

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 259

Let me remember that there is no sin.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson says, "**Sin is the only thought that makes the goal of God seem unattainable.**" (W.259.1.1) What is that thought? It is the thought that I have done something so horrendous that I could never attain my innocence again. It is the thought that I am lost forever because of the "badness" of my being for which I have to suffer. How could I go to God when I have so much to undo? Not only do we hold this belief in our unconscious minds, but we believe that we have killed God in order to exist. While this is an unconscious belief, on a conscious level, we believe the things we have thought and done have altered who we are. Now it seems to us that it will be a very long and arduous journey that will take many years, if not lifetimes, to undo our many wrong doings.

We have become blinded to the truth, and therefore, it appears that the "**strange and the distorted seem more clear.**" (W.259.1.2) In other words, the seeming reality of this world seems more clear and obvious than the truth. All the problems and issues are seen as if they are what is real and true. We see our own wrongdoings, and it seems obvious to us that there must be consequences for what we have done. In this view, the bigger the sin is the more we must pay. Our strange and distorted thought system of sin and guilt has projected out a strange and distorted world, staring back at us. It all seems so real, and so we believe we have to protect and defend ourselves from perceived attack. We think we deserve the punishment the world seems to deliver because of what we believe we have coming to us. If Jesus tells us that we have done nothing and we remain innocent, why do we insist on holding onto the belief in sin and guilt except that it protects us from God's Love? The only reason we want this protection is that we still value the separation. We still prefer to hold onto our own thoughts, and thus "**Sin is the only thought makes the goal of God seem unattainable.**" (W.259.1.1)

This cycle of guilt, punishment, suffering, and more guilt keeps us in a state of fear. We believe we deserve punishment because we are guilty and are therefore unworthy of joy, health, abundance, and happiness. These are the thoughts we live with, believing there is something we have done wrong, even though we don't completely know what it is. And this brings a feeling of not being OK, of not being worthy, of always trying to improve ourselves, and of feeling that there is something lacking in us. Only when we fully accept our innocence can the door to abundance and wholeness be open to us. It is not something we need to attain; our innocence is assured. We are already complete, whole, and guiltless, but we block this truth about ourselves because we actually prefer to hold onto the belief that we are guilty. This attraction to guilt is actually our attraction to our separate and seemingly independent selves that we cherish. Yet when we hold onto the separate self, we live in a state of fear, and we don't believe we are deserving of happiness, abundance, joy, and peace.

The movie, *The Words*, exemplifies a lifelong process of self-punishment and self-judgment because of guilt. The ego approves of this. In fact, Jesus says that the ego considers this holy. Yet Jesus says, **"You whose mind is darkened by doubt and guilt, remember this: God gave the Holy Spirit to you, and gave Him the mission to remove all doubt and every trace of guilt that His dear Son has laid upon himself."** (T.13.XI.5.1) (ACIM OE T.13.V.39) He asks that we not feel guilty **"because the Holy Spirit will undo all the consequences of my wrong decision if I will let Him."** (T.5.VII.6.10) (ACIM OE T.5.IX.96) Yet when we don't allow this for ourselves, we live with a lot of suffering. It is not necessary.

I had a situation in my life where I felt very guilty for judging a friend. I realized, in talking with Don, that I was still holding this against myself, feeling the guilt and shame for something I had done about 35 years ago. Don reminded me that nothing real had happened. I could forgive myself for what never happened except in my mind. Yet I was still carrying this situation because I felt I still needed to do something to make up for my guilt that was still there. The question is---how long does it take to release oneself from the cross? I found I was actively keeping my innocence from awareness. I had made many attempts with my friend to try to rectify the situation but she still kept her distance. There was no answer in form that I could undertake, and so I finally surrendered and gave it all over to the Holy Spirit and put the situation in His Hands. And not surprisingly, she crossed my path recently after a long period of absence of about ten years. There was a beautiful joining. I was reminded once again---no problem can be solved by our own actions. The only answer is from the Holy Spirit. **"He is swift to utilize whatever you offer Him on behalf of this (truth)."** (T.15.VIII.1.4) (ACIM OE T.15.IX.79) So let us not put ourselves in charge of our own issues. **"Refuse not the awareness of your completion, and seek not to restore it to yourself."** (T.15.VIII.3.3) (ACIM OE T.15.IX.81)

The restoration of our completion comes with the realization that we can't awaken ourselves. We can only allow ourselves to be awakened. I had tried for years to do something, but nothing worked until I got out of the way and realized that I am not the one who is in charge of getting out of this dream. That is what we have the Holy Spirit for. Our part is simply to surrender our way and to resign as our own teacher. We can't possibly know how to get out of this dream with its complexity and entanglements created by the ego. All that is needed is that we constantly turn to the Holy Spirit for His guidance. When I let go of my ideas about how to solve this situation, it was all done for me.

Jesus is calling us to recognize that **"what sin perceives is but a childish game. The Son of God may play he has become a body, prey to evil and to guilt, with but a little life that ends in death. But all the while His Father shines on him, and loves him with an everlasting Love which his pretenses cannot change at all."** (W.PII.Q4.4.2-4) Thank goodness despite what we think we have done we have not been able to change our reality. Thank God that He knows nothing we can do or have done can change Creation. All we are doing is holding our **"return to Heaven back"** (W.PII.Q4.5.7) by holding onto our misguided thoughts.

