

A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

May 17th 2015

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.

We are reading about the *Obstacles to Peace*. And as I mentioned last week, with all of the specific details that are covered, it may sound like the subject is everything other than peace. But the fact is, all of these relate to peace as being the primary state of Being through which and in which one Awakens—through which and in which the miracle occurs.

Now, as you will remember, the first obstacle was *The Desire to Get Rid of It*—meaning peace. The second obstacle was *The Belief the Body is Valuable for What It Offers*. And tonight we're beginning with the third obstacle:

The Attraction of Death¹

Now, there are four obstacles and they are presented in the order in which they are most easily undone. And that's the point! That's the reason for considering each of them—not so that you might be impressed with how horrible and insurmountable the obstacles are, but rather, that they are to be undone and how to undo them so that . . . what? Peace returns as the foundation and the superstructure of your conscious experience of Being.

Now I'm going to back up to the beginning of the last paragraph we read last week. It begins:

It is not given to the ego's disciples to realize that they have dedicated THEMSELVES to death.

Wow . . . it continues:

Freedom is offered them, but they have not accepted it, and what is offered must also be received, to be truly given. For the Holy Spirit, too, is a communication medium, receiving from the Father and offering His messages unto the Son. Like the ego, the Holy Spirit is both the sender and the receiver. For what is sent through Him RETURNS to Him, seeking itself along the way, and finding what it seeks. So does the ego find the death IT seeks, returning it to YOU.

Now it's important, when you're reading the *Course*, not to gloss quickly over the things hard to understand, or the things you don't really want to consider, and get on to the more positive things.

And so, when this paragraph starts out by saying . . .

It is not given to the ego's disciples to realize that they have dedicated THEMSELVES to death,
..

. . . it's like, "hum . . . that's about all the further I want to go into that!" And then what the next sentence says:

Freedom is offered them, but they have not accepted it, . .

"Wow! Freedom has been offered. I'm going to glom onto that. I'm going to reach for that. I'm going to give my attention to that, and I'm going to feel better than I was feeling when I read:

It is not given to the ego's disciples to realize that they have dedicated THEMSELVES to death,
..

"I'm not going to dwell on that."

Well, you're going to have to dwell on it. Because understanding what it means is essential to your being able to do, what? *Undo* it. Release it. Become unbound by it!

So, pretty heavy-handed, I would say: The ego's disciples . . .

. . . have dedicated THEMSELVES to death.

Well, let's be grounded . . . let's be practical . . . let's be sober.

Who of you has absolute confidence that you will not die? How *many* of you have confidence that you will not die?

How many of you feel, right now, that you are being, and it will be *uninterrupted* by death—no variation will occur [as] it has with almost everyone else except for the handful who have ascended or translated?

If you know that you're going to die, then you are one of the ego's disciples who is dedicated to death!

What's the saying? "The only sure thing is death and taxes."

So, you know what? You're already disciples of the ego. And you are already dedicated to death because you're absolutely sure that it's going to happen to you. Of course, there will be another

lifetime where you will return to Heaven and your life will not have ended. And so, therefore, you don't mind being absolutely sure that you're going to die out of this experience.

Man, that's dedication! That's commitment! You are bound with a certainty—the certainty of your inner decision about it. So you're already in it. And you have just found a way to describe it so that it's not as distressing as it might otherwise be. You see?

One way or another it's a certainty, and you have arrived at a certain amount of peace about it. And that peace is false. And that peace disallows for correction to occur. It disallows for this obstacle to peace to be destroyed. And yet that's the call.

You are the holy Sons and Daughters of God, who, somewhere along the line, decided with another to pay more attention to your own thoughts than the Thoughts of God. And so you forgot who you were and you forgot your function.

And now here you are living in an experience that is full of sin, sickness and death. And you think it's normal. You think it's the way God set it up. And, as I've said, you've built a story around it—many stories around it—that make it a more comfortable experience.

This *Course* is not here to make you comfortable in an illusion until the illusion is over, because the illusion won't be over until you abandon it! And you won't abandon it until you look squarely at it and see how you are engaging with it. You see?

So don't be afraid to look soberly at it.

“Well,” someone says, “how come nobody else who is teaching the *Course* is saying this? How come everyone else who studies the *Course* believes that death is inevitable?” It doesn't really matter. What matters is that I am teaching that it is not inevitable and I am bringing out the ways in which the *Course* intends to undo the obstacle. Why? So that you shall never see death!

