

THE STATE OF VISION

"We have only to raise Imagination to the state of Vision and the thing is done." (William Blake) Just imagine it! That is all you and I are required to do. No matter what it is we desire, we have only to raise imagination to the state of vision, and the thing is done! Now, when the prophets of old used the word vision in scripture, they meant all of the senses, either individually or in combination. The Book of Isaiah begins: "The visions of Isaiah, the son of Amoz. Hear, O heavens and give ear O earth; for the Lord has spoken." And the Book of Obadiah states: "The visions of Obadiah. Thus sayeth the Lord God." Here we find the visions are audio; but scripture records visions of sight, sound, scent, taste, and touch. The last chapter of the Book of Job reads: "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee."

Imagination must be raised to the sense of sight in order to see. The sense of sound seems to be the most popular in scripture, yet in the story of Jacob it is the sense of touch. Isaac, Jacob's father, was blind and could not see. His twin brother, Esau, was the first out of the womb. He was covered with hair and - because of his birth - had the right of inheritance by law. Jacob, who followed his brother, was a smooth-skinned lad, who deceived his father through the sense of touch. Killing one of his father's flock, he wrapped the skin around his arm, and when his father touched him, he felt its reality and gave Jacob the right of birth.

This is not a story of a man who was blind, or of two sons that came out of the womb of a woman. This drama unfolds from within. Esau is the world you know by your reason and senses. The room you are now in is your Esau, while your subjective desire is your Jacob. Wearing garments of hair, Esau is the outer, objective world, which Jacob, your desire, is seeking to replace. As Isaac - the father - you have the power to give reality to your desired, subjective state. Invite it to come near, that you may feel it, to know whether it is as real as your outer world is.

Isaac chose the sense of touch rather than that of sound, adding the sense of smell, saying: "You smell like Esau." Using these two senses, Isaac granted Jacob the right to become an objective fact. So when Blake tells us that if we will raise imagination to the state of vision the thing is done, he is speaking of vision in any one, or a combination of the five senses.

Perhaps the sense of hearing is most developed in you. If so, you can single out a voice and hear it with such clarity that you can become self-persuaded its words are true. Your sense of hearing can be developed to the degree that you can shut out all other senses and believe in what you are hearing. When the words take on the tones of reality and you are self-persuaded that it is so, the event has been impregnated upon you; and what do you do after impregnation? Nothing! You simply carry the knowledge that in its normal, natural time, that which you heard so clearly will be born. No two eggs have the same interval of time between their fertilization and hatching out. I do not know how long it will take for your desire to become an objective fact.

I only know that when imagination is raised to the state of vision - be it sight, sound, scent, taste or touch - the thing is done!

I know a very fine artist (whose works are in national galleries) who was starving, and didn't have a dime with which to buy food. One night she was so tired she couldn't even walk to the YWCA to offer her services for a meal. Instead, she stretched out on her couch and said: "Lord, you said if I but believed, all things would be possible. Well, I believe that I am well fed."

In relating this story to me, this lady added this comment: "I didn't actually hear the words audibly, but received an impression which was: 'If you really believed as you claim, wouldn't you prepare the table for the meal?' With that, she began to set the table in her imagination. She put on her best tablecloth, her nicest plates, and even lit a candle, in preparation of the food to come. Then she fell asleep and began to dream. As she lifted the cover from a beautiful platter, she heard a ring which persisted until she awoke to realize it was her telephone. The caller was a friend of her mother's whom she hadn't seen for years. The lady said: "Suddenly I have the greatest longing for a meal you prepared for your mother and me several years ago. Would you please do it again tonight if I bring over the ingredients?"

Now, although this lady had a kitchen in her apartment, she had no food in it, so when the friend went to the store she couldn't buy a cup of flour or sugar, but stocked up on all the basics needed to prepare a meal. Within an hour she was in the artist's home with the food, and a short time later they sat down to a delicious dinner, of which - when the meal was finished - there was enough left over for at least two more meals.

