

A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

July 13th 2015

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THIS IS A ROUGH DRAFT
AND IS NOT IN ITS FINAL FORM.

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

I wonder, if we really understand the meaning of the word, "*forgiveness?*"

We've just been reading about and considering the *Obstacles to Peace*. And the reason we've been considering them is because peace is the threshold of Awakening. Peace is the threshold of Atonement. Peace is the threshold of Awakening from the dream—coming back into our right Mind, our divine Sanity.

The *Fourth Obstacle* was *The Fear of God*. And part and parcel of overcoming the fear of God, is the *experience* of recognizing our divinity. In overcoming the fear of God and being willing to be present with Him, our divinity as His Sons and Daughters *registers with us*. We are able to remember who we Are because the fear of God is gone. The fear of the retribution of a "wrathful" God is gone, and in the peace, the Father's Love can register with us.

In fact, as the parable of *The Prodigal Son*¹ states very clearly, once the Prodigal *begins* to return Home, the Father starts out to meet him while he's still a long way off.

The Father's Love is *always* embracing every single one of you—each one of us. And when we are [abandoning] the *Obstacles to Peace* that we have created in our attempts to be independent, that Love begins to register with us and embrace us—not just as an idea, but as an experience. And that's the key thing, *an experience* . . . what I have referred to as "Knowing" because it's a deep thoughtless conviction—meaning that it is not a conviction that has been arrived at through an intellectual process of reasoning. It's an experience from the very depths of one's Being as to the Truth of Him.

Now, in that realization that you are the Son or Daughter of God, you also realize that this is true of everyone—*all of your Brothers and Sisters*.

And that is Forgiveness!

Now, it's very important to understand that you do not have to earn forgiveness. You do not have to deserve forgiveness. You cannot make yourself be forgiven. It is a Gift. It's your Birthright to not be confused and labor under the structures of the confusion.

It's important to understand this because no matter what you're suffering from, no matter how specifically and intellectually and logically you can find reasons for your misery [which] amount to being your fault and therefore [make] you unworthy of forgiveness, *forgiveness is still your Birthright!*

Forgiveness is there for you to be blessed by. And the Father does not [let] all of your mean-spirited, intellectual processes, by which you have convicted yourself, get in His way of Loving you as His beloved Son or Daughter *in whom He is well-pleased*, and then thereby, your experiencing healing.

To employ or imagine that there are reasons that are reasonable for your misery, and that therefore, your misery is justifiable, stands in the way of your ability to look at the Father without fear and be blessed by His gentle loving gaze and embrace. And yet It's available and it is your Birthright to be experiencing It.

Now, in the parable of *The Prodigal Son*, the prodigal was met, . . . not *after* he arrived at Home, but he was met along the way, and he was given—he was gifted—with fine clothing. He was gifted with the acknowledgement of his *excellence* as the Son of his Father, whose inheritance was intact.

Now, we spoke last week about the shepherd going out and finding the one lost sheep, leaving the ninety-nine so as to bring the lost one back into the fold. The parable makes no suggestion that upon finding the lost sheep, the shepherd said, by his actions, “you have caused me a great deal of difficulty and we are going back to the flock, and we are going to go back by the most difficult way that I can find, so that you will find no pleasure at all in this adventure. And, in fact, on the way back, you will have to carry *me* part of the way, especially in the most difficult spots, so that you never forget to not do this again!”

No, it doesn't say that at all, because that's not the motive or the attitude of the shepherd. The call is for the flock to be whole. And the one lost sheep does not have to suffer through trials in order to become deserving of *being* with the flock again—in order to experience wholeness again.

The motive of the shepherd is love . . . wholeness . . . completion . . . completeness.

Now when you overcome your fear of God and are willing to approach Him, or you're willing to say, “Father, tell me the truth about things,” and you are genuinely interested and you are genuinely attentive, the Answer is given. *It flows* and you receive it. And when you receive it, your perspective changes. And as your perspective changes, your world and your brothers and sisters are blessed by the new perspective.

Forgiveness occurs. And that's the call.

Now, going into the book. New subject:

Thorns and Lilies²

Or *The Gift of Lilies*, depending upon the edition you're reading from. And it says:

Look upon all the trinkets made to hang upon the body, or to cover it, or for its use. See all the useless things made for its eyes to see. Think on the many offerings made for its pleasure, and remember all these were made to make seem lovely what you hate.

