

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 313

Now let a new perception come to me.

Sarah's Commentary:

When we ask for a new perception to come to us, it means that we are motivated and willing to let our way of seeing be transformed. Jesus assures us, "**And love will come wherever it is asked.**" (W.313.1.2) It is important to get clear about what we really want. Our spiritual aspiration will guide our day. Recently, I was at a workshop where we spent time reflecting on this question. What came to me as my spiritual aspiration was to be aligned with God in every moment. Whenever I was not in peace, I could quickly bring my mind back to my aspiration and remember what I really want.

When we say that we want peace, or that we want to know God now, there is a part of us working against this desire. In other words, there is still a part of us that does not want this. If we said it and meant it, we would experience what we say we want. The fact is, we also want to be right, to hold our perspectives, to judge, attack, and defend our position. Jesus reminds us, "**To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything. If you could but mean them for just an instant, there would be no further sorrow possible for you in any form; in any place or time.**" (W.185.1.1) When we ask with deep sincerity, we receive because we already have what we are asking for; and we ask for everyone because there is only one Self.

This new or true perception is one "**which beholds all things as sinless, so that fear has gone, and where it was is love invited in.**" (W.313.1.1) Fear blocks love, and grievances are the glue that holds the blocks in our minds in place. Vision has already been given us as a gift from God and not something we need to seek for outside of ourselves. Vision reflects innocence, love, freedom, peace, beauty, and holiness held within our right minds. With a willingness to bring every misperception to the light of truth, we reclaim these gifts.

We can't give ourselves this new perception. We just "let" it come to us. Our part is to make space for it in our minds by clearing the inner altar. This is what forgiveness does. We participate in it by being willing to be wrong about the way we perceive everything. We release our judgments to the Holy Spirit, bringing the darkness to the light so we can "**behold each other in the sight of Christ.**" (W.313.2.1) We can't make this happen, but we must let it happen. We must participate in this process. No one can do it for us.

In the book, *The Eyes of an Angel*, the author, Paul Elder, had a spontaneous out-of-body experience where he felt great fear. Then he became fascinated with this experience and wanted to replicate it, but try as he might, he could not. Later, he went to the Munroe Institute to receive help in order to replicate his previous experience. Yet the more he tried, the more he failed. What I see in this is that we can't put the ego in charge of this process. Experience will come when the

altar is cleared. Our part is to be open and as willing as possible to hold onto our spiritual aspiration to stay aligned with truth. Our part is to look at our judgments, criticisms, fears, guilt, specialness, defensiveness, anger, attacks, self-concepts, roles, and everything that stands in the way of true perception. It may sound like an immense undertaking, but it is not. We may believe it is difficult, but all that this is is a wrong-minded thought of the ego.

Nothing is difficult when we know who walks with us. Our part requires discipline in watching our thoughts and staying vigilant for the Kingdom, but we don't heal ourselves. The Holy Spirit is the Healer. When we are not at peace, it is because the ego is leading the way. It means that we have wandered away from the peace available to us in each moment and have chosen instead to engage with our fearful thoughts and now see a fearful world. Our decision-making minds made the choice for the ego in the first place, so it is up to us to recognize our power to choose how to see each situation. All Jesus asks of us is for our willingness.

The light of Christ is shining in everyone without exception. Yet, we do make exceptions. We tend to put certain people on a pedestal of specialness, while others we judge as the evil-doers, the predators, the takers, and the victimizers. Movies can be helpful to see how we side with those we judge as good, those we see as victims and those we judge as perpetrators. As we experience our reactions, they provide us with opportunities for healing. We make space for the miracle by giving over our fearful thoughts to the Holy Spirit. Holding onto them means we want to be right about the way we perceive the situation. When we see that we are never right in how we judge any situation, healing can begin.

The retreat I attended recently was in a beautiful Franciscan Monastery in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Everywhere there were statues of St. Francis, and the grounds were occupied by many deer and much wildlife attracted by the peace and safety there. I love the Prayer of St. Francis, which was prominently displayed in our bedrooms and throughout the grounds and facilities. This prayer speaks about letting all our hatred, injury, discord, doubt, despair, darkness, and sorrow be replaced by a new perception. It is also about letting a new perception come to us by allowing our doubt thoughts and thoughts of despair and discord to be replaced by those that bring love and peace to our awareness:

*"O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is discord, harmony.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sorrow, joy."*

This happens not by striving, but only with vigilance in watching our thoughts and being willing to give our misperceptions for correction. **"And love will come wherever it is asked."** (W.313.1.2) We just need to be willing to choose it, be willing to let go of our perceptions, and be willing to recognize how wrong we have been about everything. Then, the door is opened to the holy altar in our minds. When we see others as selfish, greedy, and self-aggrandizing, we are actually condemning ourselves first for the same thing, and then we judge them for their sins because we prefer to distance ourselves from our own sins. We project our own self-condemnation

onto others, believing that God will punish them and that we will escape His punishment. We see them as the guilty ones and ourselves as innocent by comparison.

