

Raj/ACIM Study Group – March 20, 2003

A Course In Miracles (reference pages)

*Chapter 3 – RETRAINING THE MIND – Section: ATONEMENT WITHOUT SACRIFICE
(Raj did not start reading from the Sparkly Book until July 2003, therefore, there can be a lot of difference in the readings.)*

*Sparkly Book – p.47 / JCIM – p.19 / CIMS – p.40
Chapter 3 – THE INNOCENT PERCEPTION – Section: ATONEMENT WITHOUT SACRIFICE*

¹First Edition – p. 32 / Second Edition – p 36

² Students – commenting or asking a question.

Good evening. It is good to have you here, and I welcome everyone who is joining us on the internet as well.

For the last few weeks we have been talking about fear. What causes it and what resolves it. Tonight, we're going to be talking about a very specific form of fear. One that can grab you even if you are willing to turn toward the Altar, even if you are willing to abandon looking at things with an independent viewpoint. Because in turning toward the Altar, you, because of your preexisting state of fear, are risking the chance that you will actually experience communion with God.

So, Chapter 3 is entitled:

*THE INNOCENT PERCEPTION*¹

And the first section is entitled:

ATONEMENT WITHOUT SACRIFICE

And we'll begin right here.

ATONEMENT WITHOUT SACRIFICE

READER: *A further point must be perfectly clear before any residual fear still associated with miracles can disappear. The crucifixion did not establish the Atonement; the resurrection did.*

RAJ: I would like for you to read that sentence over slowly.

READER: *The crucifixion did not establish the Atonement; the*

resurrection did.

RAJ: Yes. Continue...

READER: *Many sincere Christians have misunderstood this. No one who is free of the belief in scarcity could possibly make this mistake. If the crucifixion is seen from an upside-down point of view, it does appear as if God permitted and even encouraged one of His Sons to suffer because he was good.*

RAJ: There you are. That's the one that will grab you when you decide to turn toward the Altar and yield into God. After all, it does appear that God plays both sides of the fence, and for divine reasons uses both blessing and cursing to teach His children, as though both were expressions of Love. [sigh] Why on earth would you choose to be benignly good if the result might be that you're crucified?

I've said it before. You have a saying, "Nobody likes a good guy". Being a good guy is not in your best interest. Many of you have at one time or another had the thought that if you really got what the *Course* was about, there would be no further reason for you to be here and you would die. Or if you actually arrived at, shall I say, the conclusion of your journey that you would likely have a heart attack or be in a disastrous accident. There is hanging in the wings, you might say, or waiting in the wings in your mind's eye, there is waiting in the wings something catastrophic or disastrous waiting to come out on the stage as you do your final bow after an exquisite and excellent performance.

In other words, ultimate good is accompanied by ultimate penalty. It's there in your minds. And the closer you dare to come to God, the more apparent that idea will become to you. Of course, it's nothing more than the ego whispering in your ear, trying to discourage you from making that final commitment. But the ego has a fair chance of convincing you if you believe that God allowed me to be crucified, suffer, and *die*, and that *that* was the atonement, that was the act of love that saved all of you. You see? So, if you believe *that*, it will be very easy for the ego to convince you that making total commitment to God and listening for His Voice and asking for His Perspective so that it might be the only perspective you have, that *that* is going to make you vulnerable to suffering, pain and death. You see? And that's

why this has to be looked at squarely.

Continue...

READER: *This particularly unfortunate interpretation...*

RAJ: Wasn't that a nice way to put it? [reader laughs]

Start over there...

READER: *This particularly unfortunate interpretation...*

RAJ: Sounds like a politician. [reader laughs]

Start over...

READER: *Okay. [laughing]²*

This particularly unfortunate interpretation, which arose out of projection, has led many people to be bitterly afraid of God. Such anti-religious...

RAJ: Let's stop there, so that there's a clear understanding of the use of the word "projection." When you turned away from the Altar and abandoned the Father's Perspective so you could have a private perspective of your own, I've said that immediately you found yourself separated and alone, and because that was not your natural state of mind and experience, you experienced a dissonance which was your innate and unalterable Sanity saying to you, "This is not your natural state of mind. Go back to it". You called the experience fear. And you decided to try to overcome the fear rather than returning Home. By not challenging and ultimately setting aside the fear by turning back toward the Altar, you caused everything you saw to appear to be fearful because you were experiencing vulnerability.

