

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 291

This is a day of stillness and of peace.

Sarah's Commentary:

In this Section, "What is the Real World?" (W.PII.Q8), Jesus says, "**The real world is a symbol, like the rest of what perception offers. Yet it stands for what is opposite to what you made.**" (W.PII.Q8.1.1-2) In other words, true perception is not reality, but it reflects reality in the same way that forgiveness reflects perfect love, joining, and Oneness. The real world is a state of mind, which is a reflection of the truth of what we are. It is not truth itself, but it is the closest we can come to it in the world of perception.

The real world is the culmination of our journey when we choose to follow only the Voice of the Holy Spirit in the right mind. Thus, the real world is right-minded perception where we see behind appearances to the light beyond them. As Jesus says, "**There can be no appearance that cannot be overlooked.**" (T.30.VI.5.4) (ACIM OE T.30.VII.74) No matter how brutal events might appear to be, there is a Call within to see with the eyes of love (vision) to the truth beyond all appearances. "**Be not deceived about the meaning of a fixed belief that some appearances are harder to look past than others are.**" (T.30.VI.6.4) (ACIM OE T.30.VII.75) If we do, we are making the error real and seeing a hierarchy among illusions. All illusions are equally untrue no matter the apparent size or degree of magnitude.

The real world is the result of undoing the belief in separation. It is the recognition that the Son of God is guiltless. The work of forgiveness is now complete. The past has been released and the voice of the ego that has tried to define who we are is now undone. The real world is not yet Heaven, but it is a reflection of Heaven. It is the symbol of the awakened state. It is a world that "**holds a counterpart for each unhappy thought reflected in your world; a sure correction for the sights of fear and sounds of battle which your world contains.**" (W.PII.Q8.2.1) All that is left is the blessed residue which is the beauty that has been saved for us.

We see this world through "**quiet eyes and with a mind at peace.**" (W.PII.Q8.2.2) This is a state of mind outside of the world of hate, attack, pain, sorrow, and death. In other words, it is a state of mind outside the dream of this world. In the dream, Jesus says that the mind is asleep, dreaming of exile from our state of perfect Oneness. It seems that this state of Oneness has been broken into billions of fragments, which are all the forms of this world. They all seem to be different from each other. In this state of separation, we are all competing with each other, doing our best to serve our own self-interests. This is a state of conflict where there is no peace.

The problems of this world seem to be never-ending, but there is actually only one problem. The only problem we have is the belief in separation. **"Preoccupations with problems set up to be incapable of solution are favorite ego devices for impeding learning progress."** (T.4.V.6.6) (ACIM OE T.4.VI.77) Isn't that what occupies most of our attention? We seem to solve one problem and then three others show up. It is a never-ending cycle of constantly trying to solve the myriad problems confronting us. The answer to all of our problems is to recognize their purpose, which is to keep us distracted from the truth of what we are. When we turn to the Holy Spirit, He **"will answer every specific problem as long as you believe that problems are specific."** (T.11.VIII.5.5) (ACIM OE T.10.VIII.80) Trust and faith are called for, so when a problem shows up, if we immediately turn to Him rather than the ego for the answer, problems get addressed in miraculous ways. **"All bring their different problems to its healing light, and all their problems find but healing there."** (T.14.IX.7.4) (ACIM OE T.14.V.44) The real world is a world of peace and is removed from the seeming conflict and problems of this world with only happy sights and sounds seen and heard.

Within the dream, death and attack have reality because we have given them reality. The body seems real as does the world, which is a projection of guilt that arose as a result of the attack on God. For the separate, individual self to seemingly have any reality, God could not exist. It is either me or God, one or the other because our perceived state of individuality and the state of Oneness cannot both be true. If we think our individual separate self is real and true, God must be non-existent. The thought system of "one or the other," God or me, has been made real in our mind and continues to be enacted in the world. To add the idea of God to the ego is to try to combine two realities. Now, God becomes another character in the dream when in fact He is outside of the dream. Love cannot be brought into fear and since it is a world of fear, love must remain outside of it. But to return to this state of love, we replace attack with forgiveness so we can experience peace.

