BRINGING THE TWO SIDES OF OUR NATURE INTO ALIGNMENT WITH EACH OTHER

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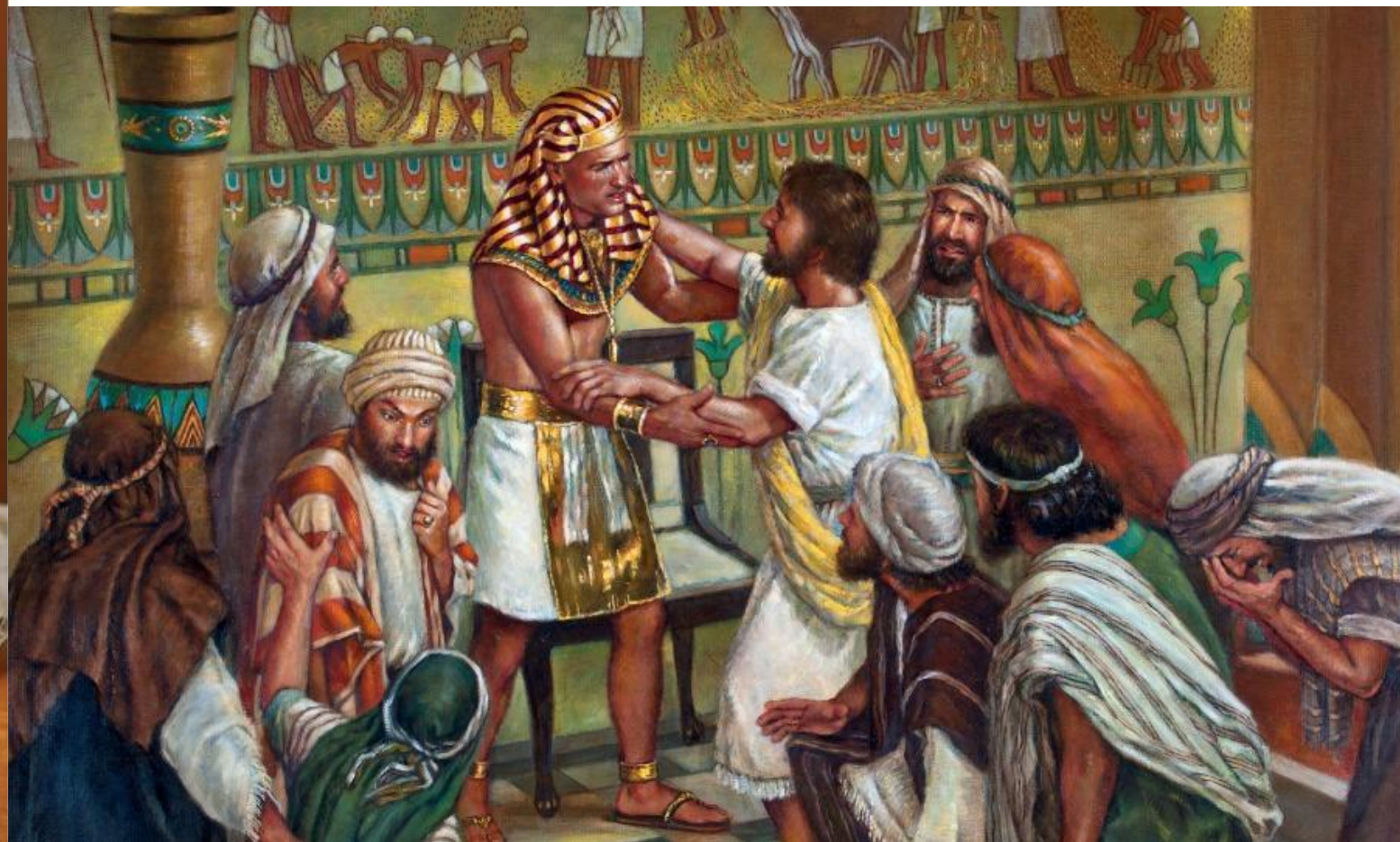
Please read beforehand:

Genesis Chapter 45: verses 4 to 15



Human nature

It is an indisputable truth that there are two sides of human nature, **a higher self and a lower self**, an essentially God-centred self and a self-centered, a potential angel of heaven and a potential devil destined for hell.

At birth we are actually neither – neither an angel of heaven or a devil destined for hell. But as we move from childhood into adulthood we start to **make deeply significant choices** as to which we want to be – an angel of heaven or a devil destines for hell.