Although this lady is a great artist, she has developed the sense of touch. She fell asleep touching the plates and the silver, and awoke touching the cover to a platter filled with food. Her experience is dramatized in scripture as the story of Isaac. In order to understand scripture, it is necessary to see it with the eyes of the mystic. Blake asked: "Why is the Bible more entertaining and more instructive than any other book? Because it is addressed to the Imagination, which is spiritual sensation, and only immediately to the understanding, or reason." When you touch something spiritually, you are receiving a sensation that your outer senses deny. And when you use your imagination, you are touching with the hands of Jacob, seeing with the eyes of Jacob, and hearing with Jacob's ears.

In the 115th Psalm, the psalmist tells us our Lord does everything we do. Then he compares the Lord to the gods of the world, saying: "Their gods are made of silver and gold. They have mouths but speak not, eyes but see not, ears but hear not, feet but walk not, hands but feel not. Those who make them are like them, and so is everyone who trusts in them." Anyone who trusts some little thing a man made with his hands, that can't talk, hear, walk or feel, has a false God and a false Jesus Christ. Made with human hands, it cannot utter a sound or hear your request. It cannot answer you, see, hear, or walk. It is merely something made with human hands; and those who trust in it are just like the thing made, because they are unwilling to exercise the inner man - called Jacob in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New.

Begin now to exercise Jacob by sending Esau out into the fields. Then clothe Jacob with the tones of reality by exercising one or all five of your inner senses. If you will become self-persuaded that your desire is already granted, even though it is denied by the outer senses it will become a fact. I do not know how it will objectify itself, or when; I only know that when imagination is raised to the state of vision, the thing is done.

Because Blake made these bold assertions, people question why he wasn't rich; but Blake had no desire for fame or enormous sums of money. At that time, the king of England was George the Third. He was a madman and remembered only because of the fact that he was king during the time of our revolution against England. People of great wealth and fame lived during Blake's lifetime, but are forgotten now, while Blake grows in stature and simply dwarfs everyone in his age.

Blake had no money. He was non-schooled by human standards. Teaching himself Latin, French, and Italian, Blake was a master in the use of the English tongue. This giant of a man had no human luxuries, but he didn't need them as he was busy doing the work of God. Blake claimed that the world was vision, confessing that his greatest work, "Jerusalem", was given to him by dictation. He didn't see Jerusalem, he heard it. The words were dictated by the Spirit of God, yet Blake called it his greatest vision.

Perhaps the sense of feeling is easy for you. If so, be like Isaac and touch your desire to see if it is Esau (real) or not. When reality was touched, Isaac said: "You have the smell of Esau; therefore the blessing is yours." Why? Because it seemed real to him.

Money has an odor all of its own. Blindfold yourself and smell a dozen different pieces of paper. Make one of them a dollar, five-, or ten-dollar bill, and the moment it reaches your nose you will know it is money, for there is something different about it.

Everything has an odor. My brother Victor is a successful businessman. When I questioned him about his success, he said: "I love the odor of business. When I open the store in the morning, I love the smell emitting there." I walked around the store with him and didn't care a thing about the odor; but I can open a book of Blake's and be lost to the world for the rest of the afternoon. When I was in Barbados recently, I shared one of Blake's letters with Victor. I so thoroughly enjoyed the reading I tasted every delicious word, but the message meant nothing to my brother. He uses his talents in a different way.

Choose the medium best for you and use it. Sound seems to be the easiest for many, yet if you love someone you will know the touch of their flesh and odor. If man didn't have a distinctive odor, how could a bloodhound find him? We think only in terms of the skunk ring, and know it can be used against a man because it is unique; but there is no dubious odor. There is no dubious voice. A voice can be imitated; but if recorded, its graph would not be like the original. You are unique, and when you love someone dearly you know their voice and what they feel like, and if you are close to them, you know their odor. Share the news of your good fortune with them. Hear them empathize with you. Listen to their voice carefully and revel in what you are hearing. Believe in what you have heard, and you have impregnated yourself with the message.

A friend recently cured his skin cancers through the use of sound. Every morning as he shaved the evidence remained. But using his sense of hearing, he listened to the voices of his friends as they congratulated him on his complete cure. He did not put his hand to his face and feel its smoothness. He could feel and see what was there, but he persisted in hearing his friends' empathy - and one day the cancers were gone.