When you don't know that you are the holy Son or Daughter of God, you believe that you are a body. And you treat yourself as though you're a body and you treat your brothers and sisters as though they are bodies. And that is the way you control each other. That is the way you manipulate approximations of harmony. And the very thing that you are afraid can take away your life, becomes the bottom line, we'll say, the governing factor of everything that happens.

Now, when you read this:

Look upon all the trinkets made to hang upon the body, . .

I'm sure you think of jewelry and clothing, makeup, hairstyles, mustaches, beards. But I want to bring out something else that you adorn the body with or put on it, and that is *obligation*. You put the weight of obligation upon your shoulders and upon the shoulders of your brothers and sisters. And of course, if you're half-way smart, you find a way to do it that's palatable and that strokes the other person so that they feel honored to carry the burden or to be obedient to you or behave the way you like that doesn't stretch you or burden you.

You have mutual agreements that you abide by and you hold each other to. And you place them on these bodies that you think you are and that you think others are.

Look upon all the trinkets . . .

. . . look upon all the obligations. Look upon all of the guilt-producing techniques that you can lay upon a brother—a body—someone who is certainly not the holy Son or Daughter of God and therefore, must be the result of a “big bang” and “physical evolution,” who is most definitely “a body.” You see?

[So] Look upon all [these things] made to hang upon the body, or to cover it, or for its use.

And I would say, it's beneficent or mean-spirited use.

See all the useless things . . .

. . . all the things that have nothing to do with forgiveness.

See all the useless things made for its eyes to see.

. . . and believe and bow down to, and suffer from, and put up with.

Think on the many offerings made for its pleasure, and remember all these were made to make seem lovely what you hate.

Oh, yeah, a happy society is one that isn't killing itself. Creatures like mice or rabbits or cows that move around on the surface of a globe called, "earth" in the solar system—just one of the creatures.

What a miserable *ignorance* of that which is a holy Son or Daughter of God. What an unforgiving and therefore, unforgiven experience.

Would you employ this hated thing to draw your brother to you, and to attract his body's eyes?

Learn . . .

. . . learn . . .

. . . you but offer him a crown of thorns, not recognizing it for what it is, and trying to justify your own interpretation of its value by his acceptance. Yet still the gift proclaims his worthlessness to you, as his acceptance and delight acknowledges the lack of value he places on himself.

Now, it's easy to apply this to your immediate experience and those around you, but we were talking last time about something going on, on your globe—Greece and its relationship with the European Union.

Now, I referred to this past week as the equivalent of an Easter Week. We still haven't had the Resurrection. We still have the gifts that we've just talked about.

Learn you but offer him . . .

. . . learn that it, Greece, was offered a crown of thorns not recognizing it for what it is. And trying to justify your own interpretation of its value—the gift of the structures, of cost and paying for your sins, your mistakes—like the lost sheep being given a *rugged* climb and walk back home to the flock.

Yet still the gift proclaims his worthlessness to you, . .

. . . the gift of all of these demands, all of this absence of forgiveness proclaims Greece's worthlessness to you—to the European Union . . .

. . . as his acceptance . . .

. . . and in this case, not delight . . .

... acknowledges the lack of value he ...

... it ...

... places on himself.

Itself. That will tell you, that the integrity of Greece—the integrity of the Greek people—is still intact and is still felt. But they're faced with something every single one of you are faced with, and that is the fear of being on the outside of the group.

What are you willing to sacrifice to not break the mutual agreements that seem to give you a modicum of peace?

How many of you are *unwilling* to shake things up?

How many of you tell your friends of your *valuing* of *A Course in Miracles*?

How many of you *open your mouth* up and share it with those whom you think might not find it of value?

How many of you are willing to say, “I am the holy Son or Daughter of God?”

How many of you keep your mouth *shut* in order to keep peace in the group?

How many of you are *sacrificing your integrity* for the sake of the family or the relationship or your place in the community?

How many of you are willing to *abandon your integrity*—put it on the back shelf and not look at it too strongly because if you do it will make you feel miserable because you are violating yourself and you can feel it?

This is the practicality of *A Course in Miracles* ... learning this.

Continuing ...

Gifts are not made through bodies, if they be truly given and received. For bodies ...

... in and of themselves ...

... can neither offer nor accept; hold out nor take. Only the mind can value, and only the mind decides on what it would receive and give. And every gift it offers depends on what it WANTS. It will adorn its chosen home ...

