

Raj/ACIM Study Group – October 31, 2002

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)
Chapter 2 – THE SEPARATION AND THE ATONEMENT
Section – THE ORIGINS OF SEPARATION
And Section – THE ATONEMENT AS DEFENSE
First Edition – p. 15 / Second Edition – p. 18

RAJ: Good evening.

AUDIENCE: Good evening.

RAJ: I am aware that since the last Gathering some of you have had fun, oh, let us say, considering the shortcomings of women, if indeed Eve is their role model. And by the same token, jabs have been pointed at men for their gullibility. [single audience laugh]

But before we go on, I want to back up for perspective. In the Bible, there are three accounts of creation. One in *The New Testament* and two in *The Old Testament*.

The one in *The New Testament* is the simplest, the most straightforward, the one that is so simple that it bypasses everyone's grasp of the totality of its meaning. It says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." [John 1:1]

In the first chapter of Genesis, that very simple rendition of creation is fleshed out wherein it says, "And God said, 'Let there be light.'" Let there be this. Let there be that. Let there be plants. And let there be cattle. And let there be whales. And so on. And then God charged all of what He created to be fruitful and multiply. And then it says that on the seventh day—because in order to flesh it out a structure had to be provided, a storyline, you might say, even though creation could not have taken time to occur—and on the seventh day God rested. There was completion. And then it says, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." Which really means "and it was VERY GOOD." And I have said before that a clearer understanding of that statement can be found in these words, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was verily (or really) God."

So, in the beginning was the Word. And God said, "Let there be." And the Word was with God. And God saw everything that He had made. And the Word was God. And behold it was verily God. Creation is finished. Creation is complete. And creation is the Movement of the Mind of God which God

sees and recognizes Himself in. It is all about God, from first to last. It is all God.

So, where is this Adam and Eve? Well, in the second chapter of Genesis it says, “But there went up a mist from the ground.” Well, let me ask you this. If you are at a movie and you see the image on the screen begin to waver and shift and become mystified and unclear, and then resolve itself in a new scene, you naturally assume that you have shifted into a different reality. It is easy to assume that. And I encourage you to assume that, when you read after creation has been completed, “and a mist went up from the ground.”

And then there is a key sentence. It says, “And there was no man to till the ground.” Well, you know what? The way it’s written sounds like the lead in to what follows, but it’s really the conclusion to what has already been written. Creation *does not* include a man to till the ground. It does not include a man to make his mark in the world. It does not include a man to exert authority and change creation. It does not include a man to give definition to everything, because God has already defined it completely, *and* charged it to be fruitful and multiply, to flourish.

So, according to this second creation, God creates man from the earth and breathes into it life. And then, He causes a deep sleep to occur, because Adam is lonely and needs a helpmate. Ah! Is this beginning to sound familiar? Because we’re beginning to describe the realm of mutually-agreed-upon definitions. And without a helpmate, how can there be a mutually-agreed-upon definition, right? And so, He takes a rib out of Adam’s chest and from that makes woman.

And the rest is history, literally, because history is a record of time that in Eternity is an illusion. And everything that follows from there on throughout the Bible is a record of illusion. It is all based upon the trials and tribulations of being a man, or a woman, to till the soil and to suffer through and survive the quote “human condition.”

The moment that mist arose in the story, everything became an example of life, of creation, being experienced through a glass darkly, through the distortion of mutually-agreed-upon definitions, and a, I’m going to say, a conscious ignorance—*ignoring* of Reality that doesn’t require a man to till the soil, that doesn’t require a woman to slave and sweat over a stove and *labor*. So, be careful when you have fun at the expense of women, or when you have fun at the expense of men, because there ain’t no such creatures.

You see, you might have been *tempted* to believe that “The Fall” occurred *after* Eve tempted Adam, that the illusion began *after* Eve tempted Adam

and he agreed to join her. *But the illusion started where the mist rose from the ground.* And it's an important thing to understand.

