

Revelation

After the stress and shock of the sudden awakening to the fundamental error of separateness, after the lightning-flash of true knowledge has toppled the crown off the Tower of Common-sense, as shown in the symbolism of the 16th Major trump, there comes a period of calm and gradual growth. In the second stage which we considered in the previous lesson, there is a sudden and painful overthrow of the false wisdom of the world, a momentary, but never-to-be-forgotten glimpse of reality, of the absolute unity of life. In the third stage this new conception of the One-ness of All begins gradually to unfold.

What happens during this unfoldment, and the specific activities involved therein, we may discover from the study of the 17th Key of the Tarot. As you will remember, this picture develops the esoteric meaning of the Hebrew letter Tzaddi, named the “fish-hook”. This is the letter to which meditation is assigned by the Sepher Yetzirah, and in the Kabbalistic scheme of the paths on the Tree of the Living Ones, it is the 28th, joining Netzach (Victory) to Yesod (Foundation). Astrologically, this letter corresponds to the zodiacal sign Aquarius, the sign of the Man, ruled by Saturn.

Let us begin with this last detail. In the Tarot, Saturn is the 21st Key, the World, symbol of the cosmic consciousness. As in mythology the god Saturn was said to eat his children, so in esoteric psychology do we find that the cosmic consciousness, when it becomes a personal experience, swallows up all its differentiations. And as Saturn was father of the gods, so is the cosmic consciousness really the source of all other modes of consciousness. It is not something new, although it seems to be in the future for most of us. In truth, all the modes of consciousness that we have experienced up to this moment, are differentiations of cosmic consciousness. Therefore in the books of wisdom the methods that lead to it are sometimes described as the Path of Return.

Students of these lessons who are familiar with the conventional astrological interpretations of the influence of the planet Saturn are sometimes puzzled by its attribution to the 21st Key of the Tarot. In

astrology Saturn is commonly regarded as a “malefic influence”, and is said to be constricting, limiting and confining. That it seems to have an unfortunate influence on ordinary worldly affairs cannot be denied, but the reason is that ordinary worldly affairs are conducted from the point-of-view of the limited, three-dimensional consciousness, and are therefore based upon the illusion of personal separateness. To men and women engaged in the vain endeavor to build their house of life on the shifting sands of common-sense, the influence of Saturn is, indeed, inimical. Not so with those who have developed, and are living from, a consciousness of the unity of Being. Then the forces of limitation are transmuted, and become the means of concentrating the Life-Power into definite and specific forms of expression.

It is this form of Saturnian activity that is depicted in the 17th Key of the Tarot, and that in the foundation of the growth and increase in wisdom characteristic of the third stage of spiritual unfoldment. For meditation, which has been described, as “an unbroken flow of knowledge in a particular object,” begins with concentration; and concentration is a voluntary limitation of consciousness. That limitation is Saturnian in quality, and because its consequence is understanding, we find that in the Tree of Life the sphere of Saturn is the third Sephirah, Binah, whose name means “understanding”.

Meditation is simply prolonged concentration. Kabalists, by associating it with the letter Tzaddi, liken it to a fish-hook. The analogy is a good one, even in its more obvious implications, and we shall discover presently that its deeper meanings are worthy of earnest consideration.

The fundamental assumption of the ancient wisdom is that every center of the Life-Power is related to the whole Life-Power. The many are expressions of the One, and the One is conscious of all the details of its expression in the Many. In its perfect knowledge, past, present and future are united. It knows the whole of its self-expression, as a whole and in detail. Our personal consciousness is but the specialization of this cosmic consciousness, and since the Life-Power is omnipresent and omnipotent, and perfectly free, there is nothing whatever to prevent its communication to one of its personal centers of any detail of knowledge that it possesses.

I call this as “assumption”, but for me it is more than that, as it has been for men and women far wiser than I, all through the ages. The Life-Power knows all things, and stands ready to share whatever detail of its knowledge may be required to aid in the unfoldment of each of its personal manifestations. It seems to us, while yet we are deluded by the illusion of separateness, that we, as persons, think and feel, that we have personal states of objective and subjective consciousness. Except for comparatively brief periods of ecstasy, even the greatest sages experience the same illusion. They, however, know it for what it is, and are not deceived by it. Hence we find them all saying with Jesus, “Of myself I can do nothing”, yet saying too, “All that the Father hath is mine”.

I have often brought this to your attention. I feel that I cannot do so too often. These lessons are not the work of Paul Case. Neither is your response to them anything that originates in your personality. My teaching and your application are really two phases of the work of the Life-Power, which uses these words and your response as means for ripening us, its centers and channels of self-expression. The illusion of personal effort persists, to be sure, but the more we know it for what it is, the less we are deluded by it, the riper we are. This in the meaning of that fine sentence in *Light on the Path*: “Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest, be not thou the warrior.” I find from experience that the less personal effort I put into writing these pages, the better is the result. Whenever I permit myself to be deluded into thinking, “This is a hard lesson to make clear, I must take great pains in preparing an outline for it,” I find that nothing worthwhile is accomplished. Just as soon as I remember that I draw all things needful from the limitless resources of the Life-Power, and, acting upon that knowledge, sit down to write without preparing any outline at all, the work is quickly finished, and from what you have said of it, is well done.

