

Luke 9:51-62

In Hasidic Jewish Tradition there is a story - A story or an illustration which disturbs me ..... this story disturbs me in the same way that the 'reading-just-read' threatens to disturb me .....

The story goes like this.....

'Imagine a place with an vast number of doors.

In front of every door the visitor finds a treasure.

Satisfied, he feels no urge to continue.

Yet, at the end of the hallway, the King is waiting to receive those among his subjects who think of **HIM** rather than of **the treasure**.

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What do you think of this story??

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I'll tell you why it disturbs me .....but first the passage .....

The passage begins Luke's 'Journey narrative'. As Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem - where his time to be taken up to heaven would occur (this is Luke's euphemism or code for Jesus' Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension .....

BUT when Jesus turned for Jerusalem ..... what did his disciples expect? What might the first reader have thought?

...They would not .....could not..... have predicted -  
passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension .....

The disciples, no doubt, had a sense that the ministry of Jesus was moving up a gear ..... to Jerusalem! The capital ..... this is definitely moving up a gear. .... Yet it must be said Jesus was already moving at speed .....

Sermon on Mt, a storm calmed, a dead girl raised, a crowd fed, the transfiguration .... meeting of Moses & Elijah ..... He has been impressive .....the disciples are sure that something is afoot ....  
.... so when he heads to Jerusalem ..... they are expectant .....  
....but expectant for what sort of Kingdom?

Immediately, as the Journey begins, we see something of the shape of this Kingdom .....

it will be a kingdom of Non-violence! (Luke 9:51-56) - The disciples call for judgement on the wicked .... But Jesus says, No! Rather there is mercy and patience ..... Perhaps the disciples think that Jesus is just biding his time and that vengeance will come later .... In fact, the Samaritan's will have their day with Jesus but it will be 'in praise' ('The Good Samaritan') and ultimately in their inclusion into the new expanded people of God - Jew - Samaritan - and gentile ..... the new kingdom of Jesus will be about welcome and inclusion - not violence and domination - the Samaritan will be praised. The Samaritans will be welcomed!! There will be fire but it will be no ordinary fire, rather 'the fire of the spirit of welcome and inclusion' will fall upon them! (Acts 8)

So far so good ..... but let me return to the hallway of the many doors - where the king is at the end ..... hoping that you will not get sidetracked by lesser treasures!

Perhaps you have already seen a connection between the hallway and the three followers .....

Following Jesus might for some seem to be a bit like the Hallway ..... Some may think ....On the Hallway journey of life ....you may be distracted by the treasures..... - and if you count these treasures above the treasure of seeing the King **then you will fail!**

Could Jesus concur to this Hallway idea? OK - He is encouraging perseverance and individual faith .... but must we simply contain Jesus to the Hallway of doors - Is he really saying the disciplined and single mindedness will triumph & the weak will stumble and fail!

Is it so simple? - **Steel yourself** .....It will be harder than you could imagine ....9:57 - 58 .... when doorways hold no treasure and only suffering .....you will need to remember the prize.....

Is it so simple? - **Steel yourself** ..... **9:59-60** ....the treasures of the settled life are attractive .....( this follower may have been recently bereaved .... but more likely the man is looking forward to fulfilling a responsibility over time ..... and in so doing all who halt at the doorway treasure of the settled life may miss out ....family and inheritance, and the like, can easily halt you at an early door .....No - steel yourself lest you fail to attain the prize of the final doorway!

Is it so simple? - **Steel yourself** ..... 9:61-62 - Seize the day .... a moment's hesitation can lead to a lifetime of distraction .....

Yes as followers - Perseverance is needed - but the long Hallway of the Hasitic tradition is not the agony path Jesus would have us on!

1. He will not ask us to go where he would not go!....(Incarnation) Jesus the King has come to us and walks the path of suffering and the many doorways with us - he is a companion on the way .... not a prize at the end! Indeed - he strengthens the faint hearted and supports the weak!! He will not allow temptations of any doorway to overwhelm us! (1 Cor.10:13 - God is faithful - he will not allow us to be separated from God Romans 8 - we in Christ have an inheritance that can not be lost!! 1 Peter 1:3-5

2. His going to Jerusalem will save and hold and gift us - to present us to the King of the final doorway - But know assuredly now that our lives are already hidden with Christ in Heaven. Jesus had his hand on the plough, He headed to the cross, for the joy set before Him - He endured the cross for us! - We look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12)
3. His going will open a great spring of love, the indwelling of the Spirit (2 Cor.3:17) - which will overflow from follower to those within their circles - be they family, friends or strangers. (This is clearly seen in the example of 1 Tim 5:8 - love family not by obligation grudgingly - but out of gratitude for the deep love of the King whose welcome is overwhelming)

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The analogy is of the Hasitic Hallways is not our Christian reality! In our passage it is not recorded that these would be followers turned back .....if they followed, we can be sure that they had Jesus as a travelling companion. If we have like concerns as these three followers ..... then know that the king has stepped from his door ..... and has met us in our distress.....

Christ meets us in our frailties .... and carries us forward ....

YES, there are many challenges in the following of Jesus ....Perseverance is needed .... but it is 'challenge with love' and it is 'challenge and love with forgiveness' and with that 'challenge and love and forgiveness' there is freedom!

What is the kingdom like? Non-violent -YES & it is Welcoming. The King says follow - He has stepped from his door and meets us in the hallway of our lives ..... meets us at the doors of that hallway - .....with comfort if at the door there be hardship's ....and if there be a treasure - his peace & love is the treasure that satisfies - a treasure to surpass all the treasures of this world!

(2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

With Christ as a companion ..... freedom is ours!