

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### **Lesson 22** **What I see is a form of vengeance.**

#### **Sarah's Commentary:**

Jesus tells us, "**The world was made as an attack on God.**" (W.PII.Q3.2.1) It is a world of form with the content of vengeance. The thought of separation brings with it attack because the separation started with an attack thought. This was the thought that we could have our separate identity by attacking Creation and making our own kingdom where we would be the ruler. As Jesus says, "**Would you remain within your tiny kingdom, a sorry king, a bitter ruler of all that he surveys, who looks on nothing yet who would still die to defend it?**" (T.18.VIII.7.5) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.77) That is what we wanted when we chose to separate from our Christ Self; but with separation comes humiliation, unworthiness, and a sense there is something wrong with us. We don't like these feelings, so we project our self-attacking thoughts onto others and make them responsible for how we feel.

We see the anger in the world, and to us, it appears independent of our own minds. "**Having projected his anger onto the world, he sees vengeance about to strike at him.**" (W.22.1.2) We see a world where we are constantly under attack. We believe the attack thoughts in our own mind must be in everyone's mind and this is why we expect an attack. We don't realize that we are only seeing our own attack thoughts. Because we believe we are separate from God and that the body and the world are our reality, we have a lot of guilt. The guilt in our minds is so intolerable that the ego knows that it won't have our allegiance for long if we have to live with all of it. It has given us a solution, which is to project the guilt out and see it in others. The ego does not tell us this is how we keep it. When we project the guilt, it is still in our mind. We have not gotten rid of it by projecting it. In fact, we just feel more guilty.

Because of the guilt in our mind, we now believe we deserve punishment. When we attack, we expect an attack in return, so we live in fear of what is coming at us from the world. We feel we are at the mercy of a world that treats us badly. We feel victimized by this world. The thought system of attack and defense is what everyone who comes here brings with them. It can't be otherwise because it is in the mind that chose separation. We are all here because of our choice for separation from God and our belief that we have attacked Him to gain our independent self. We don't like to take responsibility for our attack thoughts, and thus, we protect ourselves by claiming that we only attack in self-defense. "**His own attack is thus perceived as self defense.**" (W.22.1.3) Now we see ourselves as the innocent victims of what others do to us.

**"This becomes an increasingly vicious circle until he is willing to change how he sees. Otherwise, thoughts of attack and counterattack will preoccupy him and people his entire world. What peace of mind is possible to him then?"** (W.22.1.4-6) We are all stuck in this vicious circle until we ask for help from outside this thought system. When we are willing to see that this vicious circle starts in our own minds, then the attack and counterattack that set up our entire world, can be undone. As we will see in the Lesson tomorrow, Jesus assures

us, we can escape from the world we see by giving up our attack thoughts. We hold onto attack thoughts because we want others to be responsible for how we feel. We see our own attacks as justified because of what others do to us. We need to see that it this way so we can see ourselves as innocent victims of those attacks. Jesus tells us, this is not so. We have it all wrong. We are the makers of the universe, and our mind is the cause of everything we perceive. All power is in our own minds, and that is good news because we have the power to make another choice.

He reminds us, in Chapter 21, **"And Everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) **"For the guilty expect attack, and having asked for it they are attracted to it."** (T.15.VII.6.6) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.70) Our attraction to guilt is our attraction to the self we think we are. We are invested in the world, and judgment is what makes the world go around. Judgment is thus oxygen to the ego and keeps it going.

We are not aware of how much guilt we have because a veil of forgetfulness has been drawn over our minds. The guilt has been repressed and denied, though we have a vague sense that it is always there. Because it is there, we see a dangerous world and we build defenses. Yet with each defense we build, our fear increases. Defense would be unnecessary if we had nothing to fear. **"Since the separation, defenses have been used almost entirely to defend against the Atonement, and thus maintain the separation."** (T.2.III.1.2) (ACIM OE T.2.II.44)

Jon Mundy, an ACIM teacher/student, in his book, *The Missouri Mystic*, writes about being fired as a Methodist Minister. On his way to the office of the Bishop, he keeps saying over and over, "Do not attack this man, and do not defend yourself." When he arrives and hears the news of his being fired, he writes, "I think of something to say and then think 'no, this is an attack.' Then I think of something else and I think, 'No. This is a defense.' So, I say what he wants to hear me say, the only thing that is not an attack or a defense. I say 'goodbye.'"

Having done so, he saw later that the Bishop was actually doing him a great service. "He knew I wasn't a Methodist even before I did. Whoever wrestles with us hones our nerve and strengthens our skill. Bishop Black pushes me onward and upward to become who I'm meant to be. He helps me to fulfill my destiny." As we give up the attack and defense thoughts in our own mind, choosing the miracle brings healing and breaks us out of the vicious cycle of attack and counterattack. This goes against the counsel of the ego. Only by bringing the mind in alignment with the Holy Spirit can healing happen.

