

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 268

Let all things be exactly as they are.

Sarah's Commentary:

"**Let all things be exactly as they are**" (W.268) seems like a lesson in a kind of acceptance of everything as it is. What if someone were to attack us or attack others? Are we required to accept this? Should we accept that nothing can be changed? But this Lesson is not about acceptance of the forms of this world. We may see an event or situation as not kind or helpful, but we don't have to be upset about it because it is not the truth. If you attack me, it is not right and I don't need to accept the attack, but I don't need to become distressed and disturbed by it because it is not anything real. In other words, I can overlook the error. Who you are as the Son of God, divine and perfect, is what is real, not the person I see in front of me in the attacking body. Letting things be exactly as they are is to accept the truth and to accept that only truth is true. It is to see the truth about our brother as one with us, rather than what our body's eyes show us about him. The ego has tried to make illusion the truth and reality the illusion.

Kirsten Buxton, in her book, *I Married a Mystic*, writes about differentiating between what is true and what is not true. We believe in orders of difficulty, with some things in our lives being more complex and difficult than others. Yet Jesus says, "**What the body's eyes behold is only conflict. Look not to them for peace and understanding.**" (Manual for Teachers.8.1.6-7) There is only one answer to illusions, and it is to recognize that only love is real. In her book, Kirsten describes how the Holy Spirit asked her to put everything into opposing categories, true or false, real or unreal. She was told by the Holy Spirit, "the body's eyes may report differences in shape, size, and actions, and these are put in the false or unreal category. The experience of the present moment—seeing the Christ, feeling the connection of love between you and your brother—is put in the true or real category." She used this message all day, walking outside, looking at trees and seeing them as big and tall and causing her happiness, yet she put them all in the category of false. The only thing she put in the category of true was being in the moment. We are called to accept that only truth is true and nothing else is true. "**Salvation is the recognition that the truth is true, and nothing else is true.**" (W.152.3.1) Both parts of this sentence must be accepted. What is true is true is true, and what is false is false.

When someone attacks us or we experience difficult situations we can become upset. When this is the case, we need not feel guilty and chastise ourselves for not being above it all or sufficiently spiritual. On the contrary, it can be seen as just another opportunity to look at our unconscious guilt, being brought to awareness through this situation so it can be healed. This is what everything is for that shows up in our lives. This is why the world is a perfect classroom for our healing. Behind all form is unity. When we no longer impose our wishes on this unified field, there is no more suffering. We distort the unity behind all form when we want others to suffer for what they have done to us. The unity of God's love does not recognize anything but innocence.

When the **"tiny, mad idea"** (T.27.VIII.6.2) (ACIM OE T.27.IX.82) crept into the mind of the Son of God, there was a thought that there was something better than Oneness. We wanted to be God, and thus the world of form was made. God did not create these earthly forms. The forms came about because, in our choice for the ego thought system, the unity became distorted. Part of the Christ mind had to fall asleep in order to experience this dream. Now time and space entered this construct, and the world of form became a place where we could play out our desires and hide from God. It is important to see that this does not make us bad. We came here to experience ourselves as separate from God so we pursued what we came here to do. We took the role of God ourselves, where we could choose whatever we conceived would bring us happiness. We believe we actually succeeded in breaking away from Him, which, of course, is not possible. We hid from Him in this illusory world. We don't think of the world as an illusion as it seems real and solid to us. Our sleeping mind has fooled itself into believing that this world is our reality. That is how we judge against God, by trying to prove Him wrong, which is to be His critic. Every time we criticize our brother for his wrongdoings, we are judging against God, Who has affirmed the perfection of our brothers and ourselves.

We believe what we see with our eyes and attend to with our ears is the truth. Jesus says this is blasphemous to God (W.268.2.1) because it is a judgment against the truth. This is how we have attempted to interfere with His creation and **"distort it into sickly forms."** (W.268.1.2) As we look on bodies, we see sickly forms and not the truth of who anyone is, including ourselves. Oneness now seems to be shattered into billions of fragments, with some we like and some we dislike. But now we are called to give up our judgments and accept the truth of our brothers so we can know it for ourselves. This means whenever we judge our brother, we recognize that those judgments are based on our unconscious guilt, and we are called to put our judgments on the inner altar to be washed away. Another way to approach this is to look with Jesus, who looks with us without judgment.

