

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 251

I am in need of nothing but the truth.

Sarah's Commentary:

Now we come to the question, "**What is Sin?**" (W.PII.Q4) The simple answer is that sin is what gave birth to illusions. According to the glossary of terms from the Circle of Atonement, sin is "*a real attack that causes real damage, violation, and injury and produces real moral and spiritual guilt and calls for punishment and death. To sin would be to violate reality and succeed. Sin is the proclamation that attack is real and justified.*" Sin keeps us believing in illusion where truth is now obscured. Thus, it is the foundation of the ego and is holy to the ego. It is the thought system that gives rise to the world. The purpose of our senses, which Jesus calls the "**mechanisms of illusion**," (W.PII.Q3.3.1) show us a world external to our minds. When we look at reality as outside of the mind, we are kept blind and ignorant. "**To sense is not to know.**" (W.PII.Q4.1.8)

The senses are the purview of the ego, and the ego wants us to believe that what we experience through the senses is the truth. Yet what is revealed to us by our senses is what obscures the truth. The truth is in the mind, but because of our decision to believe the ego's story that we sinned and did something terribly wrong, we left our minds and now identify with body as ourselves. Senses were made by the ego as "proof" that the illusion is true, real, and solid. When we take in information about the world through our senses and process it with our brains, we can't know anything. Whatever we see outside us, which is everything we perceive in the world, witnesses to the sin and guilt in the mind. It is an outside picture of our inward condition, where the guilt in the mind is projected on the world. "**And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe this picture is outside, and has you at its mercy.**" (T.20.III.5.7) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.20)

We do our best to adjust to the world. It is like doing our best to adjust to an insane asylum. In my early years, I was always the "good girl" until rebellion set in later in life. Nevertheless, I always tried to adjust to the world and follow the rules with some periods of experimentation along the way. It was a relief to be told this world is not my home because it never felt like my home. To relieve the guilt, we have specific targets in the world on which we project judgment and blame for our condition. It becomes our story of victimhood and how badly we have been treated. It is a defense that keeps us from looking at the guilt buried in the mind, but it is all imagined. It is a myth made up by the ego. We bought into the ego's story that we have sinned against God by stealing our identity from Him, and now the ego tells us this "sin" calls for punishment. As long as we hold the belief that we have done something terribly wrong and therefore are bad, we will be out of touch with the truth of our reality as the sinless Son of God and will anticipate punishment in the form of many problems we encounter in the world.

What we are seeing reflects our insane thoughts held in the mind and projected onto the world. Yet the Atonement Principle is our assurance that we have not sinned. We are still at home in God,

dreaming of exile. We live in fear we will have to face punishment for what we think we have done. This is not conscious, but when we blame God for our condition, we can see how we project responsibility on God. It is all a dream and has no reality. Until we come to this recognition, we will continue to wander the world, lost and alone, distracting ourselves with the trinkets of this world and finding no lasting happiness. The core of the ego thought system is that we are lost to God and are completely on our own. This is where all our anxiety, our fear, and our vague sense that we have done something wrong and are doomed, comes from. It is not a good feeling, but we do our best to compensate for it, as well as distract from it.

Jesus assures us that we have not turned ourselves into something evil and sinful. All we have done is forgotten who we are. Forgetting who we are has not changed the truth about our reality as created by God. Validating our false reality through our senses does not make it true, even if our senses do a good job in preserving the falsity. We defend against the truth by arrogantly insisting we are right, and God is wrong about us. As long as we still see sin in others and call for retribution, we maintain we are right, and blame belongs to people and events in the world. Even if we blame ourselves, there are always those we see as responsible for our condition, and thus we keep trying to buy our innocence at the expense of "others." We hope God is watching and will punish them, rather than us, but it is false innocence. Our true innocence is already established, and no sin we can conceive of can change that fact.

Sin seems to have corrupted our innocence, although that could never happen. **"You who have played that you are lost to hope, abandoned by your Father, left alone in terror in a fearful world made mad by sin and guilt; be happy now. That game is over. Now a quiet time has come, in which we put away the toys of guilt, and lock our quaint and childish thoughts of sin forever from the pure and holy minds of Heaven's children and the Son of God."** (W.153.13.1-3)

We are being called to choose again each time we are tempted to see another as guilty. When we recognize it is just the projection of our own guilt on our brothers, and we see how this maintains guilt and suffering, we become motivated to bring the guilt to the Holy Spirit to be healed at its source in the mind. The ego needs specific targets for its attacks. **"Thus were specifics made."** (W.161.3.1) Now, these specific situations and our special relationships can be used as an opportunity for healing, rather than as a focus for guilt and attack.

Illusions go when we start to recognize them for what they are. **"The body is the instrument the mind made in its efforts to deceive itself. Its purpose is to strive."** (W.PII.Q4.2.1) So what we do is use the body to strive for what we think we want. We keep the body in a state of constant seeking for the things of this world we think will make us happy. There are many things we strive for. It can be a very long list and may include fame, fortune, status, position, power, entertainment, vacations, careers, money, material things, special relationships, sex, food, fitness, and on and on. There are also the things we worry about, plan for, expect, defend against, set goals, and decide for outcomes we want. All this striving keeps us from peace. While we say we want peace, the ego supports our seeking in the world, where it can never be found as it is only within.

