

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

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

You know, you might say that we're running this discussion about the holy instant and the two-step and special relationships into the ground, unnecessarily overdoing it all. But I promise you we're not. It's extremely important to understand exactly what the special relationship is about because it's not all that constructive.

So, what's the purpose of a special relationship?

And for clarification, one might think that a special relationship is one that stands out from all others. And in all likelihood, the most special, special relationship is the one, one has with a wife or a husband or a partner—one in which trust and intimacy and love are allowed broader and deeper expression.

And so, in many cases, those who are in primary relationships glom onto the idea of a special relationship: "Oh, let's make the most of our special relationship—let's take our special relationship and turn it into a holy relationship," thinking that it might be easier because the idea is that the special relationship is one that is fundamentally trusting and loving. You see?

But no. A special relationship is a relationship one has with anyone or anything *when he is unconscious of who he truly Is, or who she truly Is*. That's what constitutes a special relationship.

And so it's a relationship with someone you're having an argument with. It's a relationship you're having with someone you don't like or someone who

doesn't like you. It's a relationship you're having with someone in a match of some sort, a tennis match or a football game or some contest of some sort. All without having any conscious awareness of who you truly . . . and I'm going to say, divinely Are . . . for clarification—for context, for intent. You see?

So what is the purpose of a special relationship?

Well, in the misunderstanding of the value of a special relationship, one might think that it is to improve the relationship—that it's to become more and more skillful at having an excellent relationship. But no. And this is why it is so important to understand the truth about special relationships. A special relationship has always one purpose: And that purpose is to elevate the one practicing it to a position of greater excellence—of greater *autonomous* excellence.

The purpose of all special relationships, even though they are relationships and not something one engages in all by oneself in a cave out in the middle of nowhere, the purpose is to arrive at a point of such perfect independence, such perfect independence with great excellence, that one can demonstrate once and for all that he or she is a valuable valid presence—an eternal presence in it's own right. It isn't relevant to someone else—anyone else at all. It's entirely selfish. It's entirely self-serving.

And so the skill that one acquires and develops and brings into play in relationships with others, where others are working diligently also to improve the relationships while still not knowing who they divinely Are, are always for independent selfish reasons with absolute demonstrable autonomy being the ultimate goal.

So, selfishness from one side is brought to selfishness from the other side and selfishness interacts and selfishness hurts . . . but can manage to be expressed in ways, well, what is the saying, "I'll stroke your back if you stroke mine?" . . . mutual agreements of how to behave, still all for selfish reasons, but in ways that allow a little bit of pleasure to be gotten, which allows one to come to the conclusion that a pleasurable thing is happening—and indeed, this is a good relationship. And indeed, the better each partner gets at stroking the other's back, the happier everyone is. And it seems to be proof that special relationships really are special and really are valid and really are not selfish.

Now, I'm going to be very clear here: When each of you, when any of us got a divorce from the Father and said, "Father, I would rather see it my way," one put himself in a position of an experience of invalidity—pretending to be something he or she could not be. And out of that emptiness everything else developed.

And everybody, out of their emptiness, comes to each other and strokes each others' back for a little bit of pleasure, for the sole purpose of overcoming the emptiness without doing the only thing that will fill the emptiness once again, which is remembering who you Are and choosing to be that consciously and abandoning the charade—abandoning the act, abandoning the styles of relating—that all, in one way or another, seem to identify forward movement on the path of becoming absolutely, genuinely autonomous.

It's unwholesome because it's unholy. It's unwhole. Nothing constructive can emerge from emptiness, from lack of wholeness.

So, always, the purpose of a special relationship is to improve one's self. Improve one's self without interruption, even if it takes several lifetimes to arrive at this independence—this freedom to be who one is without knowing who one Is.

And so, going into the Book:

The "better" self the ego seeks is always one that is MORE special.

What does that mean? *MORE special* means more different from what the Father is Being right there where he is or where she is. More different, less like God, less like all that is valuable, all that is Meaningful. And whoever seems to possess a special self is *loved* for what can be taken from him.

