

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 14, Section X

The Equality of Miracles

Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)
bold blue text = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext
light blue text = editorial comments
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

Overview of the Section

This is an amazing section. It covers such seemingly diverse topics as order of difficulty in miracles, the ordering of our thoughts, evaluating the behavior of others, love and calls for love, how the ego's judgments work, form vs. content, modern psychology, joining with others, and the traditional lonely quest for oneness with God. Amazingly, all of these topics are revealed to be intimately intertwined.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹When no perception stands between God and His creations [Creation], or between His children [Children] and their own, the knowledge of creation **must** continue forever. ²The reflections you accept into the mirror of your mind in time but bring eternity nearer or farther. ³But eternity **itself** is beyond **all** time. ⁴Reach out of time and touch it, with the help of its reflection **in** you. ⁵And you will turn **from** time to holiness, as surely as the reflection of holiness calls everyone to lay all guilt aside. ⁶Reflect the peace of Heaven **here**, and bring this world to Heaven. ⁷For the **reflection** of truth draws everyone **to** truth, and as they enter **into** it they leave **all** reflections behind.

• Study Question •

1. *Paragraph 1 is about stepping beyond time and perception into eternity. This paragraph also mentions the idea of reflecting Heaven here. What role does this reflecting play?*
 - A. Reflecting Heaven here is the same as being in Heaven.
 - B. Reflecting Heaven is a counterfeit that pulls us away from being in Heaven and substitutes for the real thing.
 - C. Reflecting Heaven draws us to Heaven, where we leave reflections behind.
 - D. Reflecting Heaven draws everyone to Heaven with us.
 - E. C and D.

In the Urtext this paragraph comes at the beginning of a new day of dictation. However, there is a notation saying “split paragraph,” and in fact the first part of what is now Paragraph 1 of this section actually is connected to the last paragraph of the preceding section. Sometimes it is better simply to ignore the breaks between sections and even between chapters.

The last section ended by talking about “Those who have learned to offer *only* healing because of the reflection of holiness in them.” It points out that, in the state known as Heaven, holiness is the *actual condition* of what we are meant to *reflect* here in the world. There, God’s creations are no mere reflections of the Truth; they *are* Truth. And having said that, the first sentence of Paragraph 1 follows and makes perfect sense: “When no perception stands between God and His Creation...” (1:1) is speaking of Heaven, where the Creation of God is revealed and known in all Its holy splendor. Then, we are directed back to our current transitional state, where, “The reflections that you accept into the mirror of your mind in time but bring eternity nearer or farther” (1:2).

With its reference to “the mirror of your mind” (1:2) this paragraph clearly continues the line of thought from the previous section. The mirror of our minds is clouded by *perception*—apparently, any kind of perception (1:1).

To me, there is a subtle difference between the reading in the Ur Text (“between God and His Creation”) and the published version (“between God and His creations”). The word *Creation* is not only capitalized but it is not plural, placing a strong emphasis on both the divinity of Creation and its Oneness, an emphasis that is lost by adding the “s” and down-casing the “c.” The same emphasis on divinity applies to the word “Children” in the same sentence, which also loses its capital letter in the published edition. The Course here is talking about a state of mind beyond time and beyond all perception, when any thought of separation or difference has been eradicated from our minds.

Perception implies duality, the observer and the observed. This is why the Course emphasizes that, to attain knowledge (oneness), perception must be transcended. The easiest way for me to understand this is to realize that I cannot, truly, perceive myself. I can just *be* myself. Anything that I can perceive is not *me*. I can perceive my body; therefore, the body is not who I am. I am that which perceives my body. I can perceive my thoughts, and “I” is that which perceives the thoughts; therefore, I am not my thoughts. And so on. This is what insightful meditation teaches us.

To us, perception seems to provide a connection, but compared to the reality of oneness, perception constitutes separation. It is a barrier. Therefore, perception must end for oneness to be complete and for knowledge to “continue forever.”

Once perceptions are out of the way, pure, direct *knowledge* rises to prominence and continues forever—because knowledge is eternal (1:1). Every choice we make within time of what we desire to reflect, God or the ego, Heaven or hell, brings that state of eternal knowing nearer or farther (1:2). When our minds accept the reflection of Heaven here in this world, it does not *end* time or perception, it merely brings eternity closer in our perception (1:2). But the

separation is still there, even in our most loving perceptions. Eternity is not infinite time; rather, it is the entire *absence* of time (T-27.VIII.6:5), a state we cannot even imagine (1:3)..

We can bring Heavenly knowledge nearer even as we walk through time. Heaven, knowledge, and eternity, however, all exist *outside of* time (1:3). Eternity is the eternal *now*. Yet, "with the help of its [eternity's] reflection in" us, we can "reach out of time and touch it [eternity]" (1:4). As the previous section has eloquently presented, we are meant to use the mirror of our minds to reflect eternity and Heaven *here*, in this world (1:6), through the practice of forgiveness and the extension of love and peace. We can "bring this world to Heaven" (1:6). We can, in the holy instant, step out of time into eternity, an idea that is often repeated.¹ We are indeed the light of the world. Our primary function, for now, is not attempting to leave the world and enter Heaven, but rather to reflect eternity here and bring the world to Heaven.

Notice once again that the path of salvation set forth by the Course results both in drawing *you* to Heaven and drawing everyone else with you. The Course teaches that, "No one can enter Heaven by himself" (W-pI.134.17:7). The way you find Heaven is to reflect Heaven to those around you. You are healed as you heal others.

¹ "God blessed His Son forever. If you will bless him in time, you will be in eternity" (T-11.III.8:3-4).

