

THE SEVEN FORCES


Section A: Lesson 4

To everyone who reads these pages the fact that the number Seven is of great importance in the symbolic language of occultism will be more or less familiar. It will be more fully explained in the lesson dealing with the symbolism of numbers, but perhaps you will be better prepared to grasp the significance of the present lesson if I begin with a quotation from Eliphas Levi, who says:

“The number seven, or the septenary, is the sacred number of all theogonies and all symbols, because it is composed of the triad and the tetrad. It represents magic power in its whole scope; it is the mind assisted by all elementary forces, it is the soul served by nature, it is the Holy Kingdom of the Keys of Solomon, the great biblical number, the key of the creation of Moses, and the symbol of all religion. It is also the number of Charity, which is the crown of the spiritual edifice. It is the number of rest and stability. All things proceed from seven, return into seven, and explain themselves by seven. This number was represented in the Temple of Jerusalem by the golden candlestick, which was in itself a complete and magnificent pentacle. The septenary is the entire Qabalah”.

It would be easy to write a whole lesson by way of commentary upon this one passage of Levi's, which is in itself a miracle of the ideal of teaching set up by the Chinese sage, Lao-Tze, who said, “The wise man teaches without verbosity”. The same philosopher also tells us that the words of wisdom are always paradoxical, for when much meaning is compressed into few words, what is said must conceal a great deal that does not appear on the surface. Thus it is that the Masters teach always in parables, while we who are their pupils are obliged to use many words.

I want to prepare your minds a little for your later studies in symbolism. So I will undertake, in the first part of this lesson, to unravel some of the threads of occult teaching woven into the texture of this passage from Eliphas Levi.

Seven is the sacred number, he says, “because it is composed of the triad and tetrad”. There he indicates to persons trained in symbolism the very esoteric figure which was before his mind's eye as he wrote. We know because symbols, as the Freudians and others have demonstrated, are the same for all men - our common subconscious possession. But we know it, too, from Levi's own words. For elsewhere he says: “Three is the triangle of geometry”, and also, “A height, a breadth, which the height geometrically divides into two, and a depth separated from the height by the intersection of the breadth, such is the natural tetrad composed of two lines which are crossed”. Here, then, is direct evidence to support our inference that when Levi thought of the number Seven he thought of it as a combination of the triangle and the cross, familiar to him, as to us, as the alchemical symbol of Sulphur: 

What I would have you notice particularly about this sign which we now understand as a symbol of SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, is that when it is carefully drawn, all the lines composing it are of equal length.

Thus it is a figure composed of FIVE equal lines, and it is one of those universal pentacles, or sacred figures, which have come down to us as emblems of the Life-Power and its laws. For this sign of alchemical Sulphur is a unity, as a sign. Yet this One is also Three (the triangle), and Four (the cross), and Five (because it is made of five equal lines). Hence it is a sign which corresponds to the alchemical definition of the First Matter, concerning which it is written: It is One, which is also Three, and Four and Five.

The same numbers appear in the construction of the Great Pyramid. For that great symbol of the Wisdom which is now in process of revival here in the land dominated astrologically by the same zodiacal sign which ruled Old Egypt, is a symbol of unity, and is actually the only edifice of its kind in all the world. Its base is a square, another symbol of the number FOUR. The lines which bound it meet at five points, and the base and sides make five faces, so that doubly it corresponds to FIVE. Each of its four faces is a triangle. Thus here again we have the ONE which is also THREE and FOUR and FIVE.

Yet another symbol of like import has come down to us from Egypt. To Egypt, at least, we can trace an unbroken thread of occult teaching based on this particular symbol; but in China and in India, in Yucatan and in the mounds built by the aboriginal inhabitants of our Middle West, one finds traces of the knowledge summarized in this old sign. I am speaking of the Pythagorean Triangle, which is explained to members of the Masonic Order under its old name, "The 47th proposition of Euclid". This is the right-angled triangle whose vertical line consists of three equal parts, whose base has four equal parts, and whose hypotenuse contains five. In Egypt this triangle was a symbol of the Holy Family, of the Father, Osiris, symbolized by the vertical line, the Mother, Isis, symbolized by the base, and the Child, Horus, symbolized by the hypotenuse, ascending from the Mother to the uppermost point of the line that represented the Father. Deep are the mysteries of this old emblem, but no key will more quickly unlock their meaning than the one put in our possession by the fact that this triangle of Osiris, Isis and Horus is a representation of the One Life as a family. For blind must he be who cannot see that here is a pentacle of the mystery of love.

