

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 309 I will not fear to look within today.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson says that we fear to look within because we think that we actually made another will which is different from our true Will. Our fear is that the will we think we made is real. If indeed it is real, we have actually destroyed our pristine home. The beautiful thing is that none of this has happened. It is just a dream. Jesus says that we are afraid to look within and see that the will we made has no effects. We are afraid to see that the illusion is not true. The truth is that there is only love. Because of our fear to find the love within us, we side with fear. Jesus says that, in our disordered state of mind, we are not afraid of fear. He acknowledges that we don't like fear, but we are not seriously disturbed by our hostility or our desire to attack. Fear keeps us safe from God's Love and that is why we hold onto it. Our real fear is of His Love for it would end our dream of separation, and we are still attached to this dream.

The ego tells us not to look within because it tells us that we are the home of evil. **"The ego tells you all is black with guilt within you, and bids you not to look."** (T.13.IX.2) (ACIM OE T.13.III.18) Isn't this how we feel about ourselves? Don't we feel that there is something deeply wrong with us? We may not know exactly what, but there is a level of anxiety that keeps us awake at night. Yet Jesus says that the reason the ego tells us not to look there is that we will discover the truth about our reality and the reality is, we are *only* love. When we get too close to love, the ego comes in loudly with its raucous thoughts to keep us from the peace that is dangerous to its continued relevance in our lives. If we ignore the ego, it can become vicious, as our self-attacking thoughts create all kinds of problems or ailments to keep us from choosing truth.

Jesus assures us, **"When he has looked within and seen the radiance there, he will remember how much his Father loves him."** (T.13.X.8.4) (ACIM OE T.13.IV.27) This is the memory of the Christ Self that we have tried to obliterate. Why would we want to do this? We do it because if we embraced the truth of what we are, our identity as a separate self would be gone. We would know our Oneness with God and that is, understandably, very threatening to the individual self that we have so carefully constructed and defended. It includes the concepts, beliefs, and values we hold about ourselves and the roles we have assumed.

To undo the anger, hatred, and fear that we experience, great willingness is required to look at our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and concepts that we hold so we can bring them to the light. In order to know the Self that we are, we need to be willing to release every value we hold and lay it at the altar of the Holy Spirit. While we may feel threatened by loss of our individual self, we need not fear that we will be hurled into Heaven. It is a gentle process of undoing our fear-based thoughts until we come to see a world that reflects the beauty already in our minds. This is the experience of the real world where everything shines with holiness---not because the world is holy

but because our minds have come to know their own holiness and innocence. The veil has been lifted, and we see the radiance our mistaken perceptions have kept hidden from us though it has been there all along.

We hide our true motives from ourselves and blame outside circumstances and conditions for the way we feel. Yet we are increasingly learning to see everyone and everything outside of ourselves as a mirror for the unhealed mind. Until we do, we deny our own fear, guilt, and anger, and instead, we choose to see it outside of our own minds. We project our own shadows that we have disowned, and now see them in others and judge them there. It is such a huge temptation to see the cause of our suffering and lack of peace as coming from people and events outside ourselves instead of coming from within our own minds. We do this because it allows us to proclaim that we are not responsible for our condition, but are instead at the mercy of the world. Yet what we see in the world is an outside picture of our own inward condition. When we recognize that all we see are our own thoughts projected onto the world we perceive, we can take responsibility for them. Taking responsibility for everything is the beginning of empowerment. It is good news because now we recognize the power within us to choose another way to perceive. If the world were actually the cause of how we feel, we would indeed be the victims of outside circumstances. If our minds were the cause and the world the effect, we would recognize the power within to choose to see everything in a new light.

Jesus says, "**And they look out in sorrow from what is sad within, and see the sadness there.**" (T.20.III.4.7) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.19) Thus, when we believe in the reality of victims and victimizers, we feel sad at what we see, but it is all just a reflection of our own mind. In sympathizing with the pain in someone else, we are actually joining in that pain and thus making it real. True empathy is to remember who the other is as the Christ, Who can never suffer. It is apparent, when we start watching our mind, how quickly we judge and condemn or join in false empathy with what appears to be coming from the world. Our senses were made by the ego precisely for the purpose of reversing cause and effect in order to maintain victimhood and avoid responsibility for our lives.

The ego is focused on its preservation and its own self-interest. It is thus important for our healing to look at our thoughts and stay vigilant in bringing them to the Holy Spirit so they can be released. We are not forgiving what anyone has done. We are bringing awareness to our own misperceptions and looking at them, without judgment, from above the battleground.

Everything and everyone that shows up in our lives provides us another opportunity to forgive. This is how we go beyond our perceived lacks and limitations in order to recognize that not one of them is true. "**Within me is eternal innocence, because it is God's Will that it be there forever and forever.**" (W.309.1.1) I have not lost it. Oh yes, I may have obscured it by my thoughts, self-concepts, needs, and feelings of lack and unworthiness, but I can never truly make another self. I have no ability to defile the truth of my eternal innocence. We think we made another will, but it is not true. While we can look within and see the hatred and ugliness of our thoughts, they do not reflect the truth of who we are. All we have succeeded in doing is convince ourselves that illusion is reality, but it is all just a smokescreen to cover over what is real and true about us.

