

# A COURSE IN MIRACLES

## STUDY GROUP

### WITH RAJ

December 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

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THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.  
THIS COPY IS NOT IN ITS FINAL FORM  
AND WILL BE UPDATED

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

Well, as you heard, we're going to be talking about empathy. And you might be wondering, in the context of what we've been reading, where empathy popped up from. So I want to back up to the end of last week's text—the prayer that says:

*"I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself."<sup>1</sup>*

This is addressed to your Brother or your Sister, or even to any part of your world.

*"I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself.  
I know that you will be released, unless I want to  
use you to imprison MYSELF.  
In the name of MY freedom I will your release,  
Because I recognize that we will be released TOGETHER."*

I want to home in on the first line:

*"I give you to the Holy Spirit . . .*

You hear this often . . . you know . . . you have a brother who's having a problem: "Turn him over to the Holy Spirit!" And many of you treat your brother as though he's one of the discs in a tiddlywink game. And you take your disc and press it against the disc that he is, on the edge, and you pop your disc off of the edge and it makes his disc jump—it makes the other disc jump. And with a little bit of practice you develop a skill and can direct the direction

of the jump and the length of the jump so that you can, hopefully, pop it into the bowl in the center of the playing board.

And so, it is as though you say to your Brother, “I give you to the Holy Spirit—kerplunk...bump...bump...bump” and hopefully, he goes into the dish. And you say, “Ah-h, what a relief . . . I’m going to let the Holy Spirit take care of this.” And you walk on your way thinking you have done a wonderful thing. After all, you’ve turned him over to the Holy Spirit—you’ve *released* him from your caring, you might say, from your efforting, to the Holy Spirit. It says to do it in the *Course*.

And so, you walk on your way and you attend to other things without giving another thought to your brother whom you have “kerplunked to the Holy Spirit” and no blessing as occurred.

You see, as an orphan, as someone who is an independent authorizer, you see yourself as a body automatically. And you see everyone else—all the other orphans—as bodies, things “out there” that you can sort of “kerplunk . . . release to the Holy Spirit.” You know, you don’t think you’re releasing his mind to the Holy Spirit, your releasing “him,” this him that’s located where the object is, called “his body.” And your releasing him from the concern you, as a body have, or the efforting of caring that you, as a body, have been providing. All of this through space.

Now it’s very important to understand this because . . .

*"I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself.  
I know that you will be released, unless I want to  
use you to imprison MYSELF.*

Why you might even think that by having done a good “kerplunk” you are succeeding in releasing yourself. But let me ask you something: In this scenario that I’ve described, where’s the holy instant? In this scenario, where is it that you have stepped back—the first part of the two-step, you know—that you have stepped back, become still and expressed a desire to the Father, or to the Holy Spirit, or to me to know what is the truth here? About what? About your Brother. Where, in the scenario I’ve just described has that occurred? And what’s the purpose of that two-step being taken? What is the purpose of practicing the holy instant?

It is so that you might become infilled, suffused with the awareness of truth about your Brother as God sees Him, as God sees It, as the Holy Spirit truly sees your Brother, etc.

Now, *that* is a definition of true empathy. And yet, what I've described has nothing to do with relating to your Brother through space, as a body that could be kerplunked into the Holy Spirit, or where involvement with him would end and you would be free to go on about your business hopefully having been released yourself.

So, this needs to be understood.

Empathy has nothing to do with becoming sensitive to your Brother through space, body-to-body—bodies that have brains and sensory organs that allow the body to be conscious of the world and of life. You see? Empathy has nothing to do with that.

And yet, relating in that fashion is the only thing you're really used to. It's the way it is in the orphanage. It's the way those who don't know who they Are relate to each other, as bodies. And this is what you're released from: Is the goal of the Course, is the goal of the Holy Spirit that would have you Wake up.

You're not here to accomplish things through space by the force of will that does nothing but further substantiate and seem to solidify the existence of organismic bodies—matter, density. You're not here to further substantiate your orphanhood and further bind yourself in ignorance to who you truly Are.

Now, every week, every time we meet, every time you hear me speaking through Paul's mouth, Paul has provided an example of the two-step. He has provided an example of the holy instant. He has no idea what is going to happen. And he is willing to allow himself to be in that not-knowing place. Why? Well, because he cares about everyone who listens.

But, he has learned that in order for his caring about everyone to bear fruit, he had better not be *empathizing* with them. He had better be withdrawing his attention from *them*, as bodies "out there" in his experience. And instead, become still and go within, and desire to know the truth from the Father.