If you don't understand it, you can buy into the idea that you are all descendants, one way or another, of Adam and Eve, since they are the first ones capable of being parents. And even if you hadn't thought of it that way, in the more immediate present, you do see yourselves as descendants of your parents, who are descendants of their parents, who are descendants of their parents, and then you don't usually think much further back than that. But you can't be the descendants of your parents because you are the Direct Expression of God. And you embody All That God Is—Mind experiencing Itself and recognizing Itself in the experience. This is very key and I didn't want to let it escape your attention.

You see, waking up isn't about getting back into the Garden of Eden. It's about getting back *before* the Garden of Eden, *before* the mist arose from the ground, *before* the whole story of an existence separate from God began, or seemed to begin.

Before we start reading, I want to mention something that we discussed earlier: that you have no private thoughts. It's relatively easy to engage in the uncomplimentary assessment of women as beguilers, temptresses. In fact, if you're a man, you can make a point of looking for the best temptress you can find. But what I want to point out to you is that because none of you have any private thoughts, because you truly aren't separate from anything, every thought you have is beguiling. Every thought you have is tempting. I prefer using the word "tempting" now.

Every thought you have is *an invitation* that goes out from you like a messenger looking for that which confirms it. It invites a joining in agreement—every single thought—whether it's a hateful thought, whether it's a loving thought, whether it's a thought that finds its basis in the version of creation found in the second chapter of Genesis, or whether it's a thought that finds its basis in the first chapter.

And so everyone who is *thinking* is engaging in beguiling, *or*, is engaging in making an invitation to acknowledge the Truth. Your thoughts are either seductive, or they are illuminative. Either they seduce another, or they promote the illumination of another. I'm not saying this to convict anyone of anything, but to point out something that happens unconsciously if you're not aware that you're not the offspring of Adam and Eve; if you're not aware that no such form of creation ever took place at the Hand of God.

No matter what great religious books you read, you will find attempts to account for existence. And so you will find a creation story. The clearest

account of creation is in these words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” So, that means the Word wasn’t *you*. And that means that *you are* the Word That Is God. It means that you are God in action, in presence, in being, right now. And that’s what waking up is the discovery of.

Now we will go to the book.

We have a question.

SEEKER: I noticed in the two creations that the name of the deity changes. First creation, like an older name for God—Elohim, or the wind, or something like that. And the second creation where Adam and the mist is happening is called the Lord God, more of a Yahweh kind of a guy. Is that, is my perception correct on that?

RAJ: That is correct. Yes.

SEEKER: Is there a significance to that?

RAJ: Only that it represents the fact that there’s a different source for each of the creations.

SEEKER: The first one is an older story.

RAJ: The first one is the truest story. It doesn’t have anything to do with time.

SEEKER: Thank you.

RAJ: You are welcome.

READER: *All fear is ultimately reducible to the basic misperception that you have the ability to usurp the power of God. Of course, you neither can nor have been able to do this.*

RAJ: In other words, whatever everyone thinks happened after the mist arose from the ground did not change creation *as* it is represented in the first chapter. What you think you have done has never happened. It’s as simple as that.

Continue.

READER: *Here is the real basis for your escape from fear.*

RAJ: Ah. Why? Because it means that you cannot possibly be *in* the frame of mind, the mutually-agreed-upon joint frame of mind wherein mutually-agreed-upon definitions have occurred and seemed to have caused a different experience of Reality than What It Really Is.

Continue.

READER: *The escape is brought about by your acceptance of the Atonement, which enables you to realize that your errors never really occurred.*

RAJ: You see?

Continue.

READER: *Only after the deep sleep fell upon Adam could he experience nightmares. If a light is suddenly turned on while someone is dreaming a fearful dream, he may initially interpret the light itself as part of his dream and be afraid of it. However, when he awakens, the light is correctly perceived as the release from the dream, which is then no longer accorded reality.*

RAJ: Now this uses an example of light as opposed to darkness when you do your dreaming. But what I want to point out to you is that, again, [taps on the table] the glass-topped table, the carpet, your fingernails—these are all Reality seen through a glass darkly, and therefore can be misinterpreted. *But* because What They Truly Are has never stopped being the Presence and Expression of God, they serve just as much as light as that which can trigger your awaking up from the dream, and thus seeing them As They Truly Are.

Continue.

