



LESSON 115

Review III ~ Lesson 99 and Lesson 100

Sarah's Commentary:

The focus of this Course is on forgiveness but not in the traditional way we think of forgiveness. It is, instead, as this first line says, **"My function here is to forgive the world for all the errors I have made."** (W.115.(99).1.2) Thus, in Course-based forgiveness, I do not forgive you for your mistakes but only for my own. How can that be? We need to understand that when we thought we had separated from God, we brought with us a load of guilt, which we still carry. The ego offered us a plan on how we might avoid responsibility for the guilt and simply "off-load" it. The ego sold us on an arrangement where we would not need to carry this guilt, as it is overwhelming to us. The ego proposal was for us to project the guilt onto the world with the assurance that this is how we would get rid of it, but that makes others responsible for how we feel. The ego's plan was for us to blame others for our condition, which meant we give power to the illusion to victimize us. With the projection of our guilt onto others, the ego convinced us that now the guilt would no longer be ours. What the ego does not tell us is that projecting our guilt is actually how we keep it, and not only that, we actually attract even more guilt if we follow its program.

Our minds are like a movie projector, so what we see in the world (on the screen) is like the projection of the film in a projector. Think of the film running through the projector as the guilt in your wrong mind. The light coming through the projector is coming from your right mind and shines pure and clean of any images. It is like the light of your pristine, innocent being. But when there is guilt in the mind, this light is now obscured by dark images. When these dark, shadowy images are projected onto the screen, we experience fear. But when they are cleared away, the pure light can once again come through the projector.

When we think about suicide bombers, murderers, politicians we love to hate, parents who have abused us, and all the many ways "others" seem to cause pain, anger, distress, frustration, revenge, and loss of peace, it is challenging to imagine that they are all innocent. Instead, there may be a desire to retaliate, to make right, and to avenge the hurts we see and experience. Yet it is only our own thoughts about any situation that create pain for us. We project these thoughts of guilt onto others, who have conveniently provided us with the perfect situation to unload our guilt and make them responsible for our misery. Now the ego tells us that they have the guilt while we are innocent. We hope that the God we fear is taking note of these evil-doers, so they will be appropriately punished, and we will be off the hook. Our hope is that He will see who the guilty ones are and accept our innocence. After all, we tell ourselves that we tried so hard in the face of all the attacks we have experienced. **"This sickly picture of yourself is carefully preserved by the ego, whose image it is and which it loves, and placed outside you in the world."** (T.20.III.5.6) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.20)

It does seem that there are some situations and people that are more difficult and thus more challenging for us to release our anger and wish for revenge. The ego does not love us and urges us to keep this cycle of guilt going, even though this keeps us in hell. Jesus reminds us that there is no order of difficulty in the illusion. In other words, there are not some situations worse than others. I like to think of it as similar to my nighttime dreams. If someone robs me and burns down my house in my dream, has anything real happened? If they say an unkind word to me in my dream, would it be any different than my house being burned down? In the dream, it is all the same. It is all illusory. One problem is no bigger than another because neither of them is real. When we wake up, we can easily let it all go. That is what forgiveness does in this worldly dream. Any thought I hold that obscures the love in me from my awareness is painful and creates suffering.

Forgiveness is the only thing that breaks the cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. When we take responsibility for our murderous thoughts, our attacks, our hatred, and all emotions arising in us as a result of what we perceive "outside" ourselves, we take our first step in healing. When we hang onto grievances and see others as responsible for how we feel, we give all our power away. Forgiveness depends on understanding that nothing is happening outside of our own minds. **"It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition."** (T.21.IN.1.5) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) Yet we have made an adjustment to this world that we believe is real and solid. **"And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe this picture is outside, and has you at its mercy."** (T.20.III.5.7) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.20) There is no world. Thus, forgiveness requires that we recognize we are forgiving nothing except our own interpretations.

Since there is just one mind and we all participate in this one mind, when we heal our thoughts, we are healing the world. The events that trigger our emotions and seem to cause us to lose our peace are precisely where our healing lies. We must look at our thoughts and emotions without judgment. See them for what they are---just thoughts. They have no power over us. For example, if I hate anyone whom I see as an enemy or wicked person and want him or her dead, I have an opportunity to look at the vengeance that is in *my* mind. As I release my judgments and my guilt, I can know peace.

This is what Jesus means by accepting the Atonement for myself. It is all about accepting the healing of my mind and opening to the miracle. To accept the Atonement is to accept the correction. We are not responsible for the error, but only for the correction. That is the only place where change can happen. This is how I learn about my true nature and know my true innocence. False innocence is what we try to achieve when we blame others for our loss of peace by seeing them as the guilty ones. We hope God sees how they are victimizing us and punishes them so we can get off scot-free! With true innocence, healing is extended through us to everyone. Rather than judging anyone for their misbehavior, we now see a call for love and understanding. It is our own inner call to recognize that there is nothing but love, no matter what it looks like.

"My function here is to forgive the world for all the errors I have made. For thus am I released from them with all the world." (W.115.(99).1.2-3) It is only my errors I need to have removed from my mind. I have simply diverted blame from myself to others. All that I need to forgive is what I am holding in my own wrong mind. This Lesson is giving us another opportunity to look at our needs, concerns, and problems as coming from our own minds. Since the cause is in the mind, so is the solution. We are responsible for our own happiness. We have the power within us to heal our judgments and release the blocks to love through forgiveness. We cannot do this if we judge ourselves for our errors. Look at your mistakes with non-judgment. Look with the loving presence of Jesus, who will never judge you but will support your journey of healing every step of the way.

Getting in touch with our own innocence is a beautiful gift that we all yearn for. Guilt is a heavy burden on our minds. The only way to release it is to recognize our errors by being vigilant in watching our minds. When we ever have forgiven anyone even partially, we recognize what a burden is lifted from the mind. It releases us from the chains that bind us to the person we have not forgiven. Our mood lightens, our joy bubbles up, peace is restored, and stress is released. It is a wonder we don't commit to forgiving all the time with such gifts that we receive.

We need to stay vigilant to opportunities presented to us to forgive. These come up when we stand in line at the grocery store and get impatient, when we watch the news and get angry at events we see, when we get cut off in traffic, when a telemarketer calls at dinner time, when our investments crash, when the coke machine keeps our money and the coke as well, when a friend is always late, when our children disappoint us, and on and on. That is the nature of this classroom we call our lives. We become happy learners when we use these opportunities for forgiveness. We get to the point where we even welcome them. This Lesson reminds us that we are forgiving someone for what they did not do precisely because nothing here is real. It is our dream that we are dreaming. It is all coming from our own minds.

Imagine, no matter what we think we are doing on this planet, no matter what we think our function is, whatever role we play, nurse, teacher, lawyer, student, parent, daughter, son, computer analyst, hairdresser -- none of these are reasons for why we are here. They are just the backdrop for healing the mind and recognizing our own power. We are only here to learn forgiveness, which is our only function. The world is a classroom for this learning and serves no other purpose.

Jesus tells us that when our unconscious guilt is brought to the light and healed, we will see a different world. It is the world that vision will reveal to us. **"When you perceive yourself without deceit, you will accept the real world in place of the false one you have made."** (T.11. VIII.15.4) (ACIM OE T.10.VIII.90) When the guilt is released, the real world will be revealed.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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