

# Avatar and the *Course in Miracles*

by Robert J. O'Connor / Cynthia Bove

The movie *Avatar* has made a spectacular splash in movie theaters across the nation. One of the numerous reasons that this movie has made such an impression is that it keys into the higher consciousness that is beginning to take place in the world. There are some powerful parallels between this movie and the spiritual philosophy of *A Course in Miracles*.

The Course is a philosophy that helps us see the world in a different light, through a different lens. As we work through the Workbook lessons and come to understand who we are and why we are here, we will see the Real World of joy and happiness versus the world of our own making that is comprised of the thoughts of sin, guilt and fear. This movie has many interesting parallels to the Course, not the least of which shows us these two worlds in a very graphic manner. The contrasts between these two worlds is exemplified both on a personal level and on a worldly level, giving us a view of our personal and worldly struggles to overcome our shadowy ego side and change our thinking to see and experience our true nature.

To review this futuristic movie, a debilitated ex-marine named Jake is on a space ship heading to a distant planet called Pandora. He is taking part in a scientific project that will 'inject' his consciousness into a cloned body of the indigenous people called the Novi. The human scientists had developed the technology to connect a human's consciousness as they lie in an enclosed chamber to a cloned Novi Avatar's body that has been developed in another chamber.

Once Jake's consciousness was in the Avatar's body and he infiltrated the Novi society, his mission was to persuade the Novi to move their settlement elsewhere so that the people of Earth could mine a valuable ore that was only found on this planet and in particularly large concentrations where the Novi lived. If Jake and his team are not successful in their efforts, the military will forcibly and violently make them leave that area.

We become very much a part of the training that Jake goes through among the Novi. As time goes by, he learns to respect and become one with his environment. As they slay creatures for food, or the people or animals die from injuries, the people pay homage to the essence that made up that life. An indication of the respect and love they have for life is indicated in a significant phrase, where they say, 'I see you', as if seeing through and beyond form to the true essence of the person. As Jake in his cloned body becomes part of the Novi culture, he finds their views, way of life and environment captivating. The people are connected in spirit with the animals, plants, and their whole world. They honor their God, they look for spiritual communication and there is a feeling of oneness. It is as if they lived in the Garden of Eden.

As Jake embraces the Novi culture, his final test is to tame a prehistoric appearing bird, and if the beast is not mastered, it would kill him. Fortunately Jake is able to subjugate and become one with this prehistoric birdlike creature, communicating with it telepathically to have a wonderful flight around Pandora. This brings up several parallels to the Course, one of which is the ability to tame and overcome that wild and narcissistic ego part of ourselves. Once our ego desires are tamed and let go, our perception of ourselves and the world shifts and we begin to experience what it would feel like to 'fly' above the battle ground and dwell in the consciousness of the Holy Spirit. Further, we have come to realize when the ego's thought system is in charge it is the way of fear and death. As we are made aware of how to overcome the ego by changing our thinking, (taming the bird) our fetters will be loosed and we will be free to soar the heights.

As Jake's consciousness goes back and forth between his human body and the Avatar body, it becomes difficult for him to see which is the dream and which is reality, showing us the ego in action on a personal level. The Course parallels this idea, stating that we are in a dream state and we haven't awakened from the dream to find that we are still one with God, and we don't know which one is true. As we are *not* bodies but as God created us, we are made in His image and therefore are not corporal but Spirit. We dwell beyond form as the One Son, eternally unified and joyful. We have only let the woes and cares of life and our environment obscure our true vision. *A Course in Miracles* suggests a way to see beyond the veil, to practice the forgiveness of the errors that we see in ourselves and our brothers so that we can transcend our preconceived notions about form and get in touch with the formless. It is in this quietness that we are transformed out of the ego experience and into our spiritual existence.

As Jake moves back and forth between these bodies, it can be seen to illustrate the struggle between our narcissistic, self involved ego interests on the one hand, and our embracing our true nature as God's One Son on a spiritual level on the other. As Jake becomes more comfortable in the Avatar body than in his human body, we also hope metaphorically that this will take place in our own spiritual growth, where we are freed from the constraints of the ego and our lives will blossom in the heart of the Holy Spirit. Our goal is to tap into the reality of who we are beyond form. It is here in the world, amid the contrasts that we come to understand that we are not different but the same, and *that* idea will translate into the inevitable thought that what is the same is One. For a time we will move back and forth between these two worlds until we reside continuously in the Holy Spirit's thought system of Oneness.

The Human and Novi viewpoints parallel the two different thought systems of the ego and the Holy Spirit on a worldly level as well. These two worlds are sharply contrasted in this movie, where we see the striking differences between the ego thinking and the more spiritual thinking of the Avatars. The movie reflects the choice to remain in a narcissistic, suffering world driven by greed and self interest, or the Real World where we can live in the awareness of our divinity, and abide in peaceful harmony with compassion and understanding for others because we have come to the awareness of who we are beyond form.

Certainly there are particular parts of the movie that go the way of Hollywood, and are not the solutions that the Course advocates, inasmuch as the Novi's home is destroyed by the human militia, and they then attack in turn, creating some quite violent scenes. Nevertheless, we can still draw some parallels. When one sees the human corporation and militia in action, one sees the darker side of humanity, where power and money are sought at whatever cost. There is no consideration or compassion for others and their consciousness is consumed with self-interest and greed. The darkness in this movie is really sharp, deep and destructive. This is part of what the Course terms the sin, guilt and fear of the ego thought system and it is depicted here on a world scale. As we endeavor to study the Workbook lessons and become more aware of the ego's habits, we will come to terms with its unreality and then be able to watch it disappear from our consciousness.

In conclusion, this movie has many ideas for us to consider that touch upon the two thought systems of the Course, not the least of which is the differences between the Novi and the humans. These contrasts show us two ways to view the world, where before we saw only one that offered no escape. The course of action of defense and attack (consistent with the ego thought system) is indeed chosen more often than not. However, now we know we have another choice, to take the hand of the Holy Spirit who knows who we truly are beyond form. He will unerringly guide our footsteps to confirm our partnership with God, and to view all as He does. We are now aware that the ego darkness is not a part of our make-up, nor the image in which we are created. The Course reveals a new roadmap that we can follow, where we can rise above all conflict and have the vision that views all creation as One.

**Robert J. O'Connor, CSW** is a Certified Social Worker, ACIM student and lives in Holbrook, NY.

**Cynthia Bove** is new to Miracles magazine, ACIM student and lives in Port Jefferson, NY.