

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 150 **Review IV Lessons 139 and Lessons 140**

Sarah's Commentary:

[139] I will accept Atonement for myself.

[140] Only salvation can be said to cure.

Here we are, almost halfway through the year. Hard to believe! Today's Lesson is the final one in our review. It is a reminder about the importance of dedicating ourselves to accepting our true identity already in our minds, which defines what we already are, in this present moment. It seems that we have partitioned off our true identity from our awareness, yet it is the only real thing about us. The self we think we are is an image, a false identity, and a character in the dream we took on in the tiny tick of time when we aligned with the ego. This self is a bundle of thoughts, beliefs, and values we hold and includes all the concepts we have about ourselves, as well as the roles we have adopted. None of them are true. The only thing true is that we remain as God created us---perfect, whole, holy, in Oneness with Him, and containing all His attributes as His Son.

David Hawkins, MD, Ph.D., describes the Self that we are as the hardware of a computer. It is our lovable, innocent, Christ nature. On the other hand, the software contains the beliefs that have been programmed in us by the conditioning of our culture, family, and what we have made of our experiences. It is important to note that the software does not change the hardware. We are innocent, as is everyone. We have all been programmed, but the hardware has not been changed by that programming that runs our lives. Now we are learning to incorporate new software through our study and application of the Course teaching.

For many years, as I studied and practiced the Lessons and the Text, I had trouble understanding what it meant to accept Atonement for myself. In spite of learning the Course definition of Atonement, I kept having the worldly definition in my mind. Atonement is deeply ingrained in me as a negative concept of attrition for my sins, penance, mea culpa, belief in unworthiness, and having done something wrong and needing to atone for my sins, but this is not the Course definition. Atonement is only about accepting the Correction for our mistakes. When we come to recognize that we have never left our Source, there will be nothing left to correct. While we know that we have made many mistakes, held grievances, and hurt others, Jesus assures us that there is no need for guilt because we have not sinned. He simply invites us to accept the Correction in our minds for our mistakes, and they will be released by His love and His grace. If sin existed, there could be no correction, only punishment. However, Jesus assures us that we have not sinned. We have only made a mistake in choosing separation and with it, our separate identity. Furthermore, he says the mistake was corrected by the Holy Spirit the second we made it. Now it is about accepting the Correction, which is awaiting us anytime we choose. The Holy Spirit negated all consequences of the decision for separation.

As a result of the separation, we forgot who we are and got lost in this dark dream of the ego. The only way back to the awareness of our Self, which is already in the mind, is by accepting who we really are in our perfection, in our Oneness with our Creator, and in our innocence. This is what is meant by accepting the Atonement for ourselves. It is letting go of our guilt and shame, our judgments on ourselves, our self-concepts, our self-assessments, our individuality, our specialness, and ultimately our mistaken notion that we are bodies living in the world. In fact, it is the letting go of everything we think we are as egos, bodies, and personalities which constitute the false self. Basically, to accept the Atonement is to accept the truth about ourselves. We are created in the image of God with all His characteristics. Thus, accepting the Atonement is a process of reconciliation not possible within the framework of the ego thought system, meaning, the ego will never undo itself. We need help from outside the ego framework. In other words, we need to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit in the mind.

Jesus has laid out a carefully designed curriculum, letting us know how to come back to ourselves. We do these Lessons in training the mind, recognizing that we don't know the way and rely on One Who does know. Only with our mind training and our willingness, dedication, commitment, and openness can our minds be prepared for healing. What we are invited to do is to watch our mistaken thoughts about ourselves, look at all our judgments, worries, grievances, anger, and specialness as they come to awareness, and be willing to bring them to be corrected. When we look at our judgments with the light, love, and non-judgment of Spirit, we are reminded that what we are perceiving and believing is not the truth. He is the Correction always available to us when we are willing to take the first step and look at our own mistaken choices. This is what forgiveness is. It brings the miracle. It shifts our perception. It brings us back to our magnitude. All we are asked to do is stay vigilant and not fall into littleness.

The ego's "life" depends on the acceptance of ourselves as guilty sinners. The ego's voice berates us: "You can't do that! Who do you think you are? It is arrogant to think you are perfect. Look at all the things you have messed up and all the people you have hurt! You should feel guilty. You deserve punishment." To the ego, it is holy to accept oneself as a guilty sinner. The ego is happy when we accept a sentence of guilt on ourselves. However, Jesus tells us that if we listen to the ego's counsel and buy into the its description of us, we are actually being arrogant. If God says we are innocent, eternal beings, who have never sinned, then to accept the ego's contention about ourselves is to defy God. The voice of the ego says that God is wrong about us and that it alone is right about who we are. That is why Jesus challenges us by asking, "**Do you prefer that you be right or happy?**" (T.29.VII.1.9) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.43) In other words, are we going to keep listening to what the ego says about who we are, or will we turn to the Holy Spirit to be reminded of our Divine Nature?

