Raj/ACIM Study Group – January 2, 2005

A Course In Miracles (reference pages) Chapter 9 – THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ATONEMENT Section – THE ANSWER TO PRAYER First Edition – p. 154 / Second Edition – p. 165 Chapter 8 – THE JOURNEY BACK Sparkly Book – p. 203

RAJ: Good evening.

AUDIENCE: Good evening.

RAJ: And welcome to everyone who's joining us on the Internet.

Anyone run into any gristle this last two weeks? Well, remember I said that it isn't that what you've been given is really tough to chew. It's just that it's not the bite you *want* to chew *yet*. And that's a key point. You see?

Are you willing to have healing? Or do you still have some investment in quote "getting even"? Are you ready to have healing, or is there some unfinished business for you to take care of? As you know, in the *Bible* it says that I said to a number of my disciples at the beginning, "Follow thou me." And they said, in so many words, "Well, I'll be happy to, but if someone in the family has died and that we need to take care of that, and then I will join you," or, "I have such-and-such to take care of, and then I will join you." And I said, "Let the dead bury their dead. Follow thou me." You see, it illustrated the need to be willing to put your attention where it is needed, to put your attention where healing will be facilitated, to put your attention where waking up can happen. And it cannot happen with unfinished business being attended to. That's part of your dream. It can't happen when you're still trying to fix up part of your illusion. That was the point.

You all have experienced now the fact that it's *relatively* easy, not totally easy, but *relatively* easy to devote your attention to an improved concept of yourselves. You're willing to give your attention to the idea that there *is* a Place of Excellence in you, a place that is utterly Divine, that is God Presence-ing Himself right there where you are. And there is a willingness to yield into It, to lean into It, and to begin to depend on the Clarity that is forthcoming when you do lean into It. As I said, this still isn't easy for you, but you're engaged in it. And in engaging in it, you gain experience. Ease develops. You become more comfortable in this apparently unknown new territory for you, even though I've pointed out that you're coming back into your Original Territory, your Natural Being. Now, we have found out that that's not all there is to it, because you also need to develop the ability to lean into the Place of Excellence in your Brothers and Sisters; that you need to be willing to see that there is a Place of Excellence in them, and give your attention to that, rather than whatever ignorances they are expressing. What happens when you do that? Oh, all kinds of justifications come up, don't they, as to why you shouldn't, or can't, *yet* because you have some things to attend to with them. You have some issues of justice to attend to first, right? Or "Well, why should I give that much to them when no one else is giving half that to me?" Justice, justice, justice is what it boils down to. And you want to exact... you want to exact the evidence of justice *from them*, or from the situation. You want to get *satisfaction first*.

Thank God. Thank God that God doesn't respond to *you* that way. Thank God that I don't. Thank God that the Holy Spirit doesn't. Thank God that your Guides don't, because then you would be truly lost.

What's another? "Oh, well, you know, I'm coming along fairly well giving myself the benefit of the doubt. I'm coming along fairly well in honoring myself in a new way by leaning into the Holy Spirit in me. And it's not easy. And now you want me, at the same time that I'm having some difficulty in experiencing myself in a new way, to extend this to another who I'm even less inclined to extend anything to? You're... [small laugh] you're pressuring me! You're moving me too fast!" Hell, we've been talking for two and a half years and we've only gotten 203 pages. [slight audience amusement] You're being *rushed*? See, it's the gristle. It's the little bit of a bite that you don't want to chew yet. But the bite is filet mignon perfectamente. That's what the bite is.

This section is called, "The Answer to Prayer." The answer to prayer is a miracle, a sudden shift of perception, healing. Do you want healing? Then you must *give* healing.

And although you might be inclined to more easily be open to being the agent for change for your pet who is ill, or for a favorite plant in your house, I am encouraging you to go to the place where you're *least* inclined to give healing, and that is to your Brother and Sister, because you use your Brother and Sister as the justification for *not* having healing. You don't use your favorite plant as a justification for not having healing. You see what I mean? The only place you have difficulty is where? *In relationships!*

You can turn to the Holy Spirit for healing. And you can turn to the Father. You can turn to me. And in our relationship, you can experience healing. But I'm going to tell you, the healing won't be permanent as long as you're justifying not extending it to someone else. Because that's the way you make it your own. That's the way *you* embody it.

Let's go to the book. In the previous paragraph, we were speaking about believing in your Brothers. Now, continuing.

RAJ READING: To disbelieve...

RAJ: In your Brothers or Sisters.

RAJ READING: *...is to side against, or to ATTACK. To believe is to accept, and to SIDE WITH. To believe is not to be credulous, but to accept and APPRECIATE.*

RAJ: In other words, to believe is not to be stupid, is not to believe everything a Brother or a Sister says. It's not to be ridiculous. It's something else entirely.

RAJ READING: *To believe is not to be credulous, but to accept and APPRECIATE.*

RAJ: [whispered] Accept and appreciate.

If you had a situation like you've had this past week where many, many died [in a tsunami] and if, as they were this past week, their bodies were strewn around, you would walk through them listening for a sound. Here's a live one. This one's breathing. You would look for the signs of life and you would respond there.

Now:

RAJ READING: To believe is to accept, and to SIDE WITH.

RAJ: What are we talking about accepting? We're not talking about accepting bad behavior. We're not talking about accepting expressions of self that are based upon an ignorance of What That One Truly Is, which cause his expressions to be unkind or unlovely. We're talking about recognizing signs of *life* where that one is. And awkward and inarticulate expressions coming out of one's mouth, *hateful* expressions *spewing forth* are, if nothing else, a sign of life, right? So here is a live one. You get it? And you *accept* this live one as *being*, as *existing*. And you side with that one's existence, that one's Presence, no matter how he, or she, is demonstrating that Presence with bad behavior or good behavior, kindness or unkindness.

RAJ READING: To believe is to accept, and to SIDE WITH.

RAJ: Join with. Identify with. You exist. They exist. You have something in common. You can join with them.

RAJ READING: *To believe is not to be credulous, but to accept and APPRECIATE.*

RAJ: Accept and appreciate what? The signs of life. If they are alive, if they exist, if there is something you can identify with in those very basic terms, then you can, you have the means to be aware of the fact that Whatever Is True about you that has been revealed to you, and which you have been able to incorporate and identify with yourself, is True about them. If there is a Place of Excellence in you, because there's a sign of life there, life is there and the Place of Excellence is there. And if that Place of Excellence in them is the Holy Spirit, just as it is in you, then no matter how they are expressing themselves presently, you have a line of communication that can be activated. And so you *choose* to activate it.

