



# A BETTER WAY

## How Is Our Brother Our Savior?

by Robert Perry

As Course students, we probably all know that our brother is actually our savior. And we probably also know that he is our savior because he gives us the opportunity to look at our ego. By pushing our buttons, which he does so very well, he is really doing us a favor. Like a hunting dog, he is flushing our ego out into the open, where we can finally catch sight of it and bring it down.

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There is only one problem with this picture: It is not the Course's picture of how our brother is our savior. Think about it—where have you read this idea in the Course? *Have* you actually read it in the Course? Actually, you may have. There *is* one passage that refers to this idea. Lesson 192 says that, by giving us a chance to choose against anger, "each one who seems to tempt you to be angry represent[s] your savior from the prison house of death" (W-pl.192.9:6).

However, there are ninety references to the idea that we are each other's savior, and the other *eighty-nine* express a whole other concept. Surely, *that* is the concept we should be most interested in. That is what we will explore in this article. As we do, I think you will find it far more interesting and uplifting than the concept with which we are more familiar.

The following passages reveal the typical flavor of the Course's comments about saviors:

The saviors of the world, who see like Him, are merely those who choose His strength instead of their own weakness, seen apart from Him. (T-31.VIII.4:4)

Those who would let illusions be lifted from their minds are this world's saviors, walking the world with their Redeemer, and carrying His message of hope and freedom and release from suffering to everyone who needs a miracle to save him. (T-22.IV.6:5)

Now is Christ's power in your mind, to heal as you were healed. For now you are among the saviors of the world. (W-pl.165.6:2-3)

These saviors don't sound like button pushers, do they? They sound more like saints. Look at what is said about them. They have chosen Christ's strength over their weakness. They have let illusions be lifted from their minds. They have accepted Christ's power into their minds. Therefore they walk the world giving miracles, releasing others from suffering, giving healing as they received it.

This clues us in to the Course's real definition of a savior. According to those other eighty-nine references, a savior is someone who gives to others out of his store of holiness within, who extends holiness to others

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## PUBLISHED BY

Circle of Atonement

P.O. Box 4238

West Sedona, AZ 86340

Phone: (928) 282-0790

Fax: (928) 282-0523

Toll-free (orders only): (888) 357-7520

E-mail: [info@circleofa.org](mailto:info@circleofa.org)

Website: [www.circleofa.org](http://www.circleofa.org)

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A Better Way is published monthly by e-mail. If you wish to subscribe, please visit our website.

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is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to A Course in Miracles. It was founded in 1993. Its publishing division, Circle Publishing, was founded in 2003.

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## WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT SAYS

A Course in Miracles is a spiritual path. Its purpose is to train us to work miracles—to accept and extend to others the shifts in perception that awaken us to God. It consists of three volumes, which signify the three aspects of its program:

◆ Text : Through studying the teaching, the Course’s thought system first enters our minds.

◆ Workbook for Students: Through doing the practice, the Course’s thought system penetrates more and more deeply into our minds.

◆ Manual for Teachers: Through extending our healed perception to others, the Course’s thought system receives its final reinforcement and becomes the only thing in our minds.

The Course’s message is that the source of our suffering is not the world’s mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it is a realm of pure, changeless, unified spirit. This realization allows us to forgive the world’s apparent mistreatment of us by recognizing that it did not actually occur. And as we see this forgiveness come forth from us—see that we are capable of something genuinely loving and egoless—we gradually realize that we never defiled ourselves. Thus we awaken to the untouched innocence of our true nature.

