

# A COURSE IN MIRACLES

## STUDY GROUP

### WITH RAJ

August 4<sup>th</sup> 2012

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

A new section:

#### ***SIN VERSUS ERROR***

Now, where in the world did this come from?

We ended up with a significant clarifying thought last week which said:

***Let then, your dedication be to the eternal, and learn how NOT to interfere with it and make it slave to time. For what you think you do to the eternal you do to YOU. Whom God created as His Son is slave to nothing, being lord of all along with his Creator. You can enslave a body, but an IDEA is free, incapable of being kept in prison, or limited in any way except by the mind that thought it. For it remains joined to its source, which is its jailor or its liberator, according to which it chooses as its purpose for itself.***

Now earlier on, the *Course* said, *to have faith is to heal*. And then we proceeded to find beautiful expressions about how through the practice of faith, healing can occur because it's inseparable from the practice of faith. And then we ended up:

***Let then, your dedication be to the eternal, . .***

. . . right?

Now . . . it's like, out of the blue: *SIN VERSUS ERROR*

But we have had an interesting time, have we not, with words and new meanings? We've talked about *thinking* and *listening* and the fact that the two, you could say, stand on either side of a chasm. They really are not linked in any way.

Then, we talked about *faith* and *faithlessness*. And again, the two stand on either side of a chasm. They do not relate to each other. And we found that faith is not something *you* express, but rather faith is something *you give*. You give your attention to the Father, enquiring to know what the truth is—or to the Holy Spirit, desiring to know what the truth is.

And then you shut up and you listen. You see? Thinking and listening. You listen and you let yourself be infilled and you determine, we will say, to listen without interference until you hear, because the point is to hear. And when you hear, you find yourself filled with understanding and with faith that is a Gift from God.

Faith is not something you practice, it's something you stand in receipt of. You see?

Faithlessness, on the other hand—and I am repeating myself because it's important for these things to be very clear—faithlessness doesn't make sense to the ego, to what you would call the rational mind, because faithlessness is when you're relying on yourself alone as an independent agent for change.

It seems like it's an action of faith because you are bringing your faith to bear upon the situation. But because you are behaving unequivocally as an orphan when you're not, because you are relying entirely upon yourself without desiring to know of your Source—of the Father, of God—what the truth is, you, as we said, put yourself in the position of misunderstanding everything. You put yourself in a state of active ignorance that causes you to be unable to see the Kingdom of Heaven as the Kingdom of Heaven. And instead, you see and experience it as a material universe.

In other words, faith and faithlessness are not equal. They do stand on either side of a chasm of an actual unchangeable separation and they determine how you are going to experiencing Reality: truly or falsely. Makes all the difference in the world because the Kingdom of Heaven—harmony—embodies and expresses life alone. And the other expresses sin, sickness, death and all of the other negatives of the human condition.

Now after listening to what we discussed last week, one might think that all one has to do is engage in the holy instant, turn your attention to the Father,

be determined to be attentive until you are able to let the Father's Response register with you and then, in the presence of that influx of inspiration and faith, see your Brother or Sister in the light of the truth of them because that is revealed in the process of faith being gifted to you. And then, shall I say, magically observing healing occurring spontaneously with your Brother or Sister because of the innocence of your vision.

Now, that isn't always the case and that is exactly why we now are entering into an exposition of the difference between sin and error

Now it's interesting, you may be infused with faith, understanding and spiritual clarity that you've never experienced before that reveals your Brother to you in a light you hadn't seen him or her before—an amazing and healing perspective. When that happens, as I've said, your behavior immediately changes because you can't help but relate to your Brother in the context of this new clarity which you are experiencing.

Now, if there is a call for correction and you have seen it and you have let yourself be filled with faith and understanding, two things will happen: Either there will be spontaneous healing, or there will *not*. Either healing will be received—will be allowed, your Brother will let it in and will let go of whatever the details of the bondage were. But sometimes what calls for correction is something that your Brother doesn't want corrected.

And it's important for you to understand this so you don't feel as though what I'm sharing is baseless and false or that you have somehow not practiced the holy instant well . . . that it must be your fault. In fact, if you are dealing with someone who is also a student of the *Course*, and understands about the holy instant and understands, we'll say, from their perspective what we read last week, they might be inclined to say, "There is nothing going on with me that needs correcting. It is your perspective that is false and you are projecting it on me."