It is of the Lord's wonderful mercy that He makes it possible for us to be able to make these choices. We are all born with extremely self-centered inclinations. These are what constitute our outer self. And if these inclinations are unchecked and unchallenged, when we are younger and recklessly indulged when we grow older, they will cause us to go to hell.

But the Lord arranges for these self-centered tendencies and for the ego-focused side of our natures to be offset by experiences and memories of what is good and true and safe and secure and innocent and trusting and idealistic, all stored up within us; some of these things from even before we were born. In the Writings these are referred to as "remnants", meaning treasures that have been left with us and which, together, constitute our inner self.

Significantly, the devil, or evil spirits, love to bring to life the ego-centered tendencies of our outer self. To offset this activity the angels activate the resources

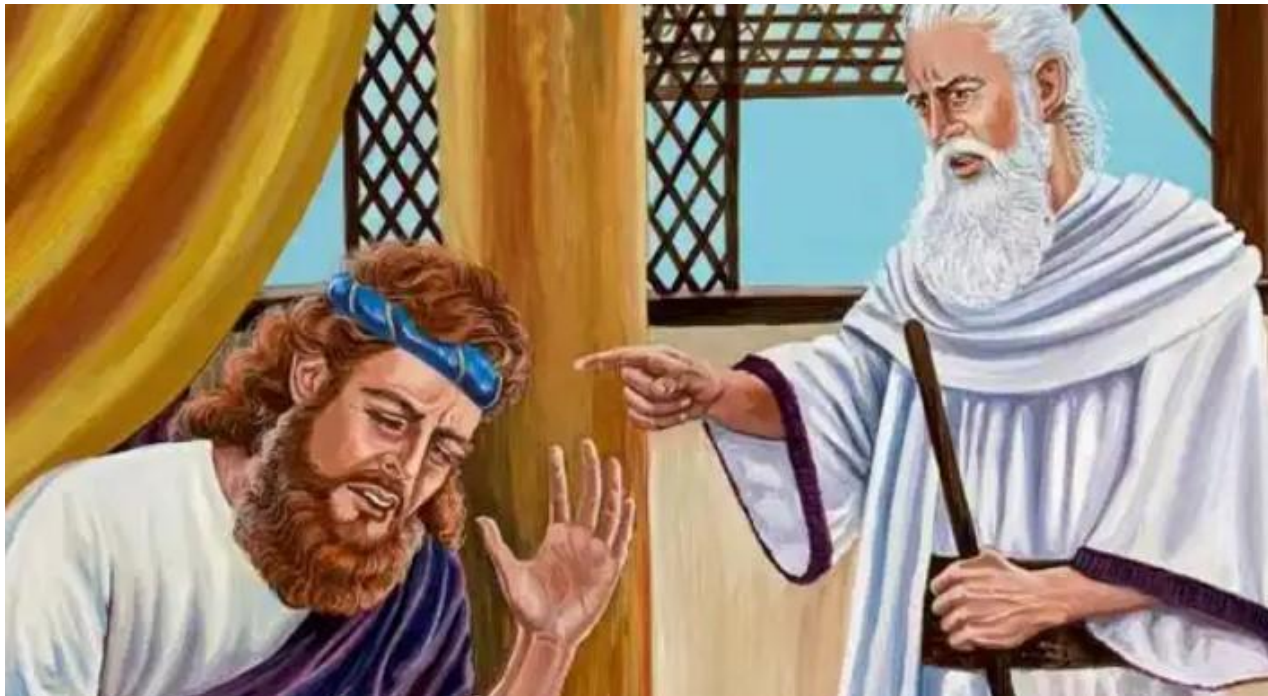
We are tempted, through our outer and lower nature. Reassuringly the angels come to our aid and awaken what counter-balances the ego-driven and self-centered thoughts, feelings and inclinations that the devil is, (or evil spirits are), trying to persuade us to indulge or give into.

