

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

May 14th 2011

THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.
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Good evening. And welcome to everyone who's joining us on the Internet.

We've been talking about shadow figures. And we've been talking about the fact that a shadow figure is a meaning that you have given to yourself to identify yourself, or a meaning you have given to someone else to identify them.

Now that is something far different from walking up to someone you know on the street and saying, "I Am. You Are." You didn't say, "I am happy. You are unhappy. I am better than you. You are worse than me." You see?

The simple fact was said, "I Am. You Are."—an acknowledgment of simplicity, an acknowledgment you could say, without any shadow figures brought into play.

Now, one of the best examples of the meaning of shadow figures that I can share with you was a series of pictures on the cover of a magazine. In the first picture there's a man obviously at work and his boss is berating him. So here we have employer/employee—boss/the one subject to the boss. Those are shadow figures. Because the fact is, I Am. You Are. You see? *We Are*. Not bosses, not employers, not superiors, not inferiors.

But then in the next picture, we see the man who is obviously come home at the end of day. So here's the inferior one arriving at home and he is berating his wife. Wow, quite a switch. Now he's the superior figure and she's the inferior. He's the one in charge. She's the one to be submissive. How can he be two different things?

Well, the next picture shows the mother shaking her finger at the little boy—their son. And the little boy has tears in his eyes. You see? And so here we have more shadow figures. The little boy's feelings are hurt. He thinks she's talking to him, instead of talking to her *picture of him* and exercising her superiority over him—the shadow figure that he is in her mind—as a means of regaining her composure after having suffered at the hand of the shadow figure that she called her husband, and whom she gave a better superior position than hers.

And then in the final picture, here's this little boy doing the best he can with the situation and he's looking at this little kitten . . . and he's shaking his finger at that little kitten. You see?

In every single one of those frames, there's really only one thing that could appropriately be said: "I Am. You Are. I Am. You Are. We are the holy Sons and Daughters of God. We are something quite Real. We are something quite inviolable. We are something quite equal. We are the presence of Love and our function is to be the presence of Love."

Now, Waking up is becoming free of the shadow figures. It's that simple. But in order to become free of the shadow figures, you have to have some way of recognizing them and abandoning them.

As I've said in the last few weeks, everyone is bouncing off of responding to the image, the picture—the meanings that they have given to others. And they are doing it from the image they have of themselves.

"Well, you know what? I have a college degree. I have a job that pays very well that utilizes the skills that I have and the intelligence that I have and I have arrived at a point where I am deserving of respect."

There you go . . . you just created a shadow image.

All there really is, is this: "I Am."

But you know what? This one who has defined himself as worthy of respect can, during the day, if someone else comes up and is rude or insulting to him, have hurt feelings. And if he was put down in front of a lot of people whom he has defined as "respecters of himself" he could not only feel bad but he could feel righteously angry.

Now, what about these feelings?

They're all reactions to shadow images. They have absolutely nothing to do with him: "I Am." They have to do with his image. They have to do with the shadow figure that he holds of himself.

And so this shadow figure of himself says to everyone else, "Here is the way you are going to treat me: You are no longer going to treat me disrespectfully, you understand?" And this image of himself will *teach* the subservient images out there how to behave and treat him with respect.

You see that all of this is pure fantasy. It's pure imagination. And all the time this kind of relationship is going on, no connection is actually being made. Everybody is learning how to behave "by the book."

You know, there was a joke that went around some time back where somebody would say a number and everybody would laugh. And it turns out that the number referred to a particular joke which everybody knew and they knew that the number related to that joke so that when the number was said, they would laugh. You see?

Well, if everybody is taught by everybody else how to behave appropriately, how to respond to the shadow figure, how the shadow figure that you are is supposed to respond to the shadow figure that I am, . . . then when the unreal message is expressed by the shadow figure that is me, everybody else automatically responds appropriately just like laughing at a number because it applies to a joke. Do you see what I'm saying?

I'm saying that that doesn't constitute communication. It doesn't constitute connection. It constitutes everybody responding to numbers and concepts by rote, automatically. Because it's the way it works. It's because it's the way it has to be. It's because that's the only way you can have order in a chaotic world. Or more truthfully, that's the only way you can have harmony when you are behaving as though you don't know who your Source is and you don't know who you really Are. That's what it amounts to.

I hope everyone had an interesting time at least, this past week, in paying attention to the occasions where you behaved like a shadow figure or you expected others to behave according to the shadow figure you were superimposing upon them, by holding them to a concept that you have about them that's based upon their past behavior.

