

Regeneration

Always remember that the root-meaning of “spirit” is “Breath”. This is the active phase of the Limitless Light, the energy which projects a universe by its “out-breathing”, and by its “in-breathing” draws that universe back again into itself. In these lessons “Spirit” means just what is meant by the Hebrew noun “Ruach”. Let us devote a little space to the inner and deeper implications of that term, as shown by Kabalistic analysis.

Resh (R), its first letter, named “head” or “face” represents a synthesis of the elements of objective consciousness. With the exception of touch, the head contains the most highly specialized instruments of sensation. It houses the brain, with its complex mechanism for transforming light into consciousness, including two organs just beginning to function in more advanced human beings. In the head, again, is the mechanism of speech. Hence Resh is truly a symbol of the ruling powers of human personality.

Among the 32 paths, it is Collective Intelligence, concerning which we are told: “Thence astrologers, by the judgment of the stars and the heavenly signs, derive their speculations and the perfection of their science according to motion of the stars”. What sort of intelligence is this? The sort all scientists depend on. The kind of consciousness which observes facts, classifies them, discerns hidden links of relation and order, formulates laws. The consciousness that reasons inductively from particulars to generals, fits facts and inferences together to frame hypotheses. In short, objective consciousness.

A double letter, Resh stands for a pair of opposites, Fruitfulness and Sterility. Fruitfulness, because the onlooking of the universal objective consciousness incites the activity of the universal subjective consciousness, and thus brings about all the right productiveness of this world of names and forms. Sterility, because the same objective consciousness, in personal centers of expression, at last penetrates by induction through the veil of names and forms, and prepares the way for the return to the formless and nameless Source of all. Through objective consciousness the Life-Power

involves itself in relativity and existence; by the same power it extricates itself from the bondage of existence, and returns to the seeming sterility of the No-Thing.

Even the number of the Tarot key corresponding to Resh indicates the same thing. It is 19, in which the “fruitfulness” intimated by the word “beginning” connects with the number 1, and the “sterility” of “ending” is implied by 9. So also the Magician, numbered 1, is a youth at the height of his virility, while the Hermit, numbered 9, is a sterile sage, at the close of his life-journey. As the initial letter of Ruach, therefore, Ruach denotes objective consciousness. It reminds us that the same power which begins manifestation (the Magician) by involving itself in name and form through inciting and contemplating the ceaseless activity of Prakriti, is also the power which finally effects its own release from the limitations of name and form (the Hermit). It sees through appearance to reality, discerns the laws behind phenomena, applies those laws to set itself free. We, who are centers of expression for this power, discover laws by inductive reasoning, formulate scientific systems, utilize the control exerted by objective over subjective consciousness through the law of suggestion. Working in and through us, the universal objective consciousness enables us to know the truth that sets us free. This liberating intelligence is the primary aspect of the Life-Breath, indicated by the initial letter of Ruach.

Vau, the second letter, means “nail” or “hook” and it is also the Hebrew equivalent for our conjunction “and”. The Life-Breath is not merely the beginning and the end of manifestation. It is the middle, too. It is the connecting medium between all modes of its self-manifestation, the link which joins the parts of the Many together in the One-ness of the All.

This connecting office Kabalists associate with Hearing, meaning thereby the subtle principle of sound-vibration, termed “Akasha” by Hindu philosophers. Akasha is the root-substance from which all things are made, the primary modifications of Prakriti. Prakriti is the eternal subjective aspect of consciousness. As soon as manifestation begins, Prakriti assumes the name and form of Akasha, and from this all other names and forms are developed. Before name and form come into being at the beginning of a cycle of the Life-Power’s self-expression, the Akasha is latent or potential. When the Life-Power begins to objectify itself, Akasha first, and then four other Tattwas, themselves differentiations of Akasha, come into existence.

The others are like waves on the ocean, or like beads on a string. Akasha is the connecting link, the string joining the beads, the ocean combining all the waves.

Vau, then, as representing Akasha, is fundamentally a symbol of the “interior nature” of the Life-Power, of the universal subjective consciousness, and to indicate that the office of the subjective consciousness is to act as a conjunction and intermediary, binding together all the seemingly separate manifestations of the Life-Power into one continuous whole. The final letter of Ruach, Cheth, the “fence” suggests limitation, in that a fence encloses a particular area set aside for cultivation. Spirit is primarily the objective mode of the Life-Power’s universal consciousness, and secondarily the integrating and disintegrating power of sound-vibration; but these two aspects necessitate and find completion in the selection of a definite field for specialized activity.