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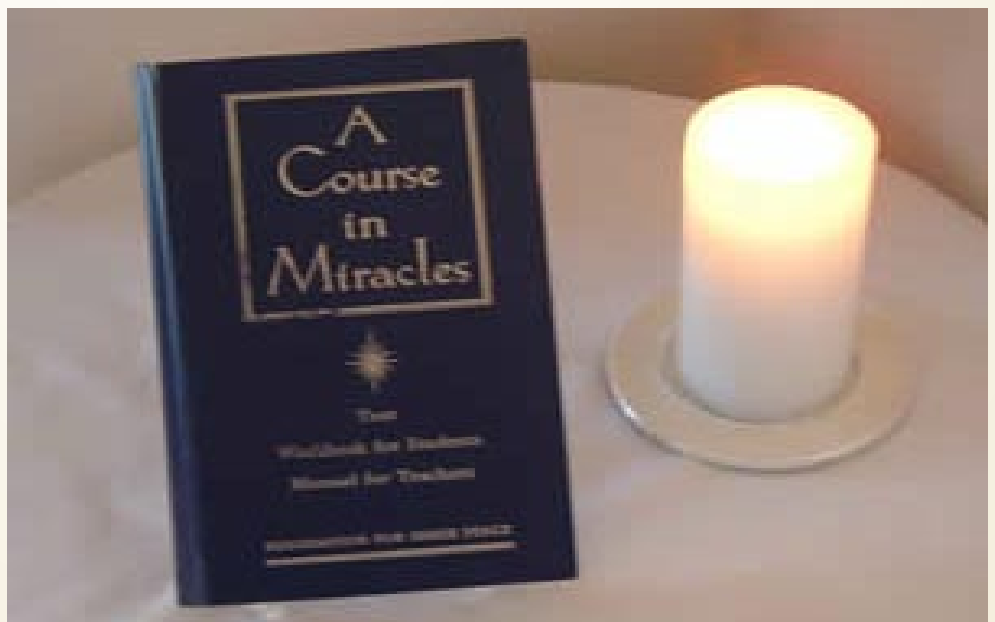
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and thereby awakens them. The Course puts it very simply: “For who is savior but the one who gives salvation?” (T-29.III.1:6). Very simply, a savior extends *salvation*, not irritation.

Along these lines, the Course has numerous images of salvation literally shining from our savior to us. In the following passages, the “he” is our savior:

What is yours shines from him to you. (T-20.IV.2:5)

See how eagerly he comes, and steps aside from heavy shadows that have hidden him, and shines on you in gratitude and love. (T-29.III.5:2)

His innocence will light your way...shining from the holy altar within him. (T-20.II.9:2)

Thus, what extends from our savior to us is not his bony, button-pushing finger. Rather, it appears to be some kind of mystical power. Indeed, this whole picture sounds very much like the traditional spiritual master who possesses divine light and can transmit it to others. It sounds, in fact, a great deal like *shaktipat*—the transmission of *shakti* from guru to disciple. In his book *Limitless Mind*, Russell Targ, a student of the Course, refers to this, saying, “Awakening can occur in the blink of an eye, frequently through the direct, heart-opening (heart-breaking) transmission of grace from an awakened teacher.”

My favorite story of this kind is from Paul Brunton’s *A Search in Secret India*. There, after traveling around India in the thirties, seeking out various holy men, the author finally finds what he’s looking for in the renowned sage Ramana Maharshi. Right before returning home, he joins Ramana and the other devotees in the meditation hall. There, he passes into a profound meditation where he at last has the supreme experience that he has sought. He reports, “I, the new I, rest in the lap of holy bliss.” He remains in a trance for two hours, completely unaware of his surroundings. The others leave the hall for dinner, but Ramana stays. When Brunton comes out of it someone tells him, “The Maharishee watched you closely all the time. I believe his thoughts guided you.”

Yet how does this apply to the ordinary people around us? The Course is very clear in saying that *everyone* is our savior. Yet the last time I looked, the people around me were not particularly adept at the transmission of *shakti*. If they are, they are doing a good job of hiding it.

This is where it gets interesting. The Course has a very reasonable account of how this is exactly what the people around me can do, under particular conditions that I supply. Actually, the Course has two accounts, one that appears to be more subtle and internal and one that is clearly interpersonal and overt.

### “Give me your blessing, holy Son of God”

The more subtle, internal version of how my brother transmits salvation to me is readily seen in two key forgiveness lessons in the Workbook, Lessons 78 and 161.

In Lesson 78 (“Let miracles replace all grievances”), you are asked to “select one person you have used as target for your grievances, and lay the grievances aside and look at him” (4:4). It says, “As you lay them down, he will appear in shining light where each one stood before” (3:1). The lesson promises that as we do this, we will “see our savior shining in the light of true forgiveness, given unto us” (7:1). Note that, here again, our savior’s light is being shined on us, “given unto us.” The catalyst is the following prayer to the Holy Spirit:

*Let me behold my savior in this one  
You have appointed as the one for me  
to ask to lead me to the holy light  
in which he stands, that I may join with him.* (7:3)

Do you see what you are praying for here? You are praying that you see past the illusion that this person is your executioner who drags you down into hell. You are asking instead to see his reality as your savior who, if you ask him, will take you by the hand and lead you into the light.

