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 - Table of Contents
 - Copyright
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 - Index
 - Back Cover
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Highlights/Bookmarks

The Religious Function of the Animus in the Book of Tobit 97

the *sine qua non* of being able to meet the dark in oneself. Jung pointed out recently that we have never been more in need of the Christian virtues than just now, when we are faced with a dark night of the soul and an unprecedented advance of the negative principle.

Very frequently in analysis—often when people learn to know their dark side for the first time—they tend to identify with their undesirable qualities and to lose sight of their virtues. This is very unwise, for the brighter their virtues, the darker their shadow, and one never cancels the other. So now, just as they are going to face the evil demon in Sarah, Raphael emphasizes her light side, so that Tobias may know she is a complete woman, with an unusually light side to balance the very dark Asmodaeus.

Though Tobias seemed to know very little of his kinsmen, he had heard of Sarah's demon and the fate of her seven husbands. He said simply: "Now for my part I fear." This is a very instinctive reaction, simple and direct, like the dog he brought with him, and one suspects his seven predecessors of having been very much lacking in instinct. The first, and even the second, may perhaps be excused but after that it was just folly not to be consciously fearful. Only a man with instinct can deal with an animus-possessed woman, and Tobias's fear here, like the fear of God, is proverbially the beginning of wisdom.

Raphael met this by reminding Tobias of his father's injunction to take a wife of his own kindred and—repeating his instructions regarding the burning of the fish's heart and liver to drive out Asmodaeus—told him that the demon would not hurt him, adding: "And fear not for she was set apart for thee before the world was, and thou shalt save her and she shall go with thee."

It is rather startling to meet here with such a clear reference to the later doctrine of predestination. Taken psychologically, and not pushed to extremes, this doctrine definitely has its part in the process of individuation. It is just as impossible to deviate from our own essential pattern as it would be for an apple to become a pear, or a tiger an innocent lamb. From this point of view, the liberated Sarah would be the anima in Tobias's pattern and Tobias the transformed animus in Sarah's. This would also explain the peculiar words with which this sixth chapter ends: "And when Tobias heard the words of Raphael and that she [Sarah] was his sister of the seed of his father's house, he loved her exceedingly and his heart clave unto her."