

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### **Lesson 333** **Forgiveness ends the dream of conflict here.**

#### **Sarah's Commentary:**

This lesson can be understood within the context of the original conflict that came with the decision to separate from God and choose the ego instead. With this decision, conflict arose in the mind. The decision to leave God's Kingdom resulted in a separate will, where we chose to make it on our own. The result of this decision was a mind full of guilt and fear. Now, our will seemed to be in opposition to God, and thus, conflict arose in the mind. This conflicted mind shows up in our relationships and in the circumstances and events of our lives. We live in fear of the attacks we think are coming at us and rightly deserved. We fear harm to ourselves that we believe is being initiated by others, although they all originate in our own mind. But now to protect ourselves from the perceived attacks, we set up defenses, both physical and psychological. We feel at the mercy of the world, not recognizing that the conflict in our own mind is the cause of all we perceive. This is precisely why the problem must be resolved in the mind and not in the world. When the mind is quiet, the problems of the world are no longer perceived as problems. We no longer give meaning to them.

This world is made up of separate and clashing wills because that is the essence of life in a world projected from a conflicted mind. It is also why conflicts can never be resolved in the world. They must be resolved at the source, which is in our own mind. In this dream, conflict is inevitable because the world is rooted in conflict. When we step outside the dream, we see the illusory nature of this world. What appeared as blocks, now are seen as opportunities for healing. When we don't defend or attack, when we take no offense, and when we turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation of the events in our lives, the way is made easy. **"We have come to gentler pathways and to smoother roads."** (W.123.1.2) **"The Thought of God protects you, cares for you, makes soft your resting place and smooth your way, lighting your mind with happiness and love."** (W.165.2.6) This becomes apparent to us when we do the work of watching the mind and bringing all perceived blocks to love.

Today, we are encouraged to look squarely at the conflict in our minds without evading it, setting it aside, denying it, disguising it, seeing it elsewhere, calling it by another name, or hiding it. **"Conflict must be resolved. It cannot be evaded, set aside, denied, disguised, seen somewhere else, called by another name, or hidden by deceit of any kind, if it would be escaped."** (W.333.1.1-2) In other words, we must undo our denial of where the conflict is which is always in our own mind.

We are being asked to give up our stories of victimhood and being unfairly treated and see instead that it is our own mind that is the source of all conflict. There is no one to blame and no one to be held responsible. Conflict in our relationships may sound something like this, "You never listen to me." "You are always leaving the TV on." "You never pay any attention to me." "I don't have a problem. You're the one who is angry" "Leave me alone. I'm having a bad day!" "Not now, I have a headache." "If you weren't so distant, I wouldn't have a problem!" "You are always blaming me for everything." "It is not my fault!"

We evade conflict by avoiding, walking away, or distracting ourselves with other things. We set the conflict aside for later, without necessarily addressing it later. We deny our anger by covering it over and pretending that everything is fine. We disguise it by blaming it on other things: hormones, bad drivers, a headache, or our need to be nice, polite, and sweet, even though there is inner rage going on. We see it somewhere else by blaming someone else, or we just call it something else such as my truth, setting boundaries, or being right.

Yet Jesus reminds us again and again that the conflict in our mind must be seen and not denied. He says that conflict must be resolved, which means we must take responsibility for the source of the conflict since it will never be resolved outside our own mind. We must be willing to look at our projections and whatever triggers us and bring it all back to our mind. In this way, the conflict can be released. It must first be brought to awareness and then given over to the Holy Spirit. It is only through forgiveness that conflict can be resolved. Conflict is an outside picture of our inward condition. When the inner conflict is healed, we may still witness what looks like a problem, but it will have no effect on us.

The other day, I was in an argument with my partner. and we were both angry at each other. The next day, after some period of withdrawal and silence, we came together seemingly in peace, but my mind was still obsessing about the problem as I perceived it. I continued to feel that there was a need for some kind of resolution. In my meditation, I heard, "What do you want? Do you want peace, or do you want resolution in your way?" When I chose to let go of my need for resolution and chose peace as my only goal, I realized there truly was no problem except in my own mind. Nothing needed to be solved in the world. With this shift, nothing changed in form, but I no longer defined it as a problem. All was well. **"What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good?"** (W.135.18.1) The only problem is when we determine what things should look like or when we decide what we need, what is good, and what is bad in our lives.