Now, every week we speak and we relate to all of you. And then, during the following week, at various times, many of you express distress with something I said or that something I said could easily have been taken the wrong way, and that person thinks I need to clarify what I said so there would be no misunderstanding. Or others will say . . . well, they'll have another gripe, a constructive one, you know, always wanting the truth to be brought out more clearly, yes, and their expression of these ideas are accompanied with an emotion of distress.

Now, Paul could come in on the following Sunday or Saturday night and sit down, knowing that there are those listening on the internet or in the group

here, who have expressed these concerns, who might not be happy once again with what I have to say. And he could approach me, start listening to me with a bit of a bias, with a bit of a willful request for me either to address these issues or perhaps, to see that these individuals will not be distressed in the coming week so that he won't have to be bothered either. You see?

Now, his desire to have me respond in a certain way so his Brothers or Sisters won't be distressed is Paul playing tiddlywinks with his friends and kerplunking them into "my will" . . . kerplunking them into an answer that will relieve him of distress, because he *cares*.

Well, you know what? If he does that, he won't hear me because he will be coloring whatever goes on between us. And his apparent caring that would be called, "empathy," will not constitute what will bring forth answers that are needed.

The simple fact is that none of you know what the truth is that Wakes you up. None of you knows what the truth is that heals because if you did, the healing would be evident. So your memory banks do not include the Answer yet.

And so, you don't have the means to express true empathy.

Now, Paul has learned from doing it over and over and over again, that when he withdraws his caring about those who are listening and what they might be feeling, and brings his genuine, quiet, sole attention to me, when he speaks, answers that constitute the truth that heals comes out of his mouth. And those listening feel that true empathy has been expressed—true empathy has been shared because they feel heard, and they feel that they have been heard because the language has been so clearly appropriate for them.

Now, you see what I'm saying? I'm saying that true empathy occurs when you join with the Holy Spirit or you ask the Father for His perspective and regardless of what your friends and acquaintances are saying or wanting or feeling, you share what the Holy Spirit is revealing. That will always demonstrate true empathy. And because no attempt was made to reach your brother through space, body-to-body, the density of bodies is lessened. The density of the experience of the mortality of a physical form is lessened because you are not behaving as a form, you are behaving as Mind, you are behaving as the Movement of Love which has no form, but always has focus.

Again, it never has form but it always has focus. And the focus is a Movement and the Movement is rendered visible and tangible but not as matter! You could say it's rendered visible and tangible as the incredible glory of God—things, yes, but things that are a moving experience . . . totally Mind.

Now, when that happens, you will be in constant involvement with your Brother or your Sister. Doing this will not put you in a position of being released from a relationship, released from an involvement, released from caring. But you know what? The involvement will not be manipulative. The involvement will never involve any aspect of control. And that's the incredible beauty of it. And it's the incredible difference between a holy relationship and a special relationship.

## *Chapter Sixteen*

### *THE FORGIVENESS OF ILLUSIONS*

The forgiveness of that which never really was. To abandon the orphanage is to forgive the fundamental illusion.

*To empathize does not mean to join in suffering, for that is what you must refuse to understand . . .*

. . . or to *pretend* that you understand or to *think* that you understand.

*To empathize does not mean to join in suffering, for that is what you must refuse to understand. That is the ego's interpretation of empathy, and is always used to form a special relationship in which the suffering is shared.*

Not only in which the suffering is shared but in which body as form becomes more solidified. Because why? Because more willfulness, more self-determination has been brought into play for the purpose of control and it comes clothed in this friendly word: empathize. To have empathy is a wonderful thing . . . not if it doesn't happen in the context of a holy instant.

Think about it. Is it not more often than not, that you empathize with someone when they're having a problem rather than when they're having a joy? And although the practice of empathy done well even fools you into thinking that you are experiencing with your Brother his or her sorrow or trauma or distress, the fact is, that all you're doing is picking up on cues or clues in their behavior—their tone of voice or their words—that remind you of an experience you had which throws you right into memory, doesn't it? . . . right out of the moment you're in. Your relating to them in their distress is a matter of you abandoning yourself to your memory of similar circumstances and the feelings you had, the feelings of loss that you had—loss of control, loss of superiority, loss of ability to be effective, loss of ability to be well and expect to get well.

And there may be warm moments of tender embrace and quiet togetherness and tears shed, demonstrating that you truly are understanding them, feeling

with them and even on film it might be a beautiful poignant moment. But without the empathy occurring in the context of the holy instant, it's only a temporary salve. It does not constitute the truth that will snap that one's or your awareness out of the illusion into the Reality—God's Reality—because you cannot draw from your memory an experience of empathy that's based on truth when you are joining with them in their suffering. It's just that simple.

