

A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

March 9th 2008

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

THE DECISION FOR GUILTLESSNESS ¹

We're going to begin right in the book tonight.

Learning will be commensurate with motivation, and the interference in your motivation for learning is exactly the same as that which interferes with ALL your thinking.

This sentence does not appear in the first and second edition. I'm going to read it again.

Learning will be commensurate with motivation, and the interference in your motivation for learning is exactly the same as that which interferes with ALL your thinking. The happy learner cannot FEEL GUILTY about learning.

[Pause]

The happy learner cannot FEEL GUILTY about learning. This is so essential to learning that it should never be forgotten. The guiltless learner learns so easily because his thoughts are free. Yet this entails the recognition that guilt is INTERFERENCE, NOT salvation, and serves no useful function at all.

Is any of this making any sense to you?

The guiltless learner learns so easily because his thoughts are free. Yet this entails the recognition that guilt is INTERFERENCE, NOT salvation, and serves no useful function at all.

You might say, “Well, of course! I know. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to realize that guilt is interference!” Well, yeah, it *does* take a rocket scientist, and it takes you, and it takes anyone with a little bit of a glimpse of his right Mind to realize that you don’t know that.

You don’t know that guilt is interference. Why do I say that? Because, if you’re not awake, you are existing in a state of disconnection from your Source. Not actual disconnection, but a disconnection by virtue of ignorance—of *ignore-ance*—by virtue of your ignoring your Source and giving preference to the idea that you, in your own right, independent of any source, are the authority and governor of your experience.

As we said before, when you got your divorce from your Father, you found that your attempt to act at odds with the nature of your being, your attempt to act at odds with the way things work, your attempt to function at odds with Reality, always has accompanying it, a dissonance, a warning like, as I’ve said before, the bells on a garbage truck or a large vehicle which ring when the vehicle is backing up, which say, “A condition of emergency or danger exists. Be careful.”

The minute you try to act at odds with your Being, the unalterable perfection of your Being reminds you that you cannot act at odds with It, even if you choose to try.

Now, first gear, as we’ve been discussing it, is you before you attempt to get a divorce from your Father or disconnect from your Source. Second gear, neutral, is where you move to . . . you think. You move there in your imagination when you get your divorce from your Father and you insist upon asserting yourself wholly and fully as the only active authority that you are going to recognize in your existence. And so you take up residence in this second gear which is neutral.

[I have been calling it neutral. I understand this has been problematic for some, but nevertheless, continue to work with it. Neutral is this supposed place where you can function in your own right.]

Now, I've mentioned that the moment you moved into second gear, it brought forth, spontaneously, third gear. First gear, we've called the Voice for Truth. Second gear, neutral, we could call your attempt to have a voice of your own, all by yourself. And third gear, which spontaneously comes into existence when you try to establish second gear, is called the voice for fear—the flip side of which always is guilt.

Now, when this surprising experience of dissonance occurred—of your Sanity providing a bell, saying, “what you are attempting to do is not safe for you,” “what you are attempting to do is at odds with your being, and to attempt to go any further in this direction will simply cause you to be provided with a stronger and stronger reminder that you are attempting to do the impossible, and don't waste your time”—It became something for you to overcome.

It was what you took on as the first challenge encountered in your state of independence. It was a challenge for you not to yield to, but to overcome. And so, you created a life for yourself, an *independent* life for yourself, and its purpose and intent was to overcome and become superior to—and therefore not governed by—this threat of “danger,” as you were perceiving It. Instead of using It for Its purpose, which was to tell you to stop doing what you were doing and go back Home, you adopted It as a challenge to overcome. And in fact, the “becoming equal” to It and “overcoming It,” even, has become your purpose.

Now, in not using It for Its real purpose, in not recognizing It as your ever-present Sanity, and turning It into something to overcome, you have turned your Sanity into fear and guilt. It's just the way it works. Thus, guilt has been the driving force of your existence. Guilt and fear, coupled together, have become the engine that motivates you, and so in this respect, *you value guilt*.