Now, because of your vulnerability, *you* defined the Kingdom of Heaven which was and is the only thing available to you to experience as hostile, as dangerous in one way or another, and you projected your fear *out* onto the Kingdom of Heaven. Now as you turn back toward the Altar, or at any point where you're willing to consider

approaching God, you likewise see God as fearful because you are seeing everything through the lens of fear. So, *your* fear is projected upon God along with everything else as not benign, as capricious, as whimsical, as unprincipled, loving and hateful, kind and unkind, merciful and unmerciful. So, you project the fear you are experiencing by virtue of wanting to have a separate perspective of your own on to God.

Continue...

READER: *Such anti-religious concepts enter into many religions. Yet the real Christian should pause and ask, "How could this be?" Is it likely that God Himself would be capable of the kind of thinking which His Own words have clearly stated is unworthy of His Son?*

RAJ: Now if it wasn't the crucifixion, the willingness to die for my Brother, which was the Atonement, and the resurrection was, then that means that when you are willing to be miracle-ready and make the Gift that God expresses through you, that Gift, just like mine, will bless and lift everyone.

There were a few Gifts I made. One of the Gifts was that I showed you that death is not a power or a presence. That it does not govern you. It does not govern Life. It does not override Life. You could say physical evidence was provided that no act, no hateful act, no illness, no disease, no accident, can interrupt your existence. By demonstrating that fact about me, I demonstrated that fact about you and gave you absolutely clear palpable, practical evidence of it so that it wasn't just a nice thought, a nice idea. And what did I also demonstrate? That your Eternality is always identified with visibility and tangibility, or what you would call form. Creation is always identified and identifiable. And there will always be that which is the visibility and tangibility of you.

I also demonstrated another part of the Gift I gave, the fact that there's nothing your Brother can do to you that can affect your uninterrupted existence. And so, you don't need to be afraid of your Brother, whether he's brandishing a spear, or a gun, or any other weapon that can seem to take your life. That doesn't mean that it will be easy. But it means it's worth the effort because the outcome is sure

if you're willing to... if you're willing to take the radical chance.

Let's continue...

READER: *The best defense, as always, is not to attack another's position, but rather to protect the truth.*

RAJ: Stop. Because of events that are going on and the obvious learning that is available from it, and because of the tendency to be spiritually unrealistic, you must understand that protecting the Truth requires at times saying "No." You don't attack another's position, but you do say "No" if that other's position is unprincipled, unloving, unkind, hateful. You have to refuse to join with that one's current frame of reference and justifications. And having said "No," voice the Truth, the truth of why he doesn't need to act or behave from that standpoint. Anyone acting in those ways is experiencing great fear and vulnerability, and his actions seem totally justifiable to him.

The Truth is everything that we've been talking about since we've started going through the *Course*. And so the Truth has to be shared with him of what is true about him, what is divine about him, why he doesn't need to be afraid, what resources he has available to him to gain the experience of his invulnerability. Re-education has to occur.

So, you protect truth by saying "No" to error, and then declaring, sharing the Truth, the Truth that heals the perspective that seemed to justify behavior that doesn't express the nature and character of the Son of God that that one is. You see? So, let's not... let's not jump off of the platform of intelligence and say it's never appropriate to say "No" to another because it's not appropriate to attack his position. Saying "No" isn't an attack if the "Yes," the declaration of Truth that heals the perspective is simultaneously provided.

Continue...

READER: *It is unwise to accept any concept...*

RAJ: *Any concept...*

READER: *It is unwise to accept any concept if you have to invert a*

whole frame of reference in order to justify it.

RAJ: Now, here's where the inversion comes. You've turned away from the Altar, you are seeing everything through the lens of fear, and therefore all of your activities whether pleasant or unpleasant are or rather have as their goal the securing of your safety. Now, which means that whether you're being happy, pleasant or unpleasant with your Brother, if it's arising out of fear, it's an attack, because what you're doing is a defense against what you assume your Brother is going to do against you. You see what I'm saying? In that sense it's an attack. It is not an embrace of your Brother.

