



LESSON 95 I am One Self, united with my Creator.

Sarah's Commentary:

In the Lesson yesterday, the practice consisted of five minutes of every hour, preferably on the hour. Jesus starts off discussing this practice and tells us that there are distinct advantages to holding to this discipline ". . . **at the stage of learning in which you are at present.**" (W.95.4.1) You will need to determine at what stage of learning you are, but for many of us, it is clear that our mind training or mind discipline is still not such that this thought system is a habit as yet. If it were a habit, the first response to every difficult situation in our lives would be peaceful seeing everything as a call for love. For most of us, I suspect, the habitual response is a grievance or judgment and only later do we reflect on the forgiveness opportunity that is being presented. In order to make the Lessons habitual when there is a temptation to get upset, Jesus offers us a disciplined approach as part of our mind training. He had previously introduced longer periods of mind watching, which helped us to see for ourselves how much our mind wanders in our meditation practice. He acknowledges that he understands this perfectly by saying, "**You have surely realized this [your mind wandering] by now. You have seen the extent of your lack of mental discipline, and of your need for mind training.**" (W.95.4.3-4) Yes, it is clear this is the case for most of us.

In this Lesson, Jesus addresses what we should do when we forget to do the practice as outlined. Clearly, he knows we will lapse from the schedule, but the question is when we do lapse, will we use this as an excuse not to return to the Lesson as soon as we have noticed we have lapsed? He says that we will be inclined to feel guilty about our lapses, rather than correct the mistake, and in fact, we will use them as an excuse to regard the day as lost. Yet he does not want us to feel guilty. That is what the ego would have us experience. Instead, he wants us to see it for what it is; "**a refusal to let your mistake be corrected, and an unwillingness to try again.**" (W.95.7.5)

He knows that we will be forgetful. If we did not need this mind training and discipline, we would not need the Course. Beating up on ourselves is to fall for the ego's game. The ego makes sure that we forget to do the practice and then says we should feel guilty for forgetting. It gets us coming and going. To berate ourselves for being bad Course students while feeling discouraged and angry with ourselves is never helpful. Jesus thus encourages us to see our mistake and try again not because he needs this of us but for our peace and happiness.

The problem is not really our lack of mental discipline as much as the guilt we take on when we judge ourselves. When we allow the guilt to be brought to awareness, we can surrender it. We can see its unreality by looking at the guilt from outside of the dream as long as we look at it without judging ourselves. Jesus invites us to sit with him, like in a theatre, and watch our mistakes with quiet amusement or, at a minimum, with gentleness holding his hand if that helps us.

"The Holy Spirit is not delayed in His teaching by your mistakes. He can be held back only by your unwillingness to let them go. Let us therefore be determined, particularly for the next week or so, to be willing to forgive ourselves for our lapses in diligence, and our failures to follow the instructions for practicing the day's idea." (W.95.8.1-3) If we don't forgive ourselves, we are *reliving* the instant when we made the original mistake in choosing to separate and to forget about God making up an identity separate from Him. Now, we are *reliving* this mistake and continuing to feel guilty about our decision instead of having this mistake corrected. **"Let all these errors go by recognizing them for what they are. They are attempts to keep you unaware you are One Self, united with your Creator, at one with every aspect of creation, and limitless in power and in peace."** (W.95.10.1-2) It is this that keeps the ego going. We want to prove that our separate self is the truth about us. What holds it in place is guilt. Guilt is the superglue of the ego. We hold onto the guilt in order to reaffirm our individual, separate self, which keeps us invested in the illusion and unaware of the truth of our reality as God created us.

Jesus tells us that repetition is necessary at this stage because of our undisciplined minds. Again, this rings true for most of us, doesn't it? The practice may still feel like a chore much of the time because our minds are still in resistance. If we schedule these frequent practice periods throughout the day, we will be less likely to forget the Lesson for long periods of time. This establishes a priority in our day to do the practice. By scheduling time for the Lesson, we affirm our purpose. We are here to wake up from this dream and to remember who we are. If this is important to us and we are devoted and committed to the truth, the practice and application of the Lesson will be given prominence in our day.

I was listening to a near-death experience reported by Thomas Mellon Benedict, who said when we leave the body, it is in our interest to be at a high level of consciousness. When our lives are used to raise our consciousness, they are being used for a mighty purpose. We are asleep in this dream, believing we are something we are not. Jesus tells us it is tragic to use time for any purpose other than to awaken. **"Delay does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time."** (T.5.VI.1.3) (ACIM OE T.5.VIII.71) We are basically living in a state of fear, chasing after things that will never bring us any joy. That is why we are urged to remember our purpose, which can only be achieved with a highly disciplined mind.