And the reason for making that statement is to delay engaging in the correction that does indeed need to be made. It is very easy to avoid correction that isn't wanted by blaming the other person's perspective and laying a guilt trip on him or her for having such a misunderstanding. And yet at the bottom line, this whole exchange of ideas placing the guilt where it doesn't belong is just a means of delaying being involved in the correction.

Now: *SIN VERSUS ERROR* pretty much equate to thinking, and I'm going to say, listening. It pretty much equates to faith and faithlessness.

I'm going to read:

*It is essential that error be not confused with “sin,” and it is this distinction which makes salvation possible.*

What’s the difference between sin and error? Well the difference is that error you don’t want to hold on to. Error hurts and you don’t want to hurt. You’re willing to give up error. But sin, we’ll say, is error you want to keep. Sin is something you don’t want to release.

It’s very simple. You’re running a fever. You’re uncomfortable or you have a stomachache or you bumped your finger in the door. There’s no way you want to hold on to these things. When you say, “Help” you really want help and you’re really willing to let go of the pain—the distress. You see? Because having it is a result of an error, an error, indeed in your mind—a misunderstanding of what you divinely Are.

As God created you, it’s not your Birthright to be experiencing any of those things I just described. And you deserve to be free of them. It is your Birthright not only to not have had them enter your experience, but also to have them leave your experience [snaps fingers] instantaneously because God did not ordain them and therefore, they have no justification for remaining.

It’s simple. Healing, you desire because it’s the release from that which is unpleasant.

And so, when you stop thinking, which is what results in sin, sickness and death—pain of any sort—when you abandon thinking and you choose to listen for the answer, you’re willing to hear it. And if you are joined with a Brother who is willing to listen, on your behalf, to hear the truth about you so that you might become free of the pain, you are *willing* to hear the answer that will relieve you. You see?

So, what is it about sin? Well, sin is like thinking. Let’s be really clear: *Thinking is sin*. Thinking is you, the holy Son or Daughter of God insisting on behaving as though you’re not, and that you are an independent entity formed out of the ethers, physically as a fluke of evolution. You see? That thinking creates a misinterpretation and a distorted experience of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now, how did sin come about? Because it’s really simply one thing. It isn’t all the complexities of sinfulness that you can talk about. Sin describes you and another Son or Daughter of God saying to God, “Father, I want a divorce from You. Father, I want to stand on my own. Father, I want to determine the meaning of everything. You see? I...I...I...I want to magnify “I.” I want to engage in activities that make me God. You see?

Now what is that? It can be called an attack on God because you are trying to separate yourself from your Source—your Father, your Mother. It's you trying to create a new origin of yourself. Get it? And it's called the origin-al sin—the original sin, the mistake, the false belief about your origin. And the attempt then to become actualized, as I've said many times, as an independent agent, it is the attempt to be successfully independent when it's impossible for you to exist that way. And the only way you could seem to have the possibility of doing it is because you've already been created, not at your own hand.

So when you said, "Father, I'd rather do it myself. Father, I'd rather determine what things are myself." And you attempted to do what couldn't be done, you engaged in sin. But it's more than that. Because it's one thing to, you might say, doodle with Creation and alter it here and there and play with it, it's another thing to do it with gusto! To do it with commitment! And at the bottom line, once the decision was made to attempt to function independently, what you would call the power of your being, which is really emotion, rose up with a commitment to succeed at doing the impossible.

That commitment to succeed at doing the impossible is the original and real meaning of addiction.

You can be addicted to a lot of little things. You can be addicted to heroin, you can be addicted to pot, you can be addicted to jujubes . . . it doesn't have to be something horrible. You could be addicted to collecting butterflies. But the point is, that you do it with an obsession and all of these lesser forms of addiction really reflect the only addiction there is, which is, at the bottom line, to not Wake up—to not be the Son or Daughter of God that you Are. You see?

You say "I want to Wake up," you say "I love *A Course in Miracles*," you say "I love what Raj has to say and I study it and I try to practice it." But as you all know, you *lapse* in the practice of it. Why? Well you say, "It's because it's a habit. I'm used to thinking. I'm used to figuring things out." You see?

But it's more than that. It's that you do not want to abandon the attempt to succeed at being Fatherless, Motherless, independent, autonomous. You're addicted to it. That's why you lapse. You really value it more.

