

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 335 **I choose to see my brother's sinlessness.**

Sarah's Commentary:

In the Introduction to Part II of the Workbook, we are encouraged to spend **"time with Him each morning and at night, as long as makes us happy."** (W.PII.IN.2.6) **"We use as much as we will need for the result that we desire."** (W.PII.IN.2.8) We apply the Lesson throughout the day as well as in morning and evening quiet times; and we apply the Lesson whenever we are tempted to judge anyone, become upset, or lose our peace. Thus, instead of sending the angry email, saying something we might regret, getting angry, getting revenge, arguing, trying to control a situation, or holding onto thoughts of distress, concern, or worry, we make the decision to step back from the ego and inquire more deeply as to what is really going on in our minds. What are we believing and valuing? Certainly, this takes discipline. The ego gets outraged, demanding action of some kind in the face of seeing itself as unfairly treated; yet we can choose to step back, which can be difficult for an untrained mind.

This Lesson is about the choice we can make in every moment to either judge or forgive. It is entirely up to us. No one will coerce us. However, Jesus urges us to forgive on behalf of our own happiness. Anything we put out there will always come back at us. This is the law of karma. What we give, we receive. The reality is that we never see our brother as he is. Whenever we choose to allow forgiveness to dominate, we feel redeemed, which is the only way we can know the Self we all share. This is the Christ Self, which is our only reality. We see in our brothers what is unhealed in our own mind. We see what it is we are holding against ourselves that we have denied in ourselves and projected onto our brothers. When we take responsibility for our projections, they can be forgiven. All concepts that we hold about ourselves are false and eventually need to be released. The only way we can be happy is by choosing Jesus as our guide to seeing in all situations. On our own, there is no certainty about anything, including what we really are.

Jesus tells us that our holy mind establishes everything that seems to happen to us. **"Every response you make to everything you perceive is up to you, because your mind determines your perception of it."** (T.10.IN.2.7) (ACIM OE T.9.VIII.60) **"Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God."** (T.21.IN.2.1-2) (ACIM OE T.21.I.2) We hurt ourselves when we see our brothers as guilty, but we can choose to give our wrong perceptions to the Holy Spirit. Making that choice over and over again, without judging ourselves for our misperceptions, brings us to a place of joy and peace found in no other way.

What we see in our brother is what we attribute to ourselves. My mind is the projector, projecting onto other bodies the attributes I judge in myself. This is how we are able to see the unhealed parts of our own mind. When we are reluctant to accept responsibility for the guilt, then the opportunity for healing is dismissed. Instead of healing, we are choosing to see what we don't like about ourselves "out there" in others, but there is no "out there." Everything we see starts in our own mind. **"Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them."** (T.26.VII.4.7) (ACIM OE T.26.VIII.48) When we think that punishment is coming to us from the world and other bodies, we are actually seeing the effects that originate in our own mind.

When fears arise in the mind, they provide a beautiful opportunity to look at the beliefs in the mind that create the effects in the world. When we are willing to own the guilt and fear in the mind, we are invited to inquire about the beliefs we are holding that support the fear. It is a time to look with curiosity and willingness to discover what is there in the hidden depths of our mind. When seen and forgiven, we experience our innocence. If fears arise again, it is just because we have not gone far enough back into the unconscious mind. Everything that seems to happen is just a portal into the divine. When we embrace it instead of resist and deny what is being revealed to us, we take a step in healing.

There are situations and events that seem to create havoc for us and bring up anger and grievances. While we give these events meaning, they are ultimately neutral. Our interpretations of these events and our emotional responses to them are what we need to take responsibility for if we are to accept healing of our mind. We assess situations and events as "good" or "bad" based on our values, concepts, beliefs, and judgments, and this is why perceptions differ among us. This is not about trying to be spiritual in the face of difficult challenges where strong reactions are triggered in us. It is not helpful to deny or repress what we are feeling. What is helpful is to inquire what the feelings are about and the beliefs that drive them. When we get honest about what shows up and are willing to admit that it all comes from within our own mind, the process of healing can start.

We only see in our brothers what it is we wish to see. We can never see our brothers as they are because their reality is beyond perception. Ultimately, when we see guilt in our brothers, it is just another opportunity to let ourselves off the hook for the same guilt. Guilt and attack are what maintains the separation. The guilt in our mind is projected onto our brothers in our wish to see in them our judgments of ourselves. This process reinforces separation. We want separation to be true so our independent self can be preserved. If we want to awaken to the truth of what we are, we must choose to heal the guilt that we project onto our brothers.

