

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 277 Let me not bind Your Son with laws I made.

Sarah's Commentary:

We have all kinds of rules and laws regarding the way we live our lives in this world, all related to the body and made to maintain our specialness. These are rules or laws about nutritional requirements, vitamins we rely on, what we will and won't eat, sleep requirements, rules about money, possessions, acquisitions, relationships, friendships, reciprocity, environment, our surroundings, religion, economics, politics, sex, manners, beauty, and on and on. We literally live by thousands of rules and laws. The Lesson harkens back to one we covered before, which is "**I am under no laws but God's.**" (W.76)

We look to these laws for our salvation. They seem to keep everything safe, secure, and intact as we perceive it. But Jesus reminds us that these laws imprison us. They are ultimately all fear-based, meaningless, and senseless. Yet in the dream, we give them meaning, always looking to these laws to keep us safe and secure, both physically and psychologically. The fact is that our salvation is not to be found in these laws. In other words, we think our happiness depends on these laws, yet it is not to be found there. We only have the illusion of safety and happiness as we do the best we can to maintain these laws that rule our lives. What the rules and commandments of our lives do is to keep the ego in check. We are relying on an external authority to guide our behavior. The truth is that the mind is unlimited, and only in the recognition of our reality as love can we find safety, happiness, security, and refuge.

What the laws we establish do, is give us the illusion of control over our lives. The reason we look outside ourselves for protection, safety, and happiness is that we believe what is outside of ourselves is the source of everything we experience. Yet Jesus asks us to consider the fact that we have reversed cause and effect. Only the mind is the cause of what we experience. We are not bound by anything outside of us. He asks us to deeply question the possibility that we have it all backward. We are beyond all these laws and are bound only by one thing, which is our mistaken idea of what we are. It is this idea that has imprisoned us. "**The body is endangered by the mind that hurts itself,**" (W.76.5.2) and nothing else. Consider the fact that all our laws are made to keep the body safe and to maintain our personal identity. By holding these laws, we give power to the events of this world to affect us. While laws have a place in the world of form, in reality, there are no laws but God's where no loss of any kind is possible, and we are always and forever safe.

Clearly, when we identify with the body and believe in the reality of this world, there are laws we live by. These laws seem to govern our world. We hold beliefs about how things must be for our safety, protection, and well-being. We spend a lot of our time and energy protecting and preserving our bodies and our psyches. We bind others to our laws by making them responsible

for our happiness. We feel our happiness is secured when others meet our requirements. But while we enjoy the power that we hold over others, Jesus reminds us that all we are doing is keeping ourselves imprisoned in the seeming reality of this world.

What are we to do? We can start by looking at the laws we deem important to our well-being. We can observe our beliefs about the importance of the laws and rules we hold and begin to question them. This will loosen our attachment to them. I started looking at my rules around reciprocity. I felt that if I did something for someone, I was owed something in return. It may be their gratitude, their money, their love, their admiration, or their gifts in kind. It was all about giving to get. As I began to question my relationship to money, and other forms of giving, and to the idea of reciprocity, I felt a freedom and joy in giving with no strings attached. I am no longer bound to how someone responds to what I give. This also applies to people who live in our home. We have many Course students who have often occupied our home. Initially, I had grievances about "my" stuff, but over the years I have come to recognize more and more that none of it is mine. We have given our house over to the Holy Spirit to be used by Him. Yes, issues still arise, but I can now welcome it, knowing that it is all for healing. No, it is not always easy, yet as much as possible, I can I choose to be a happy learner.

Jesus reminds us again and again that when we give, we have already received in the giving. We can only give to ourselves. As I grew in this awareness, I increasingly found that I was releasing my expectations for what others needed to do for me. I continue to heal any disappointments that arise around any expectations I hold of anyone. These expectations are the source of my many judgments and grievances. I have come to see more and more that my giving is my gift to myself. I see that when I give, I can only gain. Questioning all our laws strengthens our appreciation of the power and freedom of our minds. It is however, not about changing behavior but only seeing what is in the mind.

We are bound only by our beliefs. The ego keeps us invested in our victimhood. As we buy into all its laws and rules, we become fearful, angry, and distressed when they are not followed. Thus, when our laws are breached, we hold grievances. When someone has messed with our rules, it is a source of contention for us. We believe that if someone acted or spoke differently, our happiness would be guaranteed. Are we really that vulnerable to the vicissitudes of what others do or don't do to influence our state of being? In the world of the ego, the answer is yes, indeed! Yet what if we were to depart from our investment in these laws and recognize we are not bound by anything but our beliefs? What if we were to recognize that these beliefs have kept us bound in slavery to them? What if we were to question every rule we held, every law we live by, and every belief holding them in place? Finally, what if we were to really recognize that we are eternal beings who cannot die?

"Death is the central dream from which all illusions stem. Is it not madness to think of life as being born, aging, losing vitality, and dying in the end? We have asked this question before, but now we need to consider it more carefully. It is the one fixed, unchangeable belief of the world that all things in it are born only to die. This is regarded as 'the way of nature,' not to be raised to question, but to be accepted as the 'natural' law of life. The cyclical, the changing and the unsure; the undependable and the unsteady, waxing and waning in a certain way upon a certain path,---all this is taken as the Will of God. And no one asks if a benign Creator could will this."
(Manual for Teachers.27.What is Death.1.1-7)

