

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 14

God did not create a meaningless world.

Sarah's Commentary:

Yesterday, we read in the Lesson, **"Nothing without meaning exists."** (W.13.1.3) Thus, a meaningless world cannot exist and is not real. The only thing that is real is the eternal, the formless, the perfect, and that which has no limits of any kind. Therefore, the world of time, space, bodies, and substances cannot be real. This world is a place of limitation, always changing and forever imperfect. Thus, God could not have created any of it. It has come about as a result of the separation and is illusory. God created only the eternal. He can create only like Himself, so He can only create changeless perfect Oneness. The world is a projection of our meaningless thoughts. It seems very real and solid to us, and so to be told it is illusory is beyond our understanding. We might accept it intellectually for now, but our experiences mostly confirm its reality. We are invested in our bodies and our identities, which is why we need the miracle to shift our minds. **"Miracles reawaken the awareness that the spirit, not the body, is the altar of truth. This is the recognition that leads to the healing power of the miracle."** (T.1.I.20.1-2) (ACIM OE T.1.I.20) And through this healing, the mind is restored and we are released from our **". . . false sense of isolation, deprivation and lack."** (T.1.I.42) (ACIM OE T.1.I.57)

For me, it is a relief that I do not have to try to reconcile the death, destruction, and injustices of this world with God's Love. Think about it. If God is only love, His nature cannot bring about destruction. However, if we try to figure out God's nature from what we see as the wars and disasters in the world, we would need to reconcile a loving God with a wrathful God, which is what most religions have tried to do. We have tried to impose our own definition of Him, based on how we perceive the world. We project our own image onto God and simply make Him a larger and more powerful ego. This is the god the ego has made and reflects the third law of chaos described in Chapter 23. In that law, we tell God what He is. **"For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it."** (T.23.II.6.5) (ACIM OE T.23.III.24)

If God is not responsible for the pain and suffering in the world, who is? It turns out that we are. The source is the thought system of the ego. It is all a dream of our own making. It is a projection of the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. It is an experience of duality, yet duality can't be true because Oneness is all there is. God is perfect Oneness and perfect Love. Nothing outside of that perfection exists, and that is precisely the Thought we are so defended against. Our defenses protect what we have made and give value to. Our only way back to the truth of what we are is to negate all that is not the truth and to turn away from false thoughts, refusing their counsel. They block the truth of what we are, but they need to be seen. The important thing is to look at these thoughts without judging ourselves for them. We are not responsible for the error but only for the correction. The correction happens when we willingly bring our dark thoughts to awareness and

give them over to the Holy Spirit where they are healed. We can't fix ourselves, but we can surrender what no longer serves us. We can choose not to listen to the lies of the ego.

We can actively choose to deny the reality of anything not of God or of His making. We may think of denial as a negative thing, yet in Chapter 2, Jesus talks of the positive use of denial. He tells us that we have been using defenses against the Atonement, meaning that we have been setting up defenses against the truth by investing belief in the reality of the body and the world. He now urges us to use denial as a way of affirming that anything not of God cannot affect us. Thus, the disasters of this world or of our lives really can't have any real effect on us because they are just part of the dream of this world. Certainly, they can affect us in the dream, but we are not in the dream. The mind is outside of the dream and is not affected by what seems to be happening in the dream, similar to nighttime dreams.

The idea that the world is of our own making can be hard to take and can make us feel even more overwhelmed by guilt and self-hatred. Is it really possible that my murderous thoughts contribute to the violence in the world? Jesus told us in the Lesson yesterday that, "**Recognition of meaninglessness arouses intense anxiety in all the separated ones.**" (W.13.2.1) It means that all of us live with this anxiety. It helps to be told that it is natural to feel fear and resistance as we walk this path. It is not helpful to deny how we are feeling. It is important to let all our fears and concerns come to the surface. We are so used to being nice and good people that we don't want to expose our vulnerabilities, but it is specifically through exposure of the ego that healing can happen. Jesus assures us that while this process can bring up a lot of fear, "**You will not be left there. You will go far beyond it. Our direction is toward perfect safety and perfect peace.**" (W.14.3.4-6) You have a Guide with you and He will lead you through the seeming terror. God's love is on the other side. There is no way around the darkness. Trying to do a spiritual bypass or developing a spiritual ego will not work.

In my early work with the Course, this is exactly what I tried to do. I so much wanted to be an even nicer version of my egoic self. So, I learned Course principles, did the practices, had some lovely shifts in my mind and felt I was done. I felt so much better about what I knew about Course teachings that I did not want to accept I was in denial about my true motives. While I was willing to acknowledge judgments, I was not willing to acknowledge hatred in me. I was highly defended against perceived qualities in me that were negative as this did not align with my spiritual image. The shift came for me when I realized the ego was not me. The image I worked hard to maintain was the problem. Once that was apparent to me, I was willing to look deeper and no longer judge myself for the thoughts I was trying to protect.

