

# **Contemporary Mystic Christianity**

## **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

### **Jacob and the Path of Initiation**

*And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

*And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. — Genesis 25:21-23*

When mind was first given to humanity it coalesced with the desire nature instead of uniting with the spirit, with the result that the elder (spirit) became subservient to the younger (senses). Such continues to be man's condition in his present state of evolution.

*Genesis 25:24-26*

*And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.*

*And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment: and they called his name Esau.*

*And after that came his brother out, and his hand took*

*hold on Esau's heel: and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was three-score years old when she bare them.*

Looking to the values conveyed by names we find Esau meaning red, hairy, mortal man. Jacob, "whose hand took hold of Esau's heel," means understanding. He represents the spirit, a stranger to this mortal plane and ever awaiting a return to the Father's house.

*Genesis 25:2 7,28*

*And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.*

*And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

Isaac and Rebekah represent the masculine and feminine, the will and love principles. Jacob and Esau represent the higher and lower natures, respectively. Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob. The feminine principle was the first to awaken to spiritual reality. On the wings of love a neophyte rises to the higher level of spirit (Jacob).

*Genesis 25:31-34*

*And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*

*And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?*

*And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore*

*unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.  
Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and  
he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way:  
thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Esau belongs to Edom; he is red and hairy, a cunning hunter and a man of the fields. This description identifies Esau with the unregenerate nature in man. So long as Esau is in control, man lives an ephemeral life, and his values are measured in terms of things. The Esau nature despises its heritage of innate divinity, the things of flesh being at enmity with those of God.

The story of Jacob and Esau is another version of the Parable of the Prodigal Son; also the legend of the Two Brothers which owes its origin to one of the Schools of the Egyptian Mysteries. They all deal with unhappy experiences that follow upon rejection of the true heritage of the spirit. The husks of a mundane life and the appetites of the senses leave the spirit hungry and faint. After a time, the emptiness and the weariness of such a life of the senses cause the spirit to turn from the material to the spiritual, from the false to the true, from the unreal to the real.

*Genesis 26:1*

*And there was a famine in the land, beside the first  
famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went  
unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines unto Gerar.*

Famine caused Abraham to go into Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs, as it led Isaac to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in the country of Gerar. The symbolical values are similar. But they are identical in nature only, not in degree. For the Lord appeared unto Isaac and bade him not to go down into Egypt, but to dwell in a land which He would show him. He promised to bless Isaac, and to multiply his seed in that land even as the stars of heaven. And it was so.

*Genesis 26.-14,17*

*And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.*

*And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.*

The mind (Abimelech), even in its highest expression, is of itself separative in nature. It may, as in this instance, recognize that spirit (Isaac) is mightier, yet prefer to have it depart rather than attempt to become one with it. But recognition of the spirit's superiority precedes its acceptance first as a partner, and then as the supreme guide to life. Abimelech took the second step. He sought out Isaac in Gerar, where he dwelt. Said Isaac: "Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?" Abimelech answered: "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath

betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou will do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord."

Isaac then made them a feast and "they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace."

Before this state of concord had been established between Isaac and Abimelech, there had been a contention between the servants of the two masters. It was over wells (truth), and the place was Gerar (struggle). The Philistines had filled with earth the wells Abraham had dug. Wisdom in its outward form is ever extinguished by the unenlightened. But "truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again." And so it came to pass in the same day that Abimelech was feasted by Isaac that his servants came to him with the glad announcement that they had "found water."

Isaac triumphed through persistence in good works. The first well he dug was claimed by the herdsmen of Gerar. It was called Esek (contention). The second was likewise appropriated by the Gerarites and was, therefore, called Sitwah (enmity). The third, according to its proverbial charm, caused no strife. Peace was on its way. So Isaac called that well Rehobath, meaning *the Lord hath made*

*room for us.* The last well, the one reported after the covenant had been made between Abimelech and Isaac, was christened Beer-sheba, the well of dedication.

— ***Corinne Heline***