

## Including Miracle in Service

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What is the call to service in this world? What does it mean to “serve” within that which is an illusion? Jesus tells us that even forgiveness, the main tool he teaches us to use for escaping the dream, is itself an illusion, because reality judges not and therefore requires no forgiveness. What does that tell us, then, about service? Jesus does not say to us to forego forgiveness because of its illusionary reality. Hardly. He tells us that our confusion and misguided beliefs render us in desperate need of forgiveness. He says, *“Forgiveness is the great need of this world, but that is because it is a world of illusions.”* (ACIM W.PI.46.1.3)

And so it goes with the notion of service. It is by serving one another that we remember Who we are – the Christ within ourselves and our brothers. Service is merely another way of describing miracle. As Jesus says in ACIM, *“A miracle is a service. It is the maximal service you can render to another. It is a way of loving your neighbor as yourself. You recognize your own and your neighbor's worth simultaneously.”* Jesus instructs us to listen to His Voice for direction. He will Guide us very specifically and will quite literally tell us what miracles to perform and what service to undertake.

Is it time we look directly at the news that the ego’s plan has not worked to provide us any semblance of lasting health, happiness, or well-being? Oh, our idols and distractions may temporarily convince us and sway our attention, and indeed have done so quite effectively for a very long time, but it’s time to dissolve the corporation, folks. Everything Must Go. It’s time to do things the J way. And here’s the REAL “secret”! The “J Way” is the same as “our” way – we just don’t remember yet. Where our “wills” may ask from the ego for lives of abundance, filled with prosperity the ego defines as “good”, the Holy Spirit makes no differentiation, never judging between that which is good, or not, and instead only “judging” all as One, true, and “of God”. J says, in ACIM’s Manual for Teachers on page 27:

*“Judgment, like other devices by which the world of illusions is maintained, is totally misunderstood by the world. It is actually confused with wisdom, and substitutes for truth. As the world uses the term, an individual is capable of "good" and "bad" judgment, and his education aims at strengthening the former and minimizing the latter. There is, however, considerable confusion about what these categories mean. What is "good" judgment to one is "bad" judgment to another. Further, even the same person classifies the same action as showing "good" judgment at one time and "bad" judgment at another time. Nor can any consistent criteria for determining what these categories are be really taught. At any time the student may disagree with what his would-be teacher says about them, and the teacher himself may well be inconsistent in what he believes. "Good" judgment, in these terms, does not mean anything. No more does "bad".”*

As we learn to see the world through the HS eyes of forgiveness, we realize that our wills do NOT conflict with J’s in any way. He does not need to change or modify us to return us to God. Rather, we are having to UN-learn our beliefs in illusion to REMEMBER

where we already are. God's Thoughts of reality have nothing to do with the ego's ideas of abundance in form. From lesson 45, "*God is the Mind with Which I Think*", "*Today's idea holds the key to what your real thoughts are. They are nothing that you think you think, just as nothing that you think you see is related to vision in any way. There is no relationship between what is real and what you think is real. Nothing that you think are your real thoughts resemble your real thoughts in any respect. Nothing that you think you see bears any resemblance to what vision will show you*" Nothing our egos have tried to show us, sell us, and tempt us with bears any resemblance to Home.

Bless the ego, at times it is very convincing at appearing quite holy and angelic with its antics, while all the time taking us by the hand on the march to death in body. The ego's idea of service can appear quite rooted in humanitarian efforts, while deceptively whispering in our ears that death is real, sickness is real, hunger is real. That is why it is crucial to ASK Jesus what he would have us do. Ask him for Guidance before embarking upon a particular path of service, whatever appearances may seem to tell you.