We come to know who we are when the obstacles to love are cleared away, and we see the Christ in our brothers. This means we no longer want to bind our brothers with laws we have imposed on them, as well as on ourselves. Jesus tells us that as we bind our brothers, we bind God. We have as many ideas about Who God is as who our brothers are. In fact, in the third Law of Chaos, we not only tell God Who He is but "**He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it.**" (T.23.II.6.6) (ACIM OE T.23.III.24) With this belief comes the belief in sin and guilt. While Jesus tells us that in reality, we are free, we imagine we are bound by our sin and guilt and must, therefore, live in fear. We bind our brothers by projecting the sin we believe is in us, on them. This is how we try to free ourselves of the terrible things we think we have done. As long as we keep our brothers bound, we keep ourselves in bondage with them. "**A jailer is not free, for he is bound together with his prisoner. He must be sure that he does not escape, and so he spends his time in keeping watch on him. The bars that limit him become the world in which his jailer lives, along with him. And it is on his freedom that the way to liberty depends for both of them.**" (W.192.8.3-6)

Jesus keeps reminding us that we are not changed by what is changeable. What this means is that the truth about us can never be changed by anything in this world of change. We will always remain as we were created. All the laws of the world simply hide the truth of what we are. They keep us invested in the things of the world. Does this mean that we should ignore the laws of this world? As long as we still identify as a body, living in this world and still believe in linear time, there will be laws we must obey. We are not asked to simply disregard all laws, but to question our belief that the laws of this world are the source of our happiness, our security, and our salvation. In my life, some laws have fallen away and others I still obey while still recognizing that I don't have to believe in them even as I obey them. I stop at traffic lights, brush my teeth, and eat healthy foods. The Course is not about behavior, but what is going on in the mind. It is to be in the world, but not of the world. Don't be afraid to question all the rules and laws you hold about everything and to question the nature of your reality.

"Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his insanity. There is a stranger in him, who wandered carelessly into the home of truth and who will wander off. He came without a purpose, but he will not remain before the shining light the Holy Spirit offered, and you accepted. For there the stranger is made homeless and you are welcome. Ask not this transient stranger, 'What am I?' He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know. Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer that you would adjust. This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth, becomes your guide. To it you turn to ask the meaning of the universe. And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, 'How shall I look upon the Son of God'?" (T.20.III.7.1-10) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.22)

In other words, the ego is the homeless stranger. It wandered into our pristine home—the mind—and took over. Now the ego is the master of our house, and it has bound us to its laws, informing us of what we need to be happy. When we obey its requirements, it keeps us savagely bound to its demands. Only by accepting the freedom that the Holy Spirit offers do we loosen the hold the ego has on us. We think of freedom as the body's ability to do what it wants and get what it wants. Yet our true freedom is seeing that the only power is of God and His law of love. "**Do you want freedom of the body or of the mind? For both you cannot have. Which do you value? Which is your goal?**" (T.22.VI.1.1-4) (ACIM OE T.22.VII.51) "**Where the freedom of the**

body has been chosen, the mind is used as means whose value lies in its ability to contrive ways to achieve the body's freedom." (T.22.VI.2.1) (ACIM OE T.22.VII.52)

As we read in, "**What is the Christ?**" (W.PII.Q6), we are asked to accept we are not wanderers, lost in the illusion. We are home in Heaven where we never left. The awful things we think we have said or done have no reality. The answer to the separation and despair that we feel is not outside of us. It is in our minds. Christ is not a small or obscure part of us. It is our reality, and Something in us knows it. We have already decided for God. The ego has taken up a minuscule part of the mind we have made important by giving it all our attention. Now, as we withdraw our investment in it and no longer give it importance, its control over our lives is significantly diminished. Enlightenment is already accomplished. The individual character in the dream will never become enlightened.

What do we do when we discover dark thoughts in the mind—anger, jealousy, worry, or self-pity? We may hide these thoughts, justify them, deny them, or project them on others. With dedication and willingness, we bring them to the light where they are dispelled. We do not need to understand how healing happens. Our part is simply to bring our dark thoughts to awareness and place them on the inner altar for healing. If we continue to hang onto them, they cannot be released. If we continue to worry about when they will dissipate, we are failing to trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to dissolve the darkness in His light. It takes great willingness to have the courage and trust to move through this process. We may need to rely on others to hold the space for us as we bring forth our fears. Only those who do not reflect false empathy by joining us in our tale of woe, of being hurt by something outside of ourselves, can be truly helpful. To be truly helpful is not to believe anyone's story, but to see that unhappiness can only come from the choice to listen to the false self.

"The Holy Spirit reaches from the Christ in you to all your dreams, and bids them come to Him, to be translated into truth." (W.PII.Q6.4.1) Do not let shame, stubbornness, and humiliation keep your thoughts to yourself. Jesus tells us, "**He loves what He sees within you.**" (T.13.V.9.6) (ACIM OE T.12.V.42) In every attack thought you have, He sees only your call for love. Nothing is beyond redemption. Nothing is outside the reach of the Atonement. He will transform it all; but if we hide it from Him, He cannot help us. He is not shocked by anything we bring to Him. He sees past the illusion.

In all our fears, dreams, and expectations, He hears our call for help and our longing for completion. Bring all your secret sins and hidden fears to Him for healing. **"He will exchange them for the final dream which God appointed as the end of dreams."** (W.PII.Q6.4.2) (This is the happy dream or the real world or true perception.) This comes when all guilt has been given over and when we bring all the blocks that hide our true Self to the Holy Spirit.

We are looking for what we already are in truth—the Christ. All we need to do is allow the obstacles to awakening to be removed by the Holy Spirit. **"Your part is simply to allow all obstacles that you have interposed between the Son and God the Father to be quietly removed forever."** (W.189.8.3)

What is the Christ? You are. I am. Our only purpose here is to heal so we can remember what we are. We never hate our brother for what he does to us, but we hate ourselves for what we do to him. And what we do to him is that we dump our self-hate and self-attack on him and when we

do we see him as a reflection of what we are holding in the mind. Now we are called to take back our projections, and allow them to be healed so we can be freed from the prison we have made.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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