A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

December 19th 2009

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Good evening. And welcome to everyone who's joining us on the Internet.

Well, it's slightly less than a week until "my birthday." It's a time when it's very easy to abandon the holy instant because of course, when you celebrate "my birthday," you're celebrating something in the past with no compensation, if I may put it that way.

What I mean by that is, that ordinarily, you don't celebrate the birthdays of the dead. Ordinarily, you celebrate the birthdays of those who are alive. And what do you do? You spend your time *with* him or *with* her enjoying that one's presence, having fun with that one.

And so, you don't abandon the instant in which the holiness of it all can be experienced, whether you actually take advantage of it or not.

I'm going to ask you this year, on my birthday, for you to make a point of being with me. You know, next Friday, be with me in the present by asking things of me, by reaching out to me and by listening for my response. Next Friday . . . you know, in the "now" at that time, so that you have, on my birthday, an experience of the *living me*, my presence and my availability to you—not as a Godhead but as your Brother, as a friend.

And I hope that while you're with family or whoever you're celebrating Christmas with, that while you are being with them, you will make a point of just addressing me with a remark here or there—just a conscious moment of your extending yourself to me. And I want you to know, that every time you do that, I will respond whether you hear it or not.

I will also tell you that by virtue of doing it, you are more likely to hear me, than if you don't do it at all. Because then you will be occupied with, you know, the turkey or the gifts or the family or the music, or whatever it might be.

Now, we have a new section here called, *True Empathy*. And before we go on to what true empathy is, I want to take a little bit more time to talk about what it isn't, but what you believe it is and what you use it for.

Empathy, as you think of it, is a way for you to be present with a Brother or a Sister, a friend, to be intimately present with them, where, in so many words, you feel what they feel or you try to feel *for* what they are feeling without any blocks in the way—you try to let down obstructions.

But as long as you are behaving as though you're an orphan and are therefore in a constant state of vulnerability, every single act of empathy that you engage in will, at the bottom line, be able to be traced back to *self-protection*, to securing safety in what otherwise is a hostile environment—a hostile world, a hostile universe, a polarized existence.

Very often your practice of empathy is engaged in, so that you will not be caught off guard by your "untrustworthy" Brothers' behavior. And so you will be sensitive, especially to the Brothers or Sisters who seem to be the least trustworthy, whose behavior tends to show that they're likely to behave in unloving ways.

When you make a point of expressing empathy toward a Brother in a helpful, non-self-protective manner, and you really have their best interests at heart, you will find that what makes it reasonable for you to do this is that that one provides you with something meaningful. And if you're not able to be empathetic, if you're not able to be present with that one well, you may lose whatever that one provides that has meaning for you.

And so if you have a loved one who is suffering from something, you will tend to help them because you love them, but also because if something happened to them and they were no longer around, you would be at a loss that you don't want to have to cope with. And so it behooves you to be empathetic, it behooves you to be sensitive to that one so as to be able to help them still be around and *fulfill your needs*.

Now, I realize that you may feel that what I'm expressing is rather harsh and unreasonable, but you know what? It's important for you to know, that when

you think you are doing something good—ultimately good in some way or another—and you are not actually doing something ultimately good, somebody needs to tell you.

Now, I am not telling you that when you behave from your orphan mentality, even though it's with well-intentioned empathy, that you are not doing something good. When I tell you that, I also tell you what you can do and what you need to do in order to, for lack of better words, express empathy that *is* good and that *does* have benefit. And that's what we've been discussing for a couple of weeks.

Empathy as you currently use it from your orphan mentality is always manipulative and always has at its bottom line, righteousness. You do it to demonstrate your capacity to be right.

Now, you say that you do it so that you can be on top of things—so that you can respond well. Well, if you've done that, you say, "I did it right." If you behave in a way and it doesn't turn out well, you feel, "I did it wrong."

Empathy is something more than a means of expressing and achieving rightness. Empathy has nothing to do with being right. But being right is important to all of you. There's a saying, "Right is might!" as though right is strength. But that very statement is an intellectual conclusion arrived at through thinking. It's not divine insight. It's not you knowing the truth. And because it's not you knowing the truth, and is the result of an intellectual process, the statement can be reversed. And it is reversed, and it says, "Might is right!" And so whoever has the "might" to assert and conquer or control is by virtue of the expression of "might," right!" You see?

