

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 212~ Review VI

[192] I have a function God would have me fill.

Sarah's Commentary:

We have less and less structure given us as we progress in the Workbook. We are told that this lack of structure will help us "**reach a quickened pace along a shorter path to the serenity and peace of God.**" (W.RVI.4.2) It will help prepare us for the increasing formlessness of Part II of the Workbook. The Course is not about ritual. The reason for the structure in the early Lessons is to help discipline the mind, as it is something to which we are not accustomed. We are accustomed to letting the mind entertain random thoughts throughout the day and night.

The structure in Part I of the Workbook helps us become aware of how much resistance we have to awakening from this dream as measured by the resistance we have to doing the Lessons as laid out. As we go through our day, we can observe how much we don't want to follow the proposed practice, which also reveals the extent of our fear and the issues we might have with perceived "coercion." The ego resists being told what to do. It reflects our authority problem, where we want to be in control of our own lives and to maintain our separate false self.

We start our practice with the thought for the day and then wait in silence for the truth to dawn on our minds. We rely more now on the Holy Spirit to guide us through the practice time. Jesus asks us to place each practice period in His hands and, at the outset, to dedicate the entire Review to Him. It really is a dedication to our Self. We are looking more and more to be guided throughout the day from within. The senses were made to keep our focus outside. It is to spend the day in pursuits that we think will address our personal interests. But now we increasingly ask in everything we do in the day: "**What is it for?**" (W.96.6.5) This is to help us stay focused on our purpose, which is to stay connected with the Holy Spirit in all we do and to align with our spiritual goal or aspiration. We go through our day, asking for guidance. "**What would You have me do? Where would You have me go? What would You have me say, and to whom?**" (W.71.9.3-5)

Today, we review Lesson 192, "**I have a function God would have me fill.**" (W.192) It does not matter what the backdrop is to our function. Whether a housewife, carpenter, hairdresser, teacher, stockbroker, photographer, or whether we have no formal role in the world, the content of our function is always the same. It is to do the forgiveness work by staying vigilant in watching our thoughts and releasing whatever blocks to love show up in our day. Whenever we are upset, we know we have chosen the ego as our guide to seeing and now project the judgments of ourselves and see them in the world. But we must not judge ourselves for our judgments. The ego approves of self-flagellation. Instead, we are asked to look at our upsets and attacks and remember we have not changed ourselves. We are still innocent. Simply observe what is coming up in the mind throughout the day and recognize that you must have chosen wrongly whenever you are not at peace. Now you can make another choice. It is really very simple. The only thing that makes it

hard is if we believe we are the ones who must fix ourselves. When we give the upset over to the Holy Spirit, we let it go and it is done. We join with Him in the right mind.

Every encounter we have in our day has the potential to be a holy encounter. Our function is to be happy and to extend that happiness by shining our light so that everyone we meet, or even think about, is blessed by our wholeness. When this is not the case, we quickly do a restorative by bringing our grievances and thoughts of superiority and specialness to the light. Seeing sameness in our brothers is a reflection of the Oneness of the Sonship.

We cannot help but extend the joy that is in us to others, as joy cannot be contained. Yet to get to this goal requires vigilance and dedication in watching our thoughts and substituting God's Thoughts for those that keep us from peace. There are not large or small things that bring distress. There is no order of difficulty in the illusion. All problems are the same, regardless of their seeming size and scope. They are all illusory. Any distress, no matter how large or small, blocks our peace and joy, and thus, **"When you are tempted, hasten to proclaim your freedom from temptation, as you say: *This thought I do not want. I choose instead _____*** (Insert the thought for the day)." (W.RVI.IN.6.1-2) It is such an effective process when practiced with sincerity and willingness.

I was practicing this Lesson last year and found myself in some distress in the middle of the night, having just received a call from my mother where she was in tremendous pain and needed an ambulance. I noticed that, despite my attempts to come to peace, my thoughts became very entrenched and obsessive. As I applied these words and related thoughts to the situation and asked for help not to use this situation to keep me from the peace in me, increasingly I found moments of respite from the vagaries of the ego. My mind started to ease from the seemingly iron grip that held me prisoner. The Holy Spirit is the door to release. He provides us with unlimited freedom, but we must choose to go where He is. It means leaving behind the thoughts that plague us. These thoughts have no power that we are not willing to give them.