“He that believeth on me shall never see death!”²

That's my declaration. That's my promise. That's the simple truth. Death is to be undone. And the *Course* has no different purpose from that. If death is not inevitable, then it means that sickness that leads to death is not inevitable. And it means that sin—the attempt to do something that can't be done with commitment—that is to be undone as well.

That means what? A lot of things. It means ever-present health. It means no signs of aging. More than that, as you engage in the holy instant and lean into the Father's Perspective by asking of the Holy Spirit, “What is the truth here?” you set into motion your capacity to see the truth. And by that I mean, in the transformation of your awareness, as it is infilled with the inspired truth that the Holy Spirit provides, you will find what you would call physical evidence of correction of all that wasn't real, all that were misperceptions—like aging.

And so you would say you're experiencing “youthing”—the return of better symmetry, more perfect form and outline and color. You see?

You should be going through your day, every day, with an expectation of eternal Life showing up in practical language of perception, now . . . and not just reading the *Course* and glossing over the hard parts and getting to the sweet and beautiful parts that allow you some peace and comfort without correcting a darn thing! You see?

The word, “correction” means *something changes*. A call for correction is a call for a *change*. Where? Right in the middle of your experience. We could call it, “the human experience.” But actually, it’s right in the middle of your divine experience and revealing, uncovering, the divinity of it more clearly to you in your conscious awareness. This is what it’s about!

Now, beginning in this new sub-heading (*The Attraction of Death*):

To you, in whose special relationship the Holy Spirit entered, . .

. . . meaning, when in your relationship with your fellowman, you turned to the Holy Spirit to gather the facts instead of your memory and your mutual agreements, . .

To you, in whose special relationship the Holy Spirit entered, . .

. . . because you invited Him . . .

. . . it is given to release and be released from the dedication to death.

The holy instant genuinely and humbly practiced, is the threshold into the conscious experience of eternal Life—yours, *NOW* . . . not after you pass on.

For it was offered you, and you **ACCEPTED**.

And that’s the key. You **ACCEPTED**. The moment you turn to the Holy Spirit or the Father, or your Guide, or me, and you ask to know the truth, the truth will be provided if your desire is humble and genuine. And because . . .

. . . it was offered you, and you **ACCEPTED** [it] . . .

. . . the miracle occurs. And the miracle embraces you *and* your Brother or Sister always. It is never private—exclusively yours. **NEVER!**

Yet, . .

. . . in spite of the fact that . . .

. . . it’s been given and received, you must learn still more about this strange devotion, for it contains the third of the obstacles which peace must flow across.

Notice that. Peace flows across these obstacles like water. It doesn’t fight with them, it doesn’t engage with them. It floats over them.

No-one can die unless he chooses death.

Now mind you, I know! You say you're not choosing death. You're choosing life every day. You go around with a positive attitude every day. You engage in good deeds every day. You engage in helping. You're not choosing death. If you're a teenager, if you're in your twenties, if you're in your thirties, the feeling is that the sky is the limit and nothing holds you back. You're not afraid of death.

Nevertheless, you went to your grandmother's funeral a few months ago. You've noticed the obituaries. You watch the news. You see that people are dying. It isn't occupying your mind—you have a very *positive* attitude. But nevertheless, you have embodied, we'll say, the very definite belief that your life is a *life span* with a beginning and an end. You believe that. You're just not concerned about it yet.

Your *belief* in it though, is your *devotion to it*.

So, when it says . . .

No-one can die unless he chooses death . . .

. . . it means exactly that. And here's the key: If you are not choosing to engage in the holy instant, if you are not choosing to engage in the two-step and to silence your thinking, and genuinely desire to know the truth of Something beyond your *best capacities to think* . . . if you're not doing that, you are caught. You are devoted to death and death will happen because you're *choosing it*.

There's only one way to *un-choose* it, and that is to abandon the independence. Abandon your "right" to think for yourself, and partner once again with the Holy Spirit, with the Father, with your Guide. Partner—consciously do everything in the awareness that you are not alone. Partner by inquiring to know the more of what God is Being right there in your experience, than you're presently experiencing. You see? That's the only way to un-choose for death.

What SEEMS to be the fear of death is really its ATTRACTION.

Not really so hard to grasp the meaning of.

You see, because you believe that life has a beginning and an end, and you're devoted to that, and you're devoted to death, you are simultaneously voting for it and being afraid of it. This is where a sober look is really important.

