

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 18

I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson continues with the idea that our thoughts are not neutral. They all produce effects. They are the cause of what we experience. Not only that, they affect all minds since minds are joined. **"The idea for today is another step in learning that the thoughts which give rise to what you see are never neutral or unimportant. It also emphasizes the idea that minds are joined, which will be given increasing stress later on."** (W.18.1.1-2) We are not these separate, independent, private minds that we believe we are. There is just one Son that seemed to split into billions of pieces. The memory of God's Love is still in each part of the separated Son. Our right minds hold the memory of God reflected in the symbol of the Holy Spirit. We all have access to this truth within each of us.

Ken Wapnick describes the One Christ Self that we are as a huge pane of glass, which seemed to shatter, but before it shattered, the memory of God's Love was already imprinted in the glass. When we seemed to separate, the whole thing shattered into billions and billions of fragments. They constitute the entire physical universe. The memory of God's Love is still within each fragment, and this memory is totally unified. Despite the seeming fragmentation in this dream where we all seem to be separate, the reality is that we are all One. From the point of view of the fragmented pane of glass, we appear to be very different, but from the point of view of the Holy Spirit, Who is a reminder of our Oneness, we are simply having a silly dream. Obviously, to us, it is not silly because we take it very seriously. In the illusion, there are serious and tragic consequences, but God did not create any of this. It is all our own making.

Oneness is reflected in the world when we see that we are all the same. We have the same Holy Spirit---the memory of God in us all, and we identify with the same ego in the wrong mind. When we see ourselves and others as different and separate, we are choosing to identify with the ego in the wrong mind. The ego makes comparisons and judgments. This keeps us feeling separate and alone. **"You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution. It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation for wholeness. It has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was. That one error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. Your whole world rests upon it. Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is part of it."** (T.18.I.4.1-6) (ACIM OE T.18.II.4) When truth, infinity, and life were distorted they became illusion, time, and death. With all this fragmentation, is it any wonder our experiences seem so complex and challenging here?

We have taken the simple truth and seemingly shattered it into this complex array of problems. **"This fragment of your mind is such a tiny part of it that, could you but appreciate**

the whole, you would see instantly that it is like the smallest sunbeam to the sun, or like the faintest ripple on the surface of the ocean." (T.18.VIII.3.3) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.73) The problem is, **"In its amazing arrogance, this tiny sunbeam has decided it is the sun; this almost imperceptible ripple hails itself as the ocean."** (T.18.VIII.3.4) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.73) With this decision, God becomes our enemy, and we fear Him. The reality is that we are simply an aspect of the one picture that has never been broken, and we can't be apart from God. **"Without the sun the sunbeam would be gone; the ripple without the ocean is inconceivable."** (T.18.VIII.4.6) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.74) All of this is being played out in **"The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first."** (T.26.V.3.5) (ACIM OE T.26.VI.32) **"What is the world except a little gap perceived to tear eternity apart, and break it into days and months and years? And what are you who live within the world except a picture of the Son of God in broken pieces, each concealed within a separate and uncertain bit of clay?"** (T.28.III.7.4-5) (ACIM OE T.28.IV.34)

Now, we are in the process of undoing our belief in this dream. It is the belief that we can be separate from each other and that there is a gap between us and our brothers. Each of us can now do our part in healing the guilt that has come as a result of our belief that we could have annihilated God. The guilt arose as a result of our belief that we shattered Heaven and stole God's gifts, taking His role onto ourselves. To heal the guilt requires us to look at it since we can't heal what we don't acknowledge in ourselves. When we see a brother as guilty, we are given an opportunity to see that it is our own guilt we have projected. As we take responsibility for our projection, we bring the guilt back into our own minds and place it on the inner altar to be healed. We don't try to heal ourselves, as the ego will never undo itself. We leave this function with the Holy Spirit.

Because we are One, our minds are in constant communication. How could it be otherwise when there is only one Mind? There are, in fact, no private thoughts. All of us have had experiences that confirm this. We may be thinking of someone and they call, or we release our condemnation of someone and they respond with kindness instead of counterattack. We know when others are judging us, admiring us, or distancing themselves from us. In spite of this kind of evidence to the contrary, we still believe that we can have private thoughts. We believe that our thoughts are contained in separated minds, locked in separated bodies.

