

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

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THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.
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So, what will it take?

How many of you are better prepared to talk about the answer this week than you were when I asked it last week? What will it take to warrant your utilizing the holy instant—availing yourself of it?

How many of you tried and found that your inclination to be reactive or self-defensive took priority over any inclination to find a way to be the presence of Love? And so how many of you—if you tried earnestly—feel frustrated and disappointed, and that the task might even be futile because you have to say, “I don’t know what it takes.”

The key here is, you can acknowledge that you don’t yet know what it takes. But don’t get hung up on it . . . don’t become devoted to the awareness that you don’t know what it takes, DAMN IT! You see? Don’t become emotionally passionate about not knowing yet. Because I’m telling you something: It’s in you. The capacity is in you. The answer is in you. It has been in you and with you since Creation, if I may put it that way.

You know, someone who seems to be insane—incarcerated in an insane asylum—has not lost the capacity to be sane. It is *impossible* to have lost the capacity. But the capacity simply isn’t being used. At some point, the choice to use the capacity was rejected. And at this point, the reason that which triggered the decision isn’t even remembered—it’s been put out of mind, out of sight, out of memory. And so that one simply feels that his or her current mindset—state of affairs—is normal and natural. It’s just the way things are. Not being able to remember the reason for having made the decision, the fact that a decision was made is also forgotten.

And so, if someone with clarity were to approach those who are designated as insane and told them “You have the capacity. Sanity is resident in you. The capacity to be sane hasn’t been lost. You are not suffering from incapacity. You are simply suffering from not using the capacity.”

Well, that one would be likely to say, “You know what? Look around me, buddy . . . look at all the other people here, they’re just like me. You’re trying to tell me that this is not normal? You’re trying to tell me that all of us here are simply not using a capacity that we have? You’re speaking outrageously. You’re the one who’s crazy!”

But you see, someone has to say it. Someone has to tell the one who doesn’t remember having made the decision and doesn’t remember why the decision was made not to employ sanity, that such an event occurred. Why? So that that one might find the justification somewhere within them, from somewhere they’re not recognizing the impulse to become inquisitive about a capacity they didn’t know they had, a capacity they’re sure that they don’t have, a capacity that their life and their environment demonstrates to them doesn’t exist together with the verdicts of all of the psychiatrists that say to them, “You’ll never be able to go home. You’ll never live anywhere else. Accept your lot.” You see?

Now, you are not incapacitated. The capacity to avail yourself of the holy instant is present. Persist in desiring to experience it. Persist . . . persist . . . persist! All you’re persisting against is a reluctance based upon a belief that you are the definition you currently have about yourself, and nothing more.

“What will it take? I don’t know what it will take but I will persist in desiring to know—desiring to have and feel the impetus to reach beyond what I know at the moment—to experience the more of myself that I’ve been told is going on outside the definition that I’m currently defining myself by.”

Now, we ended up last week with this sentence:

It IS in your power to make this season holy, for it is in your power to make the time of Christ be NOW.¹

And this sentence is making reference to Christmas time and the way in which the season can actually be made holy, rather than it being a spiritual remembrance of holiness of another time.

It IS in your power to make this season holy, . .

. . . by letting the Christ through. And in the process of letting me through, you will find yourself exhibiting, manifesting Christhood. And in that process, you will find yourself experiencing the re-emergence, you might say, of the true definition of yourself as you're remembering Who you Are.

So, we're talking about something rather significant. We're talking about something worth persisting toward the experience of.

It IS in your power to make this season holy, for it is in your power to make the time of Christ be NOW.

The holy instant is the time of Christ. The holy instant is when there's no future and no past in which to imagine or remember anything that isn't true. It's the moment in which truth *is* the only thing. It's the moment in which you are *only* what you truly Are. So it is really worth giving your attention to, being unwilling to be distracted by anything else.

Now, continuing . . .

It is possible to do this all at once because there is but ONE shift in perception that is necessary, for you made but ONE mistake. It seems like many, but it is all the same.

Okay. The only reason I can seem to be monotonous is because the truth is so simple and there's a tendency to overlook it and imagine that it's more complicated and look for the greater complication. Or to assume that it's complicated and you won't be able to understand it, and move into self-criticism or a self-appraisal that's less than the best and then getting emotional about it.

It is possible to do this all at once, in other words, instantaneously. Because there is but one shift in perception that is necessary, for you made but one mistake. The one mistake you made was, you said, "Father, I'd rather do it myself!" You said, "Father, I would rather break my union with You and act on my own. I would rather imagine that I'm an independent agent and experience everything from that vantage point, from that belief, from that imagination." That's the one mistake.

So, it can be simple and it can be quick. Because there's only one thing you're undoing and you need to keep this in mind, because this book is full of what seems to be a lot of complicated ideas or a lot of complexity. So many different ways have been taken to say the same thing that it can seem like it's going to be very hard to understand because there is so much here to digest.