Why do we deny the anger, rage, and hostility in our minds? We have such a desire to be innocent and to look good that we cover up the ego by holding up a façade, which Jesus calls the "face of innocence." We cover over our inner turmoil and deny the anger, but we need to look under this image and expose the ego for what it really is. This can seem difficult especially if we judge ourselves for what we see behind our defenses. We may start to feel discouraged about this journey when we judge what we uncover within ourselves. We won't make progress unless we accept that to look at the ego with honesty and courage is the only way to know our true innocence. We must look squarely at our hostility and see it as the nature of the character, but not what we are. We must see conflict exactly as it is and where it is thought to be---in the reality that has been given it and with the purpose that the mind accorded it. We must hide nothing from ourselves.

When we find ourselves in a power struggle and blame our brother for how we feel, the only answer is to uncover our painful, needy side rather than use our brother to distract us from the need for healing. By taking back our projected pain, it can be healed. Looking directly at thoughts and feelings, with total honesty and courage, is a very important aspect of healing. With the courage to look at our thoughts and to take responsibility for everything that "seems" to be happening to us, we can look at the conflict from outside this dream and recognize its unreality. All conflict we see "out there" is entirely internal. If we are raging at our spouse, a friend, a parent, or whomever, we must admit that it is *our* rage. We must uncover every aspect of our thoughts around the situation and recognize the purpose being served by this conflict. Everything we do has some purpose, but we often hide this purpose from ourselves. Our purpose with conflict is to stay invested in the dream, and with forgiveness, it is a strong desire to awaken from the dream by accepting the Atonement.

Several years ago, I was dealing with a situation where my mother was placed in a care facility because the active treatment hospital would not continue to keep her there. The policy in this province is to move a person from active treatment to the first available bed no matter how inappropriate it is. The person languishes there until an appropriate placement can be made, which can be as long as six months. In this situation, my mother was moved to a locked dementia placement, even though she was very bright, alert, and capable, with no indication of dementia. Her only problem was her advanced age and her requirement for considerable amount of care with bodily needs. After trying any number of solutions and experiencing many bureaucratic blocks, I felt defeated and in a lot of despair.

In my meditation, the despair showed up as murderous rage. Going deeper, I felt an ocean of sadness that felt almost unbearable. Then a wave of guilt washed over me with the realization that the sadness I felt came from the separation and it all felt very real. I felt profound pain over the belief that I had left God and was on my own. "Oh my God, what have I done?" It was all so very painful, I could hardly breathe. While I have written about the separation, I have never felt it so acutely. It is what Jesus says is at the core of our being in our separated state, even though none of it is the truth, as we have never left Heaven. It seems the situation with my mother was just another opportunity to experience the feeling of being abandoned by God and left all alone to deal with this crazy life. In the end, we sprung mom loose from this facility and the situation was resolved. Everyone was very helpful and cooperative in assisting in her transfer out of there. It was another situation that provided me a perfect classroom for going deep into the mind and undoing false beliefs. No matter what it may look like in the moment, it is all perfectly orchestrated for our highest good if we choose to see it that way.

I love the Section in Chapter 27 called, "**The Quiet Answer**," which speaks beautifully about the issue of conflict. Basically, Jesus says that when you are in conflict, "**in your state of mind, solution is impossible.**" (T.27.IV.2.2) (ACIM OE T.27. V.37) What is to be done? The answer is in the holy instant. "**Attempt to solve no problems but within the holy instant's surety.**" (T.27.IV.3.1) (ACIM OE T.27.V.38) We are called to bring our conflicts to the light and, through forgiveness, rise above the battleground to a place in our minds where the quiet answer can be heard. This is the only place where we can ask a real question. This question comes from a mind not already positioning its own answer to the conflict. "**A question asked in hate cannot be answered because it is an answer in itself.**" (T.27.IV.4.2) (ACIM OE T.27.V.38) In other words, if I ask Jesus to help me solve a particular problem, I have already told him through my

question the answer I have determined I need in order to be happy. When a question is asked in honesty, it is to ask to see truly. Holy Spirit, how would You have me see this situation?

***"Father, forgiveness is the light You chose to shine away all conflict and all doubt, and light the way for our return to You. No light but this can end our evil dream. No light but this can save the world. For this alone will never fail in anything, being Your gift to Your beloved Son."*** (W.333.2.1-4) Forgiveness is about seeing our brother in the light of truth; and as we reach out to the holiness in his mind, we recognize our own holiness. In that experience, we know we are the same---divine, innocent beings. The spark of truth is in all of us. We all share One Self. The power of forgiveness is the power to heal the conflict that seems to be between us, yet it is just an aspect of our own mind. The temptation is always to see this conflict as the responsibility of someone else. Whatever comes up today as a difficulty that you perceive with anyone, recognize that it all starts in your mind. When the barriers in your own mind are brought to light, love will come streaming in where the hatred previously took up residence.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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