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## The Perfect Stone

This lesson deals with a single path, that of the letter Gimel. The beginning of this path, on the Way of Return, is in the Grade of Lesser Adept, in Tiphareth. Its completion is in the Grade of Ipsissimus, in Kether.

As preparation for study, review the attributions to Gimel in Section A, the interpretation of the High Priestess in Section B, and the remarks on the number 108 in Section C.

The name usually given to the thirteenth path, מנהיג, Conductive, is another correspondence to 108. Of the words corresponding by Gematria to this number, הצי, "middle," has been explained in part. It also refers to the position of the thirteenth path on the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life, and hints at the secret of equilibration utilized by the Lesser Adept during his journey up this path to Kether.

Another correspondence to 108 is הנין, to favor, to bestow. It suggests an idea often mentioned by the sages, viz., that the supreme attainment is rather by the grace of favor of God than as the result of the aspirant's personal efforts. Yet it must be clearly understood that this grace or favor is not capriciously extended. God does not grant it to some and withhold it from others. It should be realized that his grace inheres in the inmost nature of the Life-power. What is here intended to be conveyed is that this particular aspect of the Life-power, rather than the personal endeavors of the aspirant, is what brings about the final attainment of the Crown.

Finally, חק, "a conclusion, an enactment, a decree," suggests the fulfillment of the Divine Intention by this final stage of the aspirant's journey on the Way of Return to the Supreme Goal.

The full name of the thirteenth path is מנהיג האחות, Conductive Intelligence of Unity. In Hebrew, "Unity" is אחות = 419 = טיה (Serpent), the name of the ninth letter, represented in the Tarot by Strength. The unity here designated is by no means a colorless abstraction. It is the ONE THING "whence all proceed by adaptation, for the performance of the miracles of the One." By letter it is symbolized as the serpent-power, by the symbolism of the Tarot, as a lion, and it is the Fohat of Theosophical writers (See Section B)

מנהיג האחות is the number 532, which may be represented by the following words:

אבן החכמות	Stone of the Wise
אבן הדעת	Stone of Knowledge
חמה החכמות	Sun of Wisdom
חמה הדעת	Sun of Knowledge

(N.B. As a clue to the meaning of alchemy, i.e., אלכמה, observe that חמה, a poetical name for the sun, and אבן, Ehben, Stone are identical by Gematria.)

If you will give a little time to considering the meaning of these four names, you will sooner or later perceive that the work of the thirteenth path must be closely related to the alchemical operation called "sublimation." The completion of that work is the confection of that which may be called

either אבן החכמות, Stone of the Wise (i.e. Philosophers' Stone) or אבן הדעת, Stone of Knowledge. In connection with the latter name, note that the place of דעת, Da'ath, Knowledge, on the Tree of Life is on the thirteenth path, at the point where the fourteenth path crosses it -- midway between Chokmah and Binah.

The Short Lexicon of Alchemy appended to A.E. Waite's translation of the Hermetic Writings of Paracelsus, gives this definition of sublimation:

"Sublimation is the purification of the Matter by means of dissolution and reduction of the same into its constituents. It is not the forcing of the Matter to the top of the vessel, and then maintaining it separated from its caput mortuum, but its subtilization and purification from all earthly and heterogeneous parts, imparting to it a degree of perfection not previously possessed, or more correctly, its deliverance from the bonds which bind it, and hinder its operation."

The Matter, as you learned in Lesson 1, Section A, is the Astral Light of Eliphas Levi. Yogis call it Kundalini. It is the serpent-power represented by the letter Teth. Observe that it is not forced to rise, for in this statement is to be found an important key to the whole work. The Matter is simply purified from the adulterations of heterogeneity -- from the semblances of diversity which it presents to us in its ordinary manifestations. In simple truth this means that the Magus performs the Great Work by divesting the serpent-power of all appearances of Many-ness. On this account the thirteenth path is said to be the Conductive Intelligence of UNITY. When the work of this path is completed, the One Energy which presents itself to our senses in the innumerable forms we call "objects" is directly experienced as ONE, ONE and ALONE.

As we know it here on earth, the Matter is solar force. The Stone and the sun are two aspects of one reality. Therefore אבן = חמה. Alchemists agree that the Great Work which results in the perfection of the Stone is an operation of the sun and moon. To this idea the thirteenth path relates, especially as part of the Way of Return. As we climb the Tree of Life, this path begins in Tiphareth, sphere of the sun, and is itself, through its correspondence to Gimel, the path of the moon.

To traverse it, one must be a Magus, having full comprehension of the principles of cyclic motion which are exemplified in astronomy. Hence the Grade of Magus corresponds to Chokmah, which has the name מסלות, Masloth, "highways of the stars."

