

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

Jacob's Further Experiences Toward Seership

The thirty-second and thirty-third chapters of Genesis contain the most beautiful passages dealing with the life of Jacob. They tell of his meeting and final reunion with Esau, his all-night wrestle with the Angel at Peniel, and the resultant change of his name from Jacob to Israel. Esau, representative of man's lower nature, must be lifted up and completely transmuted before the glory of the experience of Peniel can be realized. "Alas," cries Faust in desperation over the struggle between the Esau and Jacob qualities in his nature, "two souls are housed within my breast that struggle there for undivided reign."

Genesis 32:1

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

Relative to Jacob's inner development, the Angels here signify his own awakened spiritual faculties. In the realization these brought him, his thoughts were directed to his brother Esau, the unregenerated element in his own nature. Wishing to redeem this, he called it forth — that is, he sent the Angels to bring Esau to him. There can be no permanent satisfaction until the lower nature has been completely purged.

When the Angels brought the message that Esau was coming to meet him, and "four hundred men with him," Jacob was "greatly afraid and distressed." Turning to the Lord he prayed for deliverance from the ordeal before him.

Genesis 32:10,11

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, for with my staff

I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

Jacob had gone far on the Path, but the tenacious hold of brother Edom (Esau-darkness of mortality and sin) was not yet completely loosed. "With my staff (serpent power) I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two bands." The opposing forces of good and evil were still contending on the battle ground of himself. To reconcile them Jacob sent his servants with presents to Esau and commanded that when they met him they should say, "Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face, peradventure he will accept of me."

Having taken this definite step towards effecting a rapprochement with Esau (transmutation of his lower nature), Jacob "was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

Genesis 32:25-31

And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

And he said, Let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, What is thy name, And he said Jacob.

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.

And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?

And he blessed him there.

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

At this time Jacob was doing esoteric work directed toward effecting certain transformations in the liver, seat of the desire nature. As desires are cleansed of passion a change takes place in that organ, physically and spiritually. In the next Root Race bodily organs will take on flowerlike forms. The first in which such a transformation will be effected is the liver. As this proceeds a condition develops when the change becomes decisive. Jacob's conscious readjustment is referred to as his thigh being out of joint. It is further described as occurring at the breaking of the day, for it signals a new birth and a new name: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."

The following legend well describes man's struggle and conquest:

Before the birth of man, the Angels sang hymns of joy and praise. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. " When Adam appeared they asked, "Is this the one for whom we sang hymns?" God said, "No, for he will fall. " At Noah's birth they repeated the question. "No, for he will plant the vine." Abraham? "No, for his progeny will be Ishmael." Isaac? "No, for he begat Esau, a displeasure unto God." Jacob? "Yes, for his name shall be changed to Israel and his descendants shall be called the 'children of Israel', which interpreted means 'sanctified before birth and remained holy'."

Israel means one who prevails with God. Origen, an early Church Father, interpreted its meaning as "one who sees God." Analyzing the component parts of the name we find "el" means Life. The syllables "is" and "ra" are feminine and masculine in their powers. Interpretation of these factors indicates a new power and a new life through union of the masculine and the feminine principles. A further analysis of the name reveals its Egyptian origin, "is" being derived from Isis, goddess of the Moon, and "ra," the Sun God Ra. The significance here is the same: blending of the potencies of the Sun and the Moon.

Jacob had so far transmuted the mortal in himself into the immortal, the terrestrial into the celestial, that in his final encounter with Esau he beheld in him the very countenance of divinity itself: "I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God." Jacob also testified to having seen "God face to face," and as a memorial to that exalting experience he called the place where it occurred Penial, meaning the face of God. It is recorded that after this event the Angel, who had previously declared to Jacob that his name shall be Israel, now called him Israel.

Genesis 31:1,3,4

And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachael, and

unto the two handmaids.

And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Jacob's meeting with Esau refers to a meeting with the Dweller on the Threshold. This is a term generally used to describe an entity made up of one's accumulated evil generated in past lives and yet awaiting liquidation. Every individual has built for himself such a vortex of destructive power, just as every individual has created for himself by the good of past incarnations a protecting presence, which is sometimes referred to as a Guardian Angel.

