

# A COURSE IN MIRACLES

## STUDY GROUP

### WITH RAJ

July 21<sup>st</sup> 2015

—————oOo—————

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

I'm going to back up to the beginning of the paragraph for context:

I have great need for lilies, for the Son of God<sup>1</sup> . . .

. . . meaning those of you who are not Awake, . . .

. . . has not forgiven me. And can I offer him forgiveness, when he offers thorns to me?

Now, of course I can offer forgiveness, but if you or anyone else *offer thorns to me*, you are in an aggressive expressive position, not a quiet *receptive* attitude. And so what I offer, you will not receive or hear.

Again:

And can I offer him forgiveness, when he offers thorns to me? For he who offers thorns to anyone is against me still, and who is whole without him?

I can't just stand there, you can't just stand there and let someone else stand in a state of defiance without recognizing that there is a call for correction that needs to be implemented. And, of course, the implementation is going to be a matter of education, isn't it—that which promotes a shift of perception out of confusion into clarity?

Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven, and you may look upon the Son of God . . .

. . . your brother, who is in a defiant state . . .

. . . as whole. But look you first upon the altar in your chosen home, and see what you have laid upon it to offer me. If it be thorns whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light, the body is your chosen home, and it is separation that you offer me.

Now, I'm going to take this in a direction that the Text will not go, because it's important to understand that those words . . .

. . . whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light, . . .

. . . are not overly dramatic, are not said for an impression.

When you got a divorce from your Father, when you said, along with a brother or sister, “Father, I’d rather see it my way.” “I’d rather do it my way.” “We would rather define everything ourselves,” you not only separated yourself conceptually from *your Source* which caused you to feel unexpectedly minus a parent—in other words, you found yourself in a state of orphanhood as an *experience*, even though it was totally imaginative—when that happened, this brother or sister whom you got the divorce from the Father with, became *untrustworthy* because in your state of orphanhood there was no grounded stability *present*.

*Everything* was dangerous, *everything* was questionable. And although the two of you—and others as they came along—made up definitions yourself and worked “together” . . . *apparently* . . . there was always present an *absence* of trust: “What will he do?” “What will she do next?” “Well, he or she is just a product of their psychological development as they grew. And each one is different and no one is predictable. And from my experience, I have learned that sometimes the unpredictable behavior is harmful—is hurtful. And so I do not trust my brother, I do not trust my sister, even though I express deep love by giving them the *extreme* benefit of the doubt, even though it is not a *total* benefit of the doubt.”

Oh-h . . . but you see, that’s an *approximation* of love, that’s an approximation of trust, that’s an approximation of respect, *because it’s not total*. And so, whether you’ve thought about it this way or not, the distrust that each of you has [of] your brothers and sisters,—*with all of Mankind*—is a grievance. A grievance that you are constantly holding. For the most part, you can rise above it and not be moved by it particularly, until an incident of some sort or another occurs. But pay attention. When the grievance comes to the surface, you are most unkind. The thorns, the jabs, the aggressive mean-spiritedness are . . .

. . . points that gleam sharply in a blood-red light . . .

. . . in an awful light . . . in an unlovely light—an *extremely unlovely light*. There is *nothing [beneficent]* about the attitude that is expressed as a result of your grievance.

Now, we’ve been reading about the *Obstacles to Peace* and how to overcome them, so that you are experiencing your peace instead of grievance, instead of distrust, instead of fear. And the fact is, that if you are not experiencing your peace, you are in a state of *ignorance*. You are experiencing something *invalid*.

But when you—when *anyone*—experiences a grievance, it is something that is quite *seductive*. It is something that is quite *compelling*. It’s something quite *mesmerizing*. And it causes you to stand in emotional agreement—turning up the volume, as it were—instead of recognizing that this is an invalid experience that doesn’t express your Birthright or your integrity, and does not constitute any kind of respect for the integrity of the brothers or sisters who are being the recipient . . . uh-h-h . . . *of these gleaming points in a blood-red light*.

Now, each of you does this because you are not experiencing your invulnerability . . . which, of course, *has nothing to do with your brothers or sisters*. It has nothing to do with any of the ones you hold a grievance against. It has to do *only* with the fact that at one point, *you said*, “Father, I’d rather determine what things are my way.” “I’d rather define everything myself.” And you began to ignore your Father—your Source. You separated yourself from It. *That* is the only thing that needs to be corrected—not your brothers, sisters, or circumstances.