Continuing.

RAJ READING: What you do not believe you do not appreciate, and you CANNOT be grateful for what you do not value.

RAJ: It's very practical. If you look at a Brother and you cannot appreciate him, you cannot value him. If you do not value him, you will find him unworthy of extending the acknowledgement of the Truth. You will find him unworthy to hang in there with, to be present with, to be involved with.

RAJ READING: What you do not believe you do not appreciate, and you CANNOT be grateful for what you do not value. There is a price you will pay for judgment because judgment IS the setting of a price. And...

RAJ: Here's the hooker.

RAJ READING: ... as you set it you WILL pay it.

RAJ: Judgment is the setting of a price.

You just never express a judgment for no reason. You express judgment, as we discussed last week, for the purpose of confusing and overwhelming your Brother; to put him off balance. You make judgments so as to cause that one to lose any confidence he may have in himself so that he is unable to authoritatively stand up for himself, and you are in a better position to influence him, or to get from him what you want. Maybe you just want the Brother to go away and leave you alone. You see? It isn't always that you will want his agreement. But you will want something, and so you bring judgment into play.

But there's a more fundamental reason for expressing judgment, and that is that the circumstances with your Brother, or Sister, have brought you to the end of your rope. Up until now, you've been able to cope pretty well. You've been able to be positively oriented with that one. You have given, and given, and given. And something has happened that was quote "the straw that broke the camel's back" unquote. And now you've had it! Now you don't know what to do. Whatever the straw was that broke the camel's back has put you at a loss. And you feel incapable of continuing to make the gift. You feel incapable of making the gift because you find yourself at a loss. You don't know what to do. And so you say, "This one is a stubborn one. Nothing that I do is heard. Nothing that I say is heard. And nothing that I do is valued. I persist, and I persist, and I persist, and they come up with one more thing."

But, you see, now you're talking about *them*. You've shifted, and it's *them* out there. And you're characterizing them. And all of this characterization is doing only one thing—it's covering up the fact that you don't want to acknowledge that you don't know what to do now.

So you're *really* at a wonderful point. "I don't know what to do, Father."

Ah, now we're doing something different from *them out there* and their stubbornness. And maybe they're just not capable of learning. Or they love their problems too much. "I'm never gonna be able to get through to them. It's all them."

"Father, I'm at a loss here. I don't know what to do. I've carried it as far as I can. And you know what? I thought I was listening to You. And I thought I was sharing with them what you were leading me to say. And I thought I was being the Presence of Love. And I thought I was doing it well. But it hasn't worked. It's not working. And I'm exhausted. I give up on them. I can't do it!"

If you're exhausted, it means you've been doing too much all by yourself, even though you've included God along the way. Because it's at exactly this point where what you're presented with seems to go beyond your capacity; that you stand at the edge of the pregnant void; this wonderful place where you are actually primed for insight, or even revelation, *if* you will abandon the last vestiges of control that you were trying to bring into play, of course, beneficently because you have an object of your affection. You're at a point where you truly need *inspiration*, where you truly need to yield even further into that Place of Excellence in you—the Holy Spirit. Why? Because you deserve to be healed of the experience of emptiness. You need to be healed of seeming to be overwhelmed yourself. You need to be healed of an apparent incapacity to be the Presence of Love further. You see?

So here's where, instead of backing out and blaming them and characterizing them in the most ferocious terms, this is where you need to take a deep breath, *stop* the judgment, and let go further into God. Let go further into the Place of Excellence in you in which Love is inexhaustible, because of the inexhaustible nature of its Source, which is the Father.

You see, when you abandon being the Presence of Love because you feel exhausted and at a loss, you lash out and you point the finger. And it's their fault, but you won't tell them what the fault was. You won't tell them that they pushed you to the edge of your known capacity for being the Presence of Love, and that you're scared to yield further.

And so you set a price by engaging in judgment. And you're going to exact from them something that will make up for all that you've done. [small laugh] And that will make up for the fact that they haven't received it all, and the fact that they've pushed you to a place where you are experiencing the discomfort of *not* knowing what to do next, even though you have been pushed to the threshold of inspiration, even though you have been pushed to the threshold of a greatly expanded experience of your Function.

RAJ READING: If paying ...

RAJ: Paying the setting of a price.

RAJ READING: *If paying is equated with GETTING, you will set the price low but demand a high RETURN.*

RAJ: You want a lot for a little. The ego wants a lot for a little.

RAJ READING: You will have forgotten, however, that your return is in *PROPORTION to your judgment of worth.*

RAJ: If your Brother, in your opinion, is not worth your attention, you will behave toward that Brother as though he or she isn't. And the return you will get will be what you've given.

RAJ READING: If paying is associated with GIVING, it cannot BE perceived as loss, and the RECIPROCAL relationship of giving and receiving will be recognized.

RAJ: As well, the experience of your relationship with your Brother will be recognized, will be experienced. And the opportunity for transformation will continue to be present.

RAJ READING: The price will then be set high...

RAJ: You will *want* to pay a lot because you're going to get a lot. When you *pay* a lot, you *give* a lot. What you give, you keep. What you give, you have.

[Editor's Note: Raj did not read the rest of the sentence. Here is the complete sentence: *The price will then be set high because of the value of the return.*]

RAJ READING: The price for GETTING is to lose sight of value, making it inevitable that you will NOT value what you receive. Valuing it little, you will not appreciate it and will not WANT it.

RAJ: How many people do you know who are accumulators? They get, get, get. They have lots and lots of things. But are they happy? And do they even use the things they've gotten? Do they actually enjoy having them? No, because having them wasn't what was important to them. The *getting* of them was what was important.

[Editor's Note: Raj did not read the following sentence: *Never forget, then, that YOU have set the value on what you receive, and have priced it by what you give.*]

RAJ READING: To believe that it is possible to get much for little is to believe that you can bargain with God. God's laws...

RAJ: I'm going to add: On the other hand.

RAJ READING: *...are ALWAYS fair and perfectly consistent. BY giving you receive.*

RAJ: See how consistent that is?

RAJ READING: But to receive is to ACCEPT, not to get. It is impossible not to HAVE,...

