 should come as no surprise, and its meaning should be obvious: "The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself" (5:1). Jesus is not saying, "You need only take care of your own healing; you can ignore everyone else." Quite the contrary! He is saying, "Before you can begin to extend miracles to others, you must heal the fear in your own mind by recognizing that your errors don't really exist." The following passage from the Manual for Teachers makes it crystal clear. This acceptance of the Atonement comes *after* a miracle has been offered to another, and *after* the miracle giver has begun to doubt whether or not he has succeeded:

Whenever a teacher of God has tried to be a channel for healing he has succeeded. Should he be tempted to doubt this...the teacher of God has only one course to follow. He must use his reason to tell himself that he has given the problem to One Who cannot fail, and must recognize that his own uncertainty is not love but fear, and therefore hate... Having offered love, only love can be received.

It is in this that the teacher of God must trust. This [accepting the healing of his own mind] is what is really meant by the statement that the one responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself. The teacher of God is a miracle worker because he gives the gifts he has received. Yet he must first accept them. He need do no more, nor is there more that he could do. By accepting healing he can give it.

(M-7.1:1,2,4,5,8; 3:1-6)

Sentence 2 spells out exactly what accepting the Atonement means: Recognizing that only mind can create (the body cannot create, see T-2.IV.2:4-5,10; T-2.IV.3:1; T-2.V.1:7), and its errors or miscreations *have already been corrected and undone*; they do not exist (1:5). Forget about what you perceive as your imagined shortcomings, faults, sins, goofs, or areas of incompetence. God has already taken care of all that; the Atonement covers them all. This is why you do not need to be concerned about your readiness. Your mind cannot do harm! It can only heal! (5:3-4). Go forth, therefore, and bring healing to the world.

The message you bring to the world is exactly what you have learned: "Their minds are similarly constructive, and their miscreations cannot hurt them" (5:5). What a glorious message this is! Your mind is a source of healing, and *never* a source of harm. You are a holy child of God, radiance of God's Being, offshoot of His Love. Forget all those dark thoughts you have been thinking about yourself; they are untrue. You have not damaged God's creation; you have not sullied the perfection of your innocence. You are still exactly as God created you. You are the child of His Love.

Affirming this to others releases their minds from both exalting and depreciating themselves (3:2). It frees them from attributing to the mind powers it *does not* possess, such as powers to alter and destroy God's creations; it frees them from denying to the mind powers it *does* possess, such as its ability to learn and create. It frees them, too, from attributing powers to the body ("its own learning device") that the body does not have, such as being able to create or to have real effects (T-2.IV.2:5-6,9; T-2.IV.3:4-6).

Paragraph 6

6. 1It should be emphasized again that the body does not learn any more than it creates. 2As a learning device it merely follows the learner, but if it is falsely endowed with self-initiative, it becomes a serious obstruction to the very learning it should facilitate. 3Only the mind is capable of illumination. 4Spirit is already illuminated and the body in itself is too dense. 5The mind, however, can bring its illumination to the body by recognizing that it is not the learner, and is therefore unamenable to learning [Ur: that density is the opposite of intelligence, and therefore unamenable to independent learning]. 6The body is, however, easily brought into alignment with a mind that has learned to look beyond it toward the light.

• **Study Question** •

5. *An exercise in observation: "It should be emphasized again"; this means it has been emphasized before. Where, and in what context?*

Many voices talk about listening to the wisdom of the body; the Course sees this differently. It affirms that the body is little more than a reflection of the mind. It can be useful because its condition can indicate what is going on in the mind, but the mind is the learner; the mind is in charge.

The body neither learns nor creates. It is a device used by the mind for learning; it facilitates the learning of the mind, but it does not learn itself. It "follows the learner" (6:2); that is, it does what the mind tells it to do. If we believe that the body has "self-initiative" (6:2), meaning it can do something (such as become sick or die, or throw off illness) without being directed by the mind to do it, the body can interfere with learning instead of helping it. Only the mind learns or becomes illuminated (6:3). The spirit does not need to learn; the body is "too dense" (6:4). The body is set free when we stop trying to make it something it is not. Instead of looking *to* the body as the source, either of sickness or of healing, we must learn to "look beyond it toward the light" (6:6).