... the body ...

. . . most carefully, making it ready to receive the gifts it wants by offering them to those who come unto its chosen home, or those it would attract to it. And there they will exchange their gifts, offering and receiving what their minds judge to be worthy of them.

And there's just been a number of days of—a summit meeting—you might say, in which gifts were exchanged all for the purpose of achieving what the ones making the gift wants.

Each gift is an evaluation of the receiver and the GIVER. No-one but sees his chosen home an altar to himself.

In other words, everyone sees his chosen home as an altar to himself. And in this frame of mind, that “himself” *is a body*—an effect of nature, of evolution.

No-one but seeks to draw to it the worshippers of what he placed upon it, making it worthy of their devotion.

And as you know, very often, because integrity isn't recognized and stood by, as the saying says, “the majority rules.”

And each has set a light upon his altar, . .

. . . the altar to himself . . .

. . . that they may see what he has placed upon it, and take it for their own.

In other words, *agree* . . . AGREE.

Here is the value that you lay upon your brother and on yourself. Here is your gift to BOTH; your judgment on the Son of God for what he is. Forget not that it is your Saviour to whom the gift is offered.

The gift that Greece gives to the European Union is given to its Savior. But the gift given by the members of the European Union to Greece is given to their Savior. But of course, when the altar is an altar to *oneself*, there is no Savior and there is no consideration of another. And there is therefore, *no love*. There is therefore, no *Brotherhood*.

This is very important.

Offer him thorns and YOU are crucified. Offer him lilies and it is YOURSELF you free.

I have great need for lilies, for the Son of God has not forgiven me.

The Sons of God who still think they're mortals, who still think they're bodies, who still think they have to manipulate each other through mutual agreement—through thorns. And . . .

. . . can I offer him . . .

. . . the one who hasn't forgiven me . . .

. . . can I offer him forgiveness, when he offers thorns to me? For he who offers thorns to anyone is against me still, and who is whole without him? Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven, and you may look upon the Son of God as whole.

You see? You see the level of involvement, the level of Brotherhood?

Be you his friend for me, . .

. . . you can't do that in your little ivory tower with all of your spiritual thoughts, private. And *A Course in Miracles* does not teach uninvolvedness.

Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven, . .

. . . Why? Why would I be forgiven? Because if you abandon your fear of God and *remember, rediscover*, we'll say, as an experience that you are a holy Son or Daughter of God, you, as I've said before, immediately Know that this is the truth about your Brother and Sister—not as an intellectual thing but as an experiential thing. Now you *Know* your Brother in a way you've never known him before.

Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven, . .

When you have forgiven your Brother by your recognition of his holiness, he can recognize it. And when he recognizes it, he will *Know* you and he will *Know* me and I will be forgiven.

. . . and you may look upon the Son of God as whole. But look you first upon the altar in your chosen home, and see what you have laid upon it to offer me.

And this is the bottom line, this is the crux, this is where the transformation comes into play, because, for lack of better words, this is where the work is done. This is where *the change* occurs. This is where *learning happens* when you look within to what you're laying upon the altar. Right now the altar is an altar to you. And you put all sorts of trinkets on it and all the things that you would have another see so that they might have the right concept about you. And *you act out* all of those trinkets and all of those things you value.

Now, I'm going to do something I've never done before, and that is, that I'm going to go to a lesson in the Workbook. It's Lesson 191.³ This lesson has as its primary thought, "*I am the holy Son of God Himself.*" Why am I reading this? Because this is what needs to be on your Altar. This is the Gift you need to be able to give in order for forgiveness to occur.

It's so easy to think that, "Oh, this is going on in Europe. And there are other things going on in the Middle East. And it's amazing, isn't it, just how much learning they must all be going through. And it's very entertaining and sometimes a little scary to see how awkwardly they're doing it. But you know what? I know the Holy Spirit will turn all of it to *their* advantage." Such supercilious, haughtiness and arrogance. And what a misunderstanding, because there isn't

anyone who is *not your* brother or *your* sister, there isn't anyone that you do not make a gift to all the time, because you are *not* separate and you are *not* able to live independent lives that don't affect each other.

Now, you could say to me, "Well, I have enough brothers and sisters right here in my neighborhood, from my family, to actual neighbors, to the bankers, you know, to the money lenders, to the grocery store. I have enough to deal with right here." Well you know what? You're not called upon to like, reach out and engage with each individual *separately*. No, the gift of forgiveness happens on the Altar right in the middle of you.