"For the holy instant reaches to eternity, and to the Mind of God" (T-15.V.11:5).

"For as the whole thought system of the ego lies in its gifts, so the whole of Heaven lies in this instant, borrowed from eternity and set in time for you" (T-17.IV.11:8).

"Your body will be sanctified today, its only purpose being now to bring the vision of what you experience this day to light the world. We cannot give experience like this directly. Yet it leaves a vision in our eyes which we can offer everyone, that he may come the sooner to the same experience in which the world is quietly forgot, and Heaven is remembered for a while.

"As this experience increases and all goals but this become of little worth, the world to which you will return becomes a little closer to the end of time; a little more like Heaven in its ways; a little nearer its deliverance. And you who bring it light will come to see the light more sure; the vision more distinct. The time will come when you will not return in the same form in which you now appear, for you will have no need of it. Yet now it has a purpose, and will serve it well" (W-pI.157.6:1-7:4).

Paragraph 2

2. ¹In Heaven reality is **shared** and not reflected. ²By sharing its reflection **here**, its truth becomes the only perception the Son of God accepts. ³And thus, remembrance of his Father dawns on him, and he can no longer be satisfied with anything but his own reality. ⁴You on earth have no conception of limitlessness, for the world you seem to live in **is** a world of limits. ⁵In this world, it is **not** true that anything without order of difficulty can occur. ⁶The miracle, therefore, has a unique function, and is motivated by a unique Teacher Who brings the laws of another world to this one. ⁷The miracle is the one thing you can do that **transcends** order, being based **not** on differences but on equality.

• Study Question •

2. *Paragraph 2 speaks of sharing the reflection of Heaven with others, which leads us to wanting only Heaven. It also speaks of the role of the miracle as a way of transcending limits, order of difficulty, and differences. Can you think of a single idea that ties together these three functions of a miracle--transcending 1) limits, 2) order of difficulty and 3) differences?*

The reason it works that way—you are healed as you give healing—is that “reality is shared” in Heaven (2:1). You cannot experience reality without *sharing* it, because it *is* shared. You have as much chance of attaining individual salvation as you do of jumping in a lake without getting wet. Water is wet, and reality is shared; that’s just how things are. To experience reality you *must* share it. As you share it, you begin to see everything in the light of that shared reality (2:2). As you open to this shared reality, by sharing it, you experience everything that is part of It—which is *everything!* God, the Sonship, joy, peace, light, blessing, all subsist in this reality, and once you taste It, nothing else can satisfy you (2:3). In fact, nothing else exists (T-Int.2:3).

Sentence 4 could easily be the start of a new paragraph. It deals with a problem in the thought that only reality exists, and in reality, everything is shared. The problem is that, on earth, we cannot conceive of what reality is like. Our experience does not match reality’s description. We cannot grasp the idea of limitlessness because our entire experience has been in a world of limits (2:4). That’s why we find it literally impossible to fully accept that “There is no order of difficulty in miracles” (T-I.1:1). Nothing in our experience is “without limits” or order of difficulty (2:5). While it may be true that a hydrogen bomb is vastly more destructive than a firecracker, the hydrogen bomb has limits. Drop one into the Sun and it would barely be noticeable. The financial resources of the US government are vast, but they are not without limit, a fact we find evidenced in things like budget crises.

This is exactly why miracles are so important: they *do* transcend limits, and in doing so, reveals the existence of another world (2:6), a world where things are

not based on differences, but on *equality* (2:7). The beginning of the next paragraph continues this line of thought.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹Miracles are **not** in competition, and the number of them that you can do is **limitless**. ²They can be simultaneous and legion. ³This is not difficult to understand, once you conceive of them as possible at all. ⁴What is more difficult to grasp is the lack of order of difficulty [**order of magnitude**] that stamps the miracle as something that **must** come from elsewhere, **not** from here. ⁵From the world's viewpoint, this is [**quite**] impossible.

• Study Question •

3. *Paragraph 3. You can do multiple miracles at once. This is easier to understand than their lack of order of difficulty. Why is this lack of order so hard to understand?*
- A. Because in this world there are limits on what can be healed.
 - B. Because in this world some things are hard to heal and some are easy.
 - C. Because we believe in differences.
 - D. Because in this world it is hard to believe that something can enter here from another world, another realm with different laws than our laws.
 - E. All of the above.

The main point of this paragraph is obvious: It is easier to understand (or to believe) that we can do *unlimited* miracles than it is to understand (or to believe) that no miracle is more difficult than or greater than any other—that we can raise the dead as easily as we can stop a nosebleed. That just seems impossible (3:5).

If one five-minute practice period can, according to Workbook Lesson 132, heal “many brothers far across the world” (W-pI.132.16:1), we cannot begin to imagine the *number* of miracles we may do. But we stop short at the *magnitude* of miracle we can expect—or rather, we can't seem to understand that *miracles do not have magnitude*. “They are all the same” (T-1.I.1:3). We have a very hard time grasping the fact that miracles are totally unbounded by physical laws. There is no difference between manifesting one dollar or manifesting a million dollars, no difference between curing a cold and curing cancer. That lack of order of difficulty is what, this paragraph points out, “stamps the miracle as something that must come from somewhere else, not from here” (3:4).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Perhaps you have been aware of [You have experienced the] lack of competition among your thoughts, which even though they may conflict, can occur [to you] together and in great numbers. ²You ~~may indeed be~~ [are] so used to this that it causes [can cause] you little surprise. ³Yet you are also used to classifying some of your thoughts as more important, larger or better, wiser, or more productive and valuable than others. ⁴This is true of the thoughts that cross the mind of those who think they live apart. ⁵For some are reflections of Heaven, while others are motivated by the ego, which but **seems** to think.