I promise you, that almost without fail, any of you who succeed in abandoning guilt, will initially feel that your life has lost purpose. And this is because guilt has been valuable—so valuable that you've been willing to give your complete commitment and allegiance to it. You use it on yourself and you use it on each other. You find that it motivates you. And you have found that your, I'm going to say, “skillful” use of it on your brothers is quite effective also for influencing your brothers and sisters and getting them to do what you want them to do so as to make you less fearful, and to assuage your feeling of guilt that threatens your peace.

So . . .

The happy learner cannot FEEL GUILTY about learning.

It's just impossible. And that's an interference to your motivation for learning because your motivation for learning is the push of guilt. Without guilt there, you think there is no motivation for being, much less learning. And therefore, the moment you get wind of the fact that there's not going to be any guilt, or any experience of it

in the process of learning, in the process of Awakening, you find Awakening less interesting, and potentially less valuable to you. Why? Because you don't know how to exist without the push of guilt behind you. And you don't know how to exist without the sense of self that you have acquired as a result of being motivated by guilt and using guilt as a motivational factor in your relationships.

Those two things give you identity . . . you think. And so, if you are going to be a happy learner and the happy learner cannot feel guilt about learning, you perceive that to be a meaningless experience which you are reluctant to engage in. It's that simple.

Now let's go back to the beginning.

Learning will be commensurate with motivation, and the interference in your motivation for learning is exactly the same as that which interferes with ALL your thinking.

Now here's the interference:

The happy learner cannot FEEL GUILTY about learning.

Why is that interference? I'll say it again: Because without guilt, you don't feel purpose, you don't feel meaning, because once you got your divorce from your Father and attempted to stand on your own, you used the guilt—which was really the warning bell from your Sanity saying, “Stop moving in this direction”—as justification for moving *further* in that direction and it became your purpose for being. And you employ it in all aspects of being unjoined with your Father, disconnected from your Source—or when you are choosing to, as absolutely as possible, ignore the fact that you have a Source other than yourself.

The happy learner cannot FEEL GUILTY about learning.

That should be good news!

This is so essential to learning, that it should never be forgotten. The guiltless learner learns so easily because his thoughts are free. Yet this entails the recognition that guilt is INTERFERENCE, NOT salvation, and serves no useful function at all.

You are accustomed to using guiltlessness merely to offset the pain of guilt, and do not look upon it as having value IN ITSELF.

You use guiltlessness as a salve, you might say. You're feeling guilty and you say to yourself, “I am guiltless.” Or you say to your brother to console him, “You are guiltless. You are God's offspring and God could not possibly have embodied guilt in

you. Therefore the feeling of guilt that you are having is un-justifiable and you don't have to be governed by it."

And so you use guiltlessness as a means of finessing your mind into a greater experience of peace, while not yet abandoning second gear. You see? You use the idea of guiltlessness to make you feel better while you're still insane, while you're still claiming independent selfhood—independent existence which you are in charge of and authorizing. You see?

So you haven't abandoned guilt yet, because as long as you're in second gear, third gear's there. And if you sit in second gear and try to employ the idea of guiltlessness to make you feel better, all you're doing is making second gear more tolerable while you are still valuing third gear, which means you're still valuing guilt. You see?

So, you're playing with guilt and guiltlessness simultaneously for an effect that doesn't constitute Awakening at all, nor does it contribute to Awakening at all.

You believe that guilt and guiltlessness are BOTH of value, each representing an escape from what the other does not offer you.

You see, guilt doesn't offer you peace. Guiltlessness offers you peace. Guilt offers you a sense of identity and purpose. Guiltlessness does not offer you a false sense of identity or purpose. And so you employ them both and try to find a certain equanimity, a certain balance, while never waking up—while never engaging in anything that will free you from the bondage of a dream of illusion.

Again . . .

You believe . . .

. . . and I know you didn't think you did before we started this paragraph, but . . .