It's a very valuable lesson. It's a very disconcerting lesson to learn. It's a disconcerting experience to have. Because you begin to realize that perhaps there hasn't been nearly as much of what is Real going on in your life as you thought. And of course, the point is not to get hung up on that but to rather

shift gears so that you are *connecting* with what is Real more consistently and *expressing* what is Real more consistently.

The only problem is, that as you find out that a lot of what you've been doing and a lot of your behavior has kept you in a state of ignorance, staying there will not be as satisfying as it used to be and so you could find life beginning to be depressing. Because part of you will still try to make the old paradigm work and it won't work because you know better. You can't make it work like you used to because you have become clearer than you were.

And so you begin to see when you are using your mind, and your associates, for the purpose of creating a false sense of harmony and order without ever connecting with your fellowman. Part of what is disturbing is the loneliness that you begin to feel. You say the number of the joke and nobody laughs anymore—they always laughed before. Your world isn't functioning like it used to. But the reason is that you know that there's an alternative and you've also begun to see just exactly how you use shadow figures to keep you from your fulfillment.

This is such a valuable step to find yourself on, because until you're on this step you can't step out of, for lack of better words, the orphanage. You can't step out of your orphanhood. You can't step into the fuller conscious experience of Being as the Son or Daughter of God, *which is the whole point*.

Now, no matter how much you deny the existence of God, no matter how much you deny your inheritance—your Birthright from the Father, your Sonship or Daughtership—you still remain unalterably what God created you to be. You remain unalterably not your own creator. And you remain unalterably with a Birthright that can only be described as whole—as fulfillment embodied infinitely, as perfection experienced, as the conscious experience of the joy of recognizing everything that you've been looking at before and calling “the world,” to be the Kingdom of Heaven, awesomely so.

So, no matter how wretched an orphan you have learned to present to the world because that shadow image gets you the most, you have just been fooling yourself. And you have been playing a charade that never ever can become Real and never has, and actually has constituted a forever-emptiness as long as you have been employing it, but which you had fooled yourself into believing was actually fulfilling.

So we talked last week about the fact that as you begin to see the truth, as soon as there begins to be glimmers of the light illuminating how things really are and you begin to remember: “Oh yes! How could I have forgotten that? Yes! Yes!” Then . . .

. . . you will [each] learn to seek for, and ESTABLISH, conditions in which this beauty can be seen.¹

[Raj skipped to the 4th sentence in the next paragraph]

The spark of holiness MUST be safe, . .

. . . your holiness must be unalterably present.

. . . however hidden it may be, in every relationship.

In every relationship you have it's the Son and Daughter of God, or the Sons and Daughters of God experiencing their Oneness. Relationships are where the light of your Being meets the light of Being in everyone else and *everything* else.

The spark of holiness MUST be safe, however hidden it may be, in every relationship.

And that's all you're ever in . . . are relationships. Whether it's the stars and the Big Dipper or the stars and the Milky Way . . . you're in relationship. There is a relationship, even if it's only how far you are physically from it. It's measurable. There is something actual. It's more than just distance, and more than just physical.

You are in relationship right now with absolutely everything that exists whether you are conscious of it or not. And . . .

The spark of holiness MUST be safe, however hidden it may be, in every relationship.

That means that your relationship with the stars and the Big Dipper are a holy relationship. It means that as far away as it seems to be, there is a relationship that is dynamic, that is actual, and that is full of the Meaning of God.

And this is why I keep saying that every single moment you're in, and every single thing you're in relationship with, whether it's a table or a plant or a fingernail, it is the provision on the spot . . . right then and there for Waking up, because you can dare to ask "What is the more of what God is Being right there, than what I'm seeing? And what is the more," I'm going to add this: "What is the more that God is Being right where I see me than what I'm currently experiencing?" You can ask that question because, again . . .

The spark of holiness MUST be safe, however hidden it may be, in every relationship. For the Creator of the one relationship has left no part of it without Himself.

Now . . .

This is the ONLY part of the relationship the Holy Spirit sees . . .

Remember, the Holy Spirit is that which will illuminate—bring the Light to and uncover the holiness of you and the holiness of that which you're in relationship with. It is the Holy Spirit's intent to illuminate the holiness of Being—yours and everything else. It's the Holy Spirit's purpose to reveal to you the truth that you have forgotten because you were making up your own definitions and giving preferences to them. You see?

So the part of the one relationship which the Father didn't leave Himself out of is . . .