The same principle should be applied in studying the lessons. If you think of it as your personal work, if you regard all these details of Kabalistic knowledge as being something terribly difficult, which you have to get into your heads, the work will be hard. Regard it as the work of the Life-Power, which already knows every one of these details. Remind yourselves that the Life-Power, which already knows everyone of these details, brings you just

exactly what you can use at the very moment when you need that knowledge most. You will be surprised to see what a difference this will make in your work.

All this is not quite so much a digression from our main theme as it may seem, because success in meditation cannot come until we realize that just as the Life-Power is the Teacher and Worker, so is It really the one who engages in meditation. We do nothing of ourselves. We are instruments through which the Life-Power does certain things. Through us it concentrates, through us it meditates, and through these activities ripens as into perfected centers of its all-embracing consciousness.

To return to the connection between Tzaddi, the fish-hook and what goes on in meditation. The inner consciousness, or subjective mind, is often compared to a sea, and the various forms of knowledge to fishes swimming in it. When we select some particular object for concentration, and fix attention upon it, we are baiting a hook and dropping it into this sea of subjective mind, and as fish are attracted by bait, so are various forms of knowledge having an affinity to the object of concentration attracted to our mental fish-hook.

Suppose, for example, you fix attention upon some picture of the Tarot pack. In the beginning you may not see very much, but the longer you watch, the nearer you will come to this experience: SOME DETAIL OF THE SYMBOLISM WILL BE EMPHASIZED IN YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS, and a glimpse of the meaning below the surface will come to you. This is the time to land your fish, that is, to make notes of what you have glimpsed just as soon as they are definite enough to put into words. Then cast in your hook again, and watch until another thought-form takes the bait.

Remember always to maintain the mood of expectancy. Your subconscious mind is like a bay opening into the ocean of cosmic consciousness, and thought-forms from the farthest reaches of that great sea of mind will be drawn to you by meditation. This is not theory, my friends. It is a plain statement of what has been experienced, by many people. The Life-Power knows just what everything means, and has perfect memory of every thought that has been given form in the mind of any human being. There is no such thing as a secret, or as a lost art. "Nothing is hidden", said Jesus,

“that shall not be revealed”. The words are sober truth, without the slightest tinge of exaggeration. And meditation is the method of the Life-Power’s self-revelation.

The name “fish-hook”, moreover, is a clue to something else that happens in meditation. For human beings such as we, every kind of mental activity has physical accompaniments, and the physical changes caused by mental states are by no means limited to transformations of the cells in the brain. It is to this fact that the letter-name Tzaddi refers.

We have learned that in the Hebrew alphabet, the “fish” is the letter Nun, and that to this letter the Sepher Yetzirah assigns Scorpio, the zodiacal sign which rules the party of the body corresponding to Yesod on the Tree of Life. As a fish-hook draws fish out of the water to be eaten, so the right practice of meditation lifts up the nerve-force which energizes the organs ruled by Scorpio, and converts that energy into food for the growth of the spiritual man.

This is why continence and chastity are insisted upon in all the old books on spiritual development. These requirements, however, are often exaggerated and over-emphasized. They who suppose that celibacy is necessary to right meditation are sadly in error. On the contrary, the celibate life, because it is a life of repression, is a hindrance to spiritual unfoldment. The Bible contains accounts of men who ripened into the higher consciousness, who were also fathers of large families. In these days, too, there are men and women of illumination who are by no means celibate. Clean living and control are indispensable. Control, however, implies right use, not suppression.

Until seekers for light come into possession of right knowledge of the true functions of sex, there will continue to be more or less following after false doctrines. This is not the place to elaborate upon this theme; but those who are ready for more light will find it, if they will fix in mind these two points: (1) the sex-function has other uses than reproduction, (2) its misuse consists in employing it for mere sense-pleasure.

The third stage of unfoldment, although it makes use of, and modifies the nerve-force which is ordinarily employed in the sex-function, has nothing to do with that function itself. Right meditation releases and lifts up the

“serpent power” (Kundalini) stored in a nerve-center at the base of the spine, which is called the Muladhara chakra in Yoga philosophy and is known to modern physiologists as the sacral plexus. In meditation, the force stored in this ganglion is made to rise, so that it energizes, in succession, six other centers, of which four are in the trunk, and two in the head.

These seven centers are symbolized in the 17th Key of the Tarot by the eight-pointed white stars, surrounding the great yellow star. The latter indicates the true source of the force which is modified in meditation. It is the cosmic energy, the “stellar” or “astral” Light of Eliphas Levi, which he describes in terms that have enabled us to identify it with the Prana of Hinduism and the Ruach of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Remember this always. In your work you are not trying to control some power which is your personal possession. You are simply learning how to obey certain laws of a universal energy, which is none other than the Limitless Light whence all things proceed. Because the primary activity of this light is the whirling motion concentrated in Kether, it is represented in the 17th Key by an eight-rayed star. The rays are like the eight spokes of the Wheel of Fortune.

