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## *Author's Note*

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the world of *Paulo and the Magician!*

When I first began this work some seven years ago, I had my mind set on a short allegorical story. Just a short little fable.

I began with an intention, a desire to share with others the magic and beauty I had discovered in working with the text known as *A Course In Miracles*, in my opinion the revelatory book of the highest Gnostic spirituality and philosophy of our era. I thought the best way to accomplish this would not be by producing a formal text book, but by using a blend of fable and story. In this way, I could perhaps create an imaginary world richly filled with symbols and metaphors that would transport the reader into these very experiences *A Course In Miracles* (A.C.I.M.) had offered me through the beauty of its language and the gentleness of its words.

As the writing progressed, however, it appeared more and more unlikely that I would be able to convey the essence of the philosophy of A.C.I.M. – its explanation for our world and our daily experiences within it – in just a short novel. There seemed indeed so much to say, and a true picture of our world would not have been complete, I felt, without the passages I subsequently came to add. Please forgive me if I did the original intention of the book an injustice. The proper meaning and nature of our individual reality on earth is perhaps still not fully captured within this final finished version. On the other hand, I do believe the reader can begin his journey here, the journey that will take him through his own gentle experiences back to the remarkable spiritual Home we all share – back to Paulo's City of Light.

Nevertheless, I would like to express a word of caution at this point. At first sight the reader might be tempted to believe he understands the individual concepts within this book quite

easily. The reader may even be reminded of other works or thought systems. Or the ideas might appear as simplistic, given the fairy-tale style in which they are expressed. But, in the experience of many of those who have attempted working with *A Course In Miracles*, putting these concepts together in right perspective is all *but* a simple task. After all, understanding the true nature of being from *outside* the perception of this material universe can be nothing less than a lifelong task of struggling against lifetimes of pre-conditioning. It is in fact a goal that obstinately refuses to materialize while we still firmly believe that these individual selves we see in the mirror every morning are truly the anchor point of our existence. So I would encourage the reader to be patient with his work through the ideas contained within, and, above all, not to underestimate the obstacles we contain to transforming our deeply held beliefs about ourselves and the world we live in.

### *A Note on the Philosophy*

I have mentioned that the concepts presented here are a representation of the principles of *A Course In Miracles*. Still, the reader familiar with the work of the early Christian Gnostics will most likely find a certain resonance with many of the ideas presented within this book. Similar to the philosophy of the early Christian Fathers in various respects, *A Course In Miracles* follows an adamantly Gnostic principle of creation, maintaining that this material world is *not* the work of a metaphysical God-Father entity. However, A.C.I.M. then goes on to explain, unlike the Gnostics, that only that which the true God created (a unified celestial realm of wholeness without opposition or separation) could in fact be real at all. Hence, the logic of A.C.I.M. goes, this material universe of multiplicity is not the real world or our real home, and is, in fact, illusion.

An illusion, yes, but one that seems exceedingly real in our senses – *but why?* By explaining the origin of the physical world as the result of a powerful decision in our collective mind (the

decision to separate ourselves from our original state of celestial 'wholeness'), A.C.I.M. informs us that everything within our range of daily experience today is nothing more than the mental out-picturing of this cosmological division, a division which continues to be played out not in a physical world of *fact*, but *within* the greater Mind.

True to its mission of deliverance, *A Course In Miracles* does not leave us to wander in this shadow-land of ignorance and suffering without help, but provides us with a number of concrete solutions to our dilemma. It presents us notably with a number of powerful psychological techniques to resolve the enigmas and troubles that abound in our daily experience (techniques described within this book), and the way, of course, to begin the real journey of turning our minds toward Home.

*A Note on Mythology*

The beauty of Gnosticism in general, and particularly of *A Course In Miracles*, is its ability to provide us with a powerful alternative to the myths supplied to us by the Judeo-Christian tradition. We live in a world of myth, whether consciously aware of the symbols in our personal mythology or not. I believe it is only by identifying the myths that currently run our lives, then consciously choosing the mythology we wish to rule our sub-conscious, that we can begin to turn our minds toward Truth and Happiness. But while we remain unaware of the symbols that dominate our psyche, we cannot possibly be in a position of power to choose.

As a result, this book seeks to give power and choice back to the decision-maker within each of us, to that part of the individual capable of being honest about her life, of being willing to discover her personal mythology, and of consciously choosing her path toward happiness. I hope, and trust, you will find that this book represents an honest alternative to the various models available to the modern philosopher-seeker, specifically a path that offers a sincere promise of finding better

understanding of our existential condition and greater peace through applying its principles. And hence I invite the reader to enjoy, to reflect, and to try her or his hand at one or two of the ideas contained within if she or he feels so moved.

Many blessings, and happy reading!

Bernard H. Groom  
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France  
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Aside from the many people who have crossed my path as informal guides and teachers to whom I shall always remain very grateful, I would like to extend a special, heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, founder and director of the Foundation for *A Course In Miracles*.

People working with A.C.I.M. have invariably, at one time or another, come to the conclusion that they do not fully grasp the subtler meanings or entire vision of this complex work. In my case that moment of self-honesty occurred nine years ago, provoked by a passage through a challenging divorce and change of work situation. I came at that time upon Kenneth's extensive work on A.C.I.M. (having battled alone with the material for eleven years) and could only say that from that day forth my life has taken wings, in every sense. His comprehension of the spiritual and psychological nature of our world should not be underestimated, and anyone seriously interested in being helped along the Gnostic path Home can very profitably share a part of his life with this great man's teachings. My debt to him cannot be repaid in so few words, and I thank him from the bottom of my heart.

### *A Word on Errors*

In every way possible, within the confines of a story, the author has tried to represent the correct metaphysical principles, perspective and psychology of *A Course In Miracles* in this work. Many sections were re-written several times over the space of eight years in order to come ever closer to a more precise expression of A.C.I.M.'s basic tenets, without losing the fable-like quality intended for the work. Nevertheless, if errors have slipped in, then they are purely the author's.

### *A Word of Advice to the Reader*

The author would also like to advise the reader that the material within this book may at times provoke a strong emotional reaction. The powerful symbolic language of the story in effect can make an unexpectedly strong impression on the sub-conscious mind. If he or she feels at any time over-whelmed by such feelings, then he or she should apply the principle of good sense and put the book away for another time, or skip chapters.

### *About the Author*

Bernard Groom first encountered *A Course In Miracles* in 1987 in New York City while working on Wall Street. He subsequently worked as a corporate trainer in Europe before moving to a country village in the Southwest of France. He has since been studying and writing on questions of spirituality while learning the building trade. Bernard is Australian-born and holds degrees from Tufts University and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, MA, U.S.A..