

A Course In Miracles and Science of Mind

by R. Gordon Seeley

Science of Mind

Science of Mind is the name Ernest Holmes (1887-1960) gave to his life's work. He was a student, mystic, teacher, and an integral part of America's New Thought spiritual movement that began in the mid-1800s. His early work was published as a small book in 1923, titled *Creative Mind*. Three years later, he released his major work titled, *The Science of Mind*. He subsequently scripted hundreds of articles for sermons, magazines, and a syndicated radio program, many of which are available today as a book titled, *Living the Science of Mind*.

[In 1927, Holmes and some of his followers began to meet formally and became known as *The Church of Religious Science*. To clarify, this paper is about Holmes' published work and is not intended to necessarily represent the teachings of the Church, or its affiliates.]

The subtitle of recent editions of *Science of Mind* reads: *A Philosophy, A Faith, A Way of Life*. In short, Science of Mind is not lightweight spirituality. Like the Course, it is vast in weight and depth. Yet, Holmes said the purpose of Science of Mind was simply: "...that the student may be able to apply his spiritual understanding to the everyday problems of human life." It turns out that Science of Mind is another wonderful example of what may be called "practical spirituality." Spirituality that really works!

The difference between A Course in Miracles and Science of Mind is mostly one of perspective, and I have divided this article into three parts: The first relates to their obvious differences, the second to their similarities, and the third to their oneness. In doing so, it should be said that, although I have been a student and a practitioner of the Course and Science of Mind for several years, my knowledge continues to be limited so I am presenting this article as a student, not as a teacher.

Differences

Looking with a critical eye, one can find many differences between the Course and Science of Mind, major and minor. For example, Science of Mind is far easier to read and comprehend than ACIM. These days I read ACIM with ease, but it took a long time before that happened. On the other hand, I never had a problem with Holmes. Not only did he write using contemporary language and style, but he was skilled at taking complex ideas and presenting them in a way that most people could understand.

Science of Mind is also far easier on the mind from a psychological standpoint. ACIM is an intentional mind-bender, designed to erase ego and create a *radically* new worldview that is based on love. Letting go of our old ideas can be painful, and ACIM inflicts great pain (imagined of course) until a transition to right-mindedness is made.

Holmes gives a plausible, precise, almost scientific explanation of how thought takes form in the material world. (God's thought as well as our own.) He said that thought is a movement of Spirit acting upon Spiritual Substance; that God's Law receives these thoughts and transforms them into something more substantial, such as matter. He said God's Law is impartial, and that anyone (God or man) can use it and get the same results. He said that if we think like God we *will* get God-like results!

Science of Mind teaches a form of panentheism, saying God is everything and everything is God. Everything we see is simply an extension of God, including ourselves. He refers to the universe, and everything in it, as "The Thought of God" and "The Body of God."

Moreover, he didn't believe that the natural world was an illusion:

"Of all things on earth the human body is the most beautiful, the most wonderful and the most God-like. When we behold a beautiful sunset we should see the wonderful thought of God, the radiance of his presence. In the strength of the hills we should see the strength of the Spirit; and seeing all things as spiritual ideas, we should learn to love them, because God has made them and given them to us to use. The soul who in ecstasy can rush up to a tree and embrace it realizes more of God than all the bigoted priests who have ever lived. The one who can sniff the ocean breeze with delight feels the presence of the divine being more keenly than does the one who kneels in despair before an awful God of Justice. Learn then how to appreciate Nature and Nature's God.

Spend much time in the out of doors; look up at the stars; let them be your companions; tread the pathless ways of the trees and the giant forests and see God in everything that you look upon, the God of the everywhere.” (Creative Mind)

Science of Mind emphasis is on seeing perfection in everything, and especially in man. There is little talk of sin and hell. Sin is simply something that can be corrected with right thinking, and once we understand the problem, it says that we should withdraw our thoughts from the problem and place them on the solution. (The solution is seeing God’s Perfection everywhere.)

