

Regeneration

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The fifth stage of spiritual unfoldment, as symbolized by the 19th Key, is the stage of new birth from natural humanity into spiritual humanity.

In the natural man the powers of sub-consciousness are stifled and perverted by the suggestions implanted as the result of erroneous conscious thinking. But by applying the correct conscious self-direction to his efforts to grow, a man becomes truly a new-born being, “twice-born.” In this New Birth the physical body is transformed, and the method of Ageless Wisdom is concisely summarized in the injunction:

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

From the natural man the spiritual man is born, and there is no ceremonial presentation of the process of regeneration that does not employ this symbolism of rebirth.

St. John, in the third chapter, records the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus:

1. “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
2. The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou does, except God be with him.
3. Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
4. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?
5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

Meditate on these words of Jesus. The New Birth is a very real process of the inner realization of the true status of man. It is a degree of adeptship, that of liberation from the limitations of physical matter and circumstances. It is also a grade of conscious self-identification with the One Life. Yet it is not final. For though it is a stage wherein all material forces are under the control of the adept, who, having himself become childlike, realizes in his own person the fulfillment of the promise "A little child shall lead them;" the person who has reached this grade still feels himself to be a separate, or at least distinct, entity. This is not full liberation, but it is a higher state than any of those preceding it. It is, in particular, the stage in which all the physical forces are dominated by the will of the adept, because he is the unobstructed vehicle of the One Will which always has ruled those forces, since the beginning.

The number 19 has a special meaning in any system of esoteric teaching derived, like Tarot, from Hebrew wisdom. For 19 is the number of words "Job" and "to be black."

Now, Job is the biblical type of the completion of one cycle of manifestation in a period of seeming loss and distress (i.e. sterility or desolation), out of which comes a renewal that more than compensates for all the sorrow which preceded it (i.e. fruitfulness). This is evident even on the surface of the drama; but it is pretty well understood amongst occultists that the Book of Job is one of the most important texts on spiritual alchemy, or regeneration.

The connection of the verb, "to be black," with the number 19 is also alchemical and magical. We are told that one of the final revelations of Egyptian initiation was the cryptic sentence: "Osiris is a black god."

Blackness is a symbol of obscurity, of the dark, hidden powers of that underworld ruled by the solar deity, Osiris. Black is misunderstood if it be supposed to represent nothing but evil. There is a darkness beyond the light of manifestation, as well as a darkness below it. Thus the occult meanings of the number 19 may serve to remind us that behind the appearances made visible by the light of the Sun are hidden realities which only the wise perceive. What is darkness and mystery to the ignorant is the source of a seer's enlightenment and understanding.

The Hebrew letter Resh (pronounced Raysh) means “head.” We associate the idea of beginning with the word “head”, and since that which is in the beginning comes first, or takes the lead, such ideas as precedence, priority, and superiority are closely connected with this letter.

Thus we have the head of a government in its ruler, the head of a class in its brightest pupil, and the heads of speech in the principal points of argument and exposition.

Again, we speak of “head” in the sense of power, as “a full head of steam”, suggesting concentrated energy. Also the ideas of completion or accomplishment are conveyed by such phrases as “to bring to a head”, or “to come to a head.”

In this connection it is interesting to notice that the addition of the digits of 19 is 10, and 10 may be reduced to 1. This suggests that there must be close connections between the ideas represented by Key 19 and those conveyed by the symbols of Keys 10 and 1.

Combining 9, the digit which completes the series of numeral signs, with 1, which begins that series, 19 unites the idea of the summing up of all the powers of a series of manifestations, or the completion of a cycle of activity (9) with the idea of a fresh beginning, or the initiation of a new cycle (1).

The title, *The Sun*, suggests the dominant symbol, which is a Sun with a human countenance. It represents the truth that the seemingly material forces of nature really are modes of a conscious energy essentially human in character and potencies. The symbol itself is the conventional alchemical representation of the day-star, but there are details in the design which are important as showing the relation of Key 19 to other cards of the series.

