

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 281

I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts.

Sarah's Commentary:

We are now reading and reflecting on the question, "**What is the Holy Spirit?**" (W.PII.Q7) The Holy Spirit is the aspect of God's Love taken into the dream. He is in our right minds where sanity and truth prevail. He is the Correction for the separation, so when we choose to forgive, we call on this part of the mind. Each time we bring our misperceptions to the truth, we experience more peace and joy until this becomes our only reality.

The Holy Spirit is the mediator between illusions and the truth. Our part is to bring illusions to Him so they can be replaced by the truth and truth can then shine through us. But how do we do that? We do it by looking at what is coming up in the mind that is blocking the love we are. We do it by looking without judging whatever comes up in our awareness. We look with honesty, courage, and simple acceptance that there is nothing wrong. We have come to identify with the ego thought system, but it is not what we are. When we are sad, angry, feel betrayed, feel frustrated, worried, depressed, anxious, needy, wanting to get something, wanting to control or manipulate, or experience anything not peaceful, there is a feeling or the thought (it doesn't matter which because they are the same) calling for our attention. When we take responsibility for it as something coming from within the mind it can be given over to be healed. While it seems that others are the cause of our upsets by what they do or say, nothing comes from anything outside of our own minds. It is the mind that is the source of our upsets. It is the wrong-minded choice for the ego and with it comes guilt and fear because of the belief we hold in the mind that we have separated from God. Now the ego tells us that we had better hide from God's retribution, and so we live in a state of fear. We distract ourselves from the fear with various activities, but we must come to see that fear is not real, does not protect us, and has no power. All power comes from love.

What the Holy Spirit does is bridges the gap between illusions and reality. What He needs from us is simple willingness to allow Him to translate sights and sounds from witnesses of guilt and fear to those of love. (W.PII.Q7.2.2). Basically, this means that everything we have made to hurt ourselves He can use for healing. In this world, our bodies were made for separation, differences, and attack; but, when we give them over to the Holy Spirit, they become a vehicle of communication for the purpose of forgiveness, healing, and extending of His love. The same can be said about our special relationships, which can be given over to the Holy Spirit so He can translate what we made to serve our specialness and give it over for healing and wholeness.

Without the Holy Spirit in our right minds, we would be forever lost in the dream. Now, "**Across the bridge that He provides are dreams all carried to the truth, to be dispelled before the light of knowledge.**" (W.PII.Q7.1.3) The ultimate goal is the attainment of the real world,

which is the end of dreams. Learning is the means by which illusions are replaced by eternal truth. This learning requires we recognize we have been wrong about everything we think we know because we have been listening to the voice of the ego that has misled us. Now we can learn that there is another Voice that can bring us home.

When Jesus speaks of God's yearning or God's incompleteness, it is a symbol to communicate how deep, unchanging, and eternal is God's Love for us. This kind of symbolic language reflects our yearning for God that is in the mind. In this world of dreams, we live with fearful images that reflect guilt and attack, which we see in the world. They are not real, but in our current state, they appear very real, dark, and frightening. What they are is a projection of what is unhealed in the mind. The answer to any problem we perceive can only be experienced in the mind. When we bring our fear-based thoughts to the Holy Spirit, He shows us that what we see as real and frightening are our misperceptions. We are misguided in who we think we are and what the world is. He translates the sights and sounds that frighten us **"from the witnesses of fear to those of love."** (W.PII.Q7.2.2) This requires overlooking the error and seeing beyond it to the truth.

The ego uses the sights and sounds of this world to keep us invested in the illusion. To us, the events of our lives all seem very real and solid. We agonize over issues in relationships, money, worthiness, career, future plans, health, and well-being, among other things. To us, they define the content of our lives, and their achievement appears to bring the fulfillment we seek through them. Yet it is always temporary and, ultimately, ends in pain. It is so very challenging to take what we experience and put it all to question, especially those things we define as pleasure.

Jesus calls all our experiences in the world, "children's toys" that we have given power. They are idols that we substitute for God's gifts. **"All idols of this world were made to keep the truth within from being known to you, and to maintain allegiance to the dream that you must find what is outside yourself to be complete and happy. It is vain to worship idols in the hope of peace. God dwells within, and your completion lies in Him."** (T.29.VII.6.1-3) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.48) Jesus reminds us again that our happiness will never come from these idols, nor from seeking outside ourselves. We can only know happiness as we look at all of our misperceptions and bring them to the truth within. To seek outside ourselves is what we came here to do, and we will only surrender our wishes when we recognize we are seeking nothing of value.

