

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 302 Where darkness was, I look upon the light.

Sarah's Commentary:

When we experience a miracle, our perception is shifted. We no longer see things quite the way we saw them before. Jesus said that the reason for his bringing the Course to the world when he did was to facilitate a "celestial speedup." We are part of this speedup as we engage in the process of awakening. A celestial speedup is the recognition that there is no time and nothing has happened. It is all a dream. Now he says that **"our eyes are opening at last."** (W.302.1.1) Now there is more light in our life. Enlightenment is the opening up to the light and to the truth of what we are and always have been, and the Second Coming is the Correction of our mistakes and the return to sanity. This is the restoration of our true Self, which was never lost. We just forgot because we experienced the temporary insanity of the separation. Temporary? Yes. **"Only an instant does this world endure."** (W.300) Our release is just a thought away **"from what we made."** (W.184.15.7)

"Now we see that darkness is our own imagining, and light is there for us to look upon." (W.302.1.5) We made up the stories of our life. We gave the events of our life our own meaning and our own interpretation. We saw attack where love, or a call for love, was all there ever was. We experience fear, yet **"fear must disappear when love has come."** (W.302.1.6) The only way out of the darkness is by bringing awareness to our fears and being totally willing to release them. There is nothing more than that to be done. In fact, if we try to undertake to do anything more, we are getting in the way by putting the ego in charge of its own undoing, and that will never work.

If we accept everything in our life, including the things that seem dark, and recognize that they are all a part of the classroom to help us learn to forgive, we can become happy learners. What this means is that when our purpose is to awaken, we can be happy about everything that shows up because it is all for the purpose of releasing the darkness so the light that we are can shine through. It is always there behind the dark clouds of our own thoughts. Our thoughts are just hallucinations. As Nouk Sanchez says in her blog, "Contrary to what the ego teaches, the people and things that trigger us are indeed the very gifts that hasten our return to Love, to our Holy Self, and to the immense safety of our Being. However, through the ego filter, we not only reject these gifts, but we fiercely defend our (ego) self from this valuable portal to liberation."

Assaults and attacks will come, not because we are on the wrong path, but they will come as part of our liberation. Mooji says that we conquer them not by fighting them but by remaining in the heart of truth. We witness what seems to be happening, but we don't identify with the forces that detract us.

We can choose to be grateful for the valleys that we go through in which some of our greatest insights can take place. These times can feel like battles in our life, but all we are battling is our perception, which keeps joy out of our awareness. Joy is always there, but the battle that seems to be going on in our mind is actually between what the ego tells us and the truth. It seems like two wills are battling, yet the Holy Spirit is still and does not do battle. He simply waits patiently for us to change our mind.

We think we need or want something to be different than it is. Thus, we suffer because wanting things to be different than they are makes us unhappy. Now we must learn to surrender everything wholly to Spirit and trust that all is for our good. **"Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success."** (T.18.V.1.6) (ACIM OE T.18.VI.41) Our judgment of what is good or bad brings suffering. Our job is simply to look at our darkness and be willing for it to be shifted. The result is always peace. We allow the valleys to be what they are so we can experience the hilltop when we are ready. It does not matter how much time this takes. Time is our friend when our desire is to use everything in our life for awakening.

There were times in my life when everything seemed hopeless and dark. Yet even without the deep resolve and devotion I have now, there was a part of my mind that knew there was value in these dark valleys, even as I was in the midst of them. I found myself watching the experience and recognized the "tenderizing" effect it had on me. I find that there is a callousness or lack of compassion that we can develop when everything is going our way. We are not being deeply challenged or humbled by events in our life. I suppose it is a kind of arrogance when everything in our life seems to be working. It is a kind of egocentric focus, where we can become insensitive to others. Falling into the dark pit of despair can teach us more compassion for ourselves and others and in the process, though we seem to be diverted from our divinity, we can recognize the gift that comes with it.

The experience of having the heart broken open can bring a deeper level of awareness and empathy. Through each of these experiences, I found I was able to look deeper at the caverns in my mind where the openings had been shut to the light. Looking into these dark places always brought new awareness and beauty for which I felt grateful in the end. No, it is not fun nor easy to go there, but when we become the observer of the experience, we can move through it with a greater degree of detachment. There is no way to get to the love without going through the fear.

When we become the observer of our experiences, we come from a place of awareness from above the battleground. We distance ourselves from the dream and become the observer of the experience, with the love of Jesus holding our hands and hearts as we go through these dark places in our mind. I have found, even in the midst of the darkness of the distress and pain, there can still be a realization that we are not the experience of the distress and pain. We are the one observing it. Now we can experience it as if it were happening to someone else, like a character in a play with whom we identify, but we know we are not this character. It is like watching a movie and identifying with the characters, but knowing we are the watcher and not the characters in the movie. Thus, there is some detachment. Jesus says that we can actually watch what is happening while smiling at the idea that there is anything real going on.

Everywhere we go, our Love, **"walks beside us showing us the way."** (W.302.2.1) When we enter these dark and dismal places, Spirit is walking with us. It reminds me of the Lesson where we are told, **"He is my Source of life, the life within, the air I breathe, the food by which**

I am sustained, the water which renews and cleanses me." (W.222.1.2) Or, as he says in Lesson 125, **"He speaks from nearer than your heart to you. His Voice is closer than your hand. His Love is everything you are and that He is; the same as you, and you the same as He."** (W.125.7.2-4) We never go alone. **"He fails in nothing."** (W.302.2.2) What a beautiful reminder! **"Where darkness was I look upon the light."** (W.302)

We are not these dense beings. Where we think we are, there is only light, but there is no way around the darkness of our thoughts. Covering them over, trying to stay positive, or trying to dismiss them is simply a spiritual bypass or a denial of our experience. This will never work, as the darkness is still there, just covered over. Thus, courage and willingness are called for to look with honesty and dedication behind our defenses. It is the only way through to the light. Instead of bracing ourselves against our feelings, we surrender into them, feel them, accept them, examine the beliefs behind them, and keep looking at them with Spirit.