At a certain stage of spiritual development the aspirant on the path "opens his eyes" to what the Lords of Destiny have previously concealed from his sight — a beneficent protection for those not yet strong enough to face their own evil karma and to consciously take upon themselves the obligation to dissolve and transmute it into good. When this is done one's power for serving constructive forces is greatly increased. A degree of mastership is attained. A miracle man appears.

Note that Jacob did not meet Esau until after his encounter with the Angel. He was afraid to do so, even

though he had made, as he thought, all necessary preparation for the event. But he was not yet ready; he was not strong enough. Not until he had risen in consciousness and come into a greater awareness of his innate divine power, and to clearer realization of the continual presence and cooperation of Angels and other spiritual forces, was he qualified to meet the Dweller.

Genesis 33:5-10

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachael, and they bowed themselves.

And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?

And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand:

for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

Among the many accounts in mystic literature dealing with the Rite of Initiation, there is none that deals more beautifully with that part which involves transmutation of evil into good than the above description of Jacob's meeting with Esau. It is a superb Angel of Light. As Jacob exclaims: "I had seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God." Jacob also testified to having seen "God face to face." Seeing such transmuted evil awakens a depth of tenderness, sympathy and compassion for the sorrow and suffering in the world and a life of loving, selfless service thereafter becomes inevitable. Among those having this vision are the friends of man, the lovers of the race, the saviours of their kind.

After this experience Jacob was ready to cross the Jordan (the stream of spiritual life) and go east (whence cometh light) to a place called Succoth, where he built him a house.

Later, Jacob "came in peace" to Shechem, where he bought a parcel of ground from the children of Hamor. There he spread his tent and erected an altar which he called El-elohe-Israel. (Genesis 33:18-20)

Hamor is the Sanskrit name for Mercury, the god of wisdom who is guiding humanity along the path to Cosmic

Knowing. The tent symbolizes Jacob's mind; the altar, the illumined spiritual state into which he had entered. This is indicated by the name of the altar, which means literally the god-life of Israel.

Every incident in the life of Jacob, as in that of all other characters in the Bible, has reference to experiences in the spiritual life. They are applicable, therefore, to everyone and at all times. The Bible contains past history; but what is of yet greater importance, it contains interpretations of problems in the life of individuals and of the race.

The thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis deals with the defilement of Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, by Shechem, son of Hamor, and the manner in which this wrong was avenged by Simeon and Levi. In the words of the text, this "thing ought not to be done." But the unsavory story is included for more than a simple moral admonition. The Bible would not be the inexhaustible spiritual treasure book that it is were this not so.

Perhaps the astrological key may best be applied for an initial reading of its esoteric content. Dinah is assigned to Virgo, the sign of virginity. The pictorial symbol for the sign is a virgin holding a lily branch or a sheaf of wheat. The lily is a symbol of purity; wheat represents the sacred seed of life. Hamor, as previously recorded, is the Sanskrit for Mercury. Shechem, a child of wisdom, aspires to the hand

of Dinah, the ideal of purity. The Shechemites, having recognized the beauty of this ideal, responded readily to the suggestion of the sons of Jacob that they perform the Rite of Purification by being circumcised even as they. Their aspiration is voiced in the eager and earnest plea to the sons of Jacob (higher self): "Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye say unto me I will give."

But while the Shechemites glimpsed this vision and aspired to it, they were yet unregenerated and the ideal, therefore, suffered defilement with the result that they experienced violent death and the destruction of their city. All that is of the sense life reaps death. What is sown in the flesh brings a harvest of corruption.

The Shechemites were the victims of double dealing. Simeon and Levi were the instruments for its execution. These two brothers come under the sign of Gemini, the twins. This sign is dual and relates to the higher and lower nature in man. In obedience to their higher nature they restored their sister, Dinah (chastity) to their father's house; by their lower nature they dealt deceitfully with the Shechemites, putting the men to the sword, taking the women and children captive, and plundering their city and countryside of all their wealth.