For example, things happen in life, and in the world at large, amongst friends, and more closely to home affecting those we love, such as cause us to question or doubt the existence of God or the fairness or justice of the way certain things unfold. Now this questioning is all going on in the outer, or lower, side to your nature. The angelic spirits with you notice this and they quietly rebuff what this activity of the evil spirits is giving rise to. They may remind you of times when you felt very secure in your belief in God and in His care and mercy. They may remind you of times when someone shared with you how they had been protected by God in some

Again, and another example: The Christian life is a life of service, of usefulness and of opening our lives to God so that He can work through us to bless those who are around us. The devil, though, mocks this and whispers in our ear that this is ridiculous and that we need to put ourselves first, and think about ourselves first, and look after ourselves, first, every time and forget about others. Once these thoughts are awakened, however, the angels, gently awaken higher thoughts and feelings, whispering an altogether different message. So, once again, there is tension leading to conflict. And conflict is, as we have just seen, temptation. We choose which will prevail.

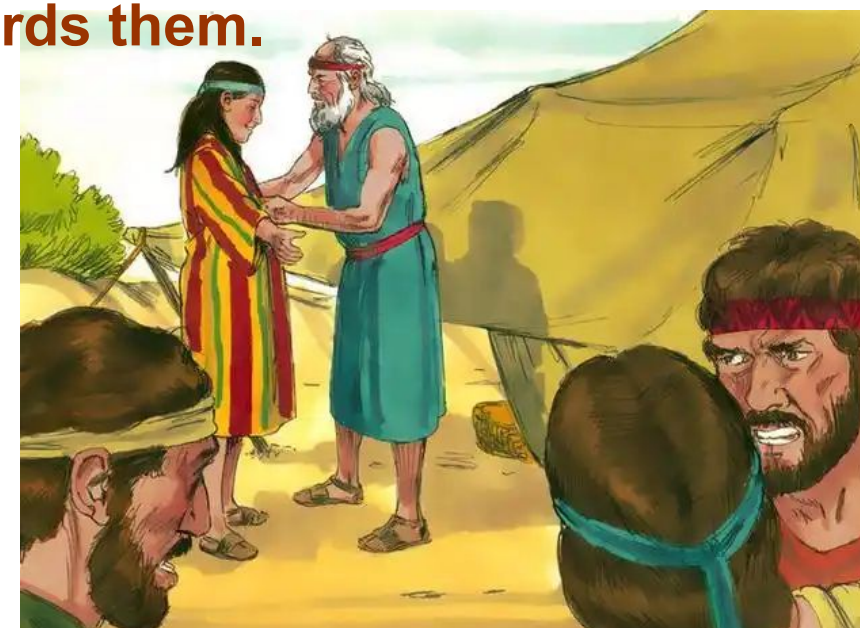
A Bible example of giving way to our lower, self-serving, nature

We know that king David, sadly, gave way to his lower, self-serving, nature when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then ordered the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. (2 Samuel 11). It took Nathan, the prophet, to awaken a response from David's higher nature (2 Samuel 12). Now realizing what he had done David went through terrible spiritual agony and self-hatred. (See Psalm 51).