Jesus teaches that what we've made as substitutes and are attached to can never bring happiness. Happiness can only be found in what we have been given by God in our creation. Yet we are not entirely convinced this is true. We continue to look for happiness in idols, but happiness is forever unattainable when we seek for it where it does not exist. Pleasure soon turns to pain. When we put all our energy into serving our specialness and meeting our needs it is always at the expense of others. When we use others for our own purposes, we will hate what we think we have become because it is all based on our belief in sin and guilt. It is all about trying to get from others what we think we lack.

In our special relationships, we try to extract love from others to meet our perceived needs. Thus, we try to win at their expense. It is a relationship of bargaining and reciprocity. We call the relationship one of special love when our needs are met, but how quickly these relationships become defined by special hate when part of the bargain is not perfectly delivered according to our expectations. It is not actually our brother's bargain, but it is the one we have put on him with our expectations of what special love must look like for us to be happy.

When we recognize the pain in our special relationships, we can call on the Holy Spirit for help. His function is to translate everything we have made to harm, for healing. Through forgiveness, all our relationships are translated by Him to healing and holiness.

When we give over our mistaken ideas of where happiness lies and ask for help of the Holy Spirit to show us the real source of happiness within the mind, truth is revealed. **"And if you offer them [our mistaken notions] to Him, He will employ the means you made for exile to restore your mind to where it truly is at home."** (W.PII.What is the Holy Spirit.Q7.3-3)

"Without forgiveness will your dreams remain to terrify you. And the memory of all your Father's Love will not return to signify the end of dreams has come." (W.PII.Q7.4.2-3) Through forgiveness, we realize no one has harmed us. The only harm that appears to come to us is from our own interpretations and judgments of situations and events which is what we are called to forgive, rather than anyone else. If we are not happy and at peace, it is because we have chosen to disown the happiness and peace in us and to blame it on our brother for having taken it from us. Thus, we are hurt only by our beliefs about the situation. Our unhappiness is based on the belief that something is missing in us, and we now try to find it outside of ourselves. We make others responsible for our happiness, but no one outside of us can ever, meet our perceived need for love. All we need is within us, waiting for our invitation to be revealed. The Answer to every desire, every need, and every problem is within. God's Love for us is symbolized by the Holy Spirit, Who **"calls to you, to let forgiveness rest upon your dreams, and be restored to sanity and peace of mind."** (W.PII.Q7.4.1)

In this Lesson, Jesus says, **"I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts."** (W.281) This is truly a powerful idea—that only I have the power to hurt me. The responsibility is mine. If we are thinking with the Holy Spirit, we can only know peace. Whenever we are in pain, sad, hurt, or ill, we are actually manifesting these reactions and emotions with our own thoughts. Thus, the power is available for us to change our minds. We don't always welcome this power because with it comes the responsibility for everything that seems to be happening to us. It means we have called it all into our experience and are not the victims of the world we see. The stories we tell ourselves of how we have been victimized are simply not the truth. They justify our situation, where we prefer to blame others in what we perceive they have done to us rather than see that we are responsible for everything that seems to happen to us. Mind is cause and the events in form are the effect.

This can seem difficult for some to hear because means they may blame themselves for their sickness and for the pain in their lives. This is just as counterproductive as it is to blame the world for what it seems to bring us. It is more helpful and healing just to watch the thoughts and beliefs we hold and give them over to the Holy Spirit. We would be stuck in the illusion forever without His help. Since we see ourselves as caught in the illusion, and are believing in its reality, we need help from outside of our own thinking minds which keep looping with the belief invested in sin, guilt, and fear. The Holy Spirit can work with these false beliefs and concepts if we turn them over to Him. He works with us in this world of illusion while never losing contact with the truth. Our part is to bring our thoughts and perceptions to Him so He can restore us to Knowledge. **"In reality you are perfectly unaffected by all expressions of lack of love. These can be from yourself and others, from yourself to others, or from others to you. Peace is an attribute in you. You cannot find it outside."** (T.2.I.5.6-9) (ACIM OE T.2.I.17)

All our pain in this world is as a result of the guilt in the mind coming from the belief we have wreaked havoc due to having separated from Love. We project the guilt on others and see it in them instead of in ourselves. Clearly, they give us lots of evidence that it is there. However, what we see in others originates in our own minds. They become a mirror, reflecting the sin and guilt we are holding onto. Attacking them for their misbehavior only brings more guilt. When we are willing to take responsibility for our self-hatred, without succumbing to the temptation to blame ourselves or our brothers, we can know innocence—our own as well as our brothers'. This comes through willingness to see we have been wrong in our perceptions and to ask for help from the Holy Spirit to see our brothers differently. To forgive one brother completely is enough because Jesus will generalize this experience for us.

