

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 254 **Let every voice but God's be still in me.**

Sarah's Commentary:

To hear the Voice of the Holy Spirit, we must look past the constantly jabbering voice of the ego that does not tell us anything real or true. We must choose to no longer listen to it, believe it, or pursue its goals and plans for achieving them, as they don't serve us. The ego is constantly sending us on a search for happiness and peace that can't be found in the world. Only when we turn to the quiet Voice within, which is the Voice of Truth, can we find the peace and joy within us. It is the Voice of our true will.

It is not about trying to silence our distracting thoughts as much as noticing them and choosing to turn away from them and not give them our attention or belief. The ego demands retaliation, defense, attack, revenge, and anything that will accumulate more guilt and more suffering. When we see what the ego is up to, we will voluntarily choose to no longer listen to its demands. When we want, above all else, to return to sanity and peace, our motivation to forgive everyone and every situation is enhanced. Forgiveness is the only way to sanity. It is to recognize that nothing here has meaning, nothing here is real, and therefore, what we believe our brother has done to us has not really happened, so it can all be overlooked. It is all a dream of our own making. Everyone who has been called into our lives is simply playing out the roles we have assigned to them in our script.

When I am angry or upset about something my brother seems to have done to me, I can choose to see the situation differently. I have interpreted it incorrectly if I am not at peace. When I give my thoughts to the Holy Spirit, He shows me another way of seeing. He shows me that everything is either love or an expression of a deep call for love. There is nothing else. If I see my brother guilty, I am making his error real. I am seeing something not there. When I realize forgiveness is all I want because guilt only brings more suffering, I turn to the quiet Voice within for His help.

If we fight our ego thoughts or try very hard to silence the ego, we will meet with frustration. Instead, we can distance ourselves from these thoughts when we just observe them and realize these thoughts need not be taken seriously. The first step in this process is to watch the thoughts, inquire more deeply into their origin in the mind, recognize the beliefs we hold, and be willing to place them on the inner altar. This is where the Holy Spirit replaces them for us when we give them over to Him. It is how our minds are shifted from the grievance to the miracle. Our part is to look at our anger and pain and accept our own thought system as the cause of all our suffering. No one has done anything to hurt us. When we see it this way, we can give our pain over to the Holy Spirit. He substitutes peace for the pain and suffering that we give over to Him. This is the choice we make when we decide we no longer want to turn to the ego as our guide. We no longer want its offerings.

We spend our days attending to all kinds of pursuits we think will meet our needs. The hopes, needs, wants, and desires I think I have are just ego distortions of my real desire, which is to know the Christ Self and to know God's Love in me. All of the frenetic activity comes from thoughts in my monkey mind. These thoughts can be replaced with stillness when I give them over to the Holy Spirit. By now, we know this takes a great amount of practice.

Silence is a rare commodity in the rush of events in our lives. When I was in Sedona, in the year 2000, studying the Course and spending lots of time in nature, climbing mountains, and meditating, it seemed easier to be still. I did not engage in as many distractions as in my daily life in Edmonton. After becoming acclimatized to the quiet meditative experience of living in Sedona, I took a trip to Scottsdale and went to a busy mall with a friend, something I had not done for the previous six months. It was such an assault on my senses that I couldn't wait to return to the quiet. Later, on my return to Edmonton, I initially felt overwhelmed by the demands of life. I was amazed at how quickly I acclimatized to the frenetic pace of daily life. The contrast was very apparent. Having said that, I realized that peace can be available in any situation and is not dependent on outside circumstances. However, to connect deeply to the peace within, withdrawing from the frenetic pace as much as we can is essential.

Taking time for stillness can seem like just one more demand to add to the day. Yet it is important to withdraw from the world and find time for stillness and to connect with the quiet place within. It is to connect with the Child in us. **"It is this Child in you your Father knows as His Own Son. It is this Child Who knows His Father. He desires to go home so deeply, so unceasingly, His voice cries unto you to let Him rest a while. He does not ask for more than just a few instants of respite; just an interval in which He can return to breathe again the holy air that fills His Father's house. You are His home as well. He will return. But give Him just a little time to be Himself, within the peace that is His home, resting in silence and in peace and love."** (W.182.5.1-7)