Now, there occurs in the dream, there occurs in the experience of those who have turned away from the Altar a penetrating event where someone shows up who doesn't forget Who He Is in the process of showing up, and he begins to express the Truth, protect the Truth by sharing it and educating those who are willing to listen to the Truth. I didn't come and attack everyone's position. I came and declared the Truth about Being. Those who thought they were teachers and who had gained stature in their community as teachers of the truth perceived what I was saying as an attack, because it undermined their best perceptions which they had brought into play as a means of gaining some sort of solid defense against the inhumanity of man, the conflicted nature of existence, and so on. And these were rabbis and priests, religious teachers, even philosophers. And so, I shared the Truth. I defended the Truth by expressing It, instead of calling into question the character of those who were teaching otherwise.

And you know what? There were quite a few who got the message and taught it. And, at the end of my time with you a crucifixion occurred, and as is sometimes forgotten, a resurrection occurred. This was a Gift, this penetration of the dream and this Presence in the dream of one who didn't forget who he was, whose expression of what is true helped to kindle the fire of awareness in many of the listeners so that they began to remember the truth as well.

This one went through a crucifixion, not at the hand of God but at the hand of man. But because I was not confused about my identity and I was not confused about the fact that I didn't have a private identity of my own, but my identity was the very Presence of God being God

right there looking like me, I did not experience death. And because I did not experience death, I was able to provide evidence – *evidence – tangible evidence* to everyone else that death is not a fact, and that you don't need to be afraid of it.

Now, why have I said all this? Because that's what happened! But because everyone hearing about it, everyone down through the centuries as they have read about it have continued to look at everything through the lens of fear and they have come to the conclusion that God not only allowed, but perhaps set up this circumstance which involved the suffering of the Christ, the passion, if you will, the agony. That is a matter of taking a situation and turning it completely upside-down so that God who is Love is seen as God the enactor of suffering, the opposite of Love, even though, somehow it was justified because all the rest of mankind was blessed. You see the insanity of it?

It is unwise to accept any concept, *any concept* that you might come up with if you have to invert a whole frame of reference in order to justify it. That fear is justified requires that you invert a whole frame of reference. You have to go to the number one guy, the Creator of All That Is and turn what He is upside-down so that it's the opposite. So God is now a God of Love and a God of hate. That's the turning upside-down of a whole frame of reference.

Continue...

READER: *This procedure is painful in its minor applications...*

RAJ: And I'm going to interrupt. You might say its minor applications are the experiences that you have in personal relationships with each other.

Continue...

READER: *...and genuinely tragic on a wider scale.*

RAJ: And a wider scale meaning an infinite scale that involves the omnipresence and omnipotence of God throughout all of Creation, so that this God of Love and God of hate is a divided God and the

infinitude of Him is governed omnipotently by His capriciousness, His flip-flopping back and forth between loving and hateful. You see?

Okay. Continue...

READER: *Persecution frequently results in an attempt to “justify” the terrible misperception that God Himself persecuted His Own Son on behalf of salvation.*

RAJ: There’s a tragic situation on a wider scale even than just personal relationships.

Continue...

READER: *The very words are meaningless. It has been particularly difficult to overcome this because, although the error itself is no harder to correct than any other, many have been unwilling to give it up in view of its prominent value as a defense.*

Indeed...

READER: *In milder forms a parent says, “This hurts me more than it hurts you,” and feels exonerated in beating a child.*

Yes...

READER: *Can you believe our Father really thinks this way? It is so...*

RAJ: Stop. Stop. Let that just hang. Can you believe our Father *really* thinks this way? When you’re reading the *Course*, don’t just... and I’m not picking on you, let there be pauses between sentences. Let there be a moment to allow what you’ve just read to register with you fully. Can you believe our Father really thinks this way?

Continue...

READER: *It is so essential that all such thinking be dispelled that we must be sure that nothing of this kind remains in your mind. I was not “punished” because you were bad. The wholly benign lesson the*

Atonement teaches is lost if it is tainted with this kind of distortion in any form.

RAJ: Right. I was not punished because you were bad. I was... I was and the nature of Being was illuminated because you are divine and have forgotten it and deserve the reminder. You deserve to have your divinity illuminated. It was a Gift.

And you know what? In spite of the upside-down thinking that has misinterpreted what happened, what I did and what the Father did worked. Because I'll tell you something. Whether you're a Christian or not, you believe that there really was a resurrection. The message has held no matter how much doubt has been brought into play. It worked. It *worked*. And if you listen to a tape of this, when you come to that spot, or at the end of this next sentence, turn your tape recorder off and sit with it for a moment. *It worked!*

Okay. Continue...