• Study Question •

4. *Paragraph 4. Like miracles, your thoughts can occur together and in great numbers. You classify some as better than others. What should you make of this classifying of yours?*
- A. You should stop classifying them and learn that all of your thoughts are beautiful and holy.
 - B. There is perhaps some basis for your classifying, since some of your thoughts reflect Heaven and others are of the ego.
 - C. True, some of your thoughts are of the ego, but by not classifying them and learning to love them, you will awaken to a state beyond differences and classification.
 - D. To classify reflects the idea of an order, and like miracles, your thoughts have no order.

Jesus now begins to compare the nature of our *thoughts* to the nature of miracles. You may think at first that this is an odd comparison, but there are remarkable similarities. Like miracles, thoughts can occur simultaneously and in great multiplicity, with conflicting thoughts existing within our minds seemingly without competing with one another (4:1). As we read just three sections back, by means of *dissociation* we maintain completely opposite thoughts within the same mind (T-14.VII.4:2-3). We find that easy to accept as true (4:2). If thoughts can be simultaneous and legion, without competition, why can't miracles, which are produced by thoughts? So this aspect of miracles, which is already familiar to us in regard to our thoughts, is fairly easy for us to understand.

However, we also *classify* our thoughts "as more important, larger or better, wiser, or more productive and valuable than others" (4:3). And, *in this world*, it's true! (4:4) Heavenly thoughts *are* wiser and more valuable than thoughts motivated by the ego—if you can call what the ego motivates "thoughts"! The ego only "seems to think" (4:5).

The point of the comparison, I think, is partly to demonstrate why we find lack of order of difficulty such a difficult concept. In evaluating our thoughts, there really is an order, a hierarchy, from lowest (ego non-thoughts) to highest (Heavenly thoughts). All our experience, even with such a non-material thing as thought, leads us to expect such a hierarchy and ranking. As we shall see, though,

there is a further point, a way that miracles can help us understand how our thoughts should *truly* be ordered.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹The result is a weaving, changing pattern that never rests and is never still. ²It shifts unceasingly across the mirror of your mind, and the reflections of Heaven last but a moment and grow dim, as darkness blots them out. ³Where there was light, darkness removes it in an instant, and alternating patterns of light and darkness [, darkness and light,] sweep constantly across your mind. ⁴The little sanity that still remains is held together by a sense of order that **you** establish. ⁵Yet the very fact that you can **do** this, and bring **any** order into chaos shows you that you are **not** an ego, and that **more** than an ego **must** be in you. ⁶For the ego is chaos, and if it were all of you, no order at all would be possible. ⁷Yet though the order you impose upon your mind limits the ego, **it also limits you**. ⁸To order is to judge, and to arrange **by** judgment. ⁹Therefore it is not your function, but the Holy Spirit's.

• Study Question •

5. *Paragraph 5. Your thoughts are a restless, chaotic, weaving pattern. Your classifying, your ordering of your thoughts, gives some order to your mind, proving that you are not an ego. But...*
- A. You should learn to order your thoughts better, for your mind is such a mess.
 - B. Someone has to order your thoughts, but it should be the Holy Spirit, not you.
 - C. You should not order your thoughts, for order is of the ego. You should be spontaneous and let God's chaos move through you in its beautiful dance.
 - D. You should order out for pizza.

What a great description of our minds! "...a weaving, changing pattern that never rests and is never still. It shifts unceasingly..." (5:1–2). I relate especially to the word "weaving." It makes me think of a rabbit running from a fox, darting this way, then that way, desperately trying to avoid being trapped in any one place. Our minds are like that. Have you ever found yourself, in the middle of a discussion with another person, taking first one position and then another position, one that is not quite in line with the first? I have. It's as if I know that neither of the positions is one hundred percent right, so I need both to cover my bases.

The chaos of our minds dissipates "the reflections of Heaven" that manage to break through (5:2), which is just what the ego wants. There is a flash of light, but it is quickly obliterated by the ego's darkness (5:3). Isn't that how it seems to you, as it does to me? You have glimpses of Heaven, but you can't seem to maintain a spiritual mind-set. "Alternating patterns of light and darkness sweep constantly across your mind" like the strobe lights of a disco. That kind of flashing light and

dark is extremely disorienting; it makes it hard to think. Exactly the intent of our egos!

So we scramble to retain some sense of order (5:4). Our thoughts seem to be a random mess, a mishmash of light and dark, so we cling to our sanity by our fingernails through the attempt to imposing *some* sense of order to our thoughts. We categorize and classify them; this one is valuable, that one is not. The key word here, emphasized in the Ur Text, is “you”—it is “a sense of order that *you* establish”. Order is good when it comes to our thoughts. Remember, some are reflections of Heaven, while others are from the ego; there is a real difference here. The question is, are *you* the best judge of which is which? No; that’s the job of the Holy Spirit (5:9).

There’s a positive lesson you can learn, though, from your ability to bring *any* order into the chaos of your mind: *it proves you are not an ego!* (5:5) Look at the emphasis the Ur Text places on words in the latter part of this paragraph. It stresses this point heavily. You are bringing some order into your thoughts. The ego is chaos (the antithesis of order). Therefore, “*more* than an ego *must* be in you” (5:5). If all you are is an ego, you could not produce order (5:6). So that’s the *up* side.