RAJ: It's the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom-everything.

RAJ READING: ...but it IS possible not to KNOW you have.

RAJ: And at the moment, all of you don't realize all that you have because you've decided to call Creation that has been given to you the world and universe; a material thing that has nothing to do with God, so you see very little of God in it. You have determined that it's *not* God. And in fact, some who read the *Course* interpret it to mean that the world *is* an illusion, it is not of God, when the fact is that if there's anything in front of your face, anything that you're experiencing, it *is God* experienced clearly, or through a glass darkly. There's no other choice. But until you begin to value it *as* the Manifestation of God, you will not find God there. And you will not, thereby, have your *vision* of it *corrected* so that you are no longer seeing it through a glass darkly.

Continuing.

RAJ READING: *The recognition of having is the willingness for GIVING, and ONLY by this willingness can you recognize what you have.*

RAJ: Now I know that you have not had a great number of experiences of the world being the Kingdom of Heaven yet, but you have had some. You have had some glimpses. And I tell you that your one task is to persist in being willing to look at your world with the desire to see more of God there than you're presently seeing, and to be, as I said, persistent in this.

Now, the same applies to your Brothers and Sisters. It doesn't matter how awful they are appearing to you, whether they are appearing that way because of their own faulty decisions within themselves, or whether they're appearing that way because *you* are insisting on seeing them as something *other* than the Excellence of God expressed because, as I said last week, you know them too damn well.

We're talking here about breaking the *habit* of how you're perceiving everything. And the only way you can break the habit of how you're seeing everything is to be willing to *look in a new way* from a new standpoint; a standpoint that has its basis in Truth, with a capital "T".

RAJ READING: The recognition of having is the willingness for GIVING,...

RAJ: It's the willingness for persistently giving your attention to your Brother in a new way—giving your attention in a new way, regardless of all of the justifications you have for looking at them in the old way.

Continuing.

RAJ READING: ...and ONLY by this willingness can you recognize what you have. What you give is therefore the value you put on what you have, being the exact measure of the value you put upon it. And this, in turn, is the measure of how much you WANT it.

RAJ: The big question is, "Is there any point at which you can justify giving up on your Brother?"

"Well, yeah. [small laugh] If he behaves badly enough."

Well, what you mean when you say that is if he behaves badly enough to put you at a loss where you don't know to do. You see? You just can't stand to be at the threshold of the pregnant void. You can't stand to be at the threshold of the unknown *where a miracle can occur*, where inspiration and insight *will* happen. Why? Because it takes too much effort on your part? It requires giving more attention than you're willing to give, more attention than you feel is justified? Well, how much do you want to wake up? How much do you want to be *Sane*?—that's another way of putting it. How much do you want to be *Sane*?

Continuing.

RAJ READING: You can ASK of the Holy Spirit, then, only by giving TO Him, and you can GIVE to Him only where you SEE Him.

RAJ: "Well, I'm not really ready to see Him in my brother, or my mother, or my wayward son, or daughter. I'm not really willing to see the Holy Spirit in the president!"

Mmm. Well, okay. But understand that you're the one unwilling. And therefore, you're the one keeping yourself in the dark. It's your word that you're laying down. What? Against your Brother? No, against yourself. "I am, under the circumstances, unwilling to be more fully conscious." That's how much you want to wake up. Thank God for those who push you to the edge. You would say, "Thank God," to them if the *edge* was a place you valued.

And I will tell you something. As you stand at the edge under dynamic circumstances or peaceful circumstances, and experience the inspiration that constitutes a miracle, a sudden shift of perception, you will begin to value the edge more. And so, if someone pushes you to the edge, you won't retaliate against them. You'll say, hopefully you'll remember to say, "Oh, yeah. This is when really great things begin to happen. And I'm not going to distract myself from the influx of a miracle by grousing at them for uncovering in me an emptiness that can't be the Truth about me, that needs to be filled; an opportunity for me to be more *conscious* than I thought I was able to be." You see?

Continuing.

RAJ READING: If you see Him ...

RAJ: The Holy Spirit.

RAJ READING: *…in everyone, consider how much you will be ASKING of Him,…*

RAJ: The Holy Spirit.

You'll be asking the Holy Spirit to show up everywhere, right? By being willing to see the Holy Spirit in *everyone*, you're asking the Holy Spirit a lot.

RAJ READING: ...consider how much you will be ASKING of Him, and...

RAJ: Here's the kicker.

RAJ READING: ...HOW MUCH YOU WILL RECEIVE.

RAJ: You see, this is why you don't need to be afraid of the *edge*. Because it's the place where *how much you can receive* can make itself available to you, because you're not defended against it, or distracted from it by your preoccupation with being pissed off at the person who drove you to the edge of your known capacity to be conscious.

Now you can look at that one who's driven you there and say, "You ask too much," or, you can actually do what you really want to do and say to *me* right now, "You ask of me too much." But I am telling you that I'm asking you to put yourself in a position of discovering how much more of What *You* Really Are *there is available to you*, and that is part of your Natural Sanity which is perfectly normal to you, and you *are* capable of it.

RAJ READING: He ...

RAJ: The Holy Spirit.

RAJ READING: ...will deny you nothing because you have denied HIM nothing,...

RAJ: You have not denied Him your attention.

RAJ READING: ...and so you can share everything. This is the way, and the ONLY way, to have His answer because His answer is all you CAN ask for and WANT. Say, then, to everyone:

RAJ: Quote.

RAJ READING: Because I will to know myself

I see you as God's Son and my brother.

RAJ: Unquote.

You can't solve the problem from the level of the problem. You can't solve the problem by understanding the elements of the problem better. You can't understand your Brother (or Sister) by pegging him (or her) with a definition in your mind; an explanation of them psychologically, physically, or any other way. What happens when you peg a butterfly? Well, it's dead, and in a case, very carefully arranged by you to look its most dead beautiful.

You have to be willing to let go of whatever way you have already pegged your Brother, or Sister, and *defined them* in your mind, because if you don't, whatever way you have carefully *arranged* what your Brother is by definition in your mind, *will*, because *you* have arranged it, get your allegiance and pride. And you will not be available to have the Holy Spirit, or God, provide you with a sudden shift of perception that allows you to see the Living One that they are, who isn't bound either by *your* definition of them, or their own definitions of themselves. And until you do abandon those definitions, and until you, by virtue of having abandoned them, are able to see the living, non-static, unpegged Presence that they are, there will be no opportunity for you to be the presence of appreciation, the presence of no judgment, that will allow them to abandon their defense and have a sudden shift of perception themselves.