READER: *This release does not depend on illusions. The knowledge that illuminates not only sets you free, but also shows you clearly that you **are** free.*

RAJ: *And* that you always have been.

And in the discovery that you always have been, there is absolutely no occasion for entertaining guilt for all this time that you seemed to have wasted in an illusion, because the Clarity of being Awake shows you that you never were *in* a dream. *And* because you never were in a dream, and because you always were present in Reality as Who You Really Are, the memory of who *you* in your Right Mind were being all along is returned to you, even though you weren't paying any attention to it for all that time because you were preoccupied and committed to your definition of everything.

Continue.

READER: *Whatever lies you may believe are of no concern to the miracle, which can heal any of them with equal ease.*

RAJ: So whatever lies you believe can't actually, can't *actually* block you from waking up; can't actually cause you to be undeserving of Knowing and Experiencing the Truth. And therefore, it can't hold off your realization of the Truth in any way.

Continue.

READER: *It makes no distinctions among misperceptions.*

RAJ: Miracles do not. Indeed.

Continue.

READER: *Its sole concern is to distinguish between truth on the one hand, and error on the other. Some miracles may seem to be of greater magnitude than others. But remember the first principle in this course; there is no order of difficulty in miracles.*

RAJ: And there is no order of magnitude of illusions. A mistake is a mistake. A misperception is a misperception. That's all.

Continue.

READER: *In reality you are perfectly unaffected by all expressions of lack of love. These can be from yourself and others, from yourself to others, or from others to you. Peace is an attribute **in** you. You cannot find it outside. Illness is some form of external searching. Health is inner peace.*

RAJ: Yes. Inner peace is what you experience when you stop sending out messengers of fear; when you stop sending out messengers of hate; when you stop sending out messengers of jealousy; when you stop sending out messages of arrogance.

And when you *choose* to become still and you experience your peace, as I've said before, you find yourself beginning to be filled with the experience of being loved, and the result is Joy. And *now* you're engaged in sending out messengers of Joy which will return to you with confirmation of that which is joyous.

Continue.

READER: *It enables you to remain unshaken by lack of love from without and capable, through your acceptance of miracles, of correcting the conditions proceeding from lack of love in others.*

RAJ: Indeed. When another sends out a messenger of hate, or fear, to you, and finds you non-responsive because you've chosen to be in your peace where you find joy, it does not bring back confirmation of what it is looking for from you. But *your* expression of joy right in the face of that, your

experience of joy that is sending out messengers of joy, has the opportunity to find a joyful response in the one who had been sending out a messenger of hate or fear. And your messenger of joy is an active agent for change, because it has its origin in the Movement of God Himself that you have let in.

Messengers of fear are not agents of change. You might say that they are agents of paralysis, agents of immobilization; but not agents of, not initiators of action, of response. The messengers of fear simply block, simply immobilize. This is why the messengers for fear have no power.

Okay, let's continue.

READER: *The Atonement as Defense*

You can do anything I ask. I have asked you to perform miracles, and have made it clear that miracles are natural, corrective, healing and universal.

RAJ: Ah. And miracles are sudden shifts of perception that happen when you're not being "man who tills the soil;" "man who makes his mark on the world." Miracles happen when you let yourself be the place where God shines through, when you let God be All There Is right where you are.

Continue.

READER: *There is nothing they cannot do, but they cannot be performed in the spirit of doubt or fear. When you are afraid of anything, you are acknowledging its power to hurt you. Remember that where your heart is, there is your treasure also. You believe in what you value. If you are afraid, you will inevitably value wrongly, and by endowing all thoughts with equal power will inevitably destroy peace.*

RAJ: Now because of the difference in the second edition, I'm going to read that so that everyone has it both ways.

RAJ READING: *If you are afraid, you are valuing wrongly. Your understanding will then inevitably value wrongly, and by endowing all thoughts with equal power will inevitably destroy peace.*

RAJ: Continue.

READER: *That is why the Bible speaks of "the peace of God which passeth understanding."*

RAJ: Indeed.

