

The Solar Myth

IN THE RELIGION OF JUDAISM we hear of a God making certain promises to a man by the name of Abraham. He promised that he would make Abraham's seed as numerous as the sands upon the seashore; and we are told how he dealt with Abraham's grandson Jacob, who was the husband of four wives, by whom he had twelve sons and one daughter. These are looked upon as the forefathers of the Jewish nation.

This is an astronomical allegory dealing with the migration of the heavenly bodies, as will be evident from a careful perusal of the 49th chapter of Genesis and the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, where the blessings of Jacob upon his sons show how they are identified with the twelve signs of the zodiac:

Simeon and Levi sharing the sign Gemini, the twins, and the feminine sign Virgo being allotted to Jacob's only daughter, Dinah; Gad represents the sign Aries; Issachar, Taurus; Benjamin, Cancer; Judah, Leo; Asher, Libra; Dan, Scorpio; Joseph, Sagittarius; Napthali, Capricorn; Reuben, Aquarius; and Zebulun, Pisces. The four wives are the four phases of the Moon and Jacob is the Sun.

This is similar to the teaching we find among the Greeks, where Gaia, the Earth, is the wife of Apollo, the Sun; and among the Egyptians, where heat and moisture, the Sun and the Moon, were personified in Osiris and Isis. The sacred rivers

Jordan and Ganges are also connected etymologically with the river Eridanus,* which is one of the constellations. It means "source of descent," and for agriculturalist such as were these ancient people, these rivers were the sources of the Waters of Life.

Josephus tells us that the Jews carried the twelve signs of the zodiac on their banners, and camped around the tabernacle which held the seven-branched candlestick representing the Sun and the heavenly bodies which move inside the circle formed by the twelve signs of the zodiac.

The Jews located their temples so that the four corners pointed northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest and the sides directly north, east, south, and west; and like all solar temples, the main entrance was in the east, so that the rising Sun might illumine its portal

and herald each day the victory of light over the powers of darkness.

Thus was brought to nascent humanity the message that the contest of light and darkness on the material plane is but the counterpart of a similar contest in the moral and mental worlds where the human soul is groping its way toward the light. The battle of light and darkness in the material world, like all other phenomena, is a suggestion of the realities in the invisible realms. Therefore, these truths were given to man as myths by divine leaders who led him until his growing intellect gave birth to arrogance which caused his benefac-

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tors to withdraw, and let him learn by the hard knocks of experience. Then he forgot them and has come to regard the ancient stories of gods and demigods as imaginary.

Yet, even the early Christian Church was imbued with this knowledge of the significance of the solar myth, for the Cathedral of St. Peter at Rome is built facing the east, like all other solar temples, telling humanity of the “Great Light of the World,” who is to come and dispel the spiritual darkness which as yet envelops us—the Light Bringer who shall bring peace on Earth and goodwill among men, causing the nations to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

The Jews greeted the Sun with the morning-sacrifice, and took leave of it at sunset in the similar manner by an evening oblation, offering up on their sabbath an additional sacrifice to the lunar race-god, Jehovah. Him they also worshiped by sacrifice at the new Moon. One great feast was Easter, when they celebrated the Passover, the time when the Sun “passes over” its easter(n) node, leaving the southern hemisphere where it winters and commencing its northern journey in its chariot of fire, hailed with joy by men as their savior from hunger and cold which would inevitably result if it stayed in south declination always.

The last of the Jewish feasts and the most important is the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Sun crosses its western node in autumn, having yielded to man the “bread of life” wherewith to sustain his material being until the next return of the Sun to the northern heavens.

For the above reasons the six southern signs (Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces) which the Sun occupies in winter are always called “Egypt,” the “Land of the Philistines,” etc., a name for something that is bad for “God’s people”; whereas the northern signs (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, and Virgo), through which the Sun passes during the fruitful season, are “heaven,” “the promised land,” which “flows with milk and honey.”