You believe that guilt and guiltlessness are BOTH of value, each representing an escape from what the other does not offer you. You do not want either alone, for without both you do not see yourselves as whole and therefore happy. Yet you are whole ONLY in your guiltlessness, and only in your guiltlessness CAN you be happy. There IS no conflict here. To wish for guilt in ANY way, in ANY form, will lose appreciation of the value of your guiltlessness, and push it from your sight.

There is no compromise that you can make with guilt, and escape the pain which ONLY guiltlessness allays. Learning is living here, as creating is Being in Heaven.

In other words, learning is living here as you engage in vacating second gear . . .

. . . as creating is Being in Heaven . . .

. . . as creating is what is in first gear.

Whenever the pain of guilt SEEMS to attract you, remember that, if you yield to it, you are deciding AGAINST your happiness, and will not learn HOW to be happy.

So, as long as you are valuing guilt, as long as you insist on employing it, or as long as you insist on trying to deal with it while in second gear, but using truths that have dawned on you from glimpses of truth in moments of being in first gear, you will not actually be engaged in learning. Learning occurs as you are willing to disengage from second gear and move to first gear.

Guiltlessness. Is guiltlessness a concept? Is guiltlessness an idea? Is guiltlessness a configuration of your mind that you can create in which you can feel guiltless and in which you can convey guiltlessness to others? Is it a tool? Is it anything that you can cause from second gear? Or is guiltlessness the state of your being when you are firmly established in first gear where God is responsible for what you Are, not you?

Guiltlessness is not a tool. Guiltlessness is not an intellectual arrangement of appropriate and principled and divine thoughts. Do you know that guiltless-ness can best be described as unselfconsciousness, where you are being without a single element of self-consciousness occurring, where you are being directly out from the Source of your being without any concern for how it looks to others, or whether you're looking intelligent, or whether you're being intelligent?

Guiltlessness is when this "thinker" that you think you are is absent, and what you Are spontaneously, you might say, expresses Itself. And in the expression, God is given manifestation, the Voice for Truth is given voice, and there is no fear. There is no dissonance of a bell saying, "You are attempting the impossible. Go back. Go back!" None of that. And everything you find yourself *being* identifies your purpose *to* you, defines your purpose *to* you. It doesn't fulfill purpose that you have defined for yourself and tried to bring into manifestation.

Now, again . . .

Whenever the pain of guilt SEEMS to attract you, remember that, if you yield to it, you are deciding AGAINST your happiness, and will not learn HOW to be happy. Say, therefore, to yourself, gently, but with the conviction born of the love of God and of His Son:

“What I experience I will make manifest . . .

And I’m going to interject here . . . not by virtue of some power you have to make things manifest, but by virtue of the fact that what you experience *does* manifest.

What you experience you will make manifest. It’s just a statement of how things work.

“What I experience I will make manifest.

It’s like, *whether I want to or not*. You see? It has nothing to do with special authority to give or withhold.

*“What I experience I will make manifest.
If I am guiltless I have nothing to fear.
I choose . . .*

. . . and remember, this section is called, *“The Decision for Guiltlessness.”* A decision is a choice.

*I choose to testify to the ACCEPTANCE of the Atonement,
NOT for its rejection.
I would accept my guiltlessness by making it manifest
And SHARING it.
Let me bring peace to God’s Son from his Father.”*

Well, there it is, spelled out to you. You want to give the gift of guiltlessness to your brother? You need to be willing to look into your brother’s eyes with the desire to see what is true about him—with the desire to see his guiltlessness. And you desire to know of it from God, while you’re looking into your brother’s eyes. You switch from second gear to first gear. You join with the Father and you ask of the Father what His truth is. “What is the truth here?” You invite the infilling of your Father’s perspective so that you might recognize what the Father is revealing to you in the brother whose eyes you are looking into.

“Let me bring peace to God’s Son from his Father.”

That’s the two-step that we’ve been talking about.