The ego does not want us to look. Instead, it demands that we defend our perspectives. Ken Wapnick says the principle of defense is not to look because to look is undoing. **"It [the Miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.PII.Q13.What is a Miracle?1.3) **"Forgiveness looks on sinlessness alone, and judges not."** (W.352.1.1) When we give everything over to the Holy Spirit, He reinterprets it all for us and reminds us who we are and who our brothers are.

Of course, we could never be successful in shattering reality. If we really could change what God created as eternal, we truly would be lost, and sin and the sickly forms of this world would indeed be real. While we experience guilt over what we believe we have done to reality, Jesus assures us, over and over, that we have done nothing, and thus, there is no need for guilt. We cannot change what God created, but we will not know this until we awaken from the dream. Through this Course, Jesus helps us to remember who we are. When we are willing to withdraw our wishes from the world, and **"thus to let it be as You created it,"** (W.268.1.3) we recognize and know our Self as we are and as we have always been in creation. Until then, we have drawn a veil over reality because of our wish to see something other than unity. We are simply refusing to accept what is forever true.

When we know the truth about the Self as we were created without all the constructs and images of separate bodies that seem to be in competition with each other, then **"What can frighten me, when I let all things be exactly as they are?"** (W.268.1.6) In other words, what can assail truth? What can hurt love? What can damage the eternal? What can interfere with Oneness? What can frighten us when we let all things be exactly as they are? All fear comes from

the belief we have changed creation and have separated from God's Love. There is no fear in Oneness. Fear comes from the denial of Oneness. We deny Oneness every time we choose to see a brother guilty, every time we attack anyone, or even when we are sad, angry, worried, or distressed. We are, in effect, using these situations to prove we are right in our perceptions, and God is wrong. "Holy Spirit, help me to forgive myself for using (this brother, this event, or this situation) to keep myself separate from Your Love."

If you feel you are being attacked by anyone today, remind yourself that you don't need to accept the attack as real. **"Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did not do."** (T.17.III.1.5) (ACIM OE T.17.IV.14) To let things be exactly as they are is to see the truth of who our brothers are—completely innocent and One with God. To overcome illusions is to accept the world of form as not there at all. It does not mean we must acquiesce to things that are not right because to do so is not real peace. It is only a kind of resignation. Real peace comes from seeing that sickly forms have no impact. They are not real. There is nothing about them that we need to accept. Yet if we are to see beyond them to the truth, we must first acknowledge how we are misperceiving what we see and bring our misperceptions to the Holy Spirit so He can reinterpret them for us.

"How does one overcome illusions? Surely not by force or anger, nor by opposing them in any way. Merely by letting reason tell you that they contradict reality." (T.22.V.1.1-3) (ACIM OE T.22.VI.45) **"Reality opposes nothing. What merely is needs no defense, and offers none."** (T.22.V.1.6-7) (ACIM OE T.22.VI.45) **"You are the strong one in this seeming conflict. And you need no defense."** (T.22.V.1.10-11) (ACIM OE T.22.VI.45)

As we watch our minds, we can see there are many ways we want things to be different than they are. We have hopes and wishes of how things should be. We follow what the ego's dictates, which is, **"I want it thus!"** (T.18.II.4.1) (ACIM OE T.18.III.17) Yet when we experience difficulties in our lives, how can we not want things to be different? How can those who are sick and suffering not want things to be different than they are? Are we really being asked to accept all this? **"All that is needed is you look upon the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up. How could there be another way to solve a problem that is very simple, but has been obscured by heavy clouds of complication, which were made to keep the problem unresolved? Without the clouds the problem will emerge in all its primitive simplicity. The choice will not be difficult, because the problem is absurd when clearly seen."** (T.27.VII.2.2-5) (ACIM OE T.27.VIII.63) In other words, all problems can be used to lead us back to the mind, which takes us to the only problem to be addressed—the belief in separation. In other words, we think we are alone and forget what we are and Who walks with us. Whatever problem we think we have, we come to realize we can never solve it on our own. Trust in the presence and power, which is always available and where the only answer lies. Listen, follow, and trust.

