

## **BIBLE MYSTERY AND BIBLE MEANING OLD TESTAMENT**

### **Lesson 4**

#### **Patriarchs Part II**

*Required Reading Genesis 25:19-34, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.*

We know comparatively little about Isaac's early life. There is no mention of him after the attempted sacrifice until he meets Rebekah, who has come from the city of Nahor to become his wife.

Apparently Isaac (joy) was a quiet, peace-loving soul with a deep trust in God. He seems to have been overshadowed, by Abraham, his dynamic father; and later to have let the strong-willed Rebekah (beauty) in the main, have her way.

Because of another famine in Canaan, Isaac and his family moved to the city-state of Gerar, where Abimelech ruled as king. Here Isaac is said to have found favor in the sight of the Lord, as God renewed the promise that he had made to Abraham. Isaac was to inherit the land, and through his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

The incident of the wells (Genesis 26:12-33) shows clearly that Isaac was a man of peace. Abraham's servants had dug these wells, and Isaac thus had prior claim to them, but he gave them up in order to keep peace with Abimelech. One must realize the necessity of water, and the importance of even a small well or spring in an arid country, in order to see the narrative's full significance.

According to the account, Abimelech realized the futility of continuing the struggle with Isaac, who enjoyed the favor of his God. Thus the two men made a covenant, after which Abimelech left in peace. The finding of water, in the well that Isaac's servants had just dug, would seem to be a result of his nonresistant attitude.

Isaac continued to prosper. What appears to be lack of inner strength, we can recognize as an intuitive trust in God, and a deep abiding devotion.

Isaac was forty when he and Rebekah were united. Like many of the women of the Bible, Rebekah had some difficulty conceiving, to give birth to a new consciousness can take time. Twenty years pass and our story tells of the struggle going on within Rebekah, and the Lord said to her, two nations are within, and the elder shall serve the younger. Of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau was born first and thus became the principal heir. The Bible tells us nothing about their early life. When they reached manhood, however, one can hardly imagine a greater contrast than between Esau (red hairy) and Jacob (sup-planter).

#### **DECEPTION OR LAW**

In reading the Bible it is easy to get caught up in the appearance of what is being shared, and that is exactly how it should be. A good story can draw us in; we can sense the emotions; we can feel a connection to the individual characters. This link is exactly what we should experience for we are sharing how we grow spiritually.

We have stories throughout our literature about tricksters, and we often want them to succeed, to use the mind effectively to achieve specific goals is an accomplishment. Many Biblical stories have deceptiveness within, and yet we must remember that these stories are written on

multiple levels. Esau and Jacob are brothers, and yet metaphysically they also represent different aspects of each individual. Esau the hunter, a man of the field, was his father's favorite. He was an earthly man, very physical. Jacob was his mother's beloved; a plain man, dwelling in tents. To live in a tent is to reside in a temporary level of awareness; a consciousness that is in transition.

Esau came in from hunting and was hungry. Esau (the human mind) could not wait. It was important to satisfy his hunger right now, and so he asked Jacob for some pottage. This is where the Esau part of our consciousness spends its time. Esau is interested in immediate gratification, there is no waiting. Jacob negotiated with Esau for his birthright which was of no use for Esau as he said he was about to die from hunger.

The next story is of the deception right of consciousness at the hands of Jacob and Rebekah. Isaac, an old man whose eyes were dim asked Esau to kill and prepare some savory meat, in preparation for receiving his blessing. Rebekah overheard and covered Jacob in lamb's hide and sent him with the meat to his father. Isaac questioned whether this was Esau or Jacob, however, he did give the blessing to Jacob; thus robbing Esau of his birthright. This blessing gave a double portion of the family inheritance, the ancients also believed it would exert great power over the blessed life and of their descendants.

On the literal level this story is one of deception, and yet when understood metaphysically, we see that as we are evolving the spiritual must always take precedence over the physical and mental. Change is imminent, and we aspire to realize our true spirituality with the Father. Yet there is a continuing struggle between the physical and the mental as our awareness continues to aspire to the higher revelation of our true spirituality. We come to understand, that everything works together for good. Even Isaac participated in this right of passage, his eyes were dim, and yet a parent would still recognize one child from another.