It can seem to newcomers that Science of Mind is materialistic, and, in a way, it is. Holmes was very concerned about our physical and material well-being, and made no apology for it. He said the Children of God have an absolute right to all the goodness God has to offer! Like Jesus, however, he also said that we must first seek the Kingdom of God, and *then* the rest will be added unto us in good measure.

Students of SOM are encouraged to perform spiritual healing work called “treatments.” There’s no direct physical contact, and it’s really mental or thought healing because the healing takes place in the patient’s mind. The idea is that healing the mind will heal the body. All SOM work actually takes place in God’s Mind because, according to SOM, there is only One Mind. In other words, what we call “our mind” is simply part of God’s Mind to be used as we see fit. We literally live and breathe and have our being within the confine of God’s Mind, the implications of which are profound.

These are just a few of the differences that can be found between ACIM and Science of Mind. At first, I thought some of them were important. As my study progressed, however, I began to see that they were more complimentary than different.

Similarities

The function of ACIM and Science of Mind is to help us change what we currently believe about life in order to improve our perception of life. The following quote reflects the similarity between Science of Mind and *A Course in Miracles*:

“To acquire the larger consciousness is no easy task. All that we have believed in which contradicts the perfect whole must be dropped from our thought, and we must come to realize that we are now living in a perfect universe, peopled with perfect spiritual beings, each of which (coupled with the Great Divinity) is complete within himself. We must see that we are one in the great one, and then we will not separate or divide, but unite and add, until in time we will find that we are living in an entirely different world from that in which we had once thought we were living.” (Creative Mind)

Holmes said that Science of Mind was simply a composite of the best ideas he found in world literature beginning with the Hindu Vedas on up to modern science. There is an emphasis on Man expressing himself as God in a world without limit. Science of Mind theory rests strongly on God’s Law regarding cause and effect. It is about how thoughts become conditions, and that if we want new conditions we must have new thoughts to bring them about. It is also about the Law of Correspondence, which states that there is a direct correlation between the kinds of thoughts we have and what they produce, and about the Law of Attraction, which brings things into our experience to match our thoughts. (Good or bad.)

Oneness

The goal of most spiritual studies is for us to become mentally integrated with our Creator to the extent that “My thoughts *are* your thoughts.” When man’s thoughts are not God’s thoughts, he suffers for it. Not at the hand of God, of course, but simply due to his own ignorance. ACIM and SOM say that in order to be truly useful and happy a radical change must occur in our thinking. They help us change the contents of our mind through the use of powerful spiritual concepts, principles, and practices. They speak of attaining Christ Vision – literally seeing through the eyes of Christ. Both teach a strong case of non-duality in a form that literally says: “I and my Father are One!” Both have strong theoretical foundations. Both use impeccable logic throughout. Both reveal strong Christian and Eastern influences, but not their dogma. Both have strong connections to New Testament ideas and sayings that may make them seem somewhat Christian.

With thoughts of separation gone, the only thing left is God and what He Created. We are left with wonderful spiritual things such as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-discipline. (Galatians 5:22,23.) However, the most important thing we are left with when all our foolish thoughts are gone is

our own True Self (the Son of God, Atman) and our beloved Creator, the Source of everything good in this, or any world.

Everyday Practice

Spiritual lessons are useless unless they are put into practice:

“We are intelligent beings living in an intelligent universe that responds to our mental states, and insofar as we learn to control those mental states, we shall automatically control our environment. This is what is meant by the practical application of the principles of Science of Mind to the problems of everyday living. This is what is meant by demonstration.” Holmes

Science of Mind demonstrations and treatments are equivalent to what the Course calls “miracles.” The process is the same, and can be seen as one of spiritual forgiveness. We need not forgive people, places, or things, because they are not the cause of our troubles. What we forgive, pardon, dismiss, let go and get rid of, is our old ideas - thoughts that seem to oppose God’s Will. Knowing that *all* human problems trace back to our thinking, we replace wrong thinking with right thinking. We look past present appearances and allow the Power and Perfection of God to flow through us. The result is a grateful sense of Oneness in which freedom, happiness, peace and prosperity come naturally and bountifully. We see the perfection of God in everyone and everything, knowing Joy of the Highest Order.

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