Right is not might. And might is not right. Oh-h...

Empathy does not help you be appropriate in your blindness, in spite of your blindness. Empathy is what uncovers your Vision—uncovers the fact, reveals the fact that you are not blind. And you know what? It accomplishes it through a state of *intimacy*.

As we've said, in the practice of the holy instant, you step back, you shut up and you ask of the Father, you abandon your privateness, and you ask of Something else than yourself and your best judgments, "What is the truth here? How do You see my Brother? How do You see my Sister? How do You see that tree? How do You see this world, what is the truth about it?" And then you listen . . . and you let it be revealed, you let the Father speak or you let the Holy spirit speak or you let me speak. That is a moment of intimacy. It is a moment of *connection*. It is a moment of *union*.

Now, true empathy is Knowing. Knowing with a capital "K." That's true empathy. How do you arrive at an experience of Knowing? You arrive at it by abandoning your attempts to be right. You experience it as a result of abandoning your need and your attempts to control. You accomplish it by abandoning your privacy.

Now I cannot make this clear enough, and unfortunately, I cannot paint the picture black enough to make you want to spontaneously abandon it. But everything you do, absolutely anything you do privately as a result of your own thoughts going on in your, "you say," in your own head, without involvement with anyone else, any activity that you engage in privately, deprives you of your sanity. It deprives you of your fulfillment because it keeps you securely in the state of orphanhood.

Now that means it keeps you in a state of illusion because you aren't an orphan and you did not create yourself.

As long as you use empathy to establish righteousness so that you might be something in your own right, or you might say, in your own rightness, you are using your mind in a way that absolutely inhibits any experience of intimacy because you're not letting anything else *in* to be with you or for you to be with.

Now, another way you use empathy is to sometimes connect with God. You want to have empathy with God. You want to feel what God feels. But here's the flaw in it: You ask God for a favor. You ask God for help in this situation or that situation. And so it is as though you send a message out and you don't know whether He receives it or not, and then, if something happens in your experience that resolves the problem, you say, "Oh, God heard my prayer and God answered my prayer."

But where's the moment when God picked up the phone and you heard Him say, "Hello" and you could say, "hello" back to him? It didn't happen. But if He had said, "Hello" and you said, "hello," empathy would have occurred. You see?

You would have been in a position to feel God's Meaning. And God would have been in a position for you to experience His Meaning. And there would have been joy. You see? It's similar to what I'm asking you to do next Friday: Have a direct Real experience with me on this birthday of mine, that you're celebrating by being absent from the moment you're in (in which you *could* connect with me) because your attention is on a day two thousand years ago. Don't do that. Let's make the connection. Let's let the intimacy be there. Let's provide the environment in which empathy can occur, empathy being, Knowing—the Knowing that occurs when God speaks to you, when I speak to you. I am speaking to you right now, every one of you, I am speaking to you right now. It's real. In other words, what I'm saying is, that empathy is the result of intimate involvement.

Now, another way in which empathy occurs in unreal and inadequate ways, is when you do ask God for an answer: An answer that will help you function better in the world or that will allow you to function in a way that resolves dissonance in your relationships. In other words, you're asking for intimacy with God so that your intimacy with God is not the subject of your intimacy, but the resolution of a problem with others is the topic of the intimacy. And the moment God tells you the answer, you say, "thanks" and you attend to applying the answer to the experience.

Like, "H-e-l-l-o" God might say, . . "H-e-l-l-o . . . are you there? I thought we had a chance for being together . . ." You see? So that's not real empathy.

Now, when I speak to you through Paul, as right now, what you're seeing is a joining that is occurring between Paul and me. He's not asking me questions, but we are involved together in a mutual endeavor, I'll put it that way. So, you might say that our reason for communicating is to have the experience of communicating. You see what I'm saying?