In the Lesson yesterday, we started the process of looking at our thoughts of anger, many of which we have long tried to hide from our awareness by not looking at them, or by diminishing their importance and projecting them. With willingness, we bring our attack thoughts to awareness. Looking at our own attack thoughts without judgment is enough. When we look without judgment and acknowledge responsibility, space is made for the miracle. The ego wants to kick and scream at the very idea of this. "What do you mean?", it demands. "Look at what they are doing to me. I am totally justified in my anger. I have every reason to be upset." But just as Jon discovered, the only way to peace is by giving up our own attack thoughts and bringing them to the light of truth so space can then be made for the miracle.

The message offered here is that there is an escape from all of this. We can achieve peace of mind. Our own thoughts have made everything we experience, and none of it is real. It is all a "savage fantasy" made up by the ego, but who we are is not the ego. We are innocent, holy, and pure beings of love and light. Because we have made this whole thing up, we have the power to change it all by realizing it is all just a fantasy made by our belief in the perishable world of form. It is not real

and does not actually exist. All I am seeing in the world are my own attack thoughts---nothing else! These attack thoughts are crystallized into form. **"My thoughts are images that I have made."** (W.15)

Our minds are indeed very powerful, but what they can't do is to change what we are as the Son of God. The Atonement Principle assures us of this. However, in the illusion, we can do anything we believe. We literally can move mountains. Once we recognize the power of our minds, we can use this power to escape from the insanity we made and learn there is another way. There is a more joyful, peaceful way to live in this world, until such time as we are ready to wake up from this dream. The power of our minds is always at work. We don't completely believe this as yet. However, we are told that somewhere in us we know we have such power. That is precisely why we dismiss it, because of our fear. It is our fear of the love we are. If we deny we have it, we can't be afraid of it. This denial of our power is supported by people who tell us not to worry about our crazy thoughts as long as we don't act on them, but this is not the truth. The power of our minds will continue to manifest but without our awareness. That is even more frightening to think about. When we recognize that the mind never loses its creative force, we will be more motivated to be vigilant in watching our thoughts.

When we take these small, daily steps in our practice, we will experience some disorientation in this period of undoing. Yet with each step we take, we make progress to another way of seeing, until we increasingly recognize that we don't want the world of attack and defense that we made.

Like many of the Lessons here, it can be tough for us to accept that we have all this anger in us; not just some of the time, but all of the time. Our desire to see nothing but peace and love will change what we see in the world. It does not necessarily mean behaviors of others will change, though they may, but it will mean we will see all behavior as love, or a call for love and understanding and nothing else.

Meanwhile, others are merely a perfect mirror for us. They reflect back to us what is in our mind. Remember, as this Lesson says, it truly is a happy discovery that we can escape all of this **"savage fantasy."** (W.22.2.1)

The world truly is tired. Aren't we all getting weary? Isn't it good to know **"All that you fear does not exist,"** (W.22.2.5) and only the eternal, everlasting, and changeless is real?

Don had made plans to be away with his buddies next week, but he did not tell me of this plan. When I asked him about it, he said he thought he had told me. The ego mind immediately had thoughts of being dismissed as unimportant, feeling left out, and wanting to retaliate with, "Well, I will just go ahead and do my own thing and not consider you." As these thoughts rolled through my mind, I stopped and looked at my own unworthiness, my attack thoughts, and my fears and asked for help to see from the vantage point of the Holy Spirit. How would He want me to see this situation? It is always to see it as an observer, from above the battleground. I am reminded that a healed mind would not be upset. When I join with the right mind, I can laugh at myself for playing out the victim role. It only took a moment for me to come back to peace. I concluded that peace was more important to me than attack and revenge. My mind would not have been changed so quickly without my years of Course practice. I am grateful that opportunities like this show up for me to look at my vengeful thoughts and take responsibility for them.

We are encouraged to do this Lesson at least five times today for at least one minute each time. Look around, and as your eyes move slowly from one thing to another, say:

***"I see only the perishable.  
I see nothing that will last.  
What I see is not real.  
What I see is a form of vengeance."*** (W.22.3.3-6)

This is a very challenging statement when I apply it to myself. I see that I still want the perishable body and the world because I still value my experience here.

***"Is this the world I really want to see?"*** (W.22.3.8)

He says, **"The answer is surely obvious."** (W.22.3.9)

To us, it is not so obvious when we are still invested in the world. We still do want to see it and be part of it, but Jesus assures us that this world is not what we truly want in our sane mind. Beyond this world, there is a world we want.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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