

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

April 25, 2015

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AND WILL BE UPDATED

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

Let's go back to the Beginning. A little refresher helps.

In the Beginning there was peace. In the Beginning there was fullness. In the Beginning there was indivisible wholeness. In the Beginning was the experience of omnipotence. The only thing was, that omnipotence wasn't something enacted by the Sons and Daughters and God. It was, rather, experienced as invulnerability—the absence of any call for any act of authority whatsoever. And Being—the experience of Being—was the conscious experience of the Movement of Creation in its pristine perfection because there was nothing present in the omnipresence of God to create a distortion of any sort.

And so again, in the Beginning, there was peace. Then as we've discussed through the years, a decision was made by two or more Sons and Daughters of God. They said to each other in so many words, "Let's *pretend* . . . let's pretend that the tree is not an idea, but is something quite physically tangible in its own right and it derives its life from moisture from the ground it is growing in. And in fact, it is growing *in the ground*—lets decide that for sure. It is not what we have experienced it to be—the ever-present illuminated Presence of the Love of God exhibiting Life, Truth, Intelligence, Principle, Mind,

Soul and Spirit as is the ground, as is the moisture, and nothing is living off of anything else. But no, let's pretend otherwise. Let's agree together, let's decide to imagine and make commitment to our imagination."

Now, as we've discussed, something happened that was quite surprising. Because after all, this "decision" was made by those who had experienced omnipotence, meaning invulnerability—eternal unchangeable harmony of Being. And so when this decision to stop referring everything that they were experiencing back to the Father, which was their part in the Movement of Creation—their co-creative part—they, in effect, divorced themselves from That which was Being them, That which was expressing Itself and appearing as Them. And the surprise was, that the experience of omnipotence *vanished*. It wasn't expected, because the decision was being made by those who knew they were omnipotent.

Now two things came into play instantaneously and automatically. And the reason it came into play was because it was the innate sanity of the Sons and Daughters of God who were going to pretend to be disconnected from their Source. The sanity that was making it clear at an experiential level that they could not become something less than what the Father was Being them as, couldn't happen without the experience of dissonance—something that said, "don't do this, it is impossible. You will discover the impossibility of it. And while you are discovering the impossibility of it, you will not be comfortable because you will be in a state of Self-denial."

And two things came into play—like two sides of a coin: The first was fear, although they didn't come in a specific order, they came simultaneously, and the second was guilt. Fear and guilt inundated them. Nevertheless, because they still knew they were omnipotent even though they couldn't understand why they weren't experiencing it, they insisted upon being independent with more intensity, with more willfulness. The act of independence was the obstacle to peace.

The act of independence which brought into play fear and guilt, was the obstacle to peace. It was that which disallowed for That which was from the Beginning and still was the Fact and the purpose of It was to say, "don't proceed any further down this path." But the

desire for power, the desire to engage in an action which would defeat the fear and the guilt was brought into play.

And so, the obstacle to peace, which was the act of independence, took on some additional character—four characteristics. And right now in this place in the *Course*, these four things are being discussed. And we are resuming in the second section of the *OBSTACLES TO PEACE*, entitled: *The Belief the Body is Valuable for What it Offers*. And although I said we would start on a certain paragraph, I am moving back to the beginning, about six paragraphs of this section.

It says:

We said that peace must first surmount the obstacle of your desire to get rid of it.

Interesting. Now we've discussed this previously. But why would you want to get rid of the peace? You would want to get rid of the peace because it would mean you would lose this sense of authority—this sense of independent *power*, willfulness, that causes you to seem to be of importance all by yourself on your own.

Why would you want peace when it requires you to lose an experience of strength—of having a will of your own? Well, only because you don't realize that it's an illusion. But because you don't, you held onto it, and exercised it with more fervor.

Continuing . . .

Where the attraction of guilt holds sway, peace is not WANTED.

Well, you know, this will come up later. Another reason not to abandon this thrill—the hit of independent willful action, and the promise of personal power that it seems to hold. Why would you want to let go of that if it meant returning to the Father . . . deferring to the Father, honoring the Father, wouldn't your disobedience be punished? You see?