Well, not really. There's just a lot of ways to say 'undo your divorce from your Father.' Undo your withdrawal from the Father, by simply turning your attention to your Father and saying, "Father, help! Father, I am going to stop providing definitions for everything based upon peculiar inclinations that I've been able to come up with that make things far more interesting [chuckle] than what You came up with . . . and exciting to boot, because they're scary as hell and nothing You made is scary as hell, and I'm sorry to say, but . . . borrrring."

It is possible to do this all at once because there is but ONE shift in perception that is necessary, for you made but ONE mistake.

Yeah, all you have to say is, "Father, I'm back. Father, fill me with all that You Are. Help me be conscious of what Your Being all that I Am, means.

. . . you made but ONE mistake. It seems like many, but it is all the same. For though the ego takes many forms, it is ALWAYS the same idea.

Now, we've talked at length about the fact that when you decided to see things on your own, you found that you were suddenly unaware of your Birthright of the fact that you are infinite Mind and you're suddenly confronted with the experience of being one isolated form in Creation coping with and dealing with a bunch of other forms of Creation, dealing with form and not doing it from the place of peace that it has been your Birthright forever to experience Creation in.

And so you found that there was fear and its side-kick, guilt. You see? And you get fear and guilt playing off of each other, and the simple decision to want to do things your way becomes very complicated—so many things to fear, so many things to defend yourself against, so many things to overcome, so many things to accomplish in order to feel competent—a complicated mess! When actually, to un-complicate it, only one thing needs to be undone: The decision to pretend to be alone.

For though the ego takes many forms, it is ALWAYS the same idea. What is not love is ALWAYS fear, and nothing else. It is not necessary to follow fear through all the circuitous routes by which it burrows underground and hides in darkness, to emerge in forms quite different from what it is. Yet it IS necessary to examine each one as long as you would retain the PRINCIPLE which governs all of them.

So, what's up here, we started out, . . .

It is possible to do this all at once because there is but ONE shift in perception,[etc.]

And now it says:

Yet it IS necessary to examine each one [of them]

. . . each of the forms that fear seems to take and emerges in a different form.

Yet it IS necessary to examine each one as long as you would retain the PRINCIPLE which governs all of them.

There's a commitment present and as long as the commitment is there and one refrains from saying, "Father, help," one refrains from abandoning independence, each one will need to be examined . . . each one that's keeping you from going Home.

When you are willing to regard them, not as separate, but as different manifestations of the SAME idea, and one you do not WANT, they go together.

All of these complex forms, all of these complex interlocking circumstances that seem to effectively bind you, they will simply leave together.

So what is this principle?

The idea is simply this; you believe that it is possible to be host to the ego or hostage to God. This is the choice you think you have, and the decision which you believe that you must make.

You're quite committed to that. You're quite committed to imagining that you would be host to the ego but hostage to God.

Hostage to God . . . well, perhaps we can talk about it this way: You're eighteen, nineteen, twenty . . . maybe twenty-five, single, independent, having a great time exploring all the things you can do now that you've left home. You're not under the control of Mom and Dad and the family, and you've finished school and you've got a job, you know, things are great and you're enjoying your independence.

And then, the possibility of marriage comes up. And you consider what it would be like to get married and have a partner. [chuckle] One of the first things that might come to your attention for consideration is that you're going to have to give up some of your freedom. You're going to have to stop being self-centered. You're going to have to shift from a general demeanor of self-protection, which you have covered up by simply being skillfully, socially

appropriate so that it doesn't really look like you're being defensive when you are. And you have to be willing to shift from defense to embrace if you are truly, meaningfully going to join into a relationship that would crystallize as marriage. And, that of course, makes you vulnerable. Embrace is very different from defense.

One could even imagine that if you were to get married, you would become hostage to your partner. Because of course, you would have to cooperate, wouldn't you? You would have to abandon carefree freedom without consideration for anything except what you want. That's a sacrifice, isn't it?

Are those who are married to each other hostage to each other? No. And because marriage isn't a hostage situation, and because marriage, well embodied, is a matter of embrace and caring cooperation, it has been appropriately called, "The cement of civilization." Contemplate it.

Abandoning independence and joining with your Father is never a matter of becoming a hostage, even though it does mean giving up a so-called capacity you think you have or that you have imagined that you have, to be independent, to be authoritative, to make things happen and to determine what everything means. You will have to give that up. Much of that you have to give up in a marriage. And in a good marriage, it makes for miracles. It makes for greater harmony in society because it's a presence. It could be called a force for good but it's really the presence of Love that naturally harmonizes without force, and brings out and illuminates the best.

Many people get divorces because they can't get it out of their mind that they're in a hostage situation and they're not willing to abandon their defense in order to be the presence of embrace that inspires and harmonizes and brings out the best.

