

A Course in Miracles – Lesson 170

There is no cruelty in God and none in me.

1. No-one attacks without intent to hurt. This can have no exception. When you think that you attack in self defence, you mean that to be cruel is protection; you are safe because of cruelty. You mean that you believe to hurt another brings you freedom. And you mean that to attack is to exchange the state in which you are for something better, safer, more secure from dangerous invasion and from fear.
2. How thoroughly insane is the idea that to defend from fear is to attack! For here is fear begot and fed with blood, to make it grow and swell and rage. And thus is fear protected, not escaped. Today we learn a lesson which can save you more delay and needless misery than you can possibly imagine. It is this:
 3. *You make what you defend against, and by
Your own defence against it is it real
And inescapable. Lay down your arms,
And only then do you perceive it false.*
4. It seems to be the enemy without that you attack. Yet your defence sets up an enemy within; an alien thought at war with you, depriving you of peace, splitting your mind into two camps which seem wholly irreconcilable. For love now has an enemy, an opposite; and fear, the alien, now needs your defence against the threat of what you really are.
5. If you consider carefully the means by which your fancied self-defense proceeds on its imagined way, you will perceive the premises on which the idea stands. First, it is obvious ideas must leave their source. For it is you who make attack, and must have first conceived of it. Yet you attack outside yourself, and separate your mind from him who is to be attacked, with perfect faith the split you made is real.
6. Next are the attributes of love bestowed upon its enemy. For fear becomes your safety and protector of your peace, to which you turn for solace and escape from doubts about your strength and hope of rest in dreamless quiet. And as love is shorn of what belongs to it and it alone, love is endowed with attributes of fear. For love would ask you lay down all defence as merely foolish. And your arms indeed would crumble into dust. For such they are.
7. With love as enemy must cruelty become a god, and gods demand that those who worship them obey their dictates, and refuse to question them. Harsh punishment is meted out relentlessly to those who ask if the demands are sensible or even sane. It is their enemies who are unreasonable and insane, while they are always merciful and just.
8. Today we look upon this cruel god dispassionately. And we note that though his lips are smeared with blood and fire seems to flame from him, he is but made of stone. He can do nothing. We need not defy his power. He has none. And those who see in him their safety have no guardian, no strength to call upon in danger, and no mighty warrior to fight for them.
9. This moment can be terrible. But it can also be the time of your release from abject slavery. You make a choice, standing before this idol, seeing him exactly as he is. Will you restore to love what you have sought to wrest from it, and lay before this mindless piece of stone?

Or will you make another idol to replace it? For the god of cruelty takes many forms. Another can be found.

10. Yet do not think that fear is the escape from fear. Let us remember what the course has stressed about the obstacles to peace. The final one, the hardest to believe is nothing, and a seeming obstacle with the appearance of a solid block, impenetrable, fearful and beyond surmounting, is the fear of God Himself. Here is the basic premise which enthrones the thought of fear as god. For fear is loved by those who worship it, and love appears to be invested now with cruelty.
11. Where does the totally insane belief in gods of vengeance come from? Love has not confused its attributes with those of fear. Yet must the worshippers of fear perceive their own confusion in fear's enemy; its cruelty as now a part of love. And what becomes more fearful than the heart of Love Itself? The blood appears to be upon His Lips; the fire comes from Him. And He is terrible above all else, cruel beyond conception, striking down all who acknowledge Him to be their God.
12. The choice you make today is certain. For you look for the last time upon this bit of carven stone you made, and call it god no longer. You have reached this place before, but you have chosen that this cruel god remain with you in still another form. And so the fear of God returned with you. This time you leave it here. And you return to a new world unburdened by its weight; beheld not in its sightless eyes, but in the vision that your choice restored to you.
13. Now do your eyes belong to Christ, and He looks through them. Now your voice belongs to God, and echoes His. And now your heart remains at peace forever. You have chosen Him in place of idols, and your attributes, given by your Creator, are restored to you at last. The Call of God is heard and answered. Now has fear made way for love, as God Himself replaces cruelty.

14. Father, we are like You. No cruelty abides in us for there is none in You. Your peace is ours. And we bless the world with what we have received from You alone. We choose again and make our choice for all our brothers, knowing they are one with us. We bring them Your salvation as we have received it now. And we give thanks for them who render us complete. In them we see Your glory, and in them we find our peace. Holy are we because Your holiness has set us free. And we give thanks. Amen.