

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 151

All things are echoes of the Voice for* God.

Sarah's Commentary:

Our bodies and the world were made as a defense against the love we are. Everything here is a reflection of the guilt in the mind projected onto the world. It all attests to separation. Yet, as we have seen in the Review Lessons, Jesus tells us that our minds hold only what we think with God. When the guilt in the mind is released, only peace and joy are reflected, but we experience fear in letting go of the known. We fear the Love we are. It is the last obstacle to peace, which is the fear of God.

My friend, Stacy Sully, asked, "What does it mean to be at the mercy of love?" She went on to say, "It means a trust beyond all reason. A surrender pregnant with pure unlimited potential. A total relinquishing of all the ideas I hold about life. Slipping into the silence and allowing love to show me who I AM. It means touching the deepest places of my vulnerability and being nakedly honest about my cherished defenses. If I am truly at the mercy of love, then there could be no conditions that I could place on the manner in which love chooses to show me who I AM. Whether it be the deepest darkest canyon or the highest brightest peak, it is all the same to Love. I cannot claim victimhood, abandonment, rejection, or unworthiness. My preferences and aversions must be seen as my ultimate defenses. I can no longer hide in my stories."

We do hide in our stories, and we do distract from our pain or make others responsible for it. When we notice our defenses, we are provided with an opportunity to become aware of how afraid we are of the all-consuming love of God. When we notice how we are defending, we can start to question what it is about for us. When we become willing to look behind our defenses, we begin the process of questioning the validity of the "dirge" we sing and the stories we hide in. We start to question the value of holding onto our defenses when all they do is to keep us in a state of suffering. No, it is not necessary or even helpful to go looking or digging to see what we are hiding from ourselves. We can instead use what is given in our daily lives and in our relationships as a classroom for learning where we can look behind our defenses when we are willing to do the healing. When we are willing to become curious about our reactions, we can investigate what is happening to trigger defensive reactions in us. Our reactions are based on what we value, the beliefs we hold, and our self-concepts. It is all part of the conditioned mind and not who we are. When the mind is quiet, and we refuse to attend to the raucous shrieks of the ego, we find respite in the quiet center of the mind. It is this we bring to the world to reflect God's love wherever we go.

We hide our uncertainties under the guise of certainty. **"Its seeming certainty is but a cloak for the uncertainty it would conceal."** (W.151.1.4) We think we know, but what can we really know when we are told, **"No one can judge on partial evidence."** (W.151.1.1) Jesus reminds us, **"It is necessary for the Teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge,**

but that he cannot. In giving up judgment, he is merely giving up what he did not have." (Manual for Teachers.10.2.1-2) He goes on to say judgment is impossible. Why? Because, **"In order to judge anything rightly, one would have to be fully aware of an inconceivably wide range of things; past, present and to come. One would have to recognize in advance all the effects of his judgments on everyone and everything involved in them in any way. And one would have to be certain there is no distortion in his perception, so that his judgment would be wholly fair to everyone on whom it rests now and in the future. Who is in a position to do this? Who except in grandiose fantasies would claim this for himself?"** (M.10.3.3-7)

Our senses, meaning our eyes, ears, and brains that interpret what we think is reality, are there to convince us that the world is real. They inform us that what we see, hear, experience, feel, and touch is actually there. Our senses were made by the ego to keep us in ignorance about our true reality given us by God in our creation. Jesus says that our faith in the information we gather daily through our senses is pathetic! He bluntly tells us that all of our interpretations are wrong. It is humbling to be told we are mistaken about everything we think. The truth is, **"My mind holds only what I think with God."** (W.R.IV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE W.R.IV.3) Everything else is simply not the truth. **"You cannot judge. You merely can believe the ego's judgments, all of which are false."** (W.151.4.3-4) Since we don't really believe this yet, we have work to do.

We think we understand something only to learn that we have been wrong. We think we observe correctly only to be deceived. We think something in the world is true, and it turns out not to be. We discover our senses really can't be trusted. So why do we continue to trust them? Jesus tells us that we do so because we are choosing to be deceived. We are determined to make correct the things we believe might actually be incorrect. All of our uncertainty started when we first chose to listen to the ego. With this choice came doubt about who we are. Now, in our uncertainty, we have made an image, and it is the image we defend. It is who we think we are. The world and the body are massive defenses against the reality of our Eternal Self.