The idea is simply this; . . .

. . . the principle which governs all of your illusions . . .

. . . you believe that it is possible to be host . . .

. . . oh, isn't that nice . . .

. . . host to the ego or hostage to God.

And of course, you imagine being host to the ego as good, because in so many words, the whole ego frame of reference is one of making something of yourself and being successful at it, with this constant promise of fulfillment that never, ever comes. But it's a promise that God isn't going to give you.

[chuckles] And the only reason God isn't going to give it to you is because that isn't . . . [sigh] that isn't what fulfillment is. That isn't what fulfillment is about.

Fulfillment is about fitting in with the illumined Movement of Creation so completely that the joy of Creation is fully experienced by you and your inseparability from it is experienced by you and you are unseparated from the conscious experience of everyone of your Brothers and Sisters as they joy in being co-creators of Creation, because they're not distracted by imagining they could be doing something else.

So you believe this promise of the ego and you doubt what the Presence of God means for you. You see your good as sacrifice . . . you see what is truly your good as sacrifice. And what you see as good is an illusion. That actually is a sacrifice. But you don't believe it and so you're unwilling to let go of it.

What will it take to participate in the holy instant? Part of what it will take is a willingness on your part to believe what I'm saying, so that you'll explore the possibility and abandon your blind commitment to what doesn't promise what I'm telling you.

The idea is simply this; you believe that it is possible to be host to the ego or hostage to God.

No other alternative.

This is the choice you think you have, and the decision which you believe that you must make.

You see no other alternatives, for you cannot accept the fact that sacrifice gets NOTHING.

Yeah, you say, "Why do you talk about sacrifice at all? I wasn't thinking about sacrifice. And I don't think that sacrifice . . . I don't even think about sacrifice. It's not part of my world. I'm too busy doing good things. I'm too busy going to work every day. I'm too busy raising my family and sharing all the good that I can . . . but make the best out of . . ."

I beg your pardon! You've got to be honest! You all are daily overcoming the tendency toward *not having*. You busy yourself, because if you're not busy, you will not generate fulfillment—meaning income. You will not impart to anyone else what they need to learn. And so you will end up not getting credit. You will end up not being respectable.

Not one of you believes that if you sat down and were absolutely present with NOW that you would have everything you need, not because you had done

something to deserve it, but because it's the nature of Being. Not one of you believes that. So, every single one of you believes that sacrifice gets you something, that sacrifice is something you're dealing with constantly, you see?

Lack . . . the tolerance of lack is normal . . . tolerance of lack is what sacrifice means. You see, so now this sentence will mean something to you:

Sacrifice is so essential to your thought system that salvation APART from sacrifice means nothing to you.

If it meant something to you, you would actually consider as a viable truth, the possibility that, "It's the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," and therefore, has given you the Kingdom, and therefore is in the act of Being you at this very moment, giving you the Kingdom, withholding nothing of what He is and nothing of what Creation is from you. You would be willing to consider that.

And man, if you would be willing to consider that, you would find the fragrance, if I may put it that way, because it wouldn't be totally tangible, but the fragrance of real peace inviting you to consider this further. You would find the impulse to struggle subsiding, and in its absence promising something far different to you, you see? You don't have that experience often because sacrifice is so essential to your thought system.

Now, just because I say that and just because it's true at the moment doesn't mean you have justification for self-criticism. Just be aware of it so that you can say, "I don't want to do that anymore. I think I may give the holy instant a chance. I think I might try and see if there's an actual different experience of being conscious that would be so wonderful that I would look back and say, 'Yes, I was insane, but I am no longer.'"

Your confusion of sacrifice and love is so profound that you cannot conceive of love WITHOUT sacrifice.

"You know, I love my wife. As a result, I don't go out with the boys as much, you know, I don't drink as much as I used to. I've become sort of a home-body and I've begun to do things around the house. I'm actually beginning to enjoy taking care of the property—landscaping a little bit. You know, I really have a talent for that. I never knew it before." You see?

But the idea is that in a marriage you sacrifice . . . love and sacrifice go together. You've got to abandon your freedom—that's sacrifice.

Your confusion of sacrifice and love is so profound that you cannot conceive of love WITHOUT sacrifice. And it is this that you must look upon; sacrifice is ATTACK, not love.

To see your mate as the reason you're sacrificing something of meaning and value to you is mean-spirited. It's not love. And if, in fact, you are sacrificing those things "to keep the peace" or to have a certain modicum of harmony that looks like a loving family, when there's really a grievance there, that's mean-spirited. That's not love. And yet, love is real. And love relationships are the appropriate place for love. And love in relationships is the cement of civilization, we could even say the cement of society.

And so it's worth abandoning the appearance of love and the justification of sacrifice for what love really is, because it brings into place a new order of things, just like abandoning your independence and joining with the Father uncovers a larger order of things—a universal order of things—fulfillment, salvation. Any of those good words apply here.

