

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### Lesson 22 What I see is a form of vengeance.

#### Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us, **"The world was made as an attack on God."** (W.PII.Q3.2.1) It is a world of form with the content of vengeance. The thought of separation brings with it attack because the separation started with an attack thought. This was the thought that we could have our separate identity by attacking Creation and making our own kingdom where we would be the ruler. As Jesus says, **"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) That is what we wanted when we chose to separate from our Christ Self; but with separation comes humiliation, unworthiness, lack, loneliness, and a sense there is something wrong with us. We don't like these feelings, so we project our self-attacking and self-condemning thoughts on others and make them responsible for how we feel. We don't see our own minds as the cause of how we feel so we blame others.

We see anger and attack in the world, and it appears to be independent of our own minds. **"Having projected his anger onto the world, he sees vengeance about to strike at him."** (W.22.1.2) We feel constantly under attack. We believe the attack thoughts we hold in the mind must be in everyone's mind which is why we expect attack from others. We don't realize that it is only our own attack thoughts we see. Because we believe we separated from God and made a body and world where we can hide, we have a lot of guilt. The guilt in the mind is so intolerable the ego knows it won't have our allegiance for long if we must live with this mountain of guilt, so it had to come up with a solution, which is to project the guilt in our mind and see it in others. The ego never told us this is how we keep it. When we project the guilt, it is still in the mind. We have not gotten rid of it by projecting it. In fact, we just feel more guilty.

Because of the guilt in the mind, we believe we deserve to be punished. When we attack, we expect attack in return, so we live in fear of what is coming at us from the world. We feel we are at the mercy of a world that treats us badly and thus feel victimized and unfairly treated. The thought system of attack and defense is what everyone who comes to the world brings with them. It can't be otherwise because it is in the mind that chose separation. We are all here because of our choice for separation from God and our belief that we have attacked Him to gain our independent self. We don't like to take responsibility for our attack, and thus, we claim we only attack in self-defense. **"His own attack is thus perceived as self defense."** (W.22.1.3) Now we see ourselves as the innocent victims of what others do to us.

**"This becomes an increasingly vicious circle until he is willing to change how he sees. Otherwise, thoughts of attack and counterattack will preoccupy him and people his entire world. What peace of mind is possible to him then?"** (W.22.1.4-6) We are all stuck in this vicious cycle of sin, guilt and fear until we are ready to receive help from outside the matrix of this thought system. When we are willing to see that this vicious cycle starts

in the mind and we are responsible for it all, it can be undone. As the Lesson tomorrow assures us, we can escape from the world we see by giving up attack thoughts. We stubbornly hold onto attack thoughts because we want others to be responsible for the separation and for our condition. We see our attacks as justified so we can see ourselves as innocent victims of what others do to us. Jesus says we have it all wrong. **"For the guilty expect attack, and having asked for it they are attracted to it."** (T.15.VII.6.6) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.70) Our attraction to guilt is our attraction to the self we think we are. We are invested in the world, and judgment is what makes the world go around. Judgment is thus oxygen to the ego and keeps it going. Because we are the makers of the universe, and our mind is the cause of everything we perceive, all power is in the mind. The power is of God but now being misused. But because we have this power, we can now make another choice.

We read in Chapter 21, **"This is the only thing that you need to do for vision, happiness, release from pain and the complete escape from sin, all to be given you. Say only this, but mean it with no reservations, for here the power of salvation lies. I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And Everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.1.5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15)

We are not aware of how much guilt we have because a veil of forgetfulness has been drawn over our minds. The guilt has been repressed and denied, though we have a vague sense that it is always there. Because it is there, we see a dangerous world and we build defenses to protect ourselves. Yet with each defense we build, fear increases. Defense would be unnecessary if we had nothing to fear. **"Since the separation, defenses have been used almost entirely to defend against the Atonement, and thus maintain the separation."** (T.2.III.1.2) (ACIM OE T.2.II.44) In other words we defend against the love and light that we are. We don't want to believe in our own innocence. We feel unworthy of our magnificence because of what we believe we have done.

Jon Mundy, an ACIM teacher/student, in his book, *The Missouri Mystic*, writes about being fired as a Methodist Minister. On his way to the office of the Bishop, he keeps saying over and over, "Do not attack this man, and do not defend yourself." When he arrives and hears the news of his being fired, he writes, "I think of something to say and then think 'no, this is an attack.' Then I think of something else and I think, 'No. This is a defense.' So, I say what he wants to hear me say, the only thing that is not an attack or a defense. I say 'goodbye.'"

