



LESSON 96

Salvation comes from my One Self.

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us, **"As you can hear two voices, so you can see in two ways. One way shows you an image, or an idol that you may worship out of fear, but will never love. The other shows you only truth, which you will love because you will understand it. Understanding is appreciation, because what you understand you can identify with, and by making it part of you, you have accepted it with love. That is how God Himself created you; in understanding, in appreciation and in love. The ego is totally unable to understand this, because it does not understand what it makes, does not appreciate it and does not love it."** (T.7.V.9.1-6) (ACIM OE T.7.VI.50)

We have two ways of seeing any situation. One way is to see through the ego's interpretation, which is to see each brother as an image or idol from whom we try to extract love. This way of seeing will always bring the fear that we will be abandoned, betrayed, or hurt. We see through our own persona and it is an image full of fear. We try to get the persona of the other to love us and to meet our needs, but it can never happen because the persona is not real. When they won't agree to our contract or hidden agenda, we feel angry and betrayed. The other way is to see them with vision, which is to look through the perception of the Holy Spirit. When this is the case, we are able to see our brother as a reflection of the innocence in our own mind. We see the sameness we share as our One Self. We can only see in this way when the blocks to love we hold in our own mind (guilt, fear, judgments, grievances) are removed through forgiveness. This requires taking responsibility for our projections and willingly releasing them to the Holy Spirit. When we turn to the ego as our teacher, we focus on what we can get from others, but with the Holy Spirit, our desire is to give with no expectations.

Later in Chapter 7 we read, **"Your mind is dividing its allegiance between two kingdoms, and you are totally committed to neither."** (T.7.VI.9.1) (ACIM OE T.7.VII.63) **"Perceived problems in identification at any level are not problems of fact. They are problems of understanding, since their presence implies a belief that what you are is up to you to decide. The ego believes this totally, being fully committed to it. It is not true. The ego therefore is totally committed to untruth, perceiving in total contradiction to the Holy Spirit and to the knowledge of God."** (T.7.VI.9.4-8) (ACIM OE T.7.VII.64)

Here, we are reminded that we have a divided allegiance between the right mind and wrong mind. The right mind is where truth resides. This is where we connect with our eternal Being and One Self. It is the part we can't change, no matter how we feel about ourselves. In other words, we are still as God created us. The wrong mind is the kingdom ruled by the ego. It contains our self-concepts, our values, and our beliefs. It is the false self that has no reality. It is who we think we are--the self that seems to be living in a body and in the world. With our investment in the ego,

we value our individuality, uniqueness, and specialness. We believe that this is where we have control over our lives and our decisions.

We believe that we have made what we are and our lives are up to us. This belief totally obscures God and our reality. It obscures who we truly are as divine beings. Instead, we believe that what is real is the body, the world, the concepts of ourselves, and our problems. While we hold onto this reality and experience ourselves as bodies, we cannot know who we are as the Christ Self. Our wholeness and limitless power and our consistent peace and joy are still in the mind; they are just hidden from our awareness.

The fact is that we are only One Self, but our experience is of two selves in conflict. We say we want peace, joy, and happiness, yet there seems to be this part of us that resists or actively sabotages what we say we want. We say we want peace, we want joy, we want love, we want truth, and we want God, but we also want the things of this world. We try to spiritualize the illusion by trying to bring truth to the illusion and trying to have a better dream here. We try to make ourselves spiritual, but it will not work. We say we want light, yet we hold onto the darkness. We say we want peace, yet we do everything to be rid of it. Jesus asks us, "**Would you let a little bank of sand, a wall of dust, a tiny seeming barrier stand between your brothers and salvation.**" (T.19.IV.A.2.9) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.41) Unfortunately, so often we do cherish this "**little remnant of attack,**" (T.19.IV.A.2.10) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.41) but when we do, we set up a barrier between ourselves and our brothers.

We hold onto our way of seeing things, our grievances, judgments, and specialness. Only by releasing the dark thoughts, the self-concepts, the grievances, and the belief that things of this world (idols) can ever satisfy us, can we open to the truth of who we really are. The idols are things, circumstances, situations, special relationships, and objects we deem important and use to try to complete ourselves. We follow the ego's mantra to keep seeking for our happiness outside of ourselves, but happiness and peace will always elude us. We will never find what we are seeking for in the world. The only completion is to know who we are as the Christ Self. Everything else leaves us always feeling limited and lacking. In other words, no matter what we seek for in this world, we will never be satisfied.

Our typical response to this inner conflict is to try to reconcile what we see as the different parts of ourselves, but this will never work. "**You have sought many such solutions, and none of them has worked. The opposites you see in you will never be compatible. But one exists.**" (W.96.1.3-5) We will continue to experience the conflict until we are ready to release the false identity we have accepted as our reality.

We have become so preoccupied with the body that we have lost sight of spirit. We will never find any safety, comfort, happiness, or wholeness in guilt and fear, yet that is what we try to do. We try to carve out some sense of safety and security in the world of form, whether it is in our special relationships, money, status, material goods, job, or any number of things. In our lives, we "**attempt an endless list of goals you cannot reach; a senseless series of expenditures of time and effort, hopefulness and doubt, each one as futile as the one before, and failing as the next one surely will.**" (W.96.2.2) We are constantly trying to solve the problem of the anxiety and emptiness we feel, but we can never solve it in our own way. The problem is not in the body or in the world but in our decision for separation, and only there lies the solution.

