

OLD TURTLE

ONCE , LONG AGO YET SOMEHOW NOT SO VERY LONG
WHEN ALL THE ANIMALS & ROCKS & WINDS & WATERS & TREES AND BIRDS & FISH
AND ALL THE BEINGS OF THE WORLD COULD SPEAK & UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER
THERE BEGAN AN ARGUMENT.

IT BEGAN SOFTLY AT FIRST.

QUIET AS THE FIRST BREEZE THAT WHISPERED “HE IS A WIND WHO IS NEVER STILL”.

QUIET AS THE STONE WHO ANSWERED “HE IS A GREAT ROCK THAT NEVER MOVES”.

GENTLE AS THE MOUNTAIN THAT RUMBLED

“GOD IS A SNOWY PEAK, HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS”.

AND THE FISH IN THE OCEAN THAT ANSWERED

“GOD IS A SWIMMER IN THE DARK BLUE DEPTHS OF THE SEA”.

“NO” SAID THE STAR; “GOD IS A TWINKLING & A SHINING VERY FAR, FAR AWAY”

“NO” REPLIED THE ANT “ GOD IS A SOUND AND A SMELL & A FEELING, WHO IS VERY VERY CLOSE”.

THE ANTELOPE INSISTED “GODS IS A RUNNER, SWIFT & FREE, WHO LOVES TO LEAP AND RACE IN THE WIND”.

“SHE IS A GREAT TREE” MURMURED THE WILLOW, “A PART OF THE WORLD, ALWAYS GROWING & ALWAYS GIVING”

“YOU ARE WRONG” ARGUED THE ISLAND. “GOD IS SEPARATE & APART”

“GODS IS LIKE THE SHINING SUN, FAR ABOVE THINGS”, ADDED THE BLUE SKY

”NO, HE IS A RIVER WHO FLOWS THROUGH THE VERY HEART OF THINGS” THUNDERED THE WATERFALL.

“SHE IS A HUNTER” ROARED THE LION.

“GOD IS GENTLE” CHIRPED THE ROBIN.

“HE IS POWERFUL” GROWLED THE BEAR.

AND THE ARGUMENT GREW LOUDER AND LOUDER & LOUDER.

STOP!

A NEW VOICE SPOKE

IT RUMBLED LOUDLY, LIKE THUNDER.

AND IT WHISPERED SOFTLY LIKE BUTTERFLY SNEEZES

THE VOICE SEEMED TO COME FROM

OLD TURTLE

OLD TURTLE HARDLY EVER SAID ANYTHING

AND CERTAINLY NEVER ARGUED ABOUT GOD

BUT NOW OLD TURTLE BEGAN TO SPEAK

“GOD IS INDEED DEEP” HE SAID TO THE FISH IN THE SEA.

“AND MUCH HIGHER THAN HIGH” SHE TOLD THE MOUNTAINS

“HE IS SWIFT AND FREE AS THE WIND AND STILL & SOLID AS A GREAT ROCK”

SHE SAID TO THE BREEZES & STONES.

“SHE IS THE LIFE OF THE WORLD” TURTLE SAID TO THE WILLOW.

“ALWAYS CLOSE BY, YET BEYOND THE FARTHEST TWINKLING LIGHT”: SHE TOLD THE ANT & THE STAR.

“GOD IS GENTLE & POWERFUL, ABOVE ALL THINGS AND WITHIN ALL THINGS.”

“GOD IS WHAT WE DREAM OF AND ALL THAT WE SEEK” SAID OLD TURTLE. “ALL THAT WE COME FROM AND ALL WE CAN FIND”

“GOD IS”.

OLD TURTLE HAD NEVER SAID SO MUCH BEFORE.
ALL THE BEINGS IN THE WORLD WERE SURPRISED AND BECAME VERY QUIET.
BUT OLD TURTLE HAD ONE MORE THING TO SAY.
“THERE WILL SOON BE A NEW FAMILY OF BEINGS IN THE WORLD” SHE SAID.
“AND THEY WILL BE STRANGE AND WONDERFUL”
THEY WILL BE REMINDERS OF ALL THAT GOD IS.
“THEY WILL COME IN MANY SHAPES AND COLORS
WITH DIFFERENT FACES AND DIFFERENT WAYS OF SPEAKING.
“THEIR THOUGHTS WILL SOAR TO THE STARS,
BUT THEIR FEET WILL WALK THE EARTH.
THEY WILL POSSESS MANY POWERS.
THEY WILL BE STRONG, YET TENDER,
A MESSAGE OF LOVE FROM GOD TO THE EARTH,
AND A PRAYER FROM THE EARTH BACK TO GOD”

AND THE PEOPLE CAME; BUT THE PEOPLE FORGOT.
THEY FORGOT THEY WERE A MESSAGE OF LOVE,
AND A PRAYER FROM THE EARTH.
AND THEY BEGAN TO ARGUE... ABOUT WHO KNEW GOD.
AND WHO DID NOT;
AND WHERE GOD WAS, AND WAS NOT; AND WHERE GOD WAS OR WAS NOT.
AND OFTEN THE PEOPLE MISUSED THEIR POWERS
AND HURT ONE ANOTHER; OR KILLED ONE ANOTHER.
AND THEY HURT THE EARTH
UNTIL FINALLY EVEN THE FORESTS BEGAN TO DIE
AND THE RIVERS, AND THE OCEANS,
AND THE PLANTS & ANIMALS AND THE EARTH ITSELF
BECAUSE THE PEOPLE COULD NOT REMEMBER WHO THEY WERE, OR WHERE GOD WAS
UNTIL ONE DAY THERE CAME A VOICE LIKE THE GROWLING OF THUNDER, BUT A SOFT AS
BUTTERFLY SNEEZES

“PLEASE STOP”

“THE VOICE SEEMED TO COME FROM THE MOUNTAIN WHO RUMBLED “SOMETIMES I SEE GOD
SWIMMING IN THE DARK BLUE DEPTHS OF THE SEA”
AND FROM THE OCEAN WHO SIGHED
“HE IS OFTEN AMONG THE SNOW CAPPED PEAKS REFLECTING THE SUN”
FROM THE STONES WHO SAID “ I SOMETIMES FEEL HER BREATH, AS SHE BLOWS BY”.
AND FROM THE BREEZE WHO WHISPERED, “I FEEL HIS STILL PRESENCE AS I DANCE AMONG
THE ROCKS.”
AND THE STAR DECLARED “ GOD IS VERY CLOSE”
AND THE ISLAND ADDED “HIS LOVE TOUCHES EVERYTHING”
AND AFTER A LONG. LONESOME AND SCARY TIME
THE PEOPLE LISTENED AND BEGAN TO HEAR
AND TO SEE GOD IN ONE ANOTHER
AND IN THE BEAUTY OF ALL THE EARTH AND ITS INFINITE VARIETY OF CREATION
AND OLD TURTLE SMILED
AND SO DID GOD