

CONVERSATIONS WITH RAJ

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QUESTION: I have been going through a very deep process of integrating all the materials that you have been sharing about the differences in the way people look at illusion vs. reality. I've particularly studied the answers in the March issue of Conversations with Raj.

The Course has been of major importance in my life. So deep and meaningful has it been, that this difference of interpretation regarding reality/illusion has become an issue for me, and the issue hasn't totally gone away. What I'm beginning to hear is that the way to see this world is as an idea in the Mind of God. I don't know where to go with it further than that, except that I long to have my vision of this expanded further than you have gone.

RAJ: First of all, I want to address the fact that the ego has not one iota of ability to create. It, itself, is a distortion, an altering of something that already exists. That which, already exists, which apparently becomes altered, is pure Individuality. Therefore, I have spoken of the ego as the false sense of Individuality -- the partial, limited experience of Individuality, which considers itself to be all there is and ignores the disowned, unconscious part of Individuality.

I do not mean by that that the disowned part is unconscious, but It is not available consciously to the area of the Totality of Individuality, which is circumscribed by the ego's structures. In other words, when one is identifying oneself as ego, as that which is embraced within the ego's structures, the greater area of the Totality of one's Being seems to be unavailable, going on in what psychologists call the "unconscious."

Nevertheless, the Totality of one's Individuality, whether consciously experienced or not, is, Itself, conscious, and is, Itself, being fully the Presence of the Father.

Now, if the ego is unable to create, then there is no way the ego could have "created" a world of illusion. I mean by that that it cannot have succeeded in creating an alternate to Reality, which could be called unreality, which somehow occupies space and time somewhere apart from the infinite manifestation of the Father.

Since the ego is, itself, a distorted sense, its sense of everything is distorted. The "everything" about which the ego has a distorted perception is Reality, is the infinite manifestation of God. Therefore, if you are looking at something, which is illusory, it is a distortion of something Real. The ego has not been able to go outside of the Presence of God to create an illusion. So, its perceptions are always distortions of the true experience of God.

If you are having any conscious experience at all, it is a conscious experience of the Presence of God, which is either purely and clearly experienced because you are totally Awake, or which is being experienced in a distorted way because it is being viewed through the lens of the ego sense.

Let me put it this way: It is actually impossible for you to experience a "true illusion," something which has nothing of Reality behind it at all, and therefore stands alone as pure fabrication out of nothing.

You must understand that the *Course* is addressing egos because the majority of mankind does not realize there is anything else to him but what he currently experiences. Those who pick up the books are those who see themselves as egos and who believe the world is as they experience it, and have no idea, no faintest intimation that there is something beyond what they are experiencing -- that there is a truer experience available. So, they *must* release their world. And they must arrive at a point where they grasp that they are creating what they are seeing by virtue of blocking the truer perception of it.

They must come to the point where they recognize that their limited ego sense is absolutely governing the way in which they are experiencing the Kingdom of Heaven, and that therefore they are not experiencing the Kingdom of Heaven truly. They must arrive at a point where they recognize that their ego sense is an active denial of their Individuality, which is the Presence of God. Why? So that they can count themselves as an illusion? No. So that they can feel guilty? No. But so that they can know that there is something *beyond* their present experience that they can dare to open up to and leave the limitation behind. And this is true of the world, the universe, the *infinite* manifestation of the Father.

Everyone must come to a point where he is willing to conceive of the possibility that the way he is experiencing everything is distorted, is limited, but that it is a limited perception of a *Wholeness*. Why? So he can discount the world? No. So that he can dare to reach beyond his present perception into the fuller experience of Reality as God made it, as God sees it, and therefore become what he has been all along, the Christ consciousness -- that which perceives Reality with the purity of God's perception.

Again, I must come back to this key point. The ego is incapable of creating. Therefore, there *has not been* the creation of an actual illusion -- something that stands by itself, apart from, separate from Reality. That would constitute something totally illusory. But the ego, because it constitutes a denial of Reality, causes the only thing that is going on to be experienced in a biased, or slanted, or distorted way. The distorted perception is the experience of the denial of Reality, but it is going on *right in the middle of Reality*, and Reality is the *subject* of the distortion.

I am going to make one thing perfectly clear. Disease is the result of the denial and the devaluation and the absence of respect and love for the body. Sin, disease, and death are the inevitable results of not valuing the infinite manifestation of God for what it is. Healing is the result of finding God in the very place where the illusion of disease is going on -- not *as* the disease, but as the underlying Reality about which a deluded sense has been embraced.