In 5:6 we were told to stop over-evaluating our learning devices (our bodies), and to restore our mind "to its true position as the learner." Paragraph 6 expands on that thought. When we believe that our bodies can hurt us, or that their sickness can adversely affect our minds, we are over-evaluating their powers. The body cannot act independently of the mind; the mind always comes first. Therefore, the mind is where learning, or correction, must take place.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹Corrective learning always begins with the awakening of spirit [Ur: the spiritual eye], and the turning away from the belief in physical sight. ²This often entails fear, because you are afraid of what your spiritual sight [Ur: eye] will show you [Ur: which is why he closed it in the first place]. ³I said before that the Holy Spirit [Ur: the spiritual eye] cannot see error, and is capable only of looking beyond it to the defense of Atonement. ⁴There is no doubt that this may produce discomfort [Ur: There is no doubt that the spiritual eye does produce extreme discomfort by what it sees], yet the discomfort is not the final outcome of the perception. ⁵When the Holy Spirit [Ur: spiritual eye] is permitted to look upon the defilement of the altar, He also looks immediately toward the Atonement. ⁶Nothing He [Ur: Nothing which the spiritual eye] perceives can induce fear. ⁷Everything that results from [Ur: accurate] spiritual awareness is merely channeled toward correction. ⁸Discomfort is aroused only to bring the need for correction [Ur: forcibly] into awareness.

• **Study Question** •

6. *Have you ever experienced fear as you sensed yourself being turned away from belief in spiritual sight? Have you ever been afraid of what spiritual sight might show you? Do you find yourself discomforted as the Holy Spirit exposes the ego's deceptions in the heart of your own mind? Spend a few minutes meditating on sentences 5 through 8, consciously applying these thoughts to your own fears.*

The Urtext makes clear that learning begins with an awakening, not just of spirit, but of spiritual *sight* (7:1). As spiritual sight awakens, we are often afraid of what it may show us (7:2). In fact, fear of what we might see is why we closed our spiritual eyes in the first place. Have you noticed? We're still talking about fear, and how it often arises in the beginning stages of our spiritual journey. This fact has come up over and over, going back to T-1.IV.1:1-2. We don't like having the basement and attic of our mind exposed to the light; what we have stored there is rather embarrassing, if not incriminating. The good news is that the Holy Spirit "cannot see error"; He always applies "the defense of Atonement" (7:3), which means He looks past our errors to their correction. The Holy Spirit isn't about finding fault; His only purpose is healing, and the same is true of our own spiritual eyes.

Notice how all this is interwoven. "I said before" (7:3) refers to T-2.III.4, talking about the inner altar, and how spiritual vision cannot see error; in the latter half of the same sentence, the words "the defense of the Atonement" are another reference to Section II, "The Atonement as Defense," where the Atonement is identified as the only defense that cannot be turned into attack or used against us. The whole chapter is concerned with getting us past our fears, and reassuring us about the discomfort we feel when we begin to look within and find the ego intertwined with all our thinking. "No doubt" it produces discomfort, but that isn't the end of the story (7:4). The discomfort is a passing phase. When we look with the Holy Spirit, he channels everything towards correction, and so will we; the discomfort is a temporary thing, necessary only to make us aware that we *need* correction (7:8). This notion—the temporary need to focus on the problem just long enough to trigger a request for correction—will come up again in each of the next two sections: T-2.VI.8:7–8 and T-2.VII.5:8–9.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹The fear of healing arises in the end from an unwillingness to accept unequivocally [Ur: the unequivocal fact] that healing is necessary. ²What the physical eye sees is not corrective, nor can error [Ur: it] be corrected by any device that can be seen physically. ³As long as you believe in what your physical sight tells you, your attempts at correction [Ur: all {your} corrective behavior] will be misdirected. ⁴The real vision is obscured, [Ur: The reason why the real vision is obscured is] because you cannot endure to see your own defiled altar. ⁵But since the altar has been defiled, your state becomes doubly dangerous unless it *is* perceived. [Ur: This perception is totally not-threatening because of the Atonement.]