There is no hint in the lesson that this requires any conscious cooperation on his part. It sounds like if

you see past your grievances, you will truly see your brother as a holy being and will *experience* him leading you into the light.

Lesson 161 (“Give me your blessing, holy Son of God”) is similar, and perhaps even more to the point. There again, we choose someone to forgive. We then visualize this person’s body in detail (face, hands, feet, clothing, smile, gestures). Then the lesson asks us to think about the following:

What you are seeing now conceals from you the sight of one who can forgive you all your sins; whose sacred hands can take away the nails which pierce your own, and lift the crown of thorns which you have placed upon your bleeding head. (11:5)

In other words, the sight of his body hides from you his real identity. Buried within him is a divine being, whose forgiveness can lift all your guilt, whose “sacred hands” can take you down from the cross. Recognizing this, you beseech him just as you would an enlightened guru:

Ask this of him, that he may set you free:

Give me your blessing, holy Son of God.  
I would behold you with the eyes of Christ,  
*and see my perfect sinlessness in you.* (11:6-8)

Notice what you are doing. You are asking for the blessing of a divine being, a blessing that will reveal the sinlessness in you. Blessing, of course, is an ancient idea in world religion. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* defines blessing as “the transfer of a sacred and beneficent power” (vol. 2, p. 247).

You may assume that you are not having an actual interaction with this person but are just shifting your own perception of him. As if in answer to this assumption, the Course then assures you:

And He will answer Whom you called upon. For He will hear the Voice for God in you, and answer in your own. Behold him now, whom you have seen as merely flesh and bone, and recognize that Christ has come to you. (12:1-3)

Language such as this leads me to believe that this is not merely happening within the privacy of our mind. Look at what transpires in these passages: We ask this person for his blessing, and we are told that he will hear and answer (or rather, the Christ in him will hear and answer). It’s as if we are donning a special pair of glasses (referred to in the lesson as “the eyes of Christ”), which can see past this person’s outer persona. They allow us to see a deeper, holy dimension of his being, which is genuinely awake and active. As we beseech this deeper element in him, it actually hears and responds (Lesson 161). As we ask it to, it leads us to the light (Lesson 78). This aspect of our brother, then, does exactly what the spiritual master does in transmitting *shakti*, for at this deep level, our brother *is* a spiritual master.

Other passages in the Course back up this idea that there is a real interaction going on. Both of the passages below say that, even while our brother is consciously out to lunch, a deeper part of him can transmit something holy to our mind. In the first passage, he transmits light; in the second, gratitude.

Your brother may not know who he is, but there is a light in his mind that does know. This light can shine into yours. (T-9.II.5:8-9)

It does not matter if another thinks your gifts unworthy. In his mind there is a part that joins with yours in thanking you. (W-pl.197.4:1-2)

Why should it be so surprising that the Christ in our brother can actively bless and illumine us without our brother’s conscious knowledge? The lives of great masters are replete with stories of them appearing to people in dreams and visions, and even physically in waking life. Do you think that they are consciously aware of making these appearances? One such master, Faqir Chand (1886-1981) confessed that he was



never aware of appearing to his devotees, despite countless stories of him doing so. He was so adamant about this that a biography written about him was titled *The Unknowing Sage*. A master that I spent time with in the early 90s jokingly referred to his “evil twin” who would visit people. If some deeper element in masters can interact with people without the master’s conscious awareness, why can’t a deeper element in our *brother* do the same? This is exactly what these passages in the Course are suggesting.

I find this concept rather remarkable. It gives me the sense that I am surrounded by gurus who can transmit divine blessing to me, if only I will use the eyes of Christ and peer beneath their outer mask. Why am I not asking for their blessing?

## “He made me an angel”

The second account given by the Course does involve our brother’s conscious awareness and participation. Here, there is definitely a physical interaction taking place between me and my savior.

