

SUMMARY: MOSES AND ME

(Exodus 3:1-15)

Some Jewish scholars point to the absence of a genealogical record of Israel's 430 years in Egypt: how we have lists describing the generations from Adam all the way to the children of Jacob but then nothing until after the Exodus. It's suggested, that's because it was during their time in Egypt that God's covenanted people forgot who they were. ...*they'd lost their identity!*

And who could blame them? 430 years is a long time – that's virtually our settler history of Canadaⁱ since Samuel De Champlain established his fort in 1608 on what became Quebec City. And so, living totally within the Egyptian context for all those years, subject to every Egyptian influence, of course they were going to lose much of their sense of identity. But then Moses appeared and the people were set free to own again who they actually were.

God providing an Egyptian womb-like experience to grow a newly conceived Israel from the tiny 70-person Jacob-embryo that they were to the fully formed fetus of some 2-3 million that they became 430 years later, ready for Moses to facilitate their birth – as he did through the breaking waters of the Red Sea. And so a nation was born!

That is how the people of Israel have for millennia owned their genesis! Literal fundamentalists have and still argue that that's exactly what happened and they find archaeological evidence to support them. Revisionist scholars and historians argue for a more symbolic or metaphorical application *believing this to be an inspiring [national myth](#) narrative with little historical value*. Whatever it is, all agree on how profoundly formative and influential this piece of scripture is and always will beⁱⁱ.

So what are we to make of this powerful passage? What is all this saying to us? It's true that Israel is described as a chosen people! But it's as true that their 'chosenness' was not simply for status, but for a very particular purpose! And as Christ-followers, that is most profoundly STILL what we are! God is still wanting to have communities who know who and what God chooses to reveal: that God is intimately love/life/healing/hope, as opposed to some hard remote deity of judgmental exclusion. And then for all who come to know that, to come also to live out that reality as God's witnesses/reflectors that others may come to know how valued and beloved they and ALL OF EVERYTHING – actually is!

But what we seem to do best - is forget! Why would we not want to hold on to that beautiful truth with all we can, embrace it, live and share it? Why kick against that? I don't know, but that is why we are here! That is why there is a 'chosen' people – chosen to bring creation back to that realization! ***That is what the whole Person and Event of Jesus Christ has restored for us to know and to be!*** What I'm suggesting is that as we allow ourselves to go there, so we are able to identify with each one of this story's dynamics, each presenting us with its own lesson and challenge.

Which most resonates with you? ...perhaps it's that Egyptian culture? They who at first were so warmly hospitable and welcoming of Joseph and his family - *this group of needy and deeply grateful foreigners* - but then, as Israel became more self-sufficient, so they came to feel increasingly threatened by them, and so they tried to hurt them, enslaved them - stop their growth.

That terrifies me! Because I suspect that there ARE those currently in my world that I am somehow intimidated by, and so instead of nurturing and blessing their growth and spirituality I may be choosing – albeit subconsciously - to get in their way! I once heard a radio preacher stress how the main reason for a Christ-follower to have a husband/wife/partner, or even to develop friendships, is not just to satisfy ourselves but to become the context that allows for the fullest and best development of the other’s potential; it’s for them to become better/more of themselves as a result of our presence in their lives, as opposed to our keeping them small in order to feed ourselves and our insecure egos! *Could that at times be what we do to our loved ones? How about to people who are different to us? People of other racial or religious groups? People of different sexual orientation? Do we really think that it’s by pushing others down that we can better preserve ourselves, puff ourselves up?*

And then there’s all those generations of Israel in Egypt, growing to become a great multimillion throng in the course of those 430 years - people who had become so used to their Egyptian context that they had virtually all but forgotten who they actually were! HAVE WE FORGOTTEN WHO WE ARE? *It’s like we ARE among those slowly conforming ourselves to the standards and patterns of whatever we are exposed! People who come to believe that our reasonably comfortable survival within the daily routine of Egyptian slavery is actually all there is and that it is enough! I’m not too sure how happy they were when Moses arrived to shake their world by reminding them of how they were meant for so much more!*

We need to ask ourselves how settled, how capitulated/resigned we are to just whatever we’ve come to believe of ourselves and of what all this is actually ‘all about?’