There simply is no happiness possible in this state of insanity. We have put our energy toward serving the body's seeming existence instead of investing it in waking up to the truth of our reality. We work very hard to try to make our experience here as good, comfortable, pleasurable, safe from

harm, beautiful and indestructible as we can. Thus, the mind is focused on what can never serve our own best interests. **"Yet mind can also see itself divorced from spirit, and perceive itself within a body it confuses with itself."** (W.96.4.4) It [the mind] has lost sight of spirit, for its true function is to serve spirit, and only when we put our mind to this function will we be happy and know peace. Our wrong-minded thought system of sin, guilt, and fear holds others responsible for our lack of fulfillment. Even if we seem to hold ourselves responsible by blaming ourselves for our inadequacies, we still hold someone else responsible for those inadequacies. Blaming ourselves or others is still the same thing.

When we identify ourselves with the body and personality, the mind is completely in the service of this existence. We see ourselves as **"helpless, limited and weak."** (W.96.5.2) We feel alone, separated, and a victim of the world. The body becomes a **"frail support"** (W.96.5.3) where we try to hide. So much of our attention in this world goes into the care and maintenance of these bodies, and we live in fear of anything untoward happening to them. They are indeed very frail and they continually deteriorate. This is because he tells us that mind apart from spirit has **"denied its Source of strength."** (W.96.5.2) Only by undertaking our function of forgiveness where we no longer hold others responsible for our condition can we reclaim the power in us.

"If you are physical, your mind is gone from your self-concept, for it has no place in which it could be really part of you." (W.96.3.6) In other words, if we truly are bodies, then the spirit cannot be part of us. When we join with spirit, we can't be a body. **"If you are spirit then the body must be meaningless to your reality."** (W.96.3.7) When we recognize ourselves as One Self, united with our Creator, the body is not our reality. We simply are not these frail beings at the mercy of a cruel world. When we identify ourselves as bodies, we have actually left the mind, which is where truth resides. The Holy Spirit calls us to return to the truth of who we really are. The Holy Spirit resides in our right minds.

In each moment and in each decision that we make, we choose: a grievance or a miracle, the separation or our reality. It depends on which teacher we turn to---the ego or the Holy Spirit. This is a question of whether we choose to defend our specialness and individuality, or we choose forgiveness and thus the truth. In each decision we make, we choose: Heaven or hell, truth or illusion, body or spirit.

For healing to occur, we must bring all our worries, depression, feelings of victimhood, attack thoughts, expectations of outcomes, fantasies, and wishes, to the light. Then we must be willing to let them go. To waste our time listening to the ego and going where it takes us, leads us nowhere. It is like trying to resolve things in our nighttime dreams. What is the point? I spent the whole night in my dream last night packing to go on a journey and being concerned about taking everything I needed. However, in spite of my dedication and commitment to this task, it was to no avail, which only became apparent to me when I woke up.

Fortunately for us, the Holy Spirit has been placed in our right minds as a bridge to help us with this awakening. He entered our minds the instant the decision for the wrong mind (separation) was made. He calls us constantly to give up our futile attempts at finding happiness in the physical world and urges us to open our minds to the truth. This is the Divine Help that brings our minds back to our true function to serve the spirit, connect with the love we are, and bring this reflection to the world as an extension of God's Being. **"Your mind will bless all things."** (W.96.10.4) That is the case when we reclaim the truth of who we are through our function of forgiveness. This is how we rejoin with the Source of our strength.

Our self-deceptions can't change the truth about us, no matter how lost we are in this dream. We remain as God created us and can never be separated from our Creator. While we have deceived ourselves about who we are and have believed in the reality of the body, the truth of our reality as the Christ Self has never changed. Isn't that a reassuring thought? Nothing we have done has changed our reality. Nothing we have believed about ourselves is true. Through forgiveness, we release the untrue and reconnect to spirit, leaving aside all the distractions of the world as we enter into His Presence. We are reminded, **"The ego's whole thought system blocks extension, and thus blocks your only function. It therefore blocks your joy, so that you perceive yourself as unfulfilled."** (T.7.IX 3.4-5) (ACIM OE T.7.X.93)

The Self we seek is not something outside of us, but it is what we are. **"Perhaps your mind remains uncertain yet a little while. Be not dismayed by this."** (W.96.11.2-3) We may not be ready yet for the experience of awakening, but we should not feel discouraged because of this lack of readiness. It will be ours when we are ready. Every time you do the practice, you **"offer Him another treasure to be kept for you."** (W.96.11.5) Therefore, nothing is ever lost. As we do this practice, we just keep filling our storehouse with treasures. From this storehouse, we draw these treasures, which are then extended as blessings and miracles. We need to be patient with ourselves in this process. We can relax, knowing that time is being used for its intended purpose. We do the work by applying these Lessons to our daily lives. As we do this, the Self rejoices, even if the joy has not yet penetrated the conscious mind.

I share these thoughts with you, knowing I am talking to myself, reminding myself of the truth as I write. I join with you in gratitude and willingness to heal my mind so I can remember who I am as spirit. Salvation comes from my One Self, which I share with you. Through that One Self, we bring salvation to the world. As we receive, we give. **"Think, then, how much is given unto you to give this day, that it be given you!"** (W.96.12.3)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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