I'll tell you something. It's not up to them to make your decision to stand at the edge and embrace what is beyond it, easier for you. That's just another convenient delaying tactic. "You better behave differently so that my standing at the edge doesn't seem so imperative. You need to make it easier for me." And we're right back into the old ego-bullshit of manipulating into mutually-agreed-upon definitions and ways of behavior that constitute the dream you need to wake up out of.

So here's the big question. Here's your bottom line vulnerability. "What if when I do this and I do have miracles happening, sudden shifts of perception do occur, and I make the gift, and I, by embodying it now, have it, what if they don't change? What if they continue to act badly? What if they continue to engage with me in a manner that is calculated to upset me? Am I supposed to just say, 'Thank you for the miracles,' and let them continue to behave badly?" See, the suggestion is that maybe you will end up being a doormat, because you're so busy making the gift, that you're not saying "No"—that you abandoned simple intelligence. You're afraid that abuse will become the norm.

[Editor's Note: Now Raj goes back and reads from the beginning of today's material.]

RAJ READING: To believe...

RAJ: In your Brother.

RAJ READING: *...is to accept, and to SIDE WITH. To believe is not to be credulous, but to accept and APPRECIATE.*

RAJ: No. None of this is going to amount to your being credulous, stupid, naïve. Anything goes. Whatever you say, I believe, I accept. Whatever way you behave, I believe, I accept. No.

I promise you... I promise you that you cannot abuse me. And if you try to, if you engage in that attitude and behavior, I will call it for what it is. Not to attack you. Not as judgment. But to show you that you're doing something that isn't working, to show you that you're doing something that you don't *want* to do any longer, *because* it isn't working—because it doesn't blend

with the *Way* Things Work. And then I will illuminate the Way Things Work so that you can make a choice for *that*, instead. And I will hang in there with you, but I will object. I will object, not by attacking you, but I will object by calling the game for the game that it is, and not reacting to it, and saying, "This doesn't work. Don't do this with me. It won't work. Stop doing this with me. Do this, instead."

But, you see, that involves *ongoing involvement*; a continuing to give your attention there where your Brother is, not to his behavior, but to that of Excellence in him that you know has to be there. You will find that inspiration and insight will give you the clarity to know how to be in the moment with that Brother, or Sister. And, of course, I mean by that mother, father, son, daughter, acquaintance—everyone. You will find yourself knowing how to be with that Brother and Sister [in a way] that does not allow chaos to persist. You will find that guidelines, boundaries for communication, will be established out of your mouth. You will not let chaos rule. You see?

You will find yourself taking hold. But always you will find yourself taking hold in a context not that you knew of ahead of time, but a context in which whatever inarticulate expressions, or whatever willingness there is to be inarticulate is being expressed by your Brother, will be squelched and required to fit in to a means of communication that will allow dialogue to occur, rather than ongoing mystification, confusion. And so you may very well find yourself *seeming* to be authoritative, but not an exercise of control expressed as a means for your not having to step up to the edge and lean into the unknown; not as a defense against having to be more conscious.

The exercise of control will be the nudging and the guiding of ideas that help provide a structure in the relationship that allows the one you're with to abandon his or her defensive practices, and relax enough to let themselves—Who *They* Are—find expression, and for healing to occur. It might take a while, but since you will not be into *control*, you will not be expressing an *agenda* for this other one. You will... you will be the part of the dance of the relationship that it's your Function to be, that supports in the most graceful manner—in other words, with grace—a natural movement out of the darkness of chaos on the part of your Sister or Brother. But it's almost as though you're playing a tune that you have never heard before, on an instrument you don't know how to play, with fingers doing things they were never trained to do. And it will happen easily.

Paul has no idea every Sunday night when we sit down what's going to come out of his mouth, and it comes out most easily simply because *he lets*. A tune is played, a dance occurs with everyone. It's not hard. But you have

to be willing to embrace your Brother as the Christ. You have to be willing to *look for* and see the Holy Spirit in your Brother, just as you are becoming *more willing* to see and lean into the Holy Spirit in you, which is nothing more, nothing less, than your Right Mind, which is nothing less than the Presence of God.

Now that is the answer, no matter how complicated the *details* of any given situation might seem to be; no matter how complex they might seem to be.

"The Journey Back"—another chapter under our belt. The journey back is not made by an ego improving itself, but is the reawakening in you of the Christ of you coming back into its Right Mind, because it's no longer engaging in a fantasy activation in order to try to make a sense of self real. And it abandons its divorce proceedings from the Father, and rejoins, and *lets in* the experience of its Excellence. And then lets in the Excellence of his Brother, or Sister, as well, because in doing that it makes yours what you have been willing to extend, what you have been willing to let fill you by virtue of breaking the isolation from your Father, and which you have extended on and made your own.

I find you worthy of acknowledging the Divinity of You. *You* must find your Brother worthy of acknowledging the Divinity in him, because that's the way you remember Who You Are. And that's just the Way It Works.

I said that I would open this evening's get-together for questions, or comments, or frustrations—whatever. You can talk about gristle you've run into, or filet mignon, that you've experienced, but this time is open because this is the nitty-gritty here. Shall we start with the complainers? [audience amused] Let's say the ones that have had a rough time.

SEEKER: I can kind of understand. I mean I grasp it. I feel like I grasp it. Then I get out there and I find that really trying to do this, I feel sort of like lost, like I lost my anchor. And the difficulties that arise, the difference, the changes in the relationships that I have with people, I find disconcerting, because it feels like I'm disrupting the way things have always been. And I'm making people pissed at me. And that's definitely, I don't believe that's my intent. I don't think I'm intentionally trying to go out and do that. Is that kind of part of the...

RAJ: Well, I'm not intentionally go out and trying to do that either, but [seeker laughs] there's often the same result. Apparent disruption is not automatically cause for you to stop coming from the Place of Excellence in you. It is one of the means the ego uses to maintain the status quo and keep change from happening, keep miracles from happening.

Well, when you were confronted with that, you find yourself feeling at a loss, right?

SEEKER: Yes.

