



The Mar Thoma Church Diocese of North America & Europe Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

RENEWAL OF RELATIONSHIP

Genesis. 33: 1-17.

The scripture selected for our meditation focus on the general area of human relationship, the specific interaction between Esau and Jacob.

After being separated for many years in special circumstances, Esau embraced his brother Jacob. This meeting transformed not only the lives of two brothers, but many lives even beyond immediate family members. When Jacob modified his life attitude and met his brother, he ignited a change of relationship among others and institutions. It has the potential of a new world order as visualized by Jesus our Lord and Savior.

At this time I shall select two authors who influenced my life and attitude. One of them is Martin Buber, the great Jewish Philosopher of the 20th century He taught the supremacy of “I and Thou”, different from “I-It” human encounter. He explains human life as a “meeting” or “fellowship”. The second influential person is Harold Kushner, a Rabbi who is the author of the bestselling book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. He notes that we live in two worlds, one the world of work and the second the world of faith. He explains how Jacob with his crooked habit has become Israel following straight ways of living.

In the biblical narrative the name Jacob has connotation of *akov* crooked whereas Israel, has echoes of *yashar*, straight. Jacob is no longer a trickster but transforms as *yashar* with straightforward ways of behaving. He puts his faith in believing that doing the right thing is the best medicine for the troubled world. At one point in Jacob’s lifetime struggle his mysterious opponent asked him, what is your name? It seems like a strange question to ask in the middle of a fight. But in ancient times a name is more than an identifying label. It points to a person’s identity. “Who are you? is meant what kind of person are you. What kind of values you live by, not just “what do people call you? Ask yourself what is your name? Who am I really? What kind of person you want to be?

Esau was in a hurry to meet his brother Jacob. He embraced his brother. The quality of human relationship is expressed here. It was a genuine “meeting”, an encounter. An attitude of contentment (*samthriпти*) is expressed in the words “I already have plenty, my brother.” In social life we need this attitude, especially in our tendency to grab materials from others both legally and illegally. We express this different lifestyle in a consumer-oriented social life, which challenges our modern materialistic living.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you have shown us the value of sharing and make sacrifices for others, by following your simple life and just be different from the dominant trends of the modern living. We need your guidance and spirit. Amen

Dr.T.M.Thomas

“And Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept.”

- Genesis 33:4