We see this in such passages as the one where the celebration of the Passover is enjoined, to



Albrecht Dürer, German, 1471-1528, *Samson Killing the Lion*, woodcut, c.1496, 38.2 x 27.6 cm (sheet), Restricted gift of Katherine Kuh, 1964.73

By subduing the lion, king of beasts and symbol of the sun forces, Samson demonstrates his identity with the solar power; whose home is Leo, the Lion.

“remember thy coming out of Egypt” (Ex. 13:3). This feast is a rejoicing over the emergence of the Sun from the southern signs. The same indication is in the recorded fact that Jacob was with Joseph in Egypt when he died. At the winter solstice when the Sun of the past year has completed its journey and reached its lowest degree of south declination, it is in the zodiacal sign Sagittarius. By reference to Genesis 49:24, where the dying Jacob speaks of the “bow” of Joseph, it is easy to identify him with the sign Sagittarius, which represents a centaur in the act of drawing his bow, and thus the story of Jacob dying in Egypt with Joseph is re-enacted each year when the Sun dies in the sign Sagittarius at the winter solstice.

The story of Samson is another phase of the solar myth. As long as Samson’s hair was allowed

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to grow, his strength would increase. Samson is the Sun, and its rays represent Samson's hair. From the winter solstice in December to the summer solstice in June the Sun's rays grow, and it gains in strength with every day. This frightens the "powers of darkness," the winter months, the Philistines, for if this Light Bringer continues to reign, their kingdom will come to an end, and they counsel together against Samson to discover wherein his strength lies. They secure the cooperation of the woman, Delilah, which is the sign Virgo, and when Samson, the Sun, passes through that sign in September he is said to have laid his head on the woman's lap and to have confided his secret to her.

She shears him of his locks, for at that time the rays of the Sun begin to grow shorter and lose their strength. Then the Philistines or winter months come and carry the debilitated giant into their prison, the southern signs where the Sun is in winter. They put out his eyes or deprive him of his light and at last bring him to their temple, their stronghold, at the winter solstice. There they subject him to infamous indignities, believing they have vanquished the light completely, but with his last remaining strength the fettered solar giant shatters their temple. Although he dies in the effort, he overcomes his enemies and thus leaves the way clear for another sun-child to be born to save humanity from the cold and famine which would result if he had remained bound in the toils of the powers of darkness, the Philistines, the winter months.

The lives of all the saviors of mankind are also founded upon the passage of the Sun around the circle of the zodiac, which pictures the trials and triumphs of the initiate, and the fact has given rise to the erroneous conclusion that these saviors never existed, that the stories are merely sun-myths. This is wrong. All divine teachers sent to man are cosmic characters, and the ordering of their lives is in accord with the marching orbs, which contain, as it were, an anticipated biography of their lives. Each came with divine spiritual light and knowledge to help man to find God, and therefore the events in their lives were in accord with the events which the physical lightbearer, the



Albrecht Dürer, German, 1471-1528, *Virgin on the Crescent Moon*, title page to *The Life of Mary* (monograms), 1511, 20.3 x 19.6 cm, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

Image represents a Christian version of the Cosmic Virgin on her lunar throne nursing her Sun-Child, the World Savior.

Sun, encounters on its pilgrimage through the year.

The saviors were all born of an immaculate virgin, at the time when darkness is greatest among mankind, as the Sun of the coming year is born, or begins its journey on the longest night of year, when the zodiacal sign Virgo, the Virgin, stands on the eastern horizon between 10:00 and 12:00 P.M. in all latitudes. She remains as immaculate as ever after she has given birth to her sun-child; hence we see the Egyptian goddess Isis sitting on the crescent Moon nursing her divine babe Horus; Astarte, the immaculate lady of Babylon, with her babe Tammuz, and a crown of seven stars over her head; the lady Devaki in India with her infant Krishna; and our own Virgin Mary, giving birth to the Savior of the Western World under the Star of Bethlehem. Everywhere the same story: the immaculate mother, the divine babe, and the Sun, Moon, or Stars. □

*Eridanus: a long winding constellation extending southward from Taurus and containing the bright star Achernar.