### JACOB AT PA'DAN-A'RAM

As often happens, Jacob was not able to enjoy the fruits of his deception. He fled to Pa'dan-a'ram, the home of his mother's family. Pa'dan-a'ram represents a level of awareness where the mental and intellectual level off, a broad level in the evolving consciousness, a plateau. On the way, however, he had an experience which would greatly influence his future life. Stopping for the night, and using a stone (established Truth) for a pillow, he rested in Truth, and had an extraordinary dream. *"He dreamed that there was a ladder set upon the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."* (Genesis 28:12) At this time, also, God renewed the promise that He had given to Abraham and Isaac. We are never in a vacuum and so every event on our path can bring great meaning and growth into our lives, if we remain open to receive.

The imagery of Jacob's ladder has a deep meaning in that Divine ideas "descend" into our individual awareness, whereas our aspirations "ascend" to God. In addition, upon awakening from his dream, Jacob had a definite realization of God's Presence. *"Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!'"* (Genesis 28:16) This is a step in our evolution that we dwell in the midst of God. That we each can make the realization that we are not alone. God is present at all times and in all circumstances and yet this awareness still falls short of the total attainment of Omnipresence of God.

Jacob, however, still had much to learn. It is apparent from Genesis 28:18-22 that Jacob was prepared to bargain with God, keeping his part in the covenant only if God first fulfilled His part. The voice of God is heard to give the same promise he has already bestowed upon Abraham and Isaac, *"the land whereon thou liest, in thee will I give it, and to thy seed."* What we

choose to hold in consciousness is ours, and when we choose to raise our consciousness we will lie on another level of land. We may move from a valley to a mountain.

Jacob lived a prosperous life in Pa'dan-a'ram, but his uncle Laban's trickery made life difficult. Laban means white clear shining thought. Lessons can come in multiple ways, and depending on what we are holding in mind, our lessons may appear to be very difficult. Laban, like Jacob, was skilled in deceit and subterfuge, and thus Jacob reaped as he had sown. This is the "Law of Expression", we manifest what we hold in mind. The complexity of scripture allows us to access multiple layers of spiritual knowledge as we are better prepared to receive and accept such understanding. Even Laban's trickery brought a clearer understanding to Jacob.

Yet there was a nobler and gentler side to Jacob's nature, as seen by his love for Rachel and his lifelong devotion to her. We are told that the seven years that he served for her "*seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.*" Let us remember that the number seven is a time of completion, a time that is often associated with spiritual growth. Upon the completion of the agreed seven years, Laban tricked Jacob by giving him Leah (weary, faint, exhausted) the older daughter. Rachel represents purity, one can only assume that Jacob had not grown spiritually enough to identify with this level of purity. Jacob agreed to work an additional seven years for Rachel and they were married immediately.

Leah conceived immediately, but Rachel was barren. So began the twelve tribes of Israel. Rachel gave Bilhah, her handmaiden to Jacob. Likewise Leah gave Zilpah, her handmaiden to Jacob, and eventually Rachel had two sons. The following is a list of the sons and daughter, and their metaphysical meanings.

#### TRIBES OF ISRAEL

**Leah:** The human soul--weary, exhausted

Reuben-- a son seen

The first faculty brought forth in man's spiritual development is vision.

Simeon--hearing or receptivity

When man is receptive to the inflow of Spirit nothing can keep his good from him.

Levi--uniting

Uniting in the body is feeling, in the soul compassion, and in the spirit love. Love is the unifying principle in consciousness.

Judah--praise Jehovah

In Spirit this is prayer and the faculty of accumulating spiritual substance. In sense consciousness this faculty becomes acquisitiveness, the desire to accrue material things.

**Bilhah: (Rachel)** Soul receptivity, or susceptibility, somewhat given to self-abasement. The unfolding mentality in individual consciousness bring forth two sons. These qualities find expression first in the physical or more outer consciousness of man.