Guiltlessness is nothing you can achieve in second gear. And guiltlessness is not something you can use in second gear. Guiltlessness is what *is*—whether you like it or not, whether you deserve it or not—when you have taken up residence in first gear. When you do that, second gear, no longer being employed, no longer seems to have existence. And, likewise, third gear—guilt and fear. *That’s* how you access and embody guiltlessness. Not by any use of your mind whatsoever, not by any wonderful

words, but by an actual shift wherein you embody the meaning of these words: “*I of myself can do nothing.*”² “*If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.*”³

In other words, don’t be confused. If you have seen me, you haven’t seen *me*, you have seen the Father. The Father, *being* me, is all there is of me. The Father is what is here.

That’s what moving to first gear means. And that’s where the experience of guiltlessness is available. And that’s where the blessing of the awareness of guiltlessness fills your mind so fully that you see it everywhere and auto-matically extend it everywhere. Not because you’re full of words that express guiltlessness that you throw out into the air, but because in you there is no self-consciousness, there is no discomfort. You do not wonder how you appear to others. What others might think of you doesn’t even cross your mind. And so you are totally free to be the place where your function can be fulfilled—the function set in place by your Father in His expression of Himself that’s called you.

So, continuing . . .

Each day, each hour and minute, even every second, you are deciding between the crucifixion and the resurrection; . .

. . . sounds ominous. Here’s another way of saying it . . .

. . . between the ego and the Holy Spirit.

Meaning you as an orphan or that which is nothing more than your right Mind.

The ego is the choice for guilt; the Holy Spirit the decision for guiltlessness.

If you want to experience your inviolable guiltlessness, choose for the Holy Spirit in you, lean into the Holy Spirit in you. Ask the Holy Spirit in you to help you let It do Its job, by decreasing your resistance to letting It into you and healing your tiny sense of self, by replacing it with the infinite presence of the Mind of God that constitutes your mind, and abandoning all attempts to make the mind you think you have and the mind that you think you are, into some grandiose equivalent to God, which keeps you forever bound to guilt and fear.

The power of decision is all that is yours.

Simple.

The power of decision is all that is yours. What you can decide BETWEEN is fixed, because there are no alternatives except truth and illusion.

I'm sure many of you in this past week have had fun discovering how many carrots you're chasing, how many sub-carrots there are that you're chasing that all feed the one main carrot that is your all-important goal, which is to become a real boy or a real girl—to become real in your own right, while still separated from your Source as though you don't have a source.

And in the process of discovering how many carrots there are it might seem that there are a whole lot of carrots to choose between—"well, I'm going to choose this one," "well, I'm going to discard that one," "well this one will help me for awhile, but I've got to discard that one"—when there's only one thing that needs to be done. There are only two choices that you have available to you: Chase a carrot or don't chase a carrot.

So to hell with how many carrots there are, and to hell with how many carrots your brothers and sisters have. It doesn't matter. What matters is, are you still chasing the carrot or did you stop? Those are the only two options you have available to you. And the only function you can fulfill is to choose one or the other. And there's no way to make that into something important. How can you make that choice better than anyone else? How could you lord it over your brother? "Well, I made the choice this way!"

What you can decide BETWEEN is fixed, because there are no alternatives except truth and illusion.

There are no alternatives except first gear and second gear. First gear is a real option. Second gear, itself, is an illusion.

And there is no overlap between them, because they are opposites which CANNOT be reconciled and CANNOT both be true. You are guilty OR guiltless, bound OR free, happy OR unhappy.

The point is, you want to be a happy learner. And in order to be a happy learner, you've got to abandon second gear, not become better at being in second gear. When you abandon second gear and you say, "Father, help . . ."—when you reach out to the Father or you reach out to the Holy Spirit, or you reach out to me, or you reach out to your guide—you are, as I've said so many times, breaking the isolation, joining again, unifying what has been whole all along. But you're consciously embracing it, consciously acknowledging it, consciously making it true for you *by no longer denying it*.

