

Spirituality as a Covenant of Success

by Rev. Arthur W. Chang

A Covenant to Success

Spirituality is our clear sense of wholeness in a world that too often is experienced only in fragmentary ways. Spirituality brings everything under the great roof of spiritual understanding. In the story of Moses it is said, whenever his problems became overwhelming, he entered into "the Tent of Meeting" to commune with God. There, he took the humanly unsolvable problems of his time and placed them in God's "No problem, mon"-tray where they were easily handled.

If we are to achieve our success with ease and wholeness, then Spirituality is profoundly important. It seems to be our tendency to appreciate it more when things are going badly for us, or when the issues of business or relationship in daily life grind to an interminable struggle with failure, rather than flowing like the River Jordan, the symbol of God's sustenance and nurturing for success.

Take, for example, the way Jacob attempted to get a leg up on his world. Like a few misapprehending people in business today who don't realize that dishonesty with their customers is bad business, Jacob thought chicanery and crookedness would get him what he wanted. It did! Only he couldn't keep it, as we never can keep whatever is not ours by right of consciousness.

One mythic story tells of the hero who comes out of the jungle with god and it turns into ashes. This is the same story. Jacob used his creative power of thought to cheat his brother, Esau, out of Isaac's (their father) foremost blessing, robbing Esau of his rightful bequest.

If the story ended there, it would not be a spiritual story. Spiritual stories are primarily about inner liberation that plays out in the world. In its ancient way, the Bible tends to render this freedom-principle as our freedom from sin through God's redemptive power.

As humans live by the Law of Sowing and Reaping, Jacob was soon confronted with the result of his foul deed. The result was he had to run away to escape dying at the hands of his predator-wise brother-the hunter of wild game. Jacob, symbolizing our contemplative

potential to be vastly more than what we may initially appear to be, found redemption in a dream. Because of this intuitive insight, he made a covenant with God and went on to become the patriarch of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and to great worldly success as well. Jacob showed that there was no contradiction between being a smashing business success in the world of affairs as well as spiritual seed for much of the Hebrew scriptural tradition. This is our natural state of affairs.

Many of us may be missing the impact that this powerful spiritual connection with God makes on our worldly success. It is called a "covenant." Catherine Ponder calls it, more pointedly, a Success Covenant. She says that a covenant is a solemn agreement between two people to achieve definite results.

In the case of Jacob his covenant took two parts. The first specified what Jacob wished God to do for him: to provide prosperity, guidance, peace of mind, and reconciliation with his family. Jacob vowed a vow: "If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."

In the second part of the covenant, Jacob vowed what he would do for God. It is rendered as follows in the Bible: "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Genesis 28:22). Giving a tenth of our earning back to our spiritual source is called a tithe.

True spirituality calls upon us to see all that we have as coming from God and not from ourselves. Thus, giving back to our spiritual source is a fundamental law-The Law of Circulation, which says whatever we put out comes back to us a thousandfold. This term means "abundantly." We are to give back to where are spiritually fed.

As a contemporary example, Ponder writes about a man who floundered financially for some time until he decided to tithe. He made his Success Covenant at the beginning of a New Year. He gave ten percent of his income to his church, where he learned this mystical method, and in six months, one piece of property he could not sell for over six year, and another for over two-sold! He continued to thrive and became the success he never was before tithing.

Consider making a Success Covenant. Write down what you want God to do for you, and what you will do for God, and start by giving of

yourself and watch positive changes take place in your business and all your affairs.

The Miracle of Intention

Once you commit your intention to writing and to God through prayer, the Law of Mind in Action begins to work. Ideas, people and resources come into your life that were not previously available.

Setting your intention is the same as casting the die and fixing new patterns of experience. Dr. Holmes notes that all thought is creative. He says, "Since this is true, it follows that we cannot say that one thought is creative while another is not. We must say that all thought is creative, according to the nature, impulse, emotion or conviction behind the thought. Thought creates a mold in the Subjective, in which the idea is accepted and poured, and sets power in motion in accordance with the thought. Ignorance of this excuses no one from its effects, for we are dealing with Law and not with whimsical fancy." (*The Science of Mind*, 30).

Whether our concerns are about business, health, or relationship, the fact that all our thoughts are creative means we can change our thoughts and change our lives. If you feel you will never find the right person for you, you will certainly tend to manifest that belief. With negative beliefs you will, as Emerson says, "miscreate your world."

The world-creating Creative Mind is forever creating but, in this case it will create inversely because you have sown the negation of your dreams. The creative Law tells us "You reap what you sow," or "You get back what you give." To set your intention is to evoke that part of you willing to break with past patterns of thinking that are too limiting for your dreams. We must gladly shed these for an attitude that gives rise to new and infinite possibilities.

The miracle of intention arises because Life wants to do new things with and through us and is never satisfied to rest on its laurels. Start the fire of intention and it will transform our meal into a banquet of fulfillment.

The Leap of Faith

The leap of faith is a natural outcome of our spiritual practices. Take time to meditate daily upon the inexhaustible nature of Spirit and your covenant or contract with Spirit. Affirm daily, what it is that you want

from God and come to your fullest acceptance of that good at the end of each session of meditation and prayer. Ideally, this should be a twenty-minute practice. At times this may not be possible and affirmations will suffice. We should not miscalculate the essential nature of our spiritual practice. It is to let the mud settle and the water clear around our true intentions.

The murky waters of consciousness, the clouds of confusion about our vision, or inattention to our covenant will lead to confusion and failure in everyday affairs. Fear, like a forest fire, will consume the resources for our journey by misdirecting our creative energy. We will then experience life like that mythic snake that devours its own tail. We will be wondering why, with greater efforts, we are experiencing less and less fulfillment and achievements.

A leap of faith is what happens when a new pattern spontaneously elevates our experience to the next desirable level of experience—well beyond the limitations of a previous mental pattern. This is what Jesus spoke of as a faith that can move mountains. The literalists will concern themselves with the physical mountains. By contrast, the symbolic reader of the Bible will be concerned with all the obstacles and other things that trip us up.

How marvelous it is to know that nothing can truly prevent us from achieving our desires; that each obstacle can and will melt away before a spirituality. This is because spirituality is our new covenant of freedom and great success in the world. Success is a desirable attribute in a broader spiritual understanding and leads to a full and wholesome participation in this life, here and now, for this is indeed the great blessing that has been bestowed upon us.