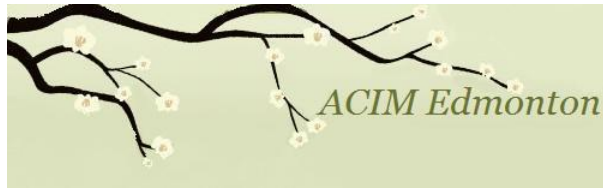


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 55 ~ REVIEW I [Review Lessons 21-25]

Sarah's Commentary:

We are now emphasizing the relationship and connectedness among the first fifty Lessons and the cohesiveness of the thought system to which they direct us. The purpose of the review is for the integration of this new thought system. Therefore, see these reviews as leading you to a totally new and deeper experience of the Lessons. This review is about the power of our minds to choose, and we will only use this power of choice if we see the world as it is—a place of misery, decay, disaster, and death. It is not created by God but made as an attack on God since it is a place where we chose to hide from Him. It sounds very dark when put this way, but unless we see it as it is, we will have no motivation to choose the alternative. Yes, there are beautiful aspects to this world that reflect the beauty in our own minds; yet even these are shadows of what lies beyond.

We are asked to spend at least two minutes on each Lesson. It is not necessary to go back to the original Lesson but rather focus on the discussion that accompanies each one. Also, if there is one Lesson you particularly like, you may wish to stay with just that one for the day. I really like, "**I am determined to see things differently,**" (W.21) and one I always resonate with and try to remind myself of regularly is, "**I do not perceive my own best interests.**" (W.24) Choose the ones that resonate for you.

The Lessons in this review point to the confusion that exists in our minds. This confusion is ultimately projected onto the world. We see a world of vengeance and a world of attack with "**. . . signs of disease, disaster and death.**" (W.55.1.2) We all share in "**. . . the mad idea of separation,**" (W.54.3.3) which has formed the world we see. It is a collective nightmare. The motivation to wake up from this dream comes when we look clearly at the nature of the world by seeing it as a world of attack. By looking at our own attack thoughts, we acknowledge that what we are seeing in the world comes from our own minds.

When we deny our attack thoughts, we project them onto others and see the guilt in them instead of in our own minds. We do not understand God and His love. If we did, we would not be here, trying to uncover the attack thoughts in our minds that block His love from our awareness. When we are willing to see how much of what we do is about serving our own self-interests at the expense of others, we can see how this is the foundation for the separation that we experience with each other. It is based on the original attack on God, where we believed we won our independent self at His expense. Thus, attack got us something we wanted, and we now see value in attack as a way to serve our interests, wishes and desires.

When we change our minds, we change what we see. "**As forgiveness allows love to return to my awareness, I will see a world of peace and safety and joy. And it is this I choose to see, in place of what I look on now.**" (W.55.3.4-5) Thus, forgiveness takes us to the real world. When the guilt in our minds, which projected this world, is healed, only blessing shines

from the mind, and now, the world is seen as blessed. That is why efforts made to try to bring peace and harmony to the world will never work. The only way we can know peace, safety, and joy is to find our way to peace through forgiveness. This clearly requires a high level of awareness, self-honesty, and courage to look at our true motivation in every situation. We need to continually look at our desire to gain at the expense of others.

It is important not to judge ourselves for what we see within. Only by looking at our unloving thoughts, which block the love within, can the love shine through us. If we don't look at our unloving thoughts, they remain intact and are projected out. The world is not the problem. The problem is my perception of the world, which starts in my own mind. Nothing has meaning except the meaning I give it. Therefore, my interpretation of events is the problem, yet nothing is a problem to the Holy Spirit. The ocean is not changed because there is seaweed floating in it. Thus, the ocean does not see the seaweed as a problem, and we need not see it that way either when we look at it without blaming ourselves. The problem is not real.

As guilt is released, **"It is therefore in my power to change every mind along with mine, for mine is the power of God."** (W.54.4.6) This shows us how Jesus, and other awakened beings, had such influence on the world because there is only One Mind. We are One and share the same power, yet this is unknown to us until we release the blocks. **"Love is not learned. Its meaning lies within itself. And learning ends when you have recognized all it is not. That is the interference; that is what needs to be undone. Love is not learned, because there never was a time in which you knew it not."** (T.18.IX.12.1-5) (ACIM OE T.18.XI.96) We just need to do the work to come to know our true reality. This involves turning over our attack thoughts to the Holy Spirit. Our attack thoughts show us the content of our minds, which we see reflected in the world. They are what give rise to this picture of the world of attack.

What are attack thoughts? They show up as guilt, worry, sickness, vulnerability, fear, condemnation, unhappiness, grievances, addictions, loneliness, boredom, doubt, worthlessness, blame, expectations, fantasies, demands, lack, and anything that keeps us from our peace and joy. It is whatever keeps us invested in the character in the dream, rather than the dreamer of the dream. Thoughts of revenge, anger, frustration, needs, and wishes can also be added to the list. It is important that we not see these thoughts as "bad," but instead recognize them as false thoughts that have no reality. When we define ourselves as bad for holding such thoughts, we are judging ourselves instead of being the watcher of these thoughts. Watching them without judgment is what healing is about. We are not these thoughts. They do not belong to us, and thus, they do not define us. We are the observers of these thoughts. There is nothing we need to do to make ourselves holy, as holiness is our nature. There is no value in trying to make a nicer self in the dream. This is not a course in self-improvement.

