



Despite my comments I might offer regarding ACIM, I should mention how it is that I discovered ACIM.

Around 1978, while incarcerated, I began to notice insights arising within over and over. Some 16 years later and after my 1984 release, I realized that my attention given to this inner resource was a pure form of meditation. It was not until a few years after this that I began to realize that "doing meditation" wasn't necessary, and that this "presence" was there and available all the time. And eventually, it became clear that this which was in me...was me...my reality, which happens to be shared with all. This discovery is nothing "*special*"...but it is unfortunately often ignored...or...it is missed while seeking it due to beliefs and conditioning causing us to look for it where it is not.

Along the way, around 1992, due to a false allegation about criminal behavior (*which allegations were never proven because it was impossible for there to be any evidence*)...I ended up going to Parents United (*not mandated, but simply being cooperative*). Related to that, I began sessions with a social worker with a psychology background. We would talk about related subjects, but then I would always shift to talking about what I had discovered and which was most precious in my mind. After a number of sessions, this counselor asked me, "Have you ever heard of '*A Course In Miracles*'?" I said no and asked what it was. She said it was a book that a friend of hers studied (and which she herself had not read)...and went further to say that a lot of the things I had to say sounded much like what her friend would say all the time.

Well, that was a little interesting, but I had no reason to check it out. A few weeks later, I decided to see if I could become involved in a study group for the works of Joel Goldsmith, an author whose writings I liked. Goldsmith was a prolific writer on various subjects surrounding a practice called *The Infinite Way*. He was Christian, and although I was not Christian any longer, I did have some appreciation of many things said in Christianity. I finally found a group, not far away, and went to the meeting. I was the only one there besides the man and woman who offered the study group. Apparently, that one meeting ended up being the only one they ever had. So I never ended up studying Goldsmith's works, even though I already owned 25 books written by him and had grown somewhat from reading his books. I was given an open invitation by them to come to their home and talk, which I did fairly often.

My wife began to accompany me on these visits, and a long friendship developed between all of us. They introduced us to (the) Alternatives to Violence Project; which we are still involved in today, some 26 years later (*today operating our own local group in the community and in three prisons*). If one looks under the hood, one discovers that it is based on looking for this same reality in everyone, referencing it as something innate to all people.

Then one day, the woman gave me a cardboard box of spiritual books to look over. When I got home, I skimmed through book after book, tossing each one in a pile that I most likely would not read fully. Then I picked up this dark blue book. It was "*A Course In Miracles*". As I began to skim through it, a passage would catch my eye, and then another, and after a few moments, I called down the hall to my wife and said, "Honey!!! You know all those things I mentioned which came to me as insights that I didn't understand or know what to do with (*and so put them on a back shelf in my mind*)? Well, they're here in this book!!!" That was exciting since I'd had no one who was interested in hearing these things. But as I began to go to ACIM study groups (after reading it), I discovered that they seemed to be stuck in a "*choose again, and study the lessons over and over*" rut, and were truly missing the point of it. So once again, I didn't really have anyone to talk to about these things.

Now I share my insights here on this web site. Just as I am not a follower of religion or of the Bible, so also I am not a follower of ACIM. There are many things in both of those texts that run contrary to what is shown within. Eventually, I began to realize that neither book was a guide or manual in the usual sense. Both were using a teaching method which I came to call "the two-edged sword teaching method". They would present a simple statement of truth, and then follow it with lots and lots of statements that went against the truth presented. It was left up to the reader to notice, and to realize that only the truth is true, and to further realize that it was not helpful for them to simply accept things because they were in a book or because an author was said to have inspiration or even to be quoting God, etc. And so it is, that each of us have within us this common resource as our reality. No one ever needs to wonder "who is right?" or to make decisions based on a belief in the answer to such an arbitrary question. Our reality shows us what we need to understand, according to what we are willing and currently able to consider, and perhaps come to grips with and accept. So, just as my early training in Christianity was..., so also ACIM was...a stepping stone (and in the case of ACIM, somewhat of a confirmation).

More on the "two-edged sword teaching method" and the institutionalized mindsets toward whom it was given, and actually written by the very people who needed to be taught, but who were set in their ways and "*stiff-necked*": [expanded definition](#) (found on the Summary page)

As much as possible, I try to not use "the two-edged sword teaching method". To the extent I am able, I put food for thought forward for people to consider, and perhaps ponder. But it needs to be clear that my words...are not the ultimate truth. The ONLY ultimate truth is not words, or beliefs, but is our reality itself. Accepting my words will never be enough. Each person must discover this for their own self. If after such a discovery, the insights you have arising for you look different than what I've said...that's wonderful...search your heart and go with it. It doesn't matter that the words differ, as words are tools of symbolism in the temporal realm...or in other words, tools of denial (and thus incapable of transmitting or representing the ultimate truth of reality's presence). The only thing that matters is that we open ourselves to the influence of that reality, and gradually become willing to accept its influence as the primary reliance and guide in our lives.