Love makes the Father descend from the height of the Absolute and Unconditioned in order to unite himself with the form-giving power of Nature, the Mother. And that same current of love ascends little by little from the horizontal plane of seemingly dead matter, up through the lower forms of organic life until sensation, symbolized by the five units of the hypotenuse, is perfected, and the Child, humanity, realizes its one-ness with the Father. Here is the whole story of creation, summarized in three straight lines. And the key to it all is love.

Love, too, is the great secret revealed by the alchemical symbol of Sulphur from which Eliphas Levi drew the ideas for the quotation that begins this lesson. For "love" is the correct translation of the Greek original of the noun which the Authorized Version of the Bible renders "charity". Love is represented by the septenary, too, because Seven is the magical number of the planet Venus, and because in the Secret Wisdom of Israel the seventh aspect of the One Life is said to be the sphere, or field of operation, of the influence of Venus. This seventh aspect of the One Life is named Victory, and it is to this that our seventh affirmation refers.

For the Primal Will from which we live is a Will-to-Love, and the wisdom and understanding which support us are a wisdom rooted in love and an understanding of the law which guides us moment by moment into the perfect realization of love. What Levi means by saying “All things proceed from seven, return into seven, and explain themselves by seven” is this: “All things proceed from love, return into love, and explain themselves by love”.

Love is only another name for the Astral Light, and this is the key to what is quoted from Levi in the first lesson: “It (the Astral Light) is represented on ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis which twines in a loveknot around two poles”. Love is God, according to the Gospel of John, so that the man who knows how to master the Great Magical Agent so as to profit by and direct its currents, in becoming the depository of the power of God receives the exhaustless treasure of the power of love.

You misunderstand me wholly if you think this is just sentiment that I am writing. What I am trying to tell you is the rock-bottom principle upon which the whole of practical occultism is established. Love is only another name for that which scientists call “electricity”, for that which Qabalists call the “Limitless Light”, for that which we have termed the Life-Power. Love, a word misunderstood and profaned by darkened minds the world over, is at once “the blind force which souls must conquer in order to detach themselves from the chains of earth”, and the redeeming force by means of which that liberation is affected.

I have said all this because in this lesson we are to consider seven aspects of the operation of the One Life, and among those seven are four which the misunderstanding of generation after generation has endowed with more or less malefic qualities. This is why I have worked around through a series of symbols to bring you to the realization that the Ageless Wisdom has proclaimed from the beginning the truth that the One Thing whence all things come is the power of love.

When we know this, we have a clue to the solution of all the mysteries of practical occultism. When we realize it perfectly we enter into superconsciousness. When we live it, moment by moment, every detail of our lives is adjusted in harmony with the rhythms of the cosmos, and all things work together for our good.

Now, remembering always that this septenary of forces is a sevenfold manifestation of the One Power of Love, let us turn to the consideration of the seven names for these forces which have come down to us from our predecessors in the study of the Ageless Wisdom. The names are terms familiar to students of astrology, for they are the names of the seven heavenly bodies known to the ancients. They are:

| | | | | | |
|----------|------------|----|-----|------|---|
| Saturn | symbolized | by | the | sign | ♄ |
| Jupiter | “ | “ | “ | “ | ♃ |
| Mars | “ | “ | “ | “ | ♂ |
| The Sun | “ | “ | “ | “ | ☉ |
| Venus | “ | “ | “ | “ | ♀ |
| Mercury | “ | “ | “ | “ | ☿ |
| The Moon | “ | “ | “ | “ | ☾ |

The symbols are all composed of combinations of the circle, the cross and the crescent. The circle is a symbol of the superconscious plane because it has always been the sign of perfection, and also because it is the mathematical representation of that No-Thing which is apprehended or touched (remember that Vayu, the circle, corresponds to touch) in superconsciousness. The cross is the symbol of self-consciousness, which is, indeed, the cross that we must all “take up” if we would follow the Way of the Masters. It is the symbol of the never-ending conflict which characterizes all the activities of self-consciousness, the conflict which has its root in the apparent separateness between the “I” which is the Experiencer and the “Not-I” which is the thing experienced. The crescent is the symbol of subconsciousness, of the cup which receives all that life pours into it, of the reflecting principle, or Not-I, in which the “I AM” sees an image of itself.

