

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 331

There is no conflict, for my will is yours.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson starts with a new question, **"What is the Ego?"** (W.PII.Q12) People talk about loving or hating the ego, but no one can say it belongs to them, for it is the separated self. Yet it feels like it is our identity. The ego's chosen home is the body and as long as we identify with the body, we will think it is our reality. It is the self we think we are with a separate will and our own private thoughts. Jesus tells us that the ego is idolatry, meaning the worship of a false god, the false self we have come to identify as "me," which we value and think of as the central character in this illusory dream.

In the Clarification of Terms, Jesus asks: **"What is the ego? Nothingness, but in a form that seems like something. In a world of form the ego cannot be denied for it alone seems real. Yet could God's Son as He created him abide in form or in a world of form? Who asks you to define the ego and explain how it arose can be but he who thinks it real, and seeks by definition to ensure that its illusive nature is concealed behind the words that seem to make it so."** (C.2.2.1-5) **"There is no definition for a lie that serves to make it true."** (C.2.3.1)

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) The miracle is opposite to the ego because, in the experience of the miracle, we see all that the ego appeared to be. When we ask why we separated, and how did all of this happen, we need to **"Hear, then, the one answer of the Holy Spirit to all the questions the ego raises: You are a child of God, a priceless part of His Kingdom, which He created as part of Him."** (T.6.IV.6.1) (ACIM OE T.6.V.50) This answer is already in the mind. The question, why did we separate, assumes that separation happened. However, contained in the question is an assumption that is incorrect because the separation never happened.

When we identify with the ego, we give allegiance to a substitute for the Christ Self. We made a will, a self, and a body in opposition to God, Who we now see as the enemy. We fear this god, who is made in our own image—a wrathful, punishing, and jealous god. The ego made up a god to fear so we would keep our allegiance to it (the ego).

It is this god the ego made that is perceived at war with us. It is this image of an angry God that we have run away from, hiding in the body and the world where we think we are safe from His wrath. We now see God as having abandoned us to suffer and die in a cruel world. We cry out,

"God, why have you abandoned me?" Yet, in truth, we are the ones who have abandoned Him, and now we project onto Him our decision to leave Heaven and abandon God.

We see Him as having almighty power, which makes us powerless victims, subject to His treatment of us. We experience suffering and ask, "God, why did you let this happen to me?" as if God were responsible for our condition. That is how the ego set it up so our fear of God and His all-consuming love would keep us from abandoning the ego. But the ego is really just a fear thought to which we have given the attributes of love. In other words, we now look to fear (the ego) for protection when in truth our only real protection is God's Love.

When we identify with the body, how can we be anything but doomed to suffer and die? **"The ego is the 'proof' that strength is weak and love is fearful, life is really death, and what opposes God alone is true."** (W.PII.Q12.1.3) We are constantly defending ourselves against sickness, suffering, and death, but it is a losing proposition. Jesus asks us to look at what we have chosen. **"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)

It seems to us that life began when we were born in a body. Life seems hard. We go through many challenges. We feel vulnerable. We get sick. We suffer, and in the end, we die. This is the myth we all believe when we come to this world and a veil of forgetfulness is dropped across the mind. Now the body becomes the central figure in our dream. It is the "hero" of this dream. **"There is no dream without it, nor does it exist without the dream in which it acts as if it were a person to be seen and be believed. It takes the central place in every dream, which tells the story of how it was made by other bodies, born into the world outside the body, lives a little while and dies to be united in the dust with other bodies dying like itself."** (T.27.VIII.1.2-3) (ACIM OE T.27.IX.77)

The core of the ego thought system is one of having defeated God and of having established our own reality. But our existence is challenged when we experience a glimpse of eternity, which is the holy instant. It is a moment from outside this dream. With each holy instant, we come to see that the dream has no reality and never did. Reality is egoless. God is not part of this ego insanity. In each moment, we have a choice—to identify with the insanity of the ego or to choose forgiveness and peace. Every time we accept we are mistaken in how we perceive and instead choose to forgive, we experience a reflection of Heaven until the dream is no more.

Lesson 331 is, **"There is no conflict, for my will is Yours."** Our experience in this world is full of conflict, yet conflict only comes from the split mind. There is a part of the mind that identifies with the ego and another part that is a reflection of the Christ. We project the thought system of strife and conflict on the world. Thus, we experience a world of conflict and conflicted relationships. It is a thought system of "one or the other," God or me, which came about with the separation. Only the wrong mind holds thoughts of conflict. In this dream, we can and do experience conflict, but the truth is there is only One Will, and we share that Will with God.

