

TAMING OF A HAUGHTY PRINCE **The Divine Pedagogy of Formation - IV**

Paul Kalluveetil

Little Flower Novitiate, Trichur, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

There cannot and should not be a fit-all-size method of formation. Curtailing and destroying the individuality and uniqueness of a formee is a crime against humanity and divinity. The divine Formator came up with tailor-made methods befitting the vocation each one received. Moses was selected right from the womb of his mother for a unique task he was going to be entrusted with. He grew up as a haughty prince thanks to the environment he was provided. The divine gardener steps in to prune the wild growth of his favourite seedling. The taming of that wild horse sets before the human formators a spectacular example to be emulated. Like a potter God took utmost care in preparing the clay to produce his unique work of art. However, like Michael Angelo, the divine sculptor was not working on an inert block of marble to produce a lifelike Moses but a lively Moses for which the material, the environment had to collaborate. The story of Moses also point towards the witnessing role of the persons chosen to play leading roles in the society. Their obligations do not end with themselves; their failures have a social impact as well. Therefore, persons under formation to play key roles in the society should be aware of their representative value as well.

Introduction

We have already analysed three examples of God's pedagogy of formation in the Bible. The divine Master was employing totally

different methods in order to remodel Abraham, Jacob and Joseph into his living and loving reflections. Taking into account the specific characters of each one he adopted new and innovative methods. The formators of the candidates to religious and priestly life have to take into account this kind of formative vision. They should not attempt to mould everybody in the same cast curtailing and destroying their individuality and uniqueness. In this present study we analyse the story of Moses. It is quite interesting to observe the peculiarities of the divine pedagogy of formation in this case.

PART I: THE CALL

Preparatory Stage

Right from the womb of his mother the Lord chose Moses (Jer 1:5) to entrust him a great task. He was commissioned to liberate the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt and to lead them to the Promised Land. For this He equipped Moses with all the necessary qualities. While the male progenies of Hebrews were condemned to be slaughtered at their very birth, the divine Master protected him and made him the adopted son of the Egyptian princess (Ex 2:1-10). Thus Moses was brought up like an Egyptian prince acquiring expertise in science, art and sports. Divine intervention arranged his own mother to nurse him, so that he could imbibe the religious faith and traditions of his own people. Equipping the designate with the required qualities and environment for his/her future ministry is the preparatory stage of the divine pedagogy of formation.

A Haughty Action

The First Attempt

Moses was enjoying all the conveniences and luxuries of the royal palace. The divine Formator saw that an obsession to this intoxicating environment could eventually become detrimental to the candidate. Hence the Master decided to save Moses from such a languor. The candidate was given a chance to go for a stroll outside the palace (Ex 2:11-12). Then the youth noticed the forced labour of his kinsmen and the cruel treat they received from the Egyptian supervisor. The impulsive prince immediately reacted by

slaying the Egyptian. He paid back violence with violence, and buried the taskmaster in the sand.

Reflection I

At this point in time Moses was not yet called by God. Before he was appointed as the liberator of the Hebrew slaves, this arrogant and self-centred prince was taking upon himself such a role. The methodology used by him to liberate the people was not that of God. His rashness resulted from the haughty and egoistic temperament. The prince executed the royal appointee by taking the law in his hand. The divine Formator had a precise scheme and an opportune time. Only after the completion of the formative process, and by the explicit permission of the Master could one venture to undertake the mission. One should at all cost avoid impertinence and the self-sufficient mentality. God never wanted Moses to act in a revengeful way. The formation of a person is completed, transforming him/her into a powerful instrument in the hands of God, only when one dies to his/her ego (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22). For that one has to permit the divine Master to lead him/her along the ways of *jnana* (wisdom), *bakthi* (devotion) and *karma* (action). Till then nobody should try to dash oneself against the so-called foes. It is not only dangerous but also incongruous for an immature person to undertake a task that he/she is not authorised to do.

Second Attempt

Moses, being puffed up by the initial success, went out again as a hero on the next day (2:13-14). This time it was two Hebrews who were fighting. In a patronizing air he asked the culprit, "Why are you striking your fellow Hebrew?" Prompt was the reply: "Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" This reaction stunned and frightened the prince. "What I did must have become known!" Later the news did reach the ears of Pharaoh.