The *down* side is that when you impose order on your mind you limit the ego (that’s good), but you also limit yourself (not so good) (5:7). It makes *you* the judge, and you expend an enormous amount of energy attempting to maintain mental order. The Course told us earlier, “You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment” (T-3.VI.3:1). Jesus goes on to say:

All uncertainty comes from the belief that you are under the coercion of judgment. You do not need judgment to organize your life, and you certainly do not need it to organize yourself. (T-3.VI.3:4-5)

When you “order” your thoughts you are engaging in *judgment* (5:8), and thus laying a tremendous burden on yourself. Judgment is the function of the Holy Spirit, as we are told earlier in the Text: “I have said that judgment is the function of the Holy Spirit, and one He is perfectly equipped to fulfill” (T-8.VIII.4:7; see also T-6.V(C).1-2). Thus, ordering your thoughts is His job, not yours. Here, then, is yet another aspect of our lives that we need to turn over to the Holy Spirit. We’ve already been told not to make decisions by ourselves. We’ve been told to open the doors of our minds and bring all our dark and secret thoughts to Him. So this—allowing Him to order our thoughts, to judge them and classify them—is really an extension of that surrender of our independence to the Holy Spirit. I use the word “surrender” purposefully. It’s a loaded word, as is another word I almost used: “submission.” It inevitably triggers resistance and rebellion.

When Helen Schucman was scribing the early chapters of the Course, she had trouble with the word “obedience.” In the published version of the Course we read:

Equals should not be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also

© 2013 by Allen A. Watson, Portland, OR

<http://allen-watson.com/> • allen@allen-watson.com • 503-916-9411

entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted.
(T-1.II.3:5-8)

But in the Ur Text, the original dictation read like this:

An Elder Brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and a reasonable amount of obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love, because he is a brother, and also to devotion, if he is devoted. It is only my own devotion that entitles me to yours.

Notice the phrase, “*a reasonable amount of obedience*”! That’s Helen’s interpretation of what she heard. In the editing process, Helen was instructed by the Voice to remove the words “a reasonable amount.” Like Helen, we resist the idea of surrender, submission, and obedience. And it seems to be a justifiable resistance. After all, are not God and I one? How can I “submit” to God or the Holy Spirit? Isn’t that dualistic? Doesn’t that make me separate from God?

The whole point of submission is to overcome separation. It is relinquishing all thought of a will that is independent of God’s. It is abandoning our imagined ability to judge, or to make decisions, on our own, apart from the Holy Spirit. It is not that we, as separate beings, “submit” or “surrender” to the Holy Spirit, and allow some Divine Being external to ourselves to rule our lives. That whole picture *presumes* separation; it is the ego’s point of view of the process. True surrender to the Holy Spirit is the exact opposite of dualistic thinking; it is the recognition that my mind and God’s *are one*. I recognize that I *have* no independent will. I withdraw my trust in my apparent separateness, and turn instead to “the stately calm within” as this passage from Chapter 18 directs us. Notice how it uses the same imagery, depicting our chaotic thoughts as a “weaving, changing pattern”:

The truth will save you. It has **not** left you, to go out into the mad world and so **depart from you**. Inward is sanity; **insanity is outside** you. You but **believe** it is the other way; that truth is **outside**, and error and guilt within. Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, **have** no substance. They fuse and merge and separate, in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all. To judge them **individually** is pointless. Their tiny differences in form are **not real** differences at all. **None of them matters.** *That* they have in common and nothing else. Yet what else is **necessary** to make them all the same?

Let them all go, dancing in the wind, dipping and turning till they disappear from sight, far, far **outside** of you. And turn you to the stately calm within, where in holy stillness dwells the living God you never left, and Who never left you. The Holy Spirit takes you gently by the hand, and retraces **with** you your mad journey **outside** yourself, leading you gently back to the truth and safety within. He brings all your insane projections and the wild substitutions that **you** have placed **outside** you to the truth. Thus He **reverses** the course of insanity and restores you to reason. (T-18.I.7:2-8:5)

That is the surrender to the Holy Spirit we are talking about.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹It will seem difficult for you to learn that **you have no basis at all** for ordering your thoughts. ²This lesson the Holy Spirit teaches by giving you ~~the~~ shining examples of miracles to show you that your way of ordering is wrong, but that a better way is **offered** you. ³The miracle offers **exactly** the same response to **every** call for help. ⁴**It does not judge the call.** ⁵It merely recognizes what it **is**, and answers accordingly. ⁶It does **not** consider which call is louder or greater or more important. ⁷You may wonder how you who are still bound to judgment can be asked to do that which requires no judgment of your own. ⁸The answer is very simple. ⁹The power of God, and **not** of you, engenders miracles. ¹⁰The miracle **itself** is but the witness that you **have** the power of God in you. ¹¹That is the reason why the miracle gives **equal** blessing to **all** who share in it, and that is also why **everyone** shares in it. ¹²The power of God **is** limitless. ¹³And being always maximal, it offers **everything** to **every** call from **anyone**. ¹⁴There is no order of difficulty here. ¹⁵A call for help is **given** help.

• Study Question •

6. *Paragraph 6. You have no basis for ordering your thoughts. The miracle is there to show you a different way. Its way of responding to others is how you should respond to your own thoughts. It responds to every call for help in the exact same way. How is it possible, though, for us to respond the same to someone contemplating murder as to someone who is mildly depressed?*
- A. We can use the same words for each person, but in such a way that each one will interpret them according to his own needs.
 - B. We can use different words, but should still give the same amount of time and effort to each one.
 - C. The response is, in content, the maximal power of God, which may take many different forms, including doing nothing physically.
 - D. God's power always responds the same way. That is why it doesn't always meet our needs down here. It is up to us to bridge the gap between God's power and the other's needs.
 - E. C and D.