It begins with me. I am facing a brother who seems to deserve my resentment. From my perspective, he has attacked me, either overtly or just by not doing what I want him to. The normal response on my part is to look out for myself, to either protect myself or to salvage my self-esteem by turning the tables and gaining the upper hand. Either way, I see my brother as the guilty party who deserves my condemnation.

This time, however, I don’t see it that way. Instead, I see my *brother* as the vulnerable one. I see him as the one in need. Thus, I move to protect *him*, to restore his sense of self-worth. What is the threat that he is facing? His own attack. His attack cannot actually hurt me, but it can cause him to fall from grace in his own eyes. It makes him believe that he is a bad person, deserving of whatever is coming to him.

This is what I move to protect him from. I do so through forgiveness. I see past his attacking body and personality to something holy in him, something that remains untainted by all the unkind things he has said or done. I see his attack on me as totally irrelevant to a real assessment of who he is. And this is what I convey to him. In one way or another, I let him know that the sins of his body and the flaws of his personality don’t really matter, that the only thing that matters is the ancient holiness that still lies buried within him. I let him know that, in spite of it all, he is still innocent and still deserves everything, including my love.

In other words, I don’t just see my brother differently (as in the first sense of “savior”); I actively convey to him this different perception. I give him a gift, even though he doesn’t appear to deserve one. I reach out to heal him, even though it seems like I’m the one who needs someone to heal and comfort me. In doing so, I appear to go directly against my own interests. I do precisely what my ego tells me not to do. And yet, paradoxically, this act of reaching out beyond myself is how I gain the gift. Two different passages make this very point:

Born as a gift for someone not perceived to be yourself, it has been given you. (T-31.VII.4:4)

And by this act of special faithfulness to one perceived as other than himself, he learns the gift was given to himself. (T-25.VI.5:2)

What is the logic here? How does giving my brother a gift lead to me receiving the gift? The answer lies in the effect my gift has on my brother. On the surface, he is coolly convinced that he’s the good guy and I’m the evildoer. Yet just below that, he “knows” beyond doubt that he’s a sinner, and he sees me as the living proof of it. For I bear in myself the scars of his attacks, and my anger is witness to just how deep those scars go.

Being the “proof” of his sinfulness puts me in a rare position. It gives me the power to let him off the hook. If, after all he has done to me, I still see only the holy in him, only the pure and untainted, how could this not shake loose his dark self-concept and allow at least one slender ray of his holiness to break through into his awareness? When it does and his mind lights up with joy, how could he not be filled with gratitude toward me? And being filled, how could he keep from expressing that gratitude?

In one moving passage after another, the Course implies that he cannot, that he will express it, and that his gratitude is what will awaken me. The Course says that your brother’s eyes will “shine in thanks to you

who blessing gave” (T-27.V.6:4). It says, “His gratitude goes out to you who blessed him” (T-21.VI.10:2). It says (as we saw earlier) that he “shines on you in gratitude and love” (T-29.III.5:2). Perhaps my favorite of these passages is this:

The sick, who ask for love, are grateful for it, and in their joy they shine with holy thanks. And this they offer you who gave them joy. They are your guides to joy. (T-13.VI.10:5-7)

What a beautiful image—“and in their joy they shine with holy thanks”! Have you ever had someone shine on you in this way? Notice how, in three of the above four passages, our brother’s thanks is said to “shine” or even shine “on you.” Clearly, his shining of gratitude on us is the same thing as the shining of salvation on us that we discussed earlier. His “holy thanks,” in other words, is what transmits salvation to us. It is what saves us.

Why does my brother’s thanks have such a transformative effect on me? Why does it have the ability to actually wake me up? Because in him is an awareness that I lack. Being the recipient of my gift, he is the one who knows the real value of the gift. However insufficient my gift may seem to me, he knows it was an incalculable blessing, and that is what his gratitude reveals to me. The Course says exactly that in this passage: “Their gratitude and their appreciation of what you have given them will teach you its value” (T-9.VI.5:3). Another passage expresses the same idea: “For the joy of teaching is in the learner, who offers it to the teacher in gratitude, and shares it with him” (T-16.III.7:4).

Because my brother knows the real value of my gift, he is also the one who knows the real value of what lies in *me*, the giver. He, therefore, holds the secret of my true worth. As one Course passage puts it, “They [the recipients of your gifts] see in you more than you see” (T-14.II.4:4). Haven’t you ever had that feeling, that the people you have helped see in you more than you see? If so, you are right. They do see something in you that goes beyond your limited view of yourself.