The Saturn symbol combines the cross and the crescent, with the crescent below. It is a symbol of the domination of the subconsciousness by the self-consciousness, of the ascendancy of pure reason over the race-memory. Astrologers say that Saturn is binding, limiting, concrete. It is associated by them with all that is cold, dry, harsh, “of the earth earthy”, and they regard it usually as a malefic. It gives resolution and determination, ability for profound studies, industry and perseverance, when its vibration is harmonious with that of the other planetary forces. Out of harmony with the others it is obstructive, melancholy and disappointing. For it is always what the symbol shows, a combination of self-consciousness and subconsciousness in which there is no touch of the superconscious, and in which reason, the characteristic quality of the self-conscious plane, is uppermost. In the practice of astrology we find that Saturn’s influence in good combinations brings success through good reasoning, and that the failures in bad combinations may always be traced to actions influenced by misuse of the reasoning powers. Thus an ill-aspected Saturn will make a man act from motives rooted in the sense of separateness, and his actions will injure himself and harm others.

Jupiter is the reverse of Saturn. There the crescent is uppermost, and thus Jupiter represents the domination of the self-consciousness by the subconscious. Hence astrologers make Jupiter the significator of the priesthood, of formal religion, and of the law. Some astrologers, it is true, say that Jupiter rules reason and judgment, but the reasoning is always based on precedent, that is to say, upon the race-consciousness. Jupiter is usually regarded by the old astrologers as a benefic, because when this combination is strong in a man’s horoscope he will conform to established customs, so that he adapts himself easily to the conditions of his time, and whoever does this usually prospers from a worldly point-of-view. And it must be confessed that most of the earlier astrologers were worldlings, who looked upon worldly honors, wealth, position at court, and the like, as the greatest benefits that can come to a man. But all these things come to people who obey the rules of the game as it happens to be played in their day and age, and those rules are all based upon precedents rooted in the subconsciousness. A Jupiterian man may be a man of “common sense”, and he will have what is usually described as “good judgment”, because he will always conform. He will go to the established church. He will be a conservative in politics. He will be a staunch supporter of all the “good old customs” of his ancestors. In him, therefore, subconsciousness really triumphs over self-consciousness in any situation where there is likely to be a contest

between the two. A Jupiterian succeeds because he is in harmony with his time, because he is dominated by the currents of race-consciousness.

Mars is represented by a symbol which combines the sun-symbol of superconsciousness with the cross of self-consciousness, but the cross slants to one side. Mars is described in astrological books as hot, dry, masculine, electric, inflammatory, signifying strength and force. The symbol shows a combination of self-consciousness with superconsciousness, but with self-consciousness in the ascendant. Mars puts us in contact with the great undifferentiated Life-Power, but deceives us with the belief that this power is our personal possession. Martians are impulsive, fiery, energetic, because they feel strongly the urge of the Cosmic Life, even though they misinterpret it. Mars rules the brain, and is dominant in the reproductive centers also. It cares nothing for forms and ceremonies, because it has no part in the accumulated experience of the race-consciousness. The typical Martian is courageous, adventurous, iconoclastic, questing. In bad combinations this force becomes violent, quarrelsome, self-assertive without regard to the rights of others. But it is by no means malefic. It is the power that has brought the race to its present point of evolution, the aspect of the one Life-Power which gives us direct contact with the limitless energy of the One Light, even though it deludes us into the belief that the cosmic force we feel within us is our own personal strength.

The Sun is represented by the circle, for it is the significator of superconsciousness, and thus astrologers call it the emblem of individuality in the horoscope. As you will see presently, it rules what we call the "heart". It is the solar ray which puts us in direct contact with the One Life, and this it is which leads mystics to superconsciousness through the Path of the Heart Doctrine. Note how closely the astrological description of the Sun corresponds to that of Mars. "The sun is hot, masculine, electric, dry and inflammatory", says Llewellyn George. Like the Martians, people in whom the Sun's influence is strong are adventurous, courageous, and are often found at the head of things. They are more or less open channels for the free outpouring of the Cosmic Life, and among persons who ripen into cosmic consciousness as the result of inborn tendencies, I have found that such horoscopes as were available show a well-aspected Sun.