Life of an Alien

Fleeing for Life

What Moses feared was on its way. Pharaoh sought to put him to death (v. 15). The prince immediately escaped from the palace to save his dear life. The one who had put upon himself the mask of a

brave and adventurous man fled to Median, a desert like country, as spineless fugitive. The Hebrew man had to marry the daughter of Jethro, the pagan priest, and became content to work as the shepherd of the father-in-law (vv. 16-21). The one who lived a stately life in pomp and glory had to work as a shepherd! The former extrovert became an introvert and recluse. He was exposed to extreme climate and had to wander through wilderness with the sheep he tendered.

Reflection II

The hands of the divine Formator is quite obvious here. He was preparing the candidate for a purpose - to make him the liberator of the Hebrews. However, his attitude that "I have everything and I can do everything" needed a thorough revision and alteration. Arrogance and egoism should fade away from the formee. He should grow into the depending mentality of an *agathi* (destitute) and have to learn to cling to God for survival. For this the divine Pedagogue created opportunities. He made the candidate pass through the dark night of the soul. As he had to live in remote places with his sheep, the wanderer got enough time and chance to evaluate his past life. At times deep melancholy might have afflicted him; he might have succumbed to desperate thoughts too. The routine life of a shepherd might have turned out to be an unbearable boredom to this ambitious prince. He spent his days and nights brooding over his misfortunes and vicissitudes of life. All these were integral parts of his formation, although the poor man was not aware of it. His days were being passed in loneliness and solitude.

A Perturbed Person

Bible does not provide us with details of the thoughts of Moses at these times. Only once we find him reacting. When a son was born to him, he named the baby Gershom (in Hebrew the term means "an alien there") saying "I am a stranger in a foreign land" (v. 22). This response betrays his inner feelings. For him Median was a foreign land. His parents and siblings are in Egypt. Still this refugee does not seem to remember that the dear ones are exposed to hard life as the Egyptian slaves. It does not seem to have come to his mind the religious beliefs that God had promised the land of Canaan to the forefathers of Israel. Thus the words of Moses were

not evolved from the expectation that the Lord of history will lead the chosen people to the Promised Land of Palestine. Thus he was saying to himself: I am now an alien. My life has become bitter. This thought pattern indicates that Moses was not planning to settle permanently in Median. Here we find the hand of the Formator. Thus the days of the shepherd had been filled with uneasiness. The divine Pedagogue, one may say, was purposefully sowing the seeds of restlessness in the candidate in view of his future task as liberator.

The Call of God

The Burning Bush

The Formator was till now working in the 'green room.' The groaning and desperate crying of the slaves of Egypt prompted him to directly come on the stage (vv. 23-25). He came down from heaven in order to commission Moses as the liberator of His people. That was a time when the Israelite shepherd was tending the flock of his father-in-law near the mountain of Horeb. The Lord appeared to him in a burning bush and called out, "Moses, Moses" (3:1-10). Moses responded positively to the divine vocation and was designated to liberate the Hebrew slaves from the Egyptian bondage. For this Moses has to face the ferocious Pharaoh with the message of liberation.

Reflexion III

The divine call came to Moses at an unexpected time, place and occasion. It was an invitation to accomplish a task that he has never even dreamt about. He was not prepared to undertake such an assignment. His only qualification to claim to that job was that he was a 'nobody' – a hapless *agathi* (destitute). Moses had already lost the self-confidence and daringness he was brimming with during his good old days in Egypt. He had become a timid, simple minded and wretched man. In the ordinary language, he was a useless and good for nothing fellow. During those days tending of the flock was entrusted to weak young girls. Moreover Moses has never been eloquent (4:10). Thus he had no capacity to influence Pharaoh with his persuasive oration. He will not be successful in attracting and organizing the Hebrew slaves through the magic of words. Still God had called Moses. We find here the strangeness of the divine election. The divine Master wants to speak and act

through humans. One who thinks that he/she is 'somebody' will not give the Lord complete freedom. The words of Paul are here worth citing: "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong; He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him" (1 Cor 1:27-29).

An Evasive Response

The nominee had already lost his entire self-confidence. Gripped with the inferiority complex that he was a good for nothing person, Moses replied: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (3:11). This was the pathetic voice of a person who had succumbed to depression and melancholy. I am nobody. I am incompetent for the task. Because of such an attitude he again and again declined to undertake the assigned task (3:13; 4:1, 10, 13).

