

## A meditation

When did you first meet God?

I first met God when I was around 15 or 16. I was in a phase where as soon as I went to bed and the household went quiet, I began to be terrified. I was afraid of burglars, ghosts, demons thanks to Horror Movies that I had watched at a time where I wasn't mature enough. I used to lie awake wrapped up in my blankets and squashed to the furthest in my mind safest corner of my bed as far as possible from the edges of the mattress. I used to watch YouTube Videos until 4 or 5 in the morning until I was so tired that I didn't have the energy to be afraid anymore.

In one of these nights I got up to go to the bathroom. After I had gone to the toilette, I had looked myself in the mirror.

From inside of myself a question popped up: "What are you afraid of?"

I had said it out loud to myself whilst staring in my own eyes reflected in the mirror. Suddenly I was filled with a feeling. A feeling of peace, of silence, of safety, of God. I wasn't afraid anymore, because I had realized that I didn't have an answer to that question. I went back to bed and straight away fell into a deep sleep.

I interpret the Bible text about Moses who meets God in the burning bush as a type tutorial for how to meet God.

Moses at this time is a shepherd. He is doing this to help out his father in law. He spends a lot of time on his own in the desert. Being in solitude and doing favors for other people, are a gateway to God.

It is then that the burning bush sets in.

It couldn't have just been there. Before it receives any meaning, Moses has to notice it. He has to have enough curiosity to step forward and look carefully how this bush is burning, namely without turning to ash. A miracle to a certain extent does not exist without a receiver or a person to tell about it (a spectator).

Now that God has Moses attention, he speaks to him from inside the bush. Here Moses actions convey another step in how to meet God. He answers the call.

He says to God: "Here I am".

He acknowledges being called and simply answers that he is indeed here right now. Present and conscious.

God proceeds to ask him to take off his shoes as he is standing on holy ground. To me this is a metaphor for being humble, being oneself, being rooted and in contact with the earth, the place that bore us and keeps us.

After all this, Moses only just now realizes that it is God he is talking to and who is calling him. He then tries to hide his face. He is ashamed of his past. He doesn't feel worthy of God's attention.

This is also a part of faith. Doubt. The belief that one is inadequate for God's presence comes to us in times of trouble or depression. It is inevitable for us to feel this way, if one chooses the way of faith, the way of God. Doubt is a part of faith and it is part of meeting God.

God tells Moses that he can hear the cries of suffering from the Israelites trapped and enslaved in Egypt. God faces what is troubling him and is prepared to find a solution, so much so that he even promises the release and the salvation of the Israelites.

We too have to face suffering if we want to change the world or ourselves for the better. One has to see what it is, the bad, the dark, the violent to know what it is we need to change and even to figure out how this change needs to be realized.

Moses knows that the Israelites are suffering under Egyptian rule, because he witnessed it when he was there, but he still has to face it. He has to learn to hear the cries so that he learns what it is that might forever follow him in his dreams, fears and into his life. God wants to make him aware of these things.

The solution for God's suffering is Moses. And so, he tells him to set forth and free the Israelites from their captivity.

Moses' doubt and therefore his belief in his own inadequacy are still a topic/issue for him. He tells God that he can't be fit for this task. He doubts himself to be worthy of God's plan. (He even asks God if he is sure in what he is saying.)

But God is sure and so gives Moses the promise that he will be with him.

Moses is running out of excuses. He still attempts to weasel himself out of the task and situation at hand. He says that the Israelites might not believe that he was sent by God and therefore won't follow him through the desert toward the promised land.

God lifts all doubt whether from Moses or the at this time unaware Israelites with the sentence: "I am who I am... I am has sent me to you."

For me this sentence is the ultimate guideline for meeting God. It is "I am". It is just this moment. It is this now, this place, this being that enables us to meet God.

The question of when one has met God or even first met God implying that, yeah it happens all the time, can be quite daunting.

Suddenly our mind can be filled with sentences and misconceptions.

"I haven't met God. Not even once.

Does that mean he doesn't care about me?

Did I do something wrong?

Do I not have a job on this earth?

Am I maybe not worthy of a job or meaning?

Maybe God loves me more and that's why he doesn't want to stress me with his presence or his demands?

What I ask myself is, maybe you have experienced God but you just haven't called it or named it a "meeting with God".

Have you ever experienced moments of utter silence and awe?

Have you ever witnessed the miracle of childbirth? The miracle of sunsets? The miracle of friendship and forgiveness? The utter focus and flow whilst doing something you are so immersed in that you forget time, space and your name?

I believe everyone has if they look closely.

I believe people live these kind of moments multiple times.

I believe we meet God every day, if we listen carefully and patiently enough.