I will share, as briefly as possible, a recent experience of feeling fear. I initially tried to distract myself from it. I was concerned about a family member who seemed to be suffering and in great difficulty in his life. I was gripped with thoughts of fear that were in my mind in which all kinds of tragic scenarios were playing out. I was reminded that our thoughts are nothing but hallucinations. With each thought came a scenario like a movie, playing in the mind, but the scenes were all scenes of devastation and with them came a lot of fear. I kept trying to give over the fear, but it just kept creeping back into my mind. I tried to trace it back to a thought. What was that thought? It became apparent that I believed that the Son of God could suffer and with that thought came evidence of that suffering. I forgot that this is his perfect classroom that he had chosen and that he is not a victim. I was judging the situation and choosing to see it as wrong and giving my mind evidence of ultimate destruction, which brought up a lot of fear. I was reminded of his script, which is playing out as it was chosen by him. I realized my belief in suffering was an error. When I gave over that belief, all the fear was lifted from my mind.

The Lesson is always the same, regardless of the situation: **"Forgive, and you will see this differently."** (W.193.3.7) It does not matter what the problem is, there is only one lesson to be learned. We are called to trust and to remember again that the world is a classroom and we are called to watch our thoughts and beliefs and keep turning them over for healing. We are always remembering our purpose. When we keep focused on our purpose of healing the mind, everything and everyone that shows up on our path contributes to that purpose.

The Lesson is all about how we have wrongly perceived everything and everyone, based on our own thoughts, values, concepts, and beliefs. Now we are called to forgive our misperceptions so we can see with vision. We are asked to recognize that our unforgiving thoughts are keeping us from the love we are. They reflect the belief that we have sinned, are guilty, and now we expect the world to deliver the punishment we think we deserve.

Today, we pray this prayer to ourselves---that we choose another way, realizing we have made a wrong choice. **"Our Love awaits us as we go to Him, and walks beside us showing us the way. He fails in nothing. He the End we seek, and He the Means by which we go to Him."** (W.302.2.1-3) Through forgiveness, God's love is reflected in this world. He is the End we seek in that our goal is to know who we are as One with God. We already are One with God, but we don't know our own reality. He is the Means because His love is the Source of our comfort along the way we seem to travel. We are not alone. He goes with us wherever we go. We rest in

Him. His Love is reflected in specific forms in our life for as long as we need to experience it in that way and as long as we think we are in bodily form.

With the introduction to the question **"What is the Second Coming?"** (W.PII.Q9), and the coming Section, **"What is the Last Judgment?"** (W.PII.Q10) I decided to have a look at the *Book of Revelation* in the Bible. While I am not very familiar with the Bible, the view presented in the *Book of Revelation* is exactly what is being refuted in the teachings and Lessons that we are currently reading. In fact, in looking at the *Book of Revelation*, I found the words from the Lesson yesterday, **"And God Himself shall wipe away all tears."** (W.301) Now it is all being reinterpreted for us in this Course.

The *Book of Revelation* reiterates the fall of Satan and the doom he and his angels are bound for. We are shown the duties of all creatures and angels of Heaven and the promises of the Saints, who will live forever and ever with Jesus in the New Jerusalem. The *Book of Revelation* is lavish in colorful descriptions of the visions which proclaim the Last Days before the triumphant return of Jesus as a powerful world ruler, ushering in his kingdom. The *Book of Revelation* reveals the series of devastations poured out upon the earth such as the mark of the beast "666," the climactic battle of Armageddon, and the binding of Satan. Even though we may not have been schooled in this teaching, it permeates our culture, and there is a sense of fear about the Second Coming and especially about the Last Judgment. This fear seems to be exacerbated daily with discussions of the devastation of the world. Clearly, Jesus takes issue with this in the Course and redefines it entirely.

Instead of reigning terror on the world, the Second Coming **"is merely the correction of mistakes, and the return of sanity."** (W.PII.Q9.1.1) All that happens is that it **"restores the never lost, and re-establishes what is forever and forever true."** (W.PII.Q9.1.2) It is an entirely different meaning from the Biblical teachings about fear and punishment. In the Bible, the Second Coming is about Jesus returning to judge the living and the dead. In the Course, Jesus teaches that the Second Coming is about our decision to **"let forgiveness rest on all things without exception and without reserve"** (W.PII.Q9.1.3) so we can awaken to the truth of who we are. Thus, it is undoing what never happened. It is the recognition that we have been mistaken. The entire world of time and space has been nothing but a dream. Now we are waking up. When all minds have joined in this, the Second Coming will be the total undoing of the dream. Instead of being fearful, it is a beautiful awakening and a remembering of who we are. I heard recently a new interpretation of the dreaded "666." Turned upside down it becomes "999." At one thousand, we are totally in the light and "999" is close to total willingness.

I will speak more about the Second Coming in later Lessons. It is such a beautiful symbol of the healing of our mind and the Correction of our false beliefs where we are all equally released from the belief in sin and guilt. It is not about our understanding but only our willingness to see that we have been wrong about everything, and now we can be grateful that this is so.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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