In doing this healing, it is important to look at our judgments, our grievances, our anger, our control, our worry thoughts, our shame and guilt, our specialness, and all the ways we try to protect and defend ourselves. "**Some of them will lead you directly into fear. You will not be left there. You will go far beyond it. Our direction is toward perfect safety and perfect peace.**" (W.14.3.3-6) We need to trust that there is a way out of this cycle of sin, guilt, and fear that we live with daily. The way out is not through affirmations and not through manifestations but by being willing to look at how our ego shows up in the world. What do I value more than love? How do I try to win at someone's expense? How do I see myself as different and better than my brother? How much do I want to justify my positions? How much do I want to hold onto past grievances? What is the payoff for me for withholding forgiveness? What does my salvation (happiness) depend on? What am I invested in that I insist on having my way? What do I need to be right about?

We are learning to trust this process as we are being led past the concrete world of bodies, form, time, and space. Our minds are opening to the truth of who we are as eternal beings. We are, and always have been, innocent. We come to know our innocence by letting go of the thoughts we have written on this world. **"The idea for today is another step in learning to let go the thoughts that you have written on the world, and see the Word of God in their place."** (W.14.3.1) Jesus understands this can bring up a lot of fear, but he assures us we will not be left there. We just need to transition through the fear and doubt thoughts by acknowledging them without condemning ourselves for them. This is the only way healing can happen. It is a journey through the darkness to the light.

We are all here doing these Lessons because we have the willingness to undertake this journey back to the Self. Yes, resistance to the ideas will come up, but don't let that stop you. Jesus is very gentle with us. He does not make demands of us, which is why he asks us to be gentle with ourselves. Notice that your ego is the tyrant. Its voice makes demands of you. Jesus is gentle with us because he knows these Lessons challenge us. Our minds have been conditioned to cover our fears and anxieties and to be strong in the face of adversity. We are reluctant to expose our hate and our murderous thoughts. We cover them over by pretending they are small irritations, slight impatience, occasional anger, and little annoyances. We justify these feelings in the face of what we think others have done to us. I told Don this morning that a broadcaster's voice irritated me as I was watching TV, but I immediately recognized the irritation was in me already. It was simply being exposed. A peaceful healed mind can't be irritated. What makes the Course challenging is that we don't want to take responsibility for our reactions, believing instead that they are triggered by outside events. We want to put the guilt for how we feel on others, when in fact, it is our own guilt projected out. If I can see that others are responsible, I can feel innocent, but this is a false innocence.

The Lesson today asks us to think of all the horrors of the world, name each one, and then deny its reality because God did not create it, and so it is not real. Closer to home, we are also asked to look at what we are afraid might happen to us specifically and to anyone we are concerned about and affirm that God did not create any of it. This is **". . . part of your personal hell."** (W.14.6.3) Other disasters are a reflection of our **"shared illusions."** (W.14.6.3) This is what we all uphold as true. The wars, death, and destruction are all part of our shared illusion, while all my fears about my health, my future, and my ability to share this message become part of my personal thought system, none of which is real. Just because a billion people share in these beliefs does not make them true.

Your mind might be rebelling at this point with, "What do you mean 'None of this is real?'" You may be experiencing a very painful illness or a painful divorce, which certainly feels real. The news of disasters feels real. The death of someone dear to us feels real. Personally, I find it reassuring that nothing of this world is of God's creation but is of our own making, and thus, we must let the Holy Spirit give His interpretation to everything. He can bring a new perspective to what we think we are seeing and believing. I love this story, which is all about perspective, as it shows us there is always another way to see everything, and as we do, our perspective changes.

Here it is:

One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to a farm with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family.

On their return from their trip, the father asked his son,

"How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" his father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" his father asked.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing? It makes one wonder what would happen if we all were able to be in a state of gratitude. Should I be grateful for the difficulties in my life? Increasingly, I find that I see them as opportunities to look at my responses and recognize that I can choose again.

Today, as well as practicing this Lesson as described, we are also reminded that we can use this thought anytime during the day when we feel a loss of peace or are disturbed by anything that happens in the day. I am disturbed by a huge increase in the tax assessment on my property. I can apply this Lesson today to my disturbance by reminding myself God did not create a meaningless world. He did not create this disturbing tax situation. God has nothing to do with any of it. Notice how often, when difficulties arise, we ask God how He could allow this to happen? Why would we turn to such a God for comfort? Isn't it reassuring to know that He is not responsible for anything but the Love that is always available, regardless of our perceived problems? We undertake this Lesson to help us see that the interpretations we put on this world, on ourselves, and on God as well, are wrong.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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