The thread of discussion now returns to weave together the ordering of our thoughts with the equality of miracles. In sum, miracles demonstrate to us how to properly respond to our own thoughts, how to “order” them: Respond to them all just as miracles respond to every call for help, in exactly the same way, recognizing each of our thoughts (whether we think they are good or bad) as a call for help, and responding with love.

Jesus says, with emphasis (in the Ur Text), that “*you have no basis at all* for ordering your thoughts” (6:1). He admits it will be hard to learn this, but it is a necessary lesson. The Holy Spirit assists us in learning the lesson by offering us

© 2013 by Allen A. Watson, Portland, OR

<http://allen-watson.com/> • allen@allen-watson.com • 503-916-9411

the example of miracles (6:2). Miracles, he says, “show you that your way of ordering is wrong, but that a better way is offered you” (6:2). How so? He explains in the sentences that follow.

How does a miracle “order” the calls for help it must respond to? The answer is, *it doesn't*. “The miracle offers exactly the same response to every call for help. *It does not judge the call*” (6:3–4). If that is the example of how we should order our thoughts, what it teaches is that we need not judge our thoughts; we can respond to them all in exactly the same way. What way is that? The example of miracles continues to instruct us.

Rather than judging the calls for help, trying to determine which call is “louder or greater or more important” (6:6), the miracle simply recognizes every call for help as exactly what it is, a call for help, and responds “accordingly,” that is, with help (6:5). And that is how we are meant to respond to our thoughts. We refrain from judging them and respond to them equally.

The question then arises: How on earth can we, “who are still bound to judgment” (6:7), keep from judging? “The answer is very simple” (6:8), says the Course. Yes; giving up judgment is seemingly impossible, so much so that it will take a miracle to do it! But that's what the Course is about: miracles. The power to give up judgment is the same as the power to perform miracles, and it comes, not from ourselves, but from God (6:9–10). God's power is limitless (6:12); therefore, a miracle gives equal blessing to everyone who shares in it, and *everyone* shares in it (6:11). Apparently every miracle gives everyone everything! (6:13) And every call for help gets the identical response: help (6:14–15).

It does not matter who is calling for help, or how great or little, in our perception, their need is. God does not dole out his miraculous power in measured doses. Everyone receives it all, for every request.

What we must understand here is that this is not talking only about miracles. It is presenting the way God responds to every call for help with a miracle dose of His unlimited power *as an example* of how the Holy Spirit will respond to our varied thoughts. It's what responding without judgment looks like. We have an angry thought; the Holy Spirit responds, “Ah! A call for help!” We are annoyed by slow-moving traffic; He responds, “Ah! A call for help!” We feel intense loathing for some individual; He responds, “Ah! A call for help!” We frown at someone's rude behavior; He responds, “Ah! A call for help!” We are consumed with hatred for someone: “Ah! A call for help!” And to every unloving thought, no matter what it is, no matter how “great” or how “trivial” it may appear to us, He responds with exactly the same gift of blessing. Total acceptance, complete forgiveness, the love we are really asking for, and all the power of God to transform that thought from fear to love.

Paragraph 7+

7. ¹The only judgment involved [at all] is the Holy Spirit's one division into two categories; one of love, and the other the call for love. ²You cannot safely make this division, for you are much too confused either to recognize love, or to believe that **everything** else is nothing but a call [need] for love. ³You are too bound to form, and **not** to content. ⁴What you **consider** content is not content at all. ⁵It is merely form, and nothing else. ⁶For you do **not** respond to what a brother **really** offers you, but only to the particular perception of his offering by which the **ego** [your ego] judges it. [Ur has no paragraph break here] 8. ¹The ego is incapable of understanding content, and is totally unconcerned with it. ²To the ego, if the form is acceptable the content **must** be. ³Otherwise it will attack the form. [Ur, paragraph breaks here]

• Study Question •

7. *Paragraph 7. The Holy Spirit makes only one division--into expressions of love and calls for love. We cannot make this division, because we do not see beyond the form to the content. So, someone in robes comes up to you and says, "Leave your job and come, follow me." Based on the last two paragraphs, what do you do?*
- A. Normally (in your unhealed state) you would judge it by the form, whether your ego was flattered by being given a special calling or was threatened by leaving its material security.
 - B. You would blast him with the almighty power of God.
 - C. You would see it as a call for help, and make your own call for help--by promptly dialing 911.
 - D. You would let the Holy Spirit decide if he was extending love or calling for help.
 - E. You would realize that you are totally unequipped to evaluate his statement on your own.
 - F. A, D and E.

The Holy Spirit *does* exercise judgment, but in a very limited sense: He divides every action or situation into two categories: love, or the call for love (7:1; see also T-12.I.3:1-4). Whatever is not an *expression* of love is a *call* for love. The appropriate response is either to give the needed help, or to rejoice with those extending love ("For those already willing to change their minds he has no function except to rejoice with them, for they have become teachers of God with him" (M-5.III.1:4)). Both love's expression and the need for love can bring love to our awareness. Both merit our gratitude (T-12.I.6:1-2).

Notice that this division into love or the call for love is to be made *by the Holy Spirit* and *not by you*: "You cannot safely make this division" (7:2). Why not? There are two reasons given:

Your confused mind cannot recognize love when it sees it.

You can't really believe that *everything* else is nothing but a *need* for love. Both reasons are due to the fact that our judgments tend to be based more on form than on real content; we see form and *think* it is actually the content (7:3–5). We see angry behavior or hear angry words, for instance, and cannot get past that to perceive the wounded, fearful heart that is crying out for love. Our ego's perception stops at the body (the behavior), and we respond to the behavior (the form) as if it were the true content (7:6).

