

The Cosmic Pattern in the Life of Abraham

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM, like that of every other advanced soul that has come to Earth to teach and to lead the race on its upward path, conforms to universal principles and reveals cosmic truth. True to a fundamental pattern observable in nature everywhere, twelve major events, each marking a progressive step on the way to illumination and oneness with divinity, are embraced in the life experience of Abraham, the first Initiate Teacher to the Fifth Root Race. Since the events encountered by Abraham are similar in their essential nature to those experienced by every aspirant on the path, a study of their spiritual significance cannot fail to bring encouragement and inspiration to the earnest seeker.

The first of the twelve steps is entrance by birth into a new life on Earth for the self-elected purpose of bringing to mankind a message of spiritual liberation. The arrival on Earth of such an Ego is heralded by an angelic annunciation. It is truly a holy event occasioning wide rejoicing among the heavenly Hosts, knowing as they do that it will bring the race closer to the light and hasten the day of its ultimate redemption. According to apocryphal records, it was so with the advent of Abraham.

At the second step Abram—as he was called until the Lord changed his name to Abraham—received his commission as messenger to the peoples of the Aryan Race. He was directed by the Lord to leave his country for another. From Ur in Chaldea, a land in which the esoteric light of the Mysteries shone with unsurpassed splendor, he was required to go to Canaan where, in centuries to come, the doors were



Die Bibel in Bildern, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1789-1853)

Abram Enters the Promised Land

“The first Initiate Teacher of the fifth root race” journeys to Canaan.

open to yet greater Mysteries with the advent of the Christ.

The third step outlined in Abram’s life is his dedication at Bethel, the “house of God.” Here Abram “called upon the name of the Lord” for he had awakened to a new realization of the Divine Presence.

The dedicatory step is the most important one in the life of a true disciple. Progress is measured by his earnestness. If he be reserved and halfhearted, advancement will be slow. Only when his dedication is complete, as in the case of Abram, can the desired objectives be attained. When a disciple surrenders the whole of his life in all its manifold personal and public aspects, his hold on possessions, his attachment to family and friends, his ambitions for honors and preferment—in brief, when he willingly surrenders all that he is and has to the will of the Father, then no obstacle can long delay advancement.

The fourth event to be noted is Abram’s conflict with Pharaoh. It is a test of mortal mind, such as invariably follows upon dedication to high service,

and it challenges the forces of opposition whose antagonistic activity directed against an aspirant creates situations that measure the depth and strength of his self-surrender to the highest. Abram's victory is beautifully described in the words: "And they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

The fifth step came with Abram's withdrawal from Lot. After his complete dedication to the higher life he could no longer associate with the sense life. "Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me." implores Abram of Lot; "if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

To effect this separation definitely and decisively is never easy. It often involves difficult and complicated situations, particularly in personal relationships. But when the problem is faced and solved with an uncompromising adherence to duty and right, added strength and new opportunities for service are the reward. Says the Lord Jehovah to Abram at this stage of the journey: "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

The sixth step in Abram's life follows. This is his war with the five kings. The five kings are none other than the five senses which continue to offer resistance to the commands of the higher self until their mortal qualities and material tendencies have been brought into complete alignment with spiritual purpose. A highly developed soul discrimination is required for rightly judging between the rival claims of the personal and the impersonal, the illusionary and the real. The physical senses, the chief means by which an aspirant advances in the earlier stages of spiritual development, become his principal hindrance at later stages unless they are fully subservient. To mortality belongs all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abram's seventh step was the redemption of his brother Lot, "who dwelt in Sodom." The former's "trained servants" were faculties he had disciplined and made obedient to divine will. Lot was saved by Abram beside Damascus, a city representative of certain spiritual qualities which, when awakened and active, have power to transform man's lower nature. Abram continued successful at this stage of his journey also: "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot."

At the eighth step of his journey toward spiritual unfoldment Abram received instructions concerning transcendent powers from the high priest Melchizedek. These instructions pertained to conscious operation of the united forces of mind and heart.

