

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 19, The Good Samaritan, Part V. Luke 10:25-37

1. Thus the lawyer asked this question in a world where there was a variety of views on just who the neighbor really is. Safari observes; “the oral law was not really uniform,” there was a lively debate on points of interpretation. The literary form is that of a seven-scene p ballad and is as follows;
 - a. A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers
And they stripped him and beat him
And departed, leaving him half dead. COME
DO
GO
 - b. Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road,
And when he saw him,
He passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - c. Likewise, also a Levite came to that place.
And when he saw him
he passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - d. And a certain Samaritan, traveling, came to him,
And when he saw him,
He had compassion on him COME
DO
DO
 - e. He went to him
And bound up his wounds,
Pouring oil and wine, COME
DO
DO
 - f. The he put him on his own riding animal
And led him into the Inn
And he took care of him. DO
DO
DO
 - g. The next day on took out and gave two denarii to the manager
And said, “Take care of him, and whatever more you spend
I, on my return, I will repay you.” DO
DO
DO
- 1. SCENE 3: THE LEVITE:**
 - h. *Likewise, also a Levite came to that place.
And when he saw him
he passed by on the other side.* *COME
DO
GO*

2. Both Levite and priest fall into the same Come-Do-Go action pattern established by the robbers. This action pattern classifies the priest and the Levite with the robes. The priest and the Levite contribute to the wounded man's sufferings by their neglect. The word, "Likewise indicates that the Levite is also a descending and thus following the priest. He certainly knows that there is a priest ahead of him. Derrett believes that the Samaritan knew that others passed the wounded man. Regardless which way one is traveling, "in view of the nature of the man's injuries and contours of the road, which make a long lapse of time and prolonged absence from view unlikely. The traces of the old Roman road are still visible and the present writer has personally walked almost all of its length. Derrett's statements about the contour of the road are true. One is able to see ahead in the road for a considerable distance most of the way. Furthermore, having traveled ME roads by camel, by donkey, and on foot for 20 years, I know that the traveler is extremely interest in who else is on the road. His life may depend upon it. A question put to a bystander at the edge of the last village just before the desert begins; a brief exchange with a traveler coming the other way; fresh tracks on the soft earth at the edge of the road where men and animals prefer to walk; a glimpse of the desert air of a robed figure ahead; all of these are potential sources of knowledge for the Levite traveler.
3. As I have determined by investigation, ME peasants assume that the Levite does know that there is a priest ahead of him on the road. For them the story assumes it. Maybe it's truer in the story to assume the knowledge of the priest on the road ahead of him rather than his ignorance. The detail is significant for the fabric of the drama. The Levite is not bound by as many regulations as the priest. Derrett, "a Levite might, had he wished, have allowed himself more latitude than would a priest" (Jeremiah). The Levite was only required to observe ritual cleanliness in the course of his cultic activities. Thus he could render aid, and if the man were dead or died on his hands, the repercussions for him would not have been so serious.
4. In contrast, to the priest, the Levite approaches the man. This is reflected by what he does, the priest saw and traveled by, but the Levite came to the place, and then saw and passed by. Plummer, "The Levite came up to him quite close, saw and then passed by,"'come by the place!' The Levite may have passed the four cubits defilement line and satisfied his curiosity with a closer look. Fear of defilement may not be his strongest motive as

fear of robbers may have been. More likely the example of the highest ranking priest deters him. Not only can he say, "if the priest on ahead did nothing, why should I, a mere Levite trouble myself." The Levite in his turn may have considered that it is not incumbent upon him to take such a dangerous office, from which the priest has shrunk. Duty it could be not, else that others would have never omitted it. For him to thrust himself upon it now would be a kind of affront to his superior, an implicit charging of him with inhumanity and hardness of heart. More than charging him with 'hardness of heart,' the Levite by stopping by would be criticizing the priest's interpretation of the law! When the professional read the data one way, is a poor layman to call his judgement into question?

5. The Levite, as the priest, cannot discover if the wounded man is a neighbor. This may be why he approaches him. Perhaps, he can talk? Failing to find out, he then continues on. Whatever his reasons the result tis the same; in spite of his religious profession, nothing in his total orientation leads him to help the wounded man.

6. The Levite is of a lower social class than the priest and may be walking. In any case he could have rendered minimum medical aid, even if he had no way to take the man to safety. If he was walking, we can imagine him saying to himself, "I cannot carry the man to safety, am I to sit here all night and wait for an attack by robbers?" In any case he fades from the scene.

7. SCENE 4: The Samaritan

<i>And a certain Samaritan, traveling, came to him,</i>	<i>COME</i>
<i>And when he saw him,</i>	<i>DO</i>
<i>He had compassion on him</i>	<i>DO</i>

8. As in the p of Luke 14 and 20, we are dealing with the progression of three characters. After the priest and Levite, the audience is expecting a Jewish layman. (Jeremias). Not only is this a sequence, but as we have seen, these three classes of people officiated at the temple. Even as delegations of priests and Levite went to Jerusalem and returned after their specified 2 weeks, so also, "The delegation of Israel," went up to serve with them. After their terms of service one would naturally expect all three to be on the road returning home. The listener hears the 1st and 2nd and expects the 3rd, this sequence is interrupted much to the amazement of the audience, the 3rd man is the hated Samaritans. Heretics and schismatics are usually despised more than unbelievers. This animosity is reflected in the wisdom of Ben Sirach, who wrote about 200 B.C.. "*There are two nations*

that my soul detests and the third is not a nation of all; the inhabitants of Mt. Seir, the Philistine and the stupid people at Shechem.

9. The Samaritans are classed with the Philistines and the Edomites. The Mishna declares, 'He that eats with the Samaritans is like on who eats with the flesh of swine.' At the time of Jesus, this bitterness between Jews and Samaritans is intensified by the Samaritans as they have defiled the temple during Passover a few years prior by scattering human bones in the temple court.' (Josephus). Oesterley observes; 'The Samaritans were publically cursed in the synagogues and a petition was daily offered up to God praying that the Samaritans might not be partakers of eternal life.'
10. Jesus could have told a story about a noble Jew assisting a hated Samaritan. Such a story could have been emotionally absorbed by the audience, rather than have the hated Samaritan as the hero. The present writer can only confess that in twenty years he has not had the courage to tell a story to the Palestinians about the noble Israeli, nor a story about he the noble Turk to the Armenians. Only one who has lived in the bitterness of a community with such a hated enemy can understand fully the courage of Jesus in making the despised Samaritan as morally superior to the religious leadership of the audience. Thus Jesus speaks to one of the deepest hatreds and painfully exposes it. ("P are iron fist in a.....").
11. The Greek word, compassion has the root word 'innards' inside of it. It is a very strong word in Greek and Semitic imagery (Bailey). Indeed, the Samaritan has a deep, 'gut level reaction' to the wounded man. The Old Syriac version reflects the intensity of this word by translating, "He was compassionate to him and showed him mercy." He is bound by the same Torah that also tells him that his neighbor is his countryman and kinsman. He is traveling in Judea and is less likely for him than for the priest and the Levite that the anonymous wounded man is a neighbor. In spite of this, *HE* is the one who acts.
12. The text has a clear progression as we move from the scenes. The priest *goes down the road*, the Levite *comes to the place*. The Samaritan *comes* to the man. Derrett observes; he too risks contamination, which if it incurred extends to his animals and wares. With at least one animal and quite likely more as will be noted, and perhaps some goods, he is a prime target for the same robber who just might respect a priest or Levite as a 'man of religion,' but will have no hesitation in attacking a hated Samaritan.