

## **Raj/ACIM Study Group – August 22, 2004**

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)  
Chapter 8 – THE JOURNEY BACK  
Section – THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMPRISONMENT AND FREEDOM  
First Edition – p. 129 / Second Edition – p. 139  
Section – THE RATIONALE FOR CHOICE  
Sparkly Book – p. 175

**RAJ:** Good afternoon. Or should I say, “Good evening”?

**AUDIENCE:** Good afternoon.

**RAJ:** And welcome to everyone who’s joining us on the Internet.

We’re going to go right into the book. And actually I’m going to start reading a couple of sentences earlier than where I said so that we have a sense of continuity.

**RAJ READING:** *The ego is expert only in confusion. It does not understand anything else. As a teacher, then, it is totally confused and TOTALLY CONFUSING. Even if you could disregard the Holy Spirit entirely, which is quite impossible, you could learn nothing from the ego because the ego KNOWS nothing.*

**RAJ:** This next line is a very important question.

**RAJ READING:** *Is there ANY possible reason for choosing a teacher such as this?*

**RAJ:** And intellectually, all of you would say, “No. No, there isn’t.” And you might even say, “I’m going to have to think about that.” And already you’ve missed the point, because if you’re going to think about it, it means that you’re still delaying turning to that Point of Excellence in you to learn of It. In other words, you’ve still neglected to turn to the only Teacher worth listening to, and if you haven’t done that, the ego is still being your teacher. It’s very black and white. And because it’s very black and white, it’s very simple. There’s only one thing you need to do in order to wake up. There’s only one thing you need to do in order to start your journey Home, and that is *change teachers*.

Continuing.

**RAJ READING:** *Does the total disregard of anything it teaches make anything BUT sense?*

**RAJ:** “Well,” you say, “It makes sense, but I don’t know how to hear the Truth.” It’s like saying, “I don’t know how to swim.” Well, one of the best ways to learn how to swim is to jump in the water, whether you know how to swim or not. And you’ll find that instinct takes over, and within moments, you will be swimming. In other words, the only way you’re going to be able to hear is if you start listening with commitment to hearing, not just playing with the idea of listening and hearing. As long as you think you have an alternative, which is to think for yourself, then you won’t make significant and determined commitment to hearing. You won’t listen fully.

Continuing, and referring to the ego.

**RAJ READING:** *Is THIS the teacher to whom a Son of God should turn to find HIMSELF? The ego has never given you a sensible answer to ANYTHING. Simply on the grounds of your own experience with the ego’s teaching, should not this alone disqualify it as your future teacher?*

**RAJ:** Well, you would probably say, “Yes.” But the full impact of the meaning of that question doesn’t register with you, as I’ve said before, because you’re really doing all right at the moment. And so you don’t say “yes” with the full force of conviction that causes you to right now shift gears and start listening to the Voice for Truth within you, let us say, with the intent not to act until the action arises from clarity coming from that Teacher.

“Well, you know what? I’ll have to do this on a vacation where I don’t have any other demands. And I will have plenty of time if it takes me 5 or 10 days before I hear anything.” You see how your very thought is a thought of *doubt*, a thought of quote “it not working” unquote, and therefore you better give yourself a lot of time? And that’s the way you’ll listen when the vacation comes that you actually decide to do this. You see? You haven’t jumped into the water yet where the only alternative you have available to you is to swim now. There’s never going to be a good time to do it. And you can be like Paul was and wait until the circumstances got very dire and he was halted dead in his tracks with no option available except to listen, or you can decide that it’s worth it to do it now while things aren’t too bad.

Again.

**RAJ READING:** *Simply on the grounds of your own experience with the ego’s teaching, should not this alone disqualify it as your future teacher? Yet the ego has done more harm to your learning than this alone. Learning is joyful if it leads you along your natural path, and facilitates the development of what you HAVE.*

**RAJ:** Or we could say facilitates the uncovering of What You Already Are.

**RAJ READING:** *When you are taught AGAINST your nature, however, you will LOSE by your learning because your learning will imprison you.*

**RAJ:** Please understand that even if things are going relatively well right now, you are still in prison. You are still *not* experiencing your Birthright of the Joy of recognizing Reality in everything and everyone around you. And you're making do to the best of your ability while still ignorant of your Birthright.