That's another reason—that is the fourth reason for not embracing your peace once again. And that's an illusion too, caused by the fact that everything you're perceiving now is in the imagination and isn't true and isn't real. Again:

Where the attraction of guilt holds sway, peace is not WANTED.

And let's be very clear. If you are not joined constantly with That which is nothing more than your right Mind—the Holy Spirit—and if you are not joined with me all the time, if you are not companioning with That or those which are Awake, you are in the realm of imagination. You are where fear and guilt govern and you are where fear and guilt govern the way you experience everything including the return Home . . . including your return to embrace the Holy Spirit . . . including your willingness to join with me. All of it is colored by fear and guilt.

And so, there is resistance—obstacles to peace.

Now, to summarize what we've discussed in the previous chapter, the previous section . . .

PAUL: I'm sorry. This is me, Paul, I lost it . . . just a moment . . .

RAJ: Continuing . . . in the first paragraph of *the Obstacles to Peace, Part II*:

The second obstacle that peace must flow across, and closely related to the first, is the belief that the body is valuable for what it offers. For here is the attraction of guilt made manifest in the body, and SEEN in it.

Now we've already covered this in the last meeting. But to summarize it: The body is your means of presenting force to your willfulness. It is the means by which you exercise *power* to make change or to coerce people, whether it's through fist fights, whether it's through a caress, whether it's through a loud voice, whether it's through a physical demeanor that expresses commitment and therefore

apparent strength and so on. You use the body as the means of exerting force literally, to make change. And in this state of independence governed by fear and guilt, you have developed a theory—a set of concepts—that suggest that to whatever degree you are able to bring forth into play, whether for good or for ill, it increases your independent existence and will ultimately bring you, like Pinocchio, to a point of becoming a real boy *on your own*, which we've discussed before, as well.

And so, put simply, the body is the second thing used as an obstacle to peace. Why would you abandon that which promises you *reality* without being connected to your Source and brings into play capacities of thought and reason and logic that will cause you to succeed in this task—capacities God gave you and set you free to utilize—so you could make something out of yourself? That's the theory that has arisen out of independence and the resulting fear and guilt. It's the obstacle to peace.

Why is peace important? Because in the silence of your Being when your independent chatter of the mind and the willfulness with which you use your mind for purposes other than peace, if you had disengaged from that, you are afraid that will succumb to all of the worst—everything will collapse, there will be no order.

But that's because in the realm of fear and guilt, you can't remember that order and peace were the first law of Being. Peace was in the Beginning. Peace, because God hasn't changed, is still in the Now, in the Present. Peace has gone nowhere and what you divinely Are hasn't changed one bit.

Recognizing the obstacles to peace and abandoning them, puts you at the threshold of remembering who you divinely Are. It puts you at the threshold of hearing the Holy Spirit remind you gently but firmly, and encouragingly, and lovingly of what it is your Birthright to be consciously experiencing instead of fear and guilt and everything you have associated with it.

The end of the obstacles to peace comes in the holy instant. It comes in the two-step, where you shut up, and in the genuine humble Silence that is present, you reach out beyond any of your best

thinking and you say, “Father, Holy Spirit, what is the truth here? What is the experience that it is my Birthright to be having, which I lost the experience of when I decided to try to be independent and cherish the independence?” And then stay in the Silence. Continue to bring your attention to the threshold of Awakening—the threshold by which you abandon your independence.

Now, most of this I have said before. In the Silence, when you are genuinely, trustingly, humbly and even sometimes humiliatedly listening because you are feeling incapable and not objecting to it, Revelation occurs—inspiration infills you—the Holy Spirit, your right Mind responds and registers with you. The Christ can reach you. The Father can reach you. Your Guides can reach you and they do. And there is a shift of perception that occurs.

