

The storyteller told me of a legend from the east that about a woman<sup>1</sup>, who told such fascinating stories that the king kept her alive to continue his entertainment. She always made him look forward to the next story. She was essentially a prisoner, and was able to put off her execution until the king finally pardoned her. As we discussed this amazing character, we pondered the need for creativity in our own lives, especially in response to our God, whose fundamental makeup includes that of Creator.

My thoughts went to my friend the artist, who, of all the people that I know, most demonstrates that constant level of creativity in her life. I think that this creative nature should apply to all of us. But we tend to think that only special people can maintain such intensity and productivity in her life.

The legendary woman story-teller used her creativity to save herself. Some artists mainly work to support themselves, but a true artist has the creativity flowing through them like the living water that the Teacher talked about. The artist was sometimes caught between exercising her artistic nature and making something that would sell and thus support herself. I had to counsel with her frequently to convince her to just be an artist in her own way and create what she wanted, not worrying about gain or recognition. I told her to do what she loved, out of love for their lives.

God does not just want us to be rule-keepers. He wants, even demands obedience, but only as it flows from a oneness with Him. He wants us to be a conduit that feeds others, and one that reflects God's Goodness and Glory. He wants us to follow him, not for personal gain, but because Goodness is integrated into our hearts. And He wants us to continually grow, expanding our souls as in the Teacher's idea of the new wineskins<sup>2</sup>. He wants us to continue to "become", and not be satisfied with complacency in our assumption that we are obedient servants just because we make regular contributions, attend weekly gatherings, and so forth.

Life will not be static in heaven either, as we will serve<sup>3</sup> God there<sup>4</sup> in some dynamic manner. I think we will even be involved with in His creative activities. He certainly does not need us a mere cupbearer<sup>5</sup> type of servant. He definitely wants us to work to magnify God's Goodness.

Returning to the idea of continual creation and the idea of the storyteller's storyteller, I realized that she reminds me in a way of Christ – who also continually told stories throughout His ministry. And though He was crucified in an attempt to stop them, both He and these stories live on. We should always be able to pull out new stories from God's word and His character, as long as they are consistent with the growth of our understanding of His true Greatness.

We are all a part of God's great story, and we continue to extend it as we follow the Way.

1. refer to the story of Scheherazade, from 1001 Arabian Nights
2. Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, and Luke 5:38
3. thanks to Doug Vaughn for good discussion
4. Revelation 7:15 and 22:3
5. Nehemiah 1:11