"Yet can the goal of striving change. And now the body serves a different aim for striving. What it seeks for now is chosen by the aim the mind has taken as replacement for the goal of self-deception. Truth can be its aim as well as lies. The senses then will seek instead for witnesses to what is true." (W.PII.Q4.2.3-7) It is all about purpose, so everything made to support the ego can now be used by the Holy Spirit for release from this cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. We have a choice as to whether we send out messengers to look for sin and guilt, or messengers to seek for witnesses to the truth. **"For what**

the messengers of love are sent to do they do, returning the glad tidings that it was done to you and your brother who stand together before the altar from which they were sent forth." (T.19.I.14.6) (ACIM OE T.19.II.14)

Despite the many needs we think we have, our only real need is for the truth. We may be so sufficiently invested in the world that there still are desires we have and plans we make to fulfill those desires. It is not helpful to feel guilty for pursuing what we still think we want in the world. To feel guilty is just another ego trap to keep us in its bondage. Simply notice what you are striving for in the world and be willing to ask the deeper question of purpose. What is it for? Do I really believe that when I get everything I think I want, I will be truly and deeply happy? Who is this "I" that thinks it knows where happiness lies? Who keeps putting the peace available in this instant into some future time? Happiness waits for our readiness to accept it. It is here right now. It is simply being blocked by our beliefs, concepts, fears, and guilt.

A friend told me this story of her young son who opened the refrigerator and said: "Mommy, I want something." After she went through a lot of options with him, like: "Is it milk you want?" or "How about some cheese?" or "Some fruit maybe?" The answer was "no" to each one until the exasperated Mom said, "Well, what is it that you want?" And he answered, "I don't know." Mom was supposed to figure it out. Isn't this the way we often are, ourselves, where there is this vague feeling of wanting something, but we don't know what it is? This kind of craving alerts us to the emptiness that only truth can fill. It is our desire for God. Whenever we go looking for food, cigarettes, or new clothes, we are really looking for God. It is the only desire we have that can truly be fulfilled. **"My only need I did not recognize."** (W.251.1.4)

No, we don't recognize it. We fill our lives with all the stuff we think will make us happy, only to want more and more until we give up and admit we don't know where to find true contentment. This is the first step in asking the One Who does know. When we give up wanting, we will see we already have everything.

I spent my working life trying to get recognition from my bosses. I wanted them to affirm how good I was at my job. While I did get lots of validation for good work, in my mind it was never enough. When I started on this path and experienced more healing, the recognition that I had previously craved was no longer important to me. It just simply fell away. I felt a new-found freedom from the bondage of looking outside of myself for affirmation. What was interesting was that after my need for it fell away, I started to get all kinds of recognition. I received a commemorative medal from the Federal Government. I was honored with Metis status. I received recognition for implementing a provincial holiday (Family Day) for the Premier of the Province, which was later adopted across the country, and most significant, I was the first woman in the Province of Alberta to receive a medal for outstanding Government service from the Lieutenant Governor. While I speak of it now with some measure of pride, I no longer felt the need for it nor sought it. What at one time was so important to me had lost its meaning. As Jesus says in our Lesson today, **"All that I sought before I needed not, and did not even want."**(W.251.1.3) Having said that, it wasn't that I did not appreciate the recognition. It just did not have the same degree of importance.

In finding truth, **"all needs are satisfied, all cravings end, all hopes are finally fulfilled and dreams are gone."** (W.251.1.6) Thus, we connect with the peace and joy, which has always been there. We have been looking for it in all the wrong places. We have been denying the very thing we think we want. The ego is deluded and keeps us focused on what we can never find when we look outside of ourselves. Its premise is, "Seek but do not find" and isn't this what we have been doing for a big part of our lives?

This Course is not about demanding that we make sacrifices by giving up things where there is still attachment. When the mind is ready, these things simply fall away. There is no sacrifice, nor loss. We no longer pursue these things because we see we are giving up nothing of value. We are not asked to sacrifice, nor should we feel guilty about enjoying whatever we consider as pleasures in this world. When the mind is ready to let these things go, they just drop away. Jesus says we should ask in everything, **"What for?"** (T.4.V.6) (ACIM OE T.4.VI.77) Is it for the ego or for the Holy Spirit? Anything we do in the world can be used for the purpose of awakening. When we go to the movies, we can use the experience to watch our reactions and use the experience for healing. When we go shopping we can use every encounter for the purpose of watching the mind and experiencing holy encounters. It is not about what we are doing, but the mindset with which we do it.

It is helpful to remember that everything we strive for will ultimately fail us. **"It takes great learning both to realize and to accept the fact the world has nothing to give. What can the sacrifice of nothing mean?"** (Manual for Teachers.13.2.1-2) The things we want to accomplish and the things we think will make us feel good will not give us the peace of God. Today, when you sense you are getting caught up in something trivial, take a moment to still your mind and remind yourself that you are in need of nothing but the truth.

We will continue daily with the reading of the Section, **"What is Sin?"**, (W.PII.Q4) so I will say a little more about this question in the commentary on Lesson 252.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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