Reflexion IV

Does not Moses' story prompt us to rectify our thinking and norms regarding vocation and the ways of selecting the suitable candidates? Are those who attend our camps and who prove their cleverness or skills, the only ones who are to be considered as worthy for priesthood or religious life? Do we fail to take notice of the hidden gems and reject people without trying to understand them well? Are we using the criteria of the divine Formator, or do we depend only upon the psycho-social methods?

The Human I and the Divine I

The divine Formator took into account the mental situation of Moses (3:12). He promised the candidate His constant presence: "I will be with you." The strong and firm divine *I* will sustain the weak and feeble *I* of Moses. Yahweh also gave him a sign. However, the wavering nominee remained hesitant: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'the God of your fathers has sent me to you' and they ask me, 'what is his name?' then what shall I tell them?" (3:13). With patience the Master responded. I am Yahweh, the one who is becoming one with the Hebrew slaves. That is my name. Tell them this fact. Moses has to assemble the leaders of the people and make clear to them the divine plan of

liberation. Moreover he has to approach Pharaoh and compel him to let the slaves go free (vv. 14-22). Still the apprehensive candidate continued to raise lame excuses in order to avoid the call. "What if they do not believe me?" (4:1). The forbearing Master gave two signs to the timid candidate (4:2-7) and told him what to do in case the people would not believe him (vv. 8-9). When the called one found that his objections were not effective, he had recourse to a new technique: "O Lord, I have never been eloquent... I am slow of speech and tongue" (v.10). Even then the Formator kept calm and assured Moses that it is He who provides versatility of speech. Now the candidate openly retorted: "O Lord, please send someone else" (v.13). As the Lord saw that the pacification (*samam*) and donation (*danam*) methods were futile, He showed a ferocious expression. At the same time he gave Aaron to Moses, as his spokesman (vv 14-16), and repeated the task of liberation (v. 17).

Reflexion V

Let us reflect on some special aspects which are implied in the narrative. Moses who once took upon himself the role of the liberator without being called by God, now, when truly God called him, tried hard to decline that grace. Formerly he had depended upon his own strength and power and he failed miserably. At this the prince lost self-confidence. The attitude that one is a nobody, and has nothing, is in itself salvific. That is supposed to inspire one to cling to God and to find refuge and protection (*gathi*) in the Almighty. But the case of Moses was totally different. He had sunk deeply into the abyss of despair, and did not want to free himself from that dangerous situation. He did not try to find refuge in God. Even when Yahweh came to him and offered the grace of call, he did not respond positively. Rather, he raised lame excuses one after another and tried his best to refuse the call. In the light of the biblical formation dynamics we are reminded of the possibility of such candidates as Moses. At such occasions let us follow the approach of God, the most expert person in the art of formation. Human formators should, with all meekness, gentleness and patience pursue the encouraging (*samam*) and rewarding (*danam*) methods. Even then when the called one persists in his/her objections, the formators may have recourse to the art of toughness, as God in the Bible had done.

PART II: THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF FORMATION

Preliminary Observation

God had initiated the formation process even at the birth of Moses. This invalidates the thinking that the formation needs to begin only after the selection of the candidates. We had already seen that Moses' flights as well as his life as a shepherd at Median were connected with God's formative preparation. The work of a shepherd was pregnant with biblical symbolism. God revealed himself in history as a shepherd (Ps 23; Ez 34). The one who is going to be the divine representative in grazing God's flock, should be gifted with practical and experiential knowledge of the inseparable relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. Only then he could love the people of God as his own beloved children. The divine Master was teaching the candidate how to make the people's ordeals and pains his own, and to entirely dedicate his life for their welfare. The prolonged days of solitude and wanderings through wildernesses brought a great change in Moses' impulsive and reckless temperament. There slowly grew in him an attitude of meekness. Also there occurred a great transformation in his body, which was in younger days soft and supple because of the luxurious life at the palace. It became strong and sturdy on account of habitual exposure to extreme heat and cold of the wilderness. Often he had to suffer hunger and thirst. This helped him to make the life-style of the poor and the wretched slaves of Egypt his own. Thus the divine Instructor was helping his future representative to acquire both the bodily and mental qualities for the tough task ahead of him. As the candidate was getting matured slowly but steadily, the Lord came down to call him officially and entrust him with the mission of liberation.

The New Man

The encounter with the Lord was the turning point in the life of Moses. A new man was getting formed in him. His former dynamism and enthusiasm the Master reinstalled in the chosen one. The thought that he was Yahweh's appointed one began to grow in him daily. The candidate by putting his trust in the calling One became fully alive and active.