You want to have an experience of God for the purpose of having an experience of God. Not so that you can use God for a third or another reason. Paul is getting practice at what? He's getting practice at intimacy with me that is more than just a question and an answer here and there to solve another problem. In other words, do you see what I'm saying? Paul is getting experience at ongoing intimacy that is a direct communion. And so, he's getting more and more experience at not being an orphan. And the more experience he has at not being an orphan, the less he'll want to have more of an experience of being an orphan. And there is a point at which he will yield on an on-going basis to our union.

Now, there is a purpose for this union. There is a purpose for the union I am encouraging each of you to have with your Guides on an on-going basis. And although in the beginning, you need encouragement and somewhat of a push to discipline yourself to return to the joined state when you find yourself getting distracted, ultimately the reason for being joined is so that you might permanently experience co-operation with another.

Have you ever had an experience of working with someone who is so attuned to you, or it seems as though the two of you are so attuned to each other that you can almost do things without talking—each of you being one jump ahead of the other so that if something is needed the other has it already there for you and vice versa and there is cooperation that's not by, let's say, mutual agreement, that's not by negotiation, not by discussing and coming to conclusions and agreements about how to be . . . you just be together spontaneously?

You see, I'm trying to clarify something, especially since we're less than a week away from the day that you would celebrate my birth and could use that day for an even greater purpose to make some commitment to joining and practicing the holy instant and allowing empathy to occur which is the experience of Knowing which is a gift from God—His Perspective given to you so that you might see everything as it is, enlightened, in other words.

But, in addition to having a new experience of everything in its actuality, in its beauty, in its primitive perfection, there is this thing called, "being joined." And it's not like being at a dance and everybody is standing around in a circle against the wall and everybody holds hands—it's not that kind of a sort of joining by touch. It's a joining by involvement. It is a joining in a dance, if you will, of cooperation that will begin and you will decide not to bring it to a stop ever again.

Now, I will tell you something you can't understand. But I will tell you this: When you join in this way with commitment, what is it that you think the two of you might do together? What mutual activity would you engage in?

Well I will tell you, that you will engage in observing Creation occurring. You will participate together . . . how can I put it . . . energetically? . . . See, there are inadequate words for it. But you might say, it would be like the two of you being near the crest of a mountain, the crest of a hill, and you see lights off in the distance over the hill and the two of you run to the top of the hill so that you can see what glorious thing is happening that is causing this light.

So, it's like the two of you joined together in running to the top of the hill, the two of you joined in mutual anticipation, the two of you joined in consciously revering and loving and being interested in the same things . . . do this thing, of observing Creation.

Now, I'm aware that's totally inadequate to give you reason to make commitment today or next Friday to the holy instant. But, well, there was something Paul heard during the last week: A sentence that said, "If it's of any value, let it change you." And he thought immediately of the *Course*... if it's of any value, let it change you. You see, it isn't something here to read and to grasp intellectually and to, you know, savor the little morsels of truth that you glean from it here and there.

It's here to change you. It's here to inspire you to do something you haven't been doing. Because what you have been doing amounts to being asleep and missing out on the fulfillment and the wholeness of Creation as it actually is confronting you but which you are misinterpreting as a physical world and universe, and blinding yourself by those definitions to its glory.

Now, you deserve not to be alone. You need not to be alone. You need to be free of the experience of loneliness. You also need to be free of living life as though you're just staying one jump ahead of failure, one jump ahead of tragedy, one jump ahead of lack.

I'm telling you that the practice of the holy instant which provides the environment in which empathy can occur which amounts to Revelation—the Revelation of Knowing the truth, the clarity that God gives you, involves you becoming joined with others.

In running to the crest of the hill to experience the glory of Creation that's occurring there . . . there . . . there, everywhere, it's an involvement, it's not a loneliness anymore, and you don't "develop" this intimacy with another who you can enjoy Creation with together. It isn't for the purpose of gleaning truths from that other one so that you can—in this other place where the Kingdom of Heaven looks like we're all a physical world and universe—manage to manipulate things better than you've ever done before so that you can be more secure and safer than ever before and therefore experience a sense of relief and be able to take a deep breath for a little bit at least, before you have to start protecting yourself again. You see?