Now, I said:

... look . . . first upon the altar in your chosen home, and see what you have laid upon it to offer me.

And I promise you that any time you are offering thorns—grievances expressed toward a brother—you cannot say you love *me* but you’re having a problem with your *brother*—[that the two of us] are different. If you are expressing [grievances], if you indulge in them, if you’re not bothered by them, then you are not joined with the Father. And the fourth *Obstacle to Peace* is still functioning, is still determining your experience and your perceptions. It’s that simple. And so you cannot be loving me any more than the brother that you feel you have an obvious reason for holding a grievance against.

So, the answer is not changing your brother to give you your peace, even though your brother may need to be changed. What needs to happen is: You need to abandon your fear of the Father, the Fourth Obstacle, so that you might, in your surrendering of your will, feel the Father’s Will *in you as You* and experience the Love that *experientially* illuminates to you that you must indeed, be nothing less than the holy Son or Daughter of God.

And as I said, that’s the threshold of the second part of the realization. And that is, that your brother, your sister, is likewise the holy Son or Daughter of God for exactly the same reason you Are, . . . and your perception of your brother or sister shifts. When it shifts, and there is correction called for in your brothers’ experience, you will be able to express it, . . . you will be able to respond in a way that promotes that realization rather than aggravates his grievance. And this is very important.

Now, I’m going to continue with the thread as it’s unfolding in the *Course*:

Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven, and you may look upon the Son of God as whole. But look you first upon the altar in your chosen home, and see what you have laid upon it to offer me. If it be thorns whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light, the body is your chosen home, . . .

... you’re identifying yourself as “a body” . . .

... and it is separation that you offer me. And yet the thorns are gone.

And yet the thorns are gone? What does that mean?

Well, you must remember that I was sharing this *in a context* with Helen. And there's a continuity here that has, you might say, been interrupted by the introduction of a new chapter heading that occurs right in the middle of the flow, and makes it seem as though we have finished about the *Obstacles to Peace* and the result of overcoming and abandoning them. And it's not true.

And so, when it says . . .

. . . If it be thorns whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light, the body is your chosen home, and it is separation that you offer me. And yet the thorns are gone . . .

. . . it means that the thorns are gone because you have abandoned all four *Obstacles to Peace*.

We're continuing on with the movement, because when you overcome and abandon the four *Obstacles to Peace*, there's *more*. There's now the experience of being able to relate to your brothers and sisters with the Knowing of their divinity—no matter how *they* are seeing themselves and, as I said, when *you* are able to see it because there is *no other way* to see a brother or sister of someone who is the holy Son or Daughter of God—meaning you. If you are [the holy Son or Daughter of God] and you are feeling it, then you, as I said, *immediately feel it about your brothers and sisters*. And so there will be a process of education that occurs—a process of correction where brothers and sisters are still reluctant to abandon their fear of God. But you [will] make it easier. You [will] facilitate it for your brothers and sisters.

And so it says:

And yet the thorns are gone.

They're gone because you made the shift.

Look you still closer at them now, and you will see your altar is no longer what it was.

Well, what was it before? Well, it had all these trinkets on it, didn't it? All these tools that you used for manipulation in order to get what you valued and make other people value what you value so that you could become something more than this orphan that you feel like.

So, once you've overcome the Fourth Obstacle, the altar changes. It no longer has these trinkets on it. No. What it has on it is the gift of your realization: "I am the holy Son of God." "I am the holy Daughter of God." That's the only thing left on it. You see?

Now . . .

You look still with the body's eyes, and they CAN see but thorns. Yet you have asked for and received ANOTHER sight. Those who accept the Holy Spirit's purpose as their own share also His vision.

And this makes even more sense when you remember that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than your right Mind.

Those who accept the Holy Spirit's purpose . . .

. . . which obviously has to be each one's purpose . . .

. . . as their own share also His vision.

That's the shift of perception. That's the correction that occurs with love.

And what enables Him to see His purpose shine forth from every altar now is yours as well as His.

The altars in every single one of your brothers and sisters [are] not actually adorned with trinkets and manipulative tools. They think [they are], and they behave as though [they are], but their holiness is still the only thing sitting there on the altar—the only thing that *is* being expressed and being broadcast.

He sees no strangers, only dearly loved and loving friends . . .