There is only one message in ACIM, and it is very simple to understand. This is so because there is only one reality, only one seeming departure from it in denial, and only one restoration of that illusion via the one miracle. Although I say one, one, one, one...here in the temporal realm, we experience everything in multiples or dividedness. There is one reality, but we think of reality as diverse. There is one departure (which unfortunately gets referenced as "sin"), but we think of this as the symptoms we see regarding that departure...and so it seems to us there are many "sins". There is only one illusion, and yet of course, we see our world populated with body-bearing people as many and as diverse. There is only one restoration because there is only one *departure illusion*\* to remedy...and there is only one miracle because there is only one illusion (and a miracle is an illusion). But again, to us there seems to be many paths leading toward variations on restoration, and many steps to arrive, depending on which path taken, etc.

**It is important to take note of what error is.** All too often, people involved in ACIM spend inordinate amounts of time trying to identify each behavior that needs improving, thinking that these are error. They are not. All behaviors are neutral symptoms of the *one error*. That error is judgment by way of choosing, which is the attempt to see more than whole reality. This attempt is futile for it is not possible to see more than whole reality; however, we can and do create "*separate-appearing*" imagery as perceived dividedness instead, substituting this for real vision. In other words, our choosing specifically is denial, and is ALWAYS denial. There is nothing such as choosing "for" without the seemingly separated but actually joined act of choosing "against" (*a major aspect of perception as "good and evil"*). Since whole reality is all there is, choosing against can only be of two varieties:

1. denial of reality: choosing against whole reality...the single error (*attempting to look away, i.e.-denial*), which generates the single illusion (*this world of bodies and objects*), imbued with the single miracle (*atonement*) throughout the illusion we perceive...or...
2. denial of denial: choosing against the idol objects we've created as imagery (which is the mechanism of the miracle by which denial and its world are reduced and eliminated, bringing about the atonement, or returning our attention to where it belongs).

Fortunately, the nature and design of denial's error-generated creation as illusion is denial...which *"MUST always (energetically) deny in order to be perceived"*, and must complete a cycle of denial...first denying reality, then (*with continuing denial as its modus operandi*) denying that which its perception sees as the only thing left to deny...which is denial itself. So all error generates its own miracle path back to whole vision's sanity in order for it to be perceived at all. Although ACIM likes to dress this up in "holy spirit" clothing, there is only reality...which is spoken of as whole spirit (or holy spirit). There is nothing magically divine about holy spirit. One can believe they think holy thoughts with holy spirit, but actually whole spirit does not think, but knows...and knowledge doesn't use words, imagery, thinking or awareness of that which is not there. ACIM suggesting that it does cannot make this to be "literally" so. Whatever truth is in such statements is temporal truth, wrapped in words to allow us to consider opening our hearts to find out the real truth of our oneness in that which we've come to call God, but which needs no such label. In other words, such statements in ACIM are metaphors. That which is whole reality cannot be literally divided into father, son, holy spirit, and people...we are one. Anyone who declares otherwise is speaking from temporal duality and perception, not reality (*which has neither separateness nor worded language with which to make such a declaration*).

Wherever I go, there I am. *"I am the lord thy God" and "there is none else."*

We are not progressing toward becoming like that reality, but actually are that whole reality now, whether we recognize it or not.

**To notice this, to recognize it, and to confess it freely** is not arrogance, but **is humility**. It is the humility found in the willingness to let go of prideful traditions and lowliness (*the result of the mental condition from partaking of the false knowledge called "good and evil"*) once the truth is seen within. That truth is...that this *"I am reality"* is what we are instead of those false images...truly a whole and shared reality.

There never was a separation. You realize that, right?

- o wholeness as innocence
- o wholeness as perfection
- o wholeness as what I am in all

This could easily be summed up in this way: There is...

