

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 272 How can illusions satisfy God's Son?

Sarah's Commentary:

What keeps us invested in the illusion, believing dreams can content us? It seems that while our continuing problems, challenges, and difficulties tire us, there are things in our lives that we consider the happier aspects of the dream, and thus they tempt us to keep looking for happiness where it cannot be found. **"What is a temptation but a wish to make illusions real? It does not seem to be the wish that no reality be so. Yet it is an assertion that some forms of idols have a powerful appeal that makes them harder to resist than those you would not want to have reality. Temptation, then, is nothing more than this; a prayer the miracle touch not some dreams, but keep their unreality obscure and give to them reality instead."** (T.30.VIII.3.1-4) (ACIM OE T.30.IX.91)

We still have some niggling hope that there is something here that will satisfy us. The ego continues to entice us with substitutes for Heaven. These substitutes are called idols and are based on our belief that something lacking in us can be filled with these substitutes for God. We pursue the idols because we think they fulfill the cravings, needs, and lacks that we experience. The substitutes are also referred to as **"distorted perceptions."** (T.1.VII.1.1) (ACIM OE T.1.II.102) Distorted miracle impulses may be for food, money, sex, closeness, attention, and power. This is the miracle impulse, which has been distorted by our belief that we are bodies. So, the miracle impulse, which comes from the love we are, is unconsciously distorted into physical needs, all based on lack. In other words, there is a miracle under all our cravings, but it has been distorted by our perceived needs.

Our attraction to guilt, pain, and death is dressed up by the ego to make us think it is pleasure that we are attracted to. If we really saw that our substitutes for the miracle were made to keep us in duality and that what we are choosing is pain, it would not be hard to release these substitutes. Pain and pleasure don't seem the same in this world because the ego has made guilt look attractive to us. We are being asked to work with our attachments, preferences, and investments so they can be loosened. The ego would have us keep from awareness our investment in the separated self and the world so the miracle cannot shine through. When we realize that this is the way the ego keeps us in the game of suffering, we increasingly bring awareness to our attachments and give it over to Holy Spirit, asking that He reinterpret them. What is it that is deeply satisfying to me? What does food, sex, money, power, and affiliation offer me? Jim Carey said that getting it all is helpful, as we can then realize that none of these things that we pursue bring us happiness.

Sex is one of those distorted miracle impulses where there is an attraction to joining and a belief that it can be accomplished through bodies. This is not to say there is anything wrong with sex, but to realize what is behind the sexual drive is what we truly want---true joining and reconnection to Oneness. In fact, in the Urtext (which is the original of the material taken down by Helen

Schucman before the edited material of the Course), Jesus says, "**Sex was intended as an instrument for physical creation [for producing new bodies] to enable Souls to embark on new chapters in their experience, and thus improve their record. The pencil was NOT an end in itself (See earlier section).**" (URText T.1.B.40d) The pencil is equivalent to the body in that they are both forms of no consequence, but can be used for a holy purpose. Although sex was made for ego purposes, like everything of the ego, it can be used by the Holy Spirit for a holy purpose. Thus, it is all about purpose. We do not understand what love is, since we often confuse and equate romance, specialness, and sexual attraction with love. The best reflection of God's love in this world is forgiveness. This is how we make space in our minds for the miracle to shine forth. As Leonard Cohen says, "There is a crack in everything. That is how the light gets in."

In a workshop by Ken Wapnick* held at Temecula, California, he said, "There is nothing in this world that is true. Forgiveness is not true. This 'holy' Course in Miracles is not true. Nothing is true in this world. Truth is only of God. We can, however, have the reflection of truth in this world. The Course, therefore, is the reflection of truth. Other spiritualities are reflections of truth. Forgiveness is a reflection of truth. It is not truth, but rather the reflection of truth. That is why Jesus says that love is not possible in this world, but it is possible to be the reflection of holiness." So, whatever it is that helps us awaken from the dream is to be welcomed. We can give the world a purpose that supports our awakening.

Jesus teaches that no substitute will ever satisfy the Son of God. All illusions will never be enough: not our illusions of security achieved through family, home, and financial stability; not our illusions of love achieved through special relationships; not our illusions of safety achieved by taking vitamins, locking doors, and buying insurance; and not our illusions of specialness achieved by seeking recognition, attention, and glory. It is why we are never satisfied. **"Yet you do not recognize them because you have raised their substitutes to such predominance that, when truth calls to you, as it does constantly, you answer with a substitute."** (T.17.IV.3.2) (ACIM OE T.17.V.29) We keep on seeking and seeking, wondering why we don't ever feel the deep peace and joy that only forgiveness can offer. We don't recognize that all of these substitutes are forms of fear.