This is why we need help from outside of this dream---we have become convinced we are right about the way we see things. **"It [the ego] guides your senses carefully, to prove how weak you are; how helpless and afraid, how apprehensive of just punishment, how black with sin, how wretched in your guilt."** (W.151.4.5) There is no question that we have bought the ego's story that we have sinned and are guilty. It has convinced us that we can expect punishment for what we have done. This keeps us in a state of fear. We feel vulnerable, lacking, afraid, abandoned, and unworthy of love, and we feel bad about ourselves. With these feelings come addiction, anxiety, depression, and difficult relationships.

The guilt is such a burden on our minds that we try whatever we can to be rid of it. The ego has given us a plan to get rid of our guilt by projecting it onto others. Yet it failed to reveal to us that not only will this not work, but we will feel even more guilty. With projection, others are now made to be responsible for how we feel. Something or someone "out there" must be the cause of my distress. When we identify with the ego's thought system of sin and guilt, we are in a constant state of defense against seemingly external attacks. Jesus helps us to see that it is only mind that is the cause of what we experience, and our minds can change as we learn to take responsibility for our perceptions and turn them over for his interpretations, as a substitute for our own. He will always assure us we are innocent. When we know our innocence, we will see it reflected in everyone. We will see all things are indeed the echoes of the Voice for God. There is only love and nothing else.

When we experience a spiritual connection, a holy instant, it is a threat to the ego because it knows we can withdraw our allegiance to it anytime we choose. It knows its existence is in peril because it is only our allegiance to it that maintains it. Our burning love for God has put us on this path and as we draw closer to the connection with Spirit, our investment in the ego is lessened. And it is what turns the ego from suspicious to vicious. It is an ego backlash where we experience its retaliation. This can cast us into an experience of doubt and despair about our goal to awaken. The resistance can increase as we draw nearer to the truth of who we are, but it can't stop us unless we allow it.

The ego requires us to continue to believe in the reality of this world for its existence. Its fear is that we actually are God's Son and not what we have made of ourselves. As we go through the journey of the development of trust, we go through stages of undoing, sorting, relinquishment, states of peace, and back through the stages. It is helpful to see how, during the process, there will be times where the going gets hard. The ego retaliates, we lose faith, and are tempted to give up on this path, but this is often when the biggest progress is being made. As Jesus reminds us, we can't rely on our own perceptions of how we are doing. **"There are areas in your learning skills that are so impaired that you can progress only under constant, clear-cut direction, provided by a Teacher Who can transcend your limited resources."** (T.12.V.5.2) (ACIM OE T.11.VI.47) This is a time of trust. **"Put yourself not in charge of this, for you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat."** (T.18.V.1.5) (ACIM OE T.18.VI.41)

If indeed, **"All things are echoes of the Voice for God,"** (W.151) then communication from God is continuous and is in everything and everyone around us. It is similar to the thought we have been practicing, **"My mind holds only what I think with God."** (W.R.IV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE W.IV.3) The only challenge is that we do not hear it, or know, it because of our own investment in the reality of the world, as defined by the ego and confirmed by our senses. Yet in every brother, we are given the opportunity to hear the truth. **"Behold your God in him [your brother] for what you see will be your Answer."** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet.2.VII.7.8) Instead of sending out messengers, looking for evidence of guilt, we now look for evidence of love and innocence. **"What fear would feed upon, love overlooks. What fear demands, love cannot even see."** (T.19.IV.A.i.11.4-5) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.50) The truth is in everyone. We are all part of the Christ Mind, as One Son. We are learning to undo the belief that separate interests can bring us peace and happiness. We go together, you and I.