Jesus says, **"You see yourself locked in a separate prison, removed and unreachable, incapable of reaching out as being reached."** (T.18.VI.7.5) (ACIM OE T.18.VII.55) **"The body is a limit imposed on the universal communication that is an eternal property of mind. But the communication is internal. Mind reaches to itself. It is *not* made up of different parts, which reach each other. It does not go out. Within itself it has no limits, and there is nothing outside it. It encompasses everything. It encompasses you entirely; you within it and it within you. There is nothing else, anywhere or ever."** (T.18.VI.8.3-11) (ACIM OE T.18.VII.56) Then, we read something even more startling to think about, where Jesus says, **"The body is outside you, and but seems to surround you, shutting you off from others and keeping you apart from them, and them from you. It is not there."** (T.18.VI.9.1-2) (ACIM OE T.18.VII.57) Thus, the body is a projection of the mind, and while we identify with it, we think we are contained in it.

Our belief that we are separate and different from each other is an illusion. Our minds are always joined and always in communication. What I am thinking affects not only you but everyone. That is why I bring peace to all minds when I bring peace to my mind because there is only one Mind.

We see this with the shift that takes place in the mind as a result of the miracle. This also explains the impact of prayer and healing when minds are joined in a single purpose. **"A miracle is never lost. It may touch many people you have not even met, and produce undreamed of changes in situations of which you are not even aware."** (T-1.I.45.1-2) (ACIM OE T.1.I.73) Perhaps someone across the world, who planned to kill himself, put down his gun. Perhaps a prison guard, who was about to beat a prisoner, had a second thought. We just can't fathom the changes that might be happening in situations of which we are unaware.

We can't imagine the impact we can each have on the world by healing our thoughts and opening to more and more love that is our natural inheritance. A healed mind can have such an awesome, powerful healing influence on the world. We have many wonderful examples of this with symbols like Jesus and Buddha, as well as many healed masters. They are the symbols for us of what a healed mind can reflect back to us in reminding us of the truth about ourselves.

In this Lesson, we learn that thoughts have an effect on everyone and are not confined to ourselves alone. This can be very motivating and encouraging when we know our times in meditation and contemplation can result in more peace in the world. It is what we all say we want but may go about it the wrong way when we join angry marches for peace. By bringing healing to our minds, we bring healing to the world. It is our healed thoughts that communicate healing to others. When we hold negative, hateful thoughts in our minds, but provide service to others out of our motivation to do good, we are communicating attack. We don't change our thoughts by changing our behavior. Our behavior will follow naturally from a change in our thoughts. Therefore, all healing must first be at the level of thought. If I have hateful thoughts toward my partner, they affect you and everyone because there is just this one Mind. My grievances have an effect on everyone, including me! For me, this is a very humbling thought. I can't, in all honesty, tell anyone I love them if there is someone I hate. I need to bring my hateful thoughts to the Holy Spirit so the love can shine through me.

Finally, Jesus says, **"Today's idea does not refer to what you see as much as to how you see it. Therefore, the exercises for today emphasize this aspect of your perception."** (W.18.2.1-2) We start with our interpretation, which gives rise to how we see. When we experience people, who victimize us, the reality is that we actually set it up that way. Why would we do that? Why would we want others to hurt, abandon, and victimize us? It is simply to reinforce a belief in our own minds that we are the effect of what others do to us. It comes from our wish not to have any responsibility for the separation. Thus, we prefer to see ourselves abandoned by God rather than see ourselves as perpetrators of the separation. That way, we believe we can maintain that we are innocent, and God is responsible. We bring that same thought system to our experience in the world and maintain the story of victimhood. We tell our story of how much we have tried to prevail in a difficult world, and we look to others to side with us. This strategy of the ego will never heal the pain in the mind as long as we cling to the story.

The ego has set it up this way so that we will see the world as the cause of our pain, rather than our own guilt. Why would we want to see a world that causes us pain? We do this because then we don't have to take responsibility for our own angry, vengeful, murderous thoughts. We would rather see these murderous impulses in others, and so, we project our own self-attacks onto others and see them hurting us and betraying us. In other words, we prefer to see the world as the cause of our pain, rather than our own thoughts.

We claim our own innocence while seeing the guilt in others. Thus, our hope is that God will punish them for the "crime" of separation, and we will get off scot-free; but the cost to us is that we keep our guilt and pain. Jesus is showing us a way out, but since we are so invested in our way

of seeing, the reversal of our thought system will take great vigilance, time, and practice. **"Now you must learn that only infinite patience produces immediate effects."** (T.5.VI.12.1) (ACIM OE T.5.VIII.81)

For the practice, we take one minute or less, three or four times today. We look around, randomly selecting subjects, and we keep our eyes on each one long enough to say:

"I am not alone in experiencing the effects of how I see_____."

"Conclude each practice period by repeating the more general statement:

"I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing." (W.18.3.2-4)

As we move from the specific applications to more generalization, we will learn that all our perceptions are the same and all are based on the same meaningless thought that I could be separate from all there is.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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