If it's valuable, if it means something, let it *change you*, let it move you into an involvement that will become a forever involvement of *awe*, *shared*, not just with your guide but with all of the Brotherhood. But you know what? You've got to take it one step at a time. And so you have to start out practicing the holy instant with the Brother who's next to you. You have to practice it by using your Brother as the reason for turning to the Holy Spirit. In other words, turning within to that which is nothing more than your right Mind or, I'm going to say, turning within to me or turning within to the Father and abandoning your privacy and your love of authority—independent authority.

You won't be able to join with the whole Brotherhood. But the Holy Spirit, which is nothing more than your right Mind, has one goal only. And that is to reunite the little part or your mind, your infinite mind that you are identifying as you, with the totality of your Mind that constitutes You. Because that experience of your Mind is the experience of the Presence of God being all there is of You. And there's that intimacy again. And you want to hang out

there in that intimacy so that God doesn't have to say: "Hello . . . h-e-l-l-o . . . anybody home?" You see?

You want to hang out there with God because that's where the true experience of Creation is available to you. And you want to hang out with God with your Brothers and Sisters with whom you can share as though you are all mutually running to the crest of the hill to see the glory of God that's occurring—an infinite joined experience where you all feel each other having the same motives and the same desires and the same capacity to embrace Creation infinitely.

Now that is not understandable to you. But I know that it's understandable to you that there can be One of the Brotherhood that you could have an intimate experience with and it would be easier to have an intimate experience with One than an infinite number. And so that's why you have a Guide. That's why you have a Guide who's been assigned to you for the sole purpose of supporting you and nudging and pushing and gently coercing you without overriding your will, so that you may, through the use of your will, abandon your insistence upon being private and independent authority and joining once again so that you may return to your sanity and your joy and your abundance and your fulfillment, and on and on and on.

So, you know, don't wait until Christmas Day to try to talk to me. Put forth the effort *now* even while you're hearing me speak through Paul's mouth, because I can answer you while I'm speaking through his mouth—it's easy.

Now, I'm trying to convey to you that you exist in the middle of the Kingdom of Heaven. You exist in the middle of the awesome, even though you look at it and say it's just a material world and universe. Nevertheless, you stand in the middle of that which is awesome and its awesomeness awaits your willingness to see it and let it register with you.

There's incredible reason for hope. There is incredible reason for reaching for the unknown, for reaching for unreasonable good and letting it happen and letting it change you, letting it cause you to *be* with everything in a new way.

And I've talked about joining with your Guide or the Holy Spirit or God. You know what? You can join with a flower. You can join with a lampshade. If something is going on that you're experiencing, it has Meaning—it has divine Meaning. And it would love to join with you in the true experience of what it is and the true experience of the relationship that you have—the relationship you have with the lampshade, because you certainly have a relationship with the lampshade. You see?

Now this may sound a little silly, but you know what? The lampshade would love to run to the top of the hill with you to see the glory of God that's going on over the crest of the hill. There isn't *anything* in all of Creation, there isn't anything in your experience that doesn't wish to join in the conscious appreciation of its Source—God.

I'm saying that there's a living true relationship that exists between you and everything, a relationship of involvement like running to see the glory, anticipating seeing the glory—nothing passive, nothing where you just sort of pass information between each other for another reason, not because you really like each other but because you're convenient and might be able to help. It's more than that. It is a marvelous involvement of joined purpose that none of you figured out or calculated or negotiated—which would, of course, mean that you would have to be willing to renegotiate and refigure because, of course, you don't want things to get dull, so you have to keep things unsettled and renewed.

The purpose of your Being is in you already. And it moves spontaneously. It moves in all of you spontaneously and therefore, moves in harmony. This movement in all of you is in perfect harmony with everyone of you—all of the Brotherhood. And it's experienceable as a togetherness.

I've used the word "family" before to try to convey to you this non-calculated experience—this experience that has nothing to do with figuring things out or intellectual processes—because it's an experience of intimacy, of infinite incredibly joyous involvement.

So, let's go into the book.

TRUE EMPATHY¹

True empathy is of Him Who knows what it is.

Which at this point, as far as you're concerned, is the Holy Spirit—it's not You *yet*.

True empathy is of Him Who knows what it is. You will learn His interpretation of it if you let Him use your capacity for strength, and not for weakness.

