

The Parable of the Camel Trader

February 2009

Beloved one, I would share with you a story. In your holy Scriptures it would be called a parable; it is a story. Once upon a time, as you would understand time to be, a little boy was born. And this little boy was born into a family that raised animals. They had sheep, they had goats, and they had camels. The father of the family carried on what had been, within the generational lineage, the family business of raising, breeding, and trading camels.

The family was fairly well off, because camels could demand a good price. The family was on a certain caravan route that went to a very busy seaport, and so there was much trade that brought the father much profit.

Over the years, as the father grew older, the family business passed to this little boy, who was now a grown man, and because he was the oldest of the family, he was chosen to carry on the family business of the camel raising, breeding, and trading. It was a good business that he knew. From the very beginning, he saw how it provided for the family, and more than that, he had a fondness for the animals.

He enjoyed being with the sheep. He enjoyed being with the goats. He saw how life was an exchange: the sheep would give the wool for the garment making, and the goats gave their milk and sometimes their meat. The sheep also gave of their meat, and the camels brought in a good price when the caravans came by and needed new camels, and sometimes they even needed more camels to carry the burdens of the trade that they were taking to and from the seaport.

As a young boy he had spent most of his days with the animals to the place where he had a common language with them, an instinctive language. There was much that he shared on a level that went deeper than just the words, and there was great love.

As he became a man and took over the family business, he took to himself a wife and began a family of his own, and the camel trade proved for them a good livelihood, and he felt very good about being able to provide for his family.

But as is the way of the world, the caravans found a new route to a new seaport, and the new seaport was busier than the old one. And so the caravans started going a new route, not where he was raising his camels, where his family had lived for many generations, and so the business and the golden coins dwindled.

Misc

He wondered, and he cursed the new seaport and the new business and the ones who would be attracted to the new seaport. After all, in his thinking, what was wrong with the old seaport? What was wrong with the old trade route that went by his village? He became very bitter; so bitter that his friends did not want to be around him. His brothers and sisters, who were raising their own families nearby, did not want to be with him.

He was very unhappy, so he reached a decision that he would have to take a group of his camels across land to find the new route of the caravans and set up a new business somewhere else. So he said to his family, "I will set out to see where the new route is and I will see how the trade is, and when I have established a place, I will send for you."

None of his family was happy about this, because they liked living in the village they had known all their lives, and where the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather and all the family members, including the cousins and aunts and uncles, had always lived.

So he set out with a group of his camels to see where the new trade route was and to see how business would be. Along the way one evening during the nighttime, robbers came and stole all but three of his camels, so he was left with only three. He became even more embittered. Why had this happened to him? Life had been good up to a certain point. Why had things changed?

He railed against his God, and he railed against the caravans that had changed their route, and he railed against the new seaport, and most of all he railed against the robbers, the thieves who were very good at setting upon a solitary person traveling alone. That is why the caravans traveled in caravans, as protection.

He went on with his three camels to the seaport to have a look at it to see what he could do to set up a new business there, but he found that the land around the seaport was not to his liking. It was too busy, and too many people were living on the outskirts of the seaport, and they were as bad as the robbers on the way. He did not feel happy being there.

His idea had been to set up a new place where he would breed more camels and establish a new business, but he knew that he was not going to be happy there, and it was not a place where he wanted to bring his family. The more he thought about his family and he thought about his village, he knew that he did not want to be in the area of the new seaport.

One evening it came to him that what was most important was his family, the friendships that he had turned his back on, the happiness that he had felt with the

Misc

sheep, with the goats, and with raising of the camels, the simplicity of life; not the business of the seaport; not the unscrupulous way that they had dealt with him. He had sold two of his camels for much less than what they were worth, and he was left with one old camel. She was very old. That is why no one wanted to buy her. She was too old for breeding, and she was too old to do much heavy work. She was his companion.

So he spoke to this camel and he said, "Let us return unto the village. I see now that what I was looking at, what I was chasing after, is not where my treasure lies, but it is with my family and with the village and the villagers that I have known." And with that, his heart opened; the heart that had been closed, tightly armored for a long time as he saw his camel trade dwindling and the caravans no longer coming near his place.

And so with this one very old camel that had been his friend for many, many years and had bred for him many small young camels that he then sold for a good price, with his very old friend he traveled back to the village. He did not know what to expect, because when he had left, everyone was happy to see him go.

But a most miraculous thing happened. His heart had opened. He was in joy with the stars of the night, with the sun in the daytime, with the grass, the fields, the birds. Every little bit of life in every different form he began to see in a new light.

The camel, his companion from the time he was a little boy, spoke to him and pointed out to him the treasures of life itself. And because he had the communion with the camel, his old friend, when he arrived at the village there was a feeling around him that was new, a feeling of appreciation of all that Is.

He did not care if others did not speak to him, but he loved them. And so, of course, they spoke to him, because they could see that there was a smile upon his face, and they welcomed him home. The family was very happy to have him back home again, and he found that there was enough of the goat milk, of the meat, of the wool, and he had left a few of the camels at home, enough that he could start a new breeding program with them, and he gave camels to the rest of the village.

He had come through generational thinking into the family business. He had broken with the family, turned his back, cursed everything that had been near and dear to him, and left. He had gone afar, had everything taken from him except for the old, old camel that was his dear friend, and everything changed for him.

So when he returned to the village, he was no longer the bitter man who had left. He went on to father some more children who loved him dearly. He had great-

Misc

grandchildren who loved him and villagers who came and spoke to him about, "What is it like out beyond the village?" And he would say, "It is a grand adventure, and if you want to go, go. But if you have everything that is near and dear and important to you right here, then you do not have to travel abroad to find happiness."

So some of them, being adventuresome, set out on their own. But most of them stayed in the village and are there yet to this day, raising their camels and their sheep and their goats and being very happy in the sunshine and in the rain, celebrating the simplicity of life.

Now, if you want to draw from that story any parallels into this day and time, you are free to draw your own conclusions.

Oftentimes two thousand years ago, I would sit with you and I would tell very simple stories. Very little was written down in those days. It was not as you had a certain notebook or computer Blackberry to take with you. You did not even have the papyrus to write on, usually, because you were simple folk.

It was not until much later that my stories were written down; however, they were simple enough, as this one is, that ones remembered them and passed them down generation to generation until finally someone decided they would write them down and they ended up in your holy collection of biblos, the Bible. And so you have in this evening the parable of the camel trader, not unlike your investment traders of this day.

Now, beloved one, remember first, foremost, and last, how beloved you are; how greatly I love each and every one of you; how always I travel with you, I laugh with you, I joke with you; I love you; I support you. Allow yourself always to look upon the glass that is half full as opposed to half empty, and to count, simple as it sounds, your blessings, for this is a good life. Beloved one, I am in love with you.

So be it.