Having done so, he saw later that the Bishop was actually doing him a great service. "He knew I wasn't a Methodist even before I did. Whoever wrestles with us hones our nerve and strengthens our skill. Bishop Black pushes me onward and upward to become who I'm meant to be. He helps me to fulfill my destiny." As we bring awareness to the attack and defense thoughts in the mind, we can give them over to the miracle which brings healing and breaks us out of the vicious cycle of attack and counterattack. This goes against the counsel of the ego which urges us to protect ourselves through attack and defense. Only by bringing the mind in alignment with the Holy Spirit can healing happen.

In the Lesson yesterday, we started the process of looking at our thoughts of anger, many of which we have long tried to hide from awareness by not looking at them, or by diminishing their importance and projecting them. With willingness, we bring these attack thoughts to awareness, without judging ourselves. When we look without judgment and acknowledge responsibility, space is made for the miracle. The ego wants to kick and scream at the very idea of this. "What do you mean?", it demands. "Look at what they are doing to me. I am totally justified in my anger. I

have every reason to be upset." But just as Jon discovered, the only way to peace is by giving up attack thoughts and bringing them to the light so space can be made for the miracle.

The message we are given is that there is an escape from all of this. We can achieve peace of mind. Our own thoughts have made everything we experience, and none of it is real. It is all a "savage fantasy" made up by the ego, but who we are is not the ego. We are innocent, holy, and pure beings of love and light. Because we have made this whole thing up, we have the power to change it all by realizing it is all just a fantasy made by our belief in the perishable world of form. It is not real and does not actually exist. All I am seeing in the world are my own attack thought—nothing else! These attack thoughts are crystallized into form. **"My thoughts are images that I have made."** (W.15)

Our minds are indeed powerful, but what they can't do is to change what we are as the Son of God. The Atonement Principle assures us of this. However, in the illusion, we can do anything we believe. We literally can move mountains. Once we recognize the power of the mind, we can use this power to escape from the insanity we made and learn there is another way. There is a more joyful, peaceful way to live in this world than listening to the ego. The power of the mind is always at work though we don't completely believe this yet. However, we are told that somewhere in us we know we have such power. That is precisely why we dismiss it, because of our fear. It is our fear of having misused the power. It is our fear of God for what we believe we have done. We believe if we deny we have this power, we need not be afraid of it. This denial of our power is supported by people who tell us not to worry about our crazy thoughts as long as we don't act on them. This is not the truth as all thoughts produce form. The power of the mind will continue to manifest but without our awareness. That is even more frightening to think about. When we recognize that the mind never loses its creative force, we become motivated to be vigilant in watching our thoughts.

When we take these small, daily steps in our practice, we may experience some disorientation in this period of undoing. Yet with each step we take, we make progress to another way of seeing, until we increasingly recognize we no longer want the world of attack and defense we made.

Like many of the Lessons, it can be tough to accept we have all this anger in us; not just some of the time, but all of the time. Yet when we bring awareness to it, healing happens. Our desire to see nothing but peace and love will change what we see in the world. It does not necessarily mean behaviors of others will change, though they may, but it means we will see all behavior as love, or a call for love and understanding and nothing else.

Meanwhile, others are a perfect mirror for us reflecting what is in the mind. As this Lesson says, it truly is a happy discovery we can escape all of this **"savage fantasy."** (W.22.2.1)

The world truly is tired. Aren't we all getting weary? Isn't it good to know **"All that you fear does not exist,"** (W.22.2.5) and only the eternal, everlasting, and changeless is real?

Don had made plans to be away with his buddies next week, but he did not tell me of this plan. When I asked him about it, he said he thought he had told me. The ego mind immediately had thoughts of being dismissed as unimportant, feeling left out, and wanting to retaliate with, "Well, I will just go ahead and do my own thing and not consider you." As these thoughts rolled through my mind, I stopped and looked at my own unworthiness, my attack thoughts, and my fears and asked for help to see from the vantage point of the Holy Spirit. How would He want me to see this situation? It is always to see it as an observer, from above the battleground. I am reminded that a

healed mind would not be upset. When I join with the right mind, I can laugh at myself for playing out the victim role. It only took a moment for me to come back to peace. I concluded that peace was more important to me than attack and revenge. My mind would not have been changed so quickly without my years of Course practice. I am grateful that opportunities like this show up for me to look at my vengeful thoughts and take responsibility for them.

We are encouraged to do this Lesson at least five times today for at least one minute each time. Look around, and as your eyes move slowly from one thing to another, say:

***"I see only the perishable.  
I see nothing that will last.  
What I see is not real.  
What I see is a form of vengeance."*** (W.22.3.3-6)

This is a very challenging statement when I apply it to myself. I see that I still want the perishable body and the world because I still value the separate self.

***"Is this the world I really want to see?"*** (W.22.3.8)

He says, **"The answer is surely obvious."** (W.22.3.9)

To us, it is not so obvious when we are still invested in the world. We still do want to see it and be part of it, but Jesus assures us that this world is not what we truly want in our sane mind. Beyond this world, there is a world we want.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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