Continuing.

**RAJ READING:** *Your will is IN your nature, and therefore CANNOT go against it.*

*The ego cannot teach you anything as long as your will is free because you will not LISTEN to it. It is NOT your will to be imprisoned BECAUSE your will is free. That is why the ego is the DENIAL of free will. It is NEVER God Who coerces you because He SHARES His Will with you. His Voice teaches ONLY His Will, but that is not the Holy Spirit's lesson because that is what you ARE. The LESSON is...*

**RAJ:** That the Holy Spirit teaches.

**RAJ READING:** *The LESSON is that your will and God's cannot be out of accord BECAUSE they are one. This is the undoing of EVERYTHING the ego tries to teach. It is not, then, only the direction of the curriculum which must be unconflicted, but also the CONTENT.*

**RAJ:** Now, I want to back up a little bit. We will say in time—not in the book—in the past I have shared with you that there is no such thing as free will and that the only right use of will is to choose not to use it. And yet we're reading here that your will must be free in order not to be bound by, or fooled by, the teachings of the ego.

Well, let me ask you this. If I have been advising you not to rely upon your best judgments and your thinking and your reasoning and all of your learning up to this point, if I have been telling you to be willing to abandon that in order to go within to the Altar to connect with the Holy Spirit which is nothing more than your Right Mind and to yield to It, you're going to have an experience that you would call or describe as abandoning your free will. If you're going to be yielding to something else, you're going to be abandoning the capacity you thought you had to function independently. In other words, you will say you're having an experience of abandoning free will.

It sounds like my teaching is conflicted, but it's not. You don't know what your will is right now, because you have been letting the ego teach you. You

have been relying upon your best *sense* of what you are with no Conscious Experience of What You Really Are. And so you literally do not know what free will is, even though you *think* that you've been expressing it your whole life.

As long as you are relying upon your own thinking and reasoning, and basing your actions upon the conclusions you come to, and asserting yourself on the basis of the conclusions you have come to you, you are expressing a will that is not only independent from God, but is also independent from each other. And I am telling you that that is imprisonment, because you're missing out on what the meaning of the word "Brotherhood" is. And you're missing out on what it means to fit in with the Brotherhood. And you're missing out on what it means that you are to find your own in another's good; meaning you're to find your own good in another's good; that the way to have is to share.

The word "we" is characteristic of free will, is characteristic of the experience of free will. But right now your experience of free will is "I, I, I." Therefore, because all your definitions that you have given to everything were made-up out of whole cloth, so to speak, rather than your having arrived at the definitions of What Everything Is from your connectedness with the Source of every thing, you have likewise given your own definition to the words "free will." And your definition of "free will" is as confused and incorrect as the definitions you've given to everything else.

That is why I have said the only right use of will is to choose not to use it. The only thing that can possibly mean to you is that the only right use of what you're calling "free will" must be abandoned, 'cause you have no sense of, or Conscious Awareness of, any other will. And you will *not* be open to and receptive to the Father's Will until you do abandon reliance upon this cherished right that you think you have to express free will, which constitutes your being independent from your Brother—"I, I, I"—without the experience of "We." That is isolation. Isolation is imprisonment.

Continuing.

**RAJ READING:** *The ego wants to teach you that you want to OPPOSE God's Will.*

**RAJ:** And how does it do that? It tells you that there's great value in expressing your will. And the better you do it, the more respectable you will be. And the better you do it, the more powerful you will be. And the better you do it, the more influential you will be. And the better you do it, the more successful, or wealthy, or whatever, you will be. All of this, as you

know, appeals to your ego, doesn't it? It piques your curiosity and causes you to pursue your independence, not only further, but more intently.

