

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 219 ~ Review VI [199] I am not a body. I am free.

Sarah's Commentary:

"I am not a body I am free. For I am still as God created me." (W.RVI.3.3-5) Our identity in the world is that of a body. Everything we see, say, and touch and everywhere we go, everything we do, everyone we meet, every emotion we have of anger, worry, distress, anxiety, pleasure, pain, sickness, and ultimately death affirm our bodily existence, and this is an affirmation that there is no God. Because of this strong identity with the body, we need to be constantly reminded, **"I am not a body."** It requires a lot of practice to undo the belief in the body and personality that I describe as myself. The personality is a bundle of beliefs, values, and self-concepts that I hold and give power to. Clearly, simply affirming that I am not a body will not change these beliefs. Change will come through the decision to watch the mind and withdraw the relevance given to our thoughts. We can choose not to listen to the thoughts, but to do that we must attend to what we are thinking, believing, and valuing and withdraw our investment in these thoughts.

Everything used by the ego to convince me that I am a body and that I am my thoughts can be turned over to the Holy Spirit to demonstrate that I am the Son of God. My reality is Spirit. I am love, peace, and joy and unlimited mind, outside of the body and not contained by it. I am that which watches the thoughts. I am the awareness, behind the thoughts, that has always been. It is the same awareness that was there when I was born, when I was seven, when I was twenty-seven, as well as today. It is the changeless aspect of my Self, beyond the body. The more I stay in awareness, the less I identify with the body and personality.

I am reading in the Text, **"I Need Do Nothing,"** (T.18.VII) (ACIM T.18.VIII) where Jesus says, **"There is one thing that you have never done; you have not utterly forgotten the body. It has perhaps faded at times from your sight, but it has not yet completely disappeared. You are not asked to let this happen for more than an instant, yet it is in this instant that the miracle of Atonement happens. Afterwards you will see the body again, but never quite the same. And every instant that you spend without awareness of it gives you a different view of it when you return."** (T.18.VII.2.1-5) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.64)

Each time we practice the holy instant in which we enter the present moment—the NOW, the body disappears. It happens through the acceptance of the Atonement for myself. It is the acceptance of the truth of what I am. And how this happens is when we release our attachment and investment in our identity as a body which Jesus describes as a fence around a great and glorious idea. We practice the holy instant that is given us if we want it. It is our decision. **"For beyond the past and future, where you will not find it, it stands in shimmering readiness for your acceptance."** (T.15.IV.1.8) (ACIM OE T.15.V.35) We must desire to become the living expression of the Christ while keeping our minds focused on the blessing, even in difficult circumstances. It

requires that we maintain a consistent focus on what is going on in our minds and be willing to redirect our thoughts. We are willing to release the outcome. We keep in mind our essence and recognize that all darkness is there only to assist in our awakening, so we can let our littleness go and choose our magnitude instead. We take time in silence. Our progress depends on willingness and not on time.

I was speaking with a friend last night about loneliness. When I thought more about where loneliness comes from, I realized that it is all about my identity, which is the belief that I am separate from everyone else. It is a belief, based on the Laws of Chaos, that truth is different for each of us. This experience in which we feel separate from others, locked in the body, and invested in lack and limitation is the human condition. It keeps us separate from others with the belief that we each have our own unique values and hold different perspectives that we cannot share. The only thing that can be shared is forgiveness. We can be in a crowd and feel profoundly separate from everyone. We can be in an intimate relationship and feel the loneliness of separation.

Bodies can never join, as they were made not to join. **"For relationships, to the ego, mean only that bodies are together."** (T.15.VII.8.2) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.72) **"For they think their minds must be kept private or they will lose them, but if their bodies are together their minds remain their own."** (T.15.VII.11.5) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.75) The body has been made as a limit on what in truth cannot be limited. Our concept of freedom is not about the unlimited mind, but it is about the body getting to do what it wants. Yet real freedom is of the mind. It is the total opposite of how we think of freedom, but it is not hard to see how lacking in freedom we are when we identify ourselves with the body.

