

A COURSE IN MIRACLES STUDY GROUP WITH RAJ

June 7th 2015



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

We are considering the *Obstacles to Peace* and have been, in quite some detail, for a few weeks now. Currently, we are considering the third obstacle which is, *The Attraction of Death*.

Before we continue, I want to point out that there is one element which arouses the obstacles to peace—which brings the obstacles to peace into play—and that element is independence . . . *independence*.

Independence from what?

Well, always it's independence from relationship. You see? Independence is always the breaking of a relationship—the violation of a relationship.

You, as the Sons and Daughters of God, have a Function. And that Function is to recognize the Movement of the infinite Mind of God, and recognize It and acknowledge It for what It is: The Movement of God—the Movement of the divine Mind that God is. Your confirmation of the Movement of God as *God's*, secures infinity and eternity as a singularity—as That which is indivisible and undivided even though It is an infinite expression.

In your recognition of that infinite expression, you are in intimate relationship *with it all*. You see that?

Before any act of independence occurred, before any Son or Daughter of God said, “Father, I'd rather define things for myself,” there was no, I will say, objectivity, where you were separate from what you were experiencing and recognizing as the infinite expression of God.

As a result, the singularity of Mind was an experience of infinite ever-present omnipresent relationship with all of Creation. That is not only your Birthright to be experiencing, it is what is utterly natural and normal for you when you're not insisting upon being some sort of an independent agent—being creative all by yourself.

So, overcoming the *Obstacles of Peace* is never a matter of managing somehow to independently escape the obstacles and to then independently be free of them. The eradication of the *Obstacles to Peace* is the reestablishment of the inviolable, unchangeable intimate relationship that you and

every one of the Sons and Daughters of God enjoy as, for lack of better words, your natural habitat, your natural way of Being.

Overcoming the *Obstacles to Peace* is the uninhibited and unavowed experience of intimacy—of unity—of active conscious Brotherhood.

We need to keep this in mind because Atonement—the coming back into your right Mind—is never an independent act, action, or activity. It is always going to be relative to a Brother or a Sister, or some part of Creation in which you become innocently present with Creation, or that aspect of it.

The removal of the *Obstacles to Peace* is the reestablishment of union, of Brotherhood. And all of the *Obstacles to Peace* have as their goal, the *breakdown* of union because it is predicated on an act—by a Son or Daughter of God—of separation from his Father. From God.

So everything that we've been talking about needs to be considered in relation to your relationships with each other—those immediately in your experience as well as mankind as a whole. It won't just be the Obstacles to Peace in your head. It won't be the escape from the Obstacles to Peace in your immediate relationships, but in *the Brotherhood of Man*, the result of which will be *Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men*.¹

This is important to understand, because it will ground you. It will also cause you to look at, we'll say, the *Attraction to Death* in a more grounded way, in a more practical way, in a less esoteric way, because you will be able to look at it relative to the use to which you're putting your mind. Because you are always using your mind to create the *Obstacles to Peace* and to, we're going to say, *activate it, objectify it, manifest it*.

Now, going into the book we see:

Death, were it true, would be the final and complete disruption of communication which is the ego's goal.²

Now, it isn't that the ego is an entity in itself, that has a goal of disrupting communication. It is that you as a Son or Daughter of God, initially disrupted communication with your Father by deciding to act independently of the Father. And that disruption of the unity of Mind between the Father and the Son became manifest as *a disturbed mind*. The communication was disturbed and the result was a disturbed mind that then had to communicate with the Brotherhood through language, ideas and coercion.

Communication became something *between* two things. Whereas communion is the oneness of One infinite Thing. You see the difference? It's important.

Now I want you to think about it. When you are in conflict, when you are angry, jealous, when you are depressed . . . when you are any of these things, they're *never* something private—just about you. They always have their root in a relationship you're in, and, at the bottom line, a *call* in that relationship for communion. In other words, a call for those in the relationship to abandon

their personal, private willfulness—to learn of the Father, to learn of their Source what the Truth is, so that a unified understanding occurs. That’s communion. That is what is normal. That is what is holy. That is “the goal.”