However, it’s not just because my brother sees it in me; it’s also because I am willing to accept his testimony. I am willing to regard him as a credible witness of my holiness. If I tell myself, “I am the holy Son of God,” it’s just not the same. The Course asks me to do that, and it’s useful, but how far will that really go in? After all, I’m testifying on my own behalf, and how credible is that? As the Course says, “No one with a personal investment is a reliable witness, for truth to him has become what he wants it to be” (T-12.I.5:2). Forget convincing the jury; my testimony probably won’t even convince me, because I know that if there is anywhere I am biased, it is on the subject of my own innocence.

In contrast, the person I have helped, the person I have healed—*he* is a credible witness. Indeed, he is living proof of the holiness in me. The evidence is right there inside him. It is those places on his heart that used to be scars but now are healed. He, then, is Exhibit A. And since his testimony is on someone else’s behalf, I will treat it as far more trustworthy than mine. For he has no vested interest. He is testifying strictly because I helped him on his way and he can’t help but say “thank you.” How could one doubt a witness like that?

His gratitude, then, has two saving powers: first, it carries the awareness of my value, and second, I’m willing to accept its testimony. That is why his gratitude is what saves me. It is the *shakti* that illuminates me. I don’t mean that in a tongue-in-cheek way. We have already seen that the hidden Christ in my brother can bless me without my brother’s awareness. Why, then, couldn’t the Christ in him move through his body’s actions? Why couldn’t my brother, in his expression of thanks, be channeling the Christ in him, channeling His grace to me?

If you doubt that gratitude from someone you have helped has the same power as *shakti* from an awakened being, consider the following story from *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Written by Angela Sturgill, it is entitled “Mr. Gillespie.”

When I was in seventh grade, I was a candy striper at a local hospital in my town. I volunteered about thirty to forty hours a week during the summer. Most of the time I spent there was with Mr. Gillespie. He never had any visitors, and nobody seemed to care about his condition.

I spent many days there holding his hand and talking to him, helping with anything that needed to be done. He became a close friend of mine, even though he responded with only an occasional squeeze of my hand. Mr. Gillespie was in a coma.

I left for a week to vacation with my parents, and when I came back, Mr. Gillespie was gone. I didn't have the nerve to ask any of the nurses where he was, for fear they might tell me he had died. So with many questions unanswered, I continued to volunteer there through my eighth-grade year.

Several years later, when I was a junior in high school, I was at the gas station when I noticed a familiar face. When I realized who it was, my eyes filled with tears. He was alive! I got up the nerve to ask him if his name was Mr. Gillespie, and if he had been in a coma about five years ago. With an uncertain look on his face, he replied yes. I explained how I knew him, and that I had spent many hours talking with him in the hospital. His eyes welled up with tears, and he gave me the warmest hug I had ever received.

He began to tell me how, as he lay there comatose, he could hear me talking to him and could feel me holding his hand the whole time. He thought it was an angel, not a person, who was there with him. Mr. Gillespie firmly believed that it was my voice and touch that had kept him alive.

Then he told me about his life and what happened to him to put him in the coma. We both cried for a while and exchanged a hug, said our good-byes and went our separate ways.

Although I haven't seen him since, he fills my heart with joy every day. I know that I made a difference between his life and his death. More important, he has made a tremendous difference in my life. I will never forget him and what he did for me: he made me an angel.

You couldn't ask for a more perfect example of what the Course is talking about. The Course speaks of someone you've helped shining his thanks on you and awakening you to the fact that you are God's Son. How different is that from someone whose life you saved giving you the warmest hug you ever received and revealing to you that you are an angel?

### **“You cannot wake yourself”**

The two ways in which my brother is my savior, then, are not really so different. In one, I inwardly see him as holy. I see the veiled Son of God in him, which then stirs to life and illumines me, even without my brother's conscious awareness. In the other, I actively convey to my brother my vision of him as holy. He then spontaneously expresses his gratitude to me, and this becomes the outer vehicle through which the hidden Son of God in him gives me his blessing. In both, I call upon something divine in my brother, which then responds by shining on me and awakening me.

