



The Moses Within Us

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The subject of the book of Exodus, internally, is the liberation of the spiritual by the coming of the Lord into the world. This was accomplished by great miracles; the ten plagues in Egypt, then the passing through the Red Sea while the Egyptians pursued, and afterwards by many temptations in the wilderness, where further miracles took place by which they were saved. If we reflect upon the account of the sons of Israel in Exodus we can understand all the states we have to go through to be brought into Heaven.

The opening chapter of Exodus describes first the state of the church when good played the leading part and there was a multiplication of the truths of faith. This is signified by the sons of Israel becoming very numerous while dwelling in Egypt. It then describes evils and falsities infesting those truths, which is signified by the Pharaoh, who knew not Joseph, afflicting the children of Israel with heavy burdens. This affliction grew heavier and more severe until at length the Lord raised up Moses to free the people of Israel from their bondage.

Pharaoh's daughter choosing the name Moses for the baby boy was of Divine Foresight and Providence, for his name sounds like the Hebrew verb meaning "to draw out, " and indeed Moses would later "draw" the children of Israel "out" of Egypt. Similarly, Moses represents the Divine Law or the Word, and Divine Truths serve to draw us out of bondage to falsities.

Moses represents the divine law or the divine truth which is both spiritual and natural. We can picture these two types of truth as being both above us and below us. The divine law above us, which is spiritual, is the influx of divine truth from the Lord. It is this spiritual divine truth which inflows into us from the Lord, with the hope and endeavor that we will be willing to receive it. On the other hand, the divine law below us, or natural truth, is the sense of the letter of the Word in its literal or written sense.

The sense of the letter of the Word, its natural sense needs to be taken up into our minds where it resides as memory-knowledges – essentially facts that we keep in our memory and which provide the basis for our thinking. These memory-knowledges are absolutely necessary for our spiritual growth and regeneration. As we read in *Arcana Coelestia* 6750:

Memory-knowledges are what they who are being regenerated must first learn, because they are a plane for the things of the understanding, and the understanding is the recipient of the truth of faith, and the truth of faith is the recipient of the good of charity. Hence it can be seen that memory-knowledge is the first plane when a person is being regenerated.
(AC 6750)¹

This is not only true for us, but was true for the Lord also when he was in the process of glorifying his Human. This was represented in Genesis by Abraham going down into Egypt because there was a famine in the land of Canaan. The famine signified a lack of memory knowledges or natural truths which were needed by the Lord for His Glorification. Egypt signified those memory knowledges. Abraham's journey there represented the Lord's acquisition of the necessary memory knowledges. This process was also signified by the infant Lord being brought into Egypt for protection from Herod who was seeking to kill him. Herod, like the Pharaoh of Moses' time, represents falsities trying to kill truths in their infancy. This was further represented by the sons of Israel traveling to Egypt to purchase grain because there was a famine in the land of Canaan, not knowing that it was their brother Joseph who had taken steps to prepare for a famine so that there would be food in Egypt. This working of Providence Joseph himself referred to when he said to his brothers:

“Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 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. God sent me before

¹ Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*. London: Swedenborg Society, 1995.

you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 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.

(Genesis 45:4-8) ²

The acquisition of memory knowledges, or truths from the sense of the letter of the Word, serves not only to feed us with truths which are necessary for our spiritual development, but also serves to protect us from falsity. However, it can also lead to our spiritual enslavement if we wrap our minds up in merely acquiring memory knowledges from the Word, without applying them in our lives and in our interactions with others. Remember that the sons of Israel grumbled several times against Moses leading them in the wilderness, and desired to go back to the “flesh pots” of Egypt, as they called them, even though that meant their slavery. Such can be the appeal of remaining content with only being fed by the teachings of the Word without practicing them.

The affection for memory knowledges is present with almost everyone. It is why children ask questions, and it is why we want to know and remember things. In regard to our regeneration, having an affection for the memory knowledges found in the sense of the letter of the Word is absolutely essential. This is the knowledge that we draw as it were from without, from the Word in its natural sense.

The influx of truth from the Lord, which is spiritual, flows down into our minds seeking a dwelling place there which corresponds with it. That dwelling place is our rational mind which is able to draw up the facts, or memory knowledges, stored up in our natural mind and reflect upon these – – if we choose to do so. Those literal or natural truths drawn from the sense of the letter of the written Word become the basis, containant, and support of the spiritual truths flowing into us from the Lord, as is indicated in the Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture 27.

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Moses then can represent that place within each of us where the spiritual Divine Truth flowing into us from the Lord dwells within its corresponding natural Divine Truth from the letter of the Word. And as the spiritual Divine Truth flowing into us from the Lord, as it were from above, and the natural literal sense of the Word, coming into us, as it were from below, are both from the Lord, then within each of us the Lord may dwell in what is His own within us. The story of Moses then is not a story of a historical leader of his people, as fascinating as that is, but spiritually understood, it is the story of the Lord's dwelling and working within us, thus of the Moses within each of us.

Suggested reading:

Exodus 1:8-11, 15-20, 22

Exodus 2:1-10

Emanuel Swedenborg, Arcana Coelestia §6750-6752