When we recognize that this life does not serve us and does not bring the peace and joy we yearn for, we are ready to commit to this path. **"Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point."** (T.2.III.3.6-7) (ACIM OE T.2.II.48) Until then, we do everything we can to adjust to the world and strive for the idols we think will bring us happiness; but when we seek for happiness in the things of this world, it will always elude us.

We see the reflection in the world of what is in the mind. If there is only kindness in the mind, only kindness can be seen and with it there is nothing to condemn or judge. When we show kindness, we recognize our Source as being kind because we cannot be separate from our Source. When the mind is totally kind, all thoughts and perceptions are kind because they are all products of the mind. Now, **"Only happy sights and sounds can reach the mind that has forgiven itself."** (W.PII.Q8.2.6)

The real world signifies the end of time, as time has now served its purpose. Time was made to reinforce guilt, but when used by the Holy Spirit, time is given us for healing guilt. Thus, while time for us has been used for a hurtful purpose, the Holy Spirit uses it to help us awaken to the truth of who we are. This requires that we bring our grievances, attack thoughts, and in fact all dark thoughts to the light. If we hold onto grievances, we are saying that we don't want to return home. We need to become very vigilant of our judgments and attack thoughts because they are

simply decisions to stay in the dream and choose to see ourselves as separate and alone. **"The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery is happiness."** (T.14.II.1.1-3) (ACIM OE T.13.VII.54)

This Lesson comes each year to me on my birthday. I take it as a gift from the Holy Spirit every year to devote this day to stillness and peace. It is a gift we can accept anytime we choose because it is already in us. There is nothing for us to seek. The loveliness of this day depends on what we have chosen within. **"Spiritual vision looks within and recognizes immediately that the altar has been defiled and needs to be repaired and protected. Perfectly aware of the right defense it passes over all others, looking past error to truth. Because of the strength of its vision, it brings the mind into its service. This re-establishes the power of the mind and makes it increasingly unable to tolerate delay, realizing that it only adds unnecessary pain."** (T.2.III.4.3-6) (ACIM OE T.2.II.49)

We delay our homecoming when we stubbornly resist the Correction and choose instead to hold onto our version of events and use them to justify our lack of peace. When we recognize that this only brings more pain, we become motivated in our refusal to tolerate delay. The time between the event and our decision to accept healing into the mind is considerably shortened as we apply these Lessons. Where it seemed to take us months to get over something painful, it gets reduced to weeks, then days, then minutes, and finally seconds. We increasingly find that it becomes much too painful to hold onto grievances.

A **"day of stillness and of peace"** (W.291) talked about in this Lesson is not about anything happening outside of ourselves. Stillness and peace are in fact attributes of our mind. It is our natural state. The experiences we seem to have that create turmoil and distress in our life are not the truth. They are not fact. Jesus says, the fact is that this day is a day of stillness and of peace. How can that be? Which is true? What he says or what I am experiencing? Am I a body living in the world, or am I the Christ? Only one of these realities is true. Which one do I accept? My frame of reference looks like chaos with unpredictable events. I seem to be at their mercy, but this is not the frame of reference of this teaching. Do I open up to the holiness, which is the truth, or do I hold onto my frame of reference?

In Chapter 14, thoughts in the mind are described as having **"a weaving, changing pattern that never rests and is never still. It shifts unceasingly across the mirror of your mind, and the reflections of Heaven last but a moment and grow dim, as darkness blots them out."** (T.14.X.5.1-2) (ACIM OE T.14.VI.49) This restless mind with all of the thoughts that go around and around creates chaos for us. It is why we are invited to watch our thoughts and release them to the Holy Spirit. It is a discipline that takes time and practice, but it is the only way to uncover what is blocking the truth. The truth is blocked by our restless thoughts. Behind them, and always there, are stillness and peace.

"I rule my mind which I alone must rule." (W.236) The thoughts we hold and the feelings we experience are what block the holiness surrounding us. It is up to us to choose. **"The power of decision is my own."** (W.132) I can make the choice for a happy day. The movie, *Before I Fall*, illustrates how a change of mind can result in a wholly different way to live the day. We see in this movie how no matter what we might do to make ourselves happy and adjust to the world,

as long as the mind is locked into a static pattern of past and future, there is no hope of sustained happiness. There is nothing more important we can do with our day than to set the intention to use every opportunity to open up more and more to the love that we are. It is the giving up of the "I know mind" that goes to its familiar responses. Difficult events that show up in our lives are there to stir up this familiarity of the mind and thus are very helpful. To see them in this way is to be a happy learner.