The Sun has eight salient or pointed rays. Thus the lines passing through these rays form the same angles as the lines within the circles on the Fool’s dress, the lines that form the spokes of the Wheel of Fortune, and the lines in the greater star of Key 17. The suggestion is that one and the same power is represented by the ten circles on the Fool’s garment, the Wheel, the Star, and the Sun, since the geometrical basis of all these is identical.

In Key 17 you will notice eight secondary rays of the Great Star. In Key 19 those have been expanded to form the eight curved, or wavy rays of the Sun. It is as if there has been a development of power, and the nature of that development is definitely indicated, because curved lines invariably represent feminine aspects of the Life Power.

In other words, what is manifested here is the equal development of masculine (salient) and of feminine (wavy) forms of the universal radiant energy.

Besides these larger rays there are also shown 48 beams, in groups of three, each group placed between a salient and a wavy ray. These refer to the expression of the One Force in works of integration, preservation, and disintegration. Their total number, 48, not only reduces to 12, but is also 4×12 , so that it suggests some connection with Key 12, as well as the operation of the law symbolized by that Key in the four phases of “matter”, Fire, Water, Air, and Earth.

Around the disk of the Sun there are also shown a series of short lines, apparently intended to serve as mere shading. But the number of these little lines is not accidental. There are exactly 125, and 125, as the cube of the number 5 (or $5 \times 5 \times 5$) represents the power of that number exercised in a threefold manner, or through the entire extent of the three-dimensional world. If we remember that the number 5 is represented geometrically by the pentagram, symbol of man’s dominion over the elements, it will be evident that 125 conveys symbolically the extension of that dominion over and through every part of nature.

Finally, the human features in the solar orb, as in all alchemical representation representations of the Sun, are intended to show that here is a representation of a living, conscious intelligence. It is an ancient occult doctrine that all the celestial bodies are vehicles of intelligence, and the farther modern science goes in its analysis of the physical universe, the more evident does it become that this ancient notion is essentially true, even though it may be true in a subtler, finer sense than was understood by our ancient brethren. The main point is that the Sun, as a synthesis of all the active forces entering into the composition of human personality, is here shown as a living force, and not as a merely mechanical or chemical energy. It is a power like unto ourselves. We have something in common

with it. It enters intimately and immediately into our lives. There is a sense, indeed, in which we may say that all our personal activities are particular manifestations of solar energy. Our lives, in other words, are part of a series of transformations of energy which constitute a circuit. It is not merely that energy coming from the Sun flows through our bodies and takes form in their actions. It is that energy coming from the Sun, and flowing back to it again, produces all the phenomena of human existence. Thus the solar energy shines in us, and that being true, our energy shines in the Sun. It is a difference of degree of radiance, but Sun and Man are lights on the same circuit of invisible spiritual energy. This is a central doctrine of Ageless Wisdom, and it has important practical consequences.

The letters Yod which are shown falling from the Sun (six on each side, and one in the middle, between the children), are thirteen in number so as to suggest first of all the ideas of unity, and love, inasmuch as 13 is the value of the Hebrew words Unity, and Love. They are Yods, moreover, in order to indicate the law of response which is associated with that letter.

The sunflowers in this design are five in number. Four of the sunflowers are open. They represent the four great stages of organic development: 1. The mineral kingdom; 2. The vegetable kingdom; 3. The animal kingdom; 4. The kingdom of the natural man. The unopened sunflower is the stage of development as yet uncompleted for most people. It is the kingdom of the spiritual humanity, which goes as far beyond the natural man as the natural man goes beyond the animal.

The four sunflowers which represent the kingdoms already perfected are turned across the wall, so that they face the children, as if the children were their suns, to which they turn for light and heat. The idea intended by this symbolism is that the kingdoms of life thus represented are actually turning to, and thus expressing their dependence upon, the regenerated humanity represented by the children. But the fifth sunflower turns toward the Sun above. For it and the children both symbolize the same thing. It is representative of a state of being as yet in its earlier stages of development, and at present dependent more upon the working of universal forces than any embodiment of these forces in human life. That is to say, the natural man and the three kingdoms below him are dependent upon the new-born

spiritual humanity, and receive their sustenance through that spiritualized flowering of the human race. But the spiritual humanity turns only to that which is above for support.