That might seem hard to understand. But you know what? Egos are like chameleons. And so when they come next to or near another ego, they will sense into that other ego, they will sense into whether there's betterness there, whether there's something more desirable there, including maybe that the other ego is somewhat attracted—whether sexually, whether personally, whether financially, whatever. And if there is a rapport, the one approaching will sense into it and begin to modify his or her behavior—modify who he or she is, if it looks like there might be gain from the other person's perception of him.

“If the other one likes me, then I will stop being me. I will stop being the me I was trying to be that I've been working on for so long. I will modify it here and there to wheedle out of this person a little bit more appreciation.” You see? “And so I will steal this identity—that this other one sees in me—from that one, and I will play on it and I will monopolize it and I will make it work for me. And if I'm smart, I'll make it work for the other one too, so that that other one will continue to like me even more.”

And so, one being a chameleon easily gives up the colors that were being displayed before.

And so you take from another their goodwill—their good intent, their good perception—whether it’s true or not. And you take it from them and incorporate and use it with still, for what purpose? To become better, to somehow arrive at this place of excellence that will constitute true real autonomy and you’ll have that one there to witness for you and to be there to prove and demonstrate the truth of your independence. You see?

Now, . . .

Where both partners see this special self in each other, the ego sees “a union made in Heaven.”

[Repeats] . . . “a union made in Heaven.”

Yes! Boy, true love—instantaneous, felt by both. Or even if it grew, if it’s still perfect enough, it’s worth more than anything.

For neither one will recognize that he has asked for hell, . . .

. . . how has he asked for hell? He—both partners whoever they are—will have asked for hell by intending to engage in a relationship still without knowing who they truly Are. And that constitutes bringing emptiness to emptiness, bringing selfishness to selfishness, bringing nothing to nothing. You see?

For neither one will recognize that he has asked for hell, and so he will not interfere with the ego’s illusion of Heaven, which it offered him to INTERFERE with Heaven.

You see, you think that special relationships are there for really good reasons—different kind of reasons: emotional reasons, mental reasons, physical reasons. But no, even though that seems to be true and it gives everyone something to tackle and work on, it has only one purpose and that is to interfere with Heaven. The purpose is to interfere with your remembering who you Are—your remembering that you didn’t have to get that divorce from your Father, you didn’t have to get that relationship annulled with your Father. You see? It interferes with that. It’s simple.

Everyone thinks that there are many good reasons for special relationships, even if they’re difficult ones, even if they’re unpleasant because they “make you grow” and they strengthen you, and . . . blah . . . blah . . . bullshit!

And so it’s easy to get caught up in working on all these many points when there’s only one point totally unrelated to improving one’s self. And that point

is: That the purpose of the special relationship is to keep you unconscious of who you truly Are, which would resolve the problem, which would cause you to Wake up.

*Yet if all illusions are of fear, and they CAN be of nothing else,
the illusion of Heaven . . .*

. . . “Oh, it’s a relationship made in Heaven” . . .

*. . . the illusion of Heaven is nothing more than an "attractive"
form of fear, in which the guilt is buried deep, and rises in the
form of "love."*

“Hmm . . . what guilt?”

Well, the guilt that automatically came into play when you decided to do things on your own, the guilt and fear—the team—that came into play when you said, “Father, I’m going to look at it on my own. I’m not going to look at it with You anymore. I am not going to co-create with You by being that conscious awareness which is devoted to the clear experience of what You Are creating so that I might join you in acknowledgement of it as Your Creation. And as acknowledgment of my function which is to *recognize* Your handiwork, Father.”

When you abandoned that, guilt and fear came into play. You don’t like the guilt so you push it out of sight. But it rises in the form of love in a special relationship.

The appeal of hell . . .

I know these are strong words . . . and you probably think you can Wake up without taking a look at them in this strong form, but I promise you if you will take a look at them, it will become evermore clear to you how much you want to abandon it—it will make it evermore *easy* to abandon them.

*The appeal of hell lies only in the terrible attraction of guilt,
which the ego holds out to those who place their faith in
littleness.*

. . . “But Father, I’d rather abandon the infinite view for my view, for my way of looking at things.” You see?

What’s the terrible attraction of guilt?