When you get into arguments with each other, when you get down and dirty with each other, always the technique employs doing whatever it takes to avoid communication, to avoid looking squarely at the need and *changing*, when change is called for.

This is important.

I shared with Paul this past week, this idea: *What you see with your ego, you have to convince me of.* I did not mean when I was saying it to him that what he saw with his ego, he had to convince *me* of. I was speaking with relevance to relationships. And one could say this to his Brother, or one’s Brother could say this to you: “What you see with your ego, *you* have to convince me of.”

Now this is because communication, not being communion, is something that is projected from one thing to another. Unfortunately, the ego is a state of independence from the Father in which fear and guilt are the bottom line elements. And so every single bit of communication, where what one sees with his ego he has to convince the other of, is disruptive, distorting and destructive. What you see with your ego *you* have to convince me of.

But I continued . . . What you see with the Holy Spirit, *the Holy Spirit* convinces me of. That’s because it’s communion.

Every one of you at this point who are hearing my voice are functioning in the ego’s realm. And what the *Course* is bringing to your attention and illuminating to you is the necessity of practicing the holy instant in which *you become still*. You stop listening to and talking with your ego. And in the Silence, you ask of the Holy Spirit, “What is the truth here?” so that the Holy Spirit can respond. And what you see with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit convinces your Brother of—the one whom you were having a grievance with. And there is no level of coercion that occurs.

The practice of the holy instant is the way you move out of and become free of the *Obstacles to Peace*.

Continuing:

Those who fear death see not how often and how loudly they call to it, and bid it come to save them from communication.

Every argument you get in, every disagreement you have with another and every bit of the wrangling that goes on, is the avoidance of communication. Technically, it’s the avoidance of communion. It’s the avoidance of being of One Mind.

Well, how often are you in disagreement? How much of your day is spent being distressed—whether it's a little bit or a lot—with another one's perspective, or what another one is attempting to do? And how many of you enjoy the *practice of judgment* that you engage in, without realizing that the practice of judgment, for lack of better words, affects you physically, negatively. It raises blood pressure. It disrupts digestion. It disrupts your heart rate. It unsettles you. Anger, carried to its extreme, can give you a heart attack.

What I'm pointing out here is, that the practice of grievance, the practice of fear and hate *is a devotion to death*. And of course, if death occurs, then the conflict is over and the disagreement and the *stubbornness* of your Brother or Sister doesn't have to be dealt with anymore.

But of course, you're not thinking about that. Why? Because when you experience fear and anger, it brings you in touch with a need—you think—to be in touch with your strength. And so in a way, fear magnifies the opportunity for you to express your strength, and therefore, is self-confirming. And *that* is pleasing. And *that* is why it is difficult to abandon the practice of fear and hate. If you do, it seems that you're abandoning the opportunity for your strength to be confirmed.

Now . . .

For death is seen as safety, the great dark saviour from the light of truth, the answer to the Answer, the silencer of the Voice that speaks for God.

Yes, it does. No one wants to really *look directly* at the issues that need to be looked at, because the ego suggests that looking at what the Answer to those things is, will be your guilt calling for *penalty*. And so to hear the Father's Answer becomes frightening instead of relieving, instead of something that you would run for and leap into your Father's Arms to be supported and held and safe.

Yet the retreat to death is not the end of conflict.

In other words, the practice of avoiding unity, the practice of avoiding hearing the Holy Spirit answer you and resolve things, does not end conflict. To get away from that which will penalize you will not end the conflict because you have been deceptively invited to stay in the place which is itself, conflicted.

Only GOD'S answer is its end.

The end of conflict.

The obstacle of your seeming love for death that peace must flow across seems to be very great.

