

Commentary

ACIM® Text (CE)

T-3.II, Special Principles for Miracle Workers

The underlining, italics, and footnote formats are explained at the end of the commentary. Also, see the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition. Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

Overview

In his footnote, Robert points out something you would never know without reference to the original shorthand notes: The title of this section was dictated by Jesus, and he numbered the paragraphs. These are not just more miracle principles. They are addressed to people like you and me who have stepped up to become workers of miracles. They point out what kinds of things should not be our concern when doing so, and what things should be our concern.

Paragraph 1

1. The miracle abolishes the need for lower-order concerns. ²Since it is an illogical, or out-of-pattern, time interval by definition, the ordinary considerations of time and space do not apply.¹ ³I do not regard time as you do, and your space problems are not mine.² ⁴When you perform a miracle, I will arrange both time and space to adjust to it.

First, we shouldn't be concerned with "lower-order concerns" (1:1). These include "ordinary considerations of time and space" (1:2). We need not worry about how long things will take or how quickly something is needed, nor where it will come from or how it will get here. Presumably, this includes how much it will cost or how much space is needed. Time and space are not issues for Jesus (1:3). We just extend the miracle as directed, and he "will arrange both time and space to adjust to it" (1:4).

2. A clear distinction between what was created and what is made is essential. ²All forms of correction (or healing) rest on this fundamental correction in level perception.

Next, we need to be really clear about the distinction between creating and making (also called "miscreation").(2:1). We need to be especially clear that only what we create with God is real; all miscreations are illusions. And God did not create this world or our bodies. Just consider these quotes on the topic:

The world you see is an illusion of a world. God did not create it, for what He creates must be eternal as Himself, yet there is nothing in the world you see that will endure forever. (C-3.1:1–2 (CE))

Do not perceive anything God did not create, or you *are* denying Him. (T-10.V.13:1 (CE))

¹ That the miracle is "illogical" means that it doesn't logically follow *from what went before*. It is "out-of-pattern"—the occurrence of a new pattern, rather than a continuation of past patterns. These past patterns include the "laws" of time and space.

² "Space problems" almost certainly refers to the common meaning of *not having enough space*. The original phrase was "and Kolb's space problem is *not* mine." Lawrence C. Kolb was chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, where Helen and Bill worked. His "space problem" is mentioned (see Cameo 14) alongside "a storage problem" and referred to as "a" space problem: "A storage problem is hardly more difficult for me to solve than a space problem, (see comments under special principles for miracle workers.)" So "Kolb's space problem" was simply someone having *a* space problem; i.e., not having enough space. The overall idea here (as we see in the next sentence) is that when you perform a miracle, this allows Jesus to rearrange time and space in order to take care of your lower-order concerns, bringing them into line with the healing that just took place. He may, for example, solve a space problem you have been struggling with.

What God did not create does not exist. (W-14.1:2 (CE))

Therefore, whatever you or the recipient of the miracle or may not have done is completely irrelevant. You should not even *perceive* these things. They do not exist! If you see them, you are viewing “a visual misperception.”

All of your miscreations can disappear in the well-known “twinkling of an eye” because they are a visual misperception. (T-2.II.13:4 (CE))

This is an essential correction in level perception (between created or made, real or unreal), and *all forms* of correction or healing rest upon it (2:2). This is the *sine qua non* of miracles (that’s Latin for “Without this, nothing”). Without this distinction, miracles are not possible.

3. Another way of stating the second principle is this: Never confuse right-mindedness with wrong-mindedness. ²Responding to any form of miscreation with anything except a desire to heal (or a miracle) is an expression of this confusion.

Because this idea is so foundational to working a miracle, Jesus restates it in another way. “Never confuse right-mindedness with wrong-mindedness” (3:1). We do not need to respond to the person’s wrong-mindedness as if it concerned something real. Our only concern is to undercut that wrong-mindedness, that is, to heal their *mind*. If we respond to the person’s miscreation or wrong-mindedness with *anything except a desire to heal*, we have made the mistake of confusing wrong- and right-mindedness (3:2).

The exposition of this foundational distinction continues in the remaining paragraphs.

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

When we successfully offer a miracle we have denied the reality of whatever miscreation is confronting us and have affirmed the truth: it does not exist (4:1). Lesson 14 in the Workbook gives several startling and perhaps challenging examples:

God did not create it, and so it is not real. Say, for example:

⁵*God did not create that war in _____, and so it is not real.*⁴

⁶*God did not create that airplane crash in _____, and so it is not real.*

⁷*God did not create that disaster [specify] in _____, and so it is not real.*

³. This seems to mean that “what is made” (see 2:1), being empty form without any real content of its own, lends itself to having false content (or meaning) projected onto it.