So there is something *to be done*. You can't imagine that this stuff is going on over *there* with *them* and so you must *be a Brother*, you must recognize your place in the Family or the Brotherhood of Man and consciously make your gift instead of unconsciously making it. And what is the gift you make, "Well, that's *their* problem *over there* let *them* take care of it. *They* must take care of it. It's between them and their God." That's the gift you're making. It's the gift of separation, it's the gift of isolation and it is absolutely inconsistent with everything the *Course* teaches. And you can't afford to justify it by means of things you've chosen to interpret strangely from the *Course*.

Lesson 191:
"I am the holy Son of God Himself."

Mind you, this is the Gift that needs to be on your Altar. Remember, that although you can read this and interpret it to mean that it is a recognition you have in the privacy of your mind at the Altar in the middle of your Being, that has nothing to do with anyone else.

How do you arrive at the awareness, the experience of being the holy Son of God yourself? By overcoming your fear of God—the last *Obstacle to Peace*—and *realizing*, as I've said, that you are the holy Son or Daughter of God. So it's *that* which is on your Altar and, as I said, inseparable from that realization, *simultaneous* with that experience is the experience that it's the truth about every one of your fellowmen—your brothers and sisters. Their holiness will not confound you but it will *astound you*. It will be whelming, not overwhelming. It will be a significant experience of the sort you've not had for a very long time.

So here's this Gift: Your realization that you're the Son or Daughter of God that is the simultaneous realization that your Brother and Sister are the holy Sons and Daughters of God. It's not a private recognition.

Beginning Lesson 191:

Here is your declaration of release from bondage of the world. And here as well . . .

. . . what?

. . . is all the world released. You do not see what you have done by giving to the world the role of jailer to the Son of God. What could it be but vicious and afraid, fearful of shadows, punitive and wild, lacking all reason, blind, insane [and sad]?

That's the state of the Son or Daughter of God who is jailed by the world. But here's the key question:

What have you done that this should be your world? What have you done that this is what you see?

Oh, is it looking for guilt? Is it about to make you the guilty one? No. It's simply saying, take a look at the mechanics of this process:

What have you done that this should be your world? What have you done that this is what you see?

Well, here's the simple answer:

Deny your own Identity, . .

. . . you holy Son or Daughter of God.

Deny your own Identity, and this is what remains.

You see? It's simple. There's no one who's guilty. But when you deny your Identity, all that's left is an experience of the dissonance of the miserable unreality of the idea.

You look on chaos and proclaim it is yourself. There is no sight that fails to witness this to you.

Look at this again:

You look on chaos and proclaim it [as] yourself.

The result is:

There is no sight that fails to witness this to you.

Your perception governs absolutely what you're seeing, because of what you have on the Altar and what the gift is that you're giving, which isn't one of forgiveness.

There is no sound that does not speak of frailty within you and without; no breath you draw that does not seem to bring you nearer death; no hope you hold but will dissolve in tears.

Without an awareness that you're the holy Son or Daughter of God, this is the kind of existence you experience. Without being able to recognize the Kingdom of Heaven is where you are, you

will see what you *believe It is*. And because there is no inspiration of Love and of your divinity in *your perception*, the Kingdom of Heaven is all of these things.

There is no sight that fails to witness [chaos] to you. There is no sound that does not speak of frailty within you and without; no breath you draw that does not seem to bring you nearer death; no hope you hold but will dissolve in tears.

It's miserable! And yet it's very easy to become addicted to the preoccupation with these things and bury yourself deeper in forgetfulness so that you do not bring to the Altar in the middle of you the answer, which is the realization, "I am the holy Son of God."

Deny your own Identity, and you will not escape the madness which induced this weird, unnatural and ghostly thought [which] mocks creation and [which] laughs at God.

Every single concept, every single misperception you embrace about the world that says, "It has nothing to do with God, it's just a physical universe." You're looking at Creation and defining it with those meanings, and it mocks God, because it's a *denial* of what is actually in front of you, which is God appearing, called "Creation," blessed by the Love that God Is and the *indivisibility* that God Is which precludes the possibility of conflict of any sort.

Deny your own Identity, and you assail the universe alone, without a friend, a tiny particle of dust against the legions of your enemies.

