

Mastership

In the old Rosicrucian texts, the Grade of the Invisible Order corresponding to Binah is called Magister Templi, that is, Master of the Temple. Two paths lead thereto. The first is the 18th, which leads upward from Geburah to Binah. The second is the 17th, which leads upward from Tiphareth to the third Sephirah. In your exercises both are paths of projection, and by this time you understand what this means.

In traversing the 18th path, the starting-point is the Grade of Greater Adept, and the goal is Understanding. But he who travels this path must first have perfected his realization of what it means to be an Exempt Adept. This path to understanding is not open to those who are merely Greater Adepts. For right understanding requires not only that one should realize the universality of Justice. The conception of unchanging Law, unqualified and untempered by Mercy, is not enough to carry us through the 18th path. And great as are the powers of those who have attained to the Grade corresponding to Geburah, it is not until they have become truly exempt from action that they are qualified to follow the course which will make them Masters of the Temple.

You understand, I hope, that anything I can say about these higher Grades can be little more than a faint shadow of the reality. My words are not final. They shed only a tiny gleam of light upon the Great Plan, and this is borrowed light, for all that I can do is to try to make a little clearer some of the directions we have received from Those who have gone on before.

The first of these indications so cleverly “hidden in plain sight” is the letter-name, הי"ט . It is the number 418, and 418 combines 400 with 18.

400 represents, as you know, the totality of manifestation, because there are 400 Sephiroth in the Great Tree of Life. It is also the number of the letter Tau (the Cross), and is thus a number referable to the Saturnine limiting, definitive, concreting vibration associated with Tau. This limiting activity is implied in the meaning of Cheth, a fence, because a fence sets a

boundary, marks out a field for cultivation. Note also that the path of Cheth necessarily partakes of the Saturnine quality, because it connects the 3d and 5th Sephiroth, which are the spheres of Saturn and Mars.

18 is the number of חַי, Chai, “life,” which appears in the divine name attributed to YESOD (Shaddai Al Chai). The digits of 18 are 1 and 8. 1 represents beginning, and is the number of Kether, the Primal Will which is the beginning of whirling motion. 8 is the number of involution and evolution, the number which symbolizes the conception expressed by Ezekiel in the phrase: “And the living creatures (חַיִּים, Chaiim), ran and returned.” Yet the number 8 is also the number of Mercury, and the HOD, sphere of Mercury, as if to show us that this involution and evolution is directed rationally. Thus this number, placed horizontally, is over the head of the MAGICIAN in the Tarot, who corresponds to Mercury, and the symbolism of that Key shows the descent of Life through the rational consciousness to the planes below, and the ascent of life from those lower planes back to the rational. For the flowers growing in the Magician’s garden are food for his higher sensibilities, even as more homely vegetables are food for his body, and their growth is a type of the ascent of nature up from the subhuman planes, through the human, back to the divine. Finally, the reduction of 18 is 9, the number of the letter Teth, the serpent-power of FOHAT. Thus we see that חַי, life, is numerically defined in esoteric terminology as “the power which enters into manifestation through the whirling motion initiated at the beginning of a cycle by the Primal Will, and involving and evolving itself through the functions of the rational or Mercurial consciousness.”

חַיִּת, then, as combining the foregoing idea of Life with the idea of limitation associated with Tau, 400, and Saturn, shows us that the 18th Path on the Tree of Life has to do with the self-limitation of the Life-Power.

Observe, too, that חַיִּת, as 418, has 13 for its first reduction, and 13 is the number of אַחַד, Achad, “unity,” and of אֶהְבֶּה, Ahebah, “love.” The self-limitation of the Life-Power produces the illusion of two antagonistic principles. Esoteric teaching says, “These Two are really One, and that One is Love.” We shall find that the other path we study in this lesson has the same connection with the number 13, as has the name of the Sephirah to which each of these paths leads us on the Way of Return.