. . . the ONLY part of the relationship the Holy Spirit sees because He knows that ONLY this is true. You have made the relationship unreal, and therefore unholy, by seeing it WHERE it is not and AS it is not.

“Well, I'm the one to give the orders and you're the one to take them! And I'm the one to be respected and you're the one to respect me!”

That's how you made the relationship unreal. You turned yourself and the other into something more than, “I Am. You Are.”—the simplicity of *Presence*. You made of the simplicity of Presence something unreal by embellishing it and saying, “I'm in charge of you and you must do what I say. I've done more to deserve respect than you have, so for right now until you do more that causes me to respect you, you respect me!” You see?

Your shadow image of yourself addresses your shadow image of them. And you tell their shadow image of themselves to honor the shadow image in you. You see? And you all train each other how to be these perfect shadow figures. [chuckles] You all teach each other how to be utterly artificial. And then you wonder at the niggling uneasiness in you that in one way or another is trying to say, “There is another way to look at this.”

Give the past to Him Who can change your mind about it FOR you.

. . . meaning the Holy Spirit.

Now, to see the integrity of all of this, what would give the Holy Spirit the authority to change your mind about it *for* you? And under what circumstance could you dare to trust into letting the Holy Spirit change your mind about it for you?

Well, it's the fact that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than your right Mind. It's You, at the bottom line. It's that of You which you're ignoring while you choose to play at being an ego. It's that simple. So you can dare to let the Holy Spirit change your mind for you, because you're letting your innate forever-integrity teach you how not to be insane anymore. And there is no one better able to teach you your sanity than That of You which is sane. That is what you would want to rely on. That would be truly the only safe thing to rely upon, to lean into, to entrust yourself to. Because you know that if you are entrusting yourself to That of You which is the absolute integrity of your Being, well, that's the only thing you could dare to commit yourself to—entrusting yourself to.

That is the wonder of the teaching of the *Course*.

Give the past to Him . . .

. . . why does it say *give the past to Him*? Because your relating to the shadow figures of yourself and your fellowman and of Creation—is you relating to things that your Brother has done in the past and things that you have done in the past, things that seem to provide you and your life with meaning.

I say that because what doesn't provide meaning to you and your life is such a simple thing as, "I Am. You Are."

"It's gotta be more than that!" But that's the only thing available in the present moment . . . in the present moment . . . in the present moment.

Anything else has to be embellished by memory. And that's how you keep yourself from Waking up. That's how you keep yourself from experiencing your innocence and your perfection. You drag the past into the present moment and heap it on your shoulders and bear yourself down with it, and *bury* yourself under it. And you do the same thing with your fellowman. And you do this because you think that it's the only kind of conscious ordering that will constitute orderliness and save you from chaos, chaos that you think awaits you for only one reason, that reason being, that you said, "Father, I'd rather see it my way. I'd rather not see it as it truly is. I'd rather be crazy for awhile. I'd rather function in my imagination for awhile, even though it's a dangerous thing to do because I will not be connected with Reality in a way that allows me to fit in with It and feel Its support and feel my perfection

within the perfection of everything that I'm allowing myself to fit in with." You see?

So you use the past to block the experience of your perfection in the present.

You have made the relationship unreal, and therefore unholy, by seeing it WHERE it is not and AS it is not. Give the past to Him Who can change your mind about it FOR you.

Dependably and without risking anything.

But first, be sure you fully realize what YOU have made the past to represent, and why.

In brief, the past is now your justification for entering into a continuing, unholy alliance with the ego AGAINST the present. For the present IS forgiveness. Therefore, the relationships which the unholy alliance dictates are not perceived nor felt as NOW.

It's sort of like you're working out the past together. You get together and instead of playing cards, you work on the past. And you're working with selves that aren't now. You're working with selves that the past created, so that the moment you're in is the crowning pinnacle glory of the past which will be replaced in the next moment by the crowning pinnacle glory of the past . . . so that always it's the "past you" relating to the "past other."

Now, I'm not speaking too nebulously. I'm speaking very clearly. And the clarity of what I'm sharing is uncovering the nebulousness of the way you've been behaving and the way you've been experiencing things, and feeling that your experience was valid and intelligent.

So let's continue:

Therefore, the relationships which the unholy alliance dictates are not perceived nor felt as NOW. Yet the frame of reference to which the present is referred for meaning . . .

. . . meaning the past . . .

. . . is an ILLUSION of the past, . .

. . . it gets even more nebulous, doesn't it. It's not an actual past, it's an illusion of the past. So you've got illusions built on illusions.