SEEKER: *I'm not sure how to answer the... ask the question, but if it worked, that means the resurrection, your resurrection was evidence that you can't kill the Son of God. And it was not, it was man who crucified you. How...*

RAJ: No. It was man who *thought* he could crucify me, *tried* to crucify me, thought he succeeded, and then found out he hadn't done anything at all.

SEEKER: *Okay. Right. 'Cause I was wondering if you could resurrect, I'm sorry, new word, resurrection without having died. I mean if that was it worked, that's where I was confused. So, the resurrection wasn't necessarily the coming back. It was that I never left.*

RAJ: That is correct. But I will tell you also that if it hadn't appeared that I had died like everyone else had always died, then there would have been no evidence that death is not even the last enemy to be overcome, it's not even an enemy at all.

READER: *The statement "Vengeance is Mine, sayeth the Lord" is a*

misperception by which one assigns his own “evil” past to God.

RAJ: That projection again. Yes. [laugh]

The “evil” past...

It’s justifiable for me to get vengeance because God gets vengeance and I’m His Son, and I take after my Father, and so I’m expressing a divine quality by expressing vengeance just as He did. You see?

Continue...

READER: *The “evil” past has nothing to do with God. He did not create it and He does not maintain it. God does not believe in retribution. His Mind does not create that way. He does not hold your “evil” deeds against you. Is it likely that He would hold them against me? Be very sure that you recognize how utterly impossible this assumption is, and how entirely it arises from projection.*

RAJ: Now He doesn’t hold your evil deeds against you because your evil deeds are beliefs, are definitions, you have created that have nothing to do with Reality. If all they are, are misperceptions believed to be true perceptions, then you are suffering from something that hasn’t occurred, and therefore something which God doesn’t hold against you. God doesn’t hold against you something you never did, even if *you believe* you did it. Even if you imagine something that you could do that would appropriately be called a bad deed, you still can’t accomplish the bad deed *really*, and therefore, there is nothing for God to punish you for.

There is nothing for you to punish yourself for, but, and this is where the work of waking up comes in, you have to recognize that you’re believing that you’re doing something that you can’t do. And it has to become clear enough that you’re trying to do the impossible and haven’t succeeded at it so that you stop doing it, because there’s behavior associated with your ideas about, or concepts about, bad deeds. So, behavior will have to change. You can’t just say, “Bad deeds aren’t real, and God won’t punish me for them”. You’ve got to recognize that fact that it’s insanity to believe that you can do something that you cannot in truth do, which is to act out your fear in

actions of defense which are actions of hate. You can't do that...

(I'm sorry. It's me, Paul, saying I'm sorry.)

...you've got to realize that attempting to do that is an insane thing to do. And there has to come an awakening of a desire in you to reflect the Father truly and to express Sanity, which requires you to stop acting out insanity, to stop acting out unkind, hateful behavior. Your mind has to be enlivened with Truth and enlivened with Love, and you have to let *that* find embodiment in your actions.

And, as we've been discussing for the past number of weeks, the means of doing that is turning to the Altar, and not relying upon your best judgments and your best definitions and your best ideas, and asking to be filled with the Father's Point of View which is exactly why we're discussing Atonement without sacrifice. And the fact that the fear of God is perhaps the one last hang-up you'll be met with as you turn toward the Altar and find a willingness in you to yield unequivocally to God.

Question.

SEEKER: *So, would you say to sum it up, the point is not so much what you do, but why you do it, because you have one of two motivations. You either turn to your reasoning, you either get it from the ego, or you get it by turning towards the Altar. So, you constantly choose between one of two motivators for your behavior.*

RAJ: Those are the only two apparent teachers there are...

SEEKER: *Right.*

RAJ: ...and only *one* of them is Real.

SEEKER: *Right. So, like, for example, you can't...*

RAJ: And there's no in-between place. There's no... there's no place where you can rest in the middle of the two teachers. You can't have time-out from God and time-out from the ego. Just as we were saying last week that having a belief insinuates that there's a believer, to say

you're going to take time-out, you're going to choose between the ego and God insinuates that there's a chooser.

SEEKER: *Well, you could either embody God, or you can be insane. Correct?*

RAJ: It's... [laugh] You are either the Son of God consciously or you're the Son of God unconsciously. But you're not something separate from God that can choose for God or choose for the voice for the ego. You are either the Christ experiencing ignorance of your Christhood and doing the best you can, or you're the self-same Christ turning whole-heartedly toward God and asking him to refresh your mind with the Truth about you. But there's only one you, and it's either ignorant of what it is and experiencing everything through an ego frame of reference, or it is conscious of what it is and is the Presence of God totally. Do you see what I'm saying?