You would say, “Guilt doesn’t attract me!” But it does. It attracts everybody, because if one has forgotten who they Are, the experience of guilt is perceived

to be appropriate, normal, essential motivation for self-improvement. You see? The guilt is there, the experience of guilt is your Sanity saying, “If you want to see things by yourself, you’re attempting to do something you are incapable of doing. Stop doing it! You cannot be comfortable attempting to do something you cannot do. And your insistence at attempting to do the impossible will be felt as discomfort—as guilt.

But the ego takes that—this independent vantage point, so called—takes that and says, “I know I am something meaningful. I know I am something valuable. I know I do not exist for no reason, and therefore, I am going to use this discomfort for the purpose of uncovering my worth through my own independent acts, and uncovering my worth through the subtle manipulation of my world, and of my Brothers and Sisters, for my benefit. And of course, the best way I can earn the respect and support of others is to do enough to benefit them, that it’s worth it to them (without their knowing who they Are) to help me, who doesn’t know who I am.” You see?

So there’s an attraction of guilt because it has become the motivation for self-improvement. It is therefore, that, which if used properly, will allow you to arrive at a point of self-respect—to arrive at a point of excellence that will deserve the respect of others. And so you are hooked on guilt. It *is* attractive to you.

You see . . .

The appeal of hell . . .

. . . which means the appeal of the experience of not knowing who you Are because you’ve said, “Father, I’d rather do it my way . . .” The appeal of that experience . . .

. . . lies only in the terrible attraction of guilt which the ego holds out to those who place their faith in littleness.

You see?

The conviction of littleness lies in EVERY special relationship, for only the deprived could VALUE specialness.

What is specialness?

It’s whatever you seem to create that makes you, what . . . ? Different from everyone else? Not really . . . different from the Father, so that you in your own right, without borrowing worth and value and meaning from something outside of yourself, can claim self-authorized, autonomous existence—being.

The demand for specialness, and the perception of the giving of specialness as an act of love, would make love HATEFUL.

You see? Why hateful? Because it's destructive. Why is it destructive? Because it keeps who you divinely Are utterly obscured from you.

The demand for specialness, and the perception of the giving of specialness as an act of love, would make love HATEFUL. And the real purpose of the special relationship, in strict accordance with the ego's goals, . .

You see? What are the ego's goals? To become better and better and better and better, to the point where you can become a puppet without strings and sing and dance at your own will, without being in any kind of connected relationship. Those are the ego's goals.

And if you're not doing the two-step, if you're not remembering to say, "Father, what is the truth here?" *before you respond to the situation*, you are keeping yourself in limbo—you are keeping yourself in ignorance.

. . . the real purpose of the special relationship, in strict accordance with the ego's goals, is to destroy reality and substitute illusion.

"Whew! . . . man, I didn't know I was doing that," you say. "I had no idea I could have been doing that. That sounds pretty awful. It sounds like there must be quite a penalty for that—an axe that's going to fall." No, the axe has already fallen. And the only axe that can fall is, that when you are choosing to ignore what you Are, you will experience being unconscious of what you Are. And the moment you *stop* choosing to be unconscious of what you Are, the axe that fell will no longer present itself as an actuality. And there won't be any suffering or penalty, because you'll see the truth—you'll know the truth—and you won't try to do the impossible or be what you cannot be.

For the ego is ITSELF an illusion, and only illusions CAN be the witnesses to its "reality."

[Repeats] For the ego is ITSELF an illusion, and only illusions CAN be the witnesses to its "reality."

I said last week, that the ego and the Holy Spirit are two different identifiers of one thing: You. The ego is you unconscious of who you Are. And the Holy Spirit is you conscious of who and what you Are—recognizing your inseparable relationship with God, and your willingness, your *love* for joining

with your Father, with That which has given you life . . . is giving you life and will forever be the life of You, flawlessly.

Everyone in the orphanage, all of you who are unconscious of who you Are and who have developed the orphanage protocols, all of you are Sons and Daughters of God who are not orphans, who are in the middle of the Kingdom of Heaven believing that they're in an orphanage, who are joined with each other and with Their Father so infinitely and completely that the fantasy they are engaged in is having no real effect at all, because what Is can't be changed, what is true can't be undone. And so it hasn't been undone, but you're believing that it has and you are believing that your beliefs are ultimate truths.