The miracle . . .

. . . a sudden shift of perception . . .

. . . teaches you that you have chosen guiltlessness, freedom and joy.

When you experience the happening of a miracle it means that you have chosen guiltlessness, freedom and joy. The miracle . . .

It is not a cause, but an EFFECT. It is the natural result of choosing right, attesting to your happiness that comes from choosing to be free of guilt.

Now, you're probably going to notice this coming week how much you're employing guilt, how often it comes into play, how often you wake up in the morning, and before you even stir out of bed your mind is filled with the things that you haven't gotten done, that you're *guilty* for not having gotten done, and how frightened that makes you feel, and how that does one of two things: Either it makes you feel like not getting up or it makes you feel like leaping out of bed so as to get rid of these things that are causing you such distress, and *take hold* of the situation and *master the situation* . . . not realiz-ing that the answer, right there while you're still lying in bed and these thoughts and feelings of guilt are occurring, is to recognize that you are in a monologue. You see? And the answer is, right then and there, to shift to a dialogue.

Invite the Holy Spirit in. Invite me in. Invite your guide in, so that one who is Awake can join with you in looking at these things and provide the perspective in which it is absolutely unnecessary to look at them with guilt or fear which will immobilize you or scare you so completely that it causes you to run with a vengeance to get rid of what is disturbing you. You see?

The miracle teaches you that you have chosen guiltlessness, freedom and joy. It is not a cause, but an EFFECT. It is the natural result of choosing right, attesting to your happiness that comes from choosing to be free of guilt.

It's so easy to become distracted by the thoughts and feelings of guilt that cause you to forget that the answer is to invite the Holy Spirit in—to abandon the monologue and learn of [from] your joining, *while in first gear*: “What needs to be done?” “What do we do about this?” “What is the Father's Will here?” “What steps do we take there?” “What identifies fulfillment of purpose now?” You see? You engage in this while in dialogue. And while in dialogue, fear, anxiety and guilt will not be found. And in your peace, the steps needing to be taken to resolve what had been frightening you when you looked at it from second gear will be accomplished.

Now . . .

Everyone you offer healing to returns it. Everyone you attack keeps it and cherishes it by holding it against you. Whether he does this or does it not will make no difference; you will THINK he does.

You might attack a brother who recognizes it as a call for love and does not attack you back. But it will make no difference to you because the messenger that you sent out was a messenger of attack, a messenger of hate and it will bring back to you confirmation of the rightness of your act. It will report back to you that something hateful is there.

So . . .

Whether he . . .

. . . your brother . . .

. . . does this or does it not will make no difference; you will THINK he does.

Again, whatever messenger you send out is the one that will come back to you and confirm the reason you sent it out, whether there is truth to the confirmation or not.

It is impossible to offer what you do not want without this penalty.

If you offer what you do not want, what you do not want will come back to you. It will bring with it this penalty. So ask yourself, do you want to decide for guiltlessness or do you want to decide for guilt? Do you want to decide for guilt, so as to build up your sense of yourself as an independent agent, capable of becoming real? Do you want to continue to do that? Because when you do, the penalty will always come back to you—the penalty of confirmation of your world being hateful, one that you must continue to be defended against.

Is that the ongoing state of tension that you want to eternally live in? If it isn't, then you must do the simple thing: Get out of second gear. Move back into first gear. Invite God back in. Be willing to acknowledge your ever-present Father, your ever-present Source, and engage in dialogue. Engage in active togetherness.

Again . . .

It is impossible to offer what you do not want without this penalty.

What you do not want, that you offer, will come back to you.

The cost of giving IS receiving. Either it is a penalty from which you suffer, or the happy purchase of a treasure to hold dear.

So again, don't be too quick to gloss over the fact that until you have decided to move back to gear one, you are in a frame of mind, you are in a mindset in which guilt is the most valuable asset you have, because it is the discomfort you need in order to reach for the carrot. It's the discomfort, the prod, the compulsiveness that will drive you to keep going for the carrot. And as long as you are valuing guilt, you will not be able to be a happy learner. And if you are not a happy learner, learning will not occur.