I urge everyone to try it. It costs you nothing. Blake had a friend named Samuel Farmer, to whom he made this fantastic statement: "Raise Imagination to the state of vision and the thing is done." You can do it by using any sense, either individually or collectively. You can imagine seeing and hearing at the same time. You can look as though you see, and listen as though you hear; but you determine what you want to see and hear.

Bring them together. See and hear only your fulfilled desire, and watch the evidence unfold in your world.

When scripture tells us that God sees the heart, it is not speaking of the physical heart, but the individual's identity. The Fourth Psalm tells you to "Commune with your own heart on your bed and be silent." In other words, talk to yourself! This self is a totality, for your feelings, thoughts, desires, and motives are always exposed to yourself, who is God the Father! You may conceal thoughts from those who are enclosed in garments of flesh and blood, but not from the depth of your own being! Scripture tells us that the Lord rejected all of the brothers and chose David, saying: "He is a man after my own heart who will do all my will." David is the one who fulfills all of your thoughts, feelings, desires, and motives - always doing your will.

Scripture will only be understood when it is seen through the eye of the mystic. Let us take the statement: "Be angry but sin not. Commune with your own heart and be silent." If you have something against someone, explode and get it off your chest. Then commune with yourself by calming down and constructing a scene which would imply everything was perfect in your life. Fall into the depth of self, using as many of your senses as possible to achieve the vision you desire to appear.

You can raise any sense - be it hearing, sight, sound, touch or smell - to the state of vision. I was drafted into the army during World War II, but I wanted no part of it. When my request for a discharge was disapproved, I did not get angry and try to go over the colonel's head. Instead, I lay down on my army cot, closed my eyes to the other fifty men in the room, and imagined I was two thousand miles away in my apartment above Washington Square in New York City. Placing myself on my bed, I saw my wife sleeping in hers. Then I rose, and looking out the window, I saw the Holly Apartments across the street and Washington Square down below. Turning, I walked into the living room, dining room, and the kitchen. I felt familiar objects and brought as many of my five senses alive in the drama as possible. At 4:00 o'clock in the morning I awoke hearing a voice say, "That which I have done, I have done. Do nothing." Who spoke those words? I did, but I heard them as coming from without.

Knowing what I had done and what I had said, I walked in faith for nine days, doing nothing on the outside. On the tenth day the colonel who had rejected my application called me into his office and gave me an honorable discharge.

I brought feeling up to the state of vision. By feeling the bed and the various objects in the apartment, I fell asleep feeling the joy of being there. The colonel thought he initiated the desire to discharge me, but he had no choice in the matter. I imagined, knowing the world was my imagination pushed out, and everyone in it had to do what they are doing to aid the birth of what I had done.

Knowing what you ought to do is not good enough; you must raise your imagination to the state of vision in order for the act to be committed. Then what must you do? Nothing! You simply watch the series of events unfold within your world. Remember, you operate your creative power, it does not operate itself. There must be action, a commitment on your part. Nothing, however, can be done to earn God's gift of grace. When God's promise fulfills itself, it happens suddenly and so dramatically that you have no time to think about it. In fact, you will not even recognize it, unless you hear it from someone who has experienced it. I know, as far as I am concerned, I never heard it from a man, or saw the Bible's story as relating to me. But I know from experience that the truth comes through an act of God in self revelation, for God is hidden in the mind of man and unveils himself as man!

Start now to exercise your God-given talents of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell - together, or individually. The sense of touch is the strongest in me. If someone expresses their desire to me in a letter, I touch the paper they wrote, believing they are telling me of their desire's fulfillment. I know only one out of ten ever respond after I have granted their request, but that is all right. Having felt their letter and seen its contents, I know I have impregnated myself with the good fortunes they are desiring, and in so doing, my own captivity is being lifted.

Right now, give something to a friend without their knowledge or consent. You have your five senses! Exercise them by bringing the objective body of Jacob to the surface. Clothe him in external reality as the Esau you would like to replace, vanishes. What you have is your Esau. Your desire is Jacob. You are their father. Raise imagination to the state of vision and allow Jacob to supplant Esau. Then rest in that assumption and watch the change which takes place in your wonderful world!

Now let us go into the silence.