. . . and sometimes friends who *aren't* being loving, because they have yet to remember that they are the holy Sons and Daughters of God, who have yet to feel the Father's Love which transforms their mind and their perception of themselves—something which *you now are able to share* with your brothers and sisters . . . the Father's Love, the real perception and experience of the Truth of him.

He . . .

. . . the Holy Spirit, and therefore you . . .

. . . sees no thorns but only lilies, gleaming in the gentle glow of peace that shines on everything He looks upon and loves.

And the fact that that is what is being seen, is that which heals and transforms and lifts your brothers and your sisters, along with you, into the experience of Truth, the experience of peace, the experience in which grievances *are absent*.

If you are not experiencing your peace, you are experiencing an illusion, and there is nothing valid in the experience for you to understand or make better. If you are not experiencing peace, you must be willing to abandon your preoccupation with the illusion. And it's very easy to do.

All one has to do is *meditate* . . .

. . . and in the process of meditating and having arrived at a state of inner peace, *asking*, "Father what is the truth?" . . .

. . . and *listening*.

This Easter, . . .

. . . which was of course, when I was sharing this with Helen. But Easter is any moment in which the realization of Truth can occur and transform your mind.

This Easter, look with different eyes upon each other. You HAVE forgiven me. And yet I cannot use your gift of lilies while YOU see them not. Nor can you use what I have given unless you share it.

You see? There's nothing private about this. There's nothing about this that you can do all alone with God, or all alone with me, or all alone with the Holy Spirit. This is *involvement in Family*.

The Holy Spirit's vision . . .

. . . which is really the vision of that which is "nothing more than your right Mind" . . .

. . . is no idle gift, no plaything to be tossed about a while, and laid aside.

I know . . . it's easy to think, "Well, I'll ask the Holy Spirit," or "I'll ask Jesus." "I'll get quiet for a while here and I will genuinely listen and get the Answer. And then I'll stop listening and go about my business, benefiting from the Answer," as though the Holy Spirit or Jesus is some infinite answering machine. No!

Listen and hear this carefully, nor think it but a dream; a careless thought to play with, or a toy you would pick up from time to time, and then put by. For if you do, so will it be to you:

Well, what will be so to you? Oh, that Guidance or communication with the Holy Spirit, or learning from the Holy Spirit, is something that happens from time to time, whenever you're curious enough. But you see, *that's still being asleep! That's still being an orphan*.

If the Holy Spirit is nothing more than your right Mind, then if you are going to be Sane, *you are going to be in your right Mind always*. Is that very clear?

You have the vision now to look past ALL illusions.

In other words, once you get past the four *Obstacles to Peace*.

You have the vision now to look past ALL illusions. It has been given you to see no thorns, no strangers, and no obstacles to peace. The fear of God is nothing to you now. Who is afraid to look upon illusions, knowing his Savior stands beside him?

The word "Savior" has a capital "S," but it's referring to your brother—your brothers and sisters *right here*.

**With him, your vision has become the greatest power for the undoing of illusion that God Himself could give.**

Do you hear that? It means that the cooperation, the camaraderie, the Brotherhood shared by every single one of you with each other, experienced from the realization that each is the holy Son or Daughter of God, *has become the greatest power for the undoing of illusion that God Himself could give!* And that means as the world is blessed and transformed *by* the sharing, *by* the acts of Brotherhood, *by* holding fast—unswervingly—to the conscious awareness that your brothers and sisters are the holy Sons and Daughters of God, and then being appropriate when correction is called for, when education is called for, when learning is called for in those who still think they're just a body. You see?

Now one could say, “Well, that's a formidable task. That's an impossible task. How can I do that with everyone? How can I *feel* their holiness? How can I feel the holiness of this one, and that one, and the other one, and the one over there, and the one back there?”

This isn't something that happens through space. It happens through realization. And what you don't understand is, that when you *value* the abandoning of the *Obstacles to Peace* enough to overcome them—abandon them—this realization that I've described, occurs. You *feel* the Father's Love. And it reveals to you your holiness, and simultaneously reveals to you the holiness, not of your brother or your sister, but of your brothers-s-s and sisters-s-s—plural—every single one of them. There is no way to consider any of them differently.

And so you don't have to work at accumulating a capacity to infinitely love this one, and that one, and the other one, and the other one. It is therefore not a formidable task. In the experience of it, it is an experience of Oneness, of Wholeness.

So *do not flinch* as you approach this threshold. When you cross the threshold, what you have been expecting will not be there to meet you.

**With him, . . .**

. . . your brother, sister . . .