Jesus reminds us in Lesson 311, **"I judge all things as I would have them be."** We first judge our own faults and shortcomings and then see the world and ourselves as sinful. This perception leaves us feeling depressed. We must be willing to step back and be the investigator of our perceptions and reactions. I find that when I investigate what is going on for me, without crucifying myself for my ego reactions, it can become quite an interesting opportunity to step back and really look at the false beliefs I hold. When we withdraw our interest in what the ego is telling us, it quickly loses steam. When we invest in those thoughts, they can become a storm in our minds. The quicker we are able to notice the thoughts and release them, the less likely they will rage into a full-blown storm in our minds.

I heard an interview on the radio last night that really touched me. A man I will call Jack called in to talk about the murder of his father. His father was stabbed many times by someone who broke into his house and stole \$60.00. This thief, and murderer, was never convicted because the family interfered with the evidence in the home. This created a great amount of anger among family members, with the exception of Jack. Jack's attention was focused on caring for his father, who did not die immediately of his wounds but lived on for another ninety days. Jack distanced himself from the family members, who continued in their rage about what had happened.

One day, Jack was in a grocery line in the store and felt a presence behind him. When he turned around, there was his father's attacker, standing right behind him. They recognized each other and fear showed up in the attacker's face; but then, a miraculous thing happened. According to Jack, he saw the man as totally transparent. Then, he heard a Voice tell him that he was looking at the Christ, created pure and holy and that forgiveness was the only response he was asked to make. In that moment, Jack understood there really was no murderer and that nothing had happened that was real or true. He saw that everyone played their role in the dream as agreed. Jack then reported that thirty days after this encounter, the seeming "murderer" suddenly died. Clearly, Jack's mind was open to a new perception of the murderer, and thus, he was given an opportunity to see who he really was as the Christ. We can't make it come, but we can let it come. It is all about readiness. Jack had been in loving service to his father rather than engaging in the grievances and anger the other family members were experiencing.

The idea that everyone plays their role in our lives as agreed upon is interesting to think about. If they agreed to play a difficult and even seemingly punishing part in our script, perhaps they are actually paying off some kind of karmic debt by offering us an opportunity to learn a lesson we have agreed to learn. They are just playing their part and as such, perhaps achieving healing for themselves. Remember, karma is simply a cause and effect phenomena. It is not something brought to us by God, but by our own beliefs.

Now Jesus urges us, **"Brother, come and join with me today. We save the world when we have joined. For in our vision it becomes as holy as the light in us."** (W.313.2.4-5) Today, let no belief in smallness, unworthiness, or any kind of judgment occupy your holy mind. Today, I would see only the beneficent, the innocent, and the loving, for that is the only thing real and true; but I can't do it unless I am willing to release the judgments I make. I can only do it as I resist the temptation to attack. This means I must watch my mind and not get attached to my thoughts. It is about having only one goal, which is to return my mind to truth. It is to practice the power of my mind to choose.

When I experience attack of any kind and feel unfairly judged, I find it particularly challenging to maintain a loving perception. That is when I most need to ask for help. Whenever we attack in return, we are trying to achieve our innocence while seeing our brother guilty. Seeking innocence in this way is the ego's answer for our anger. It tells us we are justified in defending ourselves against seemingly unfair attacks on us; but this is not the kind of innocence that mirrors the innocence given us by God. He knows we are innocent, and we can only know it when we release our attack thoughts, even in the face of having been "unfairly" criticized or "unfairly" treated.

God has kept our innocence "completely undefiled" no matter what seems to be going on in the dream. In other words, nothing and no one has the power to change the truth of who we are. When we come to know this about ourselves, nothing in the world can have any impact on us. From outside of this dream, we are all just characters in the play of this illusory world within the dream. Jesus demonstrated this when he was crucified and did not see himself attacked because he already knew there was no attack. He knew he was not a body and thus invulnerable to being hurt. He demonstrated this in his resurrection and told us that this was an extreme example. Can we not choose to see the examples of attacks in our lives in a similar way, especially when they don't even come close to his example? **"If you respond with anger [to any assault], you must be equating yourself with the destructible, and are therefore regarding yourself insanely."** (T.6.I.4.7) (ACIM OE T.6.II.7)

In the first Section of Chapter 6, **"The Message of the Crucifixion,"** he says, **"I elected, for your sake and mine, to demonstrate that the most outrageous assault, as judged by the ego, does not matter. As the world judges these things, but not as God knows them, I was betrayed, abandoned, beaten, torn, and finally killed. It was clear that this was only because of the projection of others onto me, since I had not harmed anyone and had healed many."** (T.6.I.9.1-3) (ACIM OE T.6.II.13)

Later in this Section, he says, **"You are not asked to repeat my experiences because the Holy Spirit, Whom we share, makes this unnecessary. To use my experiences constructively, however, you must still follow my example in how to perceive them."** (T.6.I.11.2-3) (ACIM OE.T.6.II.14) The message of the crucifixion was, **"Teach only love, for that is what you are."** (T.6.I.13.2) (ACIM OE.T.6.II.18) We can only know that love is what we are when we extend forgiveness and receive our brother's gratitude, which then teaches us we are indeed the beloved. With each event of this nature, a new perception can come to us until we truly know the unchanging and unchangeable truth about ourselves.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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