People of little understanding are always bringing against this teaching the accusation that by it men seek to save themselves. It is, they say, an endeavor to lift men up by his own bootstraps. This is not true. The ageless wisdom again and again proclaims the folly of the man who thinks he can save himself. They tell us that little by little the Life-Power ripens its personal centers to the point where they become able to understand and apply the law of liberation. Each person’s liberation is a particular fulfillment of cosmic law, and from another point-of-view we must regard it as a true work of “grace”, as an example of the perfect self-impartment of the One life to one of its personal aspects.

The beginning of the way of meditation is concentration upon the things of the external world, upon the facts reported through the senses. The mood in which this concentration is undertaken is of the greatest importance. Whatever the particular object you select, bear in mind, the fact that the

Life-Power already knows all about it and perceives its true relation to all other objects. Make yourself receptive to the influx of this knowledge, by holding your attention to the selected object, in the expectant mood.

As a result of this practice you will gradually begin to perceive the unity behind the various appearances of the external world, and the longer you meditate, the clearer will be your understanding of that which is symbolized by the Wheel of Fortune. In fact, nothing is better as an object for meditation than one of the Tarot pictures, because these cards speak a symbolic language already known by your subconscious mind, and their message has the unity of Life for its central theme.

Gradually, as you continue to practice, you will begin to identify your personal consciousness with the consciousness of nature, or Natural Intelligence. You will begin to know that the operations of your mind are linked to that great system described by Ezekiel as “wheels within wheels”. This is the beginning of your practical experience of the truth of non-separateness. When you can see that all your mental states are phases in the manifestation of the One Consciousness which directs the growth of trees and grasses, the flight of birds and insects, the flow of streams and the sweep of ocean currents; when you begin to feel that through your mind and body flows the power that holds the stars in their courses, the power that flames in countless suns, you are beginning to exchange mere intellectual assent for that true knowledge which has been called the doctrine of the heart.

With this experience comes a new understanding of what is meant by “Mother Nature”, or the feminine aspect of the Life-Power. That is why all three cards of the Tarot that relate to the third stage of unfoldment so emphasize the feminine. In the 3rd and 17th Keys the central figure is a woman - the same woman, in fact. In the 10th Key the title of the card points to the working of the same feminine power, for this is the Wheel of Fortune, the goddess whom the Greeks called Panthea, or she in whom all the feminine aspects of deity were synthesized.

She it is who makes meditation possible. For, as I have tried to make clear all through this lesson, it is not we who meditate, but the Life-Power which through us manifests its ability to meditate. And that ability is the work of the universal subjective, or feminine mode of consciousness. All that we

have to do, after all, is to get our personal selves out of the way. For the experience of the second stage of unfoldment, the swift, sharp flash of real perception, is called Exciting Intelligence because it sets up the subjective response that takes form as meditation. In that moment the spiritual man is conceived in the womb of Prakriti, and the third and fourth stages of unfoldment correspond in many ways to the process of physical gestation and birth. But this is a theme to which I must revert at another time.

Let me take what little space is left to make it perfectly clear that one need give no thought whatever to the physiological process I have described as accompanying meditation, other than a recognition of what takes place. For the present this is sufficient, and I would warn you against attempting to raise the Kundalini by concentrating on any part of the body. By this I do not mean that good results are not obtainable by such practice. I warn you because no two persons need just the same regimen in these specialized exercises; and to know what the student needs, the teacher must be able to exercise the clear vision whereby the exact condition of the seven centers may be determined.

I have given no detailed instruction in meditation, because these lessons are intended rather to give you a general notion as to what happens in the seven stages of unfoldment, than to serve as a course of practical Instructions. My idea is to provide you with a sort of bird's-eye view of the Path of Liberation, as a preparation for the work which will actually take you over the path itself.

Again, there is little need for me to write general instructions, when others have done the same thing so much better than I could ever hope to do. If you are seeking for practical teaching, let me recommend a careful study of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Among the various translations, my preference is that by Charles Johnston. Mr. Johnston has brought to this work a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, and a sympathetic understanding of the real purpose of Yoga. His book, moreover, has the merit of being free from Sanskrit terms.

I have but touched the surface of what might be written in this lesson. Find the deeper truths for yourself, by attentive study of the three Tarot Keys upon which this text is based. Remember always that the Tarot has a particular message for you, that there is a special application of the general

truth it teaches which has a direct and immediate bearing on your own life. Constantly remind yourself that the Knower seated in your heart has knowledge of this special application, and has power to communicate that knowledge to you. Study the symbols, and ponder upon their meaning. Expect to have it made clear to you. Listen for the Voice of the Teacher within. Still the personal consciousness, and LET the particular manifestation of cosmic consciousness that you need, find expression as a personal awareness of truth. Accustom yourself to study in this way, and you shall learn more than can be found in a thousand books.