A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

May 3rd, 2015

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

Things are getting simpler and simpler. There are fewer and fewer choices that seem to be available. And the choices that are available are stark and easy to recognize even if everyone is not enthusiastic about accepting their meaning and making a new choice.

You are—every single one of you—holy Sons and Daughters of God right now. That is an eternal *fact*. It is a governing *fact*. Accepting that is one of the choices you have. And at this point, it's becoming clear to everyone that there's only one other choice you can *seem* to make, and that is to deny what I just described you as and to see yourself as what? A body. A body that was born of other bodies as part of an evolution of physicality—of physical form and physical laws.

That seems to everyone to be obvious. The obvious actual choice—the reality. Wow...but it's time for a new perspective. It's time for a corrected perspective.

Any moment you take to just become still and be the presence of attention, you will find that you are able to first of all, imagine and then to actually begin to experience the fact that you are Awareness. You are not a body sitting or standing there, being aware, but you are Awareness in which the experience of body and world and universe is going on. We have discussed this before.

Now, the holy instant is a practice of making a shift from body identification to mind identification. And these are the only two choices you have available to you. They are *the only two choices you've ever had available to you*.

Now, when you join with the Holy Spirit, when you join in the holy instant as conscious awareness with That which is nothing more than your right Mind, which you have been calling the Holy Spirit, you are shifting from body identification to Mind identification. And I'm going to read part of the last sentence we read last week:

[And] in [the Holy Spirit] it IS possible . . .

... and only there is it possible ...

... that our communion ...

... mine, the Holy Spirit's, the Father's with you ...

... 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.

Of course, in you as that Mind, that conscious Awareness which is the Presence of Mind that is God in which all of Creation is embraced and is available for you to experience as what it truly Is, It is shifting from body identification back to Mind identification, which is joining with the Father and claiming no other perception.

That is where translation, transformation, Awakening occurs. And suddenly everything that you have been experiencing and everything that you temporarily were not experiencing will become available to you once again. You will see everything including everything you're already experiencing in the light of what it divinely really is.

And I will tell you, that in that experience, there is no sin, disease or death. There is no fear or guilt. Because those five things exist—or seem to exist *only when body identification is being employed*. We're reading about the *Obstacles to Peace*. And we're reading about the second obstacle which is entitled, *The Belief the Body is Valuable for What it Offers*. Now, man . . . if that isn't body identification, I don't know what it is. You holy Sons and Daughters of God who are not bodies, but who are not body-less.

Now this new sub-heading entitled *PLEASURE AND PAIN* in some of the editions and which is called the *ATTRACTION OF PAIN* in others. And before I continue with the text of it, I will comment that the *ATTRACTION OF PAIN* might seem to be the more appropriate sub-heading because of the fact that pain seems to grab your attention. But actually, it isn't that pain grabs your attention, it's that you *reach for pain*. And you have what you've reached for.

When you said, "Father, I would rather determine what everything is for myself" you chose an act of independence—a state of independence which doesn't exist except in your imagination. And as we've discussed, when that separation imaginatively but not actually occurred, you were immediately met with pain, with fear and guilt. They go hand in hand.

Now, pain is not the only thing you're attracted to when you're identifying as a body. *Pleasure*, you're also attracted to when you are identifying with and as a body. And so the subject is truly is more appropriate—*PLEASURE AND PAIN*—because pleasure and pain looked for in the wrong place, are both illusory, are *both attractive*, and the ego fights for both of them equally. And as is obvious, whoever opposites you are fighting for equally, are going to cause an experience of conflict—an undesirable state which one must endeavor to get out of, or improve. You see?

Now, going into the Text here:

Your little part . . .

Your little part in joining with the Holy Spirit, with me and with the Father which brings into focus the new perception . . .

... Your little part is but to give the Holy Spirit the whole IDEA of sacrifice ...

