

YK 2021

You never know when you are going to hear something that truly resonates with you (with the obvious exception of my sermons). While my family and I traveled out west this summer, we made a point to include indigenous content as part of our vacation. In Jasper, we decided to go on a medicine walk with Matricia Brown, a First Nations Cree educator. I imagined that she would take us into the woods, though she did just the opposite, leading us largely down the city streets. She pointed to two different lawns, one was well groomed and the other had weeds throughout. What she brought to our attention was, that in the face of the immense heat, the well-groomed lawn was mostly brown, while the lawn scattered with, what many would call weeds, was entirely green. She pointed out all of the random naturally growing plants and called the dandelion the perfect plant. And then she said the line that still sticks with me:

“It’s only a weed if you don’t see its value.”

Some of these weeds could provide the same amount of nutrition as anything you buy at Whole Foods. She showed us how to turn some leaves into medicinal salves, and allowed us to taste others.

“It’s only a weed if you don’t see its value.”

While she was obviously speaking literally, I couldn’t help but reflect on this sentiment as it translates to our internal lives. There are parts of us with which we all struggle. Senses of loss, anger, frustration, disappointment. Times that we look at ourselves and wish we were different. That parts of us could be changed. I was thinking about this when I found the following conversation from John Roedel posted to his Facebook page, “Hey God Hey John”. It begins:

Me: Hey God.

God: Hello, my love.

Me: I'm falling apart.

Can you put me back together?

God: I would rather not.

Me: Why?

God: Because you aren't a puzzle.

Me: What about all of the pieces of my life that are falling down onto the ground?

God: Let them stay there for a while. They fell off for a reason.

Take some time and decide if you need any of those pieces back.

Me: You don't understand! I'm breaking down!

God: No - you don't understand.

You are breaking through.

What you are feeling are just growing pains.

You are shedding the things and the people in your life that are holding you back.

You aren't falling apart.

You are falling into place.

Relax.

Take some deep breaths and allow those things you don't need any more to fall off of you.

Quit holding onto the pieces that don't fit you anymore.

Let them fall off.

Let them go.

Me: Once I start doing that, what will be left of me?

God: Only the very best pieces of you.

Me: I'm scared of changing.

God: I keep telling you - **YOU AREN'T CHANGING!! YOU ARE BECOMING!**

Me: Becoming who?

God: Becoming who I created you to be!

A person of light and love and charity and hope and courage and joy and mercy and grace and compassion.

I made you for more than the shallow pieces you have decided to adorn yourself with that you cling to with such greed and fear.

Let those things fall off of you.

I love you! Don't change! Become! Become! Become!

Become who I made you to be.

I'm going to keep telling you this until you remember it.

Me: There goes another piece.

God: Yep. Let it be.

Me: So...I'm not broken?

God: No - but you are breaking like the dawn. It's a new day. Become!! Become!!

The parts of ourselves that we struggle with, the parts of us that we wish weren't there, are exactly what makes us not only who we are, but who God made us to be. They may not be weeds to pick, but an amazing contribution to what makes each of us extraordinary.

As we recite Yizkor today, we think about all the things we carry with us, the joyful memories, but also painful losses that endure. While we tend to want to focus on the beautiful blossoms

that have grown in the aftermath of our loved one's death, it is worth remembering that the pain, the loss, the disappointment, and the anger are also there for a reason.

It's only a weed if you don't see its value.

These events, these moments in our lives, have made us who we are, which is exactly who the Almighty wishes us to be.

On these High Holy Days, let us not only use it as a time to repair and change, but perhaps even more importantly, use it as a time for acceptance and love of ourselves, weeds and all, for we are not broken, we are instead breaking like the dawn. It's a new day. The perfect day to be you.