*This* is how my brother is my savior. He saves me in the same way that a spiritual master saves me, by transmitting to me the divine light that dwells within him. My brother is a closet spiritual master, a closet Christ, something of which he himself is unaware. This, however, does not mean that the effects of his transmission on me are faint or weak. Think of what Angela Sturgill said about Mr. Gillespie: “He fills my heart with joy every day.”

This view of savior raises many questions. The first one is probably, “But doesn't my brother save me by pushing my buttons?” You already know my answer to that. Yet if you don't want to take my word for it, you can answer it for yourself. Pull out the *Concordance of 'A Course in Miracles'* or a Course computer search program and look up the references to “savior” (or “saviors” or “savior's”). Weed out the few “savior” references to the Holy Spirit or the ego (ego as false savior). Then look at the way in which the remaining references frame *how* my brother saves me (or how I save him, which is basically the same thing). Is it through something *irritating* passing from him to me or through something *holy* passing from him to me? The answer will quickly be apparent.

Also, consider this: Which view of your brother as savior yields a more uplifting view of him? Which inspires more love for him? Seeing him as a talented button pusher who sends you “lessons” and “opportu-

nities,” or seeing him as a sleeping master who awakens you with his holy blessing?

The next question that may arise goes deeper: Doesn't this frame my salvation as something my *brother* gives me? Doesn't that put *my* salvation in *his* hands? Surprisingly, the Course answers this with an unequivocal “yes.” Look closely at the following two passages:

You cannot wake yourself. Yet you can let yourself be wakened. You can overlook your brother's dreams. So perfectly can you forgive him his illusions he becomes your savior from your dreams. (T-29.III.3:2-5)

You are not yet awake, but you can learn how to awaken. Very simply the Holy Spirit teaches you to awaken others. As you see them waken you will learn what waking means, and because you have chosen to wake them, their gratitude and their appreciation of what you have given them will teach you its value. They will become the witnesses to your reality.

(T-9.VI.5:1-4)

Both of these passages say basically the same thing: You don't wake yourself (one passage even contains the shocking line, “You cannot wake yourself”). If you want to wake up, awaken your brother. Once you do, he will return the gift; He will awaken you.

Looking at that entire process, you can see that our salvation hasn't been taken out of our hands. We don't just kick back, crack open a cold one, and wait for our brothers to save us. We are the ones who set the process in motion. We put the batteries in our saviors. We release them from their chains so that they can rise and fulfill their ancient calling. We need, therefore, to see our job not so much as saving ourselves, but as saving our *saviors* and then letting *them* save *us*.

This probably sounds like Course heresy, and yet the Course itself repeats this idea again and again. What follows are a number of places where it does that. I realize it is tempting to just skim through a series of quotes like what I have below, but I urge you to read them carefully. They have the power to rock your whole understanding of salvation. This power is even greater when the original emphases that Helen transcribed are kept in (when she heard a word emphasized, she would underline it in her notebooks, and then Bill would type that word in all caps in the Urtext). Therefore, I have included those as italics in these passages:

Whom you forgive is *given* power to forgive you your illusions. By your gift of freedom is it given unto *you*. (T-29.III.3:12-13)

He has *in him* the power to forgive *your* sin, as you for *him*. Neither can give it to himself alone. And yet your savior stands beside each one. (T-19.IV(D).13:5-7)

Let him forgive you all your specialness, and make you whole in mind and one with him. He waits for your forgiveness only that he may return it unto you. (T-24.II.8:5-6)

For *by* this gift is given you the power to release your savior, that *he* may give salvation unto *you*. (T-21.II.3:8)

Here is your savior and your friend, *released* from crucifixion through *your* vision, and free to lead you now where *he* would be. (T-20.II.11:1)

*Forgiven* by you, your savior offers *you* salvation. (T-25.V.4:5)

All of these passages speak of the same basic pattern:

- First, you forgive your brother.
- This releases him and gives him the power to forgive you.
- His forgiveness is then what saves you.

The second passage above even contains the explicit statement that “Neither can give it to himself alone,”



which of course is the same idea as “You cannot wake yourself.