God is not even aware of our experience in this dream. The conflict we think is there is one of opposition and defiance that originated with our opposition to God. It is the authority problem that is the source of all our conflicts in the world. In fact, Jesus tells us, **"The authority problem is still the only source of conflict, because the ego was made out of the wish of God's**

Son to father Him." (T.11.In.2.3) (ACIM OE T.10.1n.1.2) You could call it the self-made man where we made our own father. When looked at with perfect honesty, Jesus says we would see that this is so. He says that we never look at anything with perfect honesty and keep this thought hidden from ourselves.

That is why he shows us how the ego set all this up, so we can look honestly at what we have seemingly done and question it all. **"The more you approach the center of His thought system, the clearer the light becomes."** (T.11.In.3.4) (ACIM OE T.10.II.3) We must look at the darkness of the ego thought system and be willing to **"Open the dark cornerstone of terror on which it rests, and bring it out into the light."** (T.11.In.3.9) (ACIM OE T.10.II.3) We are not alone. The spark of love in us goes with us to light the way. We are called to bring all conflict to the quiet Presence in the right mind. This requires courage and great honesty to recognize that responsibility for all difficulties starts with us.

"There is no will except the Will of Love." (W.331.1.6) ***"Fear is a dream, and has no will that can conflict with Yours. Conflict is sleep, and peace awakening."*** (W.331.1.7-8). In that awakening, the realization is clear that ***"Death is illusion; life, eternal truth."*** (W.331.1.9) Who we are is eternal and cannot die. ***"Yet God has set His masterpiece within a frame that will endure forever, when yours has crumbled into dust. But think you not the picture is destroyed in any way. What God creates is safe from all corruption, unchanged and perfect in eternity."*** (T.25.II.6.6-8) (ACIM OE T.25.III.17)

"Miracles enable you to heal the sick and raise the dead because you made sickness and death yourself, and can therefore abolish both." (T.1.I.24.1) (ACIM OE T.1.I.27) Jesus was the demonstration of the abolishment of the idea of death. He showed us that it does not exist. **"There is no death, but there is a belief in death."** (T.3.VII.5.11) (ACIM OE T.3.IX.79) **"The world is not left by death but by truth, and truth can be known by all those for whom the Kingdom was created, and for whom it waits."** (T.3.VII. 6.11) (ACIM OE T.3.IX.80)

Because we are now aware of two thought systems in the mind, the conflict in our lives may seem to increase after the initial experience with the Course. Life no longer seems as simple as when we listened almost exclusively to the voice of the ego. In **"The Lessons of the Holy Spirit"** (T.6.V) (ACIM OE T.6.V.a To Have Give All To All) Jesus makes it clear that our invitation to the Holy Spirit brought more conflict. What do we do? Do we choose the ego or the Holy Spirit? We now see that we have two mutually exclusive thought systems to choose between. When we attack, we feel even more distress than before we got on this path because we see that our judgments and attacks on others bring more guilt and pain. We know we should forgive, yet we hold grievances. We want retribution for what others have done to us, yet we want to heal the mind. Thus, we are going in two different directions, and experience a lot of conflict in the mind. We despair we will never achieve our spiritual aspiration, yet it is only the ego that can experience hopelessness. The Holy Spirit is certain, and Jesus assures us of our awakening as we increasingly learn to listen only to the Teacher in the right mind.

When we are in conflict with anyone, we can see how much we strive to establish the separate self and our own will. This will is not real so it has no real power except in the dream. To be in conflict with "another" will, which is also unreal and powerless, is like shadow-boxing with ourselves, as there is no one outside ourselves. To us it seems like a real conflict with someone else, but the

truth is we are One, and there is no separation. We share the same will, which is One with God. This will cannot be in conflict with itself, so all seeming conflict in the world is about nothing. It is all part of the dream. There is no one to be in conflict with because we are One. We *are* our brother. There is no separation. Forgiveness brings the realization there is only One Will. When we remain vigilant on behalf of truth, we come to realize our reality as the Son of God. "**Conflict is sleep, and peace awakening.**" (W.331.1.8)

I remember clearly as a young child of about 5 years of age. I was living in Sweden in a refugee camp, believing I was on my own and had to look after myself. I felt very vulnerable and believed there was no one who could protect me. Later in my life, as I revisited this time in my memory, I realized I had made a decision to rely on myself rather than God. I became very independent, very strategic, and very political, believing my survival and success in the world was entirely up to me. It was me against the world. My inner child was very indignant at the atrocities in the world and I carried this indignant child for a long time. I railed against injustices and fought for the underdog. I tried to make right what I perceived as wrong in my relationships and in the world. There is no peace in this stance. I perceived no safety in vulnerability, but later realized that it was only in being vulnerable that love could be given and received.

