

LESSON 28 • JANUARY 28

“Above all else I want to see things differently.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To commit to really seeing, to commit to withdrawing your preconceptions about things and opening your mind to seeing them with true vision. You will make this commitment one object at a time. By committing to seeing one thing truly, you are really committing to seeing everything truly.

Exercise: Six times, for two minutes.

- Repeat the idea.
- Then apply it randomly to whatever you see about you, giving each subject equal sincerity. Let your eyes rest on each one long enough to say, slowly and thoughtfully, “*Above all else I want to see this _____ differently.*” Realize that in saying this you are making a request, a request to withdraw the purpose you have laid on this object, and to see the purpose that God has given it, “the purpose it shares with all the universe” (5:3). By seeing this one object truly, then, you could see the purpose of everything. You could gain total vision.

Remarks: Each application of the idea (to the table, to the chair, to the foot) is the making of a commitment. So try to practice in this spirit. With each repetition, try to mean what you are saying. Do not rush through the words thoughtlessly. Try to say them with sincerity. Say them thoughtfully. Do not worry about whether you will follow through with these commitments, for that inhibits you from making them. And you will never *keep* them unless you first *make* them.

Commentary

The thought that I could gain vision from just a table, or any random thing for that matter, if I could look on it with a completely open mind, is staggering. It means that I have been surrounded all my life by people and things, any one of which could have brought me enlightenment, and I have not responded. The computer screen I look at as I write, if seen without any of my own ideas, could open up and show me “something beautiful and clean and of infinite value, full of happiness and hope” (5:2).

I still find that hard to believe. Oh, I don’t doubt it, in one sense. Somehow it makes sense to believe that an enlightened being, like Jesus for instance, would see, as the poet put it, “the universe in a grain of sand.” But I guess what I doubt is that *I* could see that. I’ve looked at so many tables in my life and none of them ever spoke to *me*. I look at my desk now and I see—a desk.

“Hidden under all your ideas about it is its real purpose, the purpose it shares with all the universe” (5:3). Ah! A clue as to what this lesson is getting at; we’re talking about a shared purpose. We’re asking to see a common purpose that binds everything as one. I think a desk is for writing on, a table is for eating on, a fork is for spearing my food, a computer is for sending messages to folks on the Internet. I see a whole bunch of different purposes, each thing with its own, separate purpose. But they all share a purpose. As does my body, the sky, the moon, everything I can see. What is that purpose? That is what I am asking to see.

That is something worth asking for.

Nothing around you but is part of you. Look on it lovingly, and see the light of Heaven in it. So will you come to understand all that is given you. In kind forgiveness will the world sparkle and shine, and everything you once thought sinful now will be reinterpreted as part of Heaven. How beautiful it is to walk, clean and

redeemed and happy, through a world in bitter need of the redemption that your innocence bestows upon it! What can you value more than this? For here is your salvation and your freedom. And it must be complete if you would recognize it.
(T-23.In.6:1-8)