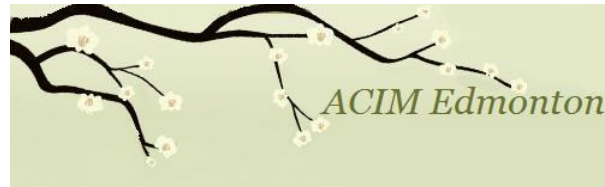


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 201 Review VI

[181] I trust my brothers, who are one with me.

Sarah's Commentary:

We have spent our last twenty Lessons continuing to address the blocks to true perception. Now we review these twenty Lessons to establish them firmly in our minds by practicing each one as often as possible throughout the day. The Review is to remind us of the importance of deeply connecting to the meaning in each Lesson and establishing it firmly in our minds. In the introduction to this Review, Jesus tells us, **"Each contains the whole curriculum if understood, practiced, accepted, and applied to all the seeming happenings throughout the day."** (W.RVI.IN.2.2) When any Lesson is fully accepted and applied it is another step in our release from the bondage of the world. All we need is just one idea, but that idea must be applied without exception.

We have a lot of resistance in the mind due to our fear of redemption but since we create our own experience, there need not be resistance. We don't need to wait in helplessness to realize spiritual freedom. We are responsible for our circumstances. We are called to take an active part in this process. It is not possible to be a victim when we accept the fact that we are an infinite creator of our reality. When we are tempted to blame anyone, we can choose to stop and remember that we can choose freedom in this instant as this is the only time it can be chosen.

The Lessons address so many aspects of the ego mind to help us recognize and accept that we have been wrong about everything. Willingness to surrender our misguided perceptions is all that is required. The ego offers up all kinds of blocks to keep the truth from entering fully into our minds, but the ego has no power except what we give it. We justify our anger and attacks and defend our positions as correct. We stubbornly hold onto our "truth," as we perceive it. Why would we want to do so when all that our perceptions do is bring more guilt, pain, and suffering? Unfortunately, we don't always recognize what we are doing. Jesus saw this when he said, "forgive them for they know not what they do."

He is our guide and helper by showing us how we are not guilty but have simply made a mistake in our thinking minds. The reason we hold onto our perceptions is because this is how we hold onto the self we think we are. It is the self that needs to see itself victimized and betrayed by others. This means we actually revel in being unfairly treated. It is our way of escaping responsibility for our condition and our situation. It gives us the justification that we need in order to blame others for how we feel. It allows us to cling to our specialness and self-concept. It reinforces the belief that our "evil" brothers will be the ones to pay the penalty for our sin.

This is why we need the Holy Spirit as the Answer to the ego's persistent hold on our minds. The Answer is already in our minds. We just need to recognize how wrong we have been and be open to hear His Answer and choose to follow. For now, we seem to need the combination of Lessons until they can ultimately blend as one. Because the process of undoing what we have made of ourselves creates resistance in the mind, the answer must come from outside the thought system of the ego. In other words, the ego will never undo itself.

The Lessons in Part II of the Workbook are much shorter, with no more detailed practice instructions. As a result, we will be left to follow the discipline we have established for ourselves until now. Lesson 153 gave us a very good overall approach to the practice, which will continue to serve us well in Part II of the Workbook. We are urged not to take less than fifteen minutes in our morning and evening meditation, and hourly remembrance during the day is encouraged. In addition, Jesus asks us to think of the Lesson as often as we can in between the hourly practice. This involves doing frequent reminders throughout each hour, although they should not be rote in nature.

We continue, as well, with the response to temptation practice, which includes how we use the Lesson to address any situation, event, or person where we are tempted to forfeit our peace. Having said that, Jesus never wants us to feel guilty if we are not ready for this kind of discipline. We do the best we can without feeling like we are being coerced into something we are not ready to do. It is an opportunity to take the process of awakening into our own hands, recognizing the value to us of rising above the clouds of distress, anger, depression, or whatever else we are feeling. Above all, we are invited to be gentle, yet firm, with ourselves in the process while not trying to be further along than we are.

Whenever we feel anxious, unfairly treated, or experience any kind of emotional or physical pain, or fear of any kind, we can turn to the Holy Spirit for help. Applying the Lesson will help us release the blocks to peace that we experience in those seemingly difficult situations. When this happens, we affirm, "***This thought I do not want. I choose instead _____.***" (Lesson for the day). (W.RVI.IN.6.2) We replace ego thoughts with the thought for the day. I know for me when I experience anger, frustration, impatience, worry, or whatever other feelings arise, the Lesson always provides the answer. I have learned to step back when the disturbance is there, take a breath and remember what I truly want and then bring my mind back to some aspect of the Lesson. I am reminded that it is up to me whether I choose to stay with the ego or make a shift above the battleground where clarity lights up the mind.

