

LESSON 96 • APRIL 6

“Salvation comes from my one Self.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To find the thought of salvation deep within your mind, and let it restore your mind to its true function of blessing all minds.

Longer: Every hour on the hour, for five minutes (if you cannot do this, at least do the alternate).

- Say, “*Salvation comes from my one Self. Its thoughts are mine to use.*”
- The remainder seems to be a combination of meditation (in which you try to contact your real thoughts, as in Lesson 45) and listening to the Holy Spirit (in which you listen for spiritual teaching, as in Lesson 76). Search deep within your mind for the presence of the Holy Spirit. He is there to speak to you your true thoughts, the thoughts of your true Self; in particular, the thought of salvation. If you succeed, thoughts will come to you telling you that you are saved and you can save. These thoughts are more than just information; they will fill your mind with strength, enabling it to bless all minds. Remember the training you’ve received both in meditation and in listening to the Holy Spirit: Hold your mind in a state of quiet attentiveness, listen in confidence, and draw your mind back from wandering when necessary.

Frequent reminders: As often as possible.

Repeat the idea. While you do, imagine that you are laying another treasure in your treasure house, a treasure you can claim anytime you want. If you will, go ahead and repeat the idea in this fashion now.

Encouragement to practice: You may feel uncertain of success today, but your Self knows you cannot fail. Your practice will bring joy to It, and It will save this joy for you, storing it in your treasure house until you are ready to take it out and experience it.

Commentary

“Although you are one Self, you experience yourself as two” (1:1). Experiencing ourselves as divided is a universal experience. Even the very practice of these lessons makes it evident to us: on the one hand, we want to do the practice because we want to go to God, we want enlightenment; on the other hand, when the hour comes and it is time to take our five minutes, something in us resists doing it. It seems as if there are two selves in us, one “good” and the other “bad,” one wanting the light and the other holding on to the darkness.

Most of my life I lived with this, believing my experience was the truth. Something in me, however, told me it was not so. How could I be two selves? How could I have two natures, as my Christian background taught me (flesh and spirit)? It didn’t make sense. The nature of something, of anything, is always one. The Course explains that one, spirit, is real; the other, the separated self that experiences being a body, is unreal, nothing more than a figment of my imagination. I am not divided, and all evidence to the contrary is a trick of the mind, a self-deception.

Based on the illusion of being split into opposites, the mind has “sought many...solutions” (1:3). It has been duped into believing in the reality of this split, and the reality of physical being. Therefore it occupies itself endlessly trying to make things work, and they never do. The mind becomes the servant of the body, trying to devise ways to make the body comfortable, to pleasure it, to make it last forever, to keep it safe from harm. In doing this, the mind has lost its true function.

Our one Self is spirit. In its preoccupation with the body the mind has, for the most part, lost sight of spirit. It needs to regain its true function of serving spirit: “Spirit makes use of mind as means to find its Self expression” (4:1). This is what brings us peace and fills the mind with joy, while serving the body brings it nothing but conflict and pain. The thoughts of spirit seek expression through our minds; that is what minds are for.

The Holy Spirit is an agent of divine Help, bringing the mind back to its true function of serving spirit. He is the representative of spirit, of our Self, to our minds, constantly calling us to set aside this futile fumbling for salvation in the realm of the physical and to open our minds to spirit. “If you are spirit, then the body must be meaningless to your reality” (3:7). Because we have dissociated our minds from their true function, we think we are alone and separate. We need a Helper Who reminds us of our true connection to spirit.

Our spirit—our Self—“retains Its thoughts, and they remain within your mind and in the Mind of God” (7:1). We remain, in spirit, as God created us. So we are not trying to change what our minds are, but rather change the purpose they serve. We are seeking, in these exercises, to reconnect to spirit, to set aside for five minutes the thoroughly distracting problems of the physical beings we think we are, and to open ourselves to these thoughts of spirit, to allow our minds to find their function as channels for spirit. “Restored in strength, it [the mind] will again flow out from spirit to the spirit in all things created by the Spirit as Itself. Your mind will bless all things” (10:3–4). That is our function; that is what we were created for. “The extension of God’s Being is spirit’s only function” (T-7.IX.3:1).

So I am rediscovering myself as an extender of God’s Being. God is Love and so I love. God creates, so I create, which here on earth is expressed as healing, as restoring creation to its natural state.

This “Self” that the Course is talking about is not something apart from me; it *is* me. Talking about seeking the thoughts of my one Self almost makes it seem as if the Self is this separate Being I am seeking to communicate with. But the Self is me. “Here you are; This is You,” as it said in Lesson 93 (W-pI.93.9:7). We are bringing the mind into contact with our spirit, but it is already me; the light is already in me, the thoughts I am “seeking” are my own thoughts I have dissociated right out of my mental awareness.

What we are asked to practice here is not described in great detail. You may be asking yourself, “What is it we are waiting for as we sit for five minutes?” And I can’t tell you; no one can. You will know when you find it. The lesson recognizes that we may not “connect” today; it uses words like “*if* you succeed” (10:1, emphasis mine) and “perhaps your mind remains uncertain yet a while” (11:2) It tells us not to be “dismayed” (11:3) if this is so. Relax with it, be patient. Do the exercises anyway. Every time you do your Self rejoices, even if that joy does not penetrate yet into your conscious mind, and it saves the joy, ready to bring it to you in full awareness when you do “succeed” and become certain of your one Self.