As a side note, it is important to realize that Jesus tells us in the Course that quite literally every decision is one between grievance and miracle. So, in that light, our mind can be engaged in "service" all day, every day. We can choose to make the decision to decide not to decide ourselves and instead turn all moment-to-moment decision making over to the Holy Spirit:

*"Your function here is only to decide against deciding what you want, in recognition that you do not know."* (T.14.IV.5.2)

Jesus, however, does teach us in ACIM three criteria to distinguish the truly valuable from what is absolutely valueless. First, what is of value is eternal. Second, what is of value never takes from another. Third, if you feel a sense of guilt surrounding an idea, then something somewhere is misdirected, and the ego has invaded to lay claim to the "value". (See ACIM Wordbook lesson 133)

Use of these criteria has been very helpful for me in determining whether I am hearing J's Guidance, or if my ego is trying to tell me something. Miracles are, certainly, of value. Their benefits are eternal, they never TAKE from anyone and in fact benefit the whole mind, and the Guidance which directs miracle mindedness always flows effortlessly with no sense of strain or guilt. The moment I feel strain around an idea, issue, or decision, I realize I have in some way deviated from truth and J's Guidance. When this occurs, it's just a matter of noticing, being willing to stop and go within to ask for a correction in direction, and choose again.

So, where does that leave us with our efforts to serve? When our hearts are pulling at us to "do service", I believe we often jump too quickly and follow the ego's plan without taking time to ask J. Yes, miracles are automatic, but that does NOT mean that every quick and sudden move represents miracle mindedness. Hardly. Sometimes, the ego jumps the gun just a bit to show it is in "control". J explains our ego's "tarnished halo" thusly, also from lesson 133:

*“Your next consideration is the one on which the others rest. Why is the choice you make of value to you? What attracts your mind to it? What purpose does it serve? Here it is easiest of all to be deceived. For what the ego wants it fails to recognize. It does not even tell the truth as it perceives it, for it needs to keep the halo which it uses to protect its goals from tarnish and from rust, that you may see how “innocent” it is.”*

J asks us “What purpose does (the service, for example) serve?”.. How could we possibly know? We do not know what anything is for! ACIM lesson 25, “*I do not know what anything is for.*” As Jesus asks quite directly on page 170 of the ACIM text, “*If you have no idea what is happening, how appropriately can you expect to react?*” (T.9.IV.8.1)

We do NOT know what anything is for. Let’s choose now to surrender our “purposes”!

Hear me very clearly here, however. I am NOT saying to renounce the notion of service any more than I am suggesting we throw in the towel on forgiveness. Forgiveness and miracle/service are our ONLY endeavors to undertake while we continue to believe we are “here”, while our ONLY function is to heal the mind. I am merely saying that we put aside, with no hesitation or sense of regret, our ego’s need to drive and navigate. I am saying we ASK for Guidance, and we listen and respond accordingly, indicating our true, deep, and humble sense of willingness to heal. I am saying we put aside our notions of what constitutes “service”, and instead remember what Jesus tells us about quite literally every interaction being an opportunity to teach, every decision being the choice between grievance and miracle, and every mind being connected as one.

Service is not just a thing of soup kitchens, charities, and widely known, international endeavors. In fact, service is not a “doing” with the body at all. Why, it is entirely possible for a body to move through the motions of all of those things and not undertake service whatsoever, as service is a state of mind – the hearing of the call and the feeling into miracle-mindedness. It is the holding of the thought that heals the mind, for the mind is where reality abides – not in a body. Yes, Jesus may call us to service where form and bodies are the backdrop and stage for miracle, but the miracle itself is taking place in the mind, in ways we can never predict nor understand, in ways that may be entirely unrelated to the “form-level” of the service the body’s eyes see.

When the ego steps in, wearing the tarnished and rusty halo, performing service according to its plan, I believe the potential is there for us to interfere with the Plan as J has arranged it for our optimized path home. We do NOT know what anything is for! Could it be that the “problem” or “crisis” which we undertook to “fix” was in place via J’s plan as the perfect opportunity for forgiveness to propel multitudes of us through time, further along the path to remembering Who we are?

Our existence as an isolated body, alone on a path unaffected by our brothers, is illusion. It is this we must begin to accept, if we are to recognize and indeed respond to the call for the interconnected, carefully planned goal of our service to one another. Together, we

will hear the Guidance, ever increasingly as we open our hearts in willingness, directing us to service, which will lead us on the optimized path to remembering Home.