



LESSON 72

Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation.

Sarah's Commentary:

A big focus in this Lesson is, "**The ego's fundamental wish is to replace God,**" (W.72.2.1) and that wish is reflected in our physical embodiment. This wish "**seems to surround the mind with a body.**" (W.72.2.3) When we identify ourselves with the body, we come to think it is our reality. As such, the end result must be death. If we are bodies and have been created in the image of God, God must also be a body. (W.72.4.5) "**A creator wholly unlike his creation is inconceivable.**" (W.72.4.6) We have given God the attributes of the ego while the ego appears to take on the attributes of God. Further, since we believe God created us as bodies, our death must be something God offers us as our salvation. In this view, while He pretends to be the Author of life, He is actually the bringer of death. "**In trying to present Himself as the Author of life and not of death, He is a liar and a deceiver, full of false promises and offering illusions in place of truth.**" (W.72.5.3) In other words, this is the God described in the Bible. He becomes a projection of the image we hold of ourselves, for if we see our bodies as real and they are given us by God, God must be an ego as well, albeit an even bigger one.

The second focus is related to grievances and how we look at them. The Lesson speaks of the kind of things we have grievances about. They are all about what bodies say or do. "**But let us consider the kinds of things you are apt to hold grievances for. Are they not always associated with something a body does? A person says something you do not like. He does something that displeases you. He 'betrays' his hostile thoughts in his behavior.**" (W.72.3.2-6) It has nothing to do with who this person really is in truth. Grievances are all about specifics, and the body offers us such specifics. Our grievances are focused on what someone says or does. When you hold grievances against your brother, "**You are doing more than failing to help in freeing him from the body's limitations. You are actively trying to hold him to it by confusing it with him, and judging them as one.**" (W.72.4.3-4)

Every time we insist we are right about our brother's misdeeds, we are keeping him in the prison of his body, forgetting it is not the truth of who he is. His reality is not a body, and neither is ours. He is just a character in our dream who, in truth, is the holy child of God, just as we are. When we forgive, we see beyond the body. We see our brother as innocent, regardless of what he has said or done. Forgiveness looks past his behaviors and looks to his true reality as a Son of God. When we choose to see guilt instead, it is because we want to see our guilt in them. That is why we want our brothers to betray us.

In fact, "**The messengers of fear are harshly ordered to seek out guilt, and cherish every scrap of evil and of sin that they can find. . .**" (T.19.IV.A.11.2) (ACIM OE T.19.Va.50)

We are delighted to see guilt in others because if we could find proof of their guilt, we believe our own innocence is left untouched, and thus we won't have to endure God's punishment. That is why we are so attracted to guilt. While all behavior is a call for love from our brothers, the ego prefers to see guilt. Through forgiveness, the Holy Spirit reveals our brother's reality and our own. Until we see our brother beyond his body, we won't believe he is really a creation of God and created in His image as Love, and neither will we believe this about ourselves.

To put it simply, we believe we are a body, here for a short time in competition with other bodies whom we see as behaving badly toward us. We hold grievances, retaliate against them, and maintain defenses to try to keep ourselves safe, until life is over. Then God offers us death, whereby we receive either a reward or punishment. Given this is the picture we have accepted, the ego says, "Life is short." "Live it fully." "Grab your small scraps of specialness." "Eat, drink and be merry." "He who has the most toys when he dies wins." Thus, we don't ask for much from life, but settle for very little. We take what little pleasure we can and make the best of it until death claims us.

With so much focus on the body and its pleasure, we exalt it and work to create the right image. The body is the central figure in our dream and we see it as our friend and protector. We do what we can to look after our own best interests, while God is seen as the enemy—the grim reaper. The body and world feel very real to us, while it is God that is seen as illusory. It comes from our desire to be autonomous and free from Him while seeing ourselves as on our own and self-created. We actually believe our separation has been accomplished because that is what seems real and solid to us. Yet it is all our dream of separation, and in that dream, we see God as the Author of death, presenting Himself as the Author of life. This is a confusing picture.

It is a world where, **"Children are born into it through pain and in pain. Their growth is attended by suffering, and they learn of sorrow and separation and death."** (T.13.IN.2.5-6) (ACIM OE T.11.X.86) Jesus says, **"If this were the real world, God *would* be cruel. For no Father could subject His children to this as the price of salvation and *be* loving."** (T.13.IN.3.1)(ACIM OE T.11.X.87) It makes God someone to be feared who cannot be trusted.

