

# Moses

the Lawyer of Yahweh

Moses was a religious man who found his whole vocational life set on fire—a fire that burned hot, but did not consume. This is the essence of the experience told in that burning bush experience.

It was with this transformed life that Moses inspired a group of Egypt-enculturated slaves to pick up their babies and a few possessions and wade across the waters in which the chariots bogged down, allowing these slaves to escape into the wilderness.

It was in this wilderness, a land that was only good for goats, that Moses became a statesman and religious leader with usual skills that served these people for the next 40 years. This is how that story goes.

At Mount Sinai Moses, the lawyer, got underway. I picture Moses holding up two hands indicating 10 mandates for law writing. We don't know the exact form for those 10 teachings, Exodus 20 was written at least 300 years later. We do know that the Moses inspired law writing took place for the next 600 years or more of Old Testament formation. Nevertheless, let us imagine our own story of those Sinai moments.

In his left hand, let us say, Moses enumerated five mandates for his ongoing Exodus law writing that fostered maintaining obedience to that Final Profound Reality that grants history-making freedom to human beings:

Here is my wording for these five mandates:

1. Have no other loyalties beyond this final loyalty to Profound Reality.
2. Create no earthen facsimiles for this Mysterious Wholeness.
3. Use even the name "Yahweh" with care.
4. Keep one day out of seven for holy ritual and rest.
5. Honor your ancestry in this holy covenant.

With his right hand, I am picturing Moses enumerated five more mandates—this time for getting along with one another in order to survive this wilderness and defend against the other groups who are also trying to make it in this forbidding environment. Here's my wordings for these five mandates:

1. Don't kill each other.
2. Don't steal from each other.
3. Don't violate someone else's spouse.
4. Don't bear false witness in the courts of justice.
5. Don't crave some other person's life over your own life, live creatively the life that Yahweh has given you.

Moses began his work as a lawyer with a rag-tag Egyptian-enculturated mob of desperate slave families. After 40 years in this wilderness, he had built a large and strong body of persons who were living the Mosaic breakthrough of realism and courage in responding to Profound Reality.

After the death of Moses, a second inspired leader, Joshua, organized a conquering army and their families to move across the river Jordan into a promised land of more fertile ground.

This is the very old story told in my own plausible way.

The biblical accounts of these events were first written down for us in about 990 BCE—300 years after the Exodus, and then they were rewritten many more times for another 300 years or so. The originating events were elaborated in narratives quite beyond the plausible for us living today..

What actually transpired at Sinai we do not know, but more was launched there than a final set of specific laws that some modern Christian bigot could post on a state-house monument.

The 10 commandments are best understood as 10 mandates for “godly” law writing—law writing that obeys the Profound Reality that we humans meet in each new situation of our actual lives. The history of the writing of the Old Testament texts witnesses to that understanding. Each generation of Bible

writers “raised Moses from the dead” to write new laws relevant for each new time. They kept within the original mandates, but they obeyed the changing times that Yahweh was understood to be bringing to them for their responding. Law-writing was part of their ongoing responding to the action of Yahweh (Profound Reality) in the present need for laws. We can still do that.

That core style of “lawful” thoughtfulness would last within three different major religions from about 1290 BCE until 2023 CE. The lucid and persistent followers of Moses have impacted history for the betterment of all humankind for about 3313 years. I am not talking here about the corrupt forces within all three of these religions. I am talking about those “people of God” who were responding to Yahweh, Allah, The Lord Almighty in their actual living.

We can understand the Exodus events as a revelation of the mercy of the Absolute Mystery of Profound Reality that actually confronts us all every moment, whether we know it or not.

Following are aspects of the truth about law-writing that was revealed in the Exodus events:

1. Each specific enforceable law is written by temporal humans, not by the agency of some divine being. Yet the Exodus also reveals that these humanly-written laws can be written in obedience to the Final Profound Mysterious Reality that we all face every day of our lives.
2. These social laws provide a social environment that we all share along with our natural environment. The difference between these two complimentary environments is the way in which humans are responsible for having created our social environment and responsible for creating the next social environment. We humans are not the creators of the natural environment, even though we are part of it, and impact the nature of it.
3. It is in and through the ongoing historical events within these two environments that we encounter the God of Moses, that Mysterious Profound Reality that no generation of us can escape.

4. There are many ways to organize our natural environmental care and our social environmental justice; however, helter-skelter is not the best way. Today a fully democratic politics is a better way than the ways that both Trump and Putin have figured out for the satisfaction of their foolish and greedy egos.

5. We Exodus-awake citizens, without aspiring to be perfect, can take on the Exodus challenge to organize fellow citizens of our own nation—whatever their face color and happiness preferences—to the end that everyone is provided “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

If we can think these democratic thoughts, we can surely attempt their achievement. We don't have to give-in to the patterns of a “winner takes all” monopoly game or to the ethical philosophy of “I-can't-do-anything” excuse making. The Exodus possibility and challenge is this: we have the freedom to change the course of history, and do so toward realism. And we have century of experience on how that can be done.

The Exodus is about compassionate action in comradeship with the merciful Profound Reality that is giving us the freedom that is also our hope for an optimal future in this real world