Dan--fruit of good judgment

Naphtali--strength of character

The faculties of judgment and strength find expression in the physical or more outer consciousness of man, but their true origin is Spirit, and their spiritual nature and spiritual activity are in due time established.

**Zilpah: (Leah)** Unfolding soul of man. We do not find sufficient staying qualities; too much of the human is still in evidence.

Gad--power

At this stage of development is on the personal plane. Divine Mind gives man power over his thoughts and ideas and the forces of the soul. In the higher consciousness this power is

exercised over the self and inner conditions rather than over other persons and the world without.

Asher--understanding corresponding with wisdom

Through his knowing faculty man acquires a body of knowledge by study and observation of the world without. Through the same faculty he acquires wisdom by being receptive to the Spirit within.

#### **Leah:**

Issachar--there is reward/zeal

The urge behind all things and the impulse to every achievement. It should be tempered with understanding and love, else it becomes a destructive force.

Zebulun--habitation or neighbor/faculty of order

Order is the first law of the universe. Indeed there could be no universe unless its various parts were kept in perfect harmony. In the sense mind there is disorder, manifests in confusion of thought and action.

Dinah--feminine aspect of judgment or intuition in natural man

**Rachel:** Feminine, receptive, or soul phase of the pure natural life in the organism of man.

This

phase is still in a transitory state (migrating). It is fruitful only on the higher, spiritual plane of ideas.

Joseph--imagination

Man develops the faculties from the simple one of seeing to that of imagination.

Benjamin--faith, an active, accomplishing faith.

### JACOB AT THE JABBOCK-JORDAN

Jacob his wives and children left Pa'dam-a'ram with a great deal of wealth and yes some controversy as well. Jacob named the dwelling place Mahanaim, meaning two camps, two hosts. Jacob recognizes that he is a house divided for he still is in fear of Esau. Esau, whom he had defrauded, had become a man of power and possessions. Although Jacob prayed fervently, reminding the God of his father of all His promises, he still depended upon material means, for he sent conciliatory messages and rich gifts to Esau.

Having sent his family and servants across the Jabbok River, Jacob met the supreme crisis of his life alone. At this time Jacob turns to God in prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) and through the surrender that ensues, he lets go and realizes that *"it is the Father within that doeth the works."* His sleep is restless and is described in terms of a wrestling match which represents a spiritual struggle with his Divine Self. The Jacob of ideals and spiritual aims triumphed over his selfish, deceptive tendencies. We struggle only as long as we see something with which to resist. As we release and let go there remains no opposition. Jacob demands a blessing which he receives. This blessing is the understanding that when we recognize and accept a Truth within a situation, the entire condition changes. In this case the consciousness of Jacob changes and *"Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have strived with God and with humans, and have prevailed.'"* (Genesis 32:28)

## ESAU AND ISRAEL

Israel no longer lives in fear and so at the meeting with Esau, on the following day, they met each other with open arms, all was forgiven. Esau manifested a generous, loving spirit, illustrating the great spiritual truth that when our attitude is right, the problem in most cases is resolved.

Jack Addington in his book "THE HIDDEN MYSTERY OF THE BIBLE," describes the steps of unfoldment from Esau to Israel in this manner. <sup>i</sup>

1. Esau was interested in venison and red pottage to fill his stomach.
2. Jacob was interested in using his mind to achieve dominion over the physical world.
3. Israel accepts the God-given dominion and is able to make peace between Esau and Jacob at last.

Israel is our next step in the realization of our oneness with the Father. We as Jacob must go through the steps of preparation the vision, receptivity, love, praise, good judgement, strength of recognition of true spirit, power over thoughts, the wisdom to be receptive to Spirit, the zeal to accomplish to move forward, harmony and order, imagination and then faith. Israel is not a title given to a select group of people, but to all who choose to enter into a path of unfoldment, of growth in Spirit. The Jacob consciousness has embarked on some very complex learning experiences, not only in this story but within our lives as well. The time is now to rise above this awareness and allow ourselves another step of unfoldment in our spiritual growth.