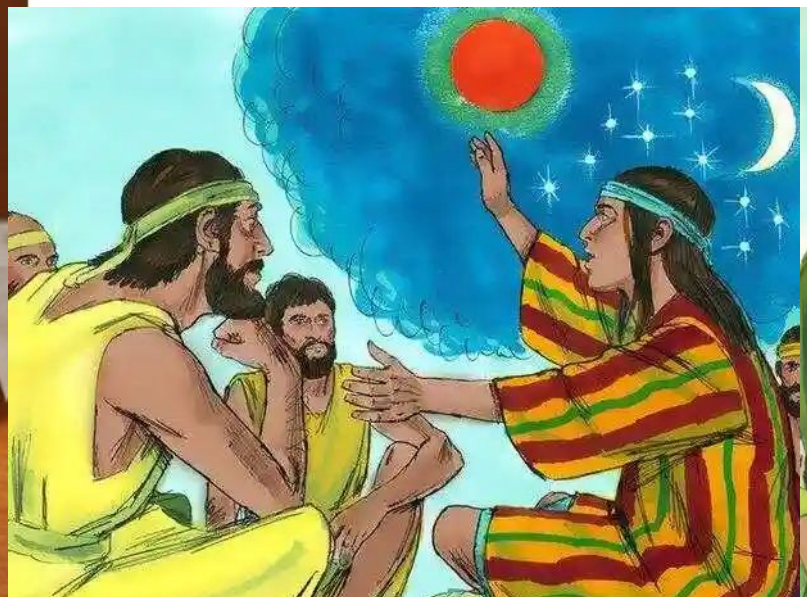


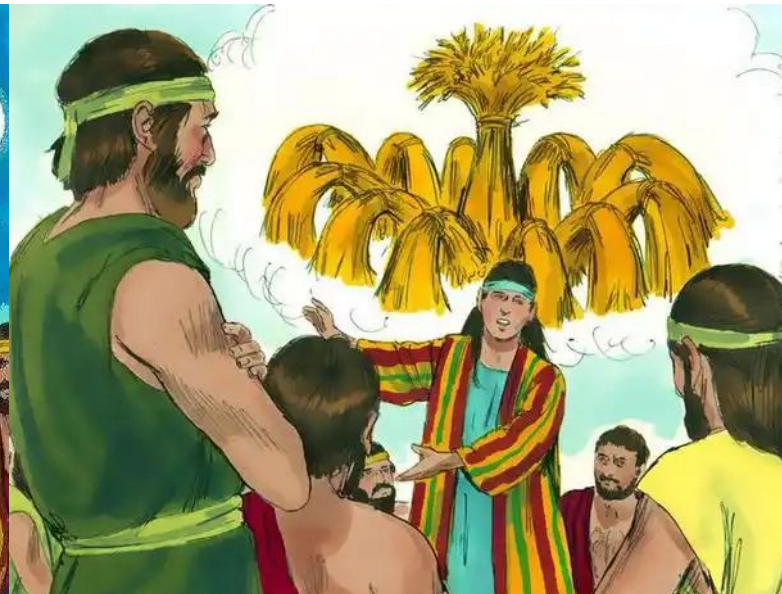
In the deeper, spiritual meaning, the stories of Joseph and his ten older brothers, are all about the two sides of our human nature; how – even for much of our lives -there is disconnect and antagonism between them. Within ourselves, the ten older brothers are our lower self, while Joseph is our higher self.

Please note, that the disconnect and the antagonism, just mentioned, was what the ten older brothers directed against Joseph. It wasn't Joseph who was disconnected from his brothers and him being antagonistic towards them.



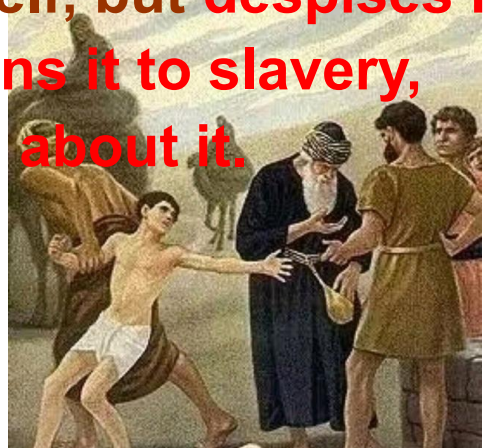
These ten older brothers had been jealous of Joseph, and angrily resentful towards him, from the time he was a boy. Their father, Jacob, singled out Joseph as especially beloved (Genesis 37:3), making him “a coat of many colours. But when his brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than all his brother, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.”(Genesis 37: 3, 4). It made matters worse when Joseph innocently reported to his father and to his brothers two dreams that he had had, in both of which, symbolically, his brothers bowed down before him.





Nursing their grievance towards Joseph the ten brothers took an opportunity to take him and bind him with the intention of killing him. But the advice of the oldest brother, Reuben, prevailed, and Joseph was instead sold into slavery in Egypt. (Genesis 36:21-27). Little did they suspect the workings of divine providence; how Joseph would one day be elevated to be second in command in Egypt and that they would one day come, desperate to buy food and bowing down before him.

This amazing and memorable story highlights how our lower, ego-centered lower self, is not only uncomfortable with our higher self, but despises it, dismisses it, binds it and consigns it to slavery, hoping to conveniently forget all about it.



But the Lord is ceaselessly at work in all of this. Our higher self, like Joseph, may be banished and conveniently forgotten about, but life begins to malfunction and feel empty. And this is what is meant, in the spiritual sense, by the drought which set in for seven years. If you have tried to live your life, shutting away, and dismissing out of sight, your higher self, or higher nature, life begins to feel very empty. You eventually find yourself becoming very hungry for deeper meaning and purpose. Living on the surface, simply pursuing what is self-satisfying, just focusing on one worldly pleasure after another, your inner life becomes a barren landscape; a wilderness; an empty desert; where nothing of worth grows.

Such is the way the Lord would have it be, that the time comes when, recognizing how empty life has become, even though a person might live in a luxurious mansion or have accumulated untold wealth, he or she starts to search for meaning and purpose;

But the question is, Where to find it?