We spend a lot of energy trying to figure out our best interests and keeping our fear at bay. We ask ourselves: What should I do with my life? Why am I not happy? Where can I find the right relationship? How can I achieve success? We strategize, plan, and try to manage our way through this world of illusion. We can never see the entire plan of Atonement, so we can never figure out our own best interests. We think we know what they are, but how can we when we don't even know ourselves? We think we know what would make us happy. Yet **"What I think are my best interests would merely bind me closer to the world of illusions."** (W.55.4.3) Why? They bind me because I keep trying to find happiness in the world, convinced there is an answer outside of my own mind, which is not the case. The ego would have us keep seeking for answers in the world for our happiness where it can never be found.

The question that arose as a result of the separation is, "What am I?" In the state of Oneness, we would never ask this question. The answer to the question can never be known by the character in the dream because who we are in the dream changes as our interests and circumstances change while the Observer/Awareness never changes. Since we don't know ourselves as the Son of God, what would we know of our best interests? The self I think I am, and thus think I know, keeps looking for fulfillment in the world. We try and try to find happiness, but eventually, disillusionment sets in which is a good thing as it compels us to look for deeper answers. This is when we start on a path of spiritual seeking. When we realize that we don't know how to be truly happy in this world, only then will we ask with sincerity of the One Who does know.

"I am willing to follow the Guide God has given me to find out what my own best interests are, recognizing that I cannot perceive them by myself." (W.55.4.4) More and more, we learn to step back and admit we don't know, and thus, we become willing to ask for help.

"Those who remember always that they know nothing, and who have become willing to learn everything, will learn it. But whenever they trust themselves, they will not learn. They have destroyed their motivation for learning by thinking they already know. Think not you understand anything until you pass the test of perfect peace, for peace and understanding go together and never can be found alone. Each brings the other with it, for it is the law of God they be not separate. They are cause and effect, each to the other, so where one is absent the other cannot be." (T.14.XI.12.1-6)
(ACIM OE T.14.VII.72)

As we step back from our own plans on how to manage the circumstances of our lives, we increasingly turn to God in ever deepening trust. We can only do this as we uncover the fearful thoughts that keep us from Him. Our biggest fear is loss of control. When we try to stay in control we are flying with the tiny wings of the sparrow ". . . **when the mighty power of an eagle has been given him.**" (M.4.I.2.2) (ACIM OE M.4.4) **"When this Power has once been experienced, it is impossible to trust one's own petty strength again."** (M.4.I.2.1) (ACIM OE M.4.4)

Our life circumstances have induced us to make a shift to applying these Lessons. Somewhere in our minds, we know our way has brought us lots of heartache and disappointment. Life has brought us to our knees—for some of us in a dramatic way where everything is lost and for others through a nagging disquiet in the mind. As a result, we start to look for a better way. Thank goodness there is a Guide who is available to us in our minds to lead us out of the insanity of this world.

By attending to this practice that is offered through these Lessons, we are provided with a doorway out of what would otherwise be a closed system managed by the ego. Instead of looking for answers outside of ourselves and trying to figure things out, we go inside and bring awareness to our thoughts and willingly let them go. Through this process of letting go of our stories, our problems, and our interpretations, we forgive the world for what it has not done to us. We are not the victims. Our minds are the cause of everything we see. We have the power; but first, we must admit our current way of being in the world is not bringing us the peace we desire.

"Do not be concerned about how you can learn a lesson so completely different from everything that you have taught yourself. How would you know? Your part is very simple. You need only recognize that everything you learned you do not want. Ask to be taught, and do not use your experiences to confirm what you have learned. When your peace is threatened or disturbed in any way, say to yourself:

"I do not know what anything, including this, means. And so I do not know how to respond to it. And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now.

"By this refusal to attempt to teach yourself what you do not know, the Guide Whom God has given you will speak to you. He will take His rightful place in your awareness the instant you abandon it, and offer it to Him." (T.14.XI.6.1-11) (ACIM OE T.14.VII.64-65)

How ready and willing are you to resign as your own guide and turn to One Who knows your best interests? His gentle love demonstrates the complete meaninglessness of the ego. By connecting with the quiet place deep within, we let go of the turbulence in the mind that keeps us in the prison of perpetual conflict. Thank God that we now have the support to take us out of the otherwise never-ending cycle of birth and death that constitutes this matrix. Our part is to keep bringing the darkness to the light by looking with great honesty and courage at our motives. As long as we keep looking for people and outside circumstances to blame for how we feel, we will keep the problems in our lives and our pain will increase. It is not always easy to look at our darkness, which is why we must take Jesus, or some other symbol of love, with us. It does take courage and determination to do this work, but we have mighty support. It need not be a painful process but we often experience it that way.

My final point is related to purpose. We think our purpose in this world is to prove the illusions about ourselves are real. In fact, we think our purpose is to prove *we* are real. **"It is for this purpose that I attempt to use everyone and everything. It is for this that I believe the world is for."** (W.55.5.3-4) The world was made to prove we are right about ourselves. We want to prove the reality of our individuality, our specialness, our self-worth, and our story. But now we are called to use the world for another purpose, which is to see only the truth as true by giving up the false. Are we ready to let go of the "I know" mind and concede we don't know so we can be taught? It is quite a challenge for us because we are still very resistant. We are still trying to preserve and defend the "self" we think we are, which makes learning this Course seem so hard. We resist questioning every belief, opinion, and judgment we hold.

"Let me open my mind to the world's real purpose by withdrawing the one I have given it, and learning the truth about it." (W.55.5.7) It is all about the power of our minds to choose. We will only use that power when we are sufficiently motivated by recognizing the world will never bring us happiness. Happiness is in the mind.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huenmert@shaw.ca

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