What a relief to realize, through this journey with the Course, that I could give up this fight with God. He tells us it is simply foolish to believe we could oppose God's Will. It is foolish to think I could have done anything to corrupt or change myself in any way. This new awareness has helped me to relax and go with the flow, recognizing all things truly do work together for our good and that there are no victims or victimizers.

There is value in everything that seems to happen to us, as it can all be used to help us in our awakening if we use every situation for that purpose. Imagine if we looked at every situation and every person with holy sight—with the eyes of Christ and saw only innocence. That is what forgiveness shows us. With forgiveness, we see only the holy. We see only God's Will for us. We see that our brother is our Self and we experience joining as One. We do not try to interfere with anyone's classroom, thinking we know what others need; nor do we correct anyone's ego, but only accept the Correction for ourselves.

If we truly want to know the Self we are, we need to look at the patterns in our lives, how we defeat ourselves, and how we attract whatever we are running away from in ourselves. It is important not to fight the ego, not to indulge it, nor to love it. We are merely asked to look at it and be willing to take full responsibility for it, rather than to project on others what we judge in ourselves. This takes courage. We tend to live in the upper rooms of our home, denying what is in the basement. We don't want to acknowledge our own shadow but prefer to see it in others and judge it there. Now we are asked to look into the dark corners where we have closed the doors tight and placed sentinels outside those doors to guard those rooms and keep us from investigating what is there. Healing requires that we look there and bring the shadow to the light, even though the process may bring up a lot of fear. Jesus assures us, we never go there alone.

We believe we separated from God in that tiny tick of time when we, as the Son of God, remembered not to laugh at the foolishness that we could separate from Love and establish a separate kingdom. We need not continue to take ourselves so seriously, but simply smile at the foolishness of our thoughts and give them over. That is what forgiveness is about. It looks at the darkness without judgment. Jesus walks with us and is eager to help us. In the Gospel of John, he

said he would never leave us desolate. Here too, in this Lesson we read, "**You could never leave me desolate, to die within a world of pain and cruelty.**" (W.331.1.4)

We need not be afraid of the ego. It is nothing, though it seems to us to have a lot of power; yet the only power it has is what we give it. Have you ever had the experience of keeping a shameful secret that has tormented you and controlled you, and there was a lot of fear that you would be found out? Then, when you finally opened the door to that dark secret room in your mind and allowed the light to shine in, all the shame and all the power it contained were gone. It never had any power to control you, except for the belief that it had to be hidden and defended.

How do we discover what we are hiding? Sometimes, we don't even know what is there, but we can see it in our projections. When we "hate" something about someone, we can use this as an opportunity to look at some version of that same thing we hate about ourselves. Unmasking the ego is what this process is about, and it is the only way to heal. The ego is all about fear. It has been running the show while our attention was elsewhere. We try everything to keep ourselves safe and guarded against discovering the love beyond the fear. We have invested in defenses, believing they keep us safe. Yet the more defenses we erect, the more afraid we feel. Now, we are invited to look at our ego strategies and conspiracies against our own happiness and surrender them. This is the process of purification where our only responsibility is to bring the darkness to the light. Healing is what only the Holy Spirit can do as He is not part of the dream but outside of it.

Allow all conflict you feel within yourself, or with anyone else, to be brought to awareness. Whenever you feel fearful, guilty, hopeless, unworthy, ashamed, disappointed, sad, depressed, angry, unloving, in conflict with anyone, or out of accord with yourself in any way, remind yourself "**There is no conflict, for my will is Yours.**" (W.331.1.11)

That is the truth, but it is not a panacea to cover feelings that are there. Those should be acknowledged, explored, investigated, felt, expressed, and released. The ego's strategy is to try to resolve conflict, but that puts the ego in the forefront. The Holy Spirit's answer is to release it. It does not matter how long it takes because this is what time is for. Any conflict we feel is simply not the truth. The truth is that the Son of God cannot suffer, and we are His perfect Son.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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