

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 216 ~ Review VI [196] It can be but myself I crucify.

Sarah's Commentary:

It is not difficult to get that when we attack, we suffer, but it is much more difficult to live it every day, especially when we experience any kind of perceived attack and feel justified in retaliating. Notice how easy it is to see flaws and what seem to be idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies in others and to use these to judge and criticize. Yet it is precisely what we do not like in ourselves that we condemn in others. The solution is, of course, **"If I attack, I suffer. But if I forgive, salvation will be given me."** (W.216.2.4) Forgiveness in the Course is always about remembering that the lesson is always our own. Everything comes from our minds. We are the dreamers of our dream. We judge something in a brother that we have not forgiven in ourselves. Our brother is a perfect mirror for our mind when we are willing to take responsibility for what we see in him as a projection of our own perceived deficiencies and self-attacks.

Now, if you look closely at the wording of this Lesson, you will see that it speaks entirely about what we are doing to ourselves. When I get upset with someone, I find it helpful to see that there is no "other." What I perceive in anyone is entirely in my own mind. I can only be affected by the behaviors of others if I give them the power to hurt me. Seeing ourselves as victimized by others is the way the ego set it all up so we could justify our attacks and deem ourselves innocent victims. When we forgive, by seeing we are responsible for our own pain, we see that in truth no one has done anything to us. Yes, in the dream, something seems to have happened. but the cause of all our upsets is in the mind.

Others play out the script we have written for them. It is as if they are reading their lines from a teleprompter, and these lines have been determined by us. This probably feels like quite a stretch, but it is very helpful in remembering that their response, which may look like an attack, is orchestrated by our mind for our awakening. We are not the victims of the world we see.

Jesus asks us to be wary of the idea we can be unfairly treated. **"Unfairness and attack are one mistake, so firmly joined that where one is perceived the other must be seen. You cannot be unfairly treated. The belief you are is but another form of the idea you are deprived by someone not yourself."** (T.26.X.3.1-3) (ACIM OE T.26.XI.87) Our brothers have simply revealed the pain and unhealed aspects of our minds. This pain must be seen to be healed. Because they have revealed where healing is needed in us, they are our saviors. When we forgive, salvation is given us, and what is salvation but to know our own innocence, joy, and magnificence. We cannot know this when we attack.

"What we give, we receive" is a law that works one hundred percent of the time. There are no exceptions to it. I can think I am hurting you and maintaining my innocence, but this is the lie of

the ego, which tells us we can get rid of the guilt in the mind by projecting it on others. Anytime we hurt anyone or try to gain at our brother's expense, we suffer. We cannot escape the reality that what we do to others we are actually doing to ourselves. The egoic belief is that when we project guilt, we are free of it. What it keeps from us, is that this is precisely how we keep it.

The golden rule says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In other words, what you give, you receive. It seems like we have a choice of what to give. The choice is to offer love to our brothers, or to withhold it from them. However, there is no wiggle room with this law. What I give, I receive. It is an immutable law. When I cause pain, I feel pain in return. How it shows up is that when I attack, I experience guilt and believe I deserve punishment, and thus I draw it into my life. The difficult events of our lives are based on the belief that we deserve them because of our attacks.

All attack is meant to hurt. We can say we did not mean it, but we are lying to ourselves. We attack because we want to. That is why watching the mind takes discipline, vigilance, and the courage to be very honest with ourselves. It requires we look openly at our intentions and see where we try to get from others, using them for our personal gain. What we are doing in these situations is always hurting ourselves while serving our specialness. I cannot think of anything that undoes the ego more readily than to take this law very seriously and use every opportunity to look at our defenses and take responsibility for our projections. When we are not being kind, forgiveness/healing is called for. We forgive as soon as we become aware we have tried to gain at our brother's expense.

Any negative thought we have about anyone can immediately be dispelled by sincerely applying the Lesson. Application of the Lesson must become a habit that we over-learn, as it is not generally our immediate reaction to a difficult situation. **"The ego always speaks first"** (T.5.VI.3.5) (ACIM OE T.5.VIII.73) means the ego will be the first to give us its interpretation of any situation. Thus, our response today is: **"This thought I do not want. I choose instead____,"** (W.RVI.IN.6.2-3) **"If I forgive, salvation will be given me."** (W.216.1.4) Or, **"This thought I do not want. I choose instead____,"** (W.RVI.IN.6.2-3) **"It can be but myself I crucify."** (W.216.1.1) Or use a version that works for you so it will be meaningful to you. This is not just rote repetition of these words. Words are powerful, but only when we connect with them deeply and with sincerity and conviction.

If what I am doing brings me suffering, I can recognize this need not be because peace is always available to me. Would you not be highly motivated to change your thoughts and behaviors if you truly believed in this law? You would want to do this out of your own self-interest. If I had the thought to shoot an arrow at you that would land in my own heart, I would be highly motivated not to take that action. Thus, the Lesson affirms that this is exactly what happens, except the attack may come back in another form.

For example, if I blame you, I may find my car breaks down as my form of self-punishment, or I may lose my job, or I may get sick. We draw all these experiences to ourselves for a purpose. They are all there to remind us that, as we forgive, the world looks more and more benign to us, regardless of what problems seem to be there. We are then able to see beyond the events and accept them as part of our classroom, rather than resist and see them as bringing us punishment and more suffering.

There are many ways we attack our brothers. We may even find ourselves using the metaphysics of the Course to make someone wrong. We may try to correct them, judge, or critique them in the

belief that we are being helpful. Yet when we step aside and place the Holy Spirit in charge, only then is peace possible. We have believed for a very long time that the cause of our distress is outside of our own minds. Changing our minds about this belief requires a lot of vigilance and discipline. Jesus helps us realize that everything is coming from our minds and not from hostile elements in the world or as a result of the condition of the body. This is all part of the ego's strategy to keep us mindless.

When we discover the murderer is within, it can induce a lot of guilt; and when we feel guilty, we find ways to punish ourselves. **"For the ego does want to kill you, and if you identify with it you must believe its goal is yours."** (T.13.II.5.6) (ACIM OE T.12.II.5) In Lesson 196, **"It can be but myself I crucify,"** Jesus says that our attacks on others in the name of self-defense lead to fear of crucifixion at the hands of God and the world. As Lesson 198 reminds us, **"Only my condemnation injures me. Only my own forgiveness sets me free."** (W.198.9.3-4)

It is helpful to remember in this regard, **"Everyone makes an ego or a self for himself, which is subject to enormous variation because of its instability. He also makes an ego for everyone else he perceives, which is equally variable. Their interaction is a process that alters both, because they were not made by or with the Unalterable [God]. It is important to realize that this alteration can and does occur as readily when the interaction takes place in the mind as when it involves physical proximity. Thinking about another ego is as effective in changing relative perception as is physical interaction. There could be no better example that the ego is only an idea and not a fact."** (T.4.II.2.1-6) (ACIM OE T.4.III.25)

How does this relate to today's Lesson? Well, we all play the game of separation and the game of hurt. We have called into our experience all the characters that show up in our play, which include those who play the roles of our friends and enemies. We are like children playing a game, having forgotten it is a game and instead we take it all seriously. Yet, we can stand back and smile gently at it all. Our thoughts hurt us when we take them seriously. We can invite the Holy Spirit for a different interpretation than how we perceive the situation. We can do it by forgoing our desire to crucify our brothers, or to try to get for ourselves at their expense. When we forgive, we see we are all the same. We share the same ego, albeit with different life circumstances, and we share One Self.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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