A couple of days ago I was waiting for Don to finish what he was doing so we could go home. I started to notice thoughts of impatience in my mind when he was delayed. "Why was he taking so long?" "I have lots to do." "There are groceries to get." "We have company for dinner." "My time is important!" Then I was reminded of the Lesson and asked for help to use this time to turn away from the ego and take advantage of the opportunity to be still and listen within. I realized the time spent waiting could be a gift if I was willing to no longer listen to the ego and turn within. Only I alone am responsible for how I choose to feel in any situation. It takes a lot of mind training. I reminded myself that the happiness I experience, or not, has nothing to do with anything outside my own mind. It is my decision alone to let the ego, or the Holy Spirit, be my guide. I find this kind of positive self-talk helpful. It motivates me to turn away from the ego on behalf of my own happiness.

In turning our thoughts over to the Holy Spirit, we are simply agreeing that they don't make us happy. We are seeing our own minds as the cause and the world as the effect, not the other way around. We are seeing that no one can take our peace away from us. If we don't have it, we have chosen to throw it away. When we are willing to have our thoughts reinterpreted from a higher source, we experience a touch of Heaven. **"The goal is clear, but now you need specific methods for attaining it. The speed by which it can be reached depends on this one thing alone; your willingness to practice every step. Each one will help a little, every time it is attempted. And together will these steps lead you from dreams of judgment to forgiving dreams and out of pain and fear."** (T.30.IN.1.2-5) (ACIM OE T.20.I.1)

In finding our way to stillness, through forgiveness, we are reminded that our will is not separate from God's Will. Today, I commit not to engage in thoughts that disturb my peace, but simply to

step back, look at these thoughts, be willing to have them replaced, and allow the Holy Spirit to do the rest. Yes, it does take a willingness to do the practice. We need to be gentle yet firm with ourselves in this process. The ego will retaliate because it does not want us to give up our dependence on it. It sets things up so that we stay dedicated to its demands and requirements. We can all be grateful that we have been given this spiritual groundwork to take us home to our Self. We need to be gentle and patient with ourselves and put our trust in the process. It is a gradual process and requires commitment, dedication, and most of all desire.

"Today we let no ego thoughts direct our words or actions. When such thoughts occur, we quietly step back and look at them, and then we let them go. We do not want what they would bring with them. And so we do not choose to keep them. They are silent now." (W.254.2.1-5) Our minds never stop the chatter, and when we get upset, our obsessive thoughts really dig in, creating a seemingly deep rut in the mind that we may find it hard to disengage. Yet with mind training, we can enhance our ability to catch our thoughts. The sooner we do this the better. Otherwise, the story becomes a drama and then it is harder to unwind from it. So as the thoughts arise, instead of judging them or turning them into a story that justifies our anger, we can simply remember to stop, step back, and release our thoughts and beliefs to the Holy Spirit. He will do the rest. We can't change ourselves. We need His help to bring about the miracle.

Stepping back means we look at these thoughts from the perspective of a non-attached observer. We don't judge. We don't evaluate. We don't examine the thoughts, nor analyze them. We merely, quietly step back and look. We identify the cause and **"then let go, so that it can be replaced."** (W.23.5.2). This can seem difficult when we are obsessing about a situation. It is all about the willingness to detach from the thoughts. Our willingness to do so is based on our decision that we don't want what these thoughts bring with them. In other words, we don't want to experience the guilt and suffering that result when we hold onto these thoughts.

The work is all about releasing thoughts in whatever form they arise. We think we like some thoughts, but it is just the way the ego keeps us engaged in the world. The world of the ego is not where we will ever know the deep peace and joy that comes from connecting with the holy Child within. We need to get honest with ourselves as to whether we want our idea of what will bring us happiness or whether we are willing to release our own ideas and allow God to work in our lives through the Voice of the Holy Spirit.

When we invest in ego thoughts, they direct our words and our actions. When we step back from the thoughts, look at them, and realize that we don't want the effects of these thoughts, then we can let them go instead of expressing them or taking action based on those thoughts. The Truth is in our right minds. God's Will is not an alien will, but, in fact, it is our own. While it may seem threatening because it is not in keeping with our personal choices, it serves our best interests. Our own choices never do. So today, we do not let our ego thoughts guide our actions. We affirm, "I do not want this thought." **"Let every voice but God's be still in me."** (W.254)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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