

## Meditation Matthew 2:1-12

Voice of a wise man.

We just had to go. You see, we'd studied the heavens, the patterns of light in the sky, and the message was really clear: a new king had been born, and he was strong, because his star was rising and speeding across the sky, in a way we'd never seen before. So we followed it, knowing the light would lead us to him, and we took gifts to pay him homage and establish a good relationship that would pay dividends in the future.

It was a long, uncomfortable and dangerous journey, but the star guided us on the path, day and night. Eventually we arrived in Jerusalem, in the late morning. The star seemed a bit to the south of us, but a king would be born in a major city, and the only one in the region was Jerusalem.

It was a horrible place, and even the bright light of the mid-day sun couldn't dispel the feeling of darkness. It was at its worst in Herod's palace, and the man himself seemed to absorb every scrap of light and life in the room. I felt quite sick in his presence, though I was sorry for him, because his fear and insecurity were so obvious, and they seemed to have driven him almost to insanity. We left as soon as we decently could, and headed off to Bethlehem- Herod's advisors had told us that the birth of Israel's Messiah had been predicted centuries ago to happen there.

We couldn't get out of that city fast enough, I can tell you: more dismal darkness, as the anxious population scurried around, no one's glance ever meeting our eyes. Even our exhausted and irritable camels seemed keen to be on the move. We decided the fear in the air was justified- there was no knowing what a madman like Herod would do next, even to his own people.

Around dusk we arrived at Bethlehem. It took a lot of searching and some asking before we found him. And there he was, in an outhouse with his parents. The light from the lamp the man held was soft and dim. But the light of love between the mother and her child filled the room.

This baby was special. I know: all babies are special, at least to their own mothers. But that's nature, and I've seen it in my own wives for their babies. But this was more. The love shone between that baby and his mother; it was mutual, as though each had been involved in creating the other. The tiny mite wasn't just contented, he was besotted with his mother in a way I'd never seen. At first I was happy just to watch, but then I wanted: I wanted that love- the love of that baby.

The baby burped and his mother moved him to bring up his wind. That was when I knew he's seen me. He gazed at me, and it was a long gaze. And there, in that gaze, I saw it: his love for me. And it was the same absolute love he had for his mother. The light of that love surrounded me, flooded over me and engulfed me. I felt it fill me. The child and I were wholly at peace with each other, and the tiredness of travel left me; I felt full of energy and joy.

© Susan H. Pulko, 2018