Now you see, **"The body is your only savior."** (W.72.6.8) For if the body is to be taken as real, it means the death of God. **"Some hate the body, and try to hurt and humiliate it. Others love the body, and try to glorify and exalt it."** (W.72.7.2-3) Whether we love the body or hate it, we have made it real. What happens when we put our attention on our bodily existence as our reality? We take whatever pleasures we can get and do our best to avoid pain. We turn to the body as our friend rather than listen to the Holy Spirit. We rely on ourselves and turn to the ego for guidance on what to do. We invest in our own counsel on how to keep ourselves safe, healthy and attractive. The decision to come into the body and the world in the first place was an attack on God so we could exist at His expense. We have chosen to do it our way, and we will experience what we came here to experience until we come to the place where we deem there must be a better way.

Jesus describes our condition as **"upside-down perception."** (W.72.8.3) In other words, we have it all wrong. Our reality is not that of a body. We are a mind. The body is a projection of that mind. Seeing yourself in the body with the **"truth outside of you, locked away from your awareness by the body's limitations,"** (W.72.8.4) is what you are called to see differently if you want peace of mind. What peace can there be when we identify with the limitations of the body that will eventually wither and die? Jesus asks us to recognize that we are not bodies, and therefore the body should not be our concern. Our natural state is to be without a body. Jesus

implores us to identify with the truth, which is what we are. It is the Self "**separate from the body,**" (W.72.9.5) and without limits of any kind. To recognize this about ourselves, we must "**replace attack with acceptance.**" (W.72.10.2) In other words, the only reason we don't know we are mind is we block the truth about ourselves by holding beliefs that are not true.

Jesus says, "**It is the body that is outside us, and is not our concern.**" (W.72.9.2) He goes on to say, "**To be without a body is to be in our natural state.**" (W.72.9.3) The body is part of those clouds discussed in previous Lessons. It is just another projection of the mind as is the rest of the world of form. Anyone who has had the experience of the holy instant of leaving the body and "seeing" the body as separate from themselves has some sense of this, whether in meditation or an experience like described by Elizabeth Gilbert in her book "Eat, Pray, Love." Here are some excerpts of her experience.

"I got pulled through the wormhole of the Absolute, and in that rush I suddenly understood the workings of the universe completely. I left my body, I left the room, I left the planet, I stepped through time and I entered the void. I was inside the void, but I also was the void and I was looking at the void, all at the same time. The void was a place of limitless peace and wisdom. The void was conscious and it was intelligent. The void was God, which means that I was inside God."

"It was the deepest love I'd ever experienced, beyond anything I could have previously imagined, but it wasn't euphoric. It wasn't exciting. There wasn't enough ego or passion left in me to create euphoria or excitement. It was just obvious. Like when you've been looking at an optical illusion for a long time, straining your eyes to decode the trick and suddenly your cognizance shifts and there—now you can clearly see it—the two vases are actually two faces. Once you've seen through optical illusion, you can never not see it again."

"Imagine cramming yourself into such a puny box of identity when you could experience your infinitude instead. I wondered, why have I been chasing happiness my whole life when bliss was here the entire time?"

This is not unlike many others who have struggled to describe an experience that is difficult to put into words. An experience like this does not change the need to do the work of releasing grievances and continuing the healing process, but it does offer a glimpse of our reality beyond the body and motivates us to stay on this path. Even momentary glimpses of the peace that passes all understanding is so very rewarding.

Jesus speaks about how we have promised the ego we would keep God at a distance, and in our secret vows we have promised each other to maintain the separation. "**Yet it is a promise to another to be hurt by him, and to attack him in return.**" (T.28.VI.4.7) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.57) This promise is buried in our subconscious, but it is at the bottom of our resistance to the Course and why we find this spiritual journey hard. Later, Jesus says we have also made a promise to God. "**In his creation did his Father say, 'You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me,'"** (T.28.VI.6.4-5) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.59) to which we replied, "**I will.**" (T.28.VI.6.6) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.59) While we have made a promise to the ego to depart from God and to each other, to maintain our attacks and betrayals, we can't maintain this promise forever. We have made a promise to God never to be apart from Him, and the Atonement Principle is our assurance this is so. We simply can't change who we are as we were created. All we have done is to forget the truth.

