

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

The Pilgrimage Toward Light

The first five chapters of Deuteronomy are a recapitulation of the story of the wanderings given in Exodus and Numbers, and constitute the introduction to an oration delivered by Moses toward the end of the fortieth year in the wilderness. In his introduction, Moses not only describes the events of the forty-year period, but demonstrates that in every instance the moral progress or retrogression of the Israelites met with its due reward or punishment at the hands of the Lord, or Law. In the fifth chapter we find another version of the Ten Commandments.

The first chapter is a synopsis of the story of their wanderings until Canaan was reached for the first time, when the Israelites feared to go up and possess their inheritance and were, therefore, turned back into the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 2:1,3,13,14

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. And the Lord spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn

you northward.

Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zared.

And we went over the brook Zared.

And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zared, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them.

So long as an aspirant has unregenerated elements in his nature — or, in the words of the above text, wanders in the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea — he must encompass Mount Seir, the inheritance of Esau, mortal man. When this is accomplished he is bidden to rise up and go over the brook Zared, whose life-giving waters, as the name signifies, give luxurious growth. This stage of advancement was reached thirty and eight years after the Israelites left Kadesh-barnea. It culminated in the powers of eleven ($30+8=11$). When the forces of eleven lift a disciple to mastership, the "men of war" belonging to his lower nature cease to do battle with his higher; they are "wasted out from the host" that have long opposed the supremacy of the spiritual authority. The Bible is always dealing with principles rather than personalities. The latter enter only as representative types who serve as convenient vehicles for conveying abstract truths in concrete terms.

Those who dedicate their lives in service to humanity live impersonally; their ways are appointed, and the path they follow is indicated by a Guiding Intelligence superior to human reason or unilluminated mortal mind. This aspect of a true neophyte's guidance is exemplified in the Lord Jehovah's direction of His chosen people. When they had consumed all the "men of war" among them, they were instructed to go forth along a specified route. They were directed to "pass over through Ai," the land of the Moabites, "nigh over against the children of Ammon"; thence over the river Arnon and into the land of King Sihon. (The Amorites represent propensities for evil, and Sihon means a sweeping away.)

King Sihon was approached by messengers from Israel, asking him for permission to let the people pass through his land, and for the privilege of buying for proper compensation such supplies as they required. In making this request the messengers promised that in their journey through his land they would turn neither "unto the right hand nor to the left." The King refused, but was over-ruled by a higher power. In other words, the followers of Moses had at this stage of their progress been able to vanquish the insidious temptations of their lower nature so it was no longer at all times in the ascendancy. Sihon's resistance meant his destruction, and with him that of all his people and all his cities. "There was not one city too strong" for

Israel. To them came the command and the promise: "Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayst inherit the land."

The path of spiritual progress concealed within the record of the Israelite's wanderings is a familiar story to every aspirant. The seeker on the Path is not spared difficulties to be encountered on life's journey among those who are selfish, vicious, greedy, ignorant, and at enmity with right and justice. These needs must be met. It is part of his task to conquer them. When this is undertaken with unwavering faith in an ever-present inner guidance and strength, victory is inevitable.

When consciousness is centered on spiritual objectives, and is informed by light from above, it turns neither to mental logic on the right nor to emotional impulses on the left. It follows the middle path whereon head and heart unite to receive the direction of spirit. This highway leads at length to the Promised Land of well-balanced spiritual attainment.

After the conquest of Heshbon, the Israelites journeyed on to Bashan where they came into conflict with King Og, the last of the "giants" (evil). He and his people were also delivered by the united forces of Good into the hands of the onward marching, victorious people. It is recorded of Og that his bedstead was of iron, and that it measured nine

cubits in length and four in breadth. This Goliath among rulers typifies material (iron) might; he was given the opportunity, which comes with the numerical activity of thirteen (9+4), to place his strength at the service of the Elect (transformation of matter into spirit) or be destroyed. King Og represents the maximum of material development; hence, further progress necessitated voluntary cooperation with spiritual enterprise. The end of mortal consciousness had been reached; henceforth it must be uplifted into activities of a spiritual nature or, through failure to receive the fresh creative impulses, suffer annihilation. The lesser state exists but as a prelude to the greater, for its survival is not an end in itself.

The fall of the giant-king Og left the Holy Land open to the Israelites. In thus attaining to the threshold of the Holy Land, the Israelites proved that they had begun the work of transmutation by which evil is transformed into good. Therefore the Lord commanded Moses to ascend Pisgah, whence he was able to survey the surrounding territory westward and northward, and southward and eastward. "Behold it with thine eyes," said the Angel of the Lord, "for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." Since Moses was not to cross Jordan, it was necessary that another Initiate be invested with authority to lead the people, and this was Joshua, son of Nun. "But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this

people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." This incident has reference to an elevation of consciousness that enabled Moses to look into the Memory of Nature and there perceive Joshua's qualifications for succeeding him as the spiritual leader of Israel after his own translation into yet higher fields of endeavor and illumination.

After his descent from Pisgah, Moses gave further instructions to the Israelites, and provided for the establishment of three cities "on this side of Jordan toward the sunrising," to be cities of refuge. These were in the lands of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the only tribes thus far to receive their inheritance. In the life of a disciple "cities of refuge" represent centers whose unfolding powers accompany the process of illumination.

Centers located in the head, the heart and the throat constitute the highest trinity of spiritual powers in man. When they become harmoniously active they are a sanctuary against a crime not limited to physical violence alone, but extending to destruction wrought largely by those who are unaware of the tremendous psychic power which may be used against a neighbor unconsciously by murderous thoughts and killing words. One who knowingly releases violent thoughts is oftentimes more guilty of a crime than a person who commits an overt deed. The latter

may unknowingly act upon an impulse generated by another and released into the psychic atmosphere, whence it gravitates to negative minds as a criminal suggestion. Murderous thought forms, for instance, are not infrequently willfully created by individuals who understand their malign power. Consciously and purposefully, such evils are often sent out in the knowledge, that someone may fall victim to their impress and execute a crime for which the principal instigator goes free in the civil law.

Moses uttered specific warnings against falling prey to various forms of negative development and black magic. To a disciple who is entering upon a study of forces active on inner planes, and who is beginning to investigate them first-hand with a view to mastering them, such advice as Moses offers is especially pertinent. "There shall not be bound among you," he urges, "any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." (Deuteronomy 18:10,11)

Moses was at once the leader of the masses and the instructor of the few. To such as Joshua and Caleb, type characters as they are, he imparted the deeper mysteries pertaining to the higher principles of man. These are woven into the outer fabric of the publicly spoken word where a

spiritually perceiving student may discern them today as clearly as did the understanding associates of the Initiate-Teacher in centuries long past.

A resume of the wanderings having been completed, Moses recounts the story of the Ten Commandments: how he received them on Mount Sinai; and how the Israelites themselves saw that the mountain burned with fire, and heard the Voice out of the midst of the fire; but, being overcome with fear, besought Moses to act as mediator between them and God, and to transmit to them the statutes of the Law of I H V H.

In accordance with their own desires, therefore, he now stands before them as a teacher, mediating between them and spirit; in this, his farewell oration, he reviews for them all the teachings given during the years of wandering.

— ***Corinne Heline***