

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 19

I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts.

Sarah's Commentary:

Yesterday, the focus of the Lesson was on seeing. Today, it is on thinking. Thinking is cause and seeing is effect. **"Thinking and its results are really simultaneous, for cause and effect are never separate."** (W.19.1.4) It all happens so quickly that it is hard to recognize thought as the cause of our seeing. We don't recognize that each thought we have produces an effect that we see in the world. Every problem, every event, every situation, and everything in this world of form starts with a thought in our minds. In fact, the whole world is a projection of the thought of separation. Essentially, the world is not separate from the mind. Nothing is really outside of the mind. It does seem like the world is outside of the mind, but Jesus reminds us that ideas do not leave their source. Another way to say this is that effects do not leave their cause, and the cause is always our own minds.

An example of this for me today was when Don and I were talking about a politician who triggers reactions in us. It is someone many people love to hate, but the hate is in our own minds. We prefer not to see it there and therefore project it onto this person. All we are seeing is the effect of our own thoughts of hate that we don't want to acknowledge in ourselves so we find convenient receptacles in others.

Another way to think about this is to think of the mind as a movie projector. The Holy Spirit is like the pure light shining through the projector until a film is put in it. The film is the thought system in the mind running through the projector that we see on the screen as colors and shapes. Our minds focus on particular aspects of the movie playing on the screen, and our identification with those aspects creates an experience for us. The screen is not the cause of our experience. We are creating this experience ourselves. When we look at the movie on the screen, we get emotionally involved in the action on the screen and forget that the projector is the source of what we see and the movie is the effect. The movie is a series of neutral events that we react to. We perceive the movie as constantly changing, but what is actually changing are our thoughts about it. We believe we are on the screen, rather than back in the mind. This is how we convince ourselves that the separation is real. It is all our movie and all the characters on the screen are part of our script. When we take responsibility for the projections on the screen as coming from our own minds, we bring the guilt back to ourselves and make space for some light in the projection to shine through where guilt had previously blocked the light.

We want all of this to be real. Our desire is to have the experience of this individual existence. We are invested in our movie. On a metaphysical level, there is tremendous guilt in the mind as a result of the decision to separate from God. We project this guilt onto the world. Now we see others as having the guilt so we don't have to be responsible for it. We prefer to see others as the bad guys. We want to see them as the guilty ones who victimize us so we can see ourselves as innocent victims who are not responsible for any of it. Jesus exposes how all of this was set up

because we have no memory of any of it. A veil of forgetfulness dropped across the mind when we chose the separation. Now it seems that the world was there when we were born, and we are its effect. Everyone here holds the same thought system.

Jesus says that the way we perceive does not affect us alone. It seems to us that we can have private thoughts that are ours alone, but Jesus tells us that this is not so. If my thoughts affect others, as was discussed yesterday, this puts a lot of responsibility on me. Jesus says it is not always a welcome idea at first because **". . . it seems to carry with it an enormous sense of responsibility, and may even be regarded as an 'invasion of privacy'."** (W.19.2.2) Later, we will see that we welcome this idea because it is the essence of the power we have to change our minds. That is what makes salvation (healing) possible. **"Despite your initial resistance to this idea, you will yet understand that it must be true if salvation is possible at all."** (W.19.2.4) It means each of us can choose peace and healing and are not victims of outside circumstances. We choose it, not only for ourselves but for everyone because we are one Self.

This is the basis for forgiveness. As I release the dark thoughts in my mind, I heal my relationships. A few years ago, I was going through some difficult issues with my mother's seniors' residence. The company that owns the residence doubled the rent and put her, and all of us, in financial jeopardy. We were troubled and wondered what we could do. I met with company officials and berated them for treating vulnerable seniors in this way. I judged that they lacked concern or consideration for these seniors in their care.

I then spoke with the media and received good coverage. Finally, I approached a lawyer to see what action could be taken. These were all ego strategies, and they did not result in resolution of the issue. I saw in retrospect that I had gone about trying to fix things on the screen, forgetting that the work was to look at my projection of guilt on others. With the realization of how I was on the wrong track, I committed to healing my mind by releasing my anger and frustration. When I was able to see my seeming "enemies" in a different light, everything started to change. Solutions were found to make this work for my mother. No, the company did not reverse their decision, but they were prepared to work with us to try to find some solutions, and in the process, they demonstrated a depth of understanding and support that was quite amazing.

"I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts." (W.19) Indeed, this fact makes salvation possible when we take responsibility for our thoughts and are willing to bring them to the light. Only then can the miracle show up. This certainly does not mean there are not things we need to attend to in the illusion. However, the real cause is in the mind, and that is the only place salvation is possible. It is a call to choose again. This teaching is very practical. Yes, the metaphysics do seem to be complex to our complex thinking minds, but they help us see how we have everything here backward. There is such power in the application of these teachings. We will only know that power when we do this work with the mind.

As in other Lessons, we are asked to be indiscriminate in selecting subjects to use in practicing this Lesson. This is important in all Lessons, as we are learning that all illusions are the same. There is no hierarchy in illusions. There are no differences in thoughts. There are not some that are better, worse, bigger, or more powerful than others. All of them are actually nothing. None of them are the truth. They are all meaningless, as we learned in previous Lessons. It is all a random series of thoughts that cross our minds that we are now being asked to look at. The ego likes to order everything, but there is no order of difficulty in miracles. As such, we are learning that some things are not more important than others. Whether we lose our job or lose our keys, it makes no difference in terms of the magnitude of the problem, except to the ego of course. Each problem is like every other problem. All problems are just reflections of the belief that we are on our own and

separate from everyone else, with our own private thoughts and our own unique problems. If this were the case, separation would be real and not the illusory dream we have constructed.

At least three times today, and four if you feel no strain, for one minute or shorter if necessary, search your mind for the thoughts there. **"As you consider each one, name it in terms of the central person or theme it contains, and holding it in mind as you do so, say:**

"I am not alone in experiencing the effects of this thought about _____." (W.19.3.3-4)

Finally, if there were no secrets and no private thoughts, why would we need to hide behind all our defenses? We only imagine we are safe in our walled-off private selves. We work hard to manage the chaos, putting on a bravado of confidence and certainty. Now we are called to take down these defenses and see how silly our thoughts are. We can laugh at the foolishness of the thoughts we have taken so seriously. When we choose forgiveness and give our grievances over to the Holy Spirit, healing is guaranteed. Our part is just to be willing to look at our thoughts. The Holy Spirit does the rest. With our choice for healing, the world becomes a gentler place. It does not mean everything in the world changes since the world was made as an imperfect place, but it does mean we will see it all differently. The responsibility is ours. It carries an opportunity that can take us out of the ego game of being the victim of events and situations. All that is required of us is to keep looking at our thoughts and bring them to the light. We can access our thoughts from our thinking mind or look at how we feel. Behind our feelings are our thoughts, beliefs, and the concepts we hold that keep us bound to the illusion, but it need not be!

Love and blessings, Sarah
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