While yesterday we read the ego's mantra is, **"Seek but do not find,"** (W.71.4.2) the Holy Spirit assures us to **"Seek and you will find."** (T.12.IV.4.5) (ACIM OE T.11.5.39) Under His guidance, we are led back to the recognition of the Christ Self that we are. So, again we see that the ego's plan for salvation is the opposite to God's. God's plan requires us to set aside the temptation to hold grievances that keep us from peace. We are called to see our brothers as ourselves, joining in our sameness instead of separating. In our bodily identity communication is limited and our focus is on differences which maintains the separation. It is God's Love that surrounds us and not the body. The body is not our source and not our reality. God is.

Forgiveness is our way back to God. When we hold grievances and when we judge our brothers, we actively attack God's plan for salvation. His plan is for us to see our brothers as innocent so we can know our own innocence. His plan is for us to accept Atonement for ourselves. It is to accept the healing by removing the blocks to love, which we have erected between ourselves and our brothers. When they are lifted from our minds space is made in the mind for love. When we see we only hurt ourselves with every judgment we make we become highly motivated to forgive.

We have it all wrong. We have been looking for salvation/happiness in the world by making judgments and holding grievances and seeing the world as the cause of our unhappiness. We are not sufficiently aware of how we hurt ourselves with our attacks. Jesus helps us to consider that maybe we are wrong about everything we currently believe. When we accept this possibility, we become willing to be shown another way to peace, joy and innocence. He tells us, **"Your upside-down perception has been ruinous to your peace of mind,"** (W.72.8.3) because we have accepted the limitations of our identity as a body. Faith grows as we test out His promises that our peace is in Him and will never be found in the ego's promises. **"Father, I thank You that Your promises will never fail in my experience, if I but test them out."** (W.327.2.1)

A loving, eternal God and a limited body and personality can't both be true. Thus, it is one or the other. Jesus says, **"This is the universal belief of the world you see."** (W.72.7.1) This is the belief in duality, which exists when we believe both in the existence of God and in the reality of the world. Duality is also the belief in the reality of the body and of its ultimate death. Whether we hate the body by sacrificing it as a martyr or ascetic, or whether we serve the body in a hedonistic way by having a blast, both sides agree that God is the author of the body. Whichever side we take, seeing the body for pleasure or hating it, either way we have made the body real. **"But while the body stands at the center of your concept of yourself, you are attacking God's plan for salvation, and holding your grievances against Him and His creation, that you may not hear the Voice of truth and welcome It as Friend. Your chosen savior takes His place instead. It is your friend; He is your enemy."** (W.72.7.4-6) Thus, we avoid the Voice for truth by listening to the voice of the ego and forfeiting our reality as a Son of God, complete, perfect and whole as we were created. We do this at great cost to our peace of mind.

We have bought into this whole story of guilt and have never looked at how the ego set it all up. Just like the Prodigal son, we feel we can never face God and go home again. Jesus appeals to us to take the steps he has laid out so we can reclaim our God-given innocence. **"Ask and you will be answered. Seek and you will find."** (W.72.11.3-4) **"Choose once again if you would take the place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there."** (T.31.VIII.1.5) (ACIM OE T.31.VIII.84)

Today, we practice laying judgment aside. When we are tempted to look to the ego to tell us where to look for our peace and happiness, we will instead ask, **"What is salvation, Father. I do not know. Tell me, that I may understand."** (W.72.12.2-4) Listen with confidence and

certainty **"that the answer will be true because of Whom you ask."** (W.72.11.7) When we release our grievances and judgments and refuse to invest in the illusion of attack and are no longer interested in winning at our brothers expense, only then will we hear the truth.

"Whenever you feel your confidence wane and your hope of success flicker and go out, repeat your question and your request, remembering that you are asking of the Infinite Creator of infinity, Who created you like Himself: *What is salvation, Father? I do not know. Tell me, that I may understand.*" (W.72.12.1-4) Our confidence wanes when we are tempted by the ego to forget our function of forgiveness and once again start listening to the ego. At such times, Jesus urges us to simply remember the truth of what he is telling us here. He is reminding us that we can remember our purpose anytime we choose. Our purpose is to wake up from this dream of misery, suffering, and death.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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