

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 126

All that I give is given to myself.

Sarah's Commentary:

Over the years, as I have watched my own process with the application of these Lessons, I have noticed how much resistance I have had in following the instructions for the Lesson practice as laid out by Jesus. I had tended to do the practice the way I believed worked for me. I had resistance to following the structure, and I noticed my reluctance to complying with the careful design in each Lesson. In other words, I put myself in charge of the process instead of surrendering to the plan provided by Jesus. What makes me think that my way and my process is right? Could it be because of my issue with authority and being told what to do? It is not at all hard for me to see this is the case. Jesus says that the authority problem is the root of all evil and not money as we have believed it to be. Jesus asks us to, "**Be willing to be taught.**" (W.126.10.3)

It is helpful for each of us to look at the many forms our resistance takes. It may be: forgetting the Lesson, deciding to do it our way, or projecting from our own understanding of what we have learned in the past onto what we read. I see the resistance in my mind to "being told what to do." Clearly, I like to do things my way. It certainly is an indication of the level of fear I have of waking up from this dream. I see how attached I am to my way, my specialness, my unique self, and my values and beliefs. It is an investment in this world that I still hang onto. Having said that, there is certainly a significant increase in my level of trust as I experience the miracles in my life. **"Every miracle that you accomplish speaks to you of the Fatherhood of God. Every healing thought that you accept, either from your brother or in your own mind, teaches you that you are God's Son. In every hurtful thought you hold, wherever you perceive it, lies the denial of God's Fatherhood and of your Sonship."** (T.11.II.2.4-6) (ACIM OE T.10.III.17) This is how trust and confidence are being developed as our perception is changed.

And thus, over time, the teaching has taken on a deeper, more profound meaning for me. In accepting the power of forgiveness and experiencing many miracles, the shifts taking place in my mind have brought more peace and joy into my life. I am finding it increasingly painful to accept the ego's counsel to compare, judge, attack, and try to benefit at anyone else's expense. It makes me realize the message of this Lesson even more fully, which is that I can only give to myself. **"All that I give is given to myself."** (W.126) There is only One Self. My brother and I are one, and what I give to him, I am giving to myself. When I attack him, I am only attacking and hurting myself.

The Lesson today is pivotal to our appreciation of just how wrong we are about everything. This realization is essential to our willingness to listen and to be taught. This Lesson, more than perhaps any other, is significant in overcoming the ego. It is one we should really give our attention to. I say this because Jesus is very clear in his statement, **"Today's idea, completely alien to the ego and the thinking of the world, is crucial to the thought reversal that this course will bring about."** (W.126.1.1) In other words, we will not see the importance of it

until we really apply the Lesson. Oh yes, we might at this point be able to understand the ideas conceptually and even have some significant success with forgiveness, but Jesus goes on to explain why we still really don't get it. He explains how we don't understand that when we attack a brother, we are hurting ourselves. In the same vein, we don't see that when we give love, we are receiving it for ourselves. In other words, we don't see that there is only one of us. We share one identity---the Christ Self. As such, there is only one mind, and there can be nothing outside of my mind. As long as we still see ourselves as different from our brothers, we will think that we are completely safe from our projections onto them. The ego has taught us that "ideas leave their source" in the mind. The fact is, what we give our brothers, we keep for ourselves. This is the reversal of the thought system that Jesus is talking about, and because it reverses everything that we currently hold as true, it is very challenging for us.

The thought system of the ego, which is to see differences and to make separation real in our minds, certainly does not affirm this message of sameness. The thought system of the ego is entirely based on differences, on private thoughts, and on separate interests. It started with the thoughts, "I am separate from God and different from Him. Now I have a will separate from God, and I am the one sitting on the throne, not Him. There can only be one reality, so if He is real, how can I also be real and exist? It must be either Him or me--one or the other. Both can't be true." This is the basis for the thought of separation that came with a mad idea. **"Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh."** (T.27.VIII.6.2) (ACIM OE T.27.IX.82) It was the first thought of separation, differences, and competition. Time seems to have been made real in that moment. It now appears that a part of God can attack itself. We don't see ourselves as the same but rather as separate beings, thinking our own separate thoughts, and living in our separate bodies. I see everyone outside of me and different from me.

As a result, we don't see our brothers' appeal for help as our own. We don't see their problems as having anything to do with us, but we see them as miserable sinners who are responsible for the condition of their lives. They are seen as the guilty ones, not us. We, therefore, hope God's punishment will, ultimately, fall on them rather than on us. While this is not a conscious thought, it is the basis for our investment in seeing others as guilty. By comparison, we see ourselves as the innocent ones. The guilt in our minds is now on them. In this scenario, our hope is that we will get off scot-free while they will experience God's punishment.