SEEKER: *Yes.*

RAJ: So you don't have, as we've said before, a safe place to hide and be indecisive, because you don't have a third spot, like a triangle and on one point is God, on one point is the ego, and on the third point is you, the chooser, who can stay there and make no choice at all, or go down one side of the triangle to the ego, or down the other side of the triangle to God. How can I put this? It's all always just one thing. It's always the Presence of God sitting right there holding the microphone. And the Presence of God there called You can experience Its God-ness, or it can pretend that it has a separate viewpoint of its own and be confused. But never for a moment has anything but the Presence of God been there. So, it can be confusing to talk about *you* listening to your ego or *you* listening to the ego because the very words postulate a separation between the two.

The process of awakening is a process of becoming unconfused. Scratch that. The process of awakening is a process of the one and only Christ there is, the one and only direct Expression of God there is called You becoming clear about the fact that you are the one and only direct Expression of God there is appearing as You. And becoming clear about the fact that the physical, material world and universe is the Kingdom of Heaven misperceived. It's about one thing moving

from confusion into clarity. Coming Home into your right Mind, into your Sanity.

It's helpful, just as it was helpful for there to seem to be crucifixion and resurrection, it's helpful to talk about the Voice for Truth and the voice for fear, and making a choice between the two. But crucifixion never happened. Ultimately resurrection never happened because never for an instant was there an interruption of life. But since everybody at that time experienced death as a "fact of life", that "fact" needed to be addressed in terms that would register and break the fixation on the factualness of death and introduce a new possibility so that everyone was freed up from total commitment to the actuality of death and could let in the possibility of the uninterruptibility, the Eternality of the experience of Being. It opened the door.

And so, we talk about making a choice between the voice for fear and the Voice for Truth which makes it sound like you're a chooser, and the voice for fear is another voice, and the Voice for Truth is God's Voice. And all we're really talking about is all of you daring to relax enough, to be at peace enough to let down your defenses so that something new can penetrate and you might say crack you open wider, like a nut, so that... or a shell, so that more of the infinity of Being can register with you. So that you aren't imprisoned by commitments to false beliefs and confusions that cause you to behave in totally erratic and unintelligent ways. Does this make sense?

SEEKER: *I'd kind of like to kind of follow up with an example. Let's say in an instant that I catch myself having... I catch myself having an ego thought, and I recognize it as a fear-based thought. So, at that moment of recognition am I then thinking Sanely because I recognize the insanity?*

RAJ: You have opened the door to Sanity. When you recognize that it's a fear-based thought which you can identify as the ego, *then* you have the option available to you because you're conscious enough of it to ask, "Father, what's the real Meaning here? What's really going on? What would be a True response?" You see? And then you listen. And then when you hear and there is a sudden shift of perception, then you are no longer confused. Illumination has happened and, for lack of better words, I will say you are more awake because you are no

longer subject to being sucked into believing and committing yourself to that particular ego, fear-based thought. You see?

SEEKER: *I think where the slight confusion still exists for me is that it almost appears as if... like we're still partially ego and still partially sane. You know, that we're maybe half and half, or however much you want to divide that. And what I heard earlier was that you could either be thinking sanely or insanely. So how could there be that degree of it, I guess, or is there such a thing?*

RAJ: I could say like Saddam Hussein, but like anyone who believes they have personal assets, you and everyone else let go of what you perceive to be assets slowly. You let go of them *reluctantly*, the things that you believe serve you and serve you in terms of keeping you safe, providing you with a defense against the unpredictability of life as you presently perceive it. The willingness to let them go and not have attachment to them, it does not come easily. And so, you only let clarity in a little bit at a time. And so, yes, there is an increasing amount of clarity that begins to govern your life, and the slowly diminishing attachment to assets that you believe keep you safe. And you're just going to have to live with the dichotomy.

Now you will find that as you yield more consistently into divine Guidance, as you lean into the Father more and more, as you yield into His Perspective more and more, there will come a point like the 100th monkey principle where enough of your mind is clear [snaps fingers] that the rest of the illusions will suddenly vanish. In the meantime, be aware that there will be that dichotomy. Don't fuss about it. Don't let the ego tell you that it's proof that what you're believing isn't true, or that you will never be able to relinquish it all. And you persist. And you persist right in the face of whatever the ego throws at you.