*No one regains a deep and lasting sense of purpose in life by more of the same, self-gratifying, ways they have indulged in the past.

*No one re-discovers self-esteem by even greater effort to dominate and control others.

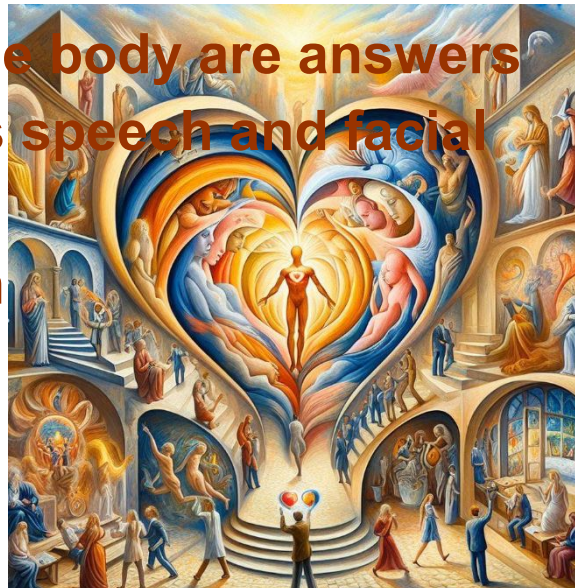
*No one recovers a sense of what life can offer them by accumulating more property or faster cars.

*No one can find inner contentment if they continue to with a "I must have" mentality.

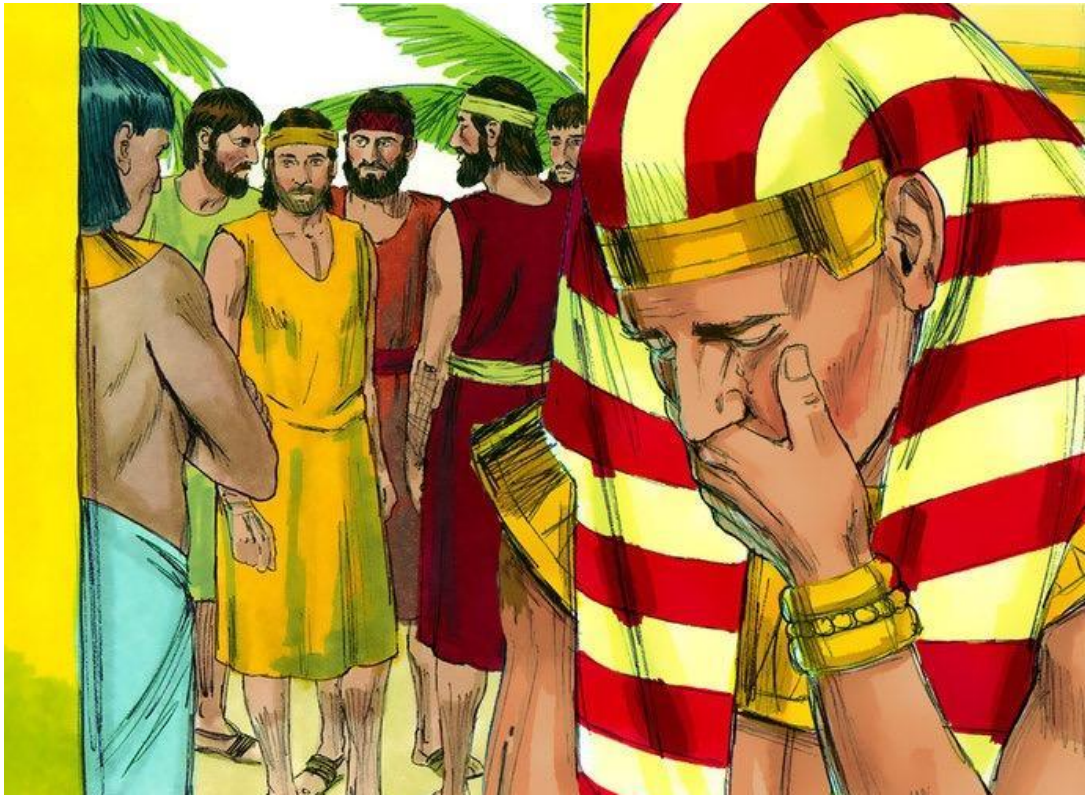
What we need, and are looking for, is not "out there"! It is within. It is by turning back to our higher self, our higher nature, the values and principles we have long hidden away or failed to pay real attention to. And it is by, at long last, subordinating our lives to these