See how the body's eyes rest on externals and cannot go beyond. Watch how they stop at nothingness, unable to go beyond the form to meaning. Nothing so blinding as perception of form. For sight of form means understanding has been obscured. (T-22.III.6:5-8)

Our egos don't care about content (or *meaning*). They care only about form. As long as you behave "nicely" my ego will accept you. If your behavior isn't acceptable to me (to my ego), I'll attack your behavior (8:1–3).

Paragraph 8

⁴If you [You who] believe you understand something of the "dynamics" of the ego [of the mind], let me assure you that you understand nothing of it [that you know *nothing* of it at all]. ⁵For of yourself you **could** not understand [know of] it. ⁶The study of the ego is **not** the study of the mind. ⁷In fact, the ego enjoys studying [the study of] itself, and thoroughly approves the undertakings of students who would "analyze" it, thus approving its importance. ⁸Yet they but study form, with meaningless content. ⁹For their teacher is senseless, though careful to conceal this fact behind impressive sounding words [behind a lot of words that sound impressive], but which lack **any** consistent sense when they are put together.

• Study Question •

8. *Paragraph 8 is really a scathing critique of modern psychology, saying it understands nothing (4), makes no sense (9), feeds the ego (7), is taught by the ego (9), uses empty jargon (9), and, in the end, studies nothing--only form with no content (8)--thus not only studying but emulating the ego. Based on this paragraph, what should modern psychology be studying?*
- A. It should be studying the ego, but should admit that that is what it is doing.
 - B. It should be studying the mind, which is the ego's host and is part of God.
 - C. It should be studying real content, not just form.
 - D. It should be studying the ego's actual "dynamics" with the help of the Holy Spirit.
 - E. It should be studying nothing--there should be no modern psychology.
 - F. B, C and D.

•

Remember that the Course was originally addressed to two working psychologists, Helen and Bill. They could hardly avoid realizing that this paragraph was targeting them as people who believed they understood something of the “dynamics” of the mind (8:4). The overall meaning of the paragraph seems clearer when the original reading of “mind” instead of “ego” is used in sentence 4. It is saying that modern psychology, which thinks it is studying the *mind*, is actually studying the *ego*. “The study of the ego is *not* the study of the mind” (8:6). Human beings alone, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, *cannot* understand the mind (8:5). Without the Spirit, psychology is just the ego studying the ego, and psychoanalysis is just stroking the ego’s vanity (8:7). The driving force behind it, the “teacher,” is the ego itself! The identity of the teacher is hidden behind “impressive sounding words,” a reference to the academic terminology of psychology (8:9).

In the middle of this critique of psychology, Jesus points out that it is studying “form with meaningless content” (8:8), which I believe refers to the confusion of form and content mentioned in the preceding paragraph. It isn’t just ordinary folks who respond to their brothers or sisters as if the form was the content; professional psychologists are doing the same thing, just with fancier language! I imagine Jesus felt it was necessary to insert this paragraph about psychiatry just in case Bill and Helen thought themselves exempt from the statements in Paragraph 7.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹This is characteristic of the ego’s judgments. ²**Separately**, they seem to hold, but **put them together** and the system of thought that arises from **joining** them is incoherent and utterly chaotic. ³For form is not enough for meaning, and the underlying **lack** of content makes a cohesive system impossible. ⁴**Separation** therefore remains the ego’s chosen condition. ⁵For no one **alone** can judge the ego truly. ⁶Yet when two or more **join together** in searching for truth, the ego can no longer defend its lack of content. ⁷The fact of union tells them it is not true.

• Study Question •

9. *Paragraph 9. The ego's lack of content makes cohesion, meaning and order impossible. Its lack of content is revealed when you try to join its thoughts together or when you join people together. Why does the joining of two or more people prove that the ego is not true?*
- A. It does not; bodies cannot join.
 - B. The ego is separation; union thus disproves the ego.
 - C. It does not really take two. The reference to "two or more" is just a colorful Biblical reference ("where two or three are gathered in my name...").
 - D. There is strength in numbers and the ego is weakness.
 - E. Just as by themselves the ego's thoughts look true, so by yourself the ego looks true. Only from a unified state can you see the ego's falsity.
 - F. B and E.

When a paragraph starts with words like “This is...” (9:1), we have to ask ourselves, “*What* is?” The reference is to the way psychiatry uses big words that sound impressive but “lack any consistent sense when they are put together” (8:9). So this first sentence tells us that what is true of psychiatric terminology is true of all the ego’s judgments. The ego’s judgments all share this characteristic: By themselves they seem to make sense, but if you try to put them together into a system of thought, it makes no sense at all (9:2). You cannot create something meaningful from a mere collection of forms; it takes real *content* to make a cohesive system possible (9:3).

Traditional psychotherapy considers and analyzes *individuals*. Our judgments of one another share the same subtle flaw. We observe someone’s behavior or hear their words, and we, as individuals, make an evaluation of them based on our observation of that one person. If we were to attempt to consolidate all our judgments of the various people in our lives into some meaningful theory of human behavior, and to combine them with the judgments made by other individuals, we would discover that all we have is chaos.

We all know this is true; we’ve experienced it. How often have you found that your understanding of someone’s behavior is totally different from the way someone else, who knows them equally well as you, sees them? One person may make a positive evaluation while another may take a negative view. The Course states the reason clearly: “No one alone can judge the ego truly” (9:5), which is why the ego *prefers* separation—if we are kept alone and apart, we’ll never truly understand the ego!