"The Holy Spirit has given you love's messengers to send instead of those you trained through fear. They are as eager to return to you what they hold dear as are the others. If you send them forth, they will see only the blameless and the beautiful, the gentle and the kind. They will be as careful to let no little act of charity, no tiny expression of forgiveness, no little breath of love escape their notice. And they will return with all the happy things they found, to share them lovingly with you. Be not afraid of them. They offer you salvation. Theirs are the messages of safety, for they see the world as kind." (T.19.IV.A.i.14.1-8) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.53)

The remedy is to turn our thoughts to the Holy Spirit and not try to do this for ourselves because we simply can't. We have a lot of investment in the things of the world, and we continue to believe in the reality of pain, disaster, suffering, and loss and can't see beyond them to the shining radiance of the real world. We need help to do this, and the way we get this help is by being willing to question our way of seeing the world. In fact, **"Whom He has judged can only laugh at guilt, unwilling now to play with toys of sin; unheeding of the body's witnesses before the rapture of Christ's holy face."** (W.151.8.4) We need faith and trust in order to

believe that only good can come to us no matter how much we see hate and anger reflected in the world.

When we no longer listen to the voice of the ego, we will see with vision, which reflects the truth of who we are. In order to uncover the truth within us, we need to be willing to pay attention to our ego thoughts so we can bring them to light for healing. We can't heal what we hide from ourselves and defend against. Jesus assures us that turning over our judgments (our thoughts) to the Holy Spirit can bring about Heaven's blessing in every circumstance. Our thoughts do need purification, but no matter how hard we might try, it is not something we can accomplish on our own. He can accomplish it for us, but we must give up the false certainty of the "I know" mind, be willing to be wrong about everything we think we know, and be willing to be taught. This is what is meant in the Bible saying that mentions we must become as little children. We must put our own perspectives to doubt and make room for Him. **"And you will see the love beyond the hate, the constancy in change, the pure in sin, and only Heaven's blessing on the world."** (W.151.11.3)

If all things are echoes of the Voice for God, then Heaven's blessing is in every circumstance. When we see with vision, we are resurrected. How this looks in our daily lives is that no matter what anyone says, no matter how seemingly hateful, no matter how apparently angry, no matter how sad or lost or pitiful the communication, we will **"see the holy face of Christ in everything, and hear in everything no sound except the echo of God's Voice."** (W.151.12.4) What this means is that we won't join in the attacks and judgments on others and neither will we join with their sadness and suffering. **"To empathize does not mean to join in suffering, for that is what you must refuse to understand. That is the ego's interpretation of empathy, and is always used to form a special relationship in which the suffering is shared. The capacity to empathize is very useful to the Holy Spirit, provided you let Him use it in His way. His way is very different. He does not understand suffering, and would have you teach it is not understandable. When He relates through you, He does not relate through your ego to another ego. He does not join in pain, understanding that healing pain is not accomplished by delusional attempts to enter into it, and lighten it by sharing the delusion."** (T.16.I.1.1-7) (ACIM OE T.16.I.1)

As I was writing this, I was interrupted, and because I have much on my plate today, the interruption was not welcome. I felt irritation rising in me at my brother. Then another call came in. I returned to my email only to find this message: "Take time to thank GOD when you are interrupted from your plan. If something comes up that is unavoidable, ask to find the gift in it. Consider the possibility this person or event has been sent to serve and bless you in some way. Perhaps you are being asked to open your heart more, make a stand for something you believe in or take a new direction that will ultimately be more meaningful than the one you were headed in. There are no accidents---only opportunities to dance in a bigger universe. I ask for help to be open to opportunities to know myself better. Let me recognize everyone who comes to me is a teacher and empowers me to do the things that love would have me do. I allow GOD's plan to substitute for mine. I find the jewel in every encounter, relationship, and experience." Yes, the Holy Spirit speaks to us in many ways and His timing was impeccable for what I needed to hear. Now I just need to be attentive to the message.

Today, we turn to the Holy Spirit, Who is the reflection of the certainty of God, to replace our own uncertainty. We turn to Him to help us see that our way has only brought misery and pain. Yet when we look at it all through His eyes, we see that nothing here is serious, even though we tend to make it serious. Jesus calls it all just the toys of children. In the illusion, actions often do have tragic consequences. In truth, nothing real has happened. The Holy Spirit helps us to see that it is

illusion. It is all our own dream, coming from our wrong-minded perspective. When we bring our pain and suffering to Him, we learn to see that we have looked at it wrongly, and in that acknowledgment, we are willing to be shown there is another way to see everything. When we are willing to release our investment in our way of seeing, we become willing to be taught. It is not about denying what we are seeing, only the willingness to step out of the dream, above the battleground, where we can see everything in this world as a reflection of love, or a call for love.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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