The name of this path is בית השפע, “House of Influence.” It might also be translated “House of Overflowing” or “House of Abundance,” for the Hebrew noun שפע means “abundant outpouring.” You will see, of course, that the name of this path begins with the letter-name of the second character in the Hebrew alphabet, Beth, and that it conveys to Qabalists the occult significance, “Mercurial outpouring.” Look at your Tree of Life, and you will see that on the side of Severity the path of Beth or Mercury leads from Kether to Binah, and that, in consequence, the 18th path, which unites Binah and Geburah must be tinged with the same Mercurial quality. This is the quality of self-consciousness expressed in its highest terms, as shown by the picture of the MAGICIAN. Thus we know that in traversing the 18th path on the Way of Return, we shall be recovering, or remembering, something of the control of external conditions by right use of mental powers which is presented in the symbolism of the MAGICIAN.

Consider the name of the 18th path even more closely. בית השפע. Beth stands for the MAGICIAN. ך stands for the HERMIT. Tav is the letter of the WORLD. Put these Keys before you on the table, and consider them attentively. You see the Life-Power descending, for cultural purposes, through the MAGICIAN. That same descent is pictured in the symbolism of the HERMIT. In the WORLD the process is symbolized as the Dance of Life. These are but three aspects of one thing, and that is the process whereby the Life-Power provides itself with an abode, a house, a dwelling-place – a particular field of action in Time and Space. The numbers of these Keys are I, IX and XXI, and added together they make 31, which must be reduced, because there are no Key-numbers beyond XXI. The reduction is IV, the number of the EMPEROR. The EMPEROR corresponds to the letter which begins the second part of the title of the 18th path. As used here, Heh is the definite article. The EMPEROR corresponds also to this power of self-definition which is dominant in the creative process. The whole universe is Life’s definition of Itself, and this is why it is said that the nature is a book, and we the readers.

The second letter of שפע is Shin, to which Qabalists assign the Fire which is the Life-Breath of the creative powers (Sh=300= רוח אלהים, Ruach Elohim). The third letter is Peh, which is attributed to Mars. The final letter is Ayin, corresponding to the sign Capricorn, wherein Mars is exalted and Saturn is the ruler. Thus the name suggests Qabalistically that the overflowing

abundance connected with this 18th path is fiery, Martian, disruptive, yet curbed and directed by means of the Saturnine power of limitation, exerted through the intellectual manifestation of the Life-Power which astrologers associate with Mercury.

I have been at some pains to indicate all these clues, in order to show you how the attribution of the Tarot to the Hebrew alphabet and paths, as given in the B.O.T.A., is justified and proven correct by the results we get when we apply it to Qabalistic terminology. In a few words, all that is here indicated may be stated thus: the 18th path is the channel of the abundant outflow of the fiery activity of the Life-Power, taking form as objects (including the objects we call “creatures” as well as those we call “things”) by means of the Life-Power’s inherent quality of self-limitation, which quality is directed by the intellectual, rational quality called “Mercury” and symbolized by the MAGICIAN.

To travel the 18th path on the Way of Return, therefore, is to overcome the limitations of Saturn by knowing how to utilize them, to master the destructive force of Mars, to awaken in oneself the regenerative potency of the Flame of the Life-Breath, and to restore the creator to his throne. (Each section of the foregoing sentence is suggested by the letters of ה ש פ ע , read backward, or in reverse, as on the WAY of RETURN, thus, ע פ ש ה . Trace out the connections.)

And because this is the path which leads to the Grade named “Magister Templi,” or “Master of the Temple,” it is symbolized in the Tarot by the CHARIOT. For the chariot is a symbol for the living temple of the Life-Power, and the driver of the car is the I AM. He is master of the positive and negative expressions of the elemental expression of the Astral Light. The positive expression is the white sphinx, the negative is the black one. The sphinxes correspond to the fourfold manifestation of the Astral Light because they are (when drawn correctly, as they are not in Mr. Waite’s design) a synthesis of the Man, the Eagle, the Lion and the Bull.