Understanding comes from thinking and the use of reason and logic. And that's why I make a distinction between the word, "understanding" and

“knowing.” *Knowing* is understanding that has come from experience without a single thought occurring. When any of you has felt God’s Love, you were in a position of never doubting the existence of God again; not because you could reason it; not because you could explain it; but because the experience was an undeniable Knowing. You could call it an understanding, because it is a Knowing so deep. But it is not something that has arisen out of thinking, or logic, or reason.

It isn’t understanding any of you want. It’s the Experience of Knowing, because Knowing is undeniable and it cannot be argued away. But what logic and reason have created *can* be argued away through an even more skillful use of reason and logic, whether there is any truth to it or not.

Continue.

READER: *This peace is totally incapable of being shaken by errors of any kind. It denies the ability of anything not of God to affect you.*

RAJ: Indeed.

READER: *This is the proper use of denial. It is not used to hide anything, but to correct error. It brings all error into the light, and since error and darkness are the same, it corrects error automatically.*

RAJ: Indeed. In other words, it uncovers misunderstanding. It uncovers misperception for what it is, which causes it to be seen as completely valueless. And what you don’t find value in, you make no commitment to, you don’t entertain, you don’t hold onto.

Continue.

READER: *True denial is a powerful protective device. You can and should deny any belief that error can hurt you. This kind of denial is not a concealment but a correction.*

RAJ: You see, if someone says something to you, “2 plus 2 is 5,” and you *know* 2 and 2 is 4, you say, “That’s not true! 2 and 2 equals 5—that’s not true.” Stating it is not the first step of negotiation, or an argument. You see? It’s just a statement of the truth. It is a correction.

Continue.

READER: *Your right mind depends on it. Denial of error is a strong defense of truth, but denial of truth results in miscreation, the projections of the ego.*

RAJ: It results in miscreation. Once again that simply means a distorted perception; *not* a new creation that is false.

SEEKER: Is it true then that in time we may grow weary of that ego behavior?

RAJ: Absolutely.

SEEKER: And we may eventually *want* to be rid of it and *want* what I hear you describing to us?

RAJ: You're already weary of it [seeker laughs] which is why you're listening. Yes.

READER: *In the service of the right mind the denial of error frees the mind, and re-establishes the freedom of the will.*

RAJ: Again, when you are confronted with illusion, when you are confronted with error, when you are confronted by misperception, and it is aggressively presented, you need to deny it. Once again though, your denial of it is not the first step of a contest, or a war, but a clear acknowledgement that it's *not* true because truth *is* such-and-such and such-and-such that *you know*. That sends a messenger out looking for confirmation, and it *will* find confirmation—transformational confirmation.

Continue.

READER: *When the will is really free it cannot miscreate, because it recognizes only truth.*

RAJ: Yes. When the will says to God, “*Thy Will be done,*” it's really free, even though the ego sees that as a loss of freedom.

SEEKER: And reacts fearfully. And then if I agree with that, then I've allowed myself to be grabbed once again.

RAJ: Exactly.

SEEKER: And then, which in turn, can leave me quite weary again. After a while, it's like insanity. It's like repeating the same mistake over and over again hoping for a better result. [laughs] [audience laughs]

RAJ: It isn't *like* insanity; it *is* insanity. Exactly.

RAJ READING: *When the will is really free it cannot miscreate, because it recognizes only truth.*

RAJ: It recognizes only Truth because that is what it has willed to see by saying, “God, Thy Will be done.”

Of course, this involves shifting from the second account of creation in Genesis 2, back to the first account in Genesis 1. Because when you say, “Thy Will, not mine, be done,” you're saying, “I choose not to be ‘man to till

the soil.' I choose not to identify myself that way. I refuse to identify myself that way because that is *not* the truth about me." And so you abandon the authority that being able to till the soil seems to give to you.

You see?

ANOTHER SEEKER: Now that sounds like, I'm not saying it is, but it sounds like we don't (you don't) have to work for a living. You don't have to till the soil. You don't have to make your mark in the world. So you don't have to really...