Venus is the complement of Mars, as Jupiter is the opposite and complement of Saturn. The typical Venusian is the artist, in whom the cross of self-consciousness is subordinate to the circle of superconsciousness. The inspiration of the artist is from the superconscious, and his intellectual, self-conscious processes are always subordinate to the impulses which come to him from this higher plane. Thus artists are notoriously unbusinesslike, and when they are at their best, are singularly unselfish and free from the narrow aspects of self-consciousness. This is why so many people in the artistic field are fond of such books as Ouspensky's Tertium Organum or Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness. Often they do not grasp what they read intellectually, but somehow they feel the essential rightness of such teachings, and respond to it emotionally.

Mercury alone, among the planetary symbols, combines all three elements. The crescent symbol of subconsciousness is uppermost, the circle representing superconsciousness is in the middle, and the cross of self-consciousness is at the bottom. Thus Mercury represents the

equilibration of all three planes of consciousness. Do not understand that the placing of the crescent symbol at the top means that the subconsciousness has been made the superior term. What is meant is that the subconsciousness has been purified and raised so that it becomes the Grail to receive the wine of life, the inspiration of spiritual wisdom. The cross is below, to show that self-consciousness performs its work in its own sphere, which is that of adjusting the personal expression of life to environment.

But in the central position is the circle of superconsciousness, supporting the cup of the subconscious activities, and sending down its current of wisdom to the self-conscious plane. Rightly understood, this Mercury sign is one of the most enlightening symbols in the whole occult vocabulary. It is far from being correctly interpreted when it is taken to mean nothing higher than the personal intellect and reason. Yet this interpretation has its modicum of truth, because so long as a man is deluded by the sense of separateness, in his ignorance he supposes that this fine equilibration of subconsciousness, self-consciousness and superconsciousness which expresses itself in keen intellectual perception, in capacity for receiving flashes of illumination, and in ability to express ideas - so long, I say, as a man supposes the Mercurial equilibration of the three modes of consciousness to be his own personal characteristic, so that he is vain of his powers, just so long will those powers come only in flashes, and he will be unable to put to good use the best that he receives.

The Moon is the significator of the subconscious plane. Her influence is moist, cold, plastic and feminine. She is the reflecting principle, dominant in personality. Astrologers regard her influence as being dominant in the breast and stomach, and as having to do with the building of the etheric pattern-body of which the dense physical body is only the outer vesture. Thus the Moon corresponds accurately to the subconsciousness, which is pre-eminently the body-builder, and the reflective, ever-fluctuating, fluidic ocean of the race consciousness, in which we are immersed.

As these lessons are written for students of occultism, I shall make no defense of astrology in these pages. The opponents of astrology are not among those who are familiar with its principles and practice. Imperfect as our knowledge of the science is, and faulty as our practice of the art (for astrology is both a science and an art), we know enough to be certain that the planetary forces do actually provide us with accurate keys to the delineation of character, and with dependable forecasts of impending conditions. The wise student of astrology will not endeavor to defend his science against the attacks of skeptics. To such the best answer is that given by Sir Isaac Newton to the astronomer, Halley, when Halley taxed him with folly for believing in stellar influence. "Mr. Halley," said Newton, "you have not studied astrology, and I have."

Whether we believe in astrology or not, we have to know its symbolic language in order to understand the ancient wisdom. Astrological symbolism is a key that unlocks many mysteries of the Bible, of the Egyptian magical doctrines, and of the Qabalah. We believe in it and we practice it. We hold without any reservation the conviction that these planetary forces are actually operative in every moment of human life, and in this we are but following the teaching which has come down to us from the past. We follow it, understand, because we have investigated that teaching experimentally, and have found it of tremendous value as an

aid to the science of self-knowledge, and as a means for adapting daily life to the cosmic rhythms. Astrology shows us the plan behind the dance of life, and enables us to take our part in it to the best advantage.