The name of the zodiacal sign corresponding to this path is Cancer, the Crab, spelt 319 = סרטן in Hebrew. The function attributed to the same path is Speech, and this is 319 = שוחה . A crab is enclosed in a hard, stone-like shell, and it walks backward. The occult idea of Speech is that of a power which can give concrete material embodiment to ideas, can encase thought in the

hard shell of material forms. This occult power of speech is implied in the Christian doctrine that all things were made by the Logos, or WORD. And just as a crab grows his shell from within outward, so the occult power of Speech can gradually solidify ideas into things. This, of course, would be called a crazy notion by most people. It is, nevertheless, the basis of all practical magic.

The backward walk of the crab symbolizes the process of retracing the path. It is a symbol of the way of return. Lao-Tze says, "The path of TAO is backward."

Because he walks backward, the crab looks always toward the place whence he has come. In like manner speech is always backward-looking. Even the materials of speech are derived from the past. The growth of a language is like the crustacean's slow progress, and whoever would use words aright must continually turn his mental gaze backward, making himself familiar with roots and derivations, tracing meanings to their sources. Clearness in speech and writing require this backward look. Coherence and consistence demand that we keep our mental gaze upon what we have said or written, as the crab keeps his eyes upon the ground which he has just traversed.

But there is a deeper occult connection between the crab-symbol and the magical use of speech than any I have touched upon. As the crab protects and isolates himself by growing a shell, so may the adept protect and isolate himself from the illusions of his environment by learning the technique of magical speech. By this means he may even build for himself an indestructible body, which will resist every hostile external influence.

This is a work which calls into play the powers which are developed in the Grade of Greater Adept, but because this making of an indestructible body by the power of words would be likely to intensify the delusion of separateness were it attempted before the adept's consciousness had been freed from that delusion, it is only to Exempt Adepts that this path of Cheth is open on the Way of Return.

A person who still labors under the illusion that he has a personal will, that he can do things of himself, is not ripe enough to be entrusted with the secret of building an indestructible body. Only the adept completely liberated from the delusion of separateness can become so free a channel

for the outpouring of the Life-Power that none of his thoughts, or words, or actions will do anything but promote the realization of the Will-to-Good which is behind all modes of manifestation. Such a man cannot be selfish, and only one who is wholly unselfish may exercise the powers of a Master of the Temple.

The number 319, which is that of שווחה, Speech, and of סרטן, Cancer, when articulated as 300, 10, 9, gives the numbers of the letters ך, ש, and ט, and these form two Hebrew words. The first, שיט, means an oar, and so suggests that by which one drives and steers a boat through water. This is analogous to the symbolism of the little boat in the background of the 13th Tarot Key, a Key also attributed to a sign - Scorpio. The meaning has to do with the artistic adaptation and control of the Water-element associated with this path through the sign Cancer. This Water element has its root in the 3rd Sephirah, בינה, and it is the substance phase of the Life-Power. Binah is called the Great Sea by Qabalists, and in traversing the 18th Path on the Way of Return, the adept learns the secret of adapting the substance-phase, (sometimes called the Astral Fluid) by means of speech. To be more explicit, the occult art of speech consists in such a specific employment of sound-vibrations related to mental images as will tend to materialize those images as physical conditions. By this occult art of speech the Exempt Adept moulds the Astral Fluid into whatsoever shapes he chooses, and the results of his control of substance through the laws of sound enable him to make for himself an indestructible body, and to produce other effects which seem like miracles to the uninitiated.

Another Hebrew word formed from the same letters is ישט, which is a verb meaning to stretch out. It hints at the tremendous extension of powers which is the outcome of the adept's command, through occult speech, of the substance phase of the Life-Power. The ordinary circle of human influence is comparatively small. Now and then, in moments of stress, some person is enabled to send his thought over miles of distance, or to project a phantasm of himself into another place. This latent power of human beings, of which you may read accounts in the proceedings of the societies for psychological research, is fully developed in the Master who has passed through the 18th Path.