The teaching Jesus offers us through this Course is our way out of the pain and suffering we experience. Today, we can be thankful for each situation we encounter and each brother who contributes so perfectly to our journey home. I choose to be thankful for each one on my path who encourages me, challenges me, triggers me, attacks me, betrays me, supports me, comforts me, blesses me, and loves me. Through each one of my brothers, I am learning to open to more and more healing and thus more and more love. As we read in the lesson tomorrow, to open to love is to decide not to be insane any longer and to accept ourselves as we were created. We are not just beings who love, but we are Love itself! Together, we can affirm this in gratitude. Canadian Thanksgiving is imminent and it reminds us to open our hearts to the blessings and miracles that surround us at every moment.

If it is a time of sadness and darkness for you, know that behind every problem is a miracle waiting to be revealed. Our part is to be willing to release painful thoughts and beliefs to the Holy Spirit as we remind ourselves that who we are cannot be hurt. What I am in truth is **"far beyond all pain."** (W.281.2.2) Only the mythical self we think we are can be hurt, but only by our own thoughts. **"Whatever suffers is not part of me. What grieves is not myself."** (W.248.1.3-4)

In any relationship, recognize the perfection of being together because what your partner brings up in you is exactly that which you need to heal within yourself. What one brings to a relationship to be healed, the other has within himself as well. It may be in another form, but it will not be seen in the brother if it does not already exist in our own minds. One may show up as the critic and the other as unworthy, but beneath the critic is the fear of unworthiness and beneath unworthiness is self-judgment. What does self-judgment do? It invites judgment (criticism) from others. Both have the same dynamic going on. The relationship becomes powerful when there is a willingness to really look at our feelings and to look beneath them at the dynamic there. This kind of relationship does not always look lovely, but it is very powerful when used by the Holy Spirit for healing. It requires a strong measure of honesty and self-responsibility. We do not like going into these dark places, yet Jesus says that he will go there with us and he will carry the lamp to light the way. He asks only that we don't judge our experience, but simply accept it.

More and more I am willing to invite the darkness to show up in any form that is helpful because I want it healed so I can know the love I am. The darkness we discover is a good thing. It is only difficult when I believe there is no way out of it or if I believe it defines me. If there is judgment instead of acceptance and willingness, I will not want to look at my murderous, hateful, and painful thoughts. When we realize the miracle is right behind these dark thoughts, we are more willing to lift the veil of denial. The miracle is only obscured by the blocks we hold in the mind. There is no order of difficulty in the illusion. Every problem is the same. None of it is true or real.

Every problem brought to the miracle is healed. If you want to know the truth, be grateful for the darkness because it gives you an opportunity to know the light. When there is a willingness and readiness to look at all the dark thoughts with acceptance, we are no longer in denial. The ego seems complex and complicated, yet we can be very grateful for how simple the truth is.

I find that if I just take a moment to stop in the midst of conflict and ask for another way to see my brother, what seems dark and difficult can be seen as just a movie running in the mind. If I think that what I am seeing and experiencing is the truth, I suffer. Nothing is ever wrong. Each instant that comes up is absolutely perfect. Our choice is only in how we see it. Why not accept everything that shows up? There really is no other option unless we want to suffer. The reason every moment is perfect is that it shows us exactly what we are thinking and feeling in that moment. Any difficulty is helpful because it shows us what is currently in the mind and offers us another way of seeing. Accept each moment as it is and accept responsibility for everything you see or judge. When I am sad and choose to get upset with my sadness it continues. But if instead, I accept the sadness instead of judge it, then the next moment brings me to a higher vibration. The energy of acceptance is very powerful because it brings us back to our essence.

Movies can be very helpful in this regard. Last night I watched the movie *Impossible*, which was based on a true story of what a family experienced during the 2004 tsunami in Thailand. It was a very difficult movie for me to watch and a lot could be said about all the emotions that came up in me, but, in the interests of brevity, I will only comment on what impacted me the most. We know, as a result of this teaching, how painful the separation from God is yet we are not completely conscious of this pain in the mind that came with the separation. This movie brought a glimpse of this pain as I got in touch with a deep sense of loss and yearning for connection that brought many tears.

Today, be willing to bring all your pain, anger, and suffering of any kind to the light without defending any of it. Accept your feelings without judging them.

"Father, Your Son is perfect. When I think that I am hurt in any way, it is because I have forgotten who I am, and that I am as You created me. Your Thoughts can only bring me happiness. If ever I am sad or hurt or ill, I have forgotten what You think, and put my little meaningless ideas in place of where Your Thoughts belong, and where they are. I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts. The Thoughts I think with You can only bless. The Thoughts I think with You alone are true." (W.281.1.1-7)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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