Everyone who insists upon being an independent thinker—a body with a brain that developed through evolutionary processes in a material world—that entity is a *concept*. It is an *interpretation* placed upon the holy Son or Daughter of God and given preference to What lies underneath it.

So, you're put in this experience of a bind where you are confident there will be death and you are afraid of it at the same time. You are attracted to death because you are attracted to being in a way that is *pure illusion*. You are attracted to function as an independent physical entity which *you are not*. But as long as you are unwilling to look any further than that, you will be bound to the experience of death.

Guilt, too, is feared and fearful. Yet it could have no hold at all except on those who are attracted to it and seek it out.

Well see, I know! *Nobody* seeks it out. *Nobody thinks* they do. But the fact is that the moment you, as I've said before, got a divorce from your Father, two things immediately came into play that you weren't expecting: fear and guilt. And so, as long as you are seeking to be independent, you are attracted to and seek the experience of fear and guilt.

You don't think of it that way because you're thinking about the fun and the exhilaration and the hit you will get from being independently intelligent, creative, and making someone out of yourself. That's what you're thinking about—something that makes utterly no sense at all to a holy Son or Daughter of God who hasn't said, "Father, I'd rather do it my way. I'd rather see things my way." You see?

And so it is with death. Made by the ego, its dark shadow falls across all living things, because the ego is the "enemy" of life.

God is Life. *Life is what God is*. Life is an Absolute. Life is unlimited because there is nothing present to be unlike it. But when someone says, "I'd rather make up the rules.

"I'd rather define what everything is," "I'd rather make up the definition," then you are separating yourself from Life. You are choosing to be different from your Source. And different means, un-like. The only way to be un-like Life is to be that which *posits and demonstrates and manifests death*. That's the bottom line.

It doesn't matter that it's an illusion. As long as one is engaged in an illusory sense of self, the illusion is going to seem quite real, and it is an unworthy experience for a holy Son or Daughter of God. It is not the Birthright of a holy Son or Daughter of God—You. Therefore, correction is called for: the need to see death as an obstacle to peace, *your* peace—the place in you in which miracles occur, in which Awakening occurs.

The act of independence, the cherishing of independence and the commitment to it is a commitment *against All that Truly Is*.

The thinking—the mindsets engaged in that—are what the word "ego" means. You are not an ego, but you can imaginatively *think* that you are independent and that you can make up the meanings of everything. And what happens is, you become a disciple of a "way" of thinking—*of a perspective*. You see? Not an actuality. So correction is called for. *The obstacle is to be undone*.

Identifying with that which is the enemy of Life is the inevitable next step.

Death:

Made by the ego, its dark shadow falls across all living things, . .

. . . at least as far as *you* can see, looking through the lens of independence that you're looking through, . .

. . . because the ego is the "enemy" of life.

And yet a shadow cannot kill.

In other words, that which has no substance, but just an appearance, cannot kill. It cannot do anything

What is a shadow to the living?

What is a misperception to a holy Son or Daughter of God?

They but walk past and it is gone. But what of those whose dedication it is NOT to live; . .

I know! Nobody has a dedication not to live. But now you know that if you're operating *independently*, you are in the realm of what is not real, where death is inevitable because the state of mind is devoted to the opposite of what *is* Real. It's devoted to the opposite of Life, Truth and Love, therefore it's opposing Life. It's affirming and constantly confirming death.

But what of those whose dedication it is NOT to live; the black-draped "sinners," the ego's mournful chorus, plodding so heavily away from life, dragging their chains and marching in the slow procession which honors their grim master, lord of death?

Well, gee whiz, who in the hell are these individuals that this is talking about? My goodness! Could it be you? Could it be the one who isn't expecting miracles? Could it be the one who doesn't think death can be avoided, or that death isn't even real and therefore nothing associated with it is real either?

You all have mutual agreements and you stand together solidly. That's the "*mournful chorus*." "Oh, Joe has this terminal illness. He only has six months to live. Well, we can pray for him to have maximum comfort between now and then. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help him."

[Chuckling] But I'm not hearing anybody say, "Hey, let's raise the dead," or "let's undo the death process, and let's expect to see it here and now!"

Now *that's the correction* of the attraction to death and that's the correction of death. And here and now is when to be *engaging in that correction* . . . by what? . . abandoning your best

judgments and everyone else's best judgments and shutting up and saying, "Father," or "Holy Spirit, what is the *living truth here*? What is the truth that eradicates the obstacle?"

