

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 359

**God's answer is some form of peace. All pain
Is healed; all misery replaced with joy.
All prison doors are opened. And all sin
Is understood as merely a mistake.**

Sarah's Commentary:

We know we have received God's answer to the prayer of the heart when we have peace, when pain is healed, and when we experience joy in place of sorrow, misery, grief, worry, or distress of any kind. This shift in the mind is what the miracle is. It is when our will, which is imprisoned by our angst, our worry, our sadness, or whatever else blocks peace and joy, is set free. We have the answer *now* because the answer is already in the mind, where it has always been. When we don't experience the miracle, it is because we are invested in our own thinking and our own answers. When the blocks to love are removed because of our willingness to surrender our need to be right, our will is set free. In that freedom, we experience Oneness with God's Will, which is our own.

Now, no conflict is possible. "**All prison doors are opened.**" (W.359) The chains that have kept us bound to the ego are now released. The realization dawns on the mind that nothing that we have ever done, or could ever do, has changed our reality. We realize, "**all sin is understood as merely a mistake.**" (W.359) The mistake we made was to believe the lies of the ego. It is when we give attention to the ego and believe our egoic thoughts. We can choose not to give attention to what is false. When we realize there is another way of seeing, we can make this choice in the mind. Acceptance of the truth comes through forgiveness when we put all that is false on the inner altar for healing. Space is now made in the mind for truth to come in. With acceptance of the truth within, love is extended through us to all our brothers.

The love of this world is all special love. It is all about bargaining and is focused on those who we believe can meet our needs. Special love is specific and has an object and a focus. "**Ego illusions are quite specific, although the mind is naturally abstract.**" (T.4.VII.1.2) (ACIM OE T.4.VIII.94) We determine "**how, what and with whom communication is judged to be worth undertaking.**" (T.4.VII.4.2) (ACIM OE T.4.VIII.98) Special love thus comes with fear of loss, which it tries to mitigate by maintaining relationships through guilt. By putting guilt on our specific love partner, we try to ensure the continuity of the relationship. It is how we try to maintain our safety. Guilt is the only need the ego has. It is the means the ego uses to sustain itself, and it is how the separation is maintained. Now we are called to do the forgiveness work specifically with those people with whom we try to maintain specialness. God's Love is nonspecific. His Love is inclusive, where no one loses and there is nothing to fear. When His love is extended through us, freedom is given all brothers. Now the prison doors are opened, and no one is held by guilt.

We see their sins are merely mistakes, just like our own. Now, instead of seeing our brother as intentionally trying to hurt us, we see someone who is mistaken and calling for love and

understanding. They do not know they have another choice, as their only option seems to be to follow the dictates of the ego. They have simply forgotten who they are. The same spark is in them as is in us. Their call is our call, and when we see this, we respond with kindness and compassion. Although we may see that they are intentionally causing harm, we recognize it is because they have misunderstood who they are, just as we have. We are all the same. When we can overlook their mistakes and remember who they are, we hold the same compassion for ourselves. While no real harm is done because it is all just a dream and nothing can change our pristine nature, in this seeming reality harm can be inflicted. Thus, it is not helpful to dismiss our hurtful behavior as unimportant.

The Lesson reminds us that we remain as we were created. We cannot be anything but sinless because we were created in God's image, and like Him, we share in His Holiness. We are God's Son. This dawns on our minds more and more as we do the forgiveness work, but we can't do it without help. We require this help from outside of the closed system of the ego. **"But there is need for help beyond yourself as you are circumscribed by false beliefs of your Identity, which God alone established in reality."** (Clarification of Terms 5.1.2)

When we call on the Holy Spirit, He releases the world from all we thought it was, and we experience the solid foundation of His Love. This foundation rests on reality rather than illusion. **"Sin is impossible, and on this fact forgiveness rests upon a certain base more solid than the shadow world we see."** (W.359.1.7) It may seem to us that forgiveness has no real strength against a seemingly solid world. In this world, anger seems to have more power than love, but we have it backward. Nothing of this world has any power while forgiveness has all the power of God behind it. This is so different from how we see now, but Jesus assures us that we can trust in the power of forgiveness.

To us, the illusion seems so very solid and intractable. God's world seems less certain and less solid. We are not sure forgiveness has the power that we give to attack. **"Its whole function, in the end, is to help the patient deal with one fundamental error; the belief that anger brings him something he really wants, and that by justifying attack he is protecting himself."** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet.2.IN.1.5) Yes, we have indeed made mistakes. We have hurt people intentionally. We have tried to win at our brother's expense, but none of this has changed who we are as created by God. Jesus says that we should rejoice that this is so. He is not saying to deny our mistakes. It is not that we should see our mistakes as good, but only to see that they are not sins and that they can be helpful for our healing when we take responsibility for the Correction. It is not about doing whatever we want and dismissing it all as just a mistake. We need to see our true motives, yet recognize that they have no real effect on us. Therefore, we can rejoice that everything can be used to remember who we are. The only purpose this world has is to help us to return to our Self.

"Help us forgive, for we would be redeemed. Help us forgive, for we would be at peace." (W.359.8-9) We need the Holy Spirit's help because we have made the error real. We think real harm has happened, and thus, we believe it is too difficult to overlook. We think we must forgive others rather than our own judgments of the situation. We don't recognize that it is our guilt that is acted out in the world. To us, it seems like attack has happened and has caused real harm. All our senses give us clear evidence of this. Therefore, we need help from Someone outside of this perceptual realm. He is the One that brings the miracle. Our part is to bring our anger, our judgments, and our hateful thoughts to Him. When we pray with sincerity for help in shifting our perception of events, He gives us the answer. The answer is always a shift in our perception.

In this blessed season of Christmas, we are asked to lay all our burdens at the feet of Jesus. He asks no adulation. He has no ego. He only wants us to release our problems and issues to him that we may be freed from our prison-house. He asks that we recognize that we are like him and the birth of Christ in him is the birth we can know in ourselves as we release guilt and fear. God's Word **"is written on our hearts."** (W.PII.Q14.5.1) What that means is that His Word is the very fabric of our being. Our function is to discover the truth of this so we can bring this message to everyone who is sent to us. We are called to be an example of a mind that has chosen the Holy Spirit and can now bring peace.

The only purpose for our time here is to heal the guilt and fear in our minds so love can extend through us. It is to recognize that the law of love is to give as we would receive so that, ultimately, we can know and recognize the true nature of our being. Our true will is expressed when peace and love are extended through us.

May the angels watch over us today because this can be the day in which we can experience Christ's birth in us. It is, therefore, as holy as any day can be. **"Let all God's holy Thoughts surround me, and be still with me while Heaven's Son is born."** (W.303.1.2)

The ego is loud and boisterous in us. By finding the stillness in the mind, which is symbolized by withdrawal from the world when giving birth, truth is welcomed in. The ego does not want peace, yet God's answer is always some form of peace. It is the place of stillness in us. It is the holy ground, the altar to truth deep in our mind, waiting to be uncovered. It means we need to take time from all of the activity and rest in God.

As we release the ego's darkness, we experience the light we are. It is a question of willingness. **"It is in your power to make this season holy, for it is in your power to make the time of Christ be now."** (T.15.X.4.1) (ACIM OE T.15.X.94) May this day be one of peace and holiness that Jesus invites us to experience today and every day. This peace is available to us anytime we release our grievances and allow joy back into our mind. It is the coming of the Christ Self we all share.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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