Now, the worst is yet to come.

If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, .

Um-m . . . that is worse isn't it?

. . . would you WANT it?

[Chuckles] See, it isn't just about triumphing over your Brother, or besting your Brother while convincing him that he's gotten some good out of it. It isn't just about countries getting along better with other countries, or groups with other groups. No! It's about triumphing over God! You see?

If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you WANT it?

No, you hadn't thought about it that way. And it's sort of hard to believe that it is. And it's sort of hard to imagine how one could shift from the orphan mindset—the current mindset. And it's sort of hard to believe that it might actually be valuable. That's hard to believe.

If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you WANT it? Let us not think of its fearful nature, nor of the guilt it must entail, nor of the sadness and the loneliness.

You see? Let's not think of all these little bits and pieces: Its fearful nature, the guilt it must entail, the sadness and the loneliness . . . you know. Oh-h-h, the ego just loves to get a hold of little details like that. Why? So that it can get rid of them, so it can improve the situation, so that you're not experiencing it anymore, and in the process of doing that, demonstrating your betterness. You see?

Let us not do what gets you entrapped in fixing up something that doesn't even exist and something that you can gain your freedom from: By

abandoning the special relationship by engaging in the two-step—by engaging in the holy instant.

Again, this is important. Let us not think of all the little details:

Let us not think of its fearful nature, nor of the guilt it must entail, nor of the sadness and the loneliness. For these are only attributes of the whole religion of the separation, . .

You see? Those are little attributes of something not only larger but less complicated instead of a bunch of little things to take care of or improve.

There's one thing to be done. And that is, the holy instant. Stopping dead in your tracks (live in your tracks) and saying, "Father," . . you see . . . breaking the isolation . . . "Father, what is the truth here? What do I need to know in order to experience Your perspective—the truth?" You see?

So, these things . . .

. . . are only attributes of the whole religion of the separation, and of the total context in which it is . . .

. . . what? . .

. . . thought to occur.

It's not even actually occurring. It's . . .

. . . the total context in which it is thought to occur. . .

. . . imagined to occur. So don't go down that road. It's just full of sticky fly-paper, here and there and all the little details—all the little details that the ego can get busy to fix up. And in getting busy to fix up, keeps keeping the truth about you obscured from you and keeping the truth about your Brother obscured from your Brother. You see?

Now, here's the ugly truth:

The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so YOU can live.

You know, you can listen to those words and say . . . you can almost laugh . . . "What a ridiculous idea! I mean, anyone who believes there is a God knows that God, God can't die, maybe the Son of God can die, but God can't die." And so when it says:

The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so YOU can live.

You blow it off with a little laughter. Not you [chuckling] not you. But here's the thing, it's simple: There's no penalty to it because you'll only suffer from ignorance until the ignorance is replaced with clarity of mind.

As long as you think you're just a mortal—something that came from a sperm and an egg, a little bit of matter, a little bit of protoplasm—as long as you think that and you live your life on that basis, you never have to imagine that there's a God, you never have to pay attention to a God and the more conscientiously you would engage in improving yourself in your own right, you're keeping God out of sight and out of mind . . . and dead.

You listen to me talk week after week. You watch Paul and you know that he struggles with letting me respond to everything—in other words, staying joined with me all the time. You hear me encourage you to connect with the Holy Spirit—that which is nothing more than your right Mind—and listening or listening to your Guide and staying joined, joined in your Guide's perspective, which is really your true perspective, you hear me say do that, do that, do that . . . and you have reasons for not doing it, you have arguments against doing it all the time, just as Paul does.

So this isn't as comical or irrelevant as you might think, when it says:

The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so YOU can live.

You know, God must be out of the picture so you can manage to not have to listen to God all the time. It's simple clarity. It's simple simplicity.

Now obviously, if you're going to try to kill God by becoming a dominant entity yourself, in your own right, you really are not going to be able to do it or attempt to do it with comfort. Not because there's retribution, not because God is a jealous or angry God, but because God isn't going to stop being what He Is, and you can't stop being what you Are. And so when you attempt to go against what is the truth, nothing is going to drop a penalty upon you. You're just going to experience the exhausting strain of attempting to do something you can't do. That's all.