Reaction and Challenge

Moses returned to Egypt and in the company of Aaron informed the elders of the Hebrews God's plan of liberation (4:18-31). As the people heard of it, they bowed down and worshipped. This favourable response brought fresh vitality in the called one. Unfortunately the joyful aspect of the task did not last long. When he approached Pharaoh, according to the instruction of Yahweh, the king violently reacted (5:4-19). It was a terrible shock for Moses. Even the people, who were more burdened and oppressed, turned against him (5:20-21). At this crisis Moses sank into severe depression and dared to accuse the One who had called him (5:22-23).

Formator as Emboldener

The Master did not lose his heart at the disbelief of the disciple. He encouraged Moses and promised him that those who try to thwart the divine scheme will be punished (6:1-13, 28, 30; 7:1-7). Such should be the conduct and way of approach one has to follow in the formation process.

Enthusiasm and Aversion

These words of consolation helped Moses to continue his fight against the personification of evil. First he informed the people about the divine message (6:9). The folk who had lost confidence because of cruel bondage were not ready to listen to him. At this juncture the Master intervened and told his envoy: "Go, tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country." Moses' responded: "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, a man with faltering lips?" (6:10-12, 28-30).

Reflexion VI

To give chance to the disciple to face challenges - this is a necessary element in the formation dynamics of the divine Master. Formation is not like a stream which flows without obstruction. There will frequently happen challenges and crises, which may weaken the enthusiasm and vitality of the formee. He/she may even question the words and actions of the formator. Moses' reaction was based on the point of view of the world. Even his own people are not listening to him. Is it not then foolishness to expect that Pharaoh, the mightiest enemy may be ready to do as he says? Further, Moses has not the eloquence to influence the rival.

Such kind of logical arguments may drive the animator into a corner, out of which it will not be easy to free oneself.

A New Venture

On such occasions the ordinary formators may be at a loss. But the divine Animator cleverly faced the crisis (7:1-5). He made the formee God-like in the presence of Pharaoh. When the disciple is empowered to perform like the Almighty and the One who controls everything, he/she needs not to be afraid of anybody. The called one can utter thus with the Psalmist: "I will not be afraid. What can a mortal do to me?" (Ps 56:4,11). The divine Master was bestowing on the disciple His own authority and power. Is it not this a most daring and heroic act of formative process?

A Formator-Formee Friendship

As a man of God Moses bravely approached Pharaoh, and performed signs and miracles (7:6-13:16). He stood firm in difficulties. Whatever he has said or done, was in the name of the Master. Every time he sought the advice of the Formator, who most willingly strengthened his hands. Here we find a formator who has put complete trust in the formee. This is indeed the originality and singularity of the divine pedagogy of formation.

A Critical Movement

When Moses led the people from Egypt and reached the Red Sea, a most dangerous situation awaited him. The army of Pharaoh was rushing towards them (14:10-12). The frightened people turned against their leader. While Moses tried to encourage them, he was also crying out to his Master (14:13-15). His action amounted to whimpering, which did not find favour with the Formator. He chided the formee for wasting time, instead of acting promptly: "Why are you crying out to me?" (v.15). Then the Master told him what to do immediately. Accordingly the disciple acted (vv. 16-28).

Reflexion VII

The divine Animator does not want the called ones to become parasites who cling to him for everything. To waste time lamenting and blaming during the crisis without doing anything - this does not pertain to God's pedagogy of formation. He trains

the candidates in order to make them self-competent persons. When the formees tend to follow the model of Moses, the formators should not shower upon them words of consolation and acts of affection. It is important to use the art of scolding without any leniency.

A Living *Magnificat*

In 15:1-18 we find the called one transforming into a person full of praise, when he, following the instructions of the Master could successfully cross the Red Sea. He confesses that it was the Master who had done everything. "The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him; my father's God, and I will exalt him" (v. 2). The formation becomes complete only when one is transformed into a song of praise of the divine glory. Mary, who was called to become the mother of God, sang the *Magnificat* and turned into a hymn of God's glory (Lk 1:46-55). A disciple attains real perfection as he/she could enjoy the foretaste of heavenly life and becomes its living symbol on earth.

A Confession

The formee could grow into the divine maturity at the experience of the Red Sea miracle which was performed by the Formator. He, with his heart and soul proclaimed the truth that it is the Lord who works through him. Naming his second son Eliezer (which means "My God is helper"), Moses exclaimed: "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh" (18:3). Such confessions are the signs that one is attaining perfection in discipleship.