Okay, so here's a case where the holy instant is called for . . . why? So that you can shut up and listen for Him who knows what true empathy is, to teach it to you because you don't know what it is yet. An involvement, but not just a teacher/student involvement, where the student goes from home to school and the teacher teaches him things and the student goes back home to a different environment and has no association with the teacher until the next

day. No. This involvement is you learning how not to be alone by virtue of asking and listening for an answer and getting an answer. The getting of the answer is not the point. The point is the time you spend together and in that act, learning what it means not to be alone, so it's easier for you to choose to abandon the thrill you thought you were getting from being alone. The learning is in the involvement while you're being taught. The learning is in the not being alone as opposed to being in the orphanage and suffering.

Не...

... the Holy Spirit ...

... will not desert you, but be sure that you desert not him.

Well, the simple fact is, you will desert him. You're not used to giving your attention there and staying with it. You're used to worrying, you're used to being afraid, you're used to being on alert to protect yourself against whatever is biting at your heels. You see? And so you will desert him and you'll have to remember, "Oh, I lost the connection. Oh, I lost the joining. I'm alone and I don't need to be. I'm going to bring my attention back to that which can teach me what empathy really is, as well as what all the rest of truth is."

Humility is strength in this sense only; to recognize and accept the fact that you do not know is to recognize and accept the fact that He does know.

Well, it's simple. You know what? You won't be willing to adopt this crazy idea that you "don't know" if there isn't anybody that knows at all, because that will really put you in a black hole. But when you learn that the Holy Spirit does know, *then* you can dare to accept the premise that you don't know, because that will not cause you to be abandoned to oblivion. It will allow you to listen for the truth to be revealed because you know someone is there to reveal it to you. And it will save you rather than cause you to be lost.

You are not sure that He will do His part because you have never yet done yours completely.

It's hard to have faith that someone will do something that you can't bring yourself to do yet. If you can't bring yourself to do it, it's hard to believe that anyone else can or will.

You will not know how to respond to what you do not understand. Be tempted not in this, . .

... now this, you have to be careful here to read this in its meaning.

You will not know how to respond to what you do not understand.

What that means is, first of all, what you do not understand is what you cannot understand. You cannot understand that this is a material world and universe. You cannot understand that you're an orphan. You cannot understand that your brothers and sisters are orphans, and you cannot understand that they are undependable because they have no dependable, underlying, grounded Source of their Being.

What is not understandable is that there is everything to fear. That isn't something you can understand . . . why? Because all of those things are not the truth, they are beliefs that you are entertaining and maintaining and reasserting because you haven't known who your Are.

But I'm teaching you who you Are. And the Holy Spirit—that which is nothing more than your right Mind—is teaching you what you Are. So you're getting confirmation to what I'm saying from within, no matter how reluctantly you're willing to embrace it.

So, . .

You will not know how to respond to what you do not understand.

You never have known how. And that is part of what has caused you to constantly feel insecure. You have tried to understand the un-understandable. You have tried to understand illusion.

Be tempted not in this, and yield not to the ego's triumphant use of empathy for its glory.

You see, you're constantly tempted to come to conclusions about what everything means based on the idea that you're just a physical organism in the chain of evolution—a fluke of nature.

So you're constantly tempted to come to your own conclusions using your best reasoning without ever shutting up long enough to inquire of That which can answer you with the truth, so that you might learn what the truth is and in the process of doing that, slowly shift from, or maybe faster, shifting from your confidence in your own capacity to do what will actually keep you ignorant longer.

> Be tempted not in this, and yield not to the ego's triumphant use of empathy for its glory.

You see? And we started out by talking of the ways the ego uses empathy for control and self-protection and so on.

The triumph of weakness is not what you would offer to a brother.

You know . . . what's the triumph of weakness? It's when you have asserted yourself based on your own best judgments as an orphan that you think you are and managing somehow to bring about a good affect that other people recognize as beneficial to them—something you've done without ever being joined, without ever having made connection with that in you which knows the truth. You see? That's the ego's triumphant use of empathy for its glory.

Be tempted not in this, and yield not to the ego's triumphant use of empathy for its glory. The triumph of weakness is not what you would offer to a brother. And yet you know no triumph but this. This is not knowledge, and the form of empathy that would bring this about is so distorted that it would imprison what it would release.