So:

**RAJ READING:** *The ego wants to teach you that you want to OPPOSE God's Will. This unnatural lesson cannot BE learned, but the ATTEMPT to learn it is a violation of your own freedom, and makes you afraid of your will BECAUSE it is free. The Holy Spirit...*

[Editor's Note: Raj emphasized the above as follows: *The ego wants to teach you that you WANT to oppose God's Will.*]

**RAJ:** Again, which is nothing more than your Right Mind.

**RAJ READING:** *...opposes ANY imprisoning of the will of a Son of God, KNOWING that the will of the Son IS the Father's. The Holy Spirit leads you steadily along the path of freedom,...*

**RAJ:** Meaning back Home along the very path you took away from Home, undoing the specific steps, acts, thoughts, that you used to establish a sense of yourself as independent from Truth, independent from Reality, independent from the Conscious Experience of What Everything Is.

**RAJ READING:** *The Holy Spirit leads you steadily along the path of freedom, teaching you how to disregard, or look beyond, EVERYTHING that would hold you back.*

**RAJ:** Now the Truth is that you haven't, none of you have forgotten Truth completely. But all of the definitions you've given to everything, and the great pride you take in being self-reliant, has caused you not to be able to discern the difference between What Is True and what you've made-up. And because you are not able to make the distinction, it is intelligent for you to devalue everything you know. Sort of like saying, "Okay, Holy Spirit, I'm going to bring every single one of my thoughts, every single one of my ideas, every single one of my beliefs, every single thing I know, and I'm not going to hold anything back, and I'm going to put it all out on the table for You to sort out. I am going to assume that absolutely nothing that I would put on the table is worthy of my keeping until You have said, 'Here, this is Real. You can have it back.'" That's intelligence. And that's what you have to be willing to do.

You have to be willing to say, "Here's everything. I don't know which of it is Real and which of it I've made-up. I'm asking *You* to sort it out for me *with me* so that I might know What Is Real And Eternal, and so that I may know what *isn't* and release it and become free of the confusion that its presence provides as to what is real."

Again.

**RAJ READING:** *The Holy Spirit leads you steadily along the path of freedom, teaching you how to disregard, or look beyond, EVERYTHING that would hold you back.*

**RAJ:** What a Friend the Holy Spirit is. And what a friendliness Its *Intent For Being* is.

Continuing.

**RAJ READING:** *We said before that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy.*

**RAJ:** I want to take a moment here because this is a very pointed point.

**RAJ READING:** *We said before that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy.*

**RAJ:** It *allows* you to make a distinction between what feels good and what doesn't feel good. It allows you to make a distinction between what you want and what you *don't* want. Why? So that you can make a choice.

Well, if you're going to make a choice, it means one is going to be selected and one is going to be rejected. Well, what does that mean in practical terms? It means that when you're having a rough experience, you're not going to say, "Well, this is just one of those things for me to have patience with." Or "This is one of those things that is here as a learning experience for me. And, of course, if it's going to be a learning experience for me, I'm not going to reject it. It must be the Father's Way of helping me grow." That kind of thinking keeps you bound in the dream because no distinction is made. And *if* the distinction is made and no choice is made, you're still stuck in the illusion.

If you want to wake up, you've got to learn the difference, make the distinction, and then you've got to make the choice. And then you have to remain committed to the choice.

**RAJ READING:** *...the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy. That is the same as saying that He teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom. YOU cannot make this distinction WITHOUT Him.*

**RAJ:** That's why you must bring everything out on the table for *Him* to sort out for you. The ego will tell you that everything on that table is valuable—your pet theories, your best judgments, your skills at defending yourself in a hostile environment. It will tell you that all of these are treasures; some that

were gifts and some that you worked very hard for, but all of which are contributing to the value of what you are. You see?

Are you going to listen to this teacher? No. You don't need to listen to this teacher because you now you know there is another Teacher. When you didn't know there was another Teacher, there was nothing you could do. But *now you know* there's another Teacher. And now you know that this other Teacher is teaching you the exact opposite of what your current teacher has been teaching you. And not only that, you know that this new Teacher teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom.