I would ask you why you think, when I was confronted by the fellow with the withered arm, I didn't heal the arm *away*, if it was an illusion, so that at least a little bit more of the "reality" of that fellow might show forth for the world to see? It was because his arm was not an illusion. The distortion, the "witheredness" of it, was where the falsehood lay.

Although you have no proof of this at the moment, I am not bodiless. I am not unidentified or unidentifiable. But my body is incapable of disease or death. That is part of the illusion.

If everything you see is an illusion, then healing would result in the evaporation, the disappearance of everything you see. But revelation always involves the coming into clearer view of that which represents perfection. If everything is illusion, then the result of healing would be what is called death, and yet everything within you will not embrace that idea and it will not embrace it because you know it isn't true.

Tell me where pure and actual illusion can exist if God, the Father, is infinite. If the Father is infinite intelligence, infinite Mind, where can there even be a *mental* territory for a deluded sense to go on in that would be outside of the Father? If God is infinite, then any illusion, any delusion, any misinterpretation must be going on within the Father, and must be a distortion of the Father, which is exactly what the *Course* presents the ego as -- the act of the denial of the Father. Where? *Right in the Presence of the Father.*

Now as I speak of this, it all becomes absurd. But the whole ego sense is an absurd twisting of the one and only thing going on, which I have referred to as Reality, which is the movement of the Presence of the Father being all there is.

Embrace your world lovingly, with a desire to experience its divinity, and whatever is illusory about the ego's present perception of it will yield to the divine original. Call it illusion, discount it as having nothing to do with God, and you will not have the faintest idea that your present perception of things has anything to yield to at all. And you will continue to be bound in ignorance.

Now, I am not talking theory here, or philosophy. You can put what I have said to the test. Try it out. Call it illusion. Say that there is nothing of God in it. Deny it implicitly, and see if there is

revelation. See if there is healing. See if there is joy. See if there is peace. See if there is a greater experience of unity. See even if you are able to love. Then try the opposite.

You do not need to rely on anybody's words, because what I am speaking about is demonstrable, provable.

QUESTION: I'm a physician, an M.D., pretty orthodox but open-minded -- internal medicine and cardiology -- and I've had some problems dealing with definitions and approaches to sickness and bodily ills. The Course says sickness requires guilt, sickness is an illusion, and healing simply requires awakening and atonement. I can see the mind and spirit being healed, but I have trouble applying this to our common degenerative bodily diseases -- the worn out bodies that necessarily come from aging in our time model -- the brain syndromes, the worn out joints, the atherosclerosis, hardening of the arteries. How do we heal a worn out physical "bag of bones"?

RAJ: This is a matter of education, both in terms of the problem as it exists, as well as in terms of the resolving of that problem. The reason you have difficulty with this is that you have no examples of the redemption of the body -- at least none that you have had occasion to observe, because they have not come within the scope of the medical discipline.

There are many radical healings occurring that are regenerative, where lost tissue, lost bone structures, lost teeth, et cetera, have been replaced as a direct result, not of surgical or physical intervention, but of a clearer perspective of what the body's function is.

The body's function is to identify the presence of your Individuality. Your Individuality is the direct expression of the Father. You might say the Father *in motion* is what constitutes Individuality. Therefore, the body's function is to identify perfectly the Presence of the Father in motion -- being Life. Therefore, it is not just a more correct apprehension of the body that is needed, but of what Individuality is, as well.

As one begins to conceive of the idea that one's Individuality is the Presence of the Father in expression, and that one's body is the identification of that Presence, one's whole attitude about his body becomes changed as rapidly as he will allow it. Greater trust in its purpose to identify one *perfectly* develops. Less doubt is present. Less fear of the body is present. Less distrust, less hate of the body is present.

It is the hate, it is the fear, it is the distrust, it is the general negativity, which becomes manifested as physical complaints. And as those are released and the acknowledgment of the body's essential divinity -- in purpose and intent -- begins to dawn in the thought, a love of the body, a respect for it because of what it divinely is, develops. It is this clearer awareness, and this

appreciation and valuing of this, which identifies the Presence of the Father that is experienced as redemption, reconstruction.

In the next ten years, there will be significant evidences, manifestations of this fact, and it is going to lead to major revision in medical practice and theory. In the meantime, it is, as I mentioned earlier, time for visionaries, time for those who can conceive of the reality of what I have just described, to insist upon it within themselves. And to acknowledge in themselves, right where they are, the essential divinity of this body, the essential divinity of the flowers, the wood, the carpet, the trees, so that one can get past what his conditioned thinking tells him, and thereby get past the *evidence* of that conditioning.