⁴. Helen originally wrote “the war in Vietnam”—this was, after all, 1969—but then changed the sentence to read as you see it above. The Vietnam reference, however, shows us the kind of specificity asked for in this exercise.

**God did not create that illness [specify] in [name of person], and so it is not real.*
(W-14.4:3–8 (CE))

Deny the error and affirm the truth. God did not create this error, therefore it isn't real. This may seem naïve—"pretending" the sickness isn't there and isn't real. To *try* to believe that cancer in our friend isn't there seems doomed to disappointment and discouragement. It seems apparent, however, that we are not asked to "try" to believe but to "believe." Period. "Not try; do!" as Yoda exclaims in *Star Wars*.

If that seems just impossible to you, you need to realize that you seem to think you know more than Jesus or that God *did* create that cancer. In which case, who wants to know a God like that? What's impossible is that God created cancer; therefore, it *cannot* be real. It cannot exist. That's what Jesus achieved: complete freedom from this fundamental level confusion. When he encountered a leper, he knew with certainty that God had not created leprosy, so he was able to extend total healing. His faith communicated itself to the leper, and the leper's faith in the truth made him whole.

But perhaps I'm making all this too hard. Perhaps we need to start with easier miracles—if such a thing exists. If someone speaks an unkind word to you, can you realize that the "unkind person" you see is not real? That, in truth, they are wholly lovable and wholly loving? That their words were a call for love and not an attack?

Another simple example is: Can I realize that my lack of funds is not real?

What we need is to realize that *only* right-mindedness "*can* create in a way that has any real effect" (4:2). Wrong-mindedness cannot do that! "What has no real effect has no real existence" (4:3). So neither our wrong-mindedness nor that of the other person can produce anything real! The only *real* effect of wrong-mindedness is emptiness (4:4). The only result can be projection, which is our mind painting a false picture over reality. We perceive sickness, for instance, only because our minds are projecting it—but it isn't real!

I think the point for us to grasp here is not trying to convince ourselves somehow that the problem (sickness, insult, betrayal, whatever) isn't real. If we focus on the problem we'll probably only make it seem *more* real. The point to grasp is, don't focus on the problem. Focus on the truth! Center our our desire to heal the other person's mind, and our own. Forget about the supposed problems; they are all illusions. If we can, even for a moment, focus only on the truth that only what God creates is real and believe it, our mind's healing will extend to others. Let go of any need to judge the other person for what they did or are doing (perhaps to themselves). Focus only on your loving desire to heal their mind, remembering that their misthought has no real effects.

5. The level-adjustment power of the miracle induces the right perception for healing.⁵ ²Until this has occurred, healing cannot be understood.
³Forgiveness is an empty gesture unless it entails correction.⁶ ⁴Without this, it is essentially judgmental rather than healing.

When a miracle occurs in your mind, the levels get adjusted. Spirit, or God's creation, is the only reality; physical events, which result from misthought, are all illusion and therefore do not really matter (5:1). As Miracle Principle 26 points out in the first two paragraphs, our problem is not that we doubt or can't believe. The problem is that we are afraid our egos are being uprooted—as they are! We must open our minds to *receive* a miracle before we can give one. Without that miraculous healing of our minds, we cannot understand healing (5:2).

There is a kind of back-and-forth throughout all these discussions between healing and forgiveness. Ultimately, I think, they are the same thing. When we truly forgive someone, we have given them healing. When we heal another's mind we have forgiven them. You can't really do one without the other. This must be why Jesus, in the gospels, so often ties them together. He heals someone and then says, "Your sins have been forgiven," or he forgives someone and they are healed. So when he says here that we can't understand healing until our minds have had our level confusion removed by a miracle (which means seeing that only spirit is real and believing it), it also means we can't understand forgiveness until this happens in our minds.

This is why the next sentence (5:3) goes on to say that forgiveness is an empty gesture unless it includes correction, correction of our level-confusion. (Robert's footnote to 5:3 explains this in more detail; check it out.) If we are still confusing what God created with what our brother or sister "made" with their misthought, we will only be offering false forgiveness. The *Song of Prayer* pamphlet has a great section on what it calls forgiveness-to-destroy. I've included it as a kind of Appendix at the end of this commentary.

⁵. "The level-adjustment power of the miracle" refers to the miracle inducing us to realize that the level of eternal spirit is what is real and that the level of physical events is illusory—the same distinction that we see in special principle 2: "A clear distinction between what was created and what is made is essential." See miracle principles 21 and 26 for the miracle as the correction for level confusion.

⁶. "Correction" here seems to refer to the correction of the level confusion that is inherent in our unforgiveness, in which we confuse "what was created and what is made" (2:1). Specifically, we confuse our brother's God-created reality with the mistakes he has made. When we do not correct this level confusion, our "forgiveness" implies that he sinned, that his mistakes were real and tarnished his reality. Such forgiveness, as Jesus says above, is "essentially judgmental rather than healing" (5:4).