Touch any one of them . . .

. . . anyone with a "*mournful chorus*" . . .

. . . with the gentle hands of forgiveness, and watch the chains fall away, along with yours.

That's always the way it works: "what you give, you get to keep," what you extend, you end up embodying. The question is: where is the gift coming from? What's the source of the gift you're giving . . . the ego or the Holy Spirit—your deranged mind that you seem to have imaginatively created, or that which is nothing but your right Mind, the Holy Spirit?

. . . watch the chains fall away, along with yours.

NOW!

See him throw aside the black robe he was wearing to his funeral, and hear him laugh at death.

You see? This is what the destruction of this obstacle to peace is going to look like here and now.

The sentence sin would lay upon him he can escape through your forgiveness.

(Whew!) Why, because you're special? No. But because your forgiveness is you being willing to abandon the mutual agreement about death and seeking for an answer beyond your best judgment and your best education with what seems to you to be perfectly obvious. And then *extending* the insight, the inspiration, the experience of truth about him or her that infills you . . . you see? The undoing of the obstacle here and now.

This is no arrogance. It is the Will of God. What is impossible to you who chose His Will as yours? What is death to you?

You see? Realization: the transformation of your conscious awareness of life and of the infinite manifestation of God transforms the material world. The Bible speaks of this *as the scales falling from your eyes*.³ The scales falling from your eyes cause you to seem to see a world that was *transformed*, but what it has always divinely been has simply registered with you in your defenselessness, in the absence of your willfulness.

YOUR dedication . . .

. . . if you've accepted the will of God.

YOUR dedication is not to death, nor to its master. When you accepted the Holy Spirit's purpose in place of the ego's, you renounced death, . . .

. . . I'm going to bring that into the present tense:

When you [accept] the Holy Spirit's purpose in place of the ego's, you [renounce] death.

It couldn't be any clearer than that. It also couldn't be any more radical than that. But the *Course* is about radical. The *Course* is about undoing the obstacles to peace and therefore undoing those things that stand in the way of your Awakening.

When you accepted the Holy Spirit's purpose in place of the ego's, you renounced death, exchanging it for life. We know that an idea leaves not its source. And death is the result of the thought we call the ego, as surely as life is the result of the Thought of God.

Wow! A sub-heading entitled:

THE INCORRUPTIBLE BODY

Strange words if one thinks that the Course is teaching that the body is an illusion:

THE INCORRUPTIBLE BODY

Continuing:

From the ego came sin and guilt and death, in opposition to life and innocence, and to the Will of God Himself.

You see? That's why it's a dedication to death. Again, nobody thinks of it quite that way because there is such pleasure taken and such an ethic of being able to take credit for being independently creative. But all the time one is engaged in independence, one is denying who he is and what his function is.

Where can such opposition lie but in the sick minds of the insane, dedicated to madness and set against the peace of Heaven.

Again, rather strong language, because that's the last thing you would describe yourself as—you wouldn't use those words relative to you. But if you don't realize that you have adopted a way of interpreting Creation and Life that is inconsistent with what it truly divinely is, then you are indulging in a mind that is sick, insane, dedicated to madness and set against the Peace of Heaven.

Don't shy away from that, because the clarity of it makes it possible for you to, with absolute clarity, choose differently, knowing why you are choosing differently.

One thing is sure: God, Who created neither sin nor death, wills not that you be bound by them. He knows of neither sin nor its results.

[Chuckling] Those have all been manufactured by a creative, disturbed, *disconnected* mind.

The shrouded figures in the funeral procession march not in honor of their Creator, . .

. . . meaning God . . .

. . . Whose Will it is they live. They are not following It; they are OPPOSING It.

And what is the black-draped body they would bury? A body which THEY dedicated to death, a symbol of corruption, a sacrifice to sin, offered to sin to feed upon and keep itself alive; a thing condemned, damned by its maker, and lamented by every mourner who looks upon it as himself.

[Sighs] You know what? It's simple. If you are choosing not to look at everything through the Father's eyes, by *letting that Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*⁴—which was the Father's Mind—then there is *nothing positive* that can be said about it. And these words which I just read:

. . . a thing condemned, damned by its maker, . .

. . . blah, blah, blah.”