What an odd idea to find repeatedly stated in the Course. How can someone outside me be what saves me? Doesn't this violate the Course's metaphysics that there is *nothing* outside of me? This, however, assumes that others really *are* outside of us, and we know, of course, that this is not true. The Course is clear that we are all one. Remember that earlier quote that spoke of your brother as “someone not perceived to be yourself” (T-31.VII.4:4)? We only *perceive* our brother as someone not ourselves. This is what we discover in a true holy encounter, in which we experience exactly what we've been talking about—the giving and receiving of forgiveness. The following passage says it beautifully:

Having made this choice you will understand why you once believed that, when you met someone else, you thought he *was* someone else. And every holy encounter in which you enter fully will teach you this is not so. (T-8.III.6:7-8)

Maybe, then, this notion of our brother actually, literally saving us doesn't violate the Course's metaphysics. Maybe God's plan for our salvation really does rest on receiving a gift from others. Maybe the whole process is far more interpersonal than we have realized. Maybe we really are surrounded by sleeping spiritual masters, and our job is to stir them from their slumber, so that, upon awakening, they can enlighten us with a loving glance from their holy eyes. Could it be that this is what saves us, that this is the light that frees us from our dark dream?

This is the spark that shines within the dream; that you can help him waken, and be sure his waking eyes will rest on you. And in his glad salvation you are saved. (T-29.III.5:6-7)



E-mail your comments to the author at: [robert@circleofa.org](mailto:robert@circleofa.org)

**Robert Perry.** *He is the author or co-author of twenty books and booklets, including Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with 'A Course in Miracles'.*

## Call for Stories

If you have a good story that exemplifies this concept of our brother being our savior, we'd love to read it, and may include it in our next issue. The pattern is this: You give something to another, which sparks that person to respond to you in a way that leaves you healed or changed. Send your article to [robert@circleofa.org](mailto:robert@circleofa.org).

## New web page: Course-Based Psychotherapy

The Circle is very happy to now offer psychotherapy based on *A Course in Miracles*. The therapist offering this service is Tracy Dand, who is a dedicated student of the Course and a licensed psychotherapist in California. We have erected a new web page devoted to this subject (<http://www.circleofa.org/indices/tracys.php>) and have posted an article by Tracy entitled, "[My Journey to Course-Based Psychotherapy](#)," in which she tells the story of her long search for a seamless integration of spirituality and psychology. Keep your eye on this page as we will be adding several articles to it in the coming weeks.

## New online store

We have just opened our new online store. This replaces our old hard-to-look-at Circle Publishing store. Our webmaster Dee Doyle (whom you'll meet in next month's newsletter) has spent months getting this store ready. As a result, it is both more pleasing to the eye and easier to use. If you have a moment, please visit it at: [www.circlepublishing.org](http://www.circlepublishing.org).

## 2007 programs offered by the Circle

The Circle of Atonement is pleased to announce two year-long programs for 2007. If you would like to deepen your experience of *A Course in Miracles*, please consider joining us for one or both of these programs:

**Foundation Study: Text Reading Program:** This popular program is designed to guide you through the Text in one year. Each weekday, you receive a reading from the Text via e-mail, with commentary on each paragraph by Robert Perry or Greg Mackie. Each day's reading includes several practical exercises. We are just completing our first year of this, and the response from students has been overwhelmingly positive. [Click here to learn more.](#)



**2007 Morning Workbook Class:** We are also inviting those at a distance to join us for our morning Workbook class, taught by Robert Perry and Greg Mackie. This class, which runs an hour each weekday morning, includes clarification of the lesson's teaching, explanation of its practice, the experience of practicing it together, and lots of warm, lively discussion. [Click here to learn more.](#)

# Year-end fundraising letter

You have probably received our year-end fundraising letter via e-mail. If you have not, or have not yet read it, please [click here](#).

## Materials recently posted on our website

Many of you know this, but for those who don't, we post new material on the website every week. Here is a list of recently posted articles and blog entries:

**Patience** by *Robert Perry*. We feel ambivalent about patience because we fear that if we don't raise a stink, we'll have to wait longer. Could it be, however, that real patience has the power to draw to us that which we are waiting for, so that our wait is actually shorter? [Read more.](#)

**Discerning the Valuable from the Valueless** by *Robert Perry*. When we make decisions, how can we know what is truly valuable, and when we are taking hold of the valueless? This article explains the somewhat puzzling list of criteria from Lesson 133. [Read more.](#)

**My Response to the Witch-hunt that is Currently Taking Place Among Some in the Course Community** by *Gary Renard*. Gary's response to the articles written by Jon Mundy, Robert Perry, and Greg Mackie. [Read more.](#)

**Expressing the miracle impluse** is *Greg Mackie's* most recent blog entry. [Read more.](#)

## Circle Mailbox

Having studied and practiced Advaita Vedanta before taking up the Course, I'd like to make a few comments about the two systems, and your article ["The Course's Nondualism," *A Better Way* #59].