• **Study Question** •

7. *When you encounter something in your physical world that seems to need healing—a sick body (yours or someone else's), a sick mind, a sick society—do you find yourself reluctant to examine your own inner altar for the source of the defilement you see? Are you more inclined to look for some external cause, which will have an external cure? Or are you willing to perceive that inner defilement, and bring it to correction?*
8. *What is the fundamental cause of any fear of healing?*

Jesus returns to the main theme of the section: the fear of healing. “In the end,” he says (8:1), the cause is an unwillingness to see the need for healing as wholly within ourselves, and not outside in something physical (8:2–3). We are afraid that if the cause is within us, and nowhere else, that this will make us, somehow, bad people (we don’t want to see our “own defiled altar” (8:4). We don’t want to realize that we have misused and abused the place in our minds that was created to be totally devoted to God; we have laid “false gods” on that altar. We may include our own inner healing as something that is needed, but we want to at least share the “blame” with something external to our minds, something physical. That leads us to misdirect our attempts at correction (8:3); we try to change the world, instead of changing our minds. The “doubly dangerous” part of this (8:5) is that unless we do see our inner defilement, we won’t realize our need of correction and healing. A focus on external causes keeps us from applying healing where it is really needed.

Paragraphs 9 & 10

9. ¹Healing is an ability that developed [Ur: **lent to man**] after the separation, before which it was [Ur: **completely**] unnecessary. ²Like all aspects of the belief in space and time, it [Ur: **healing ability**] is temporary. ³However, as long as time persists, healing is needed as a means of protection [Ur: **healing remains among the stronger human protections**]. ⁴This is because healing rests on charity, and charity is a way of perceiving the perfection of another even if you [Ur: **he**] cannot perceive it in yourself [Ur: **himself**]. ⁵Most of the loftier concepts of which you are capable now are time-dependent. ⁶Charity is really a weaker reflection of a much more powerful love-encompassment that is far beyond any form of charity you can conceive of as yet. ⁷Charity is essential to right-mindedness in the limited sense in which it [Ur: **Right-Mindedness**] can now be attained.

10. ¹Charity is a way of looking at another as if [*as if*] he had already gone far beyond his actual accomplishments in time. ²Since his own thinking is faulty he cannot see the Atonement for himself, or he would have no need of charity [Ur: **at all**]. ³The charity that is accorded him is both an acknowledgment that he needs help [Ur: **that he is weak**], and a recognition that he will accept it [Ur: **that he could be stronger**]. ⁴Both of these perceptions clearly imply their dependence on time, making it apparent that charity still lies within the limitations of this world [Ur: **within the framework of human**].

limitations, though toward the higher levels]. ⁵I said before [Ur: twice in fact] that only revelation transcends time. ⁶The miracle, as an expression of charity, can only shorten it [Ur: at best]. ⁷It must be understood, however, that whenever you offer a miracle to another, you are shortening the suffering of both of you. ⁸This [Ur: introduces a correction into the Record, which] corrects retroactively as well as progressively.

• Study Question •

9. *In your own words, describe what the Course calls "charity."*

10. *How is charity related to our function as a miracle worker (10:6)?*



These two paragraphs deal mainly with *charity*. We might wonder how charity is connected to healing, or correcting our fear; the key is in 9:4: "Healing rests on charity." That is, healing comes from, or grows out of, charity. In a sense, then, these paragraphs answer the question, "How does a miracle worker bring healing to another person?" The answer is, by offering charity. But charity is something much more potent than giving a few dollars to the United Way.

Sentence 9:4 gives a definition of charity. Here, I believe, the editors made a change that completely alters the meaning of the sentence. First, look at the published version:

...charity is a way of perceiving the perfection of another even if you cannot perceive it in yourself.

Now, compare it to the Urtext version:

... charity is a way of perceiving the true perfection of another, even if he cannot perceive it himself.