Mediator of Covenant

The divine Pedagogue appoints the formee as the mediator of the covenant which He made with Israel (ch 19-24). Moses informs the people the divine instructions; he prepares them for covenant; he intimates to Yahweh the response of Israel. Thus the formee unites both God and humans, and becomes fully engaged in the task of establishing the covenant which elevated humans to the status of children of God. Here we find the sacred duty of the called one to priestly/religious life. The Animator approves the faithfulness of

the formee and made him his representative. Should not the human formators follow such magnanimity of the divine Master?

One Who 'Dwells' with God

The formee has to run here and there for executing the task assigned to him/her. Even during this external occupation, it is necessary that he/she should 'dwell' together with (*upavasam*) the Formator. The Master invited the disciple to be with him for forty days (24:18; 34:5-8). To see the divine face alone, hear the divine voice alone, prostrate before Him, and engage in mediatory prayer – such acts are the intrinsic worth of the discipleship. When Moses dwelt with God for forty days, his face became radiant (34:29-35). Also we can see in the case of Jesus, the new Moses the event of transfiguration (Mt 17:1-5).

A Holy Obstnacy

There is a scene in which the formee shows 'obstnacy' to the Formator (33:12-23). He wanted to see with his own eyes the divine glory. If the Master had found favour with him, He should fulfil this earnest desire. Although the Lord tried to convince Moses the truth that no one may see Him and live, still the disciple persisted in his demand. Finally the Master yielded to the obstnacy of Moses. Here we find the deep and intimate relationship between the Formator and formee. The Lord thus expresses this: "I am pleased with you and I know you by name." (v 17). To know means to have an intimate and total and experiential enjoyment which leads to the acceptance and approval of the person. Also in the religious/priestly formative process there is relevance for such sincere obstnacy and ardent desire.

A Disciple Greater than the Master

When the Master decided to exterminate the unfaithful Israel from the earth, the formee tried to pacify and tactfully persuade Him and interceded on behalf of the people (32:11-14; Num 14:15-19). Then the Formator listened to the pleading of the formee. Likewise when the Israelites rebelled against Moses, he fell face down and humbly beseeched in favour of them; even the disciple was ready to do penance for the rebels (Num 16:22; 16:41-50; 21:4-9). If the Lord is not willing to pardon them, let Him blot Moses' name out

of the book of life (32:32). Is it not pertinent in our formative process to let some times the disciple become greater than the master?

An Evaluation

The divine Formator thus eulogizes his beloved formee: “When a prophet is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions; I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses, I have entrusted my entire house to him. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in fiddles; he sees the form of the Lord” (Num 12:6-8). How glorious is this evaluation about the disciple! Yahweh makes clear the fundamental difference between Moses and others. The formee is His servant. The Hebrew term *‘ebed* has a profound significance. It does not refer to a person who works for wages. Rather, it denotes one who is very dear to the Master, one who lives the ideas and ideals of his lord. Thus the Formator showers upon His formee laudatory words. No boundaries are set forth. Can the human formators imitate such totally positive evaluation concerning the formees? One thing is noteworthy. The Lord was not uttering these words directly to Moses. He was addressing Miriam and Aaron who revolted against the disciple.

The Formee Explodes

The formative process has to cover the whole life. Even if one may become very mature, he/she may occasionally stumble. Human life has ups and downs. At some critical times one may forget whatever had learned and practised. The long cherished patient mentality may go to pieces. We can see such a phenomenon in the life of Moses. Few events are studied below.

Instance I

The people quarrelled with Moses for meat. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused. At the negative reactions of both parties, the formee who was designated as a very meek person in Num 12:3, exploded and said: “Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant? ... Where can I get meat for all these people?... If this is how you are going to treat me, then kill me right now... Do not let me face my own ruin” (Num 11:12-15). The disciple who had lost self-control was threatening the Master with

unutterable and hard words. The Lord teaches the human formators how should they behave on such situations. He pacified the disciple and solved the problem by sending more quail than was needed (11:18-20, 31-35). The people ate the meat to the content of their hearts. Then the Lord punished the rebels with a severe plague.

Instance II

When the people had no water to drink they grumbled against Moses (Ex 17:1-7). They were almost ready to stone him. The agitated formee turned against the Formator and demanded him, "what I am to do with these people?" This amounted to question the Master. Even at this juncture the Formator was not at a loss. He made water come out of the rock for the people to drink, and solved the crisis.