Now, it doesn't matter how long you haven't been learning. And it doesn't matter what all of the various reasons are that you or your friends or enemies or family might be able to come up with as to why you're not learning. None of that matters.

All that matters is: Are you going to decide for guiltlessness? Are you going to dare to let yourself go through a period of transition in which lack of purpose seems to take over, where nothing is giving you identity in the way identity used to be derived by you, where the emptiness of going for the carrot is absent because you've given up going for the carrot and now you don't know what in the hell your life is for, and so it all seems empty?

Understand the dynamics of it. Understand that you have been getting purpose out of the experience of guilt. Understand that the more strongly you have denied your Father, the greater the experience of guilt, because it takes the greater push from your guilt to drive you to go the extra mile, reach the extra mile for that carrot, because now, having more strongly denied your Father, it is more imperative for you to have your independent identity established. And that's the dynamic of it.

Understand it . . . not so that you can be depressed by it, but so that it's so clear to you that it's easy to make a different choice and make a decision for guiltlessness with motivation. And then don't try to create guiltlessness. Don't try to conjure it up with all kinds of guiltlessness "talk" or guiltlessness "ideas" that you have woven into a fabric of beauty without ever having connected with the Father, without ever having shifted to first gear. You see what I'm saying?

Let there be motivation to abandon the "thinker" in second gear that's maintaining a place to be, through imagination, called second gear—*orphanhood*—and make the choice for first gear by saying, "Father, help. Father, fill me with the conscious experience of truth. Fill me with your Will."

"Better yet, since I am learning that I never could have had a will separate or different from your Will, help uncover to me, help increase in me, my willingness to experience a will other than my own personal will—the one I've been using to try and get the carrot and which has kept me entirely aloof from my sane experience of my intelligent mind, which is your Mind, which has been your gift to me because you have withheld nothing of what you Are in the creation of me."

And then listen.

Shut up and let the Father in. Let the Holy Spirit in, so that you might be a happy learner and so that you might actually wake up instead of spending another lifetime *talking about* waking up. You see?

Don't be depressed. Don't let your egos home in on all the things that were threatening to it and then feel bad or hopeless. I have not said everything you're doing is useless and you're stuck. Have I? I've said that everything that you've been doing has been useless because you've been doing it from a place where you have no authority—second gear. And there's a way to abandon that experience and let your fulfillment find you and infill you, and that is by letting the Father back in. Go back to first gear. That is a *pleasure*, even if it seems to be an effort to you initially because you've been doing the opposite for so long.

Engage in the effort it takes to keep yourself on the homing beacon, and I will look forward to being with you next week. I love you. You are loved. And the love that you are loved by sees no guilt in you. So it doesn't love you in spite of your guiltiness. It loves you because of what you already, perfectly Are. And it loves you actually fully enough to help you disengage from the habit that you have cloaked yourself with, of ongoing unforgiven guilt that you see no means of being released from.

I tell you it's an illusion. But you just can't walk around and say, "It's an illusion." "It's an illusion." If you're saying that from second gear, you're saying it from the place where guilt is still of value to you, and I promise you that from there, guilt will seem quite real and the penalties will seem quite real, even though they aren't. You want to become free of the illusion that there is guilt, that there is penalty for guilt and the penalty is very real. And you do that by abandoning the place, the frame of mind, from which the illusion of guilt is inseparable. And all you have to do, to do that, is to stop having a monologue and say, "Father, . ." and let what happens after that happen.

I'll stop for now. And again, I look forward to being with you next week.

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)
THE DECISION FOR GUILTLESSNESS

¹ Sparkly Book - p.318 / JCIM - p.133

First Edition - p. 255 / Second Edition - p. 274 These two start with 2nd sentence of Section

² John 5:30

³ John 14:9

Edited for print

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