The principle of cyclic motion is fundamental in the cosmos. To understand it aright is to possess true wisdom. The Ageless Wisdom, applying the Hermetic axiom, "That which is below is as that which is above," teaches that the same law which keeps the stars in place is manifest in all activity, everywhere. The discoveries of modern science confirm this ancient doctrine -- particularly those discoveries, so often referred to in these pages, which have to do with the constitution of atoms.

The true magician and alchemist knows how to apply these laws of cyclic motion. Indeed, many of the seeming marvels accomplished by adepts are based upon control of interatomic energy, in accordance with these laws. The principles of this control, we may say (although it would be extremely unwise to give specific information, even if we dared claim that we possess it), are principles identical with those revealed in the science of astronomy.

To make the Stone of the Wise, so that we may change base metal into gold, we therefore apply the

knowledge which Qabalists attribute to Chokmah. And when we speak of this transmutation, we are by no means using purely figurative expressions. True as it is that the Stone of the Wise effects a transmutation of consciousness, so that the base metal of sense-illusion is transformed into the pure gold of spiritual knowing, it is also true that one who has that consciousness gets with it a command of physical forces which enable him to alter the structure of atoms. Such a man can make gold, if he needs to, and the ancient Rosicrucian declaration that the Brothers of the Order have at their disposal "more gold than both the Indies bring to the King of Spain," is far from being an exaggeration. The knowledge whereby this is brought about is represented by the first two letters of אבן, Stone, because אב, Father, is a Qabalistic title of Chokmah.

To make use of these principles of cyclic motion, we must have some specific object. Furthermore, this object must aim at some realization of beauty, so the Qabalists teach, and this they indicate by the last two letters of אבן, which form the word בן, Son, a title of Tiphareth.

This title, בן, is by Gematria equal to אימא, Mother, a name of Binah. אימא, sphere of Saturn, represents concrete, definite applications of the principles of Chokmah, the Father. בן, sphere of the sun, alludes to the idea of beauty which must qualify these concrete aims.

In brief, then, the Great Work makes the Sun of Wisdom rise, perfects the Stone of the Wise. It is a work wherein Chokmah אב supplies the mathematical knowledge of principles, wherein Binah אימא provides the specific understanding of concrete application, and wherein Tiphareth בן contributes the motive of beauty. Thus the powers of a Magus (Chokmah) and a Master of the Temple (Binah) are conjoined in an operation which begins from the level of the seemingly inferior Grade of Lesser Adept (Tiphareth).

The operation must be a Magus, because one who has not attained to that Grade does not know the secret of True Will, nor does he possess a sufficient command of the Life-Force. For True Will and חיה, Chiah, the Life-Force, are both realized in Chokmah.

Jesus expressed the mystery of True Will when He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." The Will expressed in the thought, word, and action of a Magus is not personal. It is the resistless impulse of the eternal, universal vital energy. In truth, the life-force in every human being is identical with the energy of the One Life. This is the cosmic Life-force which Jesus personified as "Father," using the very name, AB, which Qabalists attribute to Chokmah, and following the Secret Wisdom also in his saying, "The Father אב hath life חיה in himself." He openly declared that what is hinted at time and again in occult writings, viz., that when we are actually doing the Will of the Father, by letting the universal life-energy flow freely through a personality cleansed from all sense of separateness, our work is not labor. We are not fatigued by our endeavors, no matter how strenuous they may seem to other people. On the contrary, work that is an expression of True Will vitalizes us, fills us to overflowing with abundance of power, really feeds us. Hence we find Jesus saying, "I have meat to eat ye know not of."

A Magus does not infer this. He does not believe it. He does not hold it as a conviction, as do we. He knows it. His personal consciousness is lost, swallowed up, in complete identification with the One Life. He does nothing of himself. His personality is an unobstructed vehicle for the perfectly regulated operation of the Life-Power.

His least action, therefore, is a conscious expression of the inexhaustible power of the ALL. To human eyes he seems to perform miracles. He seems to have developed a tremendous personal will. He seems to have powers not possessed by other men. To himself it is quite otherwise. He knows that the mightiest of his works are simply demonstrations of unchanging law. He knows that he wills nothing but what the Father wills. He knows that he has not a jot or title of power peculiar to himself. The difference between a Magus and other men is that the All-Power flows through his life into external expression, unchecked by the illusions and ignorance of personal consciousness.

Such a man is Master of the Temple of Spirit -- that sevenfold body, symbolized in ancient architecture by Babylonian temples of seven stories, but the Great Pyramid, which has a vertical axis of seven units, and also by the seven-sided vault, described in the Fama Fraternitatis, the first book issued by the Rosicrucians in 1614.