To us, salvation is about getting everything done by attending to our stuff. We even get anxious about not understanding the Course perfectly or believing we are not good at meditating! But that is just another way we suffer. It is how the ego thought system is maintained. It is continual noise in the mind, which keeps God away since God is in the quiet mind. One way we keep truth away is by arguing, judging, comparing, holding opinions, wanting to be right, and trying to control everything. This keeps the ego in business. When the temptation is there to jump into the fray, I find that if I remember to step back, take a breath, and ask for help, my mind is set free from the trap the ego has laid for it. Now the Christ Self is in charge and all is well. Nothing can upset this Self.

Until we have the experience of the real world, our world certainly seems real and solid, so it seems it is God's world that is the illusion. This world does seem real and tangible to us, just as all of our problems here seem real and tangible, but as we experience the foreshadowing of the real world with moments of true peace and joy, our faith in His Word increases. As we withdraw our investment in all we have made real, we increasingly see that what seems so real and solid is actually a dream. It is all an illusion we have made up and believe to be reality.

We need do nothing to experience stillness and peace except to bring awareness to the way we block our true Will, which we share with God. What this means is we bring awareness to the thoughts we think we are thinking. At the darkest point of his life, Eckhart Tolle said he could not live with himself any longer. Then, suddenly he became aware of a peculiar thought, "Am I one or two?" he wondered. "If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me: the 'I' and the 'self' that 'I' cannot live with. Maybe only one of them is real." He was so stunned by this realization that all of his thinking stopped, and he was taken to a state of bliss, which lasted for days.

Today, let us resolve to bring awareness to what we are thinking, how we are judging, expectations we have of others, plans we are making against future fears, and grievances we are holding. All of this is keeping us from the real world. We will experience the peace and stillness when the mind goes quiet. In the quiet mind, we connect to our Source. It does not mean there are no thoughts. We simply choose not to listen to them and not to focus on them. It takes a lot of discipline and determined effort. In the beginning stages, which by the way can last a long time, we may find things seem worse because we are uncovering a whole host of thoughts we had never been aware of because they were so well hidden by our conditioned minds. These thoughts constitute the program that runs our life. As they are exposed, we may judge ourselves for them, but this is not helpful. Welcome them, for in this awareness they are brought to light where they will dissipate into the nothingness from which they came.

I recognize today, "***I do not know the way to You.***" (W.291.2.3) When I think I know, I put myself in charge of my healing, but this is just the ego thinking that it can clean up its own act and become a spiritual person. Until we admit we don't know and have been wrong in all of our

judgments and perceptions, we will not be willing to ask for another way to see everything. It reminds me of the movie, *Dark City*, where the ego tries to find the way out by looking for a taxi or train to get out of the dark city and go to the beach (Heaven). It wants to believe it can figure its own way, which is one of control, but the ego's way will never work. In the movie, the way to leave the illusory world is to give up all doubt thoughts and surrender. Now the way is opened up. It is the same for us. We basically have to give up our way and our answers and recognize we don't know. We only need the desire to be taught. ***"Father, guide Your Son along the quiet path that leads to You. Let my forgiveness be complete, and let the memory of You return to me."*** (W.291.2.5-6)

"How much do you want salvation? It will give you the real world, trembling with readiness to be given you. The eagerness of the Holy Spirit to give you this is so intense He would not wait, although He waits in patience. Meet His patience with your impatience at delay in meeting Him. Go out in gladness to meet with your Redeemer, and walk with Him in trust out of this world and into the real world of beauty and forgiveness." (T.17.II.8.1-5) (ACIM OE T.17.III.13)

Today, I am reminded to ***"Let my forgiveness be complete, and let the memory of You return to me."*** (W.291.2.6) I recognize that if I just get this, it would take me all the way home.

"To meet everything and everyone through stillness instead of mental noise is the greatest gift you can offer to the universe. I call it stillness, but it is a jewel with many facets: that stillness is also joy, and it is love."

~ Eckhart Tolle

Love and blessings, Sarah
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