Reflexion VIII

At the execution of the task the called one may be exposed to numerous challenges. On such difficult times many may be tempted to find fault with those who oppose them. But Moses was complaining to the one who had called him. This is indeed a laudable model. It was the Formator who had given the formee such a task. Without the divine grace nobody can face the complicated problems. Hence one has to take refuge in God's presence. Those who are free with the Master may dare to complain, quarrel and even put the blame on him. There is nothing wrong in such reactions. Indeed, the divine Pedagogue likes such protests. The formators should learn how to practise unfailing forbearance in dealing with the formees. The divine Master's behaviour should inspire us.

The Fall and its Repercussion

Humans are but a mere breath (Ps 39:5,11). Even those who have attained maturity may succumb to temptations. This had happened to Moses.

The Defiance

The thirsty people began to quarrel with Moses (Num 20:1-12). The Master promptly extended a helping hand. He told the disciple to speak to the rock before the murmuring people, and it

will pour out its water. The agitated Moses did not exactly obey what the Lord had said. He bawled out angrily to the community: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then he raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. The Master did not like such a defiant action. The formee was supposed to reveal the divine holiness before the people. Unfortunately the disciple did not put complete trust in the Formator; he failed to bear witness to God's holiness before the assembly. Instead of commanding the rock, Moses struck it twice with his staff. If he would have only commanded, as the Master had asked, there would have gushed out water from the rock. Seeing it the Israelites would have glorified the Lord. But Moses failed to obey the divine instruction. Moreover he burst out against the people.

Its Aftermath

The Formator did not take lightly such a defiant attitude. Since forty years the Lord was trying hard to transform the elected people into his children, his treasured possession and a holy nation (Ex 19:5-6). He had called Moses and appointed him to lead them by becoming His voice and face. Now the formee had transgressed the divine command in the very presence of the Israelites. It was a bad example and scandal in their eyes. The immature people would have taken it as a license to practise unfaithfulness to the Lord. Thus the fall of Moses had a community dimension. One should not look at his outburst and faithless action as a lapse in his relationship with the Master. In this light we can understand the punitive response of the Formator. Such a punishment serves as a warning and lesson for those leaders who publically in the presence of the community manifest blatant infidelity towards the Lord.

The Agony of the Formator

The punishment was a severe and very painful one for the formee who had liberated the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt and led them to the vicinity of the Promise Land. He had then an uncontrollable desire to enter the Promised Land before his death. Still the Master did not fulfil the last wish of the one who had been with the people for forty years in their sorrows and joys, successes and failures, falls and declines, hunger and thirst. The Lord calmly

explains to the disciple its reason in Num 27:12-14. Formator opted for the punishment in consideration of the future benefit of the covenant people. At such a decision the heart of the divine Animator would have bled for the disciple whom He had loved very much. Still the Formator could not withdraw his decision.

A Compassionate Act

The loving Master gave Moses a special permission. He allowed the formee to climb Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah (Dt 34:1-4). There the Lord showed him the whole land making him familiar with each locality and individual names. In this act one can see the attitude of a loving host who, with great interest and pride, takes initiative to show the guest his land and possessions. The Formator was providing his beloved formee with a vision which transcended the horizons of bodily eyes. The compassionate Master gives Moses the grace to rivet his eyes on the land of his dreams, enjoy it to his heart's content and treasure it in his inner self. This act filled his mind with deep inner peace and bliss. Without taking his eyes off the sight the called one slept in the Lord. He entered into the divine rest. There in the heavenly paradise he found the fullness and culmination of life of the Promised Land. The disciple became a being of celebration, like the Triune God. The One who called Moses to 'take' (his name meant to draw out, take) the people, took the formee to Himself and made him one with Him. Thus the disciple found his self-realization (*atmasakshatkara*) in God-realization (*Iswarasakshatkara*).

Reflexion IX

The divine Animator looked at the last scene of Moses' formation as an auspicious act. Of course the formee's last desire was not fulfilled. Even at the movement of human disappointment he was given the grace to repeat again and again the words of Jesus the new Moses: "Not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42). The cross became for him crown, the period of suffering the hour of glory. Thus he could participate in the formative process of the Son of God, who became the Son of Man. The Lord allowed him to be present at the transfiguration scene at Mount Tabor, the tent of glory, and could converse with Christ about his Passover to the heavenly Jerusalem (Lk 9:28-35).