Jesus teaches that none of the heavy clouds of complication in our lives are real. All the problems and all the suffering we see around us is not real. It is all sickly forms that reflect our unhealed minds and show us projections of our own unconscious guilt. But it is not helpful to deny what we see. If our misperceptions, based on our unconscious guilt, are to be healed, they need to be brought to light. In other words, we need to acknowledge what we are misperceiving and our judgments about them, and then bring them to the Holy Spirit. He cannot heal what we don't give Him.

He reminds us, **"Only reality is free of pain"**, (W.268.2.2) and **"Only reality is free of loss."** (W.268.2.3) If anything seems to bring pain into our lives, Jesus calls it blasphemy. In other words, we are experiencing something that is not real. None of it came from God but is of our own making coming from our refusal to accept the holiness of God's creation.

It is not helpful to use what he is teaches to experience more guilt. He is simply bringing to our awareness there is another option. There is another way of looking at the world, which is what the Holy Spirit can show us. **"If God created His Son perfect, that is how you must learn to see him to learn of his reality. And as part of the Sonship, that is how you must see yourself to learn of yours."** (T.10.V.12.5-6) (ACIM OE T.9.XI.104)

While we still believe in the reality of the world and of bodies, we are not asked to ignore our safety and well-being. This Course does not ask us to change our behavior, but only to change our minds and behavior will follow. The Course is all about healing guilt and recognizing that what we think we know, based on past experience, is wrong. When we see the world as a classroom, where we take small daily steps in forgiveness, everything serves our awakening. It is not about doing anything to try to change ourselves. Our part is only to accept the perfection of everything that shows up in our lives and to bring our misperceptions to the light. To do more is to try to add the ego to the truth. The ego will never undo itself. **"Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask, or you will add the ego to Him and confuse the two."** (T.18.IV.1.6) (ACIM OE T.18.V.32) In other words, we can neither forgive ourselves, nor try to change ourselves. Our part is only to bring awareness to our misperceptions, and the Holy Spirit will do His part.

Do not attend to the voices of the world that tell you that all of this is real. **"Let not our sight be blasphemous today, nor let our ears attend to lying tongues."** (W.268.2.1) We are hearing so much today about the epidemic of disease, about the reality of war, about murders and assassinations, poverty, the environment, politics, and on and on. While it is all part of the relative world, in the absolute truth of God's reality, none of it is real. We are being asked not to attend to the fear and judgments these events bring. When fear arises today, ask for help in releasing it so you can know the peace behind these blasphemous sights and lying tongues. Rather than resign to accepting the things of this world as they are, let us today commit, instead, to accept the Divine behind all form. This is a different kind of acceptance.

A few years ago I was at a bankruptcy hearing for someone with whom I had invested money. All the money I had invested was lost, squandered, and misappropriated for which this person spent two years in jail. There were about 200 people at the hearing and a lot of anger was expressed toward this person. He was sitting at the front of the room, flanked by the bankruptcy officials. It reminded me of Jesus on the cross with the crowd calling for his crucifixion, flanked by the two thieves. All in all, it was a magnificent opportunity to look at my thoughts. Yes, there was anger and feelings of loss and betrayal, yet there was an even stronger desire to see the innocence in my brother. Where I was sitting there was a big space between the stage and the audience, and the hearing was now coming to an end. The question in my mind was whether to approach him or simply get up and leave the room. I saw how vulnerable he was, sitting there hearing all the attack aimed at him and I felt deep compassion. Jesus reminded me that I could see him as innocent and thus receive this gift for myself. In the end, I felt nudged to approach him and I open-heartedly embraced this brother. I felt my heart open as I gave him a gift of lilies, instead of the gift of thorns and thus received the gift for myself. In the days that followed there were still feelings of anger and betrayal that came up, but it became easier and easier not to give these thoughts attention. Forgiveness is a process, and when fear thoughts creep back into the mind, we can choose to see their meaninglessness and not give them our attention.

In each moment, we are asked, "Which will we choose?" The choice we make brings us whatever it is we give. When I give attack, I receive attack. Let all things be exactly as they are. We are given many opportunities in this classroom to release our brothers and thus ourselves. Which will we choose? What we give, we receive. This is the law of God. It is not about spiritualizing the experience. Hatred, judgments, disappointments, and frustrations must be seen for what they are. We are called to look at them all. **"It [the Miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.PII.Q13.What is a Miracle?1.3)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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