6. Miraculous forgiveness involves *only* correction. ²It has no element of judgment at all. ³“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” in no way evaluates what they do.⁷ ⁴It is strictly limited to an appeal to God to heal their minds. ⁵There is no reference to the outcome of their mis-thought. ⁶*This does not matter.*

Forgiveness that stems from a miracle never reinforces errors; it only corrects them (6:1). As the *Song of Prayer* says, “All forms forgiveness takes that do not lead away from anger, condemnation and comparisons of every kind are death.” Miraculous forgiveness “has no element of judgment at all” (6:2). There is no evaluation of the effects of the misthought of others—their words, their behavior (6:3). These things only affect our egos and our bodies, which are illusions. So they have no *real* effects at all. Jesus appeals to God only to “*heal their minds*” (6:4). Again, Jesus equates forgiving with healing their minds.

This is what we are learning. In what Jesus said on the cross, “There is no reference to the outcome of their misthought. *This does not matter*” (6:5–6). Is this easy for us to learn? Hardly. The central lesson of the Course is that there is no world outside of our minds (T-12.VI.1:7 (CE), W-132.4:6 (CE), (W-132.6:1–2 (CE)). If there is no world except the illusions in our minds, what difference does it make what happens in an illusion? None. This is really the whole basis for forgiveness as the Course teaches it.

On the one hand, no one can consider all the suffering, pain, and death that appears to fill our world without being overwhelmed with compassion and sorrow. The Course declares, “Look about the world and see the suffering there. Is not your heart willing to bring your weary brothers rest?” (W-191.10:7-8) So yes, compassion and sorrow are legitimate in this world. However, as I understand it, the Course is saying, “Yes, the suffering is terrible. But no one is sick, no one is abused, no one is being tortured, and no one is dying *except in the shared mind of the Sonship*.” “The body neither lives nor dies, because it cannot contain you who are life” (T-6.VII.1:4).

If there is no world there are no bodies. There is no global warming. All of this is happening nowhere but in our minds, so, as Jesus did on the cross, our prayers and our efforts must be directed to “heal their minds.” We won’t fix the world by trying to fix the world. That’s like trying to fix what’s on a movie screen by attempting to manipulate the image on the screen. We need to change what’s in the projector—our minds.

⁷ Luke 23:34 (KJV). These, of course, are the words Jesus reportedly spoke from the cross. The Course sees this statement as an appeal to God to heal the conscience of wrongdoers, since they don’t understand what they are doing.

7. The biblical injunction “Be of one mind” is the statement for revelation readiness.⁸ ²My own injunction “Do this in remembrance of me” is the request for cooperation in miracle working.⁹ ³It should be noted that the two statements are not in the same order of reality, because the latter involves a time awareness, since memory implies recalling the past in the present. ⁴Time is under my direction, but timelessness belongs to God alone. ⁵In time, we exist for and with each other. ⁶In timelessness, we coexist with God.

What does “Be of one mind” mean? Perhaps it mean to shift from the belief that we humans have billions of separate minds to the realization that we all share *one mind*. That realization makes us ready to receive revelation (7:1). After all, doesn’t revelation bring a recognition of oneness? Jesus connects it to his words at the Last Supper regarding taking bread and wine, “Do this in remembrance of me.” He says the words are a “request for cooperation in miracle working” (7:2). We cooperate with him by offering miracles to our sisters and brothers, recognizing that they are one with us, parts of the one Sonship. We are recognizing what the bread and wine symbolize, the Body of Christ filled with one Spirit.

The two statements, he points out, “are not in the same order of reality.” We are of one mind in the timeless, eternal realm of Truth, where we coexist with God. We *cooperate*, existing for and with each other, in the realm of time (which is an illusion) (7:3–6). If we see a brother or sister suffering in some way (for instance, sickness, poverty, or loss of any kind) or in any way attacking us (which is a call for love), our only desire should be to offer love, to cooperate in affirmation of our oneness. Forgive. Heal their mind. That’s what we do in time.

As we practice forgiveness and cooperation, we affirm the reality of our oneness. We affirm that minds are one. This readies us for the revelation of timeless Oneness. This is what miracle-workers do. This is why we are here. “I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here” (W-61.5:3–5 (CE)).

⁸ 2 Corinthians 13:11 (KJV): “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” Jesus is apparently reinterpreting “Be of one mind” to mean “Rise above the divided mind into a single-mindedness that is ready for the one-mindedness of spirit.”

⁹ Luke 22:19 (RSV): “And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’” In its present context, this means not “Celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of me,” but “Do miracles in remembrance of me and in cooperation with me.”