When we see that the mind is not as disciplined as it needs to be, we should not beat up on ourselves. We just need to recognize that we are pushing God away because of our fear of Him. We fear our Self and the love we are because, in the face of that love, our specialness, uniqueness, and individuality are threatened. We want to keep our investment in the individual self. This investment in the separate self is the reason for our wandering thoughts and our forgetting to do the Lesson. Recognize that this is the case. You are not guilty because you forgot. Just recognize your fear of giving up your individuality, be willing to take note of the fear, and ask for help.

While Jesus asks us to set up a structure of regularity in terms of time, he acknowledges that this is not ideal, but it is necessary at our stage of practice. What would be ideal is when the motivation for practice comes from within. As long as it is still not there, we are encouraged to set up a practice schedule on the hour until our motivation is consistent. When we forget to keep to this schedule, it is our resistance and fear that are showing up. When this happens, forgive yourself and always be willing to start again.

Three things are proposed here for our practice: 1) a shorter amount of time of five minutes 2) more repetitions with the first five minutes of practice on the hour and briefly repeating the Lesson throughout the day as much as possible and 3) regularity by structuring our day for

practice on the hour. For some, it may include post-it notes, setting the computer with an alarm, carrying a vibrating timer set to go off every hour, or whatever might work. While Jesus is introducing the value of structure, he knows that it is difficult for us and that we will forget. Using these aids can be helpful, but it is also important that we don't consistently rely on them. If we get too dependent on these kinds of reminders, it may be more helpful just to watch how the day goes without them. For me, the aids have been more irritating than helpful, so I don't use them, as my resistance seems to increase with their use. Do what is helpful to you. Despite your best efforts, you will probably still lapse, but he says not to worry if you do, and don't chastise yourself. The real problem is guilt and taking on more of it is definitely not helpful and not something Jesus wants for us.

Personally, I have resistance to the aides, as I put value on "being spontaneous." When I look at this more closely, I can see that it is actually my resistance to being told what to do. It is my resistance to structure. I know how much I have given value to going with the flow, being open to whatever shows up, and resisting control. After all, that is what the 60's were about for me. This is what we called freedom. Yet Jesus gently reminds us that our own will is never free. Our only freedom lies in knowing our true reality, and the way to awaken from this dream is through 24/7 mind training. If we truly want to know who we are, to experience joy, and to know true peace, he will show us the way. The question is, how willing are we to follow him instead of our own will?

Now, here are a few words about today's Lesson since all the commentary so far has been about the importance of practice. In this Lesson, he tells us, rather than experiencing ourselves as One Self, we feel that we have many warring parts in us. Certainly, that is not hard to see even though we may defend against concepts of ourselves as **"weak, vicious, ugly, and sinful, miserable, and beset with pain."** (W.95.2.1) Certainly, if we look honestly, we have felt our own weakness, seen ourselves as ugly, experienced our viciousness and sinfulness, and felt misery and pain. Who of us has escaped such experiences? But this is saying more than that. This is saying it is our current state no matter how much we cover it up with an inflated sense of self.

What the inflated ego does is cover up the deeply held negative beliefs about ourselves that we defend so vociferously. **"Such is your version of yourself; a self divided into many warring parts, separate from God, and tenuously held together by its erratic and capricious maker, to which you pray."** (W.95.2.2) Jesus says it is the ego to whom we look for help. It offers us some kind of identity, but it is a shifting, changing identity, depending on circumstances outside of us that can trigger fearful feelings and beliefs. Yes, it is capricious, uncertain, confused, and tenuous. Only the Self we are, behind this parody, is the truth; but the ego cannot see what we are because it is blind to the truth. **"It does not understand you are the Son of God, for it is senseless and understands nothing."** (W.95.2.5)

We are trying to reach that Self through our five-minute practices. We do it by being willing to look at the ego and bring our wrong-minded perceptions to the light of truth. We are trying to experience the united, secure, joyful, and peaceful Self. This is the One Mind we all are—the complete, healed and whole Self and the One in perfect harmony with all there is and all there will be. **"Feel this one Self, and let IT shine away all your illusions and your doubts."** (W.95.13.3) This innocent Self is the truth about you.

The illusory self is the one who plays various roles in the world, thinks it is good or bad, depending on the situation, and has built a concept of itself in the world as a conqueror as well as a victim. It is the self who is a player in the illusionary world and believes this illusion is real, when in fact it is just a dream state, a movie, and a cast of characters made up by this player (ourselves). Now we can see where we have given power away to outside circumstances and to others in the dream.

Now we have an opportunity to take responsibility for everything we feel and experience and bring it all to the light.

Today, Jesus urges us to remember how important this practice is to our happiness. Let us use every opportunity today for the purpose of undoing the ego's misperceptions so we can remember who we are and come to a state of peace.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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