As Master of the Temple, he is guided moment by moment by the clear direction of true Intuition. Not merely in times of stress and trial is he aware of the Inner Voice. Whether his physical body wakes or sleeps, he hears always, and always obeys. To other men he seems to have extraordinary foresight. When they do not call him a prophet, they imagine that he is a most careful planner. As a matter of fact, he lives a planless life, and his one rule of action is that of Jesus, "As I hear, I judge."

Having, therefore, identified himself with the Pure Source of all life, and so harmonized his least actions that whatever he does he says, "I am doing nothing," because he lives only to express the perfect rhythms of the ALL – guided by an understanding which foresees and forewarns, and keeps his feet upon the true path – the Magus is duly and truly prepared to essay the last stage of the Great Work.

Yet he begins this final operation of placing himself in the Grade of Lesser Adept. The initial processes of his undertaking depend upon mental powers peculiar to that Grade. Not from the point-of-view of a Magus, or from the vantage-ground of a Master of the Temple, but from the relatively simple realization of Sonship does he proceed, in beginning his last advance along the Way of Return.

His starting-point is the mode of consciousness called Intelligence of Mediating Influence. The Hebrew is שפע נבדל. שפע = 450 = פרי עץ, Fruit of the Tree. נבדל = 86 = אלהים, Elohim. The Fruit of the Tree is בן, the Son. Its number, 450, is 10 x 45, suggesting the tenfold expression of אדם = 45, Man. נבדל is a formula for the powers of the Elohim. (You should study it, letter by letter, with the aid of the corresponding Tarot Keys.) Thus the title of the sixth path hints Qabalistically that the Sonship of Man makes him heir to the powers of the Elohim. The idea is similar to that suggested by the symbols of the Hanged Man.

Bear in mind, too, that the letter-name, גמל, is by Gematria equivalent to חכמה, Chokmah. This indicates that the thirteenth path has a close correspondence to the specific powers developed in the consciousness of the aspirant of attaining the Grade of Magus.

As corresponding to the High Priestess, the path of Gimel is predominantly a path of recollection, and of the equilibration of the affirmative and negative aspects of the Life-Power represented by the twin pillars depicted in that Key. To traverse the thirteenth path is to read the scroll of cosmic memory.

As the scroll must be read by unrolling it in reverse order, so do the letters of גמל, read in reverse, indicate the steps of the Magus' progress upward along this path.

His faith in his Sonship must be firmly established. He must not only believe himself to be a veritable Son of the Elohim, but he must also have established that faith by works. These are works whereby the power of Ruach (here understood as Imagination) have been controlled and directed. All these practices are aimed at the equilibration of the conflicting elements of personal consciousness, together with the elimination of everything superfluous.

The aspirant must also, as has been said, eliminate all sense of personal action. He must be fixed in union with the One Life. High as are his attainments in comparison with ours, no slightest trace of pride of power can be mixed with his realization that his personality is absolutely and unconditionally dependent upon the ALL. (Mem and the Hanged Man).

In this condition of self-surrender, a state which presents outwardly the aspect of profound trance, the Magus begins his journey upward. In no other way can perfect mastery of the powers of the cosmic subconsciousness be developed.

What this mastery really is cannot be put into intelligible language. Even if this were possible, adequate description would be impossible here, because neither the writer of these pages nor those for whose instruction they are intended have reached the Grade of Magus. We can only do our best to pass on what reports have reached us from Those who have made the journey, knowing full well that what we write will fall short of the truth.

The goal of the thirteenth path is Kether, the Crown. The Rosicrucian Grade corresponding thereto is called "Ipsissimus," which means, "I, my very Self." Thus the Grade title agrees with the Qabalists' attribution of יחידה, the Self (the Atma of Hindu philosophers) to Kether.

The Latin word Ipsissimus indicates by its form what we might call the superlative degree of selfhood. It represents the highest possible realization of the meaning of I AM. Qabalists indicate this realization by יחידה, the feminine form of יחיד, "unity." The feminine construction shows that although the I AM is one and alone, it is also conceived in the Ageless Wisdom as the vehicle for אין סוף אור. As vehicle, or receptacle, it is therefore feminine.

It is said that there are ten degrees of this Grade in each of the four worlds, that is: Kether of Kether, Kether of Chokmah, Kether of Binah, Kether of Chesed, Kether of Geburah, Kether of Tiphareth, Kether of Netzach, Kether of Hod, Kether of Yesod, and Kether of Malkuth -- all in Atziluth; and a like tenfold expression in Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah.

Thus we may reckon forty distinct degrees of this one realization which Rosicrucians call Ipsissimus. It is also said that here on the physical plane (in Assiah, that is) there are, at any one time, just ten human beings in whom this realization of Kether is perfected. One has the perfect realization of Kether in Malkuth, another the realization of Kether in Yesod, and so on, up to Kether in Kether.