As Hudson says in his Law of Psychic Phenomena, this power is a function of the subjective or subconscious mind. This is the watery Astral Fluid, or substance phase of the Life-Power, whose symbol is the Moon. The adept is able to utilize it more perfectly than other people, because he has developed a vivid consciousness of the unity of substance and of the illusive nature of time and space. First by reasoning, and then by long practice in creative imagination, he has realized that both Past and Future are summed up in an eternal NOW. He has learned by the same means that there is no such thing as distance to the instantaneous action of the Life-Power. Understand me well. The adept has first perceived these truths intellectually, and then by long practice has developed skill in expressing these truths imaginatively by sound-symbols expressing definite ideas. He is one who has built up by patient practice in concentration and meditation the ability to carry into execution the words of Jesus, "Whatsoever things ye ask and pray for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." Jesus did not explain to those who listened to his esoteric teaching that a great deal of patient practice is required in order to perfect such a power of belief. He contented himself with an accurate statement of principle, knowing full well that not one person in ten thousand in any generation of mankind is ripe enough to realize that statement to the full.

And upon what is this belief to be established? Upon recognition of the unity of the Life-Power. Thus we find that 319, the number of these words we have been considering, reduces to 13, the number of the word אַחַד, Achad, Unity, which is also the number of the word אַהֲבָה, Ahebah, Love.

To understand the One-ness of All is to see, too, that the One is a principle of Love, which declares itself in The Book of Tokens by the words, "Nothing is, or can be, my antagonist." This is the point-of-view from which the Master of the Temple performs his mighty works. He sees no adversary anywhere in creation. To him there are no enemies. It never enters his mind that there is anything to be subdued, anything to be fought, anything which can possibly set itself up against the realization of the Will-to-Good of which he knows himself to be an open channel. Thus, in the 8th Tarot Key, although the Charioteer is fully armed, he is at rest, and the chariot stands still.

The Master of the Temple realizes to the full the meaning of the affirmation, “Filled with understanding of its perfect law, I am guided moment by moment along the path of liberation.” He feels within him the urge of that resistless Will which others not so wise mistake for something of their own. He makes no plans, because he knows that the successful end of the Great Work was determined from the beginning. He has neither anxiety nor curiosity about the future, because he has learned that the great secret is to do as the Hindu sage advises – “live out the present with a smiling heart.” He works, as Eliphas Levi puts it, “as if he had all eternity to work in.” Here Levi shows the subtlety of his language, for what is really meant is not “as if an endless vista of time lay before him, in which to complete his undertaking,” but rather, “as if the medium in which he works were Eternity and not Time.” It is by means of this timelessness in his thought and work that the Master of the Temple stretches out the circle of his activities so that it includes points in space far distant from that occupied by his physical body; and by this same freedom from the illusion of Time he produces in an instant results in the way of giving visible form and shape to the substance-phase of the Life-Power which seem miraculous to profane beholders of his works.

The Sephirah בִּינָה, Binah, to which the 18th Path leads, is also the Path of Sanctifying Intelligence. Thus we know that a Master of the Temple is what we sometimes call a saint. And it is important to remember that the “communion of saints” mentioned in the Christian Creed refers to the rapport existing between adepts who have attained to this Grade in the Invisible Order. For these are the ripened fruits of humanity, in whom are developed all the highest powers of the race. Even the Grade of Magus which lies beyond contains no riper souls, for the Magus excels not in ripeness but in practical skill.

“Sanctifying” in Hebrew is מְקוֹדֵשׁ = 450. From the number we are led to see that a saint is a man in whom the full powers of humanity are brought to fruition. 450 is 10 x 45, and 10 is the number of perfection, while 45 is the number of אָדָם, Adam or Man. Consider the Tarot Keys corresponding to מְקוֹדֵשׁ. A saint is one who has surrendered all personal actions to the direction of the Life-Power (M: HANGED MAN). He has traversed the road of initiation during the sleep of his physical body (Q: THE MOON). He has listened to the Voice of the Inner Teacher (V: HIEROPHANT). By coming to