...and then there is Moses himself – he who was called not just to be looking after himself but to focused on making God’s difference in the lives of others! He had probably been quite happy with his life as a desert nomad, one of Jethro, his father-in-law’s herdsmen... *But when God broke into his life that all changed! Sensitized to the suffering of the enslaved, he became compelled/charged with a whole new purpose! ...and ultimately, those people were set free!!!*

We are called to align ourselves with what he did! We do so by choosing also to face and overcome our fear of whatever complacent inertia is stopping others from knowing and living into who and what they actually are. We called uncompromisingly to challenge the lies! To speak truth to power - whatever the consequences - as we re-embrace our roles in the release of all of God’s people from their spiritual anonymity and bondage! Our work is to be about helping others to face the fear, the cynicism, the greed, the clawing consumerism, all of what is allowed to trap and bind – and to point them instead towards glimpsing and living into the reality of whom and what they really, truly are!

We are all created in God’s image – reflectors of the most sacred presence! We come most to be alive as we realize and live into that! In a recent blogⁱⁱⁱ Richard Rohr quotes Meister Eckhart describing this by using the image of a mirror and a reflection. It accurately describes this absurd impulse that haunts us all.

Imagine you’re standing before a full-length mirror, and imagine the image of you is conscious, that it can think. And this image of you has been through a lot of therapy; it’s taken a lot of courses on being an insightful image.

And it has come to a point in which it informs you that it doesn't need you.

You say to the image of you, "Well, you know, this is going to be rough, really, since you're an image of me" "No," the image says, I've worked on this; I've come to this point." And so, gently to help the image out, you step halfway off the side of the mirror; and half the image disappears. The image has a panic attack and goes back into therapy and says to the therapist, "I'm not real! I'm not real! I was working on my affirmations. I bolstered up my confidence, but I don't know where I went!"

Now, the image was real, but the image wasn't real in the way that it thought it was real. It was real, but not real without you. It was real only as an image of you.

Eckhart says, "The image owes no allegiances to anything except that of which it is the image." . . .

There is nothing that has the authority to say what it is except that of which it is the image.

And so it is with us, Eckhart says, that we are the image of God. Without God, we are nothing, absolutely nothing. In being the image of God, we owe no allegiances to anything but the Infinite Love in whose image we are made. And the idolatry of diversions of the heart where we wander off into cul-de-sacs with the imagined authority of anything less or other than Infinite Love to name who we are: this is the problem.

Dear God, we confess how easily we allow our circumstances to dominate and overwhelm our perspective of what is most true. Thank you for reminding us, in Jesus Christ, of what is most real. But thank you too that, more than just reminding us, you set us free to know who and what we actually are as we are in Him.

Thank you for how you help us to see, and to be, and to do what is most real in the heavenly freedom of your SHALOM come on earth as it is in heaven. We pray for all those who have lost sight of that. We pray now for people whose circumstances, spiritually, physically, are just so overwhelming: those facing the effects of Hurricane Laura, the seasonal wildfires, this awful Covid-19 pandemic, racial – and every other kind of injustice

In your mercy, Dear God, hear our prayers...

In Jesus' Name

Amen

Rev Robin Jacobson

ⁱ Jean Cartier believed to have named Canada as such in 1540 – 480 years ago, 68 years before Samuel DE Champlain establishment of a fort in present day Quebec City in 1608. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada/read-online/canadas-history.html>

ⁱⁱ *What's deeply tragic, though, is how national Zionist ideology has perverted what is actually SUCH a beautiful and poetic template for the liberation of all humanity to become grounds for the fierce and bloody conflict over who own rights to geographic territory that we see playing out today. **We continue to pray for the peace of all the people of Jerusalem and the Middle East'***

ⁱⁱⁱ From The Center for Action And Contemplation Daily devotions, August 6, 2020