The way out of the dilemma is to join with another human being in our search for truth (9:6). Together we *can* properly evaluate the ego; we clearly see the ego’s emptiness. When I join with another person in heart and soul, I am stepping out of the ego’s boundaries. As I experience the fact of union and oneness, I *know* that the ego is not who I really am (9:6–7). This, I believe, is why the Course in later chapters places such an emphasis on the importance of holy relationships, and teaches that “relationships are [your] salvation, and not [your] doom” (T-20.VI.11:9). The ego exists and survives in separateness. It cannot endure the true joining of hearts and minds. “Those who have joined their brothers have detached themselves from their belief that their identity lies in the ego” (T-21.IV.3:4).

Paragraph 10

10. ¹It is impossible to remember God in secret and alone. ²For remembering Him means you are **not** alone, and are willing to remember it. ³Take no thought **for yourself**, for no thought you hold is for yourself. ⁴If you would remember your Father, let the Holy Spirit order your thoughts, and give only the answer with which He answers you. ⁵Everyone seeks for love as you do, but knows it not unless he joins **with** you in seeking it. ⁶If you undertake the search **together**, you bring with you a light so powerful that what you see is **given** meaning. ⁷The lonely journey fails because it has **excluded** what it would **find**.

© 2013 by Allen A. Watson, Portland, OR

<http://allen-watson.com/> • allen@allen-watson.com • 503-916-9411

• **Study Question** •

10. Paragraph 10 is very clear that God cannot be found by myself alone. In other words, we find union with God through union with our brothers. What does that say about all those people who found God by meditating alone in a cave?

- A. Perhaps they didn't find God as fully or completely as they thought.
- B. Perhaps they did join, with their meditation teacher or with other meditaters in nearby caves.
- C. They felt joined with others in their minds--even though there was no conscious sense of mutual joining--and that is enough.
- D. A and B

In this incredible paragraph, Jesus weaves together all the themes of this section, showing the cohesiveness that is the opposite of the ego's chaos, and forcefully states one of the primary principles of the Course: We cannot be saved *alone* because alone is not what we *are*; our reality is Oneness, Unity.

Solitary salvation, remembering God "in secret and alone," is simply *impossible* (10:1). It is impossible because what remembering God *means* is that we remember our union with God and therefore our union with all those who are equally united with God. Remembering God *is* remembering Oneness. Salvation is not-aloneness. To remember God alone is like boiling water without heat, like going to a distant city without leaving where you are. You just can't do it. To travel means to leave where you are; to remember God means you are willing to remember that you are not alone (10:2).

Attempts at solitary salvation are doomed from the start because what you are trying to save, and what you are making the attempt *with*, is the ego! You are thinking only of *yourself*, which is by definition egocentric. So Jesus urges us, "Take no thought *for yourself*, for no thought you hold *is* for yourself" (10:3). Minds are joined. "I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts" (W-pI.19.title). We may believe that what we are thinking affects only ourselves, but we are wrong. My thoughts affect all the world, and remembering God means remembering that, being cognizant of my inherent union with all life. This is why it is impossible to judge my own thoughts. I cannot even begin to realize how my thoughts are affecting you, my neighbors, and people all over the world. Only the Holy Spirit is capable of that depth of evaluation.

The central instruction here is that the way to remember God is to allow the Holy Spirit to order our thoughts (10:4). He knows which are expressions of love and which are our calls for help. He responds to those calls with His loving help, not with judgment or condemnation. And as we experience His divine evaluation within ourselves, we are to offer to others the same kind of response (10:4), meeting every call for help by extending our loving help, offering miracles to everyone. No condemnation, no rejection, no righteous standoffishness. Only as we thus join with others in seeking love can we, and they, really *know* that love is what we are seeking—what *everyone* is seeking (10:5). It makes perfect sense; how could anyone find love by seeking it *alone*? Love entails joining.

Seeking for love together, coming together with that common purpose, is incredibly powerful. It transforms everything we see, and gives it all new meaning (10:6). It is, indeed, the only kind of spiritual seeking that ultimately works. Solitary seeking, by excluding interaction with others, excludes love and oneness, the very thing we all are seeking (10:7).

What about those monks in caves? Did they not find God? Perhaps they did, but not as thoroughly as they thought. There is a Buddhist story about a monk who meditated alone in a cave until he believed he was enlightened, and who then returned to society only to find that as soon as he encountered other people, his ego experienced a sudden resurrection! And most of us have had experiences that demonstrate the same thing. We spend our quiet time in the morning, reading, meditating, and we feel so very peaceful and holy, but no sooner are we on the road in our car, or dealing with our children, or finding the cap off the toothpaste, and our peace evaporates like a cloud. It is in relationships that our spirituality is truly tested, and it is in relationships that we can experience true union with God in another.

Paragraph 11

11. ¹As God communicates to the Holy Spirit in you, so does the Holy Spirit **translate** His communications **through** you, so **you** can understand them. ²God has no secret communications, for everything of Him is perfectly open and freely accessible to all, being **for** all. ³Nothing lives in secret, and what you would hide from the Holy Spirit **is** nothing. ⁴Every interpretation you would lay upon a brother is senseless. ⁵Let the Holy Spirit **show him to you**, and teach you both his love ~~and his call~~ [**and need**] for love. ⁶Neither his mind **nor yours** holds more than these two orders of thought. [Not the end of paragraph in the Urtext] 12. ¹The miracle is the recognition that this is true.

• Study Question •

11. *Paragraph 11. The Holy Spirit will translate God's communications to you and **through** you and will interpret your brother's behavior to you. Based on this paragraph, what would the Course say about the concept of divine mysteries?*

- A. There is no such thing, for God does not hide Himself.
- B. God keeps things hidden only temporarily, to make us interested and motivate us to search for what He will happily disclose.
- C. God keeps things hidden only to certain people.
- D. If there are things of God that are mysterious to us, it is because we have hidden ourselves from His accessible light.
- E. A and D.
- F. B and C.