Now, this ultimately means that each one is responsible for what he is experiencing. It means that each one is his own health care practitioner. This means that those who are *called* health care practitioners need to help to educate their patients to become aware of the very direct role they play in terms of their health. It also means that the health care practitioners must help bypass the automatic sense of guilt that comes into play when one becomes aware that he or she is responsible for his cancer, or his ruptured appendix, or his this, that, or the other thing. And make it clear that it is *knowing* that one is expressing ultimate authority over his experience that means that he can change what he has been doing from an ignorant position to one of understanding, respect, and that which will effect healing and redemption, rejuvenation.

If one doesn't know he's in control, or in charge, causing himself to experience what he's experiencing, he's not in a position to change what he's experiencing. So, although ownership of one's circumstances does bring into play the sense of guilt -- "Look at what I've done to myself," -- that needs to be stepped over lightly, like a grace note, and the acknowledgment of the authority still being present that can effect a change needs to be illuminated.

In your work, you can do this in a limited way, and it is not necessary to bring out the metaphysical or spiritual principles I have just described. But, to whatever degree you can instill in your patients an awareness that they have not lost power over their experience, and that you do not hold all of the power for their healing, this will be strengthening for them, and will contribute to their healing.

Health is simply the experience of the harmony of the body, which is natural to its identification of the Presence of the Father, which you call Individuality -- yours, or another's. Be intuitive in working with your patients, and share as much as you sense they can grasp. Never leave them feeling powerless. It is the feeling of being powerless that has brought on the fear that has brought on, eventually, distrust and the manifestation of illness.

Now, I have not gone into great detail here, and we could talk for days about this. But, for now, that is the appropriate answer.

QUESTION: My question is closely related to the question you just responded to. I do some counseling in San Francisco with AIDS patients and with their partners and families. There is certainly a lot of physical as well as emotional pain and suffering associated with this disease. I'd be interested in your insights as to what some of the lessons are to be learned from this disease, and also if you think there is a larger purpose to the whole thing.

RAJ: The "lessons" here, as long as you used that term, are the same lessons that someone having chicken pox or cancer or nearsightedness has. AIDS is not anything more than the opportunity to experience healing -- not any more than any other disease! Moralists attempt to attach significant meaning, but in the final analysis it is just one of the diseases that mankind needs to discover his freedom from, and that is all!

This disease, however, is going to hold a position, historically speaking that others have not, because it is going to serve to be "the disease" that pushes mankind over the threshold into the awareness of his authority that I was speaking of in the last answer. It is the one disease in which the regeneration of the body will be most greatly manifest. The reason for this is that no physical or chemical or medical cure will be found for it. Healing of the disease spiritually, metaphysically, or mentally -- whatever words you want to use -- will be the only cure. No one will be inclined to say, "it would have happened anyway." As a result of that distinct clarity, the power, you might say, of one's thought will become indisputably established in terms of physical health.

Now, *A Course in Miracles* states that there is no order of difficulty in miracles. It is equally important to know that there is no order of seriousness of disease -- whether it is the common cold, whether it is cancer, whether it is AIDS. One is not more difficult to heal than the other. The clearer everyone is on that point, the less objection will be created in the mind against full recovery from AIDS or any other disease.

AIDS will serve as the focus, the turning-point, in terms of physical evidence of the power of one's attitude and one's beliefs, and ultimately the authority and integrity of each Individuality, and the absolute correlation between one's mind-sets and one's physical experience.

Now, this is the fact! And there is reason for getting on the stick and approaching this problem in this way. It costs nothing except one's mind-sets. It costs' nothing except one's doubts. It costs nothing except one's fear. *And it is time for any sense of guilt associated with the disease to be dropped!* This is, of course, true about any disease, but AIDS, specifically, is a manifestation of

guilt, and it is important to understand that it is not guilt over homosexuality, it is guilt over *sexuality!*

It is absolutely necessary for everyone to be aware that AIDS did not make its entrance by means of homosexuals, but also heterosexuals who were experiencing guilt about their sexuality -- and I am speaking specifically about female prostitutes. So, this stigma that attaches AIDS to homosexuals is a belief that needs to be stemmed quickly, else there will be a scapegoat, a hate group, that will blind those doing the hating from *their* invulnerability to AIDS or any other disease as well.