... of lack, of not being equal to, of always being at a disadvantage, of always having an undercurrent of fear and an undercurrent of guilt which you can't quite identify but which becomes obvious as you, let' say, understand the dynamics of illusion better. You discover that the guilt is there because you know that you have denied the Father, you have denied your *i-d-e-n-t-i-t-y*, your Source. And there is always this undercurrent of guilt. Important to understand.

And so . . .

Your little part . . .

... in the transition ...

... is but to give the Holy Spirit the whole IDEA of sacrifice.

Another way of putting that, now, you can see, is to give up identification with the body and being willing to shift to identification with and as Mind—that conscious awareness in which all conscious experience is occurring.

Your little part is but to give the Holy Spirit the whole IDEA of sacrifice. And to accept the peace He gave instead, without the limits which would hold its extension back, . .

... what's that mean?

... the limits which would hold its extension back, ...

The limits are the obstacles you place in the extension of what the Holy Spirit reveals to you, which you are totally unconscious of when you are dedicated to identifying with and as a body.

Your little part is but to give the Holy Spirit the whole IDEA of sacrifice. And . . .

... in it's place ...

... to accept the peace He gave instead, without the limits which would hold its extension back, and so would limit YOUR awareness of it.

You see? If you do not extend what the Holy Spirit reveals to you to your Brother, you limit your awareness of it. You actually deny your awareness of it. You see? It's binding, you might say—one doesn't come without the other. In your willingness to extend what the Holy Spirit reveals to you because you've asked, "What's the truth here?" If you extend that to your Brother because you love your Brother and because your Brother deserves nothing less than that, you give that to yourself as well. And it confirms both you and your Brother or Sister as the Sons or Daughters of God that you actually are. And that is how the sudden shift of perception occurs that is called, "a miracle."

For what He gives must be extended, if you would have its limitless power, . .

You cannot have what you do not give. You see? You see how simple it's becoming? . . you might say, how choiceless it's becoming?

Now everyone can ignore this and continue to experience sin, sickness and death—the result of introducing obstacles to your peace by introducing obstacles to your union, your communion with me, with the Holy Spirit, with the Father. You see? It's utterly simple. It's utterly, difficultly simple if you bring resistance to it. But it is that simple.

... what He gives must be extended, ...

[repeats] what He gives must be extended, if you would have its limitless power, and . . .

... what? ...

... use it for the Son of God's release.

You can't just accept it and embrace it for yourself. You can't have it if you don't extend it.

It is not this you would be rid of, and having it you CANNOT limit it.

In other words, it is not this you would truly be rid of. You don't want to be rid of that which illuminates your holiness and your Brother's holiness . . . and the experience of what that means.

It is not this you would be rid of, and having it you CANNOT limit it.

You see? The minute you dare to extend to your Brother the illumination that the Holy Spirit provides to you, you also have what you've given and there is no limit to it. It is an experience of *infiniteness*, of absolute wholeness, of integrity, of invulnerability as we discussed last time, which is an experience of omnipotence that doesn't have to be exercised because there is nothing unlike it to exercise it upon.

Now:

If peace is homeless, . .

... if peace isn't finding a residence in you ...

If peace is homeless, so are you and so am I. And He Who is our home is homeless WITH us.

Either all is God Being All, or all is not God being all. It's always a unity. So, only one of them is actual and it's your Birthright to be experiencing it.

Is this your will?

Is it your will to be homeless and for me to be homeless, and for the Father to be homeless?

Is this your will? Would you forever be a wanderer in search of peace?

A wanderer . . . you know about wandering in the wilderness. Well, when you identify as body and have divorced yourself from the experience of being Mind in which everything is going on, you are in the wilderness of fear and guilt. It's that simple. And you move through this desert which you call "life today" struggling, doing your best, sometimes over insurmountable odds it would seem, where there is no support for your doing your best. It's a struggle . . . it's work . . . it's the experience of sacrifice.

But the holy instant is when you give to the Holy Spirit the whole idea of sacrifice. In other words, you abandon identification with the body which is the arena—the desert—in which your Birthright is withheld from you.

Would you forever be a wanderer in search of peace?