Charity means that I see *your* perfection even if *you* don't see it. It isn't really talking about whether or not I can see my *own* perfection. The Urtext version here agrees with the second defining sentence in 10:1–2:

¹Charity is a way of looking at another as if [*as if*] he had already gone far beyond his actual accomplishments in time. ²Since his own thinking is faulty he cannot see the Atonement for himself, or he would have no need of charity [Ur: at all].

So, in these paragraphs we see the following things about charity:

- It is a way of perceiving the perfection in another even if he or she cannot perceive it in himself or herself (9:4; 10:1–2).
- It is a weaker reflection of Love's full strength (9:6).
- It is essential to right-mindedness (9:7).
- It is a way of looking at another as if he were more spiritually advanced than he is in time (10:1).
- It acknowledges that the person needs help, and recognizes that he *will* accept it (10:3).

The two central phrases that tell us what charity is are very similar: "a way of looking at," "a way of perceiving." Clearly, charity looks at someone's errors (seeing he needs help) but also

looks past them to see the person as better than his errors would indicate, susceptible to correction. It refuses to see the person as defined by his errors. As a later passage puts it, charity sees them “as a mind in which illusions still persist, but as a mind which brother is to you” (T-28.IV.3:3).

When I extend charity to another, I am offering a miracle. This shortens suffering for both the giver and receiver, and the corrective effect extends backwards into the past as well as forwards into the future (10:7–8). (The Urtext uses the symbolism of a correction being made in the Akashic Records.)

Special Principles of Miracle Workers

Paragraphs 11 through 18

This is an unusual instance in the Course's dictation in which Jesus actually gave the heading, “Special Principles for Miracle Workers,” and numbered them. It highlights the realization that Jesus intends his course to lead to the creation of a band of people who actively work miracles.

Immediately following each principle is my summary or paraphrase of the principles, stated from the perspective of what each principle implies for, or says to, a miracle worker.

11. ¹(1) The miracle abolishes the need for lower-order concerns. ²Since it is an out-of-pattern time interval, the ordinary considerations of time and space do not apply. ³When you perform a miracle, I will arrange both time and space to adjust to it.

(11) A miracle worker does not need to be concerned with the limitations of time and space; they will adjust to the miracle.

It's worth pointing out here that Jesus very casually lays claim to being in control of time and space! As we interact with another person, attempting to bring them the deep healing of mind and spirit that they really need, sometimes “lower-order concerns” such as their external needs and problems seem to loom so large that they distract us from the inner work. Jesus is telling us to focus on the inner miracle, and to let him take care of their lower-order needs.

12. ¹(2) A clear distinction between what is created and what is made [in the miracle receiver] is essential. ²All forms of [Ur: correction or] healing rest on this fundamental correction in level perception.

(12) A miracle worker must clearly distinguish between what is created by God and His Son, which is real, and what is miscreated (made) by the mind, which is non-existent; healing consists in this distinction.

The distinction between “created” and “made” is here said to be essential to the miracle worker. Creation consists of what God creates or what we create *with God*. Making consists of what we make without God, or independently from God. Only that which is created is real; all that we make is illusions. This is the fundamental principle on which all healing rests.

13. [Ur: Another way of stating 2) is:] ¹(3) Never confuse right- and wrong-

mindedness. ²Responding to any form of error with anything except a desire to heal [Ur: (or a miracle)] is an expression of this confusion.

(13) A miracle worker needs to learn never to respond with anything but a desire to heal; no anger, no upset, no fear.

This principle is clearly a corollary to the previous one. Don't mistake the errors of someone's ego as something real and don't respond to them as if they were real. It's not attack, it's a call for love, and the response must always be a desire to heal rather than to punish.

14. ¹(4) The miracle is always a denial of this error and an affirmation of the truth. ²Only right-mindedness can correct in a way that has any real effect. ³Pragmatically, what has no real effect has no real existence. ⁴Its [Ur: *real*] effect, then, is emptiness. ⁵Being without substantial content, it lends itself to projection.