In current astrological publications there is more or less conflict about details, although the main outlines of the science are well established. For instance, the colors of the planets as given in these lessons differ from those that you will find in the works of Alan Leo and H.P. Blavatsky.

The seeming discrepancy is due to the fact that in these lessons the color-scheme used is that of the light-vibrations from pigments, from paints or crayons or dyes applied to a physical object. In the books referred to, the colors are light-colors. This is a highly technical detail, which I do not think it profitable to discuss at length just here. Our use of color-vibration is on the physical plane, and is justified by tradition and experiment. We have found that it works out in practice, and we have also found that the knowledge necessary to understand the reconciliation between the color-scale we use and the scales given in the beforementioned works necessitates experimental use of this scale, which is intended for this particular plane of physical existence.

The planetary colors we use in our Work are: Saturn, deep violet-blue, and also a certain mixture of the three primary pigments, blue, red and yellow, which looks to the physical eye like black; Jupiter, violet; Mars, red; Sun, orange; Venus, emerald green; Mercury, yellow; the Moon, blue.

Each of the planets has a dominant center of influence in the physical body. These centers are called “wheels” or chakras by the Hindus. It is unnecessary at this point to know their Sanskrit names. They correspond to seven centers in the body. Two of them are in the brain, and one is in the throat. These are the three which are above, and they correspond roughly to the triangle in the Sulphur symbol. The other four are in the trunk, and they correspond roughly to the cross in the Sulphur symbol. These centers are:

1. The pineal body, a triangular or cone-shaped organ in the upper central part of the brain. Occult teaching says that this is the center through which the vibrations of superconsciousness reach us, and it is through this center also that we come in touch with the influences sent out by those who are beyond us on the Path of Return. The pineal body receives the influence of the ray of MERCURY.
2. The post-nasal ganglion, or pituitary body, lower in the brain, behind the nose. This is the vehicle of ordinary telepathy, and our channel of communication with the universal subconscious plane of vibration. It is the center of influence of the MOON. The action and reaction between these two centers is the basis of self-consciousness, for their vibrations affect the entire system of sensory and motor centers in other parts of the brain.
3. The pharyngeal plexus, in the throat, is the center of the emotional activities associated with the influence of VENUS. Its highest function is that which enables us to hear what is known in occult literature as the Voice of the Silence.

4. The cardiac plexus, near the heart, is the seat of the solar influence. Confusion has arisen here because the physiologists call the next-mentioned center the “solar plexus”. Astrologers understand that the SUN is dominant in the heart, and in occult literature we hear of the Heart Doctrine, which is the mystical approach to a certain experience of superconsciousness.

5. The abdominal brain, or solar plexus, which governs most of the vital functions of the body, is the center of the influence of JUPITER. Under certain conditions the over-activity of this center results in the corpulence which is a well-known physical characteristic of Jupiterians.

6. The prostatic ganglion, dominant in the reproductive functions of the body, especially in the seed-making functions, is the seat of the MARS influence. It is in the sympathetic nervous system, below the navel.

7. The sacral plexus is the lowest of the ganglia. It governs excretion, and also the transmissive functions akin to excretion which provide the Life-Power with a succession of physical vehicles, generation after generation. To this plexus the SATURN influence corresponds.

Understand that the planetary forces are active in many other parts of the body. These special centers are the ones in which these influences are stored up, like electricity in a storage-battery, and it is upon this stored energy that we operate in the work which is disguised as a chemical operation upon metals in the books of the alchemists.

In those books the seven centers are called metals, and each metal is given the name of one of the planets. Each is also symbolized by the astrological symbol of that planet. The sacral plexus corresponds to LEAD and SATURN. The prostatic ganglion corresponds to IRON and MARS. The solar plexus corresponds to TIN or JUPITER. The cardiac ganglion corresponds to GOLD or the SUN. The pharyngeal plexus corresponds to COPPER or VENUS. The post-nasal ganglion corresponds to the MOON or SILVER. The pineal body corresponds to QUICKSILVER or MERCURY.