- One Reality (*called God*)
- One Denial of the whole vision of that reality. Such denial...
  - o Causes illusion to appear as multiple illusions. As these seemingly many illusions continue to divide, they...
  - o Create conflict because of the nature of their creation.
- In order to remedy the problems caused by increasing appearances of illusion, it is required to relinquish the pride of our denial and willingly accept the whole vision of our reality once again.
- The seeming departure was effected in mind by the mental vexation in the attempt to see "more" than what is real, resulting in imagery that seems convincing and suggests that we succeeded.
- One could characterize this "departure" as "turning away" from whole vision in favor of the "partial vision" of mental dividedness (*thought of as multiplication or as more*), a deception of great magnitude in thought, but in reality as nothing at all.
- So restoration of that which seems lost by virtue of this "departure" is through willingly looking upon the truth presented in, by and as whole vision once again.
- NOTHING ELSE WILL ACCOMPLISH THIS.
  - o JESUS CANNOT ACCOMPLISH IT FOR YOU.
  - o GOD CANNOT ACCOMPLISH IT FOR YOU (as separate from you).
  - o YOU CANNOT ACCOMPLISH THIS BY PURIFICATION OR WORKS.

- It requires the humility of relaxing one's grip on the insistence that the reports of evidence in the illusion are true, (*thereby forgiving yourself for the illusion you created*).

This is summarized even further by this simple phrase: "**I need do nothing.**"

That is the single message of ACIM in a nutshell. Countless hours are spent by people studying ACIM in the attempt to intellectually understand the nuances of its meaning involving the behavior of practice, practice, practice lesson after lesson. And after there are no more lessons to practice, perceiving that they aren't perfect (in their opinion), they set out on another round of reading and practicing, making it a lifelong struggle and seeming progression. "If I could just do the lessons one more time, I think I'd be in the happy dream zone." Then another set and another set.

A favorite phrase from ACIM is "choose again". ACIM speaks of choosing the holy spirit, and thinking with the holy spirit, etc., characterizing what is needed as choosing again, or choosing rightly. This is odd talk since ACIM tells us straight out that choice is not real. Choosing again may seem to be a key which leads us toward atonement, but actually choosing is the crux of the matter. Choosing is the single mechanism of denial. By choosing, judgment arises, symbolic representation arises, dividing arises, conflict arises and spawns violence...on and on we go...choosing. So let's just choose again...and again...and again.

When I was 6 or 7 years old, I joined the local Cub Scouts group. It seemed like a fun thing to do. At my first meeting, they had several new recruits, and held an initiation ceremony for them. I was one of them. We were all asked to get down on our knees and repetitively raise our hands up and say the sacred words: "Owa Tagu Siam". After awhile, it sunk in and I got up and left the kneeling group. Over the years, I looked back at that as a minor form of hazing, and it was a slightly negative memory. But today, I realize they had taught me a fundamental truth. Each of us has a mind...with whatever capacity it has. It is up to us to use it and not simply accept whatever is handed out and told to us that we should do. It took me another 23-24 years to realize that the same thing held true for Christianity and all religion or philosophy. I needed to think for myself, and also to open up to the nudging of an inner presence that made itself known at a desperately negative time in my life. As it turned out, it knew more than I did, and more than anyone or any group of people I'd ever known. —  
*Thanks, Cub Scouts!*

I probably am not telling it right, but years ago, I read a parable about a young student who was eager to be enlightened and to become a master. So as was the custom, he sought out a master who was well spoken of, and asked to become his student. The master accepted his request, and told the new student they were to leave on a teaching trip that very afternoon. Excited, the student smiled and prepared for tests and trials. They walked for a long while and arrived at the sea shore. After being there quite some time, the student asked when they were going to start his training. The master replied, "We can start now. Walk out into the water until I tell you to stop." The student walked out until he was waist deep and turned to see if the master thought that was far enough. The master waved him to continue. So he walked farther from shore to where he was shoulder deep and again, turned to see the master waving him to walk on. So the student continued until he was under water and had to bounce gently off the bottom to see the master...who again waved him to continue away from shore. The student dutifully continued until he feared he would not be able to hold his breath long enough to surface if he went any farther. When he bobbed up to the surface to see what the master's instruction was, the master was gone. Decisions, decisions...what's a student gonna do?

There are of "Course" many things I could say about ACIM, and perhaps later I will. But these few words, if taken to heart, are sufficient. One can spend years doing lessons, or they can read the whole thing once and let that spirit within them (the only spirit there is) to arise in mind and guide them in life, bringing to mind whatever tidbits from ACIM or anything else as is appropriate in the now moment (which is the only moment, which is the holy instant, which is the sabbath, which is the eternal endless day of reality...and is what we are).