understand the full significance of what it is to be a man, and by denying the false claims of personality, he has restored the Creator to His throne; and all this has been accomplished through the generative power of imagination. For without creative imagination no man ever is able to work out the logical consequences of the Unity of Being, so as to develop a vivid consciousness of the real presence in human life, here and now, of the Originating Principle of the Universe. This creative imagination is the mother, so to say, of the new conception of personality which establishes the Fatherhood of the I AM in our consciousness (7: THE EMPRESS). This work which makes a saint has its completion in the perfection and unfoldment of a new vehicle for the Life-Power, a liberated and regenerated person, through the operation of the refining fire of the Life-Breath of the Elohim (רוח אלהים, Ruach Elohim=ש=300. The Judgment.) Yet all this may be summed up in the letter Teth, because $450=4+5+0=9$ =Teth=STRENGTH, so that we may say a saint is one who has succeeded in applying the law pictured in the VIIIth Key. He knows the Secret of All Spiritual Activities, which is the secret of the control of the serpent-power, FOHAT. He has succeeded, as a result of formulating that secret in occult Speech, in learning how to make himself absolute master of the vehicle of personality, and through that vehicle, of the conditions of external nature.

So I put it, because of the limitations of language. But what has the Master of the Temple really learned to do? Simply to “stand aside and let” the I AM work through his personality. He does nothing, not the slightest thing, of himself. This is why everything that he does is so potent. Every thought he thinks, every word he speaks, every action he performs is the direct expression of the one Life which is the Creative Principle of the Universe. The Master of the Temple has attained to Nirvana, and Nirvana means extinction. But what has been extinguished? Nothing that ever had any reality. In this extinction nothing is lost. A delusion ceases to exist, that is all, and with its passing all bondage is forever at an end.

But this liberation is not completely brought about until one has traversed the 17th Path, that of the letter ZAIN, for the delusion of separate personality is really a transposition of Cause and Effect, a mistaking of the instrument for the player, and the correction of this error is what is finally accomplished in the Path of the Sword (Zain). For this is the error against which we are warned in the admonition to “rightly divide the word of

God,” which has nothing to do with Scriptural interpretations, but everything with the right ordering or classification of the ways in which the Logos, or thought-embodying energy of the Life-Power, makes itself manifest.

Rightly to divide the Word is to have a clear mental perception of the functions of the three modes of consciousness, and the truth of this matter is symbolically set forth in the 6th Tarot Key, which corresponds to the letter ZAIN. For it must be clear to you by this time that no definite creative imagination is possible without a clear-cut intellectual pattern. Intellect has to grasp the principle in order to supply the pattern from which the subconscious generation of mental images results. And since we found, early in this course, that to become superconscious we must have bodies different from those we are using now, the problem is: How may we build these kind of bodies?

Now, we know that the subconsciousness is always amenable to suggestion, and we know that it is the body-builder. Our problem, then, is to set a pattern for the building of a perfect body. Can we do this? Is there any suggestion which will bring about this result?

Yes, there is, but although the self-conscious mind has to give the suggestion, has to set in motion the change in subconscious activities which results at last in the making of the indestructible body of the Master of the Temple, the self-conscious mind does not make the pattern. The pattern is “given in the mount” where are the patterns of the Tabernacle and its furniture.

Why this must be so will be clear to you when you consider the present state of human knowledge concerning the human body. Who knows how to make a pattern of a perfect body? Who among us has seen a Master, so as to know what his body looks like on the outside, let alone what it is like beneath the surface? Nobody. None of us know how to make such a pattern.

What, then, shall we do? The 6th Key shows us. We shall use the law of auto-suggestion to free the subconscious from the domination of the self-conscious, and submit it to the direction of the superconscious. For the superconscious does know — has always known — what goes into the making of a perfect vehicle for its self-expression. Thus self-consciousness,

the “seed of the woman” who is subconsciousness, shall deliver the woman from the curse. For the curse is that the subconscious shall be subject to the direction of self-consciousness. Yet by right use of that very curse we can turn it into a blessing.

For we can say to subconsciousness:

“Be thou free henceforth from any false idea coming from me. Obey nothing but the real Self. Listen only to it, and act as the vehicle of communication through which I may become aware of its guidance, of its will.”

A simple thing to do? Yes. So was washing seven times in the river a simple thing for Naaman, but it cured him of leprosy. So will this simple method cure you, eventually, of the leprosy of separateness. And it can be explained on scientific principles.