And I keep coming back to this because it's very subtle, but it's very pervasive. You say, "What you're telling me sounds like hard work. What you're telling me sounds like something that may be impossible for me. And you know what? I'm not suffering that much. What I'm experiencing really feels like quite a bit of freedom." That subtle suggestion causes you not to look clearly at what we're talking about.

It causes you to not be clear in terms of black-and-white about What Works and what doesn't. It causes you not to look at the fact that underneath everything that's happening in your life, you're not really experiencing what you want. You're not really experiencing the freedom you would like. You're not really experiencing Joy consistently and continuously and fully. You're not really experiencing Peace. And when I use the word "Peace," I mean What Peace Really Is, which is a State of Mind in which there is no experience of vulnerability. You're *not* experiencing that. And you know it!

Don't be afraid to look honestly and deeply into yourself in this way. Because if you will look honestly and deeply into yourself, you'll realize just how little freedom you're experiencing, just how little happiness you're experiencing, just how little invulnerability you're experiencing. And I wager to say that if you're really honest with yourselves, you find no place in you that's invulnerable. *If you're not experiencing invulnerability, you are in prison. You are not experiencing freedom. You're not experiencing your Birthright.*

And if you will not be fuzzy and lovey-dovey spiritual in your mind, "God is Love, He will take care of me, and I will abide in the cozy feeling those words give me," if you don't engage in that and you take a practical look, you will see that the payoff you've been fooling yourself into believing you're getting has been an emptiness, has been nothing. And when that registers with you and sinks in, you'll say, "Damn it! I'm not putting up with this anymore. I'm going to abandon my will. I'm going to abandon what I thought free will was. And my one last act of will that I'm going to engage in is to say, 'Father, show me Your Will. I am not going to introduce what I

thought was my will into the mix anymore. I am here, Father, waiting to hear from You. I am here, Holy Spirit, waiting for *your* Guidance.”

Your last act of will, will be to abandon it, to not use it. “Insanity,” you say. No. Because if you will abandon it, really abandon it, like jumping into the deep end of the pool where there’s no way to get to the side, you will become determined to do what it takes to hear. *And* as the Father’s Will is revealed to you, the Father’s Will for you is revealed to you, it will also be revealed to you, as an experience, that that’s what *you feel*, that that’s what *you will* also. And you will recognize yourself in it. And you will gladly express it from there. And you will be free.

Again.

**RAJ READING:** *YOU cannot make this distinction...*

**RAJ:** Between imprisonment and freedom.

**RAJ READING:** *...WITHOUT Him.*

**RAJ:** The Holy Spirit.

**RAJ READING:** *That is because you have taught yourself that imprisonment IS freedom.*

**RAJ:** You didn’t know you did that.

But if you want to know the Truth, the key to the door of your cell is the free will that you prize so highly, that you value because it promises to you that through its use you can achieve anything. That’s the hooker. It says *you* can achieve and do anything you set your will to. Wow. What an ego trip. Now, in order to get out of the cell, you’ve got to take *your* will and put it in the lock and unlock the door and walk out leaving the key behind.

**RAJ READING:** *...you have taught yourself that imprisonment IS freedom. Believing them to be the same, how CAN you tell them apart? Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they ARE the same to teach you the DIFFERENCE between them?*

**RAJ:** No.

**RAJ READING:** *The Holy Spirit’s teaching takes only ONE direction and has only ONE goal. His direction is freedom and His goal is God.*

**RAJ:** Now, I know I’m beating this into the ground, but you need to hear it over and over again for clarity.

**RAJ READING:** *His direction...*

**RAJ:** Meaning the Holy Spirit’s.

**RAJ READING:** *...is freedom and His goal is God.*

**RAJ:** But the Holy Spirit is nothing more than *your* Right Mind. It's not something separate from you. It's the very Essence and Wholeness *of You*. So your Right Mind, your Right Mind's teaching takes only one direction and has only one goal. The goal of your Right Mind is constantly being implemented by it. In other words, the Sanity of You is constantly implementing it in your awareness to whatever degree you're willing to stand in receipt of it and embrace it. So, the Holy Spirit, your Right Mind, is intent upon integrating what seems to have become disintegrated.