(14) A miracle worker need only affirm truth; no response to error is necessary because it is illusory.

Another corollary of make versus create: Don't make the mistake of believing that error (or "evil") has any real effects. Deny the power of anything not of God to do harm, and affirm the truth in all concerned.

15. ¹(5) The level-adjustment power of the miracle induces the right perception for healing. ²Until this has occurred healing cannot be understood. ³Forgiveness is an empty gesture unless it entails correction [correction in these principles refers to the healing of the other person's mind]. ⁴Without this it is essentially judgmental, rather than healing.

(15) A miracle worker should avoid trying to forgive before his perception has been transformed. His perception must be corrected, or forgiveness is an empty gesture, or even an act of judgment.

Don't offer the false "forgiveness" that says, "You've done a lot of harm and ought to pay for it, but I will forgive you anyway." You can't forgive in truth until you realize there is nothing to forgive!

16. ¹(6) Miracle-minded forgiveness is *only* correction. ²It has no element of judgment at all. ³The statement "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" in no way evaluates *what* they do. ⁴It is [Ur: *strictly limited to*] an appeal to God to heal their minds. ⁵There is no reference to the outcome of the error. ⁶That does not matter.

(16) A miracle worker offers true forgiveness which is pure correction, with no element of judgment. He need not evaluate the severity of error, but simply appeals to God to heal. A miracle worker is not concerned about the outcome of the error.

The statement Jesus quotes is, of course, his own, made from the cross; the perfect example of what he is talking about. One of the most difficult things for us to accept is that *the outcome of the errors does not matter* because, as the Introduction to the Text says, "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists." In his case, the outcome of the errors was his crucifixion and

death! Yet his only concern was that the minds of those who were crucifying him might be healed.

17. ¹(7) The [Ur: Biblical] injunction “Be of one mind” is the statement for revelation-readiness. ²My request “Do this in remembrance of me” is the appeal for cooperation from miracle workers. ³The two statements are not in the same order of reality. ⁴Only the latter involves an awareness of time, since to remember is to recall the past in the present. ⁵Time is under my direction, but timelessness belongs to God. ⁶In time we exist for and with each other. ⁷In timelessness we coexist with God.

(17) A miracle worker is not adrift in dreams of ultimate oneness of mind; he exists in time for and with his brothers, and seeks only to serve them in remembrance of and cooperation with Jesus. He seeks to be truly helpful in a practical way, within the context of time.

Jesus ties together the two ideas of, “Be of one mind” and “Do this in remembrance of me.” The “this” in the second quote, he says, is an “appeal for cooperation,” that is, an appeal to be of one mind, to “exist for and with each other” (17:7). This is a final appeal to us to join together, with Jesus and with one another, to work miracles in the world, to offer only correction and forgiveness, to have no concern but for the healing of every mind. This theme is carried out in the prayer that follows in paragraph 18.

18. ¹(8) You can do much on behalf of your own healing and that of others if, in a situation calling for help, you think of it this way:

²I am here only to be truly helpful.

³I am here to represent Him Who sent me.

⁴I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do, because He Who sent me will direct me.

⁵I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me.

⁶I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal.

(18) A miracle worker recognizes that in any situation calling for help, he is there only to be truly helpful. He represents Christ in the world, and depends completely on the Holy Spirit to direct him in what to say and do. He is content to follow the Holy Spirit's direction and knows that He is with him at all times. He understands that his own healing comes from being taught to heal others.

This wonderful, much-loved prayer was not originally part of these principles for miracle workers. Robert Perry summarizes its origins very well:

It actually came as the conclusion to a long piece of guidance given to Bill Thetford. Jesus had arranged for him to attend a conference on rehabilitation in Princeton, New Jersey. At this conference, Jesus said, Bill would see what a mess the field of rehabilitation was. He would see that the professionals seeking to rehabilitate others needed rehabilitation themselves. But the real reason Bill was there was to face his own aversion to the

damaged brains, broken bodies, and weakened, dependent egos of those on the receiving end of rehabilitation. He recoiled from them because they reminded him of his own vulnerable body and his own weak ego. They were a constant statement to him, “You could be this.” This recoil Bill felt would block his natural impulse to help. Jesus said that Bill could overcome all this if, at the conference, he used this prayer.

