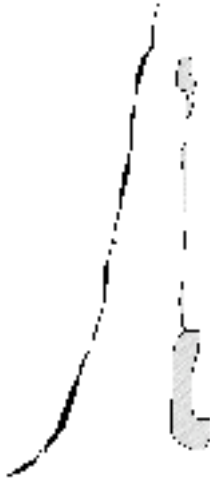


Biblical Literature

The Dead Sea - A Personal Reflection



The water in the Dead Sea is extremely salty. Everyday the Jordan pours over a half million tons of fresh water into it, but because the Dead Sea doesn't release the water, it just sits there and evaporates in the hot Mediterranean sun, leaving behind a residue of salts and minerals that putrefy the water.

It is rightly called the "Dead" Sea, because, aside from a few microbes, nothing can survive in it. Even salt water fish, die when they are introduced to the water.

In comparison, the Sea of Galilee, which receives the same clean water from the north, is thriving with life. Jesus and the disciples fished its waters with great success, as do other fishermen today.

What is the difference? The Sea of Galilee gives up its water to the Jordan and is replenished with fresh water. The Dead Sea holds onto its water and dies.

We human beings face a similar choice in life. We can become Seas of Galilee, rich full, expansive and alive, releasing some of the flood of life, time and love we have, or "Dead" Seas, grudgingly giving up little of these to others. There is a paradox here which many wise men have pointed out. The prayer of St. Francis says "It is in giving that we receive." Jesus tells us in the Gospel, "The measure you measure with will be measured back to you." Even modern financial analysts tell us that those who hoard their time, property and wealth, seem always to be chasing, but never truly acquiring true riches in life.¹ It seems that the attitude which leads to a rich supply of life's needs is the willingness to give up a significant amount of what we have.

On a separate sheet of paper in your journal, analyze how you are like the Sea of Galilee, generously giving of yourself, and how you are like the Dead Sea, hoarding it to your detriment. The following questions are to help us in our reflection:

When and to whom am I willing to give my time, energy, talent and personality? What holds me back, why? If my inner life were being analyzed and compared to the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea, which am I more like? What evidence is there of this? How can I improve my "flow" of life and energy out to others? What opportunities am I missing in my present situation?

Orman, Suze, The Courage To Be Rich.