It is only when we realize that of ourselves we do nothing, that it is the Father within that *doeth the works* that we come into our Divine birthright. We are channels for the infinite love that is the Father, and as we align ourselves with this love everything in our lives manifests in perfect harmony.

Israelites of today are not the Israel of the Bible, one is a race while the other is a consciousness

Let us remember that the stories in the Bible are included to describe the growth in consciousness of each of us. The characters and their lives are not necessarily actual historical beings. It is not important whether Joseph was a real person. What is important is that his life's story is relevant to us. As it unfolds, we begin to see that God's good is present in every seemingly devastating event that Joseph went through. In the story we see that each unjust and unfair occurrence was actually a stepping stone for a young Jewish boy from a tribe of herdsmen in Israel to become second in command to Pharaoh. The story goes that in this position he saved the lives of Egyptians and residents of the surrounding area, including his own family, during a devastating drought.

Jacob/ Israel and Rachel had a son whom they named Joseph, "whom Jehovah will add to." In Genesis 37, the story of Joseph begins. Jacob/ Israel loved this son of his old age more than all his other children and spoiled him so that his older brothers envied and hated him. Jacob/ Israel had a coat of many colors made for Joseph. In the story Joseph went to meet his brothers who threw him into a pit and intended to leave him there to die. A caravan of Midianites, merchantmen, came by and purchased Joseph and brought him into Egypt. The Midianites were enemies of the Israelites and represent those people who form their perceptions of life based on human sense and mental ideas. Egypt represents bondage in our subconscious mind that we bring on ourselves by our error thinking, duality. Often spiritual writers of scripture will refer to: going down to Egypt.



Metaphysically the people in this story represent our many states of consciousness that we pass through as we change our thinking, feeling, and perception of life's events. Joseph was the son of Jacob who became Israel when he "knew" God was in this place. And throughout Joseph's ordeals he held to that awareness of God with him. Notice that in each new, seemingly unfair circumstance, the writer says the Lord was with him and prospered him.

Let us take time to review the metaphysical meaning of the word Lord. It is law, the same law of Old Testament and New Testament days that is operating in each of our lives now. In Divine Science we call it the Law of Expression: first within, then without or like begets like. We say that life is consciousness and we see that Joseph's consciousness met each calamity from knowing the Truth that God is here.

As a young boy Joseph was already a dreamer and one who used his imagination to tap into his God potential. Imagination is a very desirable quality for us as it focuses our concepts of good; is receptive to them; and embraces the God activity that reveals the forms that emerge into conditions and experiences. It is important to note that imagination is not visualization. The latter springs from man's mind and is not spiritual. Imagination, however, is receptivity to God's nature manifesting in God's creation of man by grace. Joseph's coat of many colors represents our individual concepts of Truth w/ their hues of accompanying moods. As with 17 year old Joseph, our understanding of Truth has not evolved into the pure white robe of Truth that Jesus wore. Our consciousness builds our coat that wraps around us as we go through the day building established attitudes. The coat was, however, a gift from his father who had been given the revelation of the I AM through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/ Israel and now, Joseph.

The name Joseph represents the faculty of imagination. With Joseph, God gave him the intuitive faculty of interpreting dreams. In Genesis 37 the dream of his sheaf rising and his brothers' sheaves bowing down only served to anger his brothers further. Even Jacob rebuked Joseph for recounting a dream that the moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" We know that Joseph's spiritual ability to interpret dreams would be one of the stepping stones leading to Pharaoh's meeting and beginning to trust him.

Metaphysically our dreams can be symbols. In Joseph's case the sheaves represent substance and were a prophecy of his attainment of a superior consciousness of universal substance. That level of awareness manifested in his handling of the rich grain harvests in Egypt to protect them for the seven lean years to follow. The story of Joseph recounts that it was this consciousness that brought his father and brothers to him for needed supply. Imagination takes ideas and nurtures them under the influence of the principle of the grain of mustard seed. God magnifies what we hold in consciousness and draws to the deeply held idea everything necessary for its fulfillment. We have a deep responsibility to hold in imagination the Truth that we want to see grow in our lives.