Peace is fleshed out with the experience of why it’s incontrovertible, unchangeable, eternal, and why it’s an excellent description of the omnipotence of your Being—the invulnerability of your Being. That means that authority never has to be brought into play for self-defense. And this changes your perception about your brothers and sisters and about your world.

Now, continuing into the fourth paragraph of this section: It says . . .

Peace is extended from you only to the eternal, and it reaches out from the eternal in YOU.

When you abandon the independence where mortality, not eternity is the rule, when you step out of it, you experience the eternal that has always been present, active and inseparable from you because it’s your nature instigated by the Father’s act of Self-expression.

So, when you move in to the holy instant, when you allow peace by devaluing all of your *best skilled independent thinking* and listen, and hear, you move out of that realm of mortality. You experience your eternity, and I will tell you something, whatever you experience about the Truth of you, you simultaneously recognize as being the Truth about your fellowman and it’s so simple then to be able to appreciate and honor your fellowman in that place. And so . . .

Peace is extended from you only to the eternal, . .

. . . meaning, to all that really exists, all of Creation including your brothers . . .

. . . and it reaches out from the eternal in YOU.

Do you see? It means that your willingness to abandon the obstacle to peace that values your body for the power it can bring into play in order to secure your safety, make you important, and also cause you to become a “real boy” independent of your Source, when you abandon that, your experience of your brothers and sisters is that they have been released from it as well *in your conscious awareness of them*. The eternal in you extends to the eternal in them that you are recognizing and experiencing, and blesses them.

Again:

Peace is extended from you only to the eternal, and it reaches out from the eternal in YOU. It flows across all else. The second obstacle . . .

. . . the valuing of the body and not wanting to let go of the good it brings to you.

The second obstacle is no more solid than the first. For you will neither to get rid of peace NOR limit it. What are these obstacles which you would interpose between peace and its going forth but barriers you place between your will and its accomplishment?

This is important. You place barriers between your will and the accomplishment of your will. But this is not speaking here of your human will, or I will put it this way, your divine will perceived through the lens of fear and guilt which cause it to seem quite separated from That which placed It in you and continues to express It in you as you at this moment.

You WANT communion, not the feast of fear.

That's your will.

You WANT salvation, not the pain of guilt.

You do not want to be experiencing either of the two sides of the coin—fear or guilt. But as long as you choose for fear and guilt and the wonderful challenge of overcoming them all by yourself, *you keep fear and guilt alive* and block your willingness to let your true will be accomplished.

And you want your Father, NOT a little mound of clay, to be your home.

[note: Raj skipped reading rest of paragraph]

Now:

You have paid very dearly for your illusions, and nothing you have paid for brought you peace. Are you not GLAD . . .

. . . GLAD . . .

. . . that Heaven cannot be sacrificed, and sacrifice cannot be asked of you?

It's impossible for the omnipotence of God to be overthrown by a puny little willful act of imagination. It's impossible. And no matter what you've thought you've done, you haven't done it! And whatever you think because of your fear and guilt, that you will be punished for, you never did. Therefore, punishment is not awaiting you, but like the Prodigal Son, embrace and the abundance, the infiniteness of the Father is bestowed upon you. Not because you didn't have it and the Father finally brings it to you, but because you're not blocking what was never taken away from you, except that which you chose to ignore in the excitement and fun of trying to be something you cannot be and overcoming the dissonance of fear and guilt that accompanied it.

This has to be becoming clearer and clearer.

You know what? Every moment is the threshold of illusion or Truth. At every moment, you, the holy Son or Daughter of God is confronted by the Kingdom of Heaven and nothing else! If you choose to view it from a state of independence where fear and guilt color everything you're seeing, you seem to have lost your holiness. In fact, it's hard to believe that you really are holy. But your holiness has not deteriorated nor declined in the least through all of this imagination.

. . . Heaven cannot be sacrificed, and sacrifice cannot be asked of you? There IS no obstacle which you can place before our union, for in your holy relationship I am there already.

That means: in your holy relationship with your brothers and sisters or the trees or the lady bugs or the scorpions or the grass, I am there already with you. The Holy Spirit—that which is nothing more than your infinite capacity to experience everything without distortion—is there already.