If not, then you must start today to dishonor everything you think everything is—all that you think everything is—and be *curious* to see "the More of what God is Being" right there in what you're seeing. And that requires an attitude of Mind—a *desire* in Mind, and a *commitment* in Mind. It constitutes a shift of your operating base, we could say. And when you make that shift, the result will be that everything that looks so horrible—the wilderness of sin sickness and death—will transform so that it becomes obviously, the Kingdom of Heaven.

But it requires, beginning NOW, to consciously choose between body identification and Mind identification.

Would you forever be a wanderer in search of peace? Would you invest your hope of peace and happiness in what MUST fail?

You do invest your *hope of peace* in your body, in your partner, in your home, in your job, in the environment—the physical environment you live in. You invest *your hope of peace* outside of your mind so that you can bring it into your experience and then, because of that, have peace of mind.

But remember, the obstacle of peace is the belief that your body in its own right, is what you are and it has value—value to you. Value to any hope for decency and well-being that you might have.

It's a struggle. It's not your Birthright. Don't be afraid to acknowledge it as a struggle and don't be afraid to acknowledge that the way out of the struggle is to struggle more.

Dare to be radical enough to consciously throughout your days, try to remember that you are the presence of Mind in which all of the experiences, all of the things that you are experiencing is going on and they are the manifestation of the Movement of God, called Creation . . . not as you're seeing them, but as you will see them when you abandon identification with the body and valuing it for the salvation it can bring you.

Would you invest your hope of peace and happiness in what MUST fail?

Body identification? Not really. Not that in you which is divine. Not that in you which Knows that what you're experiencing right now is not right, is not your Birthright. No.

Now here's the thing: When you identify with body, then the next sentence is nonsense—impossible to embrace.

Faith in the eternal is always justified, . .

"Oh no!" your ego says, "Faith in the temporal is the only thing that is justified." Faith in fear and trouble and dissonance and working through problems—this is justified and there is incredible faith in it. But . . .

Faith in the eternal is always justified, for the eternal is forever kind, infinite in its patience, and wholly loving. It will accept you wholly, and give you peace.

But it won't give you peace if peace isn't your goal and if you're not looking for peace in the right place. Fortunately, there are only two places that you *seem* to have to be able to choose between. And one is, your Birthright—to be the divine and holy Son or Daughter of God that you are and never have stopped Being and to give your attention to the Father Who supplies you with the true perception of Creation when you are not holding yourself apart from Him, and when you are not using your mind to provide obstacles to that experience.

The eternal . . .

... will accept you wholly, and give you peace. Yet it can unite only with what ALREADY is at peace in you, immortal as itself.

You know what? The "hooker" is, that you are so bound to your allegiance to body identification and significance, or I'm going to say, apparent significance of fear and guilt, that you cannot find justification—*willingness* to become silent and reach for peace beyond circumstances, the peace that is inherent in your very presence of Mind.

The eternal . . .

... can unite only with what ALREADY is at peace in you, immortal as itself.

Now that's the absolute fact. And if you want to experience *that* which awaits your experience absolutely, you have to be willing to abandon the urgency with which you think you have to honor fear and guilt!

The fear and guilt are distortions which were introduced into your conscious experience of Being when you chose to be conscious without being joined to your Source and as a result, losing your experience of unity and harmony and love truly with your Brothers and Sisters.

The body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil; ...

... the body gets a bad rap. And I will say, it gets an especially bad rap from students of *A Course in Miracles*, when students of *A Course in Miracles* should be moving beyond the traditional negative interpretation of the body. The *Course* presents the fact that ...

... the body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil.

Therefore, it cannot be blamed for anything. *It does not have to be gotten rid of.* It has to be recognized for what it is and, shall I say, be used and used appropriately.

The body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil; neither pain nor joy.

But everyone believes it can, and looks for those things there. You don't have to continue *doing it!*

It . . .

 \dots the body \dots

... is a means, and not an end. It has NO purpose of itself,

No. Is it saying here that it doesn't exist? That it's an illusion? No. It simply . . .

... has no purpose of itself, but only what is given to it.