The alchemical process is said to be one of sublimation. To sublime anything is to elevate it, to lift it up. The Hindus teach that power is coiled in the sacral plexus, and they call this power Kundalini, the coiled serpent. Yoga practice is intended to lift this power from the lower centers to the higher ones, until at last it energizes the pineal body. In like manner alchemists speak of the raising of the metals from Lead to Iron, from Iron to Tin, from Tin to Copper, from Copper to Silver, from dead Silver to living Silver (“quick” in “quicksilver” means living). And then the sublimated Mercury is transmuted into Gold. What does this mean? Just exactly what the Hindus mean by raising the Kundalini. A release of the energies stored in lower centers, and a change in their rate of vibration to that of the higher centers, accompanied by corresponding changes in consciousness and by the release of powers latent in us now because we do not know how to turn on the current. Our present condition is like that of a person who has a house filled with electrical apparatus capable of doing all sorts of things, who does not know how to turn the switches which send the current into the

machines. WE HAVE THE MACHINES, ALL READY TO USE, AND WE HAVE THE CURRENT, TOO. Nothing has to be acquired, except knowledge of the laws that will set the machines to working, and skill in utilizing their activities.

But this is a very big “except”. The knowledge is carefully guarded. Keys to the means whereby you may prepare yourself to receive it will be given in these lessons, but nowhere in these pages, nor anywhere else, will you find written out a formula for “turning on the current.” Whatever purports to be such a formula is either a BLIND, which will enable you to find the truth, but will not impart it openly, or else a deliberate falsehood, invented by a charlatan to extract money from his dupes. As a matter of fact, the necessary knowledge is already possessed by your true Self, and will be given you as soon as you are ready to be instructed by that Self. As soon as you are ready, not a moment sooner. Not when you think you are ready. Not when you wish you were. You cannot deceive the true Self. The I AM in you knows just where you are upon the Path, for the I AM knows everything. It will give you the instruction you require at just exactly the proper time.

One thing, however, I can tell you. The current is not turned on by any practice of concentration upon centers in the physical body. Such practice only produces congestion and other undesirable results. Neither do you “raise the Kundalini” by any effort of that nonentity, “personal will.” The current must rise, but it must rise in accordance with the familiar electrical law that we must “step down” the current in order to apply it. The Life-Power is cosmic electricity, and it has to go from a higher to a lower potential. To raise the Kundalini, you have to bring down the undifferentiated Life Power from above the plane of personality, and because that force travels in cycles, it will raise a portion of the coiled up energy in its return.

How are you to do this? The place to begin is with your intellect. You have to reason out for yourself the truth of the doctrine that you are a center of expression for the One Life-Power, which does all things through you. You have to see that the logical consequence of this fact is a certain mental attitude toward that Life-Power. The mental attitude is summed up in a single word, RECEPTIVITY, and it is indicated by the cup-shaped crescent at the top of the Mercury symbol.

Daily you must remind yourself that all your thoughts, all your words, all your works are made possible by the fact that the current of the cosmic life flows through you. You have to learn the difference between expressing the true SELF and the counterfeit self-expression that peoples our fake Bohemias with unbalanced cranks. You have to come to understand that your physical body, and all your finer bodies, are not in any sense generators of energy. You do not make the power you use. It is just as much my power, just as much the cook’s power, just as much the janitor’s power, as it is yours. You can’t bottle it up, although you have storage-batteries in which you are permitted to keep a certain reserve supply. Your part is to learn the art of wise use, and the beginning of the art is the mental attitude which perceives that personality is only a channel for something far above it. Here is the word of that higher Self, as recorded in The Book of Tokens:

“Of all existence I am the source, the continuation, and the end. I am the germ, I am the growth, I am the decay. All things and creatures I send forth; I support them while yet they stand without; and when the dream of separation ends, I cause their return unto myself. I am the Life, and the Wheel of the Law, and the Way that leadeth to the Beyond. There is none else.

“I am the Fire of Mind which divideth itself into the superior and the inferior natures, and putteth on a robe of flesh to come down. I am the vital principle of all that is. Nothing is that does not live, and of that life I am the source. As it is written: ‘First the stone, then the plant, then the animal, and then the man.’ But before the stone I am the FIRE distributed equally in space, nowhere absent, filling all; and before the fire, hidden within it, I am the pure KNOWING, whence all forms flow forth.