We will surmount all obstacles together, for we stand within the gates, and not outside.

What does that mean? It means you and we stand within the Presence of Mind in which the conscious experience of everything is going on, and in which the meaning and substantiality and validity of everything is waiting your acknowledgement and your recognition that God—the Infinite Mind—is expressing those ideas perfectly, eternally.

How easily the gates are opened from within, . .

. . . meaning, from the presence of mind that you are . . .

. . . to let peace through to bless the tired world!

Meaning, to cause the transformation of the Kingdom of Heaven that you were seeing as a troubled world, back into what it truly is, the Kingdom of Heaven—a *healed world*, Creation with no more distortions blinding you to Its glory and your glory—because it's *your role* to be co-creator in the Movement of Creation.

Can it be difficult for us to walk past barriers together, when you have joined the limitless?

And I'm going to add, "*instead of the finite.*" You're not alone. You're accompanied by your very own divinity, the Holy Spirit. You're accompanied by me. You're not accompanied by the Father. You are *initiated* by the Father now . . . now . . . now . . . now . . . now. The eternal idea that you are is constantly infused with the *brand new* expression of the energy of God and you miss this when you choose to operate within the realm of fear and guilt, and make commitment to being there and staying there.

The end of guilt . . .

Listen to this:

The end of guilt is in your hands to . . .

. . . what? Not take hold of. Not to create, but to *give*.

The end of guilt is in your hands to give.

That means engaging in forgiveness. That means looking at the Kingdom of Heaven and withdrawing your misperception, your highly valued misperception which gives you a feeling of importance that you're unwilling to let go of because you need to know that there is something valid about you, but you can't see it when you're looking through the lens of fear and guilt.

The end of guilt is in your hands to give. Would you stop now to look for guilt in each other?

Would you?

Would you stop now to look for guilt in each other?

You *must*, no matter what justifications you think you have. Those justifications are pure imagination colored by guilt and fear, which

stops you in your tracks from coming Home, from yielding to the Father, from letting your right Mind back in to be the totality of you.

Now that's where we ended up when we were last reading from the *Obstacles to Peace*. Continuing . . .

Let me be to you the symbol of the END of guilt, and look upon each other as you would look on me.

In other words, look upon each other as the symbol of the end of guilt. Your brothers and sisters are holy Sons and Daughters of God. They are guiltless, no matter what the definition you are applying to them, no matter what the definition they are applying to themselves, when both of you are insisting upon looking at everything through the lens of fear and guilt.

Forgive me all the sins you think the Son of God . . .

Meaning your brothers, your sisters . . .

. . . committed.

*Forgive me all the sins you think [they] committed.
And in the light of your forgiveness, he . . .*

. . . your brother or your sister . . .

. . . will remember who he is, and forget what never was.

You don't believe that. You have too much experience behind you to say that having faith in your brother doesn't always work, "and with this one it never has worked!" And you believe yourself. You don't realize that this has nothing to do with your brother, but it has entirely to do with an idea in your own mind which has been put through the sieve of fear and guilt and is causing you to misapprehend your brother and sister. And as long as you are committed to that, you will *not* find your brother or sister remembering who he is, but rather reacting to your *lousy perception*

which you are holding him to and attempting to convince him of, by means of your lousy unloving behavior.

I ask for your forgiveness, for if you are guilty, so must I be.

A simple sentence absolutely true: Life changing.

I ask for your forgiveness, for if you are guilty, so must I be. But if I surmounted guilt and overcame the world, YOU were with me. Would you see in me the symbol of guilt, or of the END of guilt, remembering that what I signify to you you see within YOURSELF?

You look at me through the lens of fear and guilt and it is hard for you to trust me. It is hard for you to let me in. It is easier for you to say that someone else has the talent to do it, and you don't. That is the way you block me from registering with you and uncovering, revealing your divinity to you as an experience. You block me by relying upon your pitiful assessment of your capacity, or of me.