Now, that doesn't necessarily mean in terms of *size*, like a huge gap to leap across. It can seem to be very great because the fear is experienced as a sensation in your gut. It is a sensation which spontaneously calls for self-preservation—something in your best interest, you think.

And so, the degree of the *sensation* of fear succeeds in distracting you further and further away from whatever little willingness you might have to turn to the Holy Spirit or the Father and pray—ask for help, ask to know what is the *healing truth* here? You see?

The obstacle of your seeming love for death that peace must flow across seems to be very great. For in it lies hidden all the ego's secrets, all its strange devices for deception, all its sick ideas and weird imaginings.

Tonight I'm *wanting* you to take a look at what goes on in your mind when you are distressed, because you will find, when you pay attention right when you're in the middle of this, that the physical sensations of fear, the apparent call for self-preservation which seems to be in your best interest, these things all arise out of many different little deceits that you believe.

“Oh, the Father will condemn me.” “Oh, if I do that I will be controlled by anyone who wants to control me.” “I will lose my invulnerability that I will be able to have through the use of my own personal power and strength.”

And it goes on and on and on, and all of these deceptive little lies keep you from having the nerve or the faith or the daring to reach outside of it to the Holy Spirit, or to the Father, or to me and genuinely ask for help without being afraid of the Answer.

So these words are very meaningful:

For in it lies hidden all the ego's secrets, all its strange devices for deception, all its sick ideas and weird imaginings.

These are things that go on in your own mind as justifications to be distracted from your holiness and from the peace that is *in you and is ever present* for you to avail yourself of, and something that once you have availed yourself of it, will be the environment in which the sudden shift of perception that's called, “a miracle,” can happen and *will* happen.

Here is the final end of union, the triumph of the ego's making over creation, the victory of lifelessness on Life Itself.

Emotion and distorted ideas cause you to commit yourself to abandoning God, abandoning any gumption you might have to stand up and speak to God, “Father, what is the truth here?” “Father, help me.” “Holy Spirit, reveal to me what I need to know.”

Why? Part of the deception in the weird imaginings is the idea that, “Well, if God really were my helper, who I've called upon *a lot*, then I wouldn't be in this bad shape that I'm in. And therefore, asking God for help doesn't work. Asking the Holy Spirit to know the truth doesn't mean that I *will* become infused with a Knowing of what the truth is that uncovers to me, as an experience, my invulnerability and allows me to let out a sigh and let go of whatever strength I was going to use to preserve myself, because I Know I'm not under threat.”

Under the dusty edge of its distorted world the ego would lay . . .

. . . who?

. . . the Son of God, slain by its orders, proof in his decay that God Himself is powerless before the ego's might, unable to protect the life that He created . . .

. . . that God created . . .

. . . against the ego's savage wish to kill.

All of this goes on *daily*, and it goes on as an activity of your mind that you need to be willing to dare to look at and contradict . . . you need to be willing to look at it and contradict it and *step away from it on purpose*.

Continuing:

My brothers, Children of our Father, this is a DREAM of death.

The whole thing is a charade, if I might put it that way. The whole thing is imagination—*pure imagination*—and you don't need to be governed by imagination any more. The point here is to overcome or abandon the obstacle to peace, because the obstacle to peace is an illusion and *can* be abandoned. And therefore, you must dare to go ahead and do it in spite of your conditioning, in spite of your strong belief to the contrary.

There is no funeral, no dark altars, no grim commandments nor twisted rituals of condemnation to which the body leads you.

[Chuckling] “Oh, yes, but all bodies deteriorate and die. All bodies *do* lead to a funeral.” No! That's the belief. That's the *practiced committed belief*. But you are learning here that it is to be contradicted, and that it *can* be contradicted, and you *can* step out of it into the conscious experience of eternal life *NOW, not after you die*.

Ask not release of IT.

Meaning, don't ask for release from your body! Don't ask your body to let you go and not have to die.

But free it from the merciless and unrelenting orders YOU laid upon it, and forgive it what YOU ordered it to do.