You see? The form of empathy that's used for self-protection keeps you clearly in your mind as a vulnerable solitary thing in the middle of a bunch of other solitary things that are undependable. And if so, . .

... it would imprison what it would release.

You use the empathy to get release, but it just reconfirms the call for release.

The unredeemed cannot redeem, . .

... that's like saying the uneducated cannot make clear, the confused cannot express clarity.

The unredeemed cannot redeem, yet they have a Redeemer. Attempt to teach Him not. You are the learner; He the Teacher. Do not confuse your role with His, for this will never bring peace to anyone.

So let's be very clear here. We're talking about your letting yourself into a profound experience of intimacy, in which you join in mutual intent, in mutual action, you might say, where neither one of you are attempting to behave independently, but especially *you* are not attempting to behave independently because you need the influx of what your Brother Knows that he can reveal to you that you don't know yet.

And so part of the dance that you're doing here, part of the intimacy here, involves your being willing to completely release authority. And this isn't easy for you to do. But, here's one of those valuable things that because it's valuable, let it change you.

Ultimately, you will not express authority. You will not be an "I" among "I's," you will have shifted to a state of "us" and "we," where *we* join together in this spontaneous appreciation of Creation. Because authority will not remain once you let yourself be changed and you experience yourself as the holy Son of God. It is reasonable and valuable for you to be willing to abandon it *now* in the first stages of your involvement with your Teacher—One who is your Teacher only temporarily until you decide not to practice loss of memory, ignorance.

The unredeemed cannot redeem, yet they have a Redeemer.

You have a Redeemer.

Attempt to teach Him not. You are the learner; He the Teacher. Do not confuse your role with His, for this will never bring peace to anyone. Offer your empathy to Him,

... wish to feel with Him. Feeling with Him is like the mutual running to the crest of the hill to see the glory of God, to understand the truth more clearly, but not by yourself and not because a separate entity has relayed the information to you, but because the two of you together are allowing it to be a mutual conscious experience of unity that does not destroy your individuality.

Offer your empathy to Him, for it is his perception and his strength that you would share. And let Him offer you His strength and His perception, to be shared through you.

The meaning of love is lost in any relationship which looks to weakness, and hopes to find love there.

Any relationship that looks to weakness, and hopes to find love there is one that occurs in a context of privacy, independence, aloneness, loneliness, the orphan mentality, and truth is not to be found there, and your being changed is not to be found there, and you Awakening is not to be found there.

But you, celebrating next Friday of my Birthday by looking to the past and remembering this marvelous thing that happened then, and removing yourself from the present and not being available to me next Friday—that's a matter of looking to weakness.

Weakness is the state of being when joining is absent. It's simple.

I want you to understand that when I'm talking to you about joining with the Holy Spirit or with your Brother or with the Father, I'm talking about an act that amounts to an experience of overwhelming proportions, of incredible proportions, involving incredible involvement of a mutual infinite Movement in which everyone involved in that Movement feels everyone else's involvement with him or her in looking to see the glory of God that is occurring and attracting everyone's attention, and by giving that attention to it, participating in it by being the acknowledgement of it, because no one is running back to the orphanage with all the news about the Movement of Creation, or running back to the orphanage to function better there because of everything that was gleaned from the direct experience of Creation. You see?

It amounts to ending up being finished with doing anything in the orphanage or believing anything about being orphans, or of fear and guilt—the two partners—and all the bullshit we've been reading about that has to do with the ego state of being that is an illusion. It's total fraud.

So Chapter Sixteen is a wonderful chapter: *The Forgiveness of Illusions*. And now you know that forgiveness of illusions is you abandoning them in favor of an incredible involvement of being with all of your Brothers, but One which you will start to allow yourself to have with just one: Me or the Holy Spirit or the Father or maybe all three of us. But it will start out simple.

I love you all. And I look forward to being with you next time. More than that, I look forward to being with you frequently, more often, because you are bringing your attention to me with, for lack of better words, an inquiry because an inquiry starts an involvement, it is a movement of involvement. It's a movement of desire. And every desire includes within itself everything necessary for its fulfillment.

I gladly look forward to being with you next week.

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