And you see enemies. Because on your Altar there is not a recognition or an acceptance or a consideration of the idea that you are a holy Son or Daughter of God. And therefore, you *do not extend it!* Forgiveness doesn't occur. What does that mean—*forgiveness doesn't occur?* Well, something happens. And if forgiveness isn't occurring, the something else that happens—that is happening—is the accusation of guilt. There is no void.

Deny your own Identity, and look on evil, sin and death, . .

. . . you're going to look on something. You're looking, you're going to see something.

. . . and watch despair snatch from your fingers every scrap of hope, leaving you nothing but the wish to die.

Yet what is it . . .

Listen to this:

Yet what is it except a game . . .

. . . a game that silly children might play.

Yet what is it except a game you play in which Identity can be denied?

It's preposterous! All of this is nothing more than the, I will say, experiential effect of playing a ridiculous meaningless game in which Identity can be denied. It's ridiculous because . . . continuing . . .

You are as God created you. All else but this one thing is folly to believe.

You know, there's almost not a single time we get together that I do not share with you, confront you, encourage you to recognize and believe *that* you are right now the holy Son or Daughter of God and that you never stopped being It. That's what's on my Altar. And that's what I offer to you. And you could call it forgiveness, because you don't *believe* what I'm saying. And there is a mindset that could say, you are guilty of not believing what I'm saying, you're guilty of not believing the truth and therefore, there is a penalty that you ought to pay and must pay. It isn't true.

Now are you the Sons and Daughters of God. You don't have to earn It, you don't have to grow into It, you don't have to refine yourself from something less to something more. And the Gift I make is the constant reminder of that and it's the Gift that you need to make to your brothers and sisters.

You are as God created you. All else but this one thing is folly to believe. In this one thought is [everything] set free. In this one truth are all illusions gone. In this one fact is sinlessness proclaimed to be forever part of everything, the central core of its existence and its guarantee of immortality.

Is that something that can't be had until there's been a difficult trek back Home where you pay for having lost your way?

You are as God created you.

Such a simple thing.

In this one thought is [everything] set free.

In that Gift that you make, the difficult trek, the laborious process of refining your soul *vanishes, instantaneously!* It doesn't wait upon time. It doesn't wait upon process unless you imagine time and process into the event. And then you *will act as though* time and process is occurring, when it isn't [chuckling].

Forgiveness is called for still in Europe and in Greece. Love, family—not money—needs to govern the decisions and the actions. The participants may not be looking at themselves and recognizing that, "I am the holy Son of God Himself," but you can. And that Gift in that one thought, is everything set free.

Now I'm not going to read all of Lesson 191, but I'm going to invite you all to do so on your own.

Jumping a little bit I will read something else:

You who perceive yourself as weak and frail, with futile hopes and devastated dreams, born but to die, to weep and suffer pain, hear this: All power is given unto you in earth and Heaven. There is nothing that you cannot do. You play the game of death, of being helpless, pitifully tied to dissolution in a world which shows no mercy to you. Yet when you accord it mercy, will its mercy shine on you.

Then let the Son of God . . .

. . . meaning, the divine one that you Are . . .

. . . awaken from his sleep, and opening his holy eyes, return again to bless the world he made.

Bless the world he made by letting it be replaced with the *clarity* of what it is as the Kingdom of Heaven.

In error it began, but it will end in the reflection of his holiness.

Forgiveness . . . the Gift you make that transforms the world, *is not something you do to the world*. It's something you do quietly in the withinness of you, where you abandon the fear of God and you say, "Father, what is the truth here?" and let the Father fill you with His Perspective, revealing to you your divinity and your brother's as well.

The *details* of what is going on in Europe and Greece are not relevant factors to be used to govern how you feel about things. Who you divinely are and who every member of Greece and the European Union—the *recognition of what you all Are*—is the only pertinent thing, which, if you will dare to embrace, will cause spontaneous realization to occur of what truly blesses everyone.

And then I invite you to be the best brother and sister you can possibly be, you holy Sons and Daughters of God.

I love you very much and I look forward to being with you next time.

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¹*Luke 15:11-32*

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

²*Chapter 20 – Section: THORNS AND LILIES*
Sparkly Book – p. 479 / JCIM – p. 200 / CIMS – p. 403

*Chapter 20 – Section: THE GIFT OF LILIES
First Edition – p. 397 / Second Edition – p. 426
3Workbook*

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