RAJ: Yes. Oh, so there you are at the edge, right? Well, you were at the edge before you moved over enough to feel confidant to do this new thing that you're doing which seems to be meeting with resistance. So change is occurring. Shifting is occurring. Stay at the edge that it pushes you further into so that you can listen and be appropriate under the *new* elements of *change* that are now occurring.

SEEKER: When that disruption happens, I'm sometimes not sure. Am I going the right direction? Have I... asking myself am I slipping off? Did I get off into another, a new ego-trip kind of thing? It's real tricky, slippery, very slippery. Is that...

RAJ: The difference between the two will become more and more obvious as you persist in the experience of stepping up to the edge and leaning into the unknown, into the void, to *listen* for how to be, and what to do and that—what to say next.

You're not so totally unconscious that you don't recognize when you have really slipped into ego. It's only in the, what I'm going to call, the new area of trust-building that you are engaging in by being in a new way. You have to persist long enough for the trust to develop, so that there is not as much fear associated with *being* out of control, but still acting in the world. You see?

SEEKER: Yes. That's feels better. I think I know what you mean. There's nowhere else to go 'cause what was before is not there anymore, so I only have... there's only forward to go. A little sideways once in a while. [laughing]

RAJ: What we're talking about all along the way here is the building of trust around *being* in the world without using all of the mutually-agreed-upon definitions that have been put into place that *seem* to provide a sense of real security.

SEEKER: Thank you.

RAJ: You're welcome.

Hands. Right there.

ANOTHER SEEKER: Well, you mentioned that God's Will and ours are one, and based on this last two weeks when a lot of really crazy things happened, I kind of was thinking about that. And I've been listening to your CD. I realized that it's because I really was being distracted by my own definitions of everything. So then I had this brilliant idea that maybe the smartest thing was to quit thinking about the past, and quit trying to plan for the future, which left just *now*, and to drop all the definitions and drop all the defenses that I had. And I noticed the thought would come up, and there was all kinds of defense around it. And when I would let all the defense go, I could just feel my whole body energize somehow. And that... this is leading to where my question is, really. Okay. So then, I'm thinking all right, I'm not a body, I'm a mind. So what does a mind do? Well, a mind thinks. And then I think I heard you say it creates.

RAJ: What Mind does is it pays attention.

SEEKER: Oh, thank you. I knew that there was more. There's nothing in that. I knew there was more. Thank you. And you know me, I really want definitions of everything.

RAJ: Well, thinking is a distraction from paying attention.

SEEKER: This is so cool. Thank you. [laughing]

RAJ: Yes. Get that down in your book of definitions. [audience laughter]

SEEKER: [laughing] Thank you.

RAJ: It is well to have the reminder, because this is a reminder to let go of definitions.

SEEKER: Yeah.

RAJ: Continue.

SEEKER: I think that really handled it. I really wanted to understand what a mind does. And, you know, if that's what I am, if I'm this Mind, then I need to pay attention. And it has to be in the now because...

RAJ: Well, Mind automatically does that.

SEEKER: Oh! I don't have to make it do that? Okay.

RAJ: When you stop thinking, you'll find that what's left is you paying attention.

SEEKER: Oh.

RAJ: You being Conscious.

SEEKER: Okay.

RAJ: And actually, you will find yourself paying attention in a way that constitutes being more *present with* everything than you have ever been before, because always your thinking has stood as a barrier, a cushion, between you and that thing. So you have not really been able to be intimately present with everything, because you've got this definition of it sitting between you and it. You see?

SEEKER: Mm hmm.

RAJ: So as you let go of the past, as you let go of the definitions, you end up, you might say, just being Pure Consciousness.

SEEKER: That would be cool.

RAJ: Now Pure Consciousness is not infinite space absolutely clear of anything in it. Consciousness is the experience of attentiveness to what there is to be attentive to, which is Creation.

SEEKER: Okay.

RAJ: God.

SEEKER: Okay. Okay.

RAJ: So you will find yourself being a better driver. You will find yourself being a better organizer, if that's what's needed. Or you will find yourself being less organized because you were too compulsively organized before. You will find yourself being so present with everything in such an appropriate manner that the only way to describe it would be that you will have the experience of being *more alive* and *more connected* with everything.

SEEKER: That would be good.

RAJ: And everything will extend way beyond what you've, in the past, called everything. So you will not lose your capacity to be intelligent. You will not begin to do foolish things. You will be the Presence of an orderly Mind, you might say—not by virtue of your ordering it—but an orderly Mind that sees order everywhere, that is by virtue of its fundamental, intelligent structure communicating intelligent structure and expecting to see intelligent structure—not by plan, but just by Function. And everything will reflect back to you the quality of Truth with which you're looking at everything.

Now, in practical terms that means that everything that needs to get done will get done. All of your relationships with the people in your experience will be healing, or will be harmonious. You won't be airy-fairy, strumming a harp. Your everyday life will... every element of it will fit together in such integrity that there's not a single space for confusion, or chaos, to enter. And every aspect of it will be in Movement—the Flow of Creation identifying the Father's Will.

And so, you will *feel* the orderliness of it; I'm even going to say the subatomic orderliness of it; the Orderliness of the Movement of *Being*. And you will feel it right in this room here. You will feel the space that seems to be empty, and how it configures perfectly with every board in the ceiling and every indentation in the walls where the windows are, and how perfectly the glass interfaces with the space inside and identifies beauty, and more. You will *feel* the *perfection* of all of the space and everything *in it*; in the space. You will experience the awesomeness of this room, the outdoors, of your home, of the space in between, of the way your car moves from here to there, and the space that the air took up before your car moved into it shifts to the space behind it, and so on. You will feel the integrity of all of it.

And I tell you, it is an awesome experience, not one that you, in bliss, are sitting back having about everything else, but that you *engaged* in the Movement yourself experience. What I'm trying to convey here, again, is not an other-worldly experience, but a *new* experience of right where you have been all along. And why will you have this experience? Because, in the absence of thinking, you will find that what is left is Consciousness— Consciousness being attentive, and experiencing What *Is* Here without the interference of the definitions about everything that is here that you were employing before. And I will stop there with your answer.

SEEKER: Thank you.

RAJ: You're welcome.

Over here.

ANOTHER SEEKER: Thanks, Raj. I, too, have been chewing for the past couple of weeks, struggling, if you will, with the... on the one hand, yeah, I felt like in a way the way you described. You said some of us may feel like this is unfair that you're asking us to do this, you know. And because it just seems too advanced, it's like wait, wait, wait! Shouldn't that come at the end of the book, or something? Because, you know, I'm having a hard enough time getting to a point where I can...