And so, although you're familiar with looking at your Brother or Sister or a family member or a neighbor and watch them disallow correction, disallow healing, and you can see what they're doing, each one of you who is not Awake at this moment is doing the same thing.

It's interesting that that's all the meaning there is to the word, "sin"—the attempt to accomplish something that is impossible, obsessively. And we're talking about obsessively attempting to change the constitution of your mind

so completely that it is incomprehensible to perceive yourself to be the holy Son or Daughter of God.

So:

*It is essential that error be not confused with "sin," and it is this distinction which makes salvation possible. For error can be corrected, and the wrong made right.*

Why? Because that's what you want. You don't want to hurt. You don't want to hold onto errors. Because you're not using them to make something important out of yourself, you're not using them as building blocks to create a self-hood that has incredible control and power.

*But sin, were it possible, . .*

. . . and those are the key words.

*But sin, were it possible, would be irreversible.*

Not correctable.

*The belief in sin is necessarily based on the firm conviction that MINDS, not bodies, can attack.*

And you all know that you use that skill really well. Maybe you don't have to use it often, but when it's needed, [snaps fingers] man, you've got the skill!

*The belief in sin is necessarily based on the firm conviction that MINDS, not bodies, can attack. And thus the mind IS guilty, and will forever so remain unless a mind not part of it can give it absolution.*

Actually, the very fact that you said, "Father I want to do things for myself, I want a divorce" and so on, that's really the only form of attack that needs to be corrected. All other attacks are copycats. And undoing them will not undo the original. But if you undo the original, it will undo all of the copycats.

Now:

*[And] thus the mind IS guilty, and will forever so remain unless a mind not part of it can give it absolution.*

The *mind not part of it* that *can give it absolution* is the Holy Spirit—that part of the holy Son of God that is being ignored, that was separate from in an attempt to be autonomous. And its function is to undo the divorce. Its

function is to reinstate your Sanity. Its function is to heal your mind by making it clear to you that this sin has never been a sin. What has happened is not irreversible because *it is only an error*.

And I promise you, that once you see that all it is, is an error you will want to let go of it just as though it was appendicitis or a badly stubbed toe.

***Sin calls for punishment as error for correction, . .***

. . . *sin calls for punishment as error calls for correction*. But here's what it says:

***Sin calls for punishment as error for correction, and the belief that punishment IS correction is clearly insane.***

In everyone's insanity they use punishment as a means of correction. They use punishment as correction. And you know it. But it can only seem to be valid when you think that sin is real, that sin is actual, that the independence that is being sought can actually be *actualized*. And it can't. So punishment will never correct it. The *abandonment* of it will be the only thing that will correct it.

***Sin is not an error, for sin entails an arrogance which the idea of error lacks.***

No one arrogantly has appendicitis. No one arrogantly has a stubbed toe. No one arrogantly has a fever. You see?

***To sin would be to violate reality, and to SUCCEED.***

You see? Again:

***To sin would be to violate reality, and to SUCCEED.***

Now it's my function to share the truth with you, to show that all this is, is an error which is correctable and that no sin has occurred that requires punishment that you cannot escape. When you engage in the holy instant with a Brother asking of the Father to know what is the truth here about your Brother? you are helping demonstrate the fact that their problem is not the result of a sin that they cannot escape the punishment for, and that it is a mistake that can be corrected. You see?

When you engage in the holy instant and desire to know the truth of your Father, the function of that act is to cause healing—correction that will be accepted.

***Sin is the proclamation that attack is real and guilt is justified.***

You did indeed deny your Father and He will never forgive you. And you will never be able to go back Home and so you must make it on you own. You see? But that's an error. It's not true.

***It assumes the Son of God is guilty, and has thus . . .***

. . . what? . . .

***. . . succeeded in losing his innocence, and making himself what God created not. Thus is creation seen as not eternal, . .***

. . . you see? There we are. You practice faithlessness by attempting to be independently successful and you cause the Kingdom of Heaven to seem to be a material world and universe.

***Thus is creation seen as not eternal, and the Will of God open to opposition and defeat.***

Now it can't be true. But if you're sloppy in your thinking, you can believe anything if it serves you. And it might serve you to think that God has been defeated because if He hasn't, great punishment awaits you—unavoidable punishment awaits you. And so that causes your obsession with succeeding at being independent to intensify. You see? It causes you to strive harder to do what you cannot do and it keeps you unconscious of the fact that freedom to be what you divinely Are awaits you as a gift held out to you, for you to take hold of the moment you desire to without any explanation, without any justification.