. . . your vision has become the greatest power for the undoing of illusion that God Himself could give. For what God gave the Holy Spirit, you have received. The Son of God looks unto you . . .

. . . your brothers and sisters, in other words . . .

. . . The Son of God looks unto you for his release . . .

. . . for your forgiveness, for your withdrawal of any concept you might hold of him that is different from the Vision of him as the holy Son or Daughter of God that God has revealed to you.

For you have asked for, and been given, the strength to look upon this final obstacle, and see no thorns nor nails to crucify the Son of God, and crown him king of death. Your chosen home is on the other side, beyond the veil.

And I'm going to add, "without dying!" . . . *without dying!*

**It has been carefully prepared for you, and it is ready to receive you now.**

Your place was never truly abandoned. It has never been truly empty. And it's not like your Father used your room for other purposes until you decided to come Home. Your place is constituted of You, and You have always been in It, You have always been filling It. But you have indulged in this *imaginative state of mind* in which you pretended to be on your own, and it altered your perception of everything.

The only thing that is undone is a perception. And what has always been, will register with you again. And this does not take labor, this takes willingness . . . willingness on your part to stop valuing your independence and the power you think you ought to have in that independence, but which you never truly have.

**Your chosen home is on the other side, beyond the veil.**

You've already moved there, when you have abandoned your fear of the Father.

**It has been carefully prepared for you, and it is ready to receive you now. You will not see it with the body's eyes. Yet all you need you have.**

That's what you will discover: *all you need you have.*

**Your home has called to you since time began, . . .**

That sounds beautiful and poetic . . . doesn't it? Sort of like an encouraging, nurturing statement. But it's nothing that fancy. It's a matter of fact.

**Your home . . .**

. . . your Sanity . . .

. . . has called to you since time began, . . .

. . . since you caused time to seem to come into existence by choosing to be imaginatively—not really—*independent*.

**Your home has called to you since time began, nor have you ever failed entirely to hear. You heard, but knew not HOW to look, nor WHERE. And now you know.**

How do you know? You know by virtue of the exposition of the four *Obstacles to Peace* . . . and now the fifth—the final. The final obstacle is to . . .

. . . see no thorns nor nails to crucify the Son of God, and crown him king of death.

In other words, you must look at every one of your brothers and sisters and overcome, *abandon* the fifth obstacle—the final obstacle—which is your distrust of your brother and your withholding of full acknowledgement of what he divinely Is. You must *dare* to overcome your fear of your brother. You see? That's why you can't go back Home alone, because there is no such thing as "*alone at Home*."

In you the knowledge lies, ready to be unveiled and freed from all the terror that kept it hidden . . .

. . . all of the grievances.

There IS no fear in love. The song of Easter is the glad refrain the Son of God was NEVER crucified. Let us lift up our eyes together, not in fear, but faith.

Again, these aren't just *nice religious words*:

**Let us lift up our eyes together, . . .**

. . . let's not be separate anymore. Let's not approach each other distrustingly.

Let us lift up our eyes together, not in fear, but faith. And there WILL be no fear in us, for in our vision will be no illusions; only a pathway to the open door of Heaven, the home we share in quietness, and where we live in gentleness and peace, as one together.

*As one together . . .* not all of us disappearing into a single amorphous blob, but all of us as the infinite Expression of God—*together*—without misperceptions getting in the way of our full experience of each other.

Now I'm going to stop here for tonight. I invite everyone to consider these things as soberly as the things I shared last week, although here, it seems as though what I'm inviting you to soberly consider are sweet and gentle and supportive things. But please understand that they are as practical, and down to earth, "*nuts and bolts things*" to consider and embrace and embody.

Again:

**Listen and hear this carefully, nor think it but a dream; a careless thought to play with, or a toy you would pick up from time to time, and then put by. For if you do, so will it be to you:**

There's the nuts and bolts of it. It's the Truth . . . but you need to let It transform your behavior.

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

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*A Course In Miracles (reference pages)*

*Chapter 20 – Section: THORNS AND LILIES*

*Sparkly Book – p. 480, 2<sup>nd</sup> Full Par., 7<sup>th</sup> Line  
JCIM – p. 200, Last Par., 4<sup>th</sup> Line  
CIMS – p. 404, 2<sup>nd</sup> Line*

*Chapter 20 – Section: THE GIFT OF LILIES*

*First Edition – p. 398, Line 1 / Second Edition – p. 427, Par. 4, Line 6*

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