Ah, by awareness. But is it Awareness Guided and inspired by the Father? Or is it awareness guided and inspired by a misperception of existence as being of that of a body?

The body will seem to be whatever is the means for reaching the goal that you assign to it.

Is the goal joy and peace? Is the goal dominance? Is the goal strength and power? Is the goal to be a force for good? To be a force for good is as bad as being a force for bad. Because force doesn't come into play at all when one is joined with the Holy Spirit and the Father's Perspective.

Peace and guilt are both conditions of the mind, to be attained.

You hear that?

Peace and guilt are both conditions of the mind, to be attained.

Here are your only two choices. Are you going to choose for the condition of peace or for the condition of guilt? You see how unyieldingly simple this is, even though it's very demanding because of the habit of mis-identifying one's Self and Creation. Peace and guilt are both conditions of the mind, to be attained. And these conditions are the home of the emotion which called them forth, and therefore is compatible with them.

(chuckles) There's wonderful logic for you. Are you going to pay attention to it? Is it reasonable? No. That's why the question that follows . . .

But think you which it is that is compatible with YOU.

Is identifying as a body compatible with the holy Son or Daughter of God that you are? Is it? No. *It is not compatible!* So you must abandon it as a goal. You see?

"Well, if I have any imagination of what that's going to mean, it's going to mean radical change. It's going to be more than I can bear. *I am reluctant!*"

Oh, there we go—there's the obstacle forming. But that's because you're looking at the goal from body identification.

Here is your choice, and it IS free. But all that lies in it WILL come with it, and what you think you are can never be apart from it.

Uh-oh, that's going to mean that you're going to find yourself changed. Well, who will you be? What will you be like? Will you be safe? Will you be strong? Will you be capable? Will people recognize your integrity? All this is body-oriented wilderness thinking.

Listen again because this is *good news*:

Here is your choice, and it IS free. But all that lies in it WILL come with it, . .

... it won't be a partial gift. It won't be a little bit now and then monthly installments.

... all that lies in it WILL come with it, and what you think you are can never be apart from it. The body ...

... and I'll say, body identification ...

The body is the great seeming betrayer of faith.

Identification with the body and the emotions that accompany it—fear, guilt, the experience of sin, sickness and death—they block faith. They undo faith. They *invalidate* faith, at least to those who have placed their faith in the illusion of being a body.

But it's not true. And it doesn't require the denial or the rising above a body to get out of it, it only requires *a shift of attention* from identifying with the body and placing your attention in your mind and recognizing that as consciousness, you are experiencing body and trees and birds, etc.

The body . . .

... or body identification ...

... is the great seeming ...

... seeming ...

... betrayer of faith.

It's not the betrayer of faith and therefore, the idea of being the betrayer of faith cannot be used to discount it or minimize it, or suggest that it must be risen above and gotten rid of.

The body is the great seeming betrayer of faith.

Why? Because it's not the body. It's what you're using your mind for, to identify as body, ignoring the fact that what is seeing and defining what the body is—is Mind. And that which made the definition never left the place of being Mind.

In it . . .

 \dots the body \dots

... lies disillusionment ...

. . . in the body orientation, the body mindset, the body identification, disillusionment . . .

... lies disillusionment ...

... of course ...

... and the seeds of faithlessness, ..

... but here you go ...

... but only if you ask of it what it cannot give.

So, you're going to move toward having the body disappear because you asked of it something it couldn't give and you've had a disappointing experience? (chuckles) Disappointing in the sense that you've experienced fear and guilt and pain and sin, disease and death!

Don't get rid of the body because you asked it to do something it couldn't do and it provided you with a terminal life perception.

Write that down on a piece of paper—a stick-it note—and put it on your refrigerator or on the wall in front of your toilet, some place where you can be reminded of it. That fact needs to become more familiar to everyone.

Can your mistake be reasonable grounds for depression and disillusionment, and for retaliative attack on what you think has failed you?