Again, this is also a subject, which needs to be dealt with at length, although it is not appropriate today. It is, however, something, which I will be addressing at a later time in an appropriate way.

QUESTION: I have been diagnosed as having AIDS. I'm having symptoms and I need to know what to do about them.

RAJ: First of all, you must be willing to consider the fact that your body is not just a physical organism that has evolved through evolution of life on your earth, in the sense that Darwin expressed it. Your body is the manifestation -- the visible, tangible evidence -- of the presence of your Individuality. Your Individuality is a direct expression of the Life-Principle, or God, if you will. Therefore, your Individuality is absolutely divine, and your body's purpose is to identify that which is divine. Therefore, your body's purpose is divine. This means that no matter how many times you might seem to be born and how many times you might seem to die, you will always have with you a body. I am saying this to express the idea that body is as eternal as you are! I did not say that so as to minimize dying.

Now, on the basis that your body is an eternal manifestation of an eternal Individuality, then obviously disease and death are transitory illusions, and do not denote or signify the death of a body. What you are confronted with, here, is the opportunity to demonstrate the fact that your body is eternal and that it is not truly subject to disease. It is subject to what You divinely Are!

The only reason it seems at the present time not to be reflecting what you divinely Are, is that there is conditioning that has been provided to you at the mental level -- mental concepts, mental beliefs that you have been provided with -- that cause you not to honor your body for what it truly is, and which cause you to believe that you, along with everyone else, are subject to micro-organisms, viruses, and bacteria, and that it is normal for one's body to abandon him in one way or another. This causes an underlying fear of the body that interposes an energetic field that distorts the functions of the body, and the distortions are called diseases, or physical distress of one sort or another.

The point is that your body is either identifying what You divinely Are, or it seems to identify the beliefs and the mental attitudes that you are entertaining negatively about it. The mental attitude blocks your ability to perceive and experience the fundamental function of your body to identify You perfectly.

This means that at all times, you, at the point of your intelligence, hold the key, hold the authority over what you are going to experience. There are also other factors that enter in besides fear of or distress with one's body. One of these is guilt, for whatever reason -- guilt because one has not treated another well, guilt because one has been dishonored, et cetera. Anything, which creates guilt, and the sense of impending punishment by virtue of the guiltiness, introduces distorting energy into the field of your body.

It is therefore necessary for you to daily acknowledge the divine function or Purpose of your body, and the fact that your Individuality is absolutely divine. There is a necessity to come to the conclusion that any sense of guilt, any sense of fear, is illegitimate, and that it arises out of a basic misperception of one's Nature, and also the Nature of one's body.

Let there be an alertness on your part for any sense of guilt. For example: "This wouldn't have come upon me if I hadn't done such and such." When that thought comes, squelch it. Dismiss it as not worthy of your attention. Do not energize it. Do not mull it over. Do not hang onto it and depress yourself with it. And when the arguments come that say, "Yes, but what about this?" find a way to dismiss that "supportive" argument for feeling guilt, also.

You see, to whatever degree you can justify having the disease, you will block yourself from releasing it. You will hold it to you by validating its existence. If you say, "I have this problem because I was with so-and-so," or "I wouldn't have had this problem if I hadn't been with so-and-so," you seem to place the cause for the problem somewhere outside yourself. You cause it to seem to be valid, and then all you can do is endure it to the end and then hopefully be free of it.

If you accept the idea that you "got it from someone," or that you got it because of your behavior, or that you got it because there is something fundamentally wrong with you, and therefore you deserve it -- whether it is something from this lifetime or another -- you will only succeed in establishing in some way a "legitimate" cause for the disease.

I am simply bringing these points out with absolute specificity so that you may consciously and insistently address the issues and dismiss them.

You have done nothing at any time that would cause any divine Presence to judge you as guilty. You certainly have done things ignorantly that did not turn out to be in your best interest. But,

anyone with a divine and fully awakened perspective understands clearly that if you had known better, you would have done better. And that it is only out of ignorance that you did what you did, that from your standpoint, and with the information you had available to you, you were making the best possible choice you could.

Therefore, if anyone with a broader, more spiritual perspective would not judge you, then you cannot afford to judge yourself. It would be a total waste of time, and totally useless. Therefore, if no judgment has been made, no guilt has been established. Therefore, any sense of guilt that you might experience is also meaningless -- so much hot air.

Now, you must be willing to take this stand within yourself with great strength -- not in order to overcome the disease, but in order to overcome the tendency to believe that you are in some way *justifiably* guilty.

