

Did Jesus Evolve?



Midrash on Matthew

I find it fascinating how the writer of Matthew's gospel juxtaposes this purity teaching of Jesus with the story of a gentile woman who pleads with Jesus to heal her daughter. Right after a teaching about how we are defiled, not by what goes *into* our mouth, but rather by what comes out, Jesus is portrayed speaking some pretty nasty words—at least my contemporary standards. The vulnerable woman makes a direct request for the healing of her daughter and by today's standards, Jesus' words defile both him and the woman.

“15:26 He answered, “It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.”

They convey a heart that extends compassion only as far as my tribe. On the moral line of intelligence, this conveys an ethnocentric value system (G_d's graces extend only as far as my family, tribe, religion, etc.). As early as the story of Jonah, this narrow-mindedness was being challenged, with the reluctant Jonah called to extend mercy to the “evil” Ninevites. What's going on here?

One possibility is that this reflects Matthew's own position and not that of Jesus. Jesus doesn't really believe that

Gentiles are as impure as dogs, or that G_d's concern only extends to the Jews, but Matthew might. Jesus' action of relenting because of the woman's witty reply, shows, in the mind of Matthew, just how magnanimous Jesus was to be bothered by such a woman. Not a flattering portrait of the evangelist, but it does at least let Jesus off the hook.

Another possibility is that Jesus evolved. Much of the tap-dancing around Jesus' initial attitude toward this woman and his daughter, reflects an anxiety about Jesus being all-too-human. But if Source is incarnate in humans and if Jesus is truly human, then it only makes sense that we would get a glimpse into Jesus' own moral evolution. It seems reasonable to assume that Jesus own moral development would reflect the general development of moral intelligence from our locus of concern being ego-centric (just *me*), to ethnocentric (just *us*, as in, my family, tribe, religion), to worldcentric (all of us), to cosmo-centric (all that is). Jesus is the kind of human being who is open enough to be confronted by his limited biases and be changed. And it is not insignificant that it is a woman (who in 1st century Mediterranean culture had no right to be approaching and speaking so directly to a man) who changes Jesus' mind. To follow Jesus is be one who is open to new and higher wisdom—discovered precisely in those the dominant culture has written off.

Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

15:10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand:

15:11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles."

15:12 Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?"

15:13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

15:14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit."

15:15 But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us."

15:16 Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding?

15:17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?

15:18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.

15:19 For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.

15:20 These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

15:21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

15:22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."

15:23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."

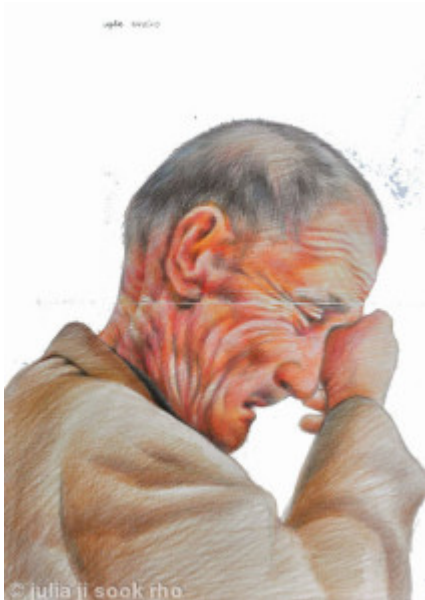
15:24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

15:25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 15:26 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

15:27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

15:28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Midrash on Genesis 45:1-15



45:1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

45:2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it.

45:3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

45:5 And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

45:6 For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.

45:7 God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

45:8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

45:9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.

45:10 You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have.

45:11 I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.

45:12 And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you.

45:13 You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here."

45:14 Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck.

45:15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.



Andrey Soldatenko

What first strikes me about this passage is Joseph's tears. In response to his brother's egregious act against him so many years earlier, he actually softens. Most humans, okay, most men, okay, I, seem to harden. My heart grows bitter. Well, actually, I direct my heart to grow bitter. I have the freedom to choose bitterness or choose open-heartedness. To choose the latter is to feel the pain, to let tears flow with the hurt. It is our tears that keep the heart cleansed and soft.

Do you notice that woman are more likely than men to respond to betrayals like this one with tears and not bitterness? Am I idealizing women here? They seem more likely to be broken than want to break others. Joseph could have really put the screws to his brothers. He had the power. He was a "lord" of Egypt now, and he sure as hell could have lorded it over these jerks. This could have been the moment he had been waiting for all his life. Payback time, baby. But he weeps on his brother's neck. He's just so damned happy to see his brothers again, and to know his father is still alive. My heart opens.

He comes by it honestly. His uncle Esau possessed such a heart, weeping on his betraying brother (Jacob's) neck on the occasion of their reunion. It would be a worthwhile exercise to trace the lineage of weeping man in the Bible, ending with him who wept over the city of peace and his friend Lazarus.

Most men's lineage, dating back thousands of years is not that of the weeping heart, but of the hardened heart. Our ancestral field matters. We are in this field, and the field is in us, for good or evil. Who are the softhearted men in your lineage? And the hardhearted ones? Can you imagine your own life as being in large measure about the redemption of the hardhearted ones, (patriarchal domination system) through open-hearted, neck-weeping love? This redemptive offering of our own lives—the refusal to shape the future based on the bitterness of a separated and disillusioned heart—may be the most immediate gesture of justice we can muster. If we are men, this is the legacy we can leave to our children and our children's children. We can help to cleanse, or redeem the field. In the words of Joseph, "God sent me to preserve life" (45:5).

I'm fortunate to have a father who has learned to allow tears. I remember visiting my daughter Sarah, who was two years old at the time, and living with her mother 2000 kms away from me. I would stay with my parents on the weekends of my visit. When it came time for me to part with Sarah, my father laid his head on my shoulder and wept at how hard it was for him to witness the sadness of the situation. I am blessed by his softheartedness.

Is it a stretch to imagine that there is something about our suffering that is part of a larger plan? This is how Joseph held his own suffering. He was destined, through his separation and suffering, to be a redemptive presence in the world. One can only imagine the long hours spent in contemplation and inquiry to arrive at this trans-personal, non-egoic, conclusion. One can only imagine how many dreams this dream interpreter must have deciphered as messages from G_d to get to the spaciousness of holding the betrayal of his brothers as part of a grander working out of the Wholeness on behalf of humanity. My hunch is that Jesus himself would have drawn upon the wisdom of his ancestor, Joseph, to create the

spaciousness in his own psyche to transform the violence of patriarchy into his own redemptive suffering.

Seeing as there are so various families buying online and likewise exploring the internet market place, it has get increasingly famous to purchase medications online. So the next question is where can you get information that is reliable. You can find useful data fleetly and conveniently by going online. The most common sexual problems in men are erectile malfunction and ejaculation disorders. A lot of doctors think about "[levitra cost](#)". Did learned something about "[buy levitra online usa](#)"? Other question we are going to is "[buy generic levitra online](#)". In effect, a medical reviews found that up to three quarters of folk on such drug experience side effects. Luckily, most cases of sexual dysfunction are treatable, so it is momentous to share your concerns with your partner and physician. Today, there are many options for men who suffer from erectile malfunction. Get emergency help if you have any of these signs of a side effect to this medication. Talk to your health care provider to see if it's sure to make the switch.