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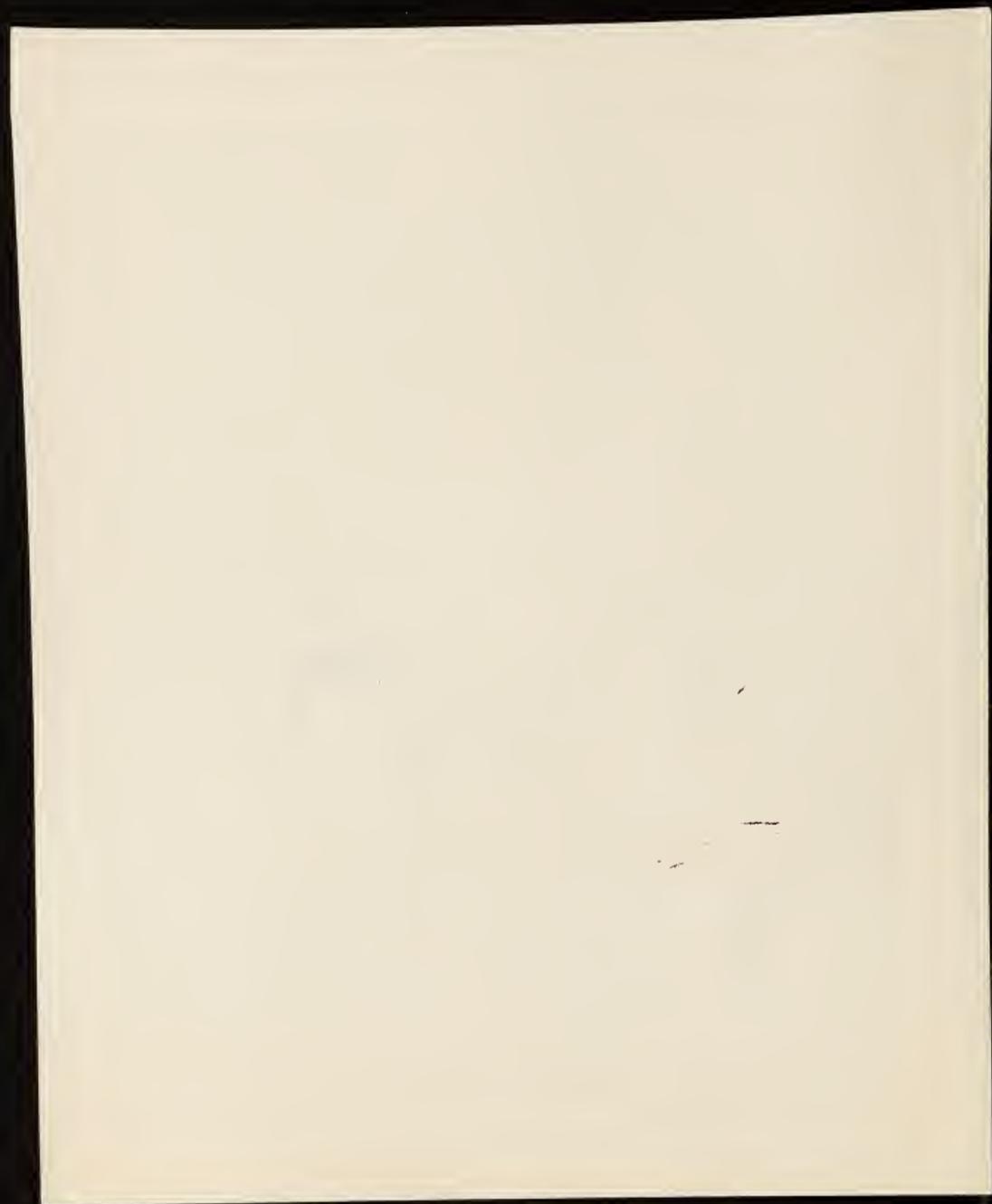


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הקניון של בית המדרש בארבעה עשר.







12.

וַיִּקְרָא וַיִּבְרָךְ...

(בראשית, כ"ח, י"ב.)

Drawing. Before 1640.

Paris, Louvre.

...*And he dreamed, and behold...*

(Genesis 28, 12.)

In this scene the ladder is missing. Nevertheless, a kind of supernatural atmosphere pervades the whole. The angel's single gesture indicates both benediction and a noiseless approach to the sleeper so as not to awaken him.



ועל-סך-בך תחיה ואת-אחיך תצבור..

(בראשית, כ"ה, מ')

Drawing. After 1640. Amsterdam, Collection
of Engravings.

*And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve
thy brother...*

(Genesis 27, 40.)

This drawing has been mistakenly assumed to represent Isaac blessing Jacob. The kneeling figure is an earthly type and lacks the spirituality that is so pronounced in all Rembrandt's representations of Jacob. Isaac looks exhausted not only by physical fatigue, but by a devastating experience as well. Rebecca, who appears in the background, also seems to have an uneasy conscience.



..וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי.

(בראשית, כ"ב, י"א.)

Etching. 1655.

B. 35.

...And said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said
Here am I.

(Genesis 22, 11.)

Unlike the correct version in the painting of 1635, the angel here is shown as grasping Abraham by his right forearm and his left arm. There was no necessity for a display of force, since Abraham would in any case have proceeded slowly and ponderously. Isaac is not bound, and his kneeling posture indicates that he has obeyed his father's commandment willingly. Abraham has placed his hand only over his son's eyes so as to ease his sufferings. His own suffering is reflected in his gloomy countenance.



..ויקח את-המאכלת לשחט את-בנו. ויקרא אליו מלאך
ה' מן-השמים..

Painting. 1635. Leningrad, Eremitage.

*...And took the knife to slay his son. And the angel
of the Lord called unto him out of heaven...*
(Genesis 22, 10—11.)

Isaac lies bound to the faggots in a blaze of light, which seems to symbolize purity. Abraham receives the angel as if he still does not dare to believe the happy tidings. The angel has come very hurriedly and seizes Abraham's right hand; the knife falls from his grasp. In an etching made twenty years later this detail is changed.



..וַיִּמְקְאוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל-צַנְאוֹ וַיִּשָּׂקְאוּ וַיִּבְכוּ.

(בראשית, ל"ג, ד.)

Drawing. About 1636.

Berlin, Collection of Engravings.

*...And embraced him, and fell on his neck,
and kissed him; and they wept.*

(Genesis 33, 4.)

It is only rarely that Rembrandt envelopes his figures in a natural light, as here. An example of this is the sketch in the L. Bonnat Collection in Paris, where Sarah is shown bringing Hagar to Abraham. There, too, the scene is pervaded with the fresh fragrance of the fields.



וַיִּחְלֶם וַהֲגֵה סֵלֶם מֵצֵב אֶרְצָה וְרֵאשׁוּ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה
וַהֲגֵה מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֲלֵים וְיֵרְדִים בּוֹ.

(בראשית, כ"ח, י"ב.)

Etching. 1655.

B. 36 c.

*And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on
the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and
behold the angels of God ascending and descending
on it.*

(Genesis 28, 12.)

Here the picture is based on a profound psychological idea. Lying on the ground and leaning upon the stone, Jacob is at the same time on the ladder whose top touches a world that is all light. — This etching is one of a series of four illustrations for a book entitled "Piedra gloriosa," by Rembrandt's friend Menasseh ben Israel (1604—1657). The other three portray the image of Nebuchadnezzar, David and Goliath, and the vision of Daniel. The odd juxtaposition of the four scenes is due to the author's idea that the stone on which Jacob lay was the one that killed Goliath and shattered the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.