And so you, in your tiny sense of yourself, retracing your steps Home, are not doing it all by yourself against overwhelming odds. You have an Ally—your very own active, present Sanity—which at the moment you're dissociated from and which you don't recognize. So I want you to understand that this process is a process of your very own capital "B" Being; a Movement of Integration that is intent upon accomplishing Its Goal. And the marvelous part about it is that when it's accomplished, your whole trip back Home into your Sanity will not be able to be attributed to anything else. And you will feel the Integrity of You in the Movement and, what I'm going to call, the Reawakening. Thus you will not get into the Kingdom of Heaven on someone else's shoulders. And you will not be where you're not ready to be.

Again.

**RAJ READING:** *The Holy Spirit's teaching takes only ONE direction and has only ONE goal. His direction is freedom and His goal is God. Yet he cannot conceive of God without YOU because it is not God's Will to BE without you. When you have learned that your will IS God's, you could no more will to be without Him than He could will to be without YOU.*

**RAJ:** Now here's a wonderfully distracting question; one that challenges the truth of what's being said, and one that could pique your curiosity.

**RAJ READING:** *When you have learned that your will IS God's, you could no more will to be without Him than He could will to be without YOU.*

**RAJ:** And the distracting question is, "Well, then how did I will to be without Him in the first place?" And I'm telling you it doesn't matter. Because *you are* in prison, and it is not your Birthright to be in prison. And so everything that could possibly be done needs to be done for you to regain your Sanity. So just accept it. It doesn't matter how you got in the mess. It matters for you to get out of it and know how to stay out of it. And so get about the business of getting out of it.

And don't delay getting out of it by saying, "I'm not going to move one inch until you explain to me how I did the impossible thing of managing to get a divorce from God." The simple fact is you didn't get a divorce from God. You only got a divorce from God in your imagination. And waking up is grounding you and getting you out of your imagination.

**RAJ READING:** *When you have learned that your will IS God's, you could no more will to be without Him than He could will to be without YOU. This IS freedom and this IS joy. Deny yourself this and you ARE denying God His Kingdom because He created you FOR this. When we said, "All power and glory are yours because the Kingdom is His," this is what we meant:*

[Editor's Note: Raj said "God *and* His Kingdom" instead of "God His Kingdom."]

**RAJ:** Because the Kingdom is His, because Creation is His, and you are His Creation, and His Creation is the Extension of All That He Is, then all power and glory are yours because the Kingdom is His.

**RAJ READING:** *...this is what we meant:*

*The Will of God is without limit, and all power and glory lie within it. It is boundless in strength and in love and in peace. It has no boundaries because Its extension is unlimited, and It encompasses all things because It created all things. By creating all things It made them part of Itself. YOU are the Will of God because this is how you were created. Because your Creator creates ONLY like Himself, you ARE like Him. You are part of Him Who IS all power and glory, and are therefore as unlimited as He is.*

*To what else EXCEPT all power and glory can the Holy Spirit appeal to restore God's Kingdom? His appeal, then, is merely to what the Kingdom IS, and for its own acknowledgment of what it is. When you acknowledge this, you bring the acknowledgment automatically to everyone because you HAVE acknowledged everyone.*

[Editor's Note: Raj said "in strength and love" instead of "in strength and *in* love."]

**RAJ:** Your vision has become infinite, all-inclusive. And so what you are aware of, you bring, you share, with everything infinitely.

**RAJ READING:** *By YOUR recognition you awaken THEIRS,...*

**RAJ:** And in very practical terms what that means is that by your recognition of What Is True, you have withdrawn from the mutual

agreements that keep the illusion or the dream going. And in that weakening of the dream, you contribute to their seeing the Truth.