You see? You're going to retaliate against the body because you think it failed you because you made a mistake? And are you going to use the results of your mistake to feel depressed and justify it—and to feel it so emotionally that it's *impossible* for you to conceive or consider that the Eternal is kind and patient and loving? You see?

Use not your error as the justification for your faithlessness.

Now this is important. Because anybody who has existed in the realm of body-identification, knows that if one has made an error, one is guilty. And there is a penalty for the error, one way or another. And conversely, if you've done something right, and it has virtue, you will benefit from it.

Both of those are a trap.

Use not your error as the justification for your faithlessness. You have not sinned, but you have been mistaken in what is faithful.

Two words there: Sinned and mistaken. To have made a mistake is not to have sinned. To have made a mistake is not to make you guilty. To have made a mistake cannot be the cause for fear. To have made a mistake cannot be the justification for suicide. To have made a mistake is not justification to try to get rid of the body or to try to get rid of your Brother. You see?

You have not sinned, but you have been mistaken . . .

... two entirely different things ...

... in what is faithful. And ...

... here you go ...

... the correction of your mistake will GIVE you grounds for faith.

Another, you might say, rule. Write it down.

... the correction of your mistake ...

... the *correction*, not the acceptance of punishment for having made a mistake, not walking around in great guilt and fear because you've made a mistake, but simply doing it—correcting it—will give you grounds for faith. And what's the correction?

Once again, *none of this is complicated*. They're really only two choices in any of this at any level. The correction is to shift from your *confidence* that

you're nothing more than a physical body thinking with electrical impulses and synapses in a hunk of meat in your head. Recognizing that consciousness or Mind is something entirely different from electrical impulses in which something is going on which is being called electrical impulses. You see? Consciousness . . . Mind is that in which everything is going on as a conscious, identifiable, experience-able experience.

So again, the correction of your mistake, shifting back to Mind identification through the practice of the holy instant will give you grounds for faith. Your faith will be revived, you might say, it will be illuminated in you because it never left you except for the fact that you brought obstacles to its experience by virtue of your faith in and devotion to your belief that you are a body.

It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and NOT find pain.

Well that does not mean again, "Man, you gotta get out of this mortal experience and the experience of a body if you're not going to be able to find anything but pain." No.

It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and NOT find pain.

Because you're trying to get something from the body that it cannot give. You're looking in the wrong place with a wrong sense of yourself—an independent isolated sense of self separated from its divine Source. It's inevitable, if you seek pleasure through the realm of body identification, you will find pain. If you look to *anything*—a tree or a car or another body, if you seek for pleasure in a big house, or a tennis court or a swimming pool, you will not be able to do it without finding pain because pleasure is not in the things, it's in the mind through which the things are being experienced when that mind is joined with its holiness, not its mortality with its Eternality by virtue of not bringing obstacles to that experience.

Again:

It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and NOT find pain. It is essential that this relationship be

understood, for it is one the ego sees as PROOF of sin. It is not really punitive at all.

The pain you experience when you're looking for it in the wrong place, is not a *punishment*. It's not a reaction to your stupidity or any other pejorative term you might apply to yourself. It is not a punishment and it is not punitive.

If you put your hand under a faucet with hot water, it will be uncomfortable, not because you were stupid, but because hot water and your finger don't belong together. And you learn not to do that again. It's inevitable if you try to do what doesn't work—it *won't work, it won't be comfortable!* And that's your salvation because it clearly says, "Don't do that again!" That's all. It brings about a call for correction . . . not a call for guilt or depression or thoughts of suicide or emotional responses. It's like, "Oh, well, won't do that again." Truly.

Again:

It is not really punitive at all . . .

... the pain that you experience.

It is but the inevitable result . . .

... of what?

... of equating yourself with the body, which is the INVITATION to pain.

When you abandon your experience of being consciousness—Mind, the Presence of the Mind of God that God is expressing as you—when you abandon that, and then identify with what is left, you're inviting the two things that come into play which you didn't know were there awaiting you: Fear and guilt, and the pain that results from the two. You see?

