

Contemporary Mystic Christianity Bible Self-Study Supplement

David and Goliath: The Dweller on the Threshold

For every neophyte, the first test after the dedication to the higher life is that of overcoming Goliath, the giant of evil, or the accumulated misdeeds of the past. This giant is always confronted by the newly-consecrated David in the battle between the Israelites (the soul newborn) and the Philistines (the lower man).

I Samuel 17:38-40

And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

And David, girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

And he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistines.

So David found that he must reject Saul's armor (the outer or external knowing), and learn to depend upon spiritual powers which he evolved within himself. Thus

accurately does this Wisdom Book describe the way of human evolution.

I Samuel 17:3-6

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

And there went out a champion of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

The Dweller on the Threshold represents the accumulated sins of the past. It is an elemental entity which frequently (though not invariably) takes on a hideous shape and bars the passage into the higher realms until it is removed. For forty days (kabbalistic time of preparation) Goliath (the strong) made his boastful offer to meet in single combat any one of the Israelites and so settle the fate of the armies.

I Samuel 17:40-43

And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five

smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; that the stone sank into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

When studied esoterically, David's victory over Goliath is not an impossible fable, but an account of a perfectly natural and recognized process of spiritual growth. The Dweller on the Threshold must be overcome before the disciple can progress further upon the way.

The staff spoken of is the wand of power evolved within man through the lifting of the spinal spirit fire, and the five smooth stones symbolize the five spiritualized physical

senses. When the physical senses are thus spiritualized, one thinks no evil, sees no evil, hears no evil and speaks no evil. The senses then resume their rightful places as channels through which the awakened spirit within man cognizes the works of the Spirit without.

A mystic legend states that when David touched the five stones they all became as one stone, which means that by lifting the senses to the realm of spirit the true essential unity is attained.

Being thus prepared, David was not so unequal for the combat as appearance would indicate. The real strength was with him, not Goliath, and so to David the only possible outcome was victory.

David smote Goliath with a stone in the forehead; a Ruffian, according to Masonic legend, slew Hiram Abiff by the same method. David took the giant's own sword and cut off his head. Evil when transmuted becomes a greater power for good.

David and Jonathan

I Samuel 18:1-4

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the Soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

Then Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

The spiritual compensation for the conquest of evil came to David in his finding Jonathan, one of the most beautiful of the Old Testament characters. We can never know the love of Jonathan until the giant Goliath has been overcome; for Jonathan typifies the intuitive love that becomes an avenue of connection with true spiritual wisdom, and is only known through the difficulty and stress that is born of repentance for wrongdoing, and the effort put forth in restitution and reform. So beautiful is this communion that it is described as a love passing that of woman. The feminine principle is the sacrificial aspect of man's nature. The vesture for the spirit is also feminine in nature, which accounts for the statement that Jonathan stripped himself of his garments and gave them to David. It was always Jonathan who counseled with David, meeting him in the high places; it was he who made David's peace with Saul.

The harp upon which David played to soothe the madness of Saul represents the powers of the interiorly illumined. Within the human body is the "seven-stringed lyre" awaiting revivification and which, when properly

functioning, possesses wonderful powers of healing that are especially efficacious in cases of obsession such as Saul's. Again, legend teaches that the harp upon which David played was made from the ram sacrificed by Abraham on Mount Moriah, and that it always sounded its most exquisite music at midnight. The ram symbolizes attainment through purity and sacrifice; Mount Moriah, "a vision of God." Midnight is the mystic hour when the call is given for service to all who are found worthy to function consciously as "invisible helpers." The story of Abraham's willingness to make the supreme sacrifice of his best-beloved (to put things of the spirit first), marks the beginning of a larger opportunity for spiritual work in the life of the pupil, as the utter lack of malice and revenge places David far upon the way of spiritual Illumination.

"And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." Naioth is the feminine form of the word Naim which means nine. The inner school of the Christian Mysteries contains nine steps or degrees. David as a disciple was working through these degrees. Saul also endeavored to continue with his esoteric work; but he lay naked, that is, he had lost (been stripped of) his spiritual power. David in his encounters with Saul carried in his hand the sword of Goliath, whereby no evil could come unto him. Goliath's sword symbolizes the power of truth augmented by the power of transmuted evil. When Saul cast a javelin it

missed its intended mark and remained suspended above him, even as did the weapon of the evil knight Klingsor when hurled at Parsifal, the pure knight. David said truly, "There is none like it, give it to me."

In sparing the life of Saul, David passed another subtle test. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." When man becomes selfless this is simple; until he reaches this state, this is a most difficult task. In the wilderness of Engedi, David was concealed in a great cave which contained numerous dark caverns. Into one of these Saul entered alone; David gently approached and cut a piece from his cloak. When he had gone a little way, David called to him to give his assurance that he held no evil in his heart toward him. Saul then wept saying, "Thou art more righteous than I." Saul represents the intellectual mind before it is illumined by Spirit; David the impulses of the heart. Saul, the material mind, seeks ever to dethrone the heart and gain supreme control of the personality; the heart, however, as constantly endeavors to become reconciled with the mind to the end that the two may work in unison. Jonathan (wisdom), the son of Saul, cleaves closely to David, ever seeking a reconciliation between David and his father. It is only through the marriage of mind and heart that wisdom really becomes manifest.

"Be not overcome by evil, but rather overcome evil with good." This has always been a Temple maxim. As we learn to become selfless, this is simple; until selflessness is attained, it is most difficult. Sensitiveness, pride, resentment, hurt feelings, all these are but varied forms of selfishness. David, the neophyte, demonstrated the Mystery Temple teaching in returning only good for evil when in the wilderness of Engedi, "the eye of truth."

— ***Corinne Heline***