"Love is a law without an opposite" simply and clearly summarizes the Course's nondualism. While the Course deals at length with our perceptions of duality its central point is that reality has no opposite. Only love is real and it has no opposite. At the metaphysical level in the Course, therefore, we don't really need to discuss pairs of opposites and then decide which ones we will "privilege." This seems to me to be putting one foot into the dualistic framework.

The Course does posit one pair of opposites for operational purposes in the world: love, and the call for love. These are opposites, or seem to be, yet even this apparent duality is subsumed under the law of love whereby the call for love is translated from error into truth by the Holy Spirit. In both metaphysical and practical terms this simplifies to essentials the endless list of opposites (fundamental or otherwise) the world of perception offers. The principle takes care of the right/wrong, good/evil dichotomies which themselves differ considerably in different cultures, times, and places. (De Sade is not wholly wrong.) Most importantly it releases us from the bondage of judgment. The loving embrace of the Course's teaching includes the "notorious psychopaths" you mention. Both the Course and Advaita Vedanta see unity in all things and all people, even those who are "behaving badly."

The principles of kindness and non-judgment are central to Advaita Vedanta and the Course, as is the requirement for the highest level of discernment regarding thought, word, and action in the world. Neither system endorses "anything goes" although both can be misinterpreted to look as though they do. I am not familiar with the Neo-Advaita you mention, but it sounds like there are social and political agendas here, not unlike the ideas in Cultural Studies which are, in my opinion, light years away from real wisdom.

Neither the Course, nor Advaita Vedanta endorse unloving behavior but, as we all know, unloving behavior happens across the board. I haven't noticed Course students to be any more or less kind than students of Advaita Vedanta, Christians, atheists, or anyone else. Moreover, Course metaphysics, when misapplied, has led to unloving behavior and downright silliness in many cases. The ego can use any metaphysical belief for its purposes.

By all means compare and contrast metaphysical systems, but we need to understand that at that level there will always be differences and disagreements, not to mention the distortions and mistakes that happen over time. Jesus tells us there are thousands of forms of the universal course. Moreover he tells us we are not free to choose the curriculum or the form in which we learn it. I suggest, therefore, great caution in making value judgments about the paths others may be taking. The path was chosen for them by the Holy Spirit. Jesus never counsels us to find fault with other paths, on the contrary, he advises against it.

I might add that the teaching I received about God or the One at the metaphysical level bears little resemblance to the interpretations you offer, but discussions on that level could go on forever.

There is a course for every teacher of God. The form of the Course varies greatly. So do the particular teaching aids involved. But the content never changes. Its central theme is always: God's son is guiltless and in his innocence is his salvation. (M-1:3-5)

We need to remember this passage when attempting to understand other authentic spiritual systems. Ultimately, we can only really understand a system from the inside, by study, practice, and discernment. From that point we begin to see, from experience, that the content of the universal course never changes.

My experience with both Advaita Vedanta and the Course has shown me this is true. On the other hand your article is a long way from that understanding.

Mary Benton

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Dear Robert,

I read the conclusion of "*Return To The Heart of God*" [A Better Way #58] and a thought floated up into my mind, "Robert's mission here TRULY IS to be a teacher of the Course." I especially like the way you share your own experience in your twenty five years with the Course. Like Jesus, you tell us the way it was for you. I really liked that – your honesty. I've been doing the Course for fifteen years and I can relate to things you have written. I think we all go through the same stuff. We all have the same Holy Spirit and ego. And as a teacher G.M. said, "Sameness isn't oneness, but it's a long way from separateness."

I thank you for this piece, written with such clarity. I bless you, for allowing it to come THROUGH YOU to us. And for that I am grateful.

Peace, my teacher and fellow student of the Course,  
Steve Weglarz