If you hypnotize a person and tell him that from that time forth nobody will ever be able to hypnotize him again, your words will be accepted by his subconsciousness, and he will never again be put “under the influence.” This is the principle involved in setting the subconsciousness free from self-conscious dominance. Only be sure, be very sure, to make it perfectly clear to the subconsciousness that you are turning it over to the direction of the true Self, to the influx of wisdom from the superconscious plane. Simply to say, in effect, “Henceforth you are free from my control; without specifying that you are merely surrendering the activities of the subconscious to the direction of the I AM, is to invite disaster. For when the subconsciousness is not curbed at all, it simply runs wild, and lunacy is the outcome of its unrestrained activities.

As I said in another lesson, the paths beyond that of the HANGED MAN are paths of realization. This path of ZAIN is the path in which we realize that the superconsciousness, symbolized in the sixth Key by the angel, is at all times the real director of personal activities and destiny. This realization is more than the perception that the I AM is the rider in the chariot of personality. It includes an understanding of the way in which this direction is effected. A man deluded by the sense of separateness supposes that self-consciousness is the plane of initiative, thinks of volition as a power of personality. When he has passed through the path of ZAIN he sees that volition and initiative have their source in superconsciousness, and pass

into subconsciousness, where they assume the form of the desires or motives which determine his selection of this or that course of action. Motive always determines volition, and every motive rises from the subconsciousness into the plane of self-consciousness. The Ageless Wisdom teaches that every man is guided, moment by moment, through the whole series of his lives, by the Cosmic Will. This guidance is misunderstood by the unenlightened, who believe that the source of their motives is separate and personal. Sages unite to declare that this is not so — that the true Self directs the personality through every stage of its unfoldment, and that the Woman of the mental pair is the immediate recipient of this direction.

Eventually the personality reaches a stage of unfoldment where this truth is perceived, and then the personal life is seen to be the direct manifestation of the Cosmic Will. Thenceforth the man acts, speaks and thinks as the conscious instrument of the true Self.

The Grade of Magister Templi, then, is one in which we arrive at understanding (BINA) of the true order of the Life-Power's manifestation through personality. He who attains to it does not become a Master. The attainment consists in the realization that the SELF is, and has been always, the Lord of His dwelling-place.

Thus Mohini Chatterji, in his introduction to the eighth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, says:

“It is true that no one can ever become the Supreme Spirit, for in reality he is never anything else. To know and to become the Supreme Spirit is really the same thing; the difference in expression is due to the difference in the inner peace of the different classes of devotees.”

The numbers of the Tarot cards representing the two paths leading to BINA are 7 and 6. Their sum, 13, is that of the card named DEATH, which corresponds to the path leading from NETZACH to TIPHARETH. He who has passed through the path of DEATH, who has become consciously immortal, knows that the true Self is Master of the Temple. Sooner or later that knowledge ripens into such perfect control of all physiological processes that he is able to prolong the life of the physical body indefinitely.

When the activities of the subconscious plane have been definitely turned over to the direction of the superconscious, no self-conscious interference with the body-building power is possible. I do not mean by this that every person who enters into superconscious experience attains to physical immortality during the same incarnation in which the awakening comes. Boehme was superconscious, Ramakrishna was superconscious, and so were hosts of others who have passed on. Sooner or later, however, the particular line of tendency which the Life-Power expressed through these personalities will descend into incarnation as a human being who lives in a physical body which does not die until he himself sets his higher vehicles free from it. Even then it will not die in the manner that we usually call "death." It will be instantly disintegrated into its component elements, will vanish from the sight of men in the twinkling of an eye.

Moreover, when a man has reached this stage of unfoldment, he is no longer subject to birth. Whenever he needs to use a physical body, he can make one as quickly as he can disintegrate it. I am persuaded that a number of such just men made perfect are at work in physical bodies in our world today. This, of course, is merely my private opinion, which no reader of these pages is expected to accept, unless it appeals to him as reasonable.

We are far from this perfection, yet we may take the first steps in the path which leads to it. We may use our intellect and imagination to build up in our minds the conception of the One Self as being even now the absolute master of its temple, human personality, and day by day we may strive to correct the illusions of our seemingly separate existence by meditation upon this truth.