Like I shared at an earlier time, those who wear contacts and who are nearsighted... I'm sorry, who are farsighted, can wear two different contacts. One to see distance and one to see up close, so that one eye is used for everything up close and the other eye is used for seeing everything at a distance. That's sort of the situation you have here and employ it. Be aware of it, the dichotomy you can't avoid. But by choosing to give preference to the eye that is looking toward the Altar

and persisting in that, and persisting in it, you begin to establish a habit and there is blessing after blessing that comes as a result that inspires you and encourages you to persist with even more willingness, let's say, with less resistance until finally you will find yourself catapulted the rest of the way.

Persistence requires decision. It requires determination. And the ego will tell you it's too much work. And indeed, some of it will seem to be hard because you have some very precious assets. [audience laughter] And what makes them precious is they tie it in so completely with what you think there is about yourself to be proud of. And the last thing you want to do is to let go of something that seems to prove to you that there's something about you that's worth being proud of, because the ego suggests that if you let go of that, you'll be nothing. Not knowing that the prize of letting it go is Sanity. And Sanity is Joy!

You have a question?

SEEKER: *Wow! A lot to put together here. I want to take it back. We have lots of little fears, but I want to take it back to that very major fear of crucifixion that we carry. From our perspective...*

RAJ: Oh, yes! [small laugh] Yes! You see, that's the fear that if you actually are a good person, you will die. Something will happen and you'll be taken away from everything you love because you have finished your work. And if you have finished your work, there's no reason to be here anymore because the only reason you were here was to do the work. It couldn't possibly have been that you were here to be the Presence of God glorifying God and enjoying the Kingdom of Heaven right here with no need to go anywhere else. And so the fear is that if you are willing to be a good person, you will be crucified. And so there is a fear of crucifixion and therefore a great reluctance to truly be a good person.

Continue...

SEEKER: *Well, that... that's it exactly. From our perspective, there's a line between the unconscious Christ and the conscious Christ. And even as we're becoming more conscious of being Christ, we hide that and put it away and put our light under the barrel. And because*

there appears to be a great dis-incentive for crossing from unconscious Christhood into conscious Christhood, being that they will take us and beat us and nail us to the tree, either literally or figuratively, and in doing so we will lose all those precious assets we have, which include our mothers.

RAJ: Not the least of which is your dignity.

SEEKER: *Our dignity, but also our mothers and sisters, and friends and wives, and places within our society and environment that bring us comfort from this level. It's a big dis-incentive from our perspective to cross that line. And we cannot just say, "Okay, I believe you, Raj. And I'm going to go for it. And I'm going to take the risk of leaving behind everything that I do hold dear and precious, with the good and true being mixed in with all the precious illusions I hold as well."*

RAJ: Yes. If you're going to become a conscious Christ, you're going to make distinctions. "Yes." "No." You're going to... you're going to cooperate with that which truly identifies intelligence and Love and Principle—God, in other words. And you're going to refuse to align yourself with the opposite. That means those who have commitment to the opposite will find you no longer available for mutual gains of agreement regarding the opposite.

SEEKER: *And that makes them angry.*

RAJ: It makes them feel abandoned because you had a mutual agreement with them to behave that way, and now you've withdrawn and you've broken the rules, and they feel alone.

Now, separate and apart from the distress that reflecting God, that being the direct Expression of God seems to create in others, it also puts you in a position of not just being the good guy who's principled and doesn't engage in things that are unprincipled. It puts you squarely in the position of the "Yes" part of the equation, which means that now you have something new to be. Becoming the good guy, becoming the Christ consciously is not something that puts you in a different category where you don't have to associate with those so-and-so's anymore, where you're shielded and private. I tell you

that if you buy in to that, the others are *really* going to be pissed off because you will be an arrogant son of a bitch. And not the Christ at all.

So, you have the aspect of upsetting those around you, because you're disengaging from the mutually-agreed-upon definitions and not playing the game anymore, and you're upsetting the status quo. Yes. See, this is part of the dichotomy that you're going to have to not quibble about. This is the work part of it.

You've got to engage the "Yes" aspect of it, which means sharing, giving voice to the Truth. Protecting the Truth, not attacking their ignorance. Protecting the Truth by giving it voice.