Denying yourself invites an experience of divine Sanity which says: Don't go any further in this direction because what will follow will be illusory and will make it difficult for you to come back into your right Mind. [Pain] is the inevitable result of equating yourself with the body, which is the INVITATION to pain. For it invites fear to enter, and become your purpose. The attraction of guilt MUST enter with it, . .

... right? The two things, when you abandon your identity—your Source—the two things that come into play are fear and guilt.

The attraction of guilt MUST enter with it, and whatever fear directs the body to do is therefore painful. It will share the pain of ALL illusions, and the illusion of pleasure will be the SAME as pain. Is not this inevitable?

Is it becoming clear? It just is simply inevitable.

Under fear's orders, the body will pursue guilt, . .

... what does that mean? It will attach itself to the feeling of guilt and it will let the feeling of guilt become the motivating factor for the actions that will follow.

Under fear's orders, the body will pursue guilt, serving its master whose attraction to guilt maintains the whole illusion of its existence.

[repeats] the attraction to guilt maintains the whole illusion of its existence.

Because the attraction is so *compelling* that you become seemingly unable to let go of it and choose once again for your peace with a faith in the Eternal.

This, then, IS the attraction of pain.

You see? But the point is, you don't have to be governed by it. You don't have to respond to it.

You know what you can do? You can ask, "Father, are you giving me this message of fear?" "Holy Spirit, are you giving me this message of guilt?" "Jesus, is what I'm perceiving true? Should I value it and validate it?"

At least if you will do that you will break the flow and allow a point of interruption in it so that you can shift your attention, and realize that you do not have to follow willy-nilly, the destructive, I will say, depressing movement that is involved.

Ruled by this perception, the body becomes the servant of pain, seeking it dutifully, and obeying the idea that pain is pleasure.

"Well, I must be learning something from this. You know, it must be having some beneficial effect." Don't become confused. The Holy Spirit can turn every situation to your advantage not because every situation is advantageous but because It knows how to undo the validation you give to circumstances that are invalid and not real.

No negative experience you are having is in itself advantageous—although you will learn. Is that clear? You don't want to validate or provide justification for suffering by saying, "It must be doing some good for me."

CRAP! BULLSHIT! Be firm with it. Denounce it absolutely! Do not be kind with it or about it. Recognize it for what it is—it's trickery!

Ruled by this perception, the body becomes the servant of pain, seeking it dutifully, and obeying the idea that pain is pleasure. It is this idea that underlies all of the ego's heavy investment in the body. And it is this insane relationship which it keeps hidden, and yet feeds upon. To YOU it teaches that the body's pleasure is happiness.

And I'm going to add: One way or another.

Yet to ITSELF it whispers, "It is death."

It's time to simply make the choice between the arena in which sin, sickness, death, fear, guilt and pain seem to be occurring and are illusory, and choosing for the holy instant. Choosing for identification with Mind as pure conscious Awareness and holding to that with devotion and commitment. Because if you do that, clarity will follow. Faith in the Eternal will show up, will register with you. Now, I'm going to end there for tonight. I'm encouraging everyone to become more black and white in their appraisal. Let there be fewer choices and let the fact that there are only two choices confront you with which choice you need to be making, so that you will make it instead of delaying because you have "so many options" and "you have so many opportunities as a body to make progress and do wonderful things" while never experiencing the peace of your Being and the peace in which the Eternal is the center and circumference of you.

I love you very much because of what you Are. And I'm not fooled for a moment by the fact that you think you're a body—something that came from a sperm and an egg. Something was happening, but it was the Movement of Creation as Mind and all that was identifiable. All that ever is ever identifiable is the visibility and tangibility of Mind Moving and recognizing Itself in the Movement—a singular integrity of perfection that becomes *your* experience when you make a single choice and start doing it today.

I look forward to being with you next time.

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

Chapter 19 – Section: PLEASURE AND PAIN Sparkly Book – p.466 / JCIM – p.195 / CIMS – p.392 Chapter 19 – Section: THE ATTRACTION OF PAIN First Edition – p. 386 / Second Edition – p.414

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