At the ninth step Abram reaches the goal of every aspirant's ideal—he is *new born*; he becomes an Initiate. The veil that conceals inner Mysteries from the gaze of the profane is lifted and he passes into the great silence, biblically termed the great darkness. Here he receives divine anointing that qualifies him to become a "father of multitudes" and an Illumined Teacher of the Aryan peoples during the critical, formative years of their development. In the midst of outer darkness but inner light—the white light of the spirit—Abram's consciousness was raised to a point enabling him to behold operations on the life side of nature. Invisible causes that lie back of visible effects became apparent to him. He was able to look into the past history, present condition and future destiny of the people whom he was called to lead. He obtained insight into their fundamental traits of character and was able to judge how far guidance and assistance were necessary and helpful—and beyond which they would interfere with free initiative and the unfoldment of individual resources and capacities. Looking into the immediate future he was able to see the vicissitudes he would undergo in the performance of his mission: "for the iniquity of the Amorites" was "not yet full."

Initiation does not relieve a recipient from labor, responsibilities, or grave problems. The power it bestows is not of a nature that ministers to personal interests, comforts or pleasures. So long as these are the results sought after and looked for, Initiation remains unattainable. Initiation is for the purpose of enlarging one's powers and capacities for service. The true Initiate becomes a servant of servants. This was taught and exemplified by Christ Jesus in the Rite of the Footwashing. Abram learned a like lesson from Melchizedek. "He who would be the greatest among you; let him be the servant of all."

At the tenth step Abram consummates the mystic marriage. The deeper meaning of Abram's union with his wife's Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, is uncovered only as the language of symbolism is interpreted aright. It is not discernible in a literal rendering of the incident. Nor is it intended to be so.

Referring to this apparent contradiction between the outer form and the inner content, the Torah declares that “fools see only the outer garment, and the wise see only the soul.” Thus are the pearls of esoteric wisdom protected from defilement by the profane.

Sarai, who later became Sarah, and Hagar represent the feminine principle in its higher and lower aspects respectively; Abram and Ishmael, the higher and the lower masculine. Before that high experience spoken of mystically as the marriage in heaven is attainable, the lower aspects of the feminine and the masculine must be purified and brought into union with the higher. This is the mystic marriage.

The eleventh step is the Rite of Circumcision. This has to do with purification, outward and inward. When the generative life is cleansed its activity is transferred to a set of higher creative centers located in the head. The creative organs are duplicated embryonically in the brain. This is why circumcision is connected exoterically with the generative organs. Esoterically, it pertains to the spiritual awakening of their higher counterparts. When this had been accomplished by Abraham there followed the birth of the cherished son Isaac, whose name means joy. Spiritual illumination is the result of purification symbolically enacted in the Rite of Circumcision.

Abraham reached this stage of illumination at the age of ninety-nine. This number reduces to nine, the numerical power under which the soul of humanity is emancipated. It is the number of the redeemed who follow the Lamb. The eager “dreamer of a land beyond the years” was not ready for the Rite of Circumcision until he had accomplished the exaltation of the feminine or love principle—as the addition of the letter “H” to his name signified. The circumcision included that of Ishmael; in other words, the final purging of his desire nature.

The twelfth and last step remains. This was the call to sacrifice his son Isaac, the object of his deepest affection. It was the supreme and final test of his life, one that has a parallel in the Temptation of Christ Jesus. It is the test of selflessness, often spoken of as



Oil on canvas, 1657. Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), 1591-1666. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

Abraham Casting out Hagar and Ishmael

The mystic marriage of the lower and higher self requires purification of the lower aspects of the candidate's masculine and feminine nature.

the Great Renunciation. When this has been passed successfully, doors open on vast power and multiplied opportunities and responsibilities. The disciple's willingness to serve selflessly has been proved.

Abraham had high aspirations; his trials were correspondingly severe. Great tasks call for high qualifications. Abraham developed these and became an inspired leader of his people. He was richly blessed. From heaven came an Angel bearing the Lord's commendation and blessing. Saith the Lord, “I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

Abraham called the place where the final step in his initiatory journey was taken Jehovah-jireh, meaning the Lord will see. And we read that to this day it is said, “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”

That mount is equally accessible to all who will put forth the effort necessary to scale its heights. Experiences encountered on the ascent are essentially the same for everyone. They differ only in details. The Lord (Law) is no respecter of persons. He who will work with Him (it) will be raised to ultimate heights. □

—Corinne Heline