Those are not too strong and that's not the entire list. But understand that there is no way for there to be any *positive* adjective applied, not until you are willing to engage in the two-step, the holy instant, and abandon your confidence in your best private thinking and rejoin with your Source.

You know, you can listen to this and you can dare to say, “Wow, I must be all screwed up! But, I do see that if I exist at all, I have to be the manifestation of a Source—an infinite Source, one that is not flawed. And I'm willing to abandon my confidence in all of what must be my screwed up thinking. I'm willing to abandon it and reach beyond it because, as a matter of fact, I do agree that everyone is going to die and that means me too. And if for some strange reason, death is an obstacle to peace that is to be undone, then I'm going to not get excited and upset and depressed because I'm so confused. And I am going to more consistently engage in the holy instant. I am going to engage in That which I am told, undoes the obstacles to peace.”

Continuing:

[Raj did not read these next two sentences: You who believe you have condemned the Son of God to this ARE arrogant. But you who would release him are but honoring the Will of his Creator.]

The arrogance of sin, the pride of guilt, the sepulchre of separation, all are part of your unrecognized dedication to death. The glitter of guilt you laid upon the body would kill it. For what the ego . . .

. . . listen to this:

For what the ego loves it kills for its obedience.

You see, the threat of death is what keeps you *cemented to* the confused outlook defined by the word “ego.”

For what the ego loves it kills for its obedience.

But listen to this:

But what obeys it not it CANNOT kill.

Well, how do you not obey the ego? You abandon it! As I’ve said many times before: *the only thing the ego cannot defend itself against, is disregard.* How do you disregard it? Yep, the two-step, the practice of the holy instant.

You have another dedication . . .

[Chuckling] . . . one besides the dedication to the ego and death.

You have another dedication which would keep the body incorruptible and perfect as long as it is useful for your holy purpose.

Wow! Is that the way you would describe an illusion? Is that the way you would describe something that is going to disappear?

You have another dedication which would keep the body incorruptible and perfect as long as it is useful for your holy purpose.

That simply means forever, unless you choose to abandon your holy purpose and attempt once again to be an arrogant ego.

[Raj reads these two sentences a little farther down: The body no more dies than it can feel. It does NOTHING.]

Of itself, . .

. . . those are the key words.

Of itself, . .

. . . referring to the body . . .

. . . it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible.

That’s because it doesn’t exist of itself.

Of itself, it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible. It IS nothing. It is the result of a tiny, mad idea of corruption which can be CORRECTED.

But now, I'm going to get real picky here. I'm going to change the wording, because this expresses the real meaning here:

The body no more dies than it can feel. It does NOTHING. Of itself, it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible. [Of itself,] it IS nothing. [Of itself,] it is the result of a tiny, mad idea of corruption which can be CORRECTED.

The words "of itself," need to begin all three of those sentences. So you can see that it is not saying that the body is nothing.

Of itself, it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible. [Of itself,] it IS nothing.

Of course, of itself.

[Of itself,] it is the result of a tiny, mad idea of corruption which . . .

. . . what?

. . . can be CORRECTED.

Not gotten rid of. The body is *not there to be gotten rid of*, but the *misperception* is to be corrected. That's what all of this is about: The *undoing* of the obstacle to peace, called *the Attraction of Death*.

For God has answered this insane idea with His Own, an answer which left Him not, and therefore brings the Creator to the awareness of every mind which heard His answer and ACCEPTED it.

Now we've paid attention in a sober way to the idea of the attraction of death. And I have elaborated on it to provide more meaning. Listen to this. Continuing . . .

You who are dedicated to the incorruptible have been given, through your acceptance, the power to RELEASE from corruption.

You see? The undoing of the obstacle.

What better way to teach the first and fundamental principle in a course on miracles than by showing you the one which seems to be the hardest can be accomplished first? The body can but serve your purpose. As you look upon it, so will it seem to be.

Doesn't say, "so will it seem to *appear and disappear*."

As you look upon it, so will it seem to be.

And the question is: with *what* are you going to look upon it? That's all. One secures the seeming interminable on-goingness of birth and death and the other undoes it, giving rise to or revealing eternal Life now . . . now . . . now.

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

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

¹*Chapter 19 – Section: THE ATTRACTION OF DEATH*

Sparkly Book – p. 468 / JCIM – p. 196 / CIMS – p. 394

First Edition – p. 388 / Second Edition – p. 416

²*John 11:25*

³*Acts 9:18*

⁴*Phillipians 2:5*

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