Daily, we start and end each Lesson with the thought, "***I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me.***" (W.RVI.IN.3.3-5) This becomes our central theme repeated throughout the day. It is an important thought to undo the belief in the body. We do think we are the body because we have aligned ourselves with the ego, which is our wrong mind. We affirm this daily by saying things like "I am tired," instead of "My body seems to be tired," or "I am in a car," when my body seems to be in the car. I can put my body to bed, but my mind can wander freely.

It seems that I am united with my body and it is my home, but this is just an illusion. We hold onto this illusion because we hold onto a self that is separate, unique, and special. It is all about what I think I want, what I think I need, what I value, what I desire, what I judge as important to me, what I can control and manipulate, what I fear and try to avoid, what I feel right about, who I blame for my condition, what I defend against, what I regret, what I hold grievances about and so much more. It is all identification with the separate self.

While we feed, pamper, exercise, and put energy into its care, and while we try to hold onto it, we are reminded of our limited and bound existence. As we distance ourselves from the body identification through forgiveness and remind ourselves that our reality is outside of this dream, the body can be put to a holy purpose. It can be used as a communication device for the Holy Spirit.

The idea, "I am not a body" repeated over and over in the Review Lessons. "**It is essential for your progress in this course that you accept today's idea, and hold it very dear.**"

(W.199.3.1) It is a process of recognizing that we have been wrong about everything we perceive, and we can make another choice.

We are aiming in these practices for "**deep relinquishment.**" (W.RVI.IN.3.8) We allow each ego thought that comes to our minds to be brought to awareness and released to the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge that we do not know anything and thus are willing to be taught. To say, "I do not know," is deeply threatening to the ego, yet it is the beginning of the undoing process.

The process is rigorous and takes effort. It requires vigilance in watching our thoughts. Our minds will wander, but we do these Lessons to achieve greater awareness, focus, and discipline. Pay attention to what you think about so your idle thoughts can be released. These ego thoughts are not the truth and do not define you. They are the chatter of the ego that keeps us from hearing the Voice of the Holy Spirit, constantly there, reminding us of the truth. Our idle thoughts keep us from recognizing our reality. It is not about stopping these thoughts, but only about withdrawing our interest and attention.

Our efforts are now focused on truth and less of our attention goes to what previously distracted us. Distractions are of the ego. We are not bad for following the ego's dictates, but we must recognize that they will not lead us to peace. In Mathew 6.33, Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added onto you." In other words, our freedom is in the Kingdom of God and not in the things of this world that we strive for. When we put our priority on the truth, our bodily needs are taken care of. We learn to take our hands off the steering wheel of our lives and to trust. Our focus is on the practice of forgiveness. Every difficult relationship and every challenging situation is another opportunity to see how everything is orchestrated for us, and by us, for our healing.

We are reminded that the cause is never "out there." The world is not acting on us. It is our thoughts projected onto the world that we see; it is only our own internal decision for the ego or the Holy Spirit. We are responsible for any lack of peace we experience. The events of the world just become a backdrop. Against this backdrop, we can see the choices we have made being played out. They reflect what is in the mind. Whether we undertake the role of a housewife, a photographer, a taxi driver, a stockbroker, or a psychologist, it is all simply a backdrop for forgiveness. It is about releasing our judgments of those who enter our stage in this play of life, whether in person or in our minds. There are no accidents. All have been ordained in our script, outside of the dream. All our encounters are part of our script and perfect for our awakening. Nothing is ever wrong.

We start the day remembering that our brothers are One with us. You are me. We are part of One Self. There is only One Mind. "**I trust my brothers who are one with me.**" (W.201.1) We take our focus off our brothers' mistakes, remembering that we are not different from them, and what we judge and condemn in them, is what we attack in ourselves. We remind ourselves to put our focus on who they really are—the same as ourselves. "**No one but is my brother. I am blessed with oneness with the universe and God, my Father, one Creator of the whole that is my Self, forever One with me.**" (W.201.2-3)

Dedicate your day to truth. Dedicate your practice to God. Jesus says, "**I place you in His charge,**" and asks that we let Him teach us "**what to do and say and think, each time you turn to Him.**" (W.RVI.IN.7.2) When we release our interfering thoughts, we learn to listen to His Voice. It is important to say here that His Voice is our own voice. It is not separate from us. He guides us very naturally in everything we do and say and think.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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