The Holy Spirit resides within us and remains constantly in direct communication with God; the Holy Spirit *translates* God's communications so

© 2013 by Allen A. Watson, Portland, OR

<http://allen-watson.com/> • allen@allen-watson.com • 503-916-9411

that we can understand them (11:1). Generally, this means stepping the thoughts down to match the level to which we have evolved in consciousness. If we are locked into dualistic thinking, the Holy Spirit speaks to us in dualistic language, which is why so much of the Course itself seems to regard God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as separate beings who interact with us. The Course addresses us at the level of our understanding.

The whole intention is to communicate, not to hide anything. Nothing is secret; there is no “secret knowledge.” God’s truth is meant for everyone (11:2). God is open to us; we should be open to Him, and hide nothing (10:3), as we’ve been told repeatedly in several earlier sections in this chapter, particularly Section VII. We may believe we are protecting ourselves by hiding our flaws and failures, but in reality—seen through the judgment of the Holy Spirit— they are *nothing* (11:3).

Why would you not be overjoyed to be assured that all the evil that you think you did was never done, that all your sins are nothing, that you are as pure and holy as you were created, and that light and joy and peace abide in you?
(W-pI.93.4:1)

Likewise—rather than interpreting our brothers and sisters with our own judgment, which “is senseless” (11:4; see 7:6)—we should “let the Holy Spirit show him to [us], and teach [us] both his love and his call for love” (11:5). The words “*show him to you*” are emphasized in the Urtext (11:5). That implies that what the Holy Spirit will show us is something we do not see with our eyes. It will be more than a simple reinterpretation of his words or actions; it will be a revelation of his Reality. We will see the Christ in him.

The same criteria for judgment apply to both *our* minds and *their* minds: there are only two orders of thought (11:6). Recognizing that only these two orders of thought exist, that everything is either an expression of love or a call for love, is the very definition of a miracle. When I see this in myself, or in another person, *that* is what the Course means by a miracle.

Paragraph 12

12. ²Where there is love, your brother **must** give it to you because of what it **is**. ³But where there is a call [*where there is need*] for love, **you** must give it because of what **you** are. ⁴Earlier I [*Long ago we*] said this course will teach you ~~how to remember~~ what you are, restoring to you your Identity.² ⁵We have already learned that this Identity is shared.³ ⁶**The miracle becomes the means of sharing It.** ⁷By **supplying** your Identity **wherever** It is **not** recognized, **you** will recognize It. ⁸And God Himself, Who wills to be with His Son forever, will bless each recognition of His Son with all the Love He holds for him. ⁹Nor will the power of all His Love be absent from any miracle you offer **to** His Son. ¹⁰How, then, can there be **any** order of difficulty among them?

• Study Question •

12. Paragraph 12. The miracle reflects the Holy Spirit's judgment. When you are giving a miracle to another, what, according to this paragraph, are you giving?

- A. Love.
- B. Your Identity.
- C. The holy instant.
- D. All of God's Love and power.
- F. A, B and D.

The miracle recognizes that, "Neither his mind nor yours holds more than these two orders of thought" (11:6). That is the essence of a miracle. When I am clear about this in any given situation, miracles happen. Both my sister and I are either offering love or asking for it; there is nothing else: no attack, no hatred, no anger, no disgust, no dislike. All thought is either an expression of love or the expression of a need for love.

When my sister expresses love in her mind, she "*must* give it to [me] because of what love *is*" (12:2). The nature of love demands that it be given. That's what love does. "With love in you, you have no need except to extend it" (T-15.V.11:3). But if the other order of thought is present—if my sister *needs* love, *I* must give love because of what *I* am (12:3)! "God is but love, and therefore so am I" (W-pI.rV.IN.4:3). Love must extend itself, and I am love, so I must extend myself, extend my love, to my sister who is in need of it.

Our Identity is Love; that is what the Course is teaching us (12:4). It is a *shared* Identity (12:5). *I am* Love, *you are* Love, *he/she is* Love; this is the

² "If the purpose of this course is to help you remember what you are, and if you believe that what you are is fearful, then it must follow that you will not learn this course. Yet the reason for the course is that you do not know what you are" (T-9.I.2:4-5).

³ "Remember always that your Identity is shared, and that Its sharing is Its reality" (T-9.IV.1:6).

grammar of the miracle. All that a miracle is, is the recognition of this shared Identity! (12:6). Either we mutually recognize and share our Identity, exchanging love, or, where one or the other does not recognize their Identity as Love, the other supplies it, filling the void. By sharing It, we recognize It (12:7).

When we so recognize our Identity as the Son of God, as the Love of God, “God Himself...will bless each recognition of His Son with all the Love He holds for him” (12:8). In plain terms, when two human beings recognize Christ in each other, they find the very Presence of God. As the Course put it earlier, “God...is approached through the appreciation of His Son” (T-11.IV.7:2).

The section ends by returning to the concept that there is no order of difficulty in miracles. It asks, how *could* there be any order of difficulty among them if every miracle—every recognition of the Christ in one another—is accompanied by all the power of God’s own Love (12:9–10)?

• **Study Question** •

13. Please summarize in your own words in no more than a paragraph the main message of this section, or the main theme that struck you personally.

•

Answer Key

1. E
2. Transcending the idea that something is hard to heal, or harder to heal than something else.
3. E
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. F
8. F
9. F
10. D
11. E
12. F
13. My summary: Your judgment sees only form and cannot see the ego's empty content. Let the Holy Spirit order your thoughts about yourself and about others. He will interpret everything as love or a call for love. He sees every call as the same and gives to each the same total love.