Kids in the back seat of my car on a long trip used to ask over and over, "Are we just about there yet?" Do ACIM folks ever ask this question to themselves? "Am I just about there YET?" Well...no, you're not just about there. However, you were already there before you thought you started. Book→to the nearest table and leave it there. Questions blown→down the road on the next stiff wind. Relax and wait upon your reality to reveal truth to you. Expect it and it will come, and is already so, knocking on the door of your heart. *Nope! Not quite there yet!* (not) Believe it or not, ACIM is just that simple...just like awakening and the atonement. Makes falling off a log look like hard work. We don't

need answers. We just need to relax into the truth within. "No pain, no gain?" Well, we're not trying to gain anything.

In the distant past, the cultures which developed as religions within ancient populations were inspired and/or given as information which reflected truth in a conflicted manner, as this was the level of acceptance (*or lack thereof*) of those people at that time. In the somewhat less distant past, Judaism arose alongside other religions, to a large extent drawing from the writings of these more ancient peoples. In Judaism, the story of the creation was presented briefly and cryptic metaphor about a "fall" of mankind into dire straights. Although some of the phrases used suggest considering the truth, in large part, the truth was skipped over, moving on to record the history of that people. More to the point, these ancient beliefs continued to be put forward in various forms, among which was writings that included the "Law of Moses", and an abridged guide called the Ten Commandments. At a later time, writings arising from within that same religion presented a simpler understanding which embraced a broader, more universally available path toward truth. This narrowed the behavioral aspect of that path down to two commandments; which if properly understood, are but one instruction in wisdom expressed in two ways. (Mark 12:30-31)

This shift in availability of an intellectual representation of truth was slow in coming, taking thousands of years. Unfortunately, even with this simplification and making writings widely available to all in the world, people still clung to the ways of the past, interpreting this simplified understanding to be a nice sentiment, but preferring the old ways nonetheless. The book called "A Course In Miracles" (ACIM) was given and began to spread. Although much of this book is plain, it is fraught with tons of intellectual detail and nuances, and from time to time tends to contradict itself in ways that seem very intentional. Because people have the tendency on board to stick to the old ways, for many ACIM became a newer interpretation of the old ways, once again burdened with complexity and statements which tend to lead people down the longer path it describes rather than the shorter path it proclaims itself to be promoting.

Nevertheless, there is a lot of accuracy in the book, despite its often use of what I call the two-edged sword teaching method just as the Bible does, but in less harsh ways (*see further information on the Summary page*). The truth is very simple, and yet in our conditioned state seems difficult and distant...until we begin to embrace it willingly. To the extent that we can relax our belief systems and stop trying to interpret everything according to their fit in those systems, truth can be realized and rediscovered. We are what we seek, and no particular change is either required of us or even possible. We simply must relax and open up...to our own reality and its whole vision. That is not a choice, but is the relinquishing of a choice. It is simple and does not require any time...and yet because of our beliefs and conditioning, it can seem to require a long time. That time becomes exponentially longer if we cling to standardized belief systems...INCLUDING THOSE ESPOUSED BY FOLLOWERS OF ACIM. The truth is not found in a belief system...any belief system.

It is spoken of in ACIM as learning to remove the blocks to love. Although that is somewhat accurate, by itself it really isn't the key. Love is the temporal expression here in the world of our illusion...of the influence of our reality as peace. Peace is not in time and cannot be seen or experienced within the confines of the illusion, for it has no imagery and cannot be confined to the false boundaries of that paradigm. Love, the reflection of our ever-present and whole remembrance of our whole reality and its vision, becomes available as and ONLY as a function of our willingness to pause our energetic inner and outer doing, and to look at that which to perception seems as something we cannot see. But when we set our intention to willingly look, we DO see, whether our senses report to us that we see or not. Love is as close to whole vision as one's conditioned mind can perceive, being thus limited by using perception in lieu of seeing. Love grows up into and as the happy dream. Peace is not in the happy dream, and yet peacefulness akin to love is there, and the level of denial is so slight that it does not represent any active resistance to reality or whole vision (which are the same) beyond the tiny amount needed to produce the creation.