These ten human beings are said to be the Secret Chiefs of the ten sections of the True and Invisible

Rosicrucian Order on the physical plane. Each section of the Order corresponds to a Sephirah, and consists of persons whose basic development corresponds to that Sephirah.

This statement, however, should not be interpreted as meaning that only ten persons now incarnate have attained to the Grade of Ipsissimus in the World of Assiah. What has been said is that there are but ten in whom this realization is perfected. These ten are the Heads of the Outer Hierarchy of the Order.

This information, however, can be of little more than academic interest to readers of these pages. It is mentioned merely to give some idea of the constitution of the occult hierarchy. The terms here used differ superficially from those familiar to readers of Theosophical literature, but there is no real difference in the teaching itself.

What, after all, is important is that you yourself may gain a flash of this high perception. For from that august Being Whose consciousness is the יחידה of Kether of Kether in Atziluth, down through the hierarchy, vibrates the "wave-length," so to say, of this supreme realization. If you tune in, you will receive so much of it as you can bear.

Before beginning practice to this end, fix in mind the fact that in meditating on the Great Self you are by no means indulging in a flight of fancy or abstract speculation. The mental result achieved by this exercise is an approximation to the most veritable reality. Now, and always, the true I AM of every human personality is נקודה ראשונה, Nequdah Rashunah, the Primordial Point whence all manifestation proceeds. The wise man sees, as did Jesus, that the true Self, or I AM, is the eternal center of creative activity. With Jesus, therefore, he declares, "Before Abraham was, I AM."

He sees, too, that this Primordial Point is a center of expression. In it is concentrated the limitless expanse of אין סוף אור, the Limitless Light. Hence Kether is also named תת זל, Tath Zal, the Profuse Giver.

Here observe that תת, Tath is 800, equivalent by Gematria to שרש, Sheresh, "root." Tath, however, is written with two Taus, to call attention to the fact that this Rootless Root concentrates the Limitless Light, and in so concentrating, sets up the double activity of that restrictive, boundary-setting phase of the Life-Power symbolized by Saturn. The root of manifestation, in other words, is a self-limitation of the Limitless Light, a specialization of itself.

Again, זל, Zal, is 37. This number has many important connotations in the Ageless Wisdom, but this is not the place to discuss them. The main point to be considered now is that 37 is the number of יחידה, the Self. The I AM is not only a center of expression, It is also the exhaustless root of all ability to give, the Original Source whence comes every supply. Not upon anything else does the Magus ever depend. The more, then, that we train ourselves in realization of the I AM, the more shall we find ourselves able actually to draw upon the illimitable resources of this inexhaustible treasure.

The first step in practice is to meditate upon the three letters of the corresponding word Gimel, גמל in connection with the corresponding Tarot Keys. Begin with the final letter Lamed, and Justice. Then take the letter Mem and the Hanged Man. After this use Gimel and the High Priestess, or rather with the idea she symbolizes. Loose all sense of personal identity in your realization that

every element of personal existence is really an expression of the power she symbolizes – the power of cosmic consciousness.

From this meditation you may pass to a similar meditation on the word כתר. Here, too, take the word letter by letter, with the Tarot Keys, beginning with ך and ending with ך.

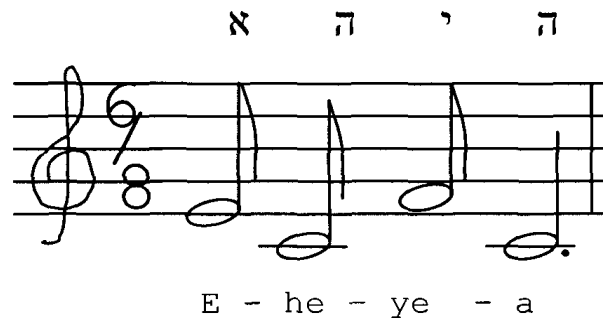
While you meditate upon ך and the Sun, remember that the force which carries you up to the Crown is the universal electric energy specialized for human beings in the solar radiance. We may always find profit in reminding ourselves that in the Great Work we are by no means dealing with metaphysical abstractions. We are physical children of the sun, and the great Intelligence whose physical body is our day-star has an actual directive power in human life.

In like manner meditate upon Tau and the World, and upon Kaph and the Wheel of Fortune. The latter is a symbol of the whirling motion (Rashith Ha-Galalim) which begins in Kether.

At the commencement of the period of meditation, intone the Divine Name, יהוה אלוה ודעת, as given earlier in Section C. At the same time see yourself surrounded by the golden radiance of the sphere of the Sun. Remain in this particular phase of the meditation until you feel that your whole being is charged with the electric fire of the