I commend to you the wonderful opening up of the spiritual meaning of this story in the seventh volume of "The Secrets of Heaven", just one short section of which I quote here:

"Regeneration consist in nothing else than the natural being made subservient and the spiritual becoming its lord. And the natural is made subservient when it is made to correspond to the spiritual (made to come into alignment with the spiritual). Once the natural is made to correspond it is no longer reactionary but acts as it is commanded, answering the beck and call of the spiritual, almost as the actions of the body are answers to the beck and call of the will, or as speech and facial expressions confirm to the thought flowing into them. From this it is evident that for a person to become spiritual, his natural must come to be, so far as the power of the will is concerned, of no worth

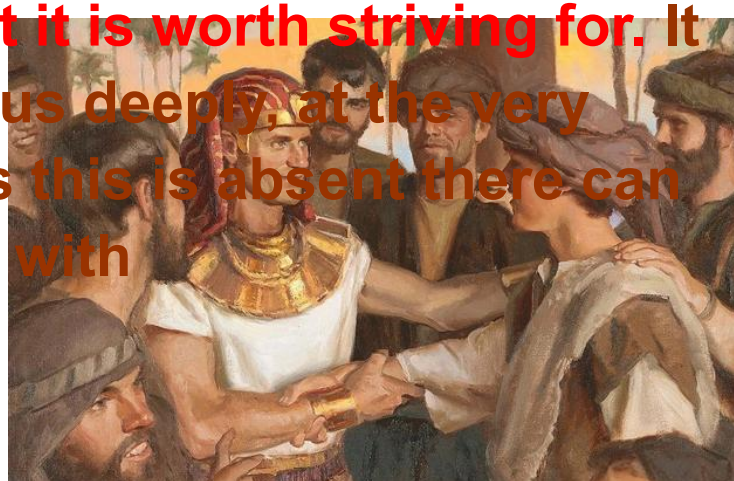


I hope you know this story well enough to remember that Joseph refused to reveal to his brothers who he was until they brought his younger brother, the last born, Benjamin, with them down to Egypt. And when, at last, they did so, “Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood before him, and he cried out, ‘Make everyone go out from me!’ So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.” (Genesis 45:1)



Benjamin was the key to Joseph revealing himself to his ten brothers and to being reconciled with them, though they now being subordinate to him.

If we are to achieve such subordination in our lives, our lower nature now subordinate to our high and better nature, we need to bring into the situation a deeply felt love for divine truth and teaching. In the Writings the spiritual meaning of Benjamin is "the affection of interior truth". ("Secrets of Heaven" 5469). An affection for interior truth is way beyond just knowing truth! It is to come to have a deep love for truth. It is to accept that divine truth really does have the answers for us; that it is worth striving for. It is to have divine truth move us deeply, at the very core of our being. So long as this is absent there can be no reconciliation, Joseph with his brothers.



Subordination to higher authority doesn't usually come easily to us, especially when it is subordination to the authority of the Lord, to the authority of his Word, and subordination to what we know of the Word. We, in our external, natural, selves, think we know better.

Jesus gave us an unforgettably powerful example of such subordination at the time of the crucifixion. His higher self was telling him what He needed to do, while His lower self was protesting and, as seems to be suggested, was urging Him to take things into His own hands and do things his own way. "Father", He said, "if it is Your will, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

Humbling self

It is the Lord's call to us in His Word to subordinate self to what is higher, spiritual, and God-centred. In the words of the Lord in the prophecy through Micah, "He has shown you, O man, what is good: and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to humble yourself to walk with God." (Chapter 6:8)

And as the apostle Paul wrote, "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells." (Romans 7:18)

As was touched upon earlier, for much of our lives there is a war raging between our higher self and our lower self; between our ideals and values and what we know to be good and true versus what our selfish and sinful inclinations would have us do. There is disharmony and antipathy. And our higher self, with its spiritual goals and ideals, is so readily, and often,

Becoming a re-born person is, in fact, about bringing these two sides of human nature back together again, this time the external or natural or lower side of our nature now subordinate to, and serving, what is higher and internal – the ten brothers serving Joseph.

Jesus famously taught. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9). And what He was referring to was bringing together what is internal and spiritual and God-centred within us with what is external and natural and self-centred. Bringing them back together, but now into their correct order.