I find a useful practice in any distress is to rest the mind and release the story the mind is creating about the situation. This means to choose not to listen to the ego's version of events. I remind myself that the script is written, and everything is unfolding in divine right order. I allow my feelings without denying, repressing, or projecting them. I ask Spirit to help me see what I need to see in this situation. It is not helpful to try to meditate our way out of how we feel. We don't try to get out of the feelings, nor indulge them, but we allow the feelings and observe them without judgment, while being willing to let them go. We trust and rest in God, knowing all is well.

Separation from the love we are is the only problem we have, and there is only one solution. We waste a lot of time and energy ruminating on distressing thoughts. The ego would have us hold others accountable for how we feel. Judgments and grievances are the juice of the ego. At some level, we need others to pay the price when we see them as the cause of our distress. The reality is if we don't have peace, we are throwing it away and making someone else responsible for having taken it from us. Only our own thoughts cause our distress. It is never about anything or anyone outside of ourselves. We must take responsibility for our own misperceptions.

Why the resistance? There are many reasons. One key reason is that we want others to be responsible for our condition so we can hold them as the guilty ones. We bury the truth about ourselves under layers of guilt and then bury the guilt under specialness. Now we are being invited to go within to uncover the guilt in the mind. The ego tells us not to go within, as it is all dark there. That is why we prefer to see sin and murder all around us, but not in us. This gives rise to

the **"face of innocence."** (T.31.V.2.6) (ACIM OE T.31.V.44) Others now become the symbols of our sins. We condemn them for what we hate in ourselves. We choose to see the cause of our problems as outside of ourselves, and now we try to solve these problems by trying to change things in the world. We have come to believe that this is the way out of our difficulties, rather than bringing our mistaken, guilt-based thought system to the truth. Guilt is the source of every problem we seem to have, and the answer is therefore always the same, regardless of the form the problem takes.

Jesus tells us that **"Anger is never justified."** (T.30.VI.1.1) (ACIM OE T.30.VII.70) We get angry when we do not get our way and insist, **"I want it thus!"** (T.18.II.4.1) (ACIM OE T.18.III.17) What does the ego want? It wants to make real our fantasies and our wishes of how things should be in the world. And when they are not the way it wants, it gets upset. The nature and degree of the upset does not matter because a seemingly small upset still blocks the peace in us. When we are upset, we want to see others guilty so we can feel innocent. That is why differences in the form of specifics were made. Guilt needs to be applied specifically to the "wrongdoers," whom we see as the cause of our upsets. We then claim innocence for ourselves at our brothers' expense. We believe that God will now punish them for their sins, while we, as the innocent and injured party, get off scot-free. It is not true innocence we achieve by this ruse. True innocence comes only through forgiveness, and forgiveness requires that we take responsibility for our perception and interpretation of everything that seems to be happening. The world is nothing more than an **"outward picture of an inward condition."** (T.21.IN.1.5) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) It is always the guilt in the mind that we see projected onto the world. The picture will only change when our minds are healed of the guilt. Mind is the cause and the world is the effect of our thoughts.

There is nothing more fulfilling than to experience the miracle that shifts our perception. The miracle will only be experienced through forgiveness. We all want to experience life as meaningful and purposeful. Everyone wants this experience. In this Lesson, Jesus says that we all have a meaningful function that God would have us fulfill, and it is the function of forgiveness. It does not matter what we do in form; the function of forgiveness is always there to be fulfilled. When we consistently undertake our function of forgiveness, the guilt in the mind is released, and we experience joy, love, laughter, and freedom in our lives. Forgiveness sets us free from all the vain illusions of the world. This is the only way to freedom, releasing us from the chains of the ego that bind us to sin and guilt. Jesus urges us to accept this function in the name of our own freedom. It is where our joy is. Thus, forgiveness is a gift to ourselves. It is the closest we can come to Heaven on earth. Forgiveness is an earthly form of love, as it reflects the love of God.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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