Your commitment to the idea that your body will finally put you in the grave, or cause you to pass on while it goes into a grave . . . your commitment to that is what needs to be abandoned.

You're ordering your body to do that, by virtue of *confidence* in this false idea—which you didn't know was false—but which you now, at least, have heard from me, is false, and which it is now up to *you* to pick up and dare to act upon. And how do you *act upon it*? By trying to make the body eternal? No! You act upon it by abandoning the *fear and the guilt*. And you abandon

the fear and the guilt by reaching outside of your best judgments and your best thinking, and asking, leaning into, the infinite Mind of God and the Holy Spirit to have the truth revealed to you.

In its exaltation . . .

. . . the body's—by giving it powers in your imaginative way to control you . . .

In its exaltation you commanded it to die, for only death COULD conquer life. And what but insanity could look upon the defeat of God, and think it real?

Well, you may not have thought of it that way. But when you are exalting the body—that which you *define* as something which is born, grows, grows old and dies—you are honoring and lifting up with respect that which has as its ultimate conclusion, death. And it's time to withdraw your honor from it. That is what this is all about.

And what but insanity could look upon the defeat of God, and think it real?

Well, here comes one of those little, oh-o-o, secrets of the ego, the strange devices and deception that comes along and says, “Well, you see, I told you. If you look to find out what the truth is, you'll find that the truth is that you are behaving insanely.” You see, it twisted things. It said, “*You* are behaving insanely,” instead of that these ideas are insane, are not true, are not practical, are not to be honored because they will lead you to nothing but confusion.

The fear of death will go as its appeal is yielded to love's REAL attraction.

Now mind you, I want to back up here. The attraction of the ego is found in the emotions and the physical sensations of fear and strengths. So the fear of death will go as its appeal—as the sensations and the beliefs—are *yielded to love's REAL attraction*.

The end of sin, which nestles . . .

Listen to this:

The end of sin, which nestles quietly in the safety of your relationship, . .

. . . what relationship? The relationship with your fellowman that is disrupted by the act of independence.

The end of sin, which nestles quietly in the safety of your relationship, . .

. . . the relationship that would be disrupted by independence, has within it the end of sin and it nestles there quietly.

. . . protected by your union, ready to grow into a mighty force for God, . .

I'm going to read the whole sentence over again:

The end of sin, which nestles quietly in the safety of your relationship, protected by your union, ready to grow into a mighty force for God, is very near.

You see, once you know that this obstacle for peace is not real and that it *can* be moved past, *that* causes the relief to be very near.

The infancy of salvation is carefully guarded by love, preserved from every thought that would attack it, and quietly made ready to fulfill the mighty task for which it was given you.

What is that *mighty task*? To be the full-fledged Son or Daughter of God that you Are and never stopped being . . . without the impediment and the pain and the sorrow and the sickness and the sin and the death that accompanies this distorted perception called "independence."

Your newborn purpose . . .

. . . newborn in the relationship that you are turning over to the Holy Spirit.

Your newborn purpose is nursed by angels, cherished by the Holy Spirit, and protected by God Himself.

This is what *meets you* as you abandon the obstacle for peace, the attraction of death. You see?

It needs not your protection; IT is YOURS.

It is your protection. But you will not *feel its presence* until you've abandoned the wild strength of your willfulness in your attempt to be a successful independent agent.

It needs not your protection; IT is YOURS. For it is deathless, and within it lies the end of death.

You see? That's the only thing that will end the conflict, not succeeding in overcoming God.

What danger can assail the wholly innocent? What can attack the guiltless? What fear can enter and disturb the peace of sinlessness? What has been given you, even in its infancy, is in full communication with God and you.

The infancy of Salvation is in full communication with God and you.

In its tiny hands it holds, in perfect safety, every miracle you will perform, held out to you.

This is what you are unaware of when you are consumed with emotion and physical sensations that arise out of fear and guilt. This is the replacement.