Just like the Prodigal Son, we believe we cannot return to our home until we clean up our act and become "good." Yet when the Prodigal Son returned home and told his father, "I have sinned against you and before Heaven, I am no longer worthy to be called your son," the father does not agree with the son's evaluation of himself. He does not acknowledge any wrong doing. He does not say, "Yes, you have done wrong, but I, as a good man, will forgive you." Instead, he puts a gold ring on his son's finger, puts a cloak around him and sandals on his feet and arranges a celebration for the son who was lost and is now found. Where he went and what had happened, did not matter. The level of illusion we get caught in does not matter. The only thing that matters is that we turn

in the direction of the Holy Spirit, Who reminds us of our innocence, our happiness, and our peace.

Jesus urges us to think about what we are doing and how long we want to maintain our game of sin. It is up to us. It is our choice. Nothing we have ever done is beyond correction. It is about our readiness **"to put away these sharp-edged children's toys."** (W.PII.Q4.5.2) When will the time be? **"How long, O holy Son of God, how long?"** (W.PII.Q4.5.8) When will we be ready to return to the home we believe we had to leave because we had done something so bad that God would never forgive us?

God assures us that He loves us and is waiting for our return. We, on the other hand, think that because of what we have done, we cannot go back home. We have run away from our home. Our Father is calling us back, but we feel so guilty and terrible about the things we have done that we feel we cannot return. Yet we keep asking God---how long do we have to be here and why doesn't He bring us back? We may wonder why this all-powerful God does not just take us back home. We get so discouraged when this spiritual journey home seems to be taking such a long time, and we just want out of here. What are we waiting for? We are waiting only for ourselves. We still don't realize that we are playing the game of sin. We are believing in a story that is not true. Until we give up our silly game of self-attack and punishment and guilt, we will continue to hold Heaven back, while all the time God is there in our minds, welcoming us home. We want to hold onto our identity and our specialness and make believe we can make ourselves safe in our little kingdom, separate from God. Now we are called to surrender all these false beliefs. Bring them to the feet of Jesus. Don't ask Jesus to come into the dream to fix what you see as your problems. Go to where he is.

This Lesson is calling on us to remember that no matter what we think we have done, have not done, or have failed to do, we are still innocent. The condemnation we have laid on our own heads is what is keeping us in the cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. Our belief in sin leads to guilt, and guilt demands punishment. This brings fear, and fear leads to self-defense. Yes, we did those awful things in the dream, but the dream is not real. Does this mean we can attack with impunity? Of course not. Jesus makes it clear that attack and anger are never justified. As long as we attack, we will feel guilty, and we will expect punishment. Our attack thoughts will keep us from knowing our true innocence.

The truth is that we are completely innocent because the world is not real and our game of sin and guilt is being played out in a dream that we are dreaming. Whatever we have done in the dream did not actually happen. Therefore, sin cannot be real. The only reason the ego convinced the mind that sin is real is so that we would be convinced that our seeming rupture with God is permanent. The world arose from this thought and is a smokescreen for keeping the ego thought system in place.

Notice how no one ever admits that they attack because they want to. Oprah once spoke of a survey where people were asked about how prevalent rudeness is in society. Most said rudeness was rampant in society, but when asked if they themselves were ever rude, 99% said they were not. They justified their behavior as a defense against the rudeness of others. Isn't that how it is with us? We think our attacks are justified. We make excuses for them. It is always about what someone else has done to us first. We need to take responsibility for our attacks, release the regrets and judgments we hold against ourselves, and recognize that they have not changed our nature. We are innocent and so are all our brothers. My sole responsibility is to accept the Atonement for myself and thus extend this same innocence to all of my brothers.

Today, each time you are tempted to get angry or upset about anything, realize that you have simply made a wrong choice. The ego will always try to justify our upsets with a story. Be willing to release the story. Be willing to recognize that you are wrong in the way you see it. Ask the Teacher, Who is already in your right mind, how to see the situation.

Ask yourself today, "Do I want to act on my judgments, or do I want to find a new interpretation of the situation so I can appropriately answer the call for love from my brother?" I need to be open to acknowledging that the attack thoughts in my mind are not what I want. I can take a moment and step aside from the situation and agree to let these thoughts go. When I realize that this is how I am holding Heaven back and keeping myself from my joy and peace, I will be motivated to choose again. As I turn my thoughts over to the Holy Spirit, I trust His healing will allow them to dissipate. If it is a persistent thought, it may come back. This is only because I have not totally given it over, but I can keep giving it over until the healing is accepted by my mind.

This is all about readiness and willingness. I ask for the holy instant in which to remember, **"Whoever is saner at the time the threat is perceived should remember how deep is his indebtedness to the other and how much gratitude is due him, and be glad that he can pay his debt by bringing happiness to both."** (T.18.V.7.1) (ACIM OE T.18.VI.47) I remind myself that there is only one mind. When the person who is saner at the time extends forgiveness, the other always receives it at some level. ***"And so I choose this instant as the one to offer to the Holy Spirit that His blessing may descend on us, and keep us both in peace."*** (T.18.V.7.6) (ACIM OE T.18.VI.48)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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