***Sin is the "grand illusion" underlying all the ego's grandiosity. For by it, God Himself is changed and rendered incomplete.***

Not true. But if you're going to think on your own, if you're going to practice faithlessness, you are going to have a dark, mean-spirited, harsh experience of the Kingdom of Heaven and of being the Son or Daughter of God, simply because you are committed to not believe that you're the Son or Daughter of God in the middle of the Kingdom of Heaven. That's why it's sin. You're committed to an illusion, committed . . . obsessed, it's very [chuckle] very strong commitment. Now:

***The Son of God . . .***

. . . which is what you Are . . .



*... can be mistaken; he can deceive himself; he can even turn the power of his mind against himself. But he CANNOT sin.*

*[repeats] he CANNOT sin. There is nothing he ...*

... there is nothing you ...

*... can do that would REALLY change his reality ...*

... your reality ...

*... in any way, nor make him. . .*

... you ...

*... really guilty.*

Now that statement will over-joy the one who doesn't want to change. *There is nothing you can do that would REALLY change your reality in any way, nor make you really guilty.* Glory hallelujah! I have justification for delaying the correction of my mistake. I can hold onto what I love longer. But:

*There is nothing he can do that would REALLY change his reality in any way, nor make him really guilty.*

But what needs to be corrected still needs to be corrected. False beliefs and commitments to insane attempts to be what you are not has to stop, because it causes you to experience the Kingdom of Heaven as a material world and universe in which you sin, get sick and die, *and you have no choice about it.*

And so correction of that has to occur. It isn't true ... that you are perceiving it is an insanity. But it's not a sin. And you know what? It's not a disease. It's a misperception held onto for faulty reasons. And they are correctible if someone not entertaining your present mindset, who is entertaining the Holy Spirit's Mindset, joins with you and tells you that what you're doing needs correcting and there will not be punishment from its correction. There will be release from the sin, disease and death that you're already experiencing by virtue of not correcting it. You see?

And that's what I'm doing. And that's what each of you will do when you choose to practice the holy instant in the context of a holy relationship. Again:

*There is nothing he can do that would REALLY change his reality in any way, nor make him really guilty. That is what sin would do, for such is its purpose. Yet for all the wild insanity inherent in the whole idea of sin, it is IMPOSSIBLE.*

If it is impossible then even though sin seems to have occurred it hasn't because sin is succeeding at being what you cannot be, sin is succeeding at denying God and by that denial causing Him to cease to exist. It cannot be done. *It is impossible.* You see? That's why the solution to your dilemma is easy.

*For the wages of sin IS death, . .*

. . . that happens to be true. The wages of sin IS death. It's inescapable . . .

*. . . and how can the immortal die?*

You see? So it's not possible.

*For the wages of sin IS death, and how can the immortal die?*

You see? It's irrational. It's meaningless. Now:

*A major tenet in the ego's insane religion is that sin is not error but TRUTH, and it is INNOCENCE that would deceive.*

*INNOCENCE* . . . oh, how about that which teaches of innocence? The ego says that which would teach of innocence, like I am doing with you and like any of you will do with your Brothers if you practice the holy instant, when I teach of your innocence I am telling the truth, but your conditioned thinking says, "No, it is not. It's a nice idea that I'm a holy Son of God but it certainly isn't actual enough for me to be experiencing it now. I can't claim my divinity and stand in the face of error and not be moved by it. I can't stand with the truth of myself and watch appendicitis [snaps fingers] vanish, let's say, even in five minutes, much less immediately. I can't!" You see?

So when I tell you these things and I base it on your innocence, and I teach you of your innocence, it's all turned into a lie, or something true in the sweet-by-and-by . . . but not now. And so it's denied and you must continue to suffer or you must assume that it's going to be extremely difficult to demonstrate your holiness. You see?

And so your faithlessness in the sense of not actually engaging in the two-step and the holy instant occurs, you refrain from practicing the two-step with follow-through. And I'm here to tell you: engage in it *with follow-through* because there is nothing binding you. You have not sinned. You have not become what you cannot be. And although you've imagined that you've gotten a divorce from your Father, your Oneness with Him hasn't changed and never will.