But as I've said before, the strain, the distress, the pain, if you will, the fear and so on, will be as great as that which you're attempting to overcome that you can't overcome. The harder you push against the Rock of Gibraltar, the more your fist or your hands or your muscles are going to complain. Not because the Rock of Gibraltar decided to blast you with a penalty, but because

you're using your self to attempt to do something you can't do. And you're doing it with all your might. And all the might you're bringing to it, you are experiencing as the discomfort of the impossibility of what you're trying to do. Okay?

The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so YOU can live. And it is this theme which is acted out in the special relationship.

Every special relationship: Your relationship with your cat, your relationship with the bees, your relationship with your mate, your relationship with your car, your relationship with *anything*. All relationships are colored by whatever pigments you are introducing into the mindset through which you're looking at everything. Simple.

Through the death of YOUR self, you think you can attack another self, . .

. . . you're like the chameleon: Through the death of the blue and green chameleon, and the emergence of the blue, red and orange chameleon, you caused the death of the first chameleon.

Through the death of YOUR self, you think you can attack another self, and snatch it from the other to replace the self which you despise.

You see? You'll either go for the picture you have about what another thinks of you or you will go after what that other one actually does think about you and you will snatch it away and use it for your own selfish purposes.

Through the death of YOUR self, you think you can attack another self, and snatch it from the other to replace the self which you despise. And you despise it because you do not think it offers the specialness which you demand.

And of course, it doesn't. And that's why you are working, working, working to create your more and more special, specialness—your greater and greater difference from God. If you were at peace with yourself, you wouldn't be trying to improve yourself. And in fact, when you allow yourself into the holy instant where God's laws prevail, and you experience the perfect harmony of Being, you find no urge, no call for improving yourself, because you're in a position, the awesome position, of being able to observe all of Creation with the Father, which it's your Birthright to be doing. In which nothing needs improvement but in which all things are always made new.

. . . you despise it . . .

. . . the self you're currently experiencing . . .

. . . you despise it because you do not think it offers the specialness which you demand. And HATING it, you have made it little and unworthy because you are AFRAID of it.

You see? Now, mind you, you don't have two selves. You have two different ways of identifying, or let's say, of being identified. One is, as that which doesn't know who it is, or That which does.

You are the Son and Daughter of God. But if you don't know it, then this Son or Daughter of God that you Are becomes something you're unconscious of and there is the presence of fear and guilt which prompts you then, to get off your ass and fix yourself up, improve yourself, better yourself . . . you see? . . . because it's not good enough. And what is it that's not good enough? The Son of God, right now, the Christ that you Are: Christ Mary, Christ John. You see?

You know, sometimes you can go to a movie and the maker of the movie will throw a scene in which, because you were engrossed with everything else, you couldn't avoid seeing . . . like someone's head being blown off—something that it really wasn't necessary for you to have in your mind. And now it's there and it will always be there.

Well, we're talking about hard things here. And you might say, "I didn't need to know all of that. You threw it in when I was not expecting it and it was unfair." But what we're talking about here, what's being uncovered here is something that you do need to have in your mind, and it does need to be indelibly present, because then it gives you, perhaps, the courage, but certainly the impetus to try something new: To change the way you're being, to abandon the special relationship. Because you're now beginning to see just how far reaching and all encompassing, we'll say, the negative aspects are of this thing that you've been enjoying, because it's made life challenging and interesting—troublesome, yes. But you deserve more. It's your Birthright to be experiencing something different. And so we have to look at this.

And I thank you for bearing with me as it's uncovered. You might well have skipped these pages when you read the book.

And I love you all. And I thank you for hanging in here with me, as these things help uncover your capacity to be the Sons and Daughters of God now. And I look forward to being with your next week.

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)
Chapter 16 – Section – SPECIALNESS AND GUILT
¹ *Sparkly Book – p. 391, 3rd Par. / JCIM – p. 164, 6th Par. / CIMS – p. 329, Par. 50*
Chapter 16 – Section – THE CHOICE FOR COMPLETION
First Edition – p. 318, Last Par. / Second Edition – p. 342, Par. 8

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