ACIM focuses heavily on the idea of returning entirely to whole vision. This sounds good, and I won't pose an argument to it here. I will however say that a happy dream is not called happy for no reason. Largely because of the heavy conditioning of many people involved in ACIM to look forward toward a tomorrow in which things will be better and heaven will be present, not only is such a grand return prevented, but the preliminary happy dream is prevented as well. No happy dream?...No grand reentry either. There is more to that subject...about the ongoing cycles of creation of worlds, and how they actually are the purpose of reality, despite the denial aspect of their being created. The best advice I can offer in a short talk is to lay the book aside after having read it once, and to look within and wait upon the influence of peace to cause love to arise (*which is beyond what people usually think of as love*). When looking within, do not look at your history or how you might improve yourself, for simply noticing the influence of peace will handle that for you rather automatically. It isn't about "choosing again", and it isn't about God taking a step for you, and it isn't about you being created (past tense) by God as someone above you. ACIM speaks of thinking with the holy spirit, and yet it can be misleading. You ARE the only spirit, and are whole right now. Thus YOU are the only one doing the thinking, and you are the only one who can allow that thinking and all your experience to be

influenced and guided by your reality (which you can call holy spirit if it suits you, but it is still YOU and only YOU). Relax, look, relax, notice, relax, go on about your day...relax, look, relax, notice, relax, go on about your day... — Develop this attentional rhythm, for while here in the illusory world and temporal realm, it is your forgotten natural breath of remembrance of spirit (*the reality and whole vision of the truth which you are and which you share with all in oneness*). Eventually, it will be a natural way of life that isn't so much a rhythm as it is a confidence and ongoing noticing of the fount of life (love) as it arises into this world. We need not leave this realm, but simply need to remember that the reality of eternity is our own reality...bringing its appearance into our vision. It is here right now, this very instant...the one holy instant, available to all who notice its presence.

A Course In Miracles, presenting the literal course in miracles (*the illusion itself*), is a wonderful opportunity. However, much of that opportunity is lost for any who do not look beyond ACIM and let it go. ACIM or whatever authorship it has in time are of no importance of themselves. Only in stepping beyond its covers does the true value arise. To an extent, the book "is" a guide as people believe. But it is not a manual and code for living life...only the reality within provides that, and does so on a moment-to-moment basis. Lay it on the table and pretty much leave it there, and launch out.

Beyond being a guide of sorts, ACIM is a test to see if one is really listening to its message. You need do nothing...you are as you were (are) created...YOU are the only begotten, EVERY BIT AS MUCH AS THAT ONE WHO IS SO OFTEN CALLED THIS. (He is not your elder brother for time does not exist. He is not in any way higher than you for such disparity is impossible, and "God" cannot make it possible within its changelessness...but only through denial arising as the basis of creation.) You are and have always been perfect in eternity.

Although the so-called error of denial is referred to as a tiny mad idea and an error, it is not an accident that the world of duality is created on an ongoing basis, from moment-to-moment, founded upon that very non-reality. Creation requires denial of wholeness in order to spawn the imagery called diversity; which is why it is evidenced in energy, change and motion in time.

Even though denial is so often viewed as the bad guy and the foundation of evil, it is actually necessary that it arises. Similarly, because denial arises, so also conflict arises with it. and because conflict arises in a paradigm in which it can become exacerbated and exaggerated, the evil of violence and disparity are found. However, these exaggerations need not be so.

It is inevitable that denial will arise because of the necessity of this, and be followed by these, its children...and the potential for violence and great disparity are the avoidable woe which can come from denial. If denial were not present, we would not be sitting in heaven somewhere, singing praises about it. We wouldn't be doing, thinking or feeling anything at all. Reality is ever-present and has always existed. Within the freedom that reality forever is, is also the freedom to deny. So although denial is futile and its fruits unreal, the freedom to deny is very real.

All that is real is whole and singular, and all that is real has a single purpose within a single intention or will (expressed as though it were many purposes within a diverse intention). Only in denial of that which is changeless do we find beauty, color, exploration of diversity, and every thing that is pleasant and good for us as a garden of delight, cyclic appearances of world without end. Reality is the only true (changeless) good (having no opposite in it), and yet the false knowledge of opposites (i.e.-"good and evil") allows us pleasures and innumerable worlds or mansions.

The false good in that realm or paradigm ALWAYS has an opposite of false evil (for in reality no such evil exists...and in fact, it does not truly exist in this temporal realm either unless exacerbated conflict brings it into appearance). Evil need not be harsh and filled with woe. False evil is kept in its place (in which it complements and supports false good) when we keep true good (reality) freshly present in awareness, disallowing exacerbation of the conflict between false good and false evil. There has never been a time when denial and its children did not exist, expressing as the very purpose of reality's existence. Without denial (thus rendering a non-judged, non-abridged freedom as reality's presence) reality would have no purpose at all...and that is not possible. Without reality, denial of reality could not create the creation we see, making the only begotten to appear and become manifest as expression of the only whole reality itself.