Aren't we all a slave to our body's requirements? It is a demanding thing that has urges, needs, and incapacities that demand attention. We experience pain, frailties, and sickness. The body gets hungry, dirty, and must be fed and exercised. We obey this seeming master and become its slave, carrying out its dictates. Even more, we carry out its demands to defend ourselves, protect ourselves, and attack others. Yet when we listen to the Holy Spirit and let our body be put into His service, the body becomes a useful instrument in service of the Self. Thus, its health and well-being are assured. This does not mean that we don't take care of the body, but it is no longer the primary source of instruction, ruling our lives when we realize our true identity. This happens as we practice the holy instant. It starts with perfect communication in which we are willing to hide nothing. **"For what you would hide is hidden from you. In your practice, then, try only to be vigilant against deception and seek not to protect the thoughts you would keep to yourself."** (T.15.I.9.7-8) (ACIM OE T.15.V.44)

Egos can never join. Bodies can never join. The world of egos and bodies is a world of fear, separation, and loneliness. There is no trust and no love in this experience; but with desire and willingness, we can experience: "I am God's Son." We have never left our home. This is simply a dream of exile. There is nothing to seek and nothing to find. We need only remember the truth of what we are as we were created. And in the experience of the holy instant, we enter briefly into another reality. When we return from the experience of the holy instant, some of the confusion about our identity is lifted from the mind. The truth dawns on our minds as we commit to this practice, looking at our thoughts and recognizing their falsity. **"Let the Holy Spirit's purity shine them away, and bring all your awareness to the readiness for purity he offers you."** (T.15.9.9) (ACIM OE T.15.V.44)

When the body is given over to the Holy Spirit, it becomes a vehicle for extending love. It is now put to a holy use. Until this is the case, there is no freedom. That is the message we are to take to

our brothers **"who perceive themselves as bound and helpless and afraid."** (W.199.7.3) We can be an example to others that they too can choose the peace we have chosen. To be an example requires that we do the work to free ourselves by recognizing that the world we have made up, including our bodies, is not real. We have kept ourselves in chains, believing that the world, and not our own thoughts, is the cause of our suffering. We are the ones who have given meaning to everything around us. No one has the power to hurt or upset us. We choose to be upset because this is what we want to experience.

When we make the decision to free ourselves and it becomes the priority in our lives, we free our brothers, right along with us. Every brother we welcome brings with him another opportunity to join in the Oneness of who we are by seeing we are the same. This recognition of sameness is the reflection of God's Oneness. We owe our brothers gratitude because without them we could never see what is in our minds. We could never come to the place where we finally see our sameness with everyone. Only the guilt in the mind keeps us tied to our limited identity as bodies separate from every other body. Guilt requires differences and comparisons that maintain the separation, but our reality is One Self which is seen in our sameness.

The truth is that we are unlimited and uncontained in the body. The only bondage we experience is what we have chosen. Now we can make another choice. We can use the body for a different purpose. We practice today by reminding ourselves of the truth of who we are as God's Son. And whenever we experience pain, distress of any kind, anxiety, or investment in seeing our needs as more important than our brothers', we have chosen to align with the ego and forget what we are in truth. We have turned to the ego for its interpretation of a situation or person that seems to be the cause of our distress. Now we can choose to change our minds and decide instead to ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see each brother, every circumstance, and each situation, through the eyes of love.

We admit that we have been wrong in our way of seeing. **"I must have decided wrongly, because I am not at peace."** (T.5.VII.6.7) (ACIM OE T.5.IX.96) We recognize that we have made a mistake in listening to the ego and remind ourselves that we have a purpose here, which is to awaken to the truth of what we are. We take time today to enter the stillness where truth abides. **"And then return to earth, without confusion as to what my Father loves forever as His Son."** (W.219.1.5) Now we see the experience of our day in a different light, as we make it a day of forgiveness.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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