*Purity is seen as arrogance, . .*

. . . a poor substitute for the arrogance of being a mean-old-bastard who can get anything done through force and manipulation, because one is so excellent at being a mean-old-bastard. You see? That kind of arrogance is quite acceptable. And the better you get at being a mean-old-bastard with a certain amount of finesse, the more powerful you become and of course, the less likely you are going to want to listen to what I'm saying when I say, "Stop! The correction of the problem, the way to move out of the path of sin, sickness and death and mortality is to stop thinking and to start listening, to join with the Father—your Father, who happens to be God, you holy Son of God—I'm telling you the truth about you." But you're not going to want to listen to that because you have this great commitment to still attempting to succeed at the impossible.

*Purity . . .*

. . . anything good . . .

*. . . is seen as arrogance, and the acceptance of the self as sinful is perceived as holiness.*

"I'm a mean-old-bastard and I'm good at it, and it counts for something. In the long run it counts for something. At the end of the day it counts for something. And I am going to persist in what counts for something!"

*And it is this doctrine which replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever.*

You see? It replaces the Reality. You use your mind to blind yourself to the Reality and at one level or another you know you are doing it. And therefore, you know that you have denied, or we'll say, attacked the Father and therefore, you *know* that you are guilty and therefore, you know that you cannot avoid punishment. You see? And the cards are stacked against you skillfully by *you*. But the cards will fall the minute you stop all of that mental gymnastics, all of those mental gymnastics and you shut up and you say, "Father, what is the truth here?" It's so simple. The correction is simple because sin has not occurred, just error.

*[And] it is this doctrine which replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever. Is this humility? Or is it, rather, an attempt to wrest creation AWAY from truth, and keep it separate?*

*Any attempt to re-interpret sin as error . . .*

. . . which I've just been describing . . .

*. . . is always indefensible to the ego.*

So be attentive and watch for the arguments that come up in you that make such a statement indefensible, meaning, make it something not reasonable for you to pursue with persistence. See, the whole purpose would simply be to immobilize you and stop you from discovering that your cell is not locked—the door on your cell is unlocked.

*The idea of sin is wholly sacrosanct to its thought system, and quite unapproachable except through reverence and awe.*

Well, just think of Darwin's theories and the awe and the reverence that are given to them, which account for God in no way at all, and arrogantly suggest existence and creation to not be the evidence, the ongoing evidence of a living God, Primal Intelligence, Love, Life, Truth, Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit.

It's quite a thought system. And it's a thought system that sanctifies the idea that you not only don't have a Father, you didn't have a Father that you got a divorce from. You're just hanging out there in the wind, Sourceless and Beingless. And it's not true.

*It is the most "holy" concept in the ego's system; lovely and powerful, wholly true, and necessarily protected with every defense at its disposal.*

In other words, that sin is true, sin is not an error.

*For here lies its "best" defense, which all the others serve. Here is its armor, its protection, and the fundamental purpose of the special relationship in its interpretation.*

What is it that it defends you against? It defends you against the truth that there is a God, that you are the direct expression of God, every moment brand new. That you are the living current expression of a living current God, and you are holy and the environment infinitely that you exist in, is the Kingdom of Heaven and you're supposed to be experiencing it without any distortions whatsoever. And you can have the experience because you didn't actually do anything that's irrevocable that will keep you from experiencing your Birthright and because the only thing that stand between you and the clear glorious experience of Reality is a mistake, an error which is correctible. It's a mistake which holds no eternal meaning in itself, which if you just simply abandon it, "Oops, I dropped it in the middle of the ocean . . . Oops, I dropped it!" You see? That's the simplicity of it.

Now I will briefly touch on this tonight: Now that you know that the practice of the holy instant will not spontaneously cause correction, because there are those who will insist upon holding onto that which needs to be corrected and not let it be corrected. You must begin to consider a new . . . what you will do when you're confronted by that.

Now I don't want you to imagine what you will do, I want you to ask. I want you to ask within . . . what do you do? What do you do with someone who is unwilling to be healed?

I love you all. And I look forward to being with you next time.

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*A Course In Miracles (reference pages)*

*Chapter 19 – Section: SIN VERSUS ERROR*

*<sup>1</sup> Sparkly Book – p.453 / JCIM – p.189 / CIMS – p.381*

*Chapter 19 – Section: HEALING AND FAITH*

*First Edition – p. 374 / Second Edition – p.402*

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