RAJ: Well, I tell you what. You just try to sit down, and be still, and yield to the Father's Will, and see if you can remain unmoving. See if you can avoid breaking into dance, if you will, because of the Joy that fills you, and the Movement of God, and the Rhythm of God, and the Beat of God, and the Movement of Creation that *is* what you're the Presence of, because God Is Being All There Is of you right now. And just see if you can *keep from* doing something.

SEEKER: But it's not toiling, you know.

RAJ: Of course not. It's a natural, effortless Flow of the Movement of Fulfillment making all things new. It's just that what you're doing isn't done for your private purposes. And it isn't done for your gain. It's a *gift*.

SEEKER: And it doesn't have to be repetitive, or boring, or any of that.

RAJ: It never will be repetitive or boring.

SEEKER: Because I mean this is talked, what you're speaking about is a whole paradigm shift.

RAJ: Yes!

SEEKER: But I mean...

RAJ: From "Chapter 2" to "Chapter 1."

SEEKER: Right.

It almost sounds like anarchy in a way. I mean it *is* anarchy in a way. You're upsetting the whole apple cart of the way things are.

RAJ: You're upsetting the mutually-agreed-upon *definitions* of how things are, and returning to How Things Really Are. Absolutely.

SEEKER: Because it's almost like the definition of "work" excludes the word "fun."

RAJ: The definition. Yes.

SEEKER: I mean, if it's fun, it's play. If it's work, it's no fun. [laughs]

RAJ: Indeed.

And the greatest works of art are the ones that came out of Joy; *not* suffering, as it is proclaimed. The greatest works of art and the greatest things that have been done were the result of Joy allowed, embraced, and embodied.

SEEKER: So this is good news. We don't have to work any more. [laughs]
Yea!

RAJ: You do not have to *be* in order to survive. That's what work is.

SEEKER: You mean existing for the sake, the saying, "I have to do this in order to survive."

RAJ: Exactly.

SEEKER: I can have fun and survive, too.

RAJ: You're damn right.

SEEKER: Alright. Good news.

ANOTHER SEEKER: I just want to talk a little about personal experience, the way this *feels* as an experience.

I'm going along and I'm having my "Chapter 2" experience. And then I *deny*, I deny that. And then I guess what I'm feeling is, for a little bit, I'm going into what you could call "the void," or, you know, just sitting there kind of waiting, I guess waiting for the messenger to get back. But then that fulfillment starts, after a little period of maybe like just reorienting myself, getting my balance back after I've denied all the ruckus. And I sit there and there's quiet. There's not anything to experience. I might have to concentrate on my breath, or, you know, make an effort to not go back into the thinking and the confirming the lie.

RAJ: And the body sensations of fear, and so on.

SEEKER: Exactly. Just paying attention to something that's really going on at a primal level that's not all loaded with stimulation.

RAJ: Significance.

SEEKER: Yes. Significance, exactly. Something to—how did you say it?—to bring about a consummate act.

RAJ: Yes.

SEEKER: And so then I just sit there without anything going on for a little bit before the messenger gets back. That's what I'm experiencing. And I used to sit there for like a long time waiting for the messenger to get back 'cause I wasn't as...

RAJ: Oh, let's be clear here. When you become still, what you're doing is making room for God.

SEEKER: Exactly.

RAJ: And then there is an infilling that occurs. First is the experience of peace. And then is the experience of feeling loved. And then an accompanying Joy. Those influxes of the Presence of God experienced by you, are themselves the impulse of the messengers that are being sent out.

SEEKER: Yeah.

RAJ: And they are the messengers that will return to you with confirmation. Just being in the quietness does not send a messenger out. You're not in the quietness waiting for a messenger to return. You are in the quietness waiting upon God, waiting upon the Holy Spirit, to infill you, because it is their Purpose to uncover to you What Is True About You, which you can only recognize within yourself when you have abandoned assertive, authoritative, aggressive thinking.

You see?

SEEKER: Aggressively denied it. I mean that's the place I can apply my will; just a will not to think that thought; to stop the thought.

RAJ: To will not to think a thought is an attack on a thought. But to choose for your peace and disregard the thought, constitutes a withdrawal of your attention.

SEEKER: I know exactly what you're getting at.

RAJ: And therefore, a denial of it.