The wall behind the children is of stone. Thus it represents forms of truth, in contrast to the forms of error typified by the bricks of the Tower in Key 16.

It is nevertheless, a wall, and it is shown with five courses, in order to indicate that it is built of materials drawn from sense-experience. Those materials are aspects of truth, or reality. On this point the teachings of Ageless Wisdom behind Tarot is most explicit. It does not deny the truth of our senses. Even though our senses do not always give us correct reports, what they do report is nevertheless a phase of truth.

But the difficulty is that most people think there are no aspects of truth besides those that we learn through the senses. And by limiting themselves to sensation they build an artificial barrier that is a bar to further progress. The wall says: "Thus far and no farther shalt thou go." But, as we shall see, Key 19 has intimations of another way.

The children are nude. Thus they repeat, in this particular, the symbolism of Key 17. In Key 17 we see Nature unveiling herself as truth. In Key 19 we see humanity so perfectly identified with that truth that it has nothing whatever to conceal. Here we may anticipate an objection. You may say, "What about the secrecy with which masters of wisdom are supposed to surround themselves?" The answer is that they do nothing of the kind. The veils that hide them from us are of our making, even as is the Veil of Isis. Our ignorance is the veil, rather than any effort of theirs to remain concealed.

The Masters are the most childlike and transparent of human beings. Their words are simple. Their statements are plain and direct. That is why they are so seldom understood.

I said a moment ago that this picture shows intimations of another way than that which is barred by the wall of man's interpretations of his sense experience. That other way is hinted at by the fact that both children turn their backs upon the wall. The nature of that way is further indicated by the fairy ring in which they are dancing.

These two concentric circles are known to certain occultists as symbols of the fourth dimension. The way of the spiritual man is not as the way of the natural man. The spiritual man centers himself in the inner circle of manifestation. By repeated practice he has made habitual his inner identification with the ONE IDENTITY.

Hence, in this picture, the children are shown as being of equal stature, and standing on the same level. In the natural man sub-consciousness, the feminine aspect of personality is subordinate, and subjected to the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the masculine conscious aspect. In the spiritual man this is not so. Sub-consciousness is released from the bondage of erroneous suggestion. The powers and values of sub-consciousness are understood, and they are fully unfolded. Under the right application of the law of suggestion, subconscious habits have been established which repudiate utterly the idea that because we cannot attain to certainty, through sensation, no certainty is possible.

For this reason, indeed, the first of the Tarot Keys is named “The Fool.” The certainty of freedom possessed by the spiritual man is a knowledge gained by other than sensory means. Hence the devisers of the Tarot symbolism thought out a subtle way to make this clear to the initiated.

The Way of Certainty is the Way of Non-Sense, even as St. Paul said when he declared that his teaching was “sheer folly” to the Greeks. To be sure, the esoteric Non-Sense is not to be confused with the ordinary meaning of the word nonsense. Yet, as you probably know, the esoteric approach to certainty seems like nonsense to the mass of humankind.

The little girl makes the gesture of repudiation towards the wall, thus indicating that sub-consciousness has been trained to accept the Other Way. The little boy holds the palm of his hand away from the wall, in a gesture of acceptance that complements what is expressed by the gesture of the girl. He is open to receive the new light on the Open Way.

These two figures are also in a certain sense to be compared to the kneeling ministers at the feet of the Hierophant, who is immediately above them in the Tarot tableau, and the Hierophant himself is represented by the Sun.

This week try to understand the idea of spiritual birth, of spiritual regeneration. Reread the quotation from the third chapter of St. John. Notice Nicodemus' bewildered state of mind when he has taken the words of Jesus too literally and materialistically. Ponder over such ideas as "conversion", "initiation", "being born again." Notice the ideas that come into your mind and record them in your occult diary.

By the way, are you keeping it?