Because the relationship that occurs is not happening in the context of the holy instant, which means in the context of your actual connection with the Holy Spirit or the Father or me, there literally is nothing present to transform the moment you're in and it further solidifies a special relationship, which is a relationship of bondage . . . to what? . . . to ignorance—bondage to your ignorance of what and who you truly Are, the awareness of which [snaps fingers] would lift you out instantaneously of the whole situation that seems to call for this wonderful element called, *e-m-p-a-t-h-y*. You see?

Now, . . .

*The capacity to empathize is very useful to the Holy Spirit, provided you let Him use it in His way. He does not understand suffering, and would have you teach it is not understandable.*

He would not have you teach *that you understand* as you sit there gently crying with your brother or sister in joined suffering over his predicament.

*When He . . .*

. . . the Holy Spirit . . .

*. . . relates through you, He does not relate through the ego to another ego.*

You know, from this body here to that body over there so that he might tiddlywink him into his Awakening. No.

*He does not join in pain, knowing that healing pain is not accomplished by delusional attempts to enter into it, and lighten it by sharing the delusion.*

You see? That's the normal practice of empathy. And that has become the acquired intent of the practice of empathy: To relieve your brother of his suffering by sharing some of it—sometimes called, “taking on part of the problem yourself.” That isn't Brotherhood and that's not Brotherly love. And you must begin to find the holy instant more practical and more truly empathetic than the prevailing use and definition of empathy.

*The clearest proof that empathy as the ego uses it is destructive lies in the fact that it is applied only to certain types of problems, and in certain people.*

Well, people who have problems. There's a certain kind of people that it's used with. It's seldom use with people who are not having problems.

*These it selects out, and joins with. And it never joins except to strengthen itself.*

A really good empathy, if I might put it that way, is seen as very valuable because he helps people not feel alone when they're in misery. Well, you know what? I don't want any of you to help people feel not so much alone when they're in their misery, I want you to be a Presence who's listening to the Father for His perspective on your Brother who is suffering, so that it is your conscious awareness of the Father's Perspective of your Brother that you bring into the moment with your Brother, instead of drawing upon memory to identify with him. So that what? So that you begin to relate to your Brother and empathize with him on the basis of your experience of what he *divinely Is*, which has no part in problems and problems have no part in him. And *that is* the source of healing.

*Make no mistake about this maneuver; the ego always empathizes to weaken, and to weaken is always to attack.*

I know this is very difficult to see, but the fact is that when you empathize with your brother and you join with him in his sorrow, in his misery, you're not coming from strength within yourself. And in your joining weakness-to-weakness, you're emphasizing and substantiating and seeming to prolong weakness.

*You do not know what empathizing means.*

Although now you do, because I've been talking about it.

*Yet of this you may be sure; if you will merely sit quietly by . . .*

. . . that's the first part of the two-step: To back off and become still.

*Yet of this you may be sure; if you will merely sit quietly by and let the Holy Spirit relate through you, you will empathize with strength, and both of you will gain in strength, and not in weakness.*

Now, again, why all of a sudden are we talking about empathy? We're talking about empathy because when you go into the holy instant and you say—of

your Brother and to your Brother—"I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself, I know that you will be released unless I want to use you to imprison myself. In the name of my freedom, I will your release because I recognize that we will be released together." And that's the only way it will be happening.

So we're discussing empathy because that prayer is what brings true empathy into play. What brings true empathy into play is participating in the holy instant, *using* the holy instant to learn of the Father what the truth is about your Brother, so that you might with feeling, relate to what is true about your Brother—your Father's Son, the holy One.

And this act is the beginning of a permanent relationship—not a relationship that you will become released from—a relationship you will be *happy* to be involved in forever because it doesn't involve empathy with suffering, but it involves the ongoing joined experience of the joy of Being.

*Your part is only to remember this; you do not want anything you value to come of the relationship.*

What does that mean? It means that you do not want anything that you have learned in the orphanage. You do not want any of the concepts about what it means to be an orphan to become embodied or manifest in your relationship with your brother that you're having true empathy with.

*You will neither to hurt it nor to heal it in your own way.*

According to your best judgments—your highest spiritual learning.

*You do not know what healing is.*

Just like when Paul sits down on Saturday nights, he does not know what healing is, he does not know what needs to be said, he does not know why it needs to be said. But in his allowing, what needs to be said is said and what needs to be learned is being learned, and healing is occurring whether he can pin-point it or not.

Continuing . . .

*All you have learned of empathy is from the past. And there is nothing from the past that you would share, . .*

. . . why? You say, "We've learned from the past . . . the past is what helps us to be in the present better." But if a fundamental premise of the past is that you're just a physical organism, that you are just a body with a brain and that's

it, then your past does not include within it what is essential to being free—of Waking up. It doesn't include it.