From your holy relationship truth proclaims the truth, and love looks on itself. Salvation flows from deep within the home you offered to my Father and to me.

What home? Your heart, your soul, the quiet place in you, the altar in the center of you, when you practice the two-step or the holy instant and you silence your independence and you say, "Father, Holy Spirit, Jesus, what is the truth here?" you've made a home for us, the obstacle to us, you have abandoned.

Salvation flows from deep within the home you offered to my Father and to me.

When? A moment ago, ten moments ago, three hours ago when you were in the grocery store, five hours ago when you picked up a MacDonald's hamburger. You see? Every moment is a moment in which to practice the holy instant, *to bring your curiosity, your*

attention with desire to experience the more of what God is being right there than what you're used to seeing because of the definitions you've been using and valuing. You see?

Salvation flows from deep within the home you offered to my Father and to me. And we are there together, in the quiet communion in which the Father and the Son are joined.

This is the way it works. And it needs to become apparent that the obstacles to peace are silly imaginations that truly don't require your servitude, your allegiance, your commitment to.

Oh come ye faithful to the holy union of the Father and Son in you!

The holy Son of God, the holy Daughter of God that you Are right now and have forever been.

And keep you not apart from what is offered you, in gratitude for giving peace its home in Heaven.

You see, when the obstacles to peace are released, change occurs, transformation of your mind occurs as you become Sane, divinely Sane once again. And you're in a new place with new gifts to make. Spontaneous gifts that end up being made the moment you recognize something new that you see is incontrovertible and from which you cannot withhold your devotion to any longer—your acknowledgement of.

Send forth to all the world the joyous message of the end of guilt, and . . .

. . . what?

. . . all the world will answer.

Not true, you say. "Just look at the mess everything's in and it's getting worse and it's getting scarier. It's becoming more undependable. The rules of war are no longer being abided by. And

random acts of hatred that can't be predicted because there aren't any rules of bad behavior that everybody has agreed to follow. And this makes it really scary. And this makes it seem as though evil is really real." You see?

Wait a minute . . . you can't afford to switch your attention to a world out there and not realize that when you do that you slip back into your best or worst definitions of everything, which you have commitment to, and that you have *forgotten* that you do not have to look at everything through the lens of fear and guilt, which are not your Birthright and which will vanish the moment you withdraw your attention from your definitions about everything "out there" and in the absence of them, in the gentle holy silence in the middle of you, you say, "Holy Spirit, what is the divine truth here?" You see?

As it has been said, "You can never solve a problem from the level of the problem." You can never solve the effects of fear and guilt from the realm of fear and guilt. And so you have to bring your attention to another place. And that's the whole point of the holy instant.

Where is the threshold to Awakening? You could say it's right in the center of you. But I'm going to be more specific: The threshold of Awakening is in the Now.

Right now, if you abandon your thinking, you will be aware of where you Are. You will be aware of the circumstances . . . the trees, the roads, the homes, the furnishings, the people you're with. When you are not preoccupied with your best thinking, which takes you to the past or the future, and you silence it, in the silence your attention will be in the Now. The threshold to Awakening is in the Now. It isn't out there in anyone else's behavior.

The transformation of the world begins with your withdrawal from your great *valuing of your independent self*, and the gathering together of power that you utilize through the use of your body as a means of securing your reality as something you could never be. When you abandon that, the way you see the world will change. When the way you see the world changes, when the way you see your brothers and sisters is a true approximation of what they divinely Are,

there will come from you a *grateful joyous recognition*, an acknowledgement of it. And this will transform.

It's not better rules of war and it's not the forceful coercive manipulation of those who don't want to follow the rules but want to do that which is evil. You see?

Think of your happiness as everyone offers you witness of the end of sin, . .

Think of your happiness—think of the happiness you will experience. .

. . . as everyone offers you witness of the end of sin, and shows you that its power is gone forever.

“Oh, I know, [chuckling] that's really far-fetched isn't it? You're going to tell me that the members of ISIS are going to witness to the ends of sin because I have chosen to humble myself and abandon a different level of willfulness than they're bringing into play. Really? You expect me to believe that?”