In accordance with Oriental doctrines of the greatest antiquity, the Kabbalah applies the term “speech” to this specialization. This is an attribution of the letter Cheth. As here understood, “speech” includes all things. Even as the beginning of John’s gospel suggests, the sages teach that the manifested universe is the verbal expression of the Life-Power. In this world of name and form, Spirit becomes articulate; and it is because all things are the expression of ideas materialized through the sound-vibration that in practical occultism so much attention is given to the right use of speech.

Our Kabbalistic analysis of Ruach, therefore, shows us that by Spirit we mean a power which is primarily the onlooking, inductive consciousness that we call “objective”; secondarily, the responsive, deductive consciousness termed “subjective”, whose primary activity is the integrating and disintegrating agency of sound-vibration, (Akasha), that being also what links together the multitude of apparently separate phenomena; and finally, the combination of objective and subjective in the specialising, form-giving power which we share because of our ability to unite consciousness and sound in speech.

This power is now unfolding through us. It has brought us to the point of sharing some part of its knowledge of itself. So long as we remain within the limits of third-dimensional consciousness we must continually remind ourselves to work in harmony with the law of the Life-Breath. We must remember that Ruach works primarily through our objective consciousness. Then, from what is known of objective consciousness and its laws, we may discover that liberation demands trained use of the senses, accurate and logical inductive reasoning, and intelligent application of the law of suggestion. These come first.

Next we must bear in mind the fact that the Life-Breath links all things together, and that this uniting agency is the subjective consciousness. Our subjective minds, as I have said more than once, are not our personal possessions. Subjective consciousness is universal, and each of us is but a center of it. It unites us to all human beings everywhere, to all living creatures in the planes below man, and even to all those forms that used to be called inanimate. And this not only to terrestrial beings, but to subjective consciousness everywhere in the universe, even to the outermost limits of space.

Finally, since the Spirit unfolding in us presents itself to us as a power working always toward definite, articulate self-expression, we shall take pains to make our speech truly representative of our consciousness. It is folly to suppose that one may have any lasting experience of the higher consciousness before he has attained to ripeness in the lower stages. To enter the consciousness beyond thought requires as a preliminary no little clarification of the consciousness of which thought is the vehicle. The means of clarification is right speech. The mark of readiness for the higher order of knowing is the ability to express thought in clear, precise, definite terms.

Great sages invariably speak with authority. Jesus was a master of the spoken word. So was Buddha. So was Ramakrishna. The truly illuminated man knows what to say and how to say it. He may not use big words and sesquipedalian phrases; but he will certainly choose appropriate and accurate words, and will so combine them that what he thinks is intelligible to himself and to others.

I have written at length about what Ruach means, because the better we understand this, the sooner do we arrive at the definite consciousness of liberation which is the fifth stage of unfoldment. This consciousness is not the final liberation itself. It is the assured knowledge that one is really on the path which leads to freedom. In the Tarot it is represented by the 19th major trump, the little boy riding a white horse. Review the analysis of this card given in the lessons on the Tarot.

Psychoanalysts have discovered that symbols are universal. We do not have to invent any theory of migration to account for the fact that people living far apart use the same symbols to express the same ideas. The human mind is practically the same in every place and in every age, so that when a man tries to express an idea, the mental laws of association and representation determine the symbol he selects. It is for this reason that symbolism is truly the universal language.

The psychoanalysts have discovered that dreams of little children are always related to the impulse of sex-expression and the same symbol has the same meaning in occultism. What does this mean? Simply that the power we are using is the power that was expressed for thousands of incarnations in perpetuating the race. In this way it provided for the slow evolution of the potencies of the I AM through personal vehicles until we have arrived at the state of unfoldment now under consideration.

The child is now its symbol, because at this stage the power that was utilized only for reproduction is directed into other and higher creative channels. Thus the 19th Key shows the child riding out of the walled garden of sense-life. He represents the transmutation of creative energy from a lower or slower rate of vibration to a faster or higher rate. He rides a horse to show that he represents the control of the lower, animal forms of life-expression by the higher, human forms. The horse is white, the synthesis of all colors, to indicate that these forces which take the little boy faster and farther than he could go by himself are all seven "rays" of the Light, perfectly balanced and equilibrated. The boy rides without saddle or bridle, to show that he has perfect command of the horse.

The goal of his journey is the height beyond the pillars of the 18th Key, the mountain-top where the Hermit stands. In the 18th Key the very beginning of the journey is shown. The shell-fish crawling out of the water represents

there just what the boy and the horse do here; but there the higher is encased in the lower, as the vital and directive parts of the shell-fish's organism are concealed in the bony outer covering. In the 19th Key the horse corresponds to the shell and the boy to the living organism inside. Both have developed. Both are on their way to the final goal.

