

Esoteric Bible Studies

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TEXT

10. And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

11. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not.

17. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19. And he called the name of that

place Beth-el; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

—Genesis 28:10-19.

INTERPRETATION

These verses constitute an important part in the story of the attainment of spiritual illumination by Jacob as it is given in the book of Genesis. Beer-sheba means in the Hebrew the "Well of the Oath," and "Haran" means a high place, thus referring to a change of thought and the lifting of the consciousness above material things, which is always the most important step. Like all mankind who are unawakened spiritually, in the early stages of Jacob's development "the sun was set," and he had only stones for pillows. The ladder reaching from earth to heaven with the angels ascending and descending symbolizes the divine illumination that became his. The angels are the thoughts, words, and deeds of love with which he blessed all those with whom he came in contact. Physiologically, verse 12 refers to the various segments of the spinal column and the ascending of the spinal fluid therein. Verses 13, 14, and 15, are not only a promise of material gifts but also of a complete atomic purification of the body. The Temple becomes cleansed for the indwelling god, a very necessary process at a certain period of development as shown in the life of the great way-shower, Christ Jesus, when He drove the money lenders and the traffickers out of the Temple. Every neophyte when he has been through this wonderful experience echoes these words of Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

Verse 17 does not mean fear in the accepted sense of the word but rather a great awe and reverence. When one

is spiritually awakened then he is conscious of the wonderful beauty and glory of the inner planes and the marvelous workings of the beings inhabiting them. This experience we find duplicated in that of Stephen at the time of his martyrdom. (Acts, 7:56).

Verse 18 is very significant in its meaning. A pillow is a support for one when reposing, thus suggesting a *horizontal* position. Pillar is a firm *upright column*, a support suggesting strength. It is important to note that Jacob used the stone as a pillow in darkness when the sun had set, and again the same stone became his pillar when the light had dawned, or when the morning had come. This verse therefore holds the story of generation turning to regeneration, meaning that his spiritualization was accomplished through the process of lifting the spinal spirit fire. The oil poured upon the stone is the wisdom and understanding through which he accomplished this great work and the spiritual results obtained therefrom.

"Beth" in Hebrew means a house, and "El" means life. The place of Jacob's body had become the house of life eternal, the body of the Initiate that knows no death. Any city esoterically symbolizes a state of consciousness and "Luz" means light. Physiologically, the story of Jacob's ladder shows us the process of lifting the spinal spirit fire and the effect upon the physical body as this great life force passes through the domains of the different plexuses. Each of these plexuses receives a certain vibration from the astrological sign governing it, and so each individual responds in a different manner to the raising of the spirit fire.

From the cosmic standpoint this wonderful ladder of Jacob reveals to us the entire scheme of evolution. We see the egos descending from the World of God down to the material plane and ascending again to be reunited with God at the end of this great Day of Manifestation. We also find the teaching of re-

birth embodied here for we see again the pattern God has shown in the mount of spiritual consciousness to the Initiate—the Teacher or Leader of humanity; we see here the Life Cycle as the egos proceed from the physical world up to the Third Heaven and back again until all the lessons of earth life have been learned.

In these few verses we are studying one of the teachings of Initiation belonging to the Lesser Mysteries. In all religions preceding the Christian Dispensation the candidate always passed through various tests and trials, and these were symbolized by steps. Hence the certain number of steps in the Masonic Order leading up to the throne of King Solomon. The pyramid near Babylon was built with seven rounds of steps to correspond to the different functions of the seven planets. Esoteric Masonry refers to Jacob's Ladder as having nine rounds or steps, the bottom one upon the earth and the top one in heaven, which ladder refers to the path of the nine Lesser Mysteries. The Hebrew word for ladder is "Salam," which means "elevated" or "lifted up." In the wonderful subject of Initiation we find that all the various steps which we are studying as external events *are but processes by which are being built usable powers within the body of the aspirant for Initiation.*

My Symphony

To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich; to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, never hurry; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common—this is to be my symphony.

William Ellery Channing.