

Forgiving the Serpent
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Serpent said to Eve: Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat fruits from the trees of the garden? [...] Serpent said: Die? No, you'll not die. God is playing games with you. The truth is that God knows the day you eat the fruit from that tree you will awaken something powerful in you and become like Him: possessing knowledge of both good and evil. (Genesis 3:2, 4-5)

"Feeling the need to be busy all of the time is a trauma response and fear-based distraction from what you'd be forced to feel, if you slowed down." - Author Unknown

September 2-6th I was "away" on Virtual Retreat with the Fire & Water leadership program. Even though much of it was on Zoom, it was a deepening and growing experience for all of us. One of the things that I came away with, from my own reflection and sharing, is the awareness that God has been trying to ask me three questions. I'm going to share them with you and hold a moment of silent reflection between each question:

First, God asked me, "Why are you running?"

[pause]

Second, God asked, "Where are you running to?"

[pause]

Third, God asked, "What are you running from?"

[pause]

My initial response to all three questions was, "I don't know." Actually, for a fraction of second, I almost went into denial with "I'm not run...Oh..." That's how I knew the question came from the Divine, there was literally no way I could deny it. I didn't even KNOW I was running. But God did. And when I slowed down JUST enough to let the infinite of God come into my consciousness, that's when the first question came in, "Why are you running?"

The question wasn't judgmental, or shaming, or blaming – it was tender, loving, honest, and most importantly – curious. God assumed nothing, knowing that I needed to ponder through it for myself.

Whatever answers or emotions came up in you as you heard and reflected on those questions – I invite you to spend sometime alone this week, reflecting further on what you felt and heard.

In reading our scripture passage from Genesis this week, God invited me into a new perspective by asking me, "Why do humans lash out at Eve, when it's the serpent your actually angry at?"

At first my response was, "I don't know." Actually, for a fraction of second, I almost went into denial with "I'm not angry at...Oh..." That's how I knew the question came from the Divine, there was literally no way I could deny it. I wasn't aware that I am angry at the serpent. But God knew. And then God provided a new perspective:

"My beloved human creations, you've cast your shame, blame, and judgement-filled anger on Eve, for a thousand years, because you feel it's futile to be angry at the Serpent, because "I created the serpent to be crafty." If you acknowledge your anger of the serpent, which I created, than you will finally come to the conclusion that you are actually angry with Me. And that terrifies you most of all."

If we shift our blame from Eve, to the serpent, to God we know that we will have to stop running, have to confront the unknown, the shades of gray; as we cannot provide a sound-bite reason to blame God, like we have Eve (she was just a silly, stupid female) or like we have the serpent (well it was made to be crafty and cunning, it can't help being itself.)

Why did you even create temptation in the Garden of Eden, God? For

that matter, why did you create a “crafty animal” and put it around your naive human creations?

Friends – there are no answers for those questions. At least not that God is providing. Or, rather, I should say that the answers won't satisfy us because we are deeply hung up on the “truth” of viewing the world in black and white; good and evil.

The death that God was referring to, when God warned the humans not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the death of our ability to be comfortable in the unknown, in the Mystery that is God and Creation. “Knowledge of good and evil” translates to “processing information in black and white, and only being able to see the world in black and white.”

It isn't that the humans Adam and Eve knew everything about the Universe before that ate from the Tree of knowledge, rather they were comfortable living in the “not knowing,” they were content reveling in the vast mystery of God and Creation.

This season of COVID-19 is throwing us HARD up against the reality that we are still hung up on seeing God, the World, all of Creation from a stark black/white lens. The infinite shades of gray are terrifying us. It's those shades of gray from which we have been and are still running.

When we are willing to stop running, and allow God to guide us on a slow, leisurely, stroll through the infinite shades of gray of Creation, we start to metabolize the knowledge of good and evil out of our system. It is then that God begins to feed us the fruit of the Tree of Life, a tiny bit at a time, the fruit that brings Wisdom. The fruit that can lead us back to our God-Created ability to see the Glory of the quantum-connected Universe.

With Wisdom moving through our veins, we will be able to release our need to shame, blame, and pass judgement on one another; on ourselves; on Eve; on the serpent; and even on God. It is through Wisdom that we will begin to find healing for our collective and individual trauma.

"Feeling the need to be busy all of the time is a trauma response and fear-based distraction from what [we'd] be forced to feel, if [we] slowed down."

It's time to stop running, Beloved in Christ. It's time to feel and it's time to heal. Amen.