And, here is one of the characteristics, the key characteristic of the Christ. It shares the Truth with Love. It shares the Truth with respect that the person doesn't even feel he or she deserves. And it does this persistently, like a drop of water wearing away at a stone. The Christ has the willingness to express the Truth lovingly and in the ways that are most likely to be able to be recognized by the one you're speaking to, as many times as it needs to be said in order for the Truth of it to be recognized without it being forced upon the one you're sharing it with.

There's no way to get that over with quickly. And you know what? Ultimately, you're not doing that just until everyone wakes up. You're doing it forever because that really is at the bottom line your Nature, your Character, your Function, your Purpose. That's you glorifying God.

In the process, whatever misperceptions you're having of the Kingdom of Heaven where you think you're seeing a material world and universe will be falling away from your eyes, and it will seem less like work. But in the beginning it will seem like work, and I want you to know it so you don't think, "Oh, I must be doing something wrong. Waking up should be harmonious, pleasant, glorious." No. Breaking habits isn't. It takes commitment. We've talked about... we've talked about this and it's time for me to bring it up again.

You learn how to play the piano and you learn how through practice

to be very precise. And then you stop taking lessons. And you know, you sit down at the piano occasionally through the years and you can make pretty sounds, but the precision slips away, and it doesn't sound as brilliant and it doesn't express the composer's idea well anymore. And then you say when you're thirty-five or forty-five, "I want to get a piano. And I want to... I want to recapture what I had." And a lot of the time when you're forty, forty-five, fifty, you don't have as much enthusiasm for the work it takes to become precise as you did when you were perhaps fifteen or sixteen. And so, you say, "Oh, my. [yawning sound] It's not worth it. I didn't really want to do it that badly."

Yes, it's worth it. And yes, you're going to have to do it, because being who you are isn't something you can put down and lay aside permanently. So, I'm the kind of teacher who inspires you to do the work and not fuss about it. And this is the way you get to Atonement without sacrifice. Be willing to do the work.

You may say at age forty-five, "Well, you know, my joints, and you know, my muscles, you know, they just aren't what they used to be. I can't expect to be able to play the piano precisely." And you conveniently forget about the concert pianists who are older than you who are still on the stage playing perfectly.

Well, your mind can't atrophy. You may use it sloppily. But you know what? Most of you use it sloppily *very precisely*. Your ability to think clearly is always at maximum. And so you won't get any pity from me, if when you tell me it's hard, and I say, "Yes, it is, but persist," and you say, "I can't," you won't get any pity from me. I will be there. I am here right now saying, "Persist."

You haven't for a moment stopped being what the Father created you to be, because the Father in this very instant is *being* you. You are the focal point of Creation at this very instant, and at every instant that you could measure. So, I will say, "Open up your eyes! Pay attention! Be alert! There's a news flash for you coming from God at this very instant, and you have the capacity to receive the message and to embody the message."

And you don't need to be afraid of God because He's not another

point on a triangle. He's all there is of you. All that God is, is embodied right where each one of you is. And you can best understand it in the terms of a hologram. You have a hologram, you take one little piece out of it and the whole thing is there. You can't use that example precisely because Reality can't be cut up into little pieces. But the point is that every single speck of the infinite creation that God is being includes *All that God Is*, and that can't change.

And so, your capacity to be conscious of and embody God is *fully present right now*. Don't be afraid of what it takes to have that come more fully into your experience. And it will be easier to let it come into your experience fully when you know that you don't have to be afraid of God.

And, another way of saying 'don't hold so dearly to your assets' is, "Stop trying to cover your ass." And that is an excellent point to end with tonight.

All of the activities of the Northwest Foundation for "A Course In Miracles" are provided without charge or obligation. This is possible because of thoughtfulness, love extended without conditions. Such is the nature of Gift. As a result these materials are available to you, because someone like you has already gifted you with them.

And, at Raj's instruction, these materials will never be sold.

If you would like to add your thoughtfulness and love, to gift others with the availability of these materials, you're invited to make a tax-deductible contribution at our website, or send it to our address, both of which are shown below.

A Course in Miracles Study Group with Raj, March 20th 2003
© by The Northwest Foundation for "A Course in Miracles" a non-profit corporation.
All rights reserved
PO Box 1490 / Kingston, WA 98346-1490 / USA
Phone: 360-638-0530 Fax: 360-881-0071
Website: <http://www.nwffacim.org>
E-Mail: paul@nwffacim.org