RAJ: Let me say this. The end of the book is where the last step is taken. And we're talking about the second step.

SEEKER: Okay. Well, I'm still struggling with the first step.

RAJ: Indeed. And as I said, I've now said you have to take two kinds of steps together. Yes.

Continue.

SEEKER: Right. And I feel like I'm one of those...

RAJ: Wait a minute. I also said *you are* capable of it.

SEEKER: Yes.

RAJ: Okay.

SEEKER: Oh, I totally know that. I was blessed in the past by a point in time when I was at the bottom of my bucket, and I was just in a complete state of "I give up, God." You know, take me out of here. Whatever You're going to do with me, it's okay. I'm through with this, you know. Whatever happens, "I surrender" kind of attitude. And out of that, when I meditated thinking, "Okay. This is fine with me if this is the last time I ever meditate, you know. This is... I want to go to Heaven, or wherever." I want to be out of here, was my attitude.

And somehow, by grace, I had an awakening, or, what I'd call nowadays, is sort of like a "preview of coming attractions" experience where it was very much like you described. In other words, there's a spontaneity of right action, appropriate speech, a state of living in fulfillment, and knowing that my needs are met moment by moment. And there's a spontaneous expression of sharing; wanting to give from that overflowing of your heart.

But, okay, that sort of dwindled away. And I got back into the ego state where everything is a struggle. And I see, you know, even though I have that memory back there of that experience, I'm still in a state of, right now, in a state of "okay, Raj is saying grasp this, do this." And I'm trying to do that from an intellectual plane, which is what you've been talking about tonight, which I really appreciate this sort of screen of definitions. And all the ego could do would be to try to pretend, or see, okay, I'm going to try to behave like Christ today. And I'm going to be good. And I'm going to... you know. *It's an act.* It's the best that could be done.

RAJ: Exactly.

SEEKER: And it's just another costume. It's not the real thing.

RAJ: It's another delay.

SEEKER: And so inside me, I know. I know the difference experientially, and so I just go back and say, okay, look, there's nothing I can do other than meditate and hope that I can let go of my resentments towards family

members, other people, and all these bullshit stories that I have that I want justice.

RAJ: I understand. Let me interrupt.

SEEKER: So I really appreciate what you said tonight.

RAJ: What can you do? What am I asking you to do?

SEEKER: What I was struggling with, which tonight you've brought some clarity to, is it seemed like you were asking us to not only know ourselves as Christs, but to see that Divineness in our brother, and our sister, and our neighbor, and our boss, and everybody. And I was feeling like [whoosh sound], you know, I can't even see that in myself right now experientially. All I could do is try to imagine it, or intellectually define it.

RAJ: You want to know something?

SEEKER: What?

RAJ: If you, or anyone else who might ever hear these words, *listens*, you will learn something wonderful. If you find yourself ill and in the hospital, you want to know the surest way to have a healing? Find someone else, perhaps in the very same room you're in, someone else who is in the hospital, and devote your[self]... let them be the object of your affection. If you want healing, *give* healing.

"Oh! But you ask too much! I'm in the hospital. I'm not in tip-top shape. I don't feel energetic. I don't feel like giving." Well, that's why you're in the hospital. You see? Illness is an extreme form of isolation caused by self-preoccupation, in one way or another.

And so, here you are, I'm saying, in the hospital. And I'm saying what you're called upon for is to be willing to have someone else in need be the object of your affection and give your devotion to that one, listening to God for the Truth about that one.

"Oh! Oh! You mean... well, but what about *me*? I'm the one in the hospital that needs healing. You know, who's gonna do this for *me*? You want me to do it for them?" Yes.

Why? Because it's the way *you* break your isolation. It's *never* going to be easy to break your isolation, because it's a very ingrained habit. And anyone asking you to do what it takes to break the isolation is going to seem like an unreasonable demand, because you have other things to take care of. You have more urgent things. Blah, blah, blah. 'Tain't so. You have only one thing that you need to do, and that is break the isolation.

And so, if you want healing, be a healing presence, whether you think that it's an opportune time or not. If you *want* healing, *give* healing, because what you give, you get to keep. What you actually really extend becomes yours, becomes embodied.

And you know what? Until you wake up, there's always going to be some apparently worthy thing for you to attend to *other than* what I've just told you to do. There's going to always be some sort of emergency, or urgency, or strong need that you *feel compelled* to deal with. But I'm telling you that those things are the result of your having forgotten to say, "Father, help." You have forgotten to let something else in. So find an object of your affection, and *extend* Love so that you might *have* Love.

Continue.

SEEKER: Yes. I appreciate that shift of perception from... let's... you know, I have experienced that. I could be dwelling on something from the past that I have grievance over, and then maybe the phone rings and it's one of my sons. And I'll just instantly I'm in a state of gratitude, appreciation. So the mind is really fickle in that way. It can shift from one thing to another. I could be totally depressed at one moment, and then very happy in the next.

RAJ: But there is something determining where the attention is going to shift to and whether it's going to do it at this moment. So you... there is a decider there.

SEEKER: Yeah.

RAJ: You could have answered the phone, found out it was your son, and projected all of your negative feelings about the past that you had been ruminating about onto him, and ruined the conversation.

SEEKER: Right. Right.

RAJ: Okay.

SEEKER: Where I have a little bit of a "yes but" in what you're saying here is affection.

RAJ: Yes.

SEEKER: If I see something beautiful, I don't have any trouble feeling love and appreciation for it. It just comes spontaneously. But if I see someone who is the way you described; say I'm in the hospital and the guy in the bed next to me is in worse shape than me, or maybe not, whatever, I don't want to get into a sort of a self-righteous kind of okay, I'm going to extend love to this decrepit, poor person because I want healing for myself. That's bullshit! RAJ: That's right.

SEEKER: I want to be coming from natural, real affection.

RAJ: You don't want to do *any* of it yourself.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: What I mean by this is that if you're going to extend Love, you're going to have to turn first to the Father, and ask the Father to reveal to you what is lovable about this man, what is the Truth about this man. And you are going to listen for the Father, just as Paul is listening for me right now, so that you might be infilled with what the Father extends, so that you might... so that your perspective is changed and automatically embraces that one. And there won't be anything about your doing something for somebody else so that you will get something. I'm just explaining to you that when you do that, something does happen.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: And you get to keep what you have given. And you will never have what you never give. Okay.