Divine Science teaches that the original sin is duality. The spiritually inspired writer of this story in Genesis develops a tale that is a beautiful illustration of Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God..." The seeming duality was in brothers attempting to put to death their own brother and then selling him into slavery. Then they broke the heart of their father with the false story of Joseph's apparent death. To human understanding this is error/ evil. However, the hidden good in the story could be that traveling with this merchant

caravan taught Joseph the Egyptian language and sophisticated methods of protecting goods and accounting procedures, all necessary later when he was put in charge of Pharaoh's granary. The human picture of suffering is so vivid it is difficult to see God's presence in the events.

And yet, the imagination of man (Joseph) is working for good all the time when it is centered on Omnipresence. It is so for us as well, even in our darkest hour. Emmet Fox tells us the way out of trouble is to rise to a level of thought and understanding higher than where you met the problem, and the problem will dissolve. Taking thought does not help; raise your consciousness to Truth and God activity reveals itself as harmony. Fox's Golden Key (Stop thinking about the problem, whatever it is, and think about God instead.) is a modern day statement of the Truth Joseph embodied as he went from one devastatingly unfair experience to another. Each circumstance always led to an exalted result beyond what man could dream up: this Jewish slave was made Prime Minister of Egypt, second under Pharaoh. The writer says that Joseph remained true to the divine ideas of his Father.

In hindsight we can trace Joseph's rising spiritual awareness as it moves him up the ladder, challenge by challenge, to become the trusted second in command to Pharaoh. Joseph reached the highest level of material accomplishment of his day, and yet he was still in Egypt. Then and now there is no outside God and no outside power that has ever kept us from our good, whether it be health, supply or happiness. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; here and now. However, it is a matter of letting go of the conscious awareness of our life as a human being in order to replace our human, limited viewpoint moment by moment with Truth. When we continue to be more conscious of and more interested in the physical/ material than the spiritual, we stay in Egypt. We can be aware of the law (of Oneness, no duality) and yet not practice living by it. Living from a spiritual perception requires such a drastic change from basing our awareness on facts reported by the senses that the Master says we must be born again. Facts change; Truth is absolute, infinite, eternal, and does not depend on human concepts of time and sequence.

The story of Joseph also illustrates the divine principle of forgiveness. In Genesis 45 Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain as their country was in severe drought. Joseph recognized them and later when he "made himself known unto his brethren, he wept aloud." He was reunited with his father and all his brothers. With Pharaoh's blessing he settled them all in Goshen (unity of the mind, body, and substance of the whole man.) In Genesis 45: 8 "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God..." and in 50:20 "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Once again these words show that the writer of the story of Joseph was spiritually inspired. For us, whatever we are going through, God means it for good.

At the end of his life Joseph told his relatives, now settled in Egypt, that God would bring them back to the land He gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that "ye shall carry up my bones from hence." These bones are the essence of the awareness of One God and man's journey from Egypt (sense living) to Israel (spiritual consciousness).

## QUESTIONS

1. Rebekah had trouble conceiving. In a few sentences, describe some of the spiritual steps necessary to give birth to a new consciousness.
2. How does trickery and deception fit into the concept of “no duality”?
3. Write a paragraph about God power. Discuss the forces of the soul and how to access them.
4. Discuss the name change of Jacob to Israel.
5. What is our divine birthright?
  
6. How does the story of Joseph illustrate that man’s ideas of what is good in a situation are incomplete and not the whole picture?
  
7. What relevance does question no. 1 have to us in our lives today?
  
8. How does the story of Joseph support the idea of oneness, no duality?
  
9. Give an example in your life of moving from resolving a problem mentally to knowing the spiritual Truth that God is all there is. (You can make up the circumstances if you can’t think of an actual situation.)

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<sup>i</sup> Jack Addington, “THE HIDDEN MYSTERY OF THE BIBLE”, Dodd Meade and Company New York