SEEKER: Paying attention to my breath, versus, attacking the thought.

RAJ: Indeed. You got it.

ANOTHER SEEKER: I feel like I'm in a "Chapter 2" experience trying to avoid a Chapter 11. [laughs] [Raj laughs]

SEEKER: Are we on, is it number three? [to someone else] Thank you.

RAJ: Yes.

SEEKER: Okay.

READER: *You can defend truth as well as error. The means are easier to understand after the value of the goal is firmly established.*

RAJ: The value of the goal. And what is the value of the goal that would cause you to defend Truth rather than error? The goal has to be simple. It has to be Love. And if your goal is to Love, then it is Truth that you will naturally want to defend, because error is the disturbing element that undermines the Experience of Love if it is defended and committed to.

Continue.

READER: *It is a question of what it is **for**. Everyone defends his treasure, and will do so automatically.*

RAJ: Yes. Do you treasure harmony? Do you treasure friendship? Or do you treasure not being wrong? Or do you treasure being right? Do you treasure that which unifies, or that which separates and seems to provide the opportunity for being the winner of one-upmanship? You see?

And...

RAJ READING: *Everyone defends his treasure, and will do so automatically.*

RAJ: In other words, you don't have to *will* to do it. If you treasure something, you *automatically* defend it. It's wonderful, because the moment you value Love, the moment you value Truth, you will automatically defend it. You will spontaneously stand on its behalf, involuntarily. It's not a struggle. You might say the struggle comes in *changing* what you're treasuring.

Continue.

READER: *The real questions are, what do you treasure, and how much do you treasure it?*

RAJ: And *why* do you treasure it? You always treasure it for what it's going to do for you. You always treasure something for what it's going to do for you.

So you know what? I would like you to take time this coming week to ask yourself *what Love can do for you*. I'm not going to ask you to report back to me next week. But why would you treasure Love? You might be surprised that you don't have a large number of responses to the question. But it's worth exploring. It's worth contemplating. *What do you want Love to do for you?*

And then take a look at whether or not Love can really do what you're asking it to do for you, because if it can't, then what you are asking it to do needs to be abandoned. It's a futile road. And sometimes as you whittle away the things in you, the inclination in you to try to obtain something that's not available—in other words, to get Love to do something for you that Love is incapable of doing—sometimes in the whittling away of those wasted intents, you seem to come down to only one or two things, and that can feel rather empty.

But when you come down to one or two or three things, you can recognize the consistency between them, you can recognize the similarity. And once you see those similarities, you have the capacity to recognize other areas where Love can benefit you. And then the answer to the question, the answers grow in number.

RAJ READING: *The real questions are, what do you treasure, and how much do you treasure it?*

RAJ: And I added, “And why?”

Continue.

READER: *Once you have learned to consider these questions and to bring them into all your actions, you will have little difficulty in clarifying the means.*

RAJ: Yes. And part of the reason for the fact that you will have little difficulty is because of the... because you will be spontaneously inviting them into your experience. This is the part that doesn't take work. The coming forth of the Clarity will happen automatically, spontaneously, without labor, because it's a “Chapter 1” Experience.

Continue.

READER: *The means are available whenever you ask. You can, however, save time if you do not protract this step unduly.*

RAJ: Wasn't that a tactful and kind way to say it?

Go on.

READER: *The correct focus will shorten it immeasurably.*

RAJ: Indeed. And the correct focus, again, is not on the denial of the thing you want to get rid of. You deny the thing you want to get rid of by withdrawing your attention from it. And in doing that, you stop energizing it in your experience, and it withers for lack of *your* attention. You see? As someone once said, “It comes to you for life, and you give it all the life it

ever had.” So, withdraw your attention from it. Stop giving it life by *neglecting* to do something, rather than fighting off the devil.

Continue.

READER: *The Atonement is the only defense that cannot be used destructively because it is not a device you made.*

RAJ: And because it’s not a device you made, it’s not a device that is there to serve your private goals. The things you make are made to serve your private goals. And your private goals are the goals of one separate from the Whole. And those goals are always to preserve the separation.

You see?

So it’s wonderful.

