

REB TZIPI AND THE PROMISED LAND

I still remember so well the time when Reb TZiPi—who was then Vivien Radonsky—came to Gobind Sadan, our unique interfaith community outside New Delhi, and had an audience with our beloved teacher, Baba Virsa Singh. According to my diary, it was April 18, 1997. She had stopped by during her around-the-world tour; her next stop was to be Israel. The first thing that startled her was her encounter with Jesus. When she went to our “Jesus’ Place,” the garden where Jesus had appeared to Babaji with open arms, promising blessings for all who would come there, Jesus spoke to her, calling her his sister. To regard Jesus as her brother was a great revelation.

Then she went to Babaji, who immediately asked her, “What quality of Moses do you have most faith in?” She replied, “His perseverance.” Babaji observed, “This is the quality of all prophets. A prophet is one who undergoes all kinds of suffering for the sake of the people, and even in the midst of difficulties keeps thanking God. Moses helped the people, freeing them from slavery. He suffered for the people who had been tortured and whipped, but they were always dissatisfied and doubting. However, that never shook his faith in God. He lost faith in his people but not in God. They were trying to do business with God. But no one has done so much for his people as Moses. It was very extraordinary to give up everything in the world for his people with nothing but a staff in his hand.”

Then Babaji, who never learned to read and write but who knew so much about all the prophets, began narrating stories about Moses and noted that many of them are told not only in the Torah but also in the Holy Qur’an. He also cited examples of the difference between the prophets and the priests who run institutionalized religions in their name. For instance, he said, “A woman was very sick. Jesus blessed her on the Sabbath. The priests said, ‘You have broken the law of Moses.’ Jesus said, ‘Do you believe in a law inscribed on a stone or the one inscribed on the heart? If your goat falls into a well on the Sabbath will you not save her life?’ The priests then created a big fuss saying that he didn’t follow Moses’ law. But their intention was to limit his influence. Jesus himself said, ‘I don’t want to change any word of what has been written. I want to connect you with the word.’ People come under the influence of priests and forget what the prophets have said.”

After telling more stories about Moses, David, Jesus, and Prophet Muhammad, Babaji advised Vivien, “You are touring the world, but the whole Creation is inside you. It is good to see different cultures. But don’t think you will get enlightenment by traveling. Look inside. Don’t doubt God. Hold fast to Him. Love His message by loving the whole creation.”

This was Babaji’s mission—He always encouraged people to draw closer to God through their own prophet, and also to appreciate all other messengers of God. Vivien changed so much during her journey that when she returned to the United States, she began trying to get into a seminary to become a rabbi. At last she overcame all the hurdles and became a wonderful rabbi with her own unique style, supporting many people in their personal growth “outside the fence.” We don’t know how much inspiration she may have drawn from her visit to Gobind Sadan, “God’s House without walls,” but we dearly love her and are so glad to see her following the path of Moses, helping to free people from all that binds them, and guiding them toward the Promised Land.

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