We are born “upside down people”, meaning that we are born with the natural, external, lower side of human nature, exercising lordship over our lives. And becoming a re-born person is all about flipping things around so that what is spiritual and internal rises to power and exercises lordship of what is external and natural.

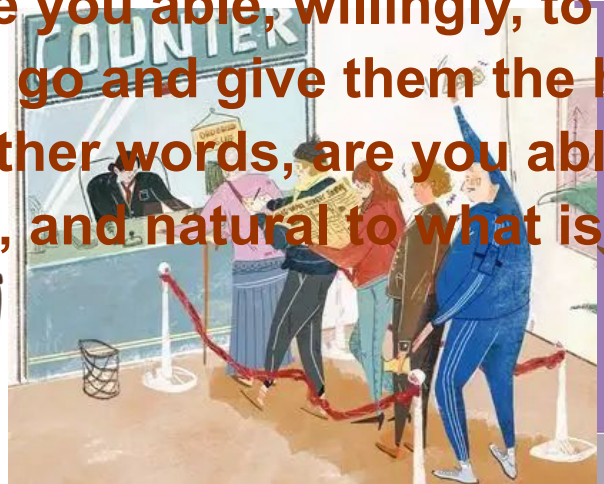
"The human being", we read, "was created in such a way that in him spiritual things and natural things, that is, his spiritual and his natural man, should accord with each other or make one. But in that case the spiritual man ought to have control over the things in the natural, and the natural man ought to obey, like a servant his master. Through the Fall however the natural man started to raise itself above the spiritual man and to turn Divine order itself upside down. As a consequence the natural man separated itself from the spiritual, and spiritual things could not reach it any longer except so to speak through chinks to provide the ability to think and speak. But so that spiritual things might flow in once more into the natural man this (has) to be regenerated by the Lord." ("Secrets of Heaven" 3167).

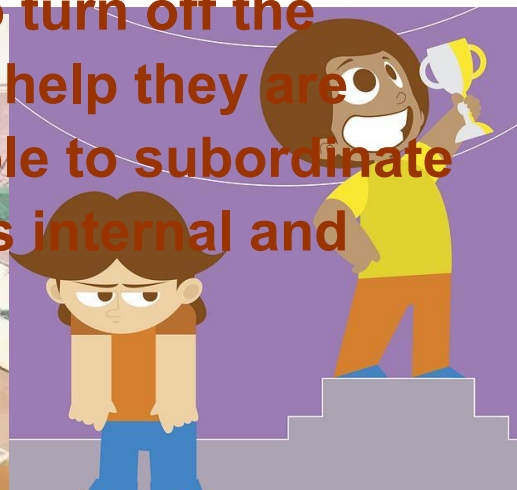
And this is encouraging, that "It is impossible to describe how beautiful the external man (our lower self) is when joined to the internal (our higher self)." ("Secrets of Heaven" 1590:2)

Can you find the patience to wait longer when someone before you, being served in a shop or in a Bank, is taking longer than you had anticipated to conduct their business? In other words, can you subordinate what is self-centred to what is God-centred?

Are you able to acknowledge and rejoice when someone else is mentioned and praised when you had hoped to be? In other words, can you subordinate what is self-centred to what is God-centred?

If you are watching and enjoying a programme on television and someone in the house urgently calls out for your help are you able, willingly, to turn off the programme and go and give them the help they are asking for? In other words, are you able to subordinate what is external, and natural to what is internal and spiritual?





THIS is the continual challenge we face and the choices we are called on to continually make, to bring what is lower and self-serving within us into submission to what is higher.

And it is the way by which we make it possible for the Lord's life of love and wisdom to flow more strongly into our lives.

Amen

Readings:

Genesis Chapter 41:41 to Chapter 42:5

Matthew Chapter 5: 1 to 10

Secrets of Heaven 10396:2

"Everyone has an internal and an external; the internal is for heaven's purposes, and the external for the world's purposes. When the external is dominant, worldly, bodily, and earthly interests reign; but when the internal is dominant, heavenly ones do so. The human being has been created in such a way however that the external may be subordinate to the internal, thus the world within him may be subordinate to the heaven; for, as has been stated, the external exists for the world;s purposes, and the internal for heaven's. When therefore the external is dominant the internal is closed, because then a person turns himself away from heaven and the Lord towards the world and self; and the place he turns to is where his heart is, consequently where his love is and together with that love the whole of his life, since a person's life consists of his love."

THE END