

A Course in Miracles & Meditation

by Jason Chan

Meditation is an integral and vital practice in *A Course in Miracles*, says Jason Chan.

After more than 20 years of studying *A Course in Miracles*, I have come to the conclusion that this book is a precious gift to mankind. It contains priceless, psychological insights that go far deeper than any others I have come across. The beauty of its language sometimes moves me to tears. The intellectual brilliance of its arguments is breathtaking. However, there is something even deeper than the radical brilliance of its teachings. When the sincere student is ready, *A Course in Miracles* calls to them in a mysterious way and this call has an almost overwhelming power within it, full of grace and unconditional love.

I have seen this happen over and over again with my own students, who have been drawn to begin studying the Course. When I first read the Course, I could hardly understand a word of it, as English was not my first language. I spent many hours late at night reading the Course painfully slowly, with an English dictionary close at hand. Nevertheless, something deep within me urged me to continue to study and, somehow, a meaning beyond the written words was conveyed to me. I was guided not to try and use my own intellectual understanding to interpret the Course, but just to do my best to open my heart and my quiet mind to receive a direct transmission of the spiritual light and wisdom that lay within it. I firmly believe that my own, previously well-established, meditation practice was invaluable in assisting this 'inner teaching'.

Past Wounds

After two or three years of assiduously studying the Course, I began to experience every sentence of it being spoken out loud to me, deep within my being. Through this process, I really began to understand the tricks of my ego. Then I started to find the strength and courage to let go of past wounds and hurts, as well as some of my previously well-hidden shadows. I did this primarily by opening up to the light during meditation and then bringing all my anger and fear into my quiet mind in order to surrender it to the Holy Spirit.

At times, I found studying and practicing the Course extremely challenging, as it urged me to exert constant vigilance against all my unforgiving thoughts. It was only after I had been studying it for several years that the real work seemed to begin, as I found myself having to forgive everyone in my life, including myself, over and over again. As I kept committing to this process and meditating more and more on it, I began to see how the ego-self never gives up and how it uses every opportunity to pull us back into its fearful, attacking way of perceiving the world and everyone in it.

From my own experience, I am now convinced that the teachings of ACIM can save sincere spiritual seekers tremendous amounts of time, even though it is an extraordinarily difficult practice to master fully. The Course is unique among great spiritual texts for the way in which it enables us to understand the plots and tricks of our egoic thought system in such depth. The Course also provides us with a very clear method to transcend egoic consciousness in order to return to a state of complete innocence, or Oneness with God.

Means of Our Salvation

A Course in Miracles is also remarkable in the way in which it uses our individual consciousness, our dream-like physical existence and all our special love and special hate relationships, as the means of our salvation. For example, if we are willing to surrender our special relationships to Him, the Holy Spirit can use them to assist us to heal all our inner darkness and our self-imposed obstacles to becoming aware of God's infinite love for us. Part of the power of *A Course in Miracles* is that it provides us with such a unique and in-depth understanding of the human mind. I have studied other spiritual traditions in some depth, particularly Buddhism and Taoism, and none of them describe human existence and physical life with such accuracy and power. But I would like to suggest to students of *A Course in Miracles* that they should not treat the Course as just an intellectual treatise or training program.

I have noticed that some students of the Course tend to intellectualize its profound teachings and use only their

thinking minds in their attempts to practice its core lessons. We need to remember that the ego loves to analyze itself and is remarkably adept at co-opting spiritual teachings, as long as they do not really challenge its continued existence. This is why I strongly recommend my students to combine their intellectual study of the Course's text and their practice of its lessons with some form of meditation practice.

A Course in Miracles only specifically mentions meditation once in the Text and then it states that "long periods of meditation aimed at detachment from the body" are not necessary and can be "tedious and very time consuming" even though they "will ultimately succeed because of their purpose" [reaching Atonement] (T 389). This one statement on meditation may well put some sincere students off using meditation as a means of deepening into the Course's teachings. However, in the Workbook, there are actually a number of exercises that sound very similar to certain meditation techniques. To cite just one example, Lesson 41: "God goes with me wherever I go," instructs:

"In the morning, as soon as you get up if possible, sit quietly for some three to five minutes, with your eyes closed. At the beginning of the practice period, repeat today's idea very slowly. Then make no effort to think of anything. Try, instead, to get a sense of turning inward, past all the idle thoughts of the world. Try to enter very deeply into your own mind, keeping it clear of any thoughts that might divert your attention." (W 63)

This sounds remarkably like a much shorter version of my own twice-daily meditation practice! I see meditation practice as being at the heart of any genuine spiritual path, including *A Course in Miracles*, because the benefits of stillness of the mind that you eventually reach through meditation cannot be over-stated. Through meditating, you can experience everything that you could ever truly desire: peace, loving kindness, inner joy, unconditional love and clarity of the mind. The more you dip into the divine peace that is available in a meditative state, the more you will unfold into your natural state of innocence and Oneness with God, that is the ultimate goal of *A Course in Miracles*. During deep meditation, your mind should become open like a clear sky. In a deep meditative state, your mind just opens and you do not think. Thinking is humankind's biggest problem. Whenever we look at something, we think about it, we conceptualize it, we judge it to be good or bad. But when you think about something, you do not know it. This is why, in my experience, studying the Course using only our lower or thinking mind can only take us so far, but no further, down the path back to God. The natural state of being is 'knowing' and this 'knowing' is abstract. This is quite different from thinking. Even the greatest philosophers or thinkers do not know. But the quiet mind, dwelling in its true, natural state, always knows itself. Meditation, for me, is a crucial means for returning to this natural state of knowing.

Returning Home

Meditation is also the most powerful and effective tool for returning home to love. When you are experiencing this Universal or Divine Love, you will just not be able to think any unforgiving or attacking thought. You will not be able to find even one twinge of the horrendous fear that pervades your ego or personality-self. When you are fearful, as the Course so clearly explains, you cannot truly love or be loved and you suffer for it. But when your mind is completely open and at peace, love just naturally pours through it. In time, the love that you experience whilst you are meditating will begin to permeate your daily life. Once you experience the beauty of God's infinite love for you during meditation, you will want to hook onto this experience. Once you begin to give less power to your ego and its all-pervasive, fearful thought system, you can more and more merge with your spirit or individual soul. Eventually, you will go back into your natural wholeness and will realize that you have created all your own negative

thought patterns and have turned them into your own living hell, or nightmare, of believing that you are an egoself who has completely separated from God your Father. From this place of wholeness, or transcendent wisdom, you become purified and your whole being will start to transform.

As your connection with the Divine, or the Christ within, becomes stronger and stronger, you will experience Heaven. Then, one day, you will realize that you never really left your heavenly home and you will understand the true meaning of eternity. You will realize that while a part of your mind is dreaming this physical life you are living, your true consciousness does not experience time or space, separation or suffering. Can we really come to know all of this through meditating? In my experience, and the experience of several of my advanced students, the answer is a resounding yes. The more we practice the art of meditation, the more we will be able to bypass the insane chatter of our lower, thinking minds, to experience a place of infinite peace and potential in which we can really experience for ourselves exactly what *A Course in Miracles* means when it says:

“Spirit is in a state of grace forever. Your reality is only spirit. Therefore you are in a state of grace forever.”
(T1 III 3:4)

Jason Chan is a master of martial arts, who received in-depth training in Chinese martial arts, Tai Chi, Chi Kung and sacred Taoist arts as a child and young adult in Hong Kong. He now lives and teaches in England. For more information go to: www.lightfoundation.com