**RAJ READING:** *By YOUR recognition you awaken THEIRS, and through theirs YOURS is extended. Awakening runs easily and gladly through the Kingdom, in answer to the Call of God. This is the natural response of every Son of God to the Voice of his Creator, because it is the Voice for HIS creations and for his own extension.*

**RAJ:** Well, I hear you saying that when you have “Aha’s,” when you have light bulbs that go on in your mind where What Is True is uncovered to you more completely and you share it, the awakening of it doesn’t run easily and gladly through the Kingdom. So what in the hell does this mean? It sounds very unrelated to real life. Right?

Well, I’m going to put it this way. If you would, imagine Creation as a great circuit board where every Aspect of Creation was a point in the circuit board, and the circuitry of the circuit board connects every single point of creation. When Truth is known, when Truth is consciously experienced, it courses through the circuit board and every single point on that board receives the impulse.

Now some of those little points on the circuit board are still very intent on expressing their free will. They are practicing the blocking of the Conscious Experience of the impulse that’s going through the circuit board, and so they don’t feel it, they don’t see it, except perhaps as a slight intrusion on their privacy, which they reinforce. So, let it be known that whether you see evidence of the good news running freely through the Brotherhood or not, the impulse has reached them.

Now, what if 50% of the Brotherhood are engaged in self-will? That means that 50% of the points on the circuit board are actively blocking the experience of the Impulse of the Conscious Awareness of Truth that the other 50% *are* consciously experiencing. They’re blocking it, but they’re still in receipt of it.

Every time you manage to listen and you feel the Impulse of Love and you extend It, the point you are on the board becomes illuminated. Even if it’s just a little bit initially, it becomes illuminated. And it means that now, we’ll say, 49.999% of the board is less illuminated. You are contributing to the lessening of the density of the dream, the lessening of the darkness. So do not let yourself become discouraged just because these beautiful words seem not to be relevant.

**RAJ READING:** *By YOUR recognition you awaken THEIRS, and through theirs YOURS is extended. Awakening runs easily and gladly through the Kingdom, in answer to the Call of God.*

**RAJ:** Well, it does run naturally and easy through the Kingdom, so don't stop. Because I promise you that each step you take lessens the density of the willfulness that those indulging in self-will have available to energize. And so, what you're doing counts.

Again.

**RAJ READING:** *Awakening runs easily and gladly through the Kingdom, in answer to the Call of God. This is the natural response of every Son of God to the Voice of his Creator, because it is the Voice for HIS creations and for his own extension.*

**RAJ:** The Father extends and it's called the Son. And the Son feels the Impulse and extends to his Brothers and Sisters, and in doing so, makes it his own. Your creations are God's Creations given away with Love that make what you've given away that was received from the Father's, yours. The Father extends Himself to you as You, but that doesn't make it yours. Until you give It away, you haven't taken a stand, have you? You haven't declared yourself.

“Well, today, I'm going to think for myself, and I'm not going to declare the Father's Will. I'm going to declare mine.” So you haven't stood in receipt of What Was Given, even though it's in your lap to receive. And *you* give away *your* will, *your* determinations, not realizing that what you're giving away is *nothing*.

When you're willing to say, “Thy Will, not mine, be done,” and you let yourself stand in receipt of the Gifts of God and accept Them by passing Them on to your Brothers, They become your Creations. Not creations that you made-up out of whole cloth, but God's Creations that you've made your own by not withholding *Them* from your Brother and Sister. And then your Brother and Sister pass It on. And Infinity is like an incredible Gifting Process that gives back to God the recognition of What God Is, making His Creation His. And there is the Singularity.

And in your fitting in, in this way, which violates your current definition of free will, you experience freedom. And the meaning of the words, “Behold, I make all things new,” becomes your Conscious Experience. And you will no longer seem to be stuck in repetition, in cycles of life that repeat themselves over and over and monotonously over again.

You now have grounds for making the choice. And you now have the encouragement for making the choice. And instead of letting it sound like a bunch of unnatural hard work, let there be an awakening in you of a sense of exploration and delight at the discovery of things of great value for you so that you can proceed with enthusiasm.

I look forward to the day when you will have the full Conscious Experience of just how much I love you. And I look forward to being with you next week.

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