*. . . it is this that you must look upon; sacrifice is ATTACK, not love.
If you would accept but this ONE idea, your fear of love would
vanish.*

Your marriage would become stronger and there would be less control, perhaps no control being exercised, just joy and peace and meaningfulness shared without inhibition, without reluctance, without sacrifice.

*Guilt CANNOT last when the idea of sacrifice has been removed.
For if there is sacrifice, as you are convinced, someone must pay
and someone must get.*

So you see, a relationship of love that is really a relationship of sacrifice is something that someone's going to pay for, and someone is going to get something for. And you know what? It's time for that kind of relationship to stop. It's time for it to shrivel up and die for lack of attention, for lack of energy. It's time for the holy instant to come into play.

You know what? You have a tendency to look at your world—especially if you're on your spiritual path—and to look at it and say, "This world is getting in my way. It's distracting me from my peace. It's distracting me from knowing what the truth is." And you can begin to see your world as an opponent, something holding you back from your spiritual growth.

This is why it is so important, so essential not to play into the idea that the world and universe is an illusion, because then you can let it be the opponent and you can not challenge that definition. And you know what? You will deprive yourself of the very thing that your true Vision is supposed to be a vision of.

Initially, as you are emerging out of preoccupation with self-consciousness and selfishness, you may indeed have to go into a quiet place, and you may have to be where there is not a whole lot of stimulation from “your world,” just so that you can remember what silence is like, so that you might know what the meaning of the word “attention” is, because in the silence you are conscious, and being conscious silently is the state of attention. And because you may have to do this in the beginning, it may seem to establish an artificial boundary between your spiritual quest and your environment, your world. And it might seem to you that you need to remove yourself from the world in order to follow through on your spiritual quest. But the fact is that your vision, your spiritual Vision, is supposed to be your vision of everything—the world and universe not colored by false definitions, not colored by emotion, anger, fear, guilt.

And so the time must come where you find, we could say, a seamless interface between your clear, mental vision and everything you’re looking at . . . where embrace becomes what you employ relative to your world.

You must stop seeing your world as material as opposed to spiritual. If you don’t stop seeing a separation, you will sacrifice the very thing you are to be conscious of with your right Mind. You see that?

. . . if there is sacrifice, as you are convinced, someone must pay and someone must get. And the only question which remains to be decided is HOW MUCH is the price for getting WHAT.

Whew! Isn’t that being held hostage? Where in that is any conscious awareness of Reality or truth or love? Why, . . . I believe that’s called “business,” isn’t it?

And the only question which remains to be decided is HOW MUCH is the price for getting WHAT.

See, now this seems to be perhaps psychologically complicated, or it might seem to be really relatively simple but as you are being able to relate it to yourself, it’s not making you too happy. And therefore, although it’s not complicated, it’s not really something that you want to easily or willingly be present with, so that you can see you’re uncomfortable with it because it’s an illegitimate imposition upon your freedom and your Birthright. If you see that, then it becomes really easy to abandon it—it’s so unattractive that any natural, we’ll say, attraction toward it leaves.

And when you do not value something you do not pursue it and it doesn’t hang on to you.

Now, what do I want of you?

What I want of you is for you to be in touch with yourself in the simplest of ways, in a genuiness, in the most genuine of ways. Because availing yourself of the holy instant will come out of a simplicity in you, a rather simple common sense that you find is present in you when you're not all hyped up with guilt and with fear and the overcoming of it, and the promise of becoming something while never acknowledging the Father you have that determines what your identity is.

I want you not to read this book and get so intellectually complicated that you forget to be simple and be in the place where things are clear and your natural, I'm going to say, divine common sense comes into play with willingness, because it's your common sense, it's your makeup, it's the way you really have felt all along, but you haven't tapped into.

And so as we're reading here . . . as we continue to read and as we continue to consider the holy instant, I want you to approach it this way. I want you to be with your fellowman this way. I want you to be with yourself this way. And I want you to continue to ask, "What will it take to avail myself of the holy instant?" Remembering that I said that the capacity is in you already, you see? It is that simple common sense that's in you already. You're already wonderful. You're already the Sons and Daughters of God. You're already divine. And right here is where your divinity is to be experienced. And right here, in what you call this world and universe, is where the Kingdom of Heaven and Creation is to be experienced all in a simple simplicity—a Birthright that's yours.

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

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)
Chapter 15 – Section – THE TIME OF CHRIST
¹ *Sparkly Book – p.372, Par.1, Last Sen. / JCIM – p.156, Par.2 Last Sen. / CIMS – p. 313, Par. 94, Last Sentence.*
Chapter 15 – Section – THE TIME OF REBIRTH
First Edition – p. 302, Par.3 / Second Edition – p. 325, Par.4

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