SEEKER: Yeah.

RAJ: I want to make sure there is time for anyone else.

SEEKER: Okay. Sure. Thank you.

RAJ: [indicating to someone that they can speak] Yes.

ANOTHER SEEKER: Thank you, Raj. The answers of some of the other people who've asked questions have already given me some of the answers to my question. But being a father, and a brother, and a husband, over the last two weeks I have had the chance to enjoy the last lectures that we've enjoyed out of the *Course*... um... have been some[what] of a personal tsunami for me because of the...

PAUL: A personal?

SEEKER: ...personal tsunami of my own with the family that we've...

PAUL: Personal "sue-no-me"?

SEEKER: Tsunami. Tsunami.

PAUL: Oh, tsunami. Okay. [laughing]

SEEKER: Considering what we've just gone through. And I have to wonder how one can bring all these personalities into some kind of agreement, even when I walk with the *Course* in my hand and my heart.

RAJ: Why do you have to bring them all into agreement?

SEEKER: That's a good question. It seems to be such a personal conflict and chaos in the family with personalities.

RAJ: A conceptual one? Or...

SEEKER: There is a strong feature about each personality in my family. And they seem to find the differences, not the commonalities to allow love in their life. And it makes it hard, from my perception, to try to...

RAJ: They love rigorous interchange.

SEEKER: They do that. It gives me an opportunity to use the *Course in Miracles* frequently. But sometimes I think my feet are still in the concrete.

RAJ: "Father, help me. Help me neglect to exercise judgment just because I am with those whose rigorousness makes it appear to me that they are expressing more ego-dynamics than I, for myself, want to employ."

What I'm trying to say to you is that maybe what they're doing isn't all egodynamics, but just a different way of expressing themselves; sort of a different language of communication than the one you're familiar with, and which, because you're not familiar with it, causes you to feel inadequate, at a loss. I am suggesting that you go within to ask whether or not any exercise of control is needed at all. And if not, how you can be present with it without engaging in judgment, and how you can be with it without feeling threatened by its intensity. To be spiritually aware does not mean to become delicate and unable to withstand *vigor*.

SEEKER: Thank you.

RAJ: You're welcome.

Over here.

ANOTHER SEEKER: Raj, what's interesting for me is that I'm in a situation in my life right now where it's a relationship that started out as a contractual agreement, in that I had some technical work that needed to be done on a project that I was working on, and I wasn't, I didn't have that technical ability, so I contracted someone to come in and do it. And what I thought was going to turn out to be a three-month project is now going over ten months. And it's a situation where initially I felt, well, the person's just incompetent, and so I need to just take all my stuff back from them and find someone else. And then I thought, well, you know, and again I'm giving you the history, 'cause for me there was a shift in it in that, you know, then I thought, I beat myself up that, well, I should've had a termination date in the contract. And so I went... all this operating number one stuff about doing business the right way came up. And then I thought, well, wait a minute. This... no. This is a lose-lose situation. I'm not getting what I need from the relationship, and she's not getting what she needs from the relationship. So let me look deeper into this. And then, of course, just by coincidence, we're covering this stuff in the *Course*. And so now I'm saying okay, now what's the real message? What is she telling me?

So I set up some meetings with her at her house with the computer to work on the project so I could be right there with her involved in the project as she was. And then I realized that this lady has so many other distractions going on in her life that it's very difficult for her just to sit with the project for any length of time. And so I've been with her now on several occasions to try and move the project along. And I'm still... it's like the first thing I came up with was there's an attention deficit disorder going on here. In other words, she can't really bring her forces to bear here.

And then on my side, it was me saying, you know, she's taking advantage of me here, you know, my patience, my resources, whatever. So there was a real charge behind it. And that's what fascinated me about the situation is that whenever there's that much of a charge behind a situation, I know that there's more meat here to chew on, and that I need to go in with it so I can get clear, because until I can get clear, it's not going to move on, or I'm going to have to repeat it again. So that's the point that I'm at now where it's coming to like, you know, the ball is in her court again. She's got to finish this thing up and present me with a finished project, a finished product.

And so now I'm being more open and looking beyond the surface than I ever have been with this situation. So, I am at that point, like you said tonight, where I'm going, "Father, you know, what's going on here? What's the meaning of this situation?" But, yet, at the same time I don't want to get caught in this situation of, well, I'll give her just one more chance. I'll give her just one more chance. You know, it's like... or the situation of, well, if I really pray hard and be open to the Father, the problem will go away. You see what I mean? So that's my question. It's like what's the appropriate... you know. Okay, now, I'm waiting. I'm listening. I'm paying attention. Is that all? Do you stop there? Do you just keep paying attention? Or what's the... **RAJ**: That's exactly what you do. You continue paying attention. The new modus operandi *is* pay attention, pay attention, pay attention, pay attention, pay attention. That's called *Being*.

SEEKER: So instead of taking the initiative, it becomes responding appropriately.

RAJ: Exactly. And responding from a deep connectedness in you to the Movement itself, irrespective of personalities, psychologies, mental disorders, or definitions that are out of the past. You *be* in life ongoingly with innocence.

SEEKER: Well, just... I mean you know so I'll ask if that's what I'm doing now, right?

RAJ: That is what you are doing now, but you are still struggling with letting go of some ordering structure, or grid, to hold the Movement up against so that you may judge, or a judgment can be made.

SEEKER: Progress. Yes. Yes.

RAJ: Indeed. And that's...

SEEKER: Silly.

RAJ: It's the useless stuff that you are learning to let go of.

SEEKER: Yes. Right. Because in effect that says, I mean holding onto that structure says I know the timetable for this particular thing to be done, as opposed to following God's timetable, so to speak.

RAJ: Now you notice also that you're talking about circumstances, projects, time, et cetera. We didn't read anything about circumstances, time, projects. We were talking about relationship and the necessity for each of you to be willing to see the Holy Spirit, or the Christ, in your Brother, just as you are learning you have to do with yourself. And to reach for, to lean into, to connect with the Holy Spirit in your Brother, or your Sister. And that you've spoken very little of here. But your attention is in that direction. I simply want to bring it more solidly in that direction.