We can easily find those to blame for the condition of our lives. We are loath to see their sins as our own projection of the guilt in our own minds that came with the belief in separation. We think we can judge their "evil deeds," and yet remain apart from the judgment we put on them. This is because we have forgotten the origin of our self-condemnation, which is the guilt in our own minds. We have chosen not to see this guilt but have projected it onto figures in the dream that we are dreaming. This is precisely how the ego set it all up. Knowing we could not live with such a load of guilt, it devised a plan to get "rid" of it by seeing our own guilt in our brothers instead. To make it all seem real, the ego has given us separate bodies with senses so we can see our sins in others. **"It seems to you that other people are apart from you, and able to behave in ways which have no bearing on your thoughts, nor yours on theirs."** (W.126.2.2)

Jesus goes on to explain that when we see sin in others as real and then try to overlook it or forgive it, this is actually a form of attack. He calls it, **"Forgiveness-to-Destroy."** (Song of Prayer.2.II) I spoke about it before in Lesson 121. It is basically about being charitable to someone whom we see as less worthy so we might see ourselves as superior and even more spiritual. **"He has not earned your charitable tolerance, which you bestow on one unworthy of the gift, because his sins have lowered him beneath a true equality with you."** (W.126.3.3) Thus, our superior stance in relation to another, whom we choose to forgive and deem guilty of a

sin, is simply an attack. While we may think that we are offering forgiveness, we are actually benefiting ourselves. We make the sin real in someone else and then maintain our own specialness at the expense of our brother's innocence. I am the determiner of whether you deserve my charitable notion of forgiveness or not, which is based on my judgment of your worthiness. To a large extent, this kind of forgiveness is based on a whim. It is how the Bible has defined God---sometimes punishing and sometimes merciful, depending on His mood. It is a situation where we have made God in our own image. We have told Him who He is, according to our own projection of our idea of Him.

In summary, we believe: 1. Other people are apart from us. 2. Their thoughts have no bearing on ours. 3. There is no direct impact of our attitudes on theirs. 4. Their call for help has nothing to do with our own need for help. 5. We can judge their sin without affecting our perception of ourselves. In other words, we believe we can remain perfectly at peace, condemning others with no effect on ourselves. Isn't this the way we mostly think? Buying into the ego thought system is buying into our belief that we are separate, unique individuals with separate interests. We are bodies, living in a world of time and space, birth and death, experiencing pain, pleasure, vulnerability, and problems, all of which we see as real.

In this view of forgiveness, we don't receive the gift of forgiveness for ourselves. With this kind of forgiveness, we are not correcting anything in our own minds. Oh, we may feel like do-gooders in the process, but we don't feel true innocence, joining, or Oneness with our brothers. **"If this be true, forgiveness has no grounds on which to rest dependably and sure."** (W.126.5.1) In fact, **"It is an eccentricity, in which you sometimes choose to give indulgently an undeserved reprieve."** (W.126.5.2) Thus, we can't receive it for ourselves because we don't recognize our own guilt but only the guilt in the other. The guilt in our own minds is now hidden and protected. In this picture, we are clearly separate and different, which reinforces the ego's program. No wonder Jesus concludes that we don't understand forgiveness. **"As you see it, it is but a check upon overt attack, without requiring correction in your mind."** (W.126.6.2) In other words, we see nothing wrong in ourselves that needs to be changed. I see the problem and the correction as being "out there" and having nothing to do with me.

We rail against the world and against the guilt in others. Clearly, Jesus tells us that there is no peace in this because there is no release from the guilt in our own minds. As we see forgiveness, **"It has no power to restore your unity with him to your awareness."** (W.126.6.5) The goal of this Course is to heal the guilt in our own minds, which cannot occur when we see forgiveness in this way. **"It is not what God intended it to be for you."** (W.126.6.6) God intended forgiveness as a gift we give ourselves for the healing of our own minds; now we can experience the gifts He has laid out for us that we currently don't consistently experience. These gifts are peace, ". . . happiness, a quiet mind, a certainty of purpose, and a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world." (W.122.1.4)

Taking responsibility for our own projections is the process by which healing can be brought to our minds. When the sin, guilt, and fear in our minds (none of which are real) are brought to the light, we will see a world of innocence. We would have no problem at all forgiving anyone if we truly saw that this would free us from continuing to hurt *ourselves*. **"You would understand the means by which salvation comes to you, and would not hesitate to use it now."** (W.126.1.3) How we see others has a profound effect on how we see *ourselves*. When we condemn others, we lose our own peace of mind. Surely, it is not something we would want to choose for ourselves, and yet in our insanity, we do.

We will only know our own innocence when we can see it in others. Does that mean we should pretend that we don't see wrongdoing? No, we will continue to see misbehavior, but can we

perhaps see someone who is attacking and still recognize the innate innocence of that person? This would mean that we would see beyond appearances, which is to see with vision. It would mean that we overlook error. When we lack confidence in our brothers, we deny the power of their minds to change, and thus we deny the power of our own minds to change. The gift of forgiveness is really for ourselves. **"Yet would He ask you for a gift unless it was for you?"** (W.126.7.2) True forgiveness is the way we achieve the gifts salvation has to offer, one of which is the gift of happiness. **"And true forgiveness, . . . must heal the mind that gives, for giving is receiving."** (W.126.7.5) When we bring our own projections back to the mind, take responsibility for them there, and willingly turn them over to the Holy Spirit, then only **"What remains as unreceived has not been given, but what has been given must have been received,"** (W.126.7.6) because our minds are joined.