I have called this goal fourth-dimensional consciousness. This is a name, but it is far from being a definition. No definition is possible. Jacob Boehme tried to describe that higher order knowing, but what he wrote sounds like gibberish, unless one has shared his experience. Then it makes perfect sense. The vision of Ezekiel and of St. John describe the same thing, but mean little to us now.

Yet we should read them over and over again. No effort should be made to understand, nor to interpret. They were not written for that purpose. They are meant to prepare the mind to have the same kind of experience. The more one unfolds his consciousness, the more intelligible do these descriptions become. Here a sentence becomes luminous, there a phrase once dark is crystal-clear. Books like these are meant to be tests of our advancement. The riper we become, the better do we grasp their meaning.

The little child on the horse also represents another thing about the fifth stage of unfoldment. Here, as a result of concentration and logical reasoning, one grasps intellectually the fact that he is really and truly a child of the Life-Power. During the fifth stage, by persistent practice in meditating upon the consequences of this perception, it becomes evident that personality is always under guidance. One sees also that the personality does nothing of itself, that it is the vehicle and instrument of a power having an aim far beyond the personal view.

Do you doubt this? Then read history, and see how the Life-Power has worked to its own ends, without respect for persons. Or look back into your own life, to see how significant were little things that you thought unimportant when they happened, how relatively unimportant the things that you then regarded as meaning more than anything else. We have to learn to be little children. "Of such", said Jesus, "is the kingdom." Those who are the most open channels for the Life-Power's working, those whose childlike confidence in guidance is the strongest, are nearest to freedom.

There is no surrender of freedom in obedience. The week I gave this lecture I did more work in a given time than I had done before for years, because I obeyed the law. I took time to make some spinal adjustments, to use exercises and postures to relieve nerve-pressures that were interfering with my mental reaction to life. I said, "The law works through this body, and I must put the instrument into better condition." That took time that I ordinarily used for writing, but I lost nothing by my obedience, for the adjustment enabled me to think better and work faster.

So it is all through. The Life-Power's methods are the fruit of its perfect wisdom. Obedience is therefore our assurance of success. Nature is our adversary so long as we disagree with her. By agreeing quickly she becomes our friend and servant. To the degree that we accept the guidance of the Life-Power, to that degree are we liberated from the worst of delusions, the notion that somehow or other we are exceptions to the rule. The notion that we can do things of ourselves.

Obedience soon brings us to understand that the law is not imposed upon us from outside. It comes from within. We are personal expressions of the law. The creative method of the universe is specialized in every human life. Every human being is a fruit of the Tree of Life.

This is shown in the 12th Key of the Tarot. The attitude of personal surrender that it typifies is the one required and developed in the fifth stage of unfoldment. In this mental attitude, which is exactly the reverse of that held by most people, you learn the secret of true repose, the arcanum of eternal rest. For when all things from least to greatest are done through you, and not by you, fatigue is banished, because he who is really guided by the Life-Power in all things wastes neither time nor strength in any way. Best of all, such a one has forgotten how to be anxious about anything.

You arrive at this stage as a result of logical inductive reasoning. You get it by keeping after it. It comes because you seek it. Sitting down and waiting for it will never bring it. If you are truly beginning to be an unobstructed channel for the Life-Power, the expression of its potencies through you, its personal center, will take form as persistence in study and practice. Sooner or later this work which at first seems to be your own personal

undertaking, will effect a change in your consciousness, and you will then perceive that not your personal self, but the Life-Power, is the real Artist, accomplishing the Great Work in you.

Then you will see why the schools of the secret science have always emphasized the necessity for the pupil's strict obedience to his teacher. The Hindus know, and we ought to know, that when we follow the instructions of a teacher we are really obeying the I AM. The Life-Power leads us to the personal centers of its wisdom who are qualified to help us. We ought not to be worshippers of personalities, but we must be ready to accept the guidance of the ONE behind the personal teacher.

When I speak or write, I do my best to let the One Teacher find me an unobstructed channel of expression. Make yourself as free an avenue of impression when you hear or read; but accept nothing until your own inner Teacher, who is identical with He who speaks and writes through me, confirms the doctrine as I give it.

In the Tarot, that Teacher is symbolized by the Hierophant. He is your own real Self, and the ministers kneeling before him are the personal modes of objective and subjective consciousness. He speaks to you with a thousand tongues, writes His law for you to read in all the innumerable symbols of the Book of Nature. See yourself as His child, as possessing, as your birthright, all the potencies of divinity, all its powers of control over sub-human forms of being, organic and inorganic. Submit yourself wholly to the guidance which comes, not from above and without, but from within, at the very center of your being. The law you must obey is not that of an alien sovereign, usurping the direction of your life. It is your own law, the perfect method of the Eternal One expressing itself through you. Know it, open yourself to it, live it moment by moment and day by day. This is to begin the life of conscious liberation.