

LESSON 151 • MAY 31

“All things are echoes of the Voice for God.”

Practice instructions

Morning/evening practice: Fifteen minutes.

Repeat the idea slowly, just once. Then watch your mind; observe your thoughts. As each thought crosses your mind, give it to the Holy Spirit. Then listen as He gives it back in purified form. What He will do is take your thought and strip away all the egoic elements in it, leaving only whatever light that was contained in it: the love, the kindness, the pure intentions, your desire for peace and for God (for teaching on this idea, see T-5.IV.8:1-6). For example, let's say the thought you give Him is “I'm running out of time to get this task done.” The purified version that you receive back from Him might be “I really want to do this right. I want to do right by the people this affects.” In other words, you will be giving Him thoughts that are very mixed bags—patterns of darkness interlaced with threads of light. When He gives them back, however, only the threads of light will be left. They will be pure light, and so will reveal the light in you. And you will see them come together into a single, perfect thought, which will shed its blessing on everyone.

Remarks: This process of purification of your thoughts will resurrect your mind, making today your personal Eastertime. It will also inaugurate your ministry. For your ministry is simply to extend your purified thoughts, which will release everyone from guilt and teach them their sanctity.

Shorter: Hourly.

Repeat the idea (which basically means that you can see in all things—in the world and in your mind—the interpretation that the Holy Spirit has given that thing. You can experience all things as echoes of the Voice for God). Thank the Holy Spirit for the purified thoughts He gives you, and trust that the world will happily accept those thoughts as its own. This seems to imply that on the hour you will do a miniature version of the longer practice—perhaps giving a thought to the Holy Spirit and listening for Him to give you back a purified version of that thought.

Commentary

The world as we see it seems to bear unrelenting witness to separation, sin, death, hatred, and the transient nature of everything. The world seen with the vision of Christ, as the Holy Spirit sees it, bears witness to the truth, to unity, holiness, life, love, and the eternal nature of everything. *Everything* is echoing the Voice for God, all the time, but we do not hear it. We hear the ego's voice with relentless consistency. The two views could not be more stark in their contrast. Why do we display such a prejudice for the ego's view?

The early part of this lesson points out that the reason the world so often seems so solidly real to us is because of our underlying doubt of its reality. It asks us to look at the fact that the ego goes too far in its stubborn insistence that what our eyes and ears show us is solidly reliable. It says that, although we know very well from our experience that our senses often deceive us, and our judgments are often wide of the mark, we irrationally continue to believe them down to the last detail. We show surprise whenever we discover that what we thought was true is not, in fact, true, even though we have had this experience hundreds or thousands of times. And it asks:

Why would you trust them [your senses] so implicitly? Why but because of underlying doubt, which you would hide with show of certainty? (2:5–6)

It is like the line in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." It is the behavior of someone who is trying to shout down their doubts with protestations of absolute certainty. So, to the Holy Spirit, our very "certainty" of the world's reality is a proof of underlying doubt! We are certain even when it is unreasonable to be certain, and that is a certain evidence of hidden uncertainty.

We who study the Course are used to the idea that we project our guilt and anger onto others. Here, however, the Course introduces the idea that there is a way in which our egos project themselves onto us. The ego doubts. The ego condemns itself. The ego alone feels guilt. Only the ego is in despair (see 5:1–6). But it projects all of these things onto us, and tries to convince us "its evil is your own" (6:2). It plays this trick on us by showing us the world through its eyes, and introducing the things of the world as witnesses to our evil, our guilt, our doubt and despair. The ego is desperate for us to see the world as it wants us to because the ego's world is what proves to us that we are identical with the ego. For instance, it leads us to evaluate our own spiritual progress and to find ourselves wanting; it induces us to despair. Why? Because *it* [the ego] is feeling despair. It knows (without admitting it) that it is going to lose. This is why spiritual despair so often strikes after a major spiritual advance. The ego feels despair, and projects that despair onto our minds, trying to convince us the despair is *ours* rather than *its*.

This is why the ego is so insistent on convincing us of the world's reality. It needs the world to build its case.

The lesson asks us to raise all our evaluations, which we have learned from the ego, to question, and to doubt the evidence of our senses. It asks us to let the Holy Spirit be the Judge of what we are, and of everything that seems to happen to us (8:1; 9:6). If we try to judge things by ourselves, we will be deceived by our own egos, and the way in which we see ourselves and the world will become a witness to the ego's reality. If, however, we let go of our judgments and accept the judgment of the Holy Spirit, He will bear witness to our beautiful creation as God's Son. Everything we see, if we look with Him, will show us God.

Read the eleventh paragraph; it describes perfectly just how the Holy Spirit accomplishes this retranslation of everything. When we give Him our thoughts, He gives them back as miracles (14:1).

Let me, then, give my thoughts to Him today. Let me not hide my thoughts from Him, nor try to alter them myself before I expose them to His sight. Let me ask Him to work His alchemy on them, to transmute the lead into gold before my eyes. That is His job. Every thought has elements of truth in it, to which we have added falsehood and illusion. The Holy Spirit strips away the false, and leaves the golden kernel of truth. He does not attack our thoughts; He purifies them. He shows "the love beyond the hate, the constancy in change, the pure in sin" (11:3). He does this with our very thoughts, and so reveals to us the gentle face of Christ as our very Self.