RAJ READING: *The Atonement is the only defense that cannot be used destructively because it is not a device you made.*

RAJ: But that means that you have to allow the Atonement to bless you. You have to allow the Atonement to do its work for its reasons, because you’re choosing to abandon your reasons—your personal, private reasons.

Continue.

READER: *The Atonement **principle** was in effect long before the Atonement began. The principle was love and the Atonement was an **act** of love.*

RAJ: Aha! An act of love. An act of love.

Now this could almost sound like a “Chapter 2” thing. You know, an act of tilling the soil; an act of making your mark on the world. But the only thing is that an Act of Love is only an Act of Love if it’s a Gift. Love is never a means of getting. That’s why it can’t be misused. A “Chapter 2” act is an act of getting. A “Chapter 1” act is a gift. An unpremeditated gift without strings. A gift without expectations attached to it. A gift that is given purely as an extension of oneself, because you no longer have a goal to do anything other than the Function *God gave you* by embodying Himself as Himself right where you are.

Is intercourse an act of love? It is referred to as an act of love. Well, it might be, and it might not be.

Is drinking a glass of water an act of love? It might be, and it might not be.

Continue.

READER: *Acts were not necessary before the separation,...*

RAJ: In “Chapter 1.”

READER: *...because belief in space and time did not exist. It was only after the separation that the Atonement and the conditions necessary for its fulfillment were planned. Then a defense so splendid was needed that it could not be misused, although it could be refused. Refusal could not, however, turn it into a weapon of attack, which is the inherent characteristic of other defenses. The Atonement thus becomes the only defense that is not a two-edged sword. It can only heal.*

RAJ: Those are incredible words.

SEEKER (reader): Yeah.

RAJ: The Truth is incredible.

So the real question this week in everything you do is, it needs to be, “Am I going to give expression to the Voice for Truth, or the voice for fear?”

If you’re going to give expression to the Voice for Truth, you *will not* engage in self-defense, because that’s not a gift. And it’s not Love. And it sends no messengers out for confirmation of that which causes your gift to be an agent for change and transformation and healing in the world.

If you feel inclined to become defended, and thus engage in retaliatory attack, you will find yourself bound to a “Chapter 2” experience—the struggle of the human condition. And you will be saying that you are descendants of Adam and Eve, and that such a world as existed after the mist arose is real, and it’s your domain, and it’s your environment.

But if you want to break that illusion, you’ve got to make the choice for the Voice for Truth. You’ve got to make the choice for Love, which means becoming undefended, because you can’t make a gift from a standpoint of defense. A defensive hand is a fist, and there’s no way to give away what is inside your hand when it is closed up in a fist. It’s that simple. And there’s no way that your hand can be a weapon when it’s extended in an open position. Oh, I realize that it can be used to slap with, but you understand my point.

Continue.

READER: *The Atonement was built into the space-time belief to set a limit on the need for the belief itself, and ultimately to make learning complete. The Atonement is the final lesson. Learning itself, like the classrooms in which it occurs, is temporary. The ability to learn has no value when change is no longer necessary. The eternally creative have nothing to learn. You can learn to improve your perceptions, and can become a*

better and better learner. This will bring you into closer and closer accord with the Sonship; but the Sonship itself is a perfect Creation and perfection is not a matter of degree.

RAJ: This is why it is a good idea not to engage in evaluating your skill as a learner, and not to make commitment to the process of learning. Learning is unavoidable. *But* don't make commitment to learning. Be willing to abandon learning [snap of the fingers] at any moment. Because to the degree that you have not locked yourself into a learning process, you are a prime target for an inspiration, and an insight, and a direct penetration of your Divinity, because it's in the unguarded moments that this happens. So don't place too high a value on learning. Place your value on being receptive, and then to the best of your ability, be defenseless against the influx of that which you haven't entertained before, of that which you haven't *allowed* to be in your presence before.

Continue.

READER: *Only while there is a belief in differences is learning meaningful.*

RAJ: Indeed.

Continue.

READER: *Evolution is a process in which you seem to proceed from one degree to the next.*

RAJ: Important word not to let escape your attention—the word “*seem*.” Evolution is a process in which you SEEM to proceed from one degree to the next.