You don't give your attention to the Excellence in them so that you can find out how to be in better control, or to find out what their problem is. You talk to the Holy Spirit to find out what the Truth about them is so that you, in your Conscious Awareness of Truth about them, are sending out those messengers *about them*. They will come back reporting what they were sent out to find, which will be confirming of your right intent, but which will also be a blessing for this other one. You see? **SEEKER:** See, what I'm experiencing right now is I see this person struggling. Okay? And so, like I'm a little bit fixated on their struggle, saying, "How can I support this person in their struggle?"

RAJ: What's the definition of struggle? And what degree of struggling? What's the degree of intensity of the struggle?

SEEKER: Right. Right. Right.

RAJ: This is something you're applying to a benign picture.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: You see what I'm saying?

SEEKER: Right.

Now theoretically I can... and I say this theoretically, I can see, I mean I know that this person is a good person. The Holy Spirit is in them.

RAJ: How do you know that?

SEEKER: Because I can feel it. I mean you can, I can feel that this person is not a bad person. They're not trying to take advantage of me. They're not, you know, jerking me around. They're doing the best they can.

RAJ: Yes, but I want you to feel that they're a good person because the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you, and not because you can sense that she fits into a certain structure of definitions.

SEEKER: Right. Right.

RAJ: You see what I'm saying?

SEEKER: Yes.

RAJ: I want it to be, I want you to be looking more for an experience than a sense.

SEEKER: Right. But the thing is...

RAJ: An experience that has been derived from an actual connection with the Holy Spirit.

SEEKER: Right. And that's what I'm trying to get at here. That is not, that does not come from trying to see it in the other person. It comes from being open and asking to be shown. Correct?

RAJ: And I am telling you that you, from your human experience, recognize that she exhibits, let's say, a certain number of criteria that tell you that

she's basically a good person. And that's not the same as a direct connection with the Holy Spirit.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: So I'm pointing you in the direction of going deeper for a Holy Spirit experience, rather than a recognition that certain criteria have been met that allow her to be recognized as a basically good person who's overwhelmed herself for whatever reason.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: Yes.

SEEKER: And the best way for me to receive that is just ask for it and be open to it.

RAJ: Exactly.

SEEKER: Not having. Not doing. There's nothing to do here. It's just...

RAJ: Except ask.

SEEKER: Except ask.

RAJ: Step right up to the edge of what you don't know and lean into it with the desire to know the Truth that needs to be known.

SEEKER: Right. Right. At this point it seems like...

RAJ: The Truth that heals.

SEEKER: Right. It's, to me at this point, it seems like *that* is more important than project completion, or project success, or...

RAJ: They're so inseparable it's not funny.

SEEKER: Right, right, right. But what I'm saying is my attention is now on what... the real value is what is the... how can I make this connection? How can I see the miracle unfold from the situation?

RAJ: Yes. Exactly.

SEEKER: And then just be with that.

RAJ: Exactly.

SEEKER: Okay. Thank you.

RAJ: Yes.

If we end right now, is there anyone who will go away and be absolutely angry because they didn't speak up? [audience laughter] Okay.

ANOTHER SEEKER: Just dejected and hurt probably would have been it.

I've been kind of fuzzy about the understanding of what extending healing meant. And as everyone's been asking and as you've been talking, I think I've realized that I thought if I extend healing, I would see a change out there. And I feel like I feel, you know, affection in here for an object of my affection out there, and then they start to talk. [laughing] You know, and then they say their complaints, or their whatever.

RAJ: Yes.

SEEKER: And I can't agree with what they're saying, but I haven't known how to offer anything else. I did have a...

RAJ: They don't want you to agree. They *want* a different answer themselves. They want *not* to have to register that complaint, or that perspective. And so you have to listen for what the answer is. You have to listen for what the answer is so that you can share that.

What's behind the moan? What is the Truth that makes them *feel* the illegitimacy of their experience, so that they have justification for complaining about the experience? Do you see what I'm saying?

SEEKER: Yeah. I did it with a stranger once.

PAUL: Pardon.

SEEKER: You know, it happened to me with a stranger. And I really leaned in, you know, to my Guidance, and I heard, "I'll give you a new experience of this person if you don't run away." And we didn't have any words. But I totally received, you know, a miracle and a blessing and really saw the beauty of them. I find it, I mean maybe I just am not leaning into it as much with people that I know and I'm having a conversation with.

RAJ: Exactly. Like I said, you know them too damn well to think that there is a Place of Excellence in them.

SEEKER: [laughing] Right. Yeah.

RAJ: You see? Yes.

SEEKER: Okay.

RAJ: And of course, that's your judgment. And those are the messengers you send out.

SEEKER: Right.

RAJ: And communication *doesn't* occur, no matter how much *talking* goes on.

SEEKER: Okay.

Because when it happened that spontaneous time, like I had no, you know, agenda for that person having a change in front of me, even though he did have a change. You know he went from being snarling and everything to being calm. But I think I'm, you know, quote "extending healing" to a lot of people around me to change them, and to, you know, control the situation, or something. And so that's not leaning into the Holy Spirit at all, you know.

RAJ: Yes. The key here is one of the pieces of gristle.

[Editor's Note: Now Raj reads a sentence from earlier in this section. The sentence was covered in an earlier meeting.]

RAJ READING: The message your brother gives you is...

RAJ: All capital letters.

RAJ READING: ... UP TO YOU.

RAJ: If you think there is an ego there, and you're listening for an ego to speak, an ego is what you're going to hear, *even* if they're speaking the utter Truth. If they are speaking the utter Truth and you recognize the excellence of it, because you're expecting an ego to speak, you are going to be suspicious of the motive for such Holiness and Excellence that's being expressed, and you will not see it.

And if they are coming from an ego place, and what they are saying is an expression of confusion and misunderstanding of What They Are, *you*, if you are listening for the *Holy Spirit* in them, will hear what is behind their poor expression, so that you can respond to *that*. But what you hear will be up to you, and that *is* the key.

SEEKER: Okay.

RAJ: Now, just because we move on doesn't mean that this chapter should be left behind. Review it over the next few months. Review it, remind yourself, because it sets a foundation for the rest of what is to come.

Okay.

SEEKER: Thank you.

RAJ: Was there another question over here? [no question was forthcoming]

Okay. You are a wonderfully lovable, motley crew. [audience laughter] I love you greatly and I look forward to being with you next week.

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