Yes, it's the truth. You will see everything falsely as long as you maintain an independent willful commitment to seeing things the way you have decided to define them or the way everyone else has decided that you should define them. It's that simple and the release is that simple.

Where can guilt be, when the belief in sin is gone?

“I know, they're not going to release their belief in sin!” Well, there you go again—you jumped the rails! You abandoned the relinquishment of your very own divorce from the Father by insisting upon *not engaging in the holy instant*, because what good will it do. It's the only way Home, because you never left Home and you never became a sinner among sinners, and the way you're seeing everyone right now is *not dependable*, because you're not seeing them joined with the Holy Spirit, or me or the Father and therefore you are Pinocchio still trying to get your own independence.

And here's the big one:

And where is death, when its great advocate is heard no more?

Fear and guilt and a willful expression of them, are the advocates not only for death but for sin, disease and death. But where is death, where is sin, where is disease when their great advocate is heard no more? Heard from where? Your own preoccupation with your tininess and your vulnerability and your innate capacity that you believe you have to secure your invulnerability as an unhooked puppet. But you can never become unjoined with that Life force, that Mind Intelligence that is forming you and forming you, now . . . now . . . now . . . now in absolute unchanging perfection.

Forgive me your illusions, and release me from punishment for what I have not done.

In other words, stop blocking me. Stop putting up obstacles that keep you from hearing me. Stop blocking the Holy Spirit. Stop putting up the obstacles of personal self-willfulness.

Forgive [us] your illusions, and release [us] from punishment for what [we] have not done.

And really what it means is: release yourself from your own imaginations which are incapable of disclosing to you your fulfillment, your divinity, and the Kingdom of Heaven that is constantly being distorted by the presence of fear and guilt, which will not disappear until you abandon them and join with us.

Forgive me your illusions, and release me from punishment for what I have not done. So will you learn the freedom that I taught by teaching freedom to each other, and so releasing me.

Paul is releasing me right now. He is not withholding me. He's not saying, "At this time it's more important for me to be distressed by what my fear and guilt is confronting me with."

I am within your holy relationship, . .

Your holy relationship. Paul's holy relationship with you, your holy relationship with Paul.

I am within your holy relationship, yet you would imprison me behind the obstacles you raise to freedom, and bar my way to you. Yet it is not possible to keep away One Who is there already.

The Holy Spirit is with you already. *It is You* already in your infinite wholeness. I am with you already. The Father is with you already.

And in Him it IS possible that our communion, where we are joined already, will be . . .

. . . what?

. . . the focus of the new perception that will bring light to all the world, contained in YOU.

You are the Presence of the Father in Expression. *You are the Presence of the Father in Expression.* As with the Father, all there is for you to experience is the Movement of divine Mind. And all there is for you to do with It, is to recognize It and acknowledge It as the Presence of God Being all there is to everything, including you. And therefore, the clear undistorted experience of Reality lies *in you* like a *bright light* that you will recognize the brightness of when you will open your eyes up and stop providing an obstruction to the experience of it.

Now let's remember what are the obstacles to? Peace. What was in the beginning? Peace. What is to become clear again? Peace. Because in Peace is where God's laws reign supreme, where omnipotence, omnipresence and all that Reality truly is, is experienced.

I'm going to read this last sentence again, so it's fresh in your mind:

*And in Him it IS possible that our communion,
where we are joined already, will be the focus of the
new perception that will bring light to all the world,
contained in YOU.*

You holy Son of God, you holy Daughter of God whom I love dearly,
eternally. I look forward to being with you next time.

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

*Chapter 19 – Section: BEYOND THE BODY
Sparkly Book – p.465, 3RD Full Par. / JCIM – p.194, Nest to last Par. / CIMS – p.392, Par. 65
Chapter 19 – Section: THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE
First Edition – p. 385, 2nd Full Par. / Second Edition – p.413, Par. 6*

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