

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Parable of the Mustard Seed

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; Mark 4:30-32.

Generally speaking, "seed" symbolizes the power of God, which manifests throughout the universe. Within every human being is a spark of our Divine Creator, and this "seed" has within itself the ability to grow and flower into a microcosmic "kingdom of God." No matter how small or undeveloped this "seed" may be, it has latent within itself all the potentialities of its Creator, and by proper cultivation becomes a wholly glorious manifestation of the spiritual attainment possible for all mankind.

The spirit within man is threefold, patterned in the image of its Creator, and its three aspects are designated as the *divine spirit*, the *life spirit*, and the *human spirit*. Man is also sevenfold and tenfold, having a threefold soul and a threefold body, connected with the spirit by the mind. During its pilgrimage into matter, the *divine spirit* aspect emanates from itself the *dense body*, extracting as pabulum the *conscious soul*. Similarly the *life spirit* radiates from itself the *vital body*, and extracts as food the *intellectual soul*; and the *human spirit* brings into being the *desire body* and extracts therefrom the *emotional soul*.

The problem facing every human being is to live so that the "seed" of divinity within may germinate and be nurtured into a living reality of the transcendent powers of the spirit, and we find in the Western Wisdom Teach-

ings definite instructions for nurturing the latent spiritual potentialities into dynamic powers. By persistent endeavor to cultivate certain faculties, food for the spirit is produced, and it "shooteth out great branches" wherein the "fowls of the air" (spiritual aspirations which naturally accompany the unfolding process) will "lodge."

The faculty of discrimination is that whereby we distinguish the real from the unreal, the essential from the non-essential, and it generates the *intellectual soul*. Discrimination, first of all, teaches us that we are spirits, and our bodies are but temporary dwelling places, instruments for our use in our pilgrimage through matter.

The faculty of observation (along with action) generates the *conscious soul*. Accurate observation is of the highest importance in spiritual development, for it insures the harmonizing of the pictures in the conscious memory with the automatic subconscious records, and thus establishes the rhythm and harmony of the dense body.

The faculty of devotion (to high ideals) evolves the *emotional soul*, helping to eliminate undesirable habits or traits of character by superseding mere desire. For intellectual people, in particular, the cultivation of devotion is most necessary.

Persistent daily effort in exercising these faculties will gradually bring about the complete mastery of the lower self by the higher self, the goal of every spiritual aspirant. The intangible liveliness radiated by every spiritually developed person speaks eloquently of the unfolded potentialities of the spirit, made manifest by the ascendancy of the Higher Self.