The miracle of life is ageless, born in time but nourished in eternity.

And I would say, born and dying in time, *but nourished in eternity*. Because time is a perception that is false and in it birth *and* death occur. But Life is ageless, *nourished in eternity*. You see? Changelessly fulfilled in eternity.

Behold this infant, . . .

And I'm going to say, dare to behold this infant right in the middle of your being consumed with fear or anger or jealousy or any other manipulative selfish movement.

Behold this infant, to whom you gave a resting-place by your forgiveness of each other, and see in it the Will of God.

There we go . . . that's your part in co-creation, is to see the Movement of God and acknowledge It as His.

Here is the babe of Bethlehem reborn.

In you, as you.

And everyone who gives him shelter will follow him, not to the cross, but to the Resurrection and the Life.

And that's the point! Atonement, Awakening, coming back into your right Mind and Knowing it.

When anything seems to you to be a source of fear, when any situation strikes you with terror and makes your body tremble and the cold sweat of fear comes over it, remember it is always for ONE reason; the ego has perceived it as a symbol of fear, a sign of sin and death.

I'm going to go back:

When anything seems to you to be a source of fear, .

It's not because it is, but it's because . . .

. . . the ego has perceived it as a symbol of fear, a sign of sin and death.

That's very important.

Waking up is a matter of abandoning the ego's interpretations by abandoning the ego, which means, again, becoming still, silencing the human thinking and expressing the prayer, "Father," or "Holy Spirit, what is the truth here? What is the *redeeming, regenerative, redemptive truth* here?"

Remember, then, that neither [the] sign nor [the] symbol .

In other words, whatever definition the ego is overlaying on what is happening . . .

. . . should be confused with source, . .

Remember, then, that neither sign nor symbol should be confused with source, for they must stand for something OTHER than themselves. Their meaning cannot lie in them, but must be sought in what they REPRESENT.

Well, they represent the ego, whose goal is to disrupt communication, disrupt union.

And they may thus mean everything or nothing, according to the truth or falsity of the idea which they reflect. Confronted with such seeming uncertainty of meaning, . .

. . . meaning when you find yourself confused and frightened and don't know where to turn . . .

. . . judge it not.

Don't get tangled in it.

Remember the holy presence of the One given to you to be the Source of judgment.

Well, who might that be? The Holy Spirit, of course. Remember, see, right in the middle of your great distress of your great emotion, of your great physical sensations of fear and power, right in the middle of that which would grab your attention and say nothing else is worth giving your attention to, right in the middle of that:

Remember the holy presence of the One given to you to be the Source of judgment.

The Holy Spirit.

Give it to Him to judge for you, and say:

And you tell me whether this isn't the description of the holy instant:

Give it to Him to judge for you, and say: "Take this from me and look upon it, judging it for me. Let me not see it as a sign of sin and death, nor use it for destruction. Teach me how NOT to make of it an obstacle to peace, But let You use it FOR me, to facilitate its coming."

This is the way you undo the *Obstacles to Peace* and specifically *The Attraction of Death*.

I love you very much. I want you to grasp the Meaning of this. And as I said when we began, I want you to remember that the abandoning of the *Obstacles to Peace* is what reestablishes *union in the Brotherhood*. It's a *Brotherhood* thing, not an *individual* thing.

It's your Brother or your Sister: It's your daughter, or your wife, or your husband or son who you are to be willing to relate to without the judgment that arises out of fear and guilt, but instead in the peace of the joining with the Holy Spirit that allows Revelation to occur that changes your mind.

I look forward to being with you next time.

—————oOo—————

¹Luke 2:14

²A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

Chapter 19 – Section: THE ATTRACTION OF DEATH
Sparkly Book–page 470, 2nd full paragraph, last sentence
JCIM–page 196, 5th line from bottom
CIMS–page 396, paragraph 83, last sentence

First Edition – page 389, 4th paragraph, last sentence
Second Edition – page 418, paragraph 6, line 5

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