Jesus asks us to consider how any of these things can satisfy God's Son. Why would we ever want less than everything? Today, we are asked to take a moment and ask ourselves if we really want this illusion and all of its temptations that bring nothing of value, **"when Heaven can be chosen just as easily as hell, and love will happily replace all fear."** (W.272.2.2) All illusion is fear. Everything we think we want in the illusion has a tinge of fear in it. If I have money, I fear losing it. If I have a special relationship, I have all kinds of fears about the person leaving, no longer loving me, hurting me, and betraying me. Fear is behind our focus on safety. The body is a fearful thing in itself--vulnerable and fragile. Having said this, it is important to remember that none of what we seek in this seeming reality is wrong. This is not a course in behavior. It is only about what is being held in the mind that we need to observe as we go about our day. We don't try to change anything. We look at it all without judgment and with willingness. We put it on the inner altar and are willing to have it transformed.

Jesus is pointing us to the truth of our Being by inviting us to ask in everything, "What is it for?" In other words, what purpose is being served? What we do for our personal safety and for our bodily pleasure is not important. What is important is the choice we make in our minds for peace or war, for forgiveness or attack, and for Heaven or for hell. We might, for example, need to physically defend ourselves from attack in this world, but the mind training helps us to defend

ourselves while still holding a defenseless thought. Or we might want to be helpful by visiting someone who is sick because we think it is the right or spiritual thing to do. But if we feel as if we are sacrificing and feel guilty, then this is the "gift" we give. When our minds are split **"This produces conflicted behavior, which is intolerable to you because the part of the mind that wants to do something else is outraged."** (T.2.VI.5.3) (ACIM OE T.2.IV.77)

Ultimately, we come to realize that there is no meaning and no real fulfillment in the things of this world no matter how much we try to find it there. We finally get disillusioned by it all, which is a good thing, otherwise, we would never seek the truth. We would never be motivated to see beyond the veil to the real world. While there are seeming temporary pleasures in the dream, none of them last and, ultimately, they can only bring pain and misery. Everything we seek in the world reflects the belief that we can exist outside the mind of God. Only the eternal can satisfy. Only the peace of God offers us real peace. Any temporary pleasures we seek are a choice for hell.

We think we are choosing something that will satisfy us and fulfill our dreams, but there can be no fulfillment here because we are asking for what is not real. No real satisfaction is possible here. What we are going for is always out of reach when we seek the things of this world. The toys and trinkets of the world just keep the gifts of God out of our awareness. **"Shall we continue to allow God's grace to shine in unawareness, while the toys and trinkets of the world are sought instead?"** (W.258.1.3)

Seeking is what we came here to do, which does not make it wrong. What is important, again, is not what we are doing, but what is in our minds. It is all about purpose. The world can serve the purpose of the ego, which is to keep us rooted in this dream and seeking for what will never satisfy, or we can turn it to the purpose of waking up to what we really are. Thus, everything we have made can be used by the Holy Spirit for our awakening. All it takes is our decision to watch our minds and bring our misperceptions to Him.

The separation from God is only our dream. It never happened. We are still innocent. Nothing we think we have done to make ourselves guilty has happened. **"And if we hear temptation call to us to stay and linger in a dream, we turn aside and ask ourselves if we, the Sons of God, could be content with dreams, when Heaven can be chosen just as easily as hell, and love will happily replace all fear."** (W.272.2.2)

"I am surrounded by Your Love, forever still, forever gentle and forever safe." (W.272.1.7) When we seek for substitutes, it is because we think they will deliver safety, love, and peace. Our disillusionment comes when we see that they never deliver what we had hoped. What is tempting you right now? Look at what you really want? Ask yourself if you think your list of wants will bring happiness and contentment to you. When we become aware that we are asking for guilt, suffering, and sorrow instead, would we still be tempted to pursue these things and further delay our journey to God? It is a journey to the peace and joy that is our inheritance.

Yesterday, I sent off a box full of clothes to charity. As I was packing them up, I was taken aback by how much I had invested in buying clothes that I did not need. Yet it offered me another opportunity to look at the perceived needs and lacks I was trying to fill. It is not helpful just to change the behavior while the desire is still there. It is helpful, however, to look at the deeper issues and feelings of lack and unworthiness. When these feelings are fully given over to the Holy Spirit, the behaviors just fall away. We are not called to sacrifice what we still value.

Jesus says that we will never be satisfied in this world because we will never find peace here. Yes, our illusions will seem to work some of the time, but the only thing that consistently brings joy is connecting with the Christ Mind. The realization that our way has not worked to bring true joy is the first step. Yes, the temptations are still there, but the realization that they will ultimately just bring more suffering, rather than the happiness, peace, and satisfaction we really want, will motivate us to look at our attachments and surrender them joyfully.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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