Yesterday, someone shared his perception of me and I felt hurt by what was said. However, I took a breath and chose to inquire into what I believed about myself that triggered me. Instead of defending myself and making a case as to why he was wrong, I was able to look more deeply at the source of my upset. There must be something in me that believes what he was saying about me in order to have a reaction. Clearly, it was a judgment I was holding against myself. Because of my own self-judgment, what was said found a place to land in me. If I did not see any truth in what was being said, I would not have a reaction to it. When we are willing to step back from our defenses, we can learn a lot about our own hidden judgments and be grateful to our brother for bringing this to our attention.

Everyone is a mirror to us of our own inner condition. **"You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there."** (T.25.III.1.3) (ACIM OE T.25.IV.23) **"When you want only love you will see nothing else."** (T-12.VII.8.1) (ACIM OE T.11.VIII.69)

The gift of forgiveness is the awakening of the memory within of our sinlessness. The Atonement Principle is the assurance that we cannot and have not changed ourselves into guilty sinners. Thus, forgiveness undoes the reality of sin, and we are offered the opportunity, through forgiveness, to receive the gifts the Holy Spirit holds out to us, rather than all the "gifts" of the ego, which only deliver more pain and suffering. Jesus wants us to recognize just how unhappy we are and to see that when we choose him as our teacher of forgiveness, more and more peace is experienced.

In any relationship, we have lots of opportunities daily to see our projections. I have expectations about the way I want things to be. The ego is always demanding, "I want it thus." I believe things have to be a certain way, and people have to meet my requirements and expectations for me to be happy. When it is not the way I want it, I hold grievances. Yet I have set it up this way in the first place by determining how things must be for me to be happy. I am responsible for the setup, and now, I am upset. What is being offered in every one of my relationships is the opportunity to look at what is in my mind. Now, I have a choice. **"I choose to see what I would look upon, and this I see, and only this. My brother's sinlessness shows me that I would look upon my own. And I will see it, having chosen to behold my brother in its holy light."** (W.335.1.5-7)

Unless and until we choose to release our false perceptions, we will suffer. It is obvious that our emotional response has nothing to do with what anyone did. I can know my response is wrong by recognizing that not everyone would respond the way I did under the same circumstances. I can decide to look at my unforgiving thoughts and take responsibility for them. Do I want to be right or happy? As Jesus says, **"Nothing at all has happened but that you have put yourself to sleep, and dreamed a dream in which you were an alien to yourself, and but a part of someone else's dream. The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is. It teaches you there is a choice of dreams while you are still asleep, depending on the purpose of your dreaming. Do you wish for dreams of healing, or for dreams of death? A dream is like a memory in that it pictures what you wanted shown to you."** (T.28.II.4.1-5) (ACIM OE T.28.III.18-19)

If I want a change in my life experience, I have to realize that I am doing the dreaming. I have dreamed every situation I encounter. It has been presented to me for a purpose. Sometimes, the purpose is not very clear to me, especially while in the midst of a difficult situation. This is not about denying what our eyes see when we witness pain, attack, murder, and sickness, but it is an opportunity to deny the ego's interpretation. It is up to us to choose the interpretation that we give to these events and to the people involved. **"This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt. They are the dream's alternative, the choice to be the dreamer, rather than deny the active role in making up the dream."** (T.28.II.12.1-3) (ACIM OE T.28.III.27)

There is a tendency in all of us to deny responsibility for our attacks as a way to claim our innocence and see ourselves as victims of someone else's attack. "If he had not said or done that,

I would not be so frustrated with him." This is all about our preference to be seen as the innocent victim, rather than admitting responsibility for everything that seems to happen to us. We are indeed the dreamer of the dream. The good news is that we have the power within us to change the dream and no longer stay stuck in it. We can look at all of it from above the battleground, where we gain a new perspective.

"What could restore Your memory to me, except to see my brother's sinlessness? His holiness reminds me that he was created one with me, and like myself. In him I find my Self, and in Your Son I find the memory of You as well." (W.335.2.1-3) If we want to wake up to the truth of who we are, if we want enlightenment, and if we want to know the love we are, we must forgive our brother for our own guilt that we have projected onto him. To be enlightened is not an event in the future. It happens in each moment in which a grievance is released. It is here now when we choose to embrace forgiveness. It is always in the moment when a block to love is released and peace is experienced *Now*.

We are One Self. We need our brothers to show us all the unhealed places in our minds that block us from the truth of what we are. They are indeed our saviors. The only way we will remember the truth is through forgiveness. Our special relationships provide us with the perfect classroom for undoing the ego, and with willingness, we can be happy learners, regardless of what is being presented to us in any situation.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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