Obviously if you hold the key, if you have been exercising authority all along, then you are in one way or another responsible for what is happening now. But, since you have been the one in charge all along, it means you *still are*, and that the opportunity is present to exercise your authority more in alignment with the Truth, and thus reverse the manifestation or the symptoms.

Knowing that you are in charge, and that you have been exercising authority that has allowed this experience to come along, should not be used as a basis for substantiating guilt. But rather, one of providing the perspective that shows you that you have the freedom to change what you are authorizing. And authorize something new, as I said, that is more in alignment with the truth about you as divine Individuality, and your body as a function of rendering visible That, which is divine.

So, be willing to be adamant, to be unequivocal, and to be firmly insistent upon challenging everything that suggests guilt. Kick fear out when it first begins to come to your thought. You have the authority to do it. You do not have to invite it into your consciousness and sit down "at tea with it," and entertain it and let it mess up your peace. *You have the choice*. The only reason you ever let it in is because you think it is justified.

So, the process, here, is going to be one of removing every justification that presents itself to you for the problem, so that you are not validating the justifications. If you are not validating the justifications, the symptoms of the disease can find no foothold in you. And the symptoms will disappear -- and this is a fact, whether it is AIDS or whether it is mumps, or whether it is chicken pox, or whether it is a simple everyday cold or headache. There is no difference of severity of diseases!

QUESTION: Well, I understand that, but in terms of the illusion...

RAJ: ...the effect seems to be drastically different. But, you must understand that the mistake is the same simple mistake, and that no matter what the degree of severity seems to be, the ease of getting rid of it is the same. So, you cannot afford to assume that this is going to be a more difficult situation to get rid of than a headache.

QUESTION: Except, if I get a headache, it can go away and I'll never think of it -- or take a pill. It seems different in that way.

RAJ: Let me put it this way: We are talking about dealing with this problem through a change of perspective. And if you were to deal with the headache through a change of perspective, rather than a pill, it would be identical. You must assume that this physical manifestation of the ignorance of your authority is as easily gotten rid of as a headache, or a cold, or the measles. And whether you have had the experience or not, every manifestation of measles can leave your system within twenty minutes of their appearance.

QUESTION: I guess my reaction to all of this is that I don't feel very powerful when you use words like "authority," and "kick out." I feel not very powerful at this point in my life. I feel less powerful than I have ever felt.

RAJ: Okay. You are, right now, exercising your authority by giving that *word*! "I don't feel particularly powerful." That is a *word* you are giving to the situation. "I feel impotent in the face of this dilemma." That is a *word* you are giving. You are energizing it and it will constitute a block, or it will distance you from your healing.

Now, you cannot go around lying, but you can use your reason to make statements that are true, even though you don't feel them. You can say, "If I am the direct expression of the infinite Intelligence, then I have the intelligence, somewhere, to face this situation and by virtue of that intelligence bring about order and harmony, because intelligence governs harmoniously, whereas ignorance governs chaotically." If you will make statements of this sort that express intelligent, reasonable ideas, you will begin to be able to have an expanding sense of your power. But you are going to have to be willing to let go of the sense of powerlessness.

The sense of powerlessness is not new at this moment as a result of this problem. It is something that has been with you. It is something that is with everyone!

QUESTION: But I've blurred it over more effectively in the past.

RAJ: Let's put it this way: It was not brought out in such bold relief because you were not faced with something as apparently overwhelming as this.

QUESTION: Right.

RAJ: But, it doesn't matter what it is that brings your attention to the point of realizing that you truly need to become more aware of your authority, of your power, of your fundamental divinity. This is simply an opportunity to grow into an expanded awareness of the substance of your Presence. If you are the direct expression of God, then you are the direct expression of omnipotence, which means that omnipotence is characteristic of *you*, even though you have not been aware of it before. It means that you cannot be subject to sin, sickness, or death, any more than the Life-Principle can be, because the Life-Principle is incapable of creating something unlike Itself.

These ideas you should mull over in your mind, rather than mulling over the worries, the fear, the sense of guilt, the sense of what you could have done better. You are going to have to make a choice as to what you are going to invite into your consciousness and entertain. And you had better make a choice for that which affirms your fundamental divine Integrity, rather than your lack of Integrity, your lack of power, your lack of Presence, your lack of authority.

You have it, and I am pointing it out to you. And, if nothing else, you have nothing to lose in experimenting with or exploring your authority.

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