Continue.

READER: *You correct your previous missteps by stepping forward. This process is actually incomprehensible in temporal terms, because you return as you go forward.*

RAJ: And this is because each step toward Home is an undoing of a step you took away from Home. And so it is indeed a return.

Continue.

READER: *The Atonement is the device by which you can free yourself from the past as you go ahead. It undoes your past errors, thus making it unnecessary for you to keep retracing your steps without advancing to your return. In this sense the Atonement saves time, but like the miracle it*

serves, does not abolish it. As long as there is need for Atonement, there is need for time.

RAJ: And as long as there is time, or seems to be time, there is need for the Atonement. As long as you seem to be able to justify not extending Love, the call for expressing Love will confront you; the call for returning to your Function will confront you. As long as you don't get the message, you will have *time to get* the message. And once you get the message, you won't need time to get the message, and time will no longer be an experience.

Continue.

Microphone.

SEEKER: So last week we were talking about light bulbs and sailing ships, and you clarified that that was us just embracing God's Willingness to give us the Kingdom through our sieve. And it'd be reasonable to look at evolution as that same process of embracing our Wholeness through our sieve?

RAJ: There is a correspondence there. Yes. And at the bottom line, the learning in that is, that it is valueless to employ a sieve at all.

Continue.

READER: *But the Atonement as a completed plan has a unique relationship to time. Until the Atonement is complete, its various phases will proceed in time, but the whole Atonement stands at time's end. At that point the bridge of return has been built.*

RAJ: Indeed.

You see, it's just a matter of a return from a misperception to a correct perception. It's arriving at a point where you abandon commitment to the so-called "fun" of looking at everything with just a little bit of skew added to it. You see?

It's like the new frames for glasses that have the memory of their shape built into them so that when you twist them, they immediately pop back into their original shape. What You Divinely Are, and which you can't alter in any way, is the same as this built-in memory in these frames of the glasses. And so, no matter how much you twist yourself and contort yourself to look funny or different from yourself, What You Are is implanted there and when either you get tired from the effort to hold the contorted position, or you just decide to stop, [snap of the fingers] the return to your normal shape, the return to what you never could stop being, is spontaneous and automatic and effortless. You see?

So the last step is in the plan from the beginning. The shape of those glasses is in them from the beginning, even before they were twisted. And when the twist is released, without effort, without work, without labor, without toil, you will find yourself experiencing Yourself Truly and Everything Else Truly. It's inevitable. It doesn't take work. You don't have to refine yourself. It's not an evolutionary process.

And you will find that the hardest work you ever did, was trying *not* to be Who You Are. Becoming Who You Are happens spontaneously when the *effort* that you were applying upon yourself to be different simply ceases; when you stop wanting to be "man who tills the soil" and "make your mark" and have authority. When you abandon that, "Chapter 1" comes to view. The simplicity of it. The wholeness of it. The bliss of it. The purity of it. The Right Mindedness of it. And the conscious harmony with every Aspect of Creation Infinitely is yours, is returned to you. And what opens that door, what promotes the spontaneous shift, is the embrace and embodiment of the Atonement Principle, which is Love, and embodying it in Acts of Love, rather than acts of defense.

And on that we will call it a night.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

RAJ: Thank you. I enjoy being with you.

All of the activities of the Northwest Foundation for "A Course In Miracles" are provided without charge or obligation. This is possible because of thoughtfulness, love extended without conditions. Such is the nature of Gift. As a result these materials are available to you, because someone like you has already gifted you with them.

And, at Raj's instruction, these materials will never be sold.

If you would like to add your thoughtfulness and love, to gift others with the availability of these materials, you're invited to make a tax-deductible contribution at our website, or send it to our address, both of which are shown below.

A Course in Miracles Study Group with Raj, October 31st 2002
© by The Northwest Foundation for "A Course in Miracles" a non-profit corporation.
All rights reserved
PO Box 1490 / Kingston, WA 98346-1490 / USA
Phone: 360-638-0530 Fax: 360-881-0071
Website: <http://www.nwffacim.org>
E-Mail: paul@nwffacim.org