It also preoccupies you from the present, so that you are not able to be present in the present with innocent eyes. They are biased by your past, they are biased by your well-established beliefs, they are biased by the learning that has been handed to you that once again has appealed to this funny something in you all, that says, "I want to get to the end of learning. I want to get to the end of involvement. I want to get to the end of what causes me to put forth effort. I want to arrive at that point where I don't have to pay attention and can just, as silly as it sounds, pay attention—just be conscious but without effort being associated with it."

You know what? You tend to think that Creation is a movement occurring in space and time, a developing movement of objects or a movement of developing objects, things or forms. But you see, that's based on the idea that Creation is form—it's matter in time and space. But what if Creation is a Movement of Being, that can best be described as the conscious experience of learning—not a development of things, but a capacity that each one has to know more than he or she has ever known before.

Star Trek says, "To go where no man has gone before." What about, "To be what no man has been before." What about, "To be the conscious Movement of Mind that constitutes learning what wasn't known before,"—which obviously is going to mean that Being, existing, the experience of Life, is going to involve your, for lack of better words, focused attention infinitely eternally.

You're not going to get rest from being conscious. And you're not going to get rest from knowing more than you knew before, which, if you think you're something tiny, is going to feel like you being stretched and stretched and stretched beyond your capacity, when it's nothing but the incredible Movement of Creation.

If you weren't an orphan, if you were a holy Child of God, what would the experience be like? Well, that's my first clue. It's you experiencing Creation, not as a body, a physique, a form in a material universe, but rather as Mind learning, forever learning, forever discovering—not discovering anything that makes you better, not discovering anything that puts you ahead of anybody else, but discovering the incredible infinite Mind of God—an infinitely joyful and fulfilling experience.

I'm going to back up again:

*Your part is only to remember this; you do not want anything you value to come of the relationship.*

What you want is what the Holy Spirit would value. What you want is what your right Mind would value. And you will not find out what that is without shutting up and desiring to know what it is and staying with that focus until the clarity dawns on you.

*You will neither to hurt it nor to heal it in your own way. You do not know what healing is.*

See? I've just shared with you that you haven't known what Creation is. I've revealed to you that It's an intimate experience of learning of infinity eternally.

*All you have learned of empathy is from the past. And there is nothing from the past that you would share, for there is nothing there that you would keep.*

Is this becoming clearer? There really isn't anything there that you would keep, because there's a fundamental flaw which you're all in the process of abandoning to one degree or another—God bless you.

*Do not use empathy to make the past real, and so perpetuate it.*

Listen . . .

*Step gently aside, . .*

. . . step gently aside from your willfulness, from your focused determination to have the good you would think is best, be brought forth.

*Step gently aside and let the healing be done for you.*

How? By doing the two-step, by engaging in the holy instant. Understand that engaging in the holy instant is going to bring forth empathy, your capacity as a holy Son or Daughter of God, to know of your Brother or Sister's holiness because your understanding has come as a direct revelation from the Father. That's empathy.

*Step gently aside and let the healing be done for you. Keep but one thought in mind, and do not lose sight of it, however tempted you may be to judge any situation, and to determine your response by judging it.*

“Oh-h, I would help him if he would do this . . . Oh-h, I would help him but I can see that he's not practicing the holy instant. He's not this. He's not that.”

*Focus your mind only on this:*

And we have another prayer:

*"I am not alone, and I would not intrude the past upon my Guest.*

Your Brother, whom you're no longer giving to the Holy Spirit as though he's a tiddlywink.

*"I have invited Him, and He is here.  
I need do nothing except not to interfere."*

How do you not interfere? By silencing your human will. And how do you silence your human will? By doing something other than engaging it. And the something other is, that you say, "Father, what is the truth here? Father, reveal to me the holiness of my Brother so that I might feel with him his holiness that will heal and transform and lift us both out of the illusion of being orphans in an orphanage, so that I might enjoy being in relationship with him *forever* and no longer want relief from my relationships."

It just keeps getting better and better. I love you all. And I look forward to being with you next time.

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*A Course In Miracles (reference pages)*  
Chapter 16 – THE FORGIVENESS OF ILLUSIONS – Section – TRUE EMPATHY  
<sup>1</sup> Sparkly Book – p.378 / JCIM – p.159 / CIMS – p. 318  
Chapter 16 – THE FORGIVENESS OF ILLUSIONS – Section – TRUE EMPATHY  
First Edition – p. 307 / Second Edition – p. 330

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A Course in Miracles Study Group with Raj, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2009  
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