Nearly every time I lead a discussion or teach a class, this prayer comes to my mind. It has an incredibly centering effect on me to mentally repeat it. It reminds me of the central message of these principles: that my only purpose is to bring healing, to be *truly* helpful, as opposed to superficially helpful—that is, to care about the inner healing rather than the lower-order needs, to look past any concerns about the outcome of anyone’s errors, to recognize that illusions have no real effects. I’m not here to look good; I’m representing Christ. I put my trust in Christ to give me words, to teach me what to say or to do. And doing this, being of service, is how *I* am healed.

I heartily recommend to everyone to memorize this prayer, and to use it often.

• **Study Questions** •

11. *In Principle 4 (T-2.V(A).14), “The miracle is always a denial of this error...”, what is “this error”?*

12. *Think of a situation in your life in the past when it would have been helpful to have known and remembered the Healer’s Prayer in Principle 8. Think of a situation in the future in which you want to remember it. You might want to memorize this prayer.*

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Answer Key

1. The logical progression of deluded thoughts which leads to fear of healing is:
 - a. My mind can hurt itself. (I've usurped God's power, damaged creation.)
 - b. I'm safer if I limit the damage to my body. (Projection of the mind's guilt onto the body.)
 - c. Therefore, healing my body is dangerous because it undoes my supposed defense of my mind. (If I realize my body isn't guilty, I will remember that my mind is—or so I think.)

We are using the body as a scapegoat. We insanely believe that if it suffers, we will escape worse punishment from God. Therefore, we don't want our bodies to be healed.

2. Yes, physical medications are not only acceptable, but recommended in certain cases. If the healer, or the patient, is afraid of using the mind to heal, "you should not attempt to do so" (2:2), but should use physical means. The benefit of doing that is that there is no mistaking the source of healing. If we are in fear, the ego is predominant (2:4) and will intrude to claim credit for the healing. As a healer, I am likely to think I performed the healing (1:5–6); as a patient, I am likely to attribute the healing to the healer instead of to God.
3. (a) No, the purpose of the miracle is to restore his right mind, so there is no reason to wait.
(b) Yes, even if just briefly.
4. The entire section is discussing the function of miracle workers. The sentence in question speaks of "the sole responsibility of *the miracle worker*," not of the lone spiritual seeker. The whole context is about what we must do, and what conditions we must meet, to be prepared to function as a channel of miracles to others (which is what a "miracle worker" is). Accepting the Atonement is our only responsibility in such preparation; it places us in a position to be able to heal others; it is the only pre-condition for working miracles. Accepting the Atonement, or accepting forgiveness, or practicing true denial of "the destructive potential" of our minds and affirming that our minds can only create, is the only qualification we need to become miracle workers.
5. The most recent reference was in 2.V.1:9–10: "The body does not exist except as a learning device for the mind. This learning device is not subject to errors of its own, because it cannot create."
6. No written answer expected.
7. No written answer expected.
8. An unwillingness to accept unequivocally that healing is necessary. We waffle on the question, unsure of just what needs healing—something in ourselves, or something outside of us. We are afraid to admit that *we* are the one needing healing.
9. Charity is looking at another person and seeing their inner perfection despite their manifest errors.

Allen Watson's Commentary on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

10. The miracle is an expression of charity (10:6). We know a miracle is an expression of love (T-1.I.35:1); we are told here that charity is a “weaker reflection” of the fullness of love (9:6). So to extend charity to someone is to offer them a miracle. The miracle worker heals by acknowledging that the person needs help, and recognizing, based on the person’s inner perfection, that they will accept the help (10:3). We see them as if they were more advanced than they actually are, in time (10:1). We heal by perceiving the person's inner perfection (9:4).
11. The error is responding to any error in someone else with anything except a desire to heal, which is a form of confusing right- and wrong-mindedness.
12. No written answer necessary.