Forgiveness-to-Destroy

1 Forgiveness-to-destroy has many forms, being a weapon of the world of form. 2 Not all of them are obvious, and some are carefully concealed beneath what seems like charity. 3 Yet all the forms that it may seem to take have but this single goal; their purpose is to separate and make what God created equal, different. 4 The difference is clear in several forms where the designed comparison cannot be missed, nor is it really meant to be.

2. 1 In this group, first, there are the forms in which a “better” person deigns to stoop to save a “baser” one from what he truly is. 2 Forgiveness here rests on an attitude of gracious lordliness so far from love that arrogance could never be dislodged. 3 Who can forgive and yet despise? 4 And who can tell another he is steeped in sin, and yet perceive him as the Son of God? 5 Who makes a slave to teach what freedom is? 6 There is no union here, but only grief. 7 This is not really mercy. 8 This is death.

3. 1 Another form, still very like the first if it is understood, does not appear in quite such blatant arrogance. 2 The one who would forgive the other does not claim to be the better. 3 Now he says instead that here is one whose sinfulness he shares, since both have been unworthy and deserve the retribution of the wrath of God. 4 This can appear to be a humble thought, and may indeed induce a rivalry in sinfulness and guilt. 5 It is not love for God's creation and the holiness that is His gift forever. 6 Can His Son condemn himself and still remember Him?

4. 1 Here the goal is to separate from God the Son He loves, and keep him from his Source. 2 This goal is also sought by those who seek the role of martyr at another's hand. 3 Here must the aim be clearly seen, for this may pass as meekness and as charity instead of cruelty. 4 Is it not kind to be accepting of another's spite, and not respond except with silence and a gentle smile? 5 Behold, how good are you who bear with patience and with saintliness the anger and the hurt another gives, and do not show the bitter pain you feel.

5. 1 Forgiveness-to-destroy will often hide behind a cloak like this. 2 It shows the face of suffering and pain, in silent proof of guilt and of the ravages of sin. 3 Such is the witness that it offers one who could be savior, not an enemy. 4 But having been made enemy, he must accept the guilt and heavy-laid reproach that thus is put upon him. 5 Is this love? 6 Or is it rather treachery to one who needs salvation from the pain of guilt? 7 What could the purpose be, except to keep the witnesses of guilt away from love?

6. 1 Forgiveness-to-destroy can also take the form of bargaining and compromise. 2 “I will forgive you if you meet my needs, for in your slavery is my release.” 3 Say this to anyone and you are slave. 4 And you will seek to rid yourself of guilt in further bargains which can give no hope, but only greater pain and misery. 5 How fearful has forgiveness now become, and how distorted is the end it seeks. 6 Have mercy on yourself who bargains thus. 7 God gives and does not ask for recompense. 8 There is no giving but to give like Him. 9 All else is mockery. 10 For who would try to strike a bargain with the Son of God, and thank his Father for his holiness?

7. 1 What would you show your brother? 2 Would you try to reinforce his guilt and thus your own? 3 Forgiveness is the means for your escape. 4 How pitiful it is to make of it the means for further slavery and pain. 5 Within the world of opposites there is a way to forgiveness for the goal of God, and find the peace He offers you. 6 Take nothing else, or you have sought your death, and prayed for separation from your Self. 7 Christ is for all because He is in all. 8 It is His face forgiveness lets you see. 9 It is His face in which you see your own.

8. 1 All forms forgiveness takes that do not lead away from anger, condemnation and comparisons of every kind are death. 2 For that is what their purposes have set. 3 Be not deceived by them, but lay them by as worthless in their tragic offerings. 4 You do not want to stay in slavery. 5 You do not want to be afraid of God. 6 You want to see the sunlight and the glow of Heaven shining on the face of earth, redeemed from sin and in the Love of God. 7 From here is prayer released, along with you. 8 Your wings are free, and prayer will lift you up and bring you home where God would have you be.

Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

The Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.

Effects of Differing Editions of the Course

There were significant changes made in the CE, although for the most part there was no alteration in the meaning of the text, and the *Manual for Teachers* had far fewer changes. There are some changes in section and paragraph breaks and sentence structure that result in different numbering in references to the same text in the two editions. When there is a major difference I will indicate it with a footnote.

I have attempted for all references to add a separate FIP reference if it differs from the CE reference, but I may have missed some. If so, I apologize. Please let me know of any referencing problems you find.

I have also tried to edit my commentary so as to reflect any wording changes in the CE. For instance, the CE Text restored the plural use of "you" where the FIP had substituted the phrase "you and your brother." One such instance will illustrate the kind of change, significant in actual words but nearly identical in overall meaning:

FIP: Thus you and your brother but shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point you both agreed to keep intact.

CE: You shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point which you had both agreed to keep intact.