This was retaliation; it was rendering evil for evil — not the way of the spirit. Speaking through Jacob, the voice of

the higher self takes the two sons to task for the destruction they have wrought. "Ye have troubled me," said the father, "to make me odious among the inhabitants of the land . . . they shall gather themselves together against me and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." The sons, voicing the consciousness of the unilluminated, concrete mind, defend their action by what seems to them unquestionable justification: "Should he," they ask, "deal with our sister as with an harlot?"

The story of Dinah's defilement is not a pleasant one. Among those who perceive little or nothing beyond the literal content of the scriptures are many who would have this story, and others of like character, expurgated from the Bible. But the Bible is not given us for entertainment, nor to lull us into a satisfaction with ourselves as we are. The Bible is for our instruction and redemption. It draws no flattering picture of our unregenerate condition. It is uncompromising in revealing the truth about fallen humanity.

This it does in the story of Dinah. It is a picture of degenerate man, of race that has fallen into lustful ways, and the death and destruction that follows thereupon. It serves to reveal man to himself and to show him the consequences of his fall into a life of sensual gratification. With this comes a conviction of what the theologian calls sin. There is a recognition that the spirit is failing to realize

and to express its true nature. After this may come a definite choice to turn and tread the way that leads to restoration of a lost spiritual estate.

Such a way is open to all, and the Bible never fails to point it out. It does not merely paint the sorry picture of fallen humanity; it affirms and reaffirms man's ability to arise and return to its Father's house. In the story of Dinah we note that she was restored to her father. Also, that Levi, one of the brothers who aided in the restoration, was still in an unenlightened state wherein he also was guilty of grave crimes, much to his father's sorrow and regret. Yet from Levi sprang the priesthood, the very guardians of spiritual law. In Israel they constituted the elect, the only ones to serve in the Holy of Holies. Herein lies the hopeful side of the picture. Herein is to be found the promise to all humanity. Shechem is destined to rise because he is a son of Hamor, the wisdom on high. Dinah, love that is of the soul, is rescued from pollution in the flesh. Levi departs from paths of contention and conflict, and enters into the holy place of the Temple of Peace.

Genesis 35:14

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

*Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:
And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.*

And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

Divested of foreign gods (false beliefs), purified, and clad in the new garment (body) of an Initiate, Jacob obeys the call of God and goes to Beth-el (the house of God). He has attained to a state of consciousness where there is no death; eternal life is realized here and now. This is an attainment awaiting every worthy aspirant on the path.

The idols and jewelry that were brought to Jacob, including the images stolen by Rachel, were buried under an oak at Shechem. This is symbolic of the mind's detachment from things on which it formerly bestowed time and thought. Dependence is no longer placed in external aids, but on inner strength. The act signifies a renunciation of all things personal and complete dedication to the things of the spirit. It is now that Jacob responds to the name Israel.

While Jacob dwelt in the land to which he had come, it is recorded that his son Reuben "went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine." Here again, the question may well be asked why this incident be included? The answer is, in part, that it should prompt just such an inquiry. If the questioner is sufficiently in earnest he will be convinced that it is included for better and deeper reasons than those apparent to the casual reader of the literal fact. Following that conviction he will look beneath the often repulsive external narrative and, in doing so, uncover treasures of spiritual truth such as only a thoughtful and sincere seeker is worthy to receive. This principle is followed throughout in the writing of the Bible and is recognized by esoteric investigators deciphering its hidden wisdom.

The astrological key will again serve us well. Reuben is Aquarius. Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, represents qualities of modesty and humility, fitting companions to love, the attribute symbolized by her mistress. Bilhah's two sons Dan and Naphtali come, respectively, under the signs Scorpio and Capricorn. Scorpio is the sign of regeneration and Capricorn of the Christed mind. These are attributes of New Race pioneers. In the Aquarian (Reuben) Age they will be the possession of many. Astrologically speaking, the story tells of the Aquarian ideal realized through a blending of the qualities of Reuben (Aquarius) and Bilhah's two sons,

Dan and Napthali (Scorpio and Capricorn). "Israel knew it."
The initiated understood these sacred mysteries.

— ***Corinne Heline***