This struggle goes on in our conflicted minds, but the Spirit does not fight the ego because the ego is not real. It is a mistaken thought system in the mind that we are called to release. Spirit simply waits for us to prepare our minds to ultimately accept the truth about ourselves. How we get to the truth is through the daily spiritual practice of meditation, contemplation, focus, deep inquiry, and journaling. We are called to do whatever it takes to come to the acceptance of our innocence and our true nature. We accept what is true about ourselves and deny the power of anything outside our own minds to help us or hurt us. This is about being willing to look with great honesty at how we block and resist the truth.

When our investment in the body and personality is recognized as the false self, we become more willing to look at our mistaken decisions and not take them personally. We only defend the false self when we believe it is what we are. As we identify more and more with the one who is witnessing the persona and not the persona itself, there is less need to defend. Through the release

of the fearful self-judgments, space is opened up for the truth to dawn on our minds. With each step on this journey, our trust and acceptance of the process increase, and we are able to see how all things work together perfectly for our good.

It is the constant and persistent voice of the ego, heard non-stop in our heads, that keeps us distracted from the truth. It keeps us invested in the dream or nightmare and constitutes the monkey-mind of random thoughts that torture us and keep us from peace. Its whole purpose is to keep us from the truth. The ego is threatened by our decision-making minds, knowing we can withdraw our allegiance from it whenever we choose. Thus, it is heavily invested in constantly reminding us of our guilt and unworthiness, and offers us ample justification to hold grievances and anger. Because we don't want the weight of responsibility for all this, we prefer to see ourselves as victims of a world outside of ourselves. Our stories of betrayal by others justify our position and allow us to see others as responsible for our condition so that we can maintain our face of innocence. We believe our stories and hide our shadow, constantly trying to show the world an image of this face of innocence. What it does is to cover over the hate and the rage and the terror that we hold in the mind for what we believe we have done. This is what needs to be seen if we are to discover the love beneath it all. It requires that we turn our attention within where the ego tells us never to look.

We remind ourselves today that **"My mind holds only what I think with God"** (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE W.RIV.3) because all the other thoughts are ego-driven and not real thoughts. They constitute the deceived mind that has forgotten what it is. They are the thoughts that keep us from God. They are the thoughts that keep us in hell. They are the thoughts we choose in order to defend against the love we are. They are the thoughts we must be willing to bring to Correction, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to shine them away. How willing are we to do this? How much are we willing to trust Him? How willing are we to walk through the darkness to the light? It takes great honesty and a lot of courage. We must let go of our defenses, which is process.

How do we learn to accept Atonement for ourselves? We take the time to quiet our self-talk, to turn over our anger for healing, and to bring every unworthy, guilty, and impure thought to the truth. This includes our pain, despair, loneliness, helplessness, fear, hurt, confusion, depression, sadness, grief, judgment and every concept we hold about ourselves, whether we judge it as good or bad. All this, and more, we bring to this miraculous place of the Atonement. We take the time required to connect with the deep peace in ourselves where we can experience a holy instant, a glimpse of Heaven, and let the holiness in us be experienced.

We accept the healing in our minds every time we reach out to a brother with joy, peace, and love. When we offer patience and love instead of condemnation, and when we offer forgiveness instead of correcting a brother, then we will understand what accepting the Atonement for ourselves is about. Then we will be motivated to visit this place, more and more often until we can truly know this world is not our home and the ego is not what we are. Then we will know the true healing of the mind, which is the only cure for every kind of pain we experience. It is our willingness to take ourselves, and our brothers, out of our self-imposed prison of the ego thought system.

None of our chosen remedies will work. **"Only salvation can be said to cure."** (W.140) We are reminded in this Lesson that the treatments for sickness offered by the world can never cure because they don't treat the problem. They only address the symptoms. The problem is the guilt in our minds that we project onto the body, and now we see it in some kind of sickness. We come to recognize there is indeed a real cure for the guilt. The cure is our acceptance of the Atonement that addresses the only problem we have---the guilt in the mind that came with the separation.

If God is holiness and is everywhere, and sin and guilt are nothing and nowhere, then guilt and sin are baseless. They are completely invalid emotions that have no reality. When we believe in guilt and sin, the power of our belief seems to give it reality. Our responsibility, however, is to withdraw belief in guilt and recognize that all sickness is some form of guilt. A sick body offers us an opportunity to see the guilt in our minds and be willing to choose peace and healing. We are not always able to do that in the face of sickness. Jesus assures us that we need not feel guilty about taking some form of magic to relieve the symptoms so that we can turn within to the real Answer when our fear is diminished. We can never experience true healing by addressing effects. Real healing must address the cause, which is the guilt in our minds.

Now we come to our final practice in this review and affirm the truth about ourselves once again. It is helpful to notice our resistance to waking up from this dream by taking note of how often we remember to do the Lesson. We all have resistance to giving up control, giving up our belief in independence, and surrendering our perspectives. We are very invested in our concepts and our opinions. We are invested in being right about ourselves, but this keeps us from being truly happy.

We have filled our minds with ideas, beliefs, and values that we hold as true, and now we must recognize that none of this has brought true peace. When we are defensive, we have identified with an illusion of ourselves. It is not who we are. With this recognition comes the motivation to step back into the stillness and defenselessness of our True Self.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

Published in DAILY LESSON MAILING by <http://www.jcim.net>
JOIN MAILING LIST HERE: <http://bitly.com/CIMSMailingList-Signup>