As I was writing this, a friend dropped by in great distress because he said his boss was constantly criticizing him. Thus, he sees his boss as guilty of attacking him and he, in turn, defends his position as one of innocence and feels completely misunderstood and victimized. What my friend chooses not to see are his own self-attacking thoughts, which he sees as outside himself and played out by the boss. His boss is exemplifying the role my friend has assigned to him. He is acting out the attack in my friend's mind and seeing it in the split-off part of himself, now seen in his boss. The answer is to take back our projections that we have placed onto our brother and see how they reflect some aspects of ourselves. Now we have an opportunity to inquire within our minds about the root of our own distress. We start with the premise that anyone with a healed mind would not be upset by events outside ourselves. We are being called to change our perception of the other so we can change our perception of ourselves. This is what the gift of salvation is, and the means for this is true forgiveness, where we take complete responsibility for the outward picture of our own inward condition. Jesus says, **"You will need help to make this meaningful, because it is so alien to the thoughts to which you are accustomed."** (W.126.8.2)

Thus, we are cautioned by Jesus when he says, **"Do not leave any spot of pain hidden from His Light, and search your mind carefully for any thoughts you may fear to uncover. For He will heal every little thought you have kept to hurt you and cleanse it of its littleness, restoring it to the magnitude of God."** (T.13.III.7.5-6) (ACIM OE T.12.III.17) This requires true humility and willingness to accept the correction of our own thoughts. We must learn to recognize how we are using others to keep ourselves from the love we are. It takes great learning because, as Jesus says, it is indeed alien to our current way of thinking. We will benefit in this process when we call on our mighty companions to support us in our inquiry.

"And if you only catch a tiny glimpse of the release that lies in the idea we practice today, this is a day of glory for the world." (W.126.8.5) We do this by exempting no one from our love since we no longer choose to crucify ourselves. We choose to join our brothers rather than set ourselves apart. We are learning to give up the insanity of the ego. We are willing to see that we have been wrong about ourselves and are willing to **"Give Him your faith today, and ask Him that He share your practicing in truth today."** (W.126.8.4) Ask for help today whenever you see a problem "out there." Be willing to see it originating in your own mind and recognize that it can only be forgiven there. Others are quite simply a reflection of what is unhealed in our own minds. Thus, the help you ask for in any situation is always for yourself. Forgiveness offers us the power to release our own minds and is of infinite worth to us. All the forgiveness we give we give to ourselves for the healing of our own mind. **"And true forgiveness, as the means by which it [Salvation] is attained, must heal the mind that gives, for giving is receiving."** (W.126.7.5)

Our judgments and attacks are all a defense against love, and yet we yearn to know ourselves as innocent. The conflict in our minds will continue until we recognize and accept this and make

forgiveness our first priority in every situation. Again, we do this by being ". . . **willing to be taught.**" (W.126.10.3) "**Be glad to hear the Voice of truth and healing speak to you, and you will understand the words He speaks, and recognize He speaks your words to you.**" (W.126.10.4) In other words, the truth is already in our minds and known to us. The Holy Spirit is not separate from us.

We are urged to make this day of special value to us. We must set our goal today to remember, "**All I give is given to myself. The Help I need to learn that this is true is with me now. And I will trust Him.**" (W.126.11.3-5) This means that we must become willing to go through this day and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit throughout the day to shine away all disturbing thoughts that keep us blind to the grandeur of our reality as the Son of God. It means that we choose to stay vigilant with regard to any distressing thoughts and be willing to choose against them with His help. Ask for it, and trust that the Answer is always given when we commit to seeing the false as false.

Watch your judgments today and be vigilant in watching your mind so you can bring your judgments and attacks to the light and see that they are your own secret sins that you are holding against your brother. Any attack on your brother is never justified. When you see anyone outside of yourself, seeming to rob you of your peace, be willing to bring your misperceptions to the holy altar and place them there for healing. Be willing to see that you share the same interests as your brother. We have all been taught wrongly. All the expressions of strong feelings and opinions that we hold, either good or bad, are illusory and simply reflect our past learning. Real strength is in the quietness of our minds where truth resides.

Again, remind yourself as often as you can that you have a goal today, an aim which makes this day of special value to you and all your brothers. Do not forget this goal for long, but tell yourself: "**All that I give is given to myself. The Help I need to learn that this is true is with me now. And I will trust in Him.**" (W.126.11.3-5) Then, enter the stillness and hear the Holy Spirit speak to you.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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