Now it doesn't hurt to see this because you have the answer. We've been talking about the answer long enough so that what we're talking about now cannot throw you for a loop or make you feel crazy. Because although you are learning of the craziness of how you have been perceiving, you're learning it after the fact—you're learning it after the fact of my having shared with you that all you need to do is engage in the two-step and practice the holy instant.

The answer . . . no matter how complicated and convoluted and crazy the things are that we're talking about, they can be stepped out of, released, let go of by a simple practice of shutting up. Shutting up what? Well, thinking and the rehearsing of shadow figures—yours and that of others—and in the silence saying one thing, "Father, what is the truth here?" And then remaining silent and listening for the infilling that will come because you are the holy Son or Daughter of God—it will come because of what you really Are.

[Yet] the frame of reference to which the present is referred for meaning is an ILLUSION of the past, in which those elements which fit the purpose of the unholy alliance are retained and all the rest let go.

In other words, the shadow figure that you have determined yourself to be, you have valued and retained it and you have let go of the truth—that you are the holy Son or Daughter of God.

And what is thus let go is all the truth the past could ever offer to the present as witnesses for its reality, while what is kept but witnesses to the reality of dreams.

This is why selective remembering is essential, so that what is Real is retained and what is not, is let go of. So that now, you could say, you are left with a past with areas of what is Real and holes where the unreal seem to be that you've let go of, that have been abandoned. And the fact is, that with the, we'll call them, islands of Reality, islands of what is true about you and what you have been and what is true about the love that has been expressed, given to you, the fact that that is the *only thing* confronting you [snaps fingers] causes the light bulb to go on, because there is nothing to distract you from the reappearing of what is Real and what was always Real in what are now holes where your shadow images used to be.

And so [snaps fingers] you Awaken wholly, totally, instantly. Your right Mind is returned to you. And that's the point.

Now:

It is still up to you to choose to be willing to join with truth or illusion. But remember that to choose ONE is to let the other GO. Which one you choose, . .

. . . and this may be a little confusing . . .

*Which one you choose, you will endow with beauty and reality because the choice **DEPENDS** on which you value more.*

Whichever one you value more, whether it is truth or illusion, you will embellish with everything that makes it attractive to you. So even if you choose illusion, which is unreality and cannot actually be beautiful, you will beautify. You will and you have. And you've made it seem worth holding onto, never having brought yourself to the point where you would say, "Wait a minute! Stop! . . Father, or any greater power that Is, If you exist, will you tell me whether I am seeing things truly or whether what I am seeing is illusory."

The spark of beauty or the veil of ugliness, the real world or the world of guilt and fear, truth or illusion, freedom or slavery, - it is all the same.

There's a fine distinction that's being made here. If you are in the orphanage and you are trying to make a choice between being a "good boy" or a "bad boy," an intelligent person or a drag on the goings on of the orphanage, if you are choosing for expressing beauty or creating messes in the orphanage it's all the same, whether you're choosing for what seems to be good or choosing for what seems to be bad. It's all the same, because the choice is being made in the orphanage.

Now, the next sentence says:

*For you can never choose **EXCEPT** between God and the ego.*

Well, what does that mean? In this context it means, whether you're choosing for the orphanage or *leaving* the orphanage. It's not for choosing to be better or worse in the orphanage. That's not a choice. That's the same-old, same-old, with new words draped around it. And perhaps, some new created behaviors draped around it. But it's still all orphan behavior. It's all still going on in orphan-land. So therefore, those aren't actual choices, because there aren't two things to choose between.

*[For] you can never choose **EXCEPT** between God and the ego.*

You can never choose except between being in the orphanage or abandoning the divorce you got from your Father. That's what it means.

Thought systems are but true or false, and all their attributes come simply from what they ARE. Only the Thoughts of God are true. And all that follows from Them comes from what They are, and is as true as is the holy Source from which They came.

Difficult to understand? Well, only if you don't know where they fit. What it's saying is, that when you're choosing to think for yourself, reason for yourself, function independently, you're lost. But when you say, (after having shut up you're thinking) "Father, what is the truth here?" and you inquire of your Source what is the truth about everything and about you, then as we've said before, you move into the arena where God's laws prevail, where your sanity can return to you as one glorious "Ah-ha!" or illumination.

Nothing else matters. It's very black and white. Either you can continue to think for yourself and solve your problems as an orphan, or you can say, "Father, fill me with all Thou Art. Fill me with the conscious experience of the Kingdom of Heaven that You are Being right now and forever."