Have you ever had the experience where you spent a great deal of your life hiding a deep, dark secret you wanted no one to know about? Then one day, you took the plunge and released this secret, only to find it no longer had any power over you? And in that release, you felt lighter and

no longer constrained and imprisoned by your shame. Once brought to the light, it may even seem laughable that it felt so important to keep this secret hidden. Anything that we bring to light disappears. The power of the secret is now dissipated. It no longer holds us in its grip.

This is what we need to do with everything we keep in the dark secret places of our mind, but we need to go even further. We need to look at our specialness as well, including our pride and our arrogance and everything we hold as important about who we think we are. Our thoughts and beliefs keep us chained to this world of illusion. They have no power once they are turned over to the Holy Spirit. Jesus asks us, **"Would you remain within your tiny kingdom, a sorry king, a bitter ruler of all that he surveys, who looks on nothing yet who would still die to defend it?"** (T.18.VIII.7.5) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.77) Why would we want to defend and protect our tiny kingdom when we can open the doors and invite His healing light to shine away all we have kept hidden from ourselves? We have not lost our innocence. We just have kept it buried under layers of guilt, shame, and specialness.

We have many defenses that we believe protect us. Yet they keep us from being honest with ourselves. We claim that we would never attack if we were not provoked. We make excuses for our behavior, pretending that we meant well. We do everything we can to try to look innocent, yet the ego is anything but benign. Even when we pretend to be of service, when guided by the ego it is all self-serving. This is quite clearly explained by Jesus in talking about the special relationship where each of us is only interested in having our own needs met. Our needs always take precedence. Even when we put another's needs ahead of our own, it is only to create indebtedness. It is all about the bargain. If the bargain is kept, the relationship is seen to be good; but if our needs, as we perceive them, are not adequately met, we hold grievances.

"Specialness is a lack of trust in anyone except yourself. Faith is invested in yourself alone. Everything else becomes your enemy; feared and attacked, deadly and dangerous, hated and worthy only of destruction. Whatever gentleness it offers is but deception, but its hate is real. In danger of destruction it must kill, and you are drawn to it to kill first. And such is guilt's attraction. Here is death enthroned as savior; crucifixion is now redemption, and salvation can only mean destruction of the world, except yourself. " (T.24.IV.1) (ACIM OE T.24.V.34) Why we don't trust others is that through projection, we see our own sin in them. While we are sometimes kind to others it is because we hope to receive something in return. It is a world of "one or the other," and we are always about protecting ourselves.

Our social constraints and sanctions, as well as rules of polite behavior, are what keep the ego under control. Without these constraints and without consequences of any kind, the ego would run rampant. This was apparent in a movie I watched recently called, *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*. When people are threatened with the end of the world, some riot in the streets, others are looters, taking stuff they will never use, and others indulge in orgies with drugs and alcohol. There are verbal and physical attacks and no constraints of any kind on behavior. Fear is expressed in conversions and baptisms as well as accumulation of survival gear.

In the end, our fear of looking within is our fear of ourselves. We think these self-serving activities reflect our real intentions underneath our conditioned, "nice" egos. What we need to do is look at our intentions in an honest way, recognizing that there is nothing inherently nice about the ego. The ego cares only about itself, but we are not the ego. We are afraid to look honestly at our unadorned ego self and see its malice and its hatred, but defenses can only be held in place if we

don't look. The one that looks is the Self, above the battleground, recognizing that the character in the dream is not our true Self.

Jesus goes with us as we willingly shine the light onto these dark caverns in our mind. He shows us their unreality. Then we can laugh with him at the unreality of our sins. He reminds us that our Will is One with God, and there is nothing else. All else is a dream. We have taken on roles we play in the dream, and we interact with other characters, but none of them are real. They are all images on the screen. **"Within me is eternal innocence, because it is God's Will that it be there forever and forever. I, His Son, whose will is limitless as is His Own, can will no change in this."** (W.309.1.1-2)

Let's not fear our thoughts or continue to defend ourselves against the truth. This defense is actually our fear of a vengeful God. We fear His punishment for what the ego has led us to believe that we have done. It has convinced us that we have stolen our separate self at God's expense. Now we no longer experience the Oneness of Heaven, but instead, experience the duality of this world. We are now being called to go past our defenses so we can be shown the unreality of what we perceive. It does take courage and it does take willingness. **"The step I take today, my Father, is my sure release from idle dreams of sin."** (W.309.2.1) We simply cannot and have not defiled our perfection! God can only create, as He is absolute perfection.

We may wonder if this requires us to go digging for all the unconscious stuff hidden from our awareness. How could we ever get to the bottom of it all? In the Aquarian Gospel, it is said that it is a gift not to have the burden of memories of the struggles having taken place over thousands of years of earthly embodiment. How weary we would become if we were to remember all the past deeds of many lifetimes and the guilt of it all. Yet this is totally unnecessary and not required for our healing. Our current lives offer us all the opportunities we need in amounts we can handle. We may feel that what we are dealing with in this lifetime is a heavy burden of the past, but what is offered is just another opportunity to release it as it comes up in our awareness so we can remember who we are. The world offers us a mirror through the events, people, and circumstances in our lives to see what is unhealed in our own minds and it is a perfect reflection of what is within the mind to be released.

"The step I take today, my Father, is my sure release from idle dreams of sin. Your altar stands serene and undefiled. It is the holy altar to my Self, and there I find my true Identity." (W.309.2.1-3)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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