



SIEBENQUELL

A Path to the other side of the wilderness

Spirituality for Adventurers 1



Exodus 3

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here am I." Then he said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

This text is known as a vocation story, which it is. But at the same time, it is also a story about choosing a path of adventure.

We need to look at the context of the story. According to Exodus, there were three stages in the life of Moses: He spent 40 years in Egypt. He resided 40 years in Midian. He spent 40 years on the path of liberation.

This text places us at the juncture where stage two moves into stage three. Thus, we have here a story that shows us paths that lead out of the middle years into the years of maturity. We are dealing with a story of maturation. And in this story, three borders are shown to us, which we must cross if we wish to reach the goal of life.

1. To the west side of the wilderness.

The first border is between Midian and the burning bush. In the text it is stated that Moses goes to the west side of the wilderness. In other words, he leaves home base. Midian is the place, where Moses re-discovered the familiar after having lost all that was familiar after the flight from Egypt. Here he has built up a new life. Here is the place where everything is now comfortable, well ordered and in place. .

We know the place, too, personally as well as communally. We know the places that mean home to us, places where we have built up life and where we know our way around. Recall the painful experiences of having to dissolve our homes, places of work or living conditions after having invested so much time and energy into them so that life could flourish there. It cost us something to come and to build up a life here.

Like Moses, these places mean a great deal to us. Like him, we know our responsibilities, our role and our place in life in these places. In Midian there are many things that bind Moses to the place, that hold him back. A wife and children, family ties, his means to make a living and security mean a lot to him, for he came to this land, just as we came to the places of our first foundations, namely, without a thing.

The question remains: What moves Moses to move over the border? What will move us? For here we stand before the first of three borders.

The answer is plain, if not simple. On the other side of this border awaits an experience of God. What moves Moses across this border is a deep, intact yearning for more life. He has a lot, but nevertheless, he yearns for more, for something different.

But in this new world, the rules of the game change. Take off your shoes! Why? Because this changes the way we move and behave. When we walk barefoot, we walk more slowly. When we go barefoot, we step more carefully, because now we are also vulnerable. We walk more attentively and look carefully where we tread. We do not trample our way through life with the same indifference and inattentiveness that people wearing shoes can allow themselves. This is an image of growing reverence for life and for the mystery of God. And it is an image of the culture of adventurers. But we cannot get here and we cannot have this experience, if we stay at home. It is more comfortable there, but we will not experience there the surprising life of our God.

To be continued.

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