Only the Thoughts of God are true.

Well, if only the thoughts of God are true, then ask God what His thoughts are and don't waste your time thinking your own. I'm not scolding you. I'm just saying the utterly simple truth emphatically.

Now:

My holy brothers, I would enter into all your relationships, and step between you and your fantasies. Let MY relationship to you be real to you, . .

. . . don't let me be a shadow figure . . . someone you read about, who walked the globe two thousand years ago, and did things that you can inspire yourselves with. Let me in, as Paul is doing at this moment for himself. Let me in to you for yourselves. Because this is the way you get over the hump of abandoning the habit of authoritative mental gymnastics called, "thinking and reasoning."

Let MY relationship to you be real to you, and let me bring reality to your perception of your brothers.

[repeats] . . . to your perception of your brothers.

Let me undo the shadow images *about* your Brothers that you have created in your mind and held them to and punished them for . . . and perhaps praised them as well when it suited you.

They were not created to enable you to hurt yourselves through them.

That isn't what you were all created for—to use each other in that way. You were created and you are Being . . . you find yourself Being . . . you find yourself at a loss for words, any words other than: I Am. You Are.

They . . .

. . . everything that you would be in relationships with . . .

. . . were created to CREATE with you.

See, *that's* where you fit in. That's where everything fits together.

This is the truth that I would interpose between you and your goal of madness.

Your goal of madness being, that you want to busy yourself creating shadow images and refurbishing your own . . . always yours, in your best interest, but not always your Brothers, in his best interest. Mostly you work on your Brothers to refurbish yours. But it's understandable why you do that, when you've denied your Source, when you've said, "I have no Source except my own imagination," you are at a loss, you're in a void . . . you're in a place where there is nothing to validate you. And so you're bound to engage only in activities which in one way or another do validate you.

Now again, we're talking in the orphanage, where you're being a bad boy trying to become a good boy and saying, "It's a good thing for me to want to become a good boy. Hey everybody, do you see I'm working to become a good boy? Do you see that? Doesn't it make you happy? Isn't that good? Tell me I'm on the right track." You see?

But that's not any answer. It keeps everything in fantasy. The call is to step out of the orphanage. The step is then to abandoning the claim to orphanhood, another way of saying to abandon the claim to independence. That's the simple bottom line fact of it.

Be not separate from me, . .

. . . this moment, the next moment, tomorrow, a week from now or don't be separate from your Guide because we're all the Christ, accept those who function as your Guides, like the Holy Spirit are Awake and perform the same function that the Holy Spirit does.

Be not separate from me, . .

I could say, be not separate from us . . .

. . . and let not the holy purpose of Atonement be lost to you in dreams of vengeance.

In other words, in the miserable state of affairs that call for justice constantly when you're operating in the land of shadow figures.

Relationships in which such dreams are cherished have EXCLUDED me.

They have excluded the Holy Spirit. They have excluded your own Guides. They have excluded God. They have excluded all the things that are Real and that can point out the things that are Real and help you abandon the things that are not, so that confusion vanishes in the clarity of the ever Presence and only Presence of what is Real of what is Love of what is truth, of what is God appearing.

Let me . . .

. . . let the Holy Spirit, let your Guide . . .

. . . enter in the Name of God, . .

. . . not in the name of your shadow figures. But:

Let me enter in the Name of God, . .

. . . in the Name of what's Real . . .

. . . and bring you peace that you may offer peace to me.

That's a really simple way of describing the two-step and the affects of the practice of the two-step. And it is my hope that as we have been covering all of this, you have begun to feel uncomfortable about continuing to function in the realm of shadow figures. Because in one way or another, it has become clearer to you that doing so is a miserable state of being that *is not* your Birthright. And that having an inkling of what your Birthright is, you are willing to more diligently than ever, abandon the use of shadow figures and lean into the Holy Spirit or your Guide or me, so that we might reflect back to you that which is true, and only that which is true in your experience—which for the present, we will call your past. And we will do that so you will become free of the past and be able to be totally present in the now which is where your salvation is and which is where Reality is.

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

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)
Chapter 17 – Section: SHADOWS OF THE PAST
¹ *Sparkly Book – p.406, 3rd Full Par. / JCIM – p.170, Par. 6 / CIMS – p. 342, Par. 23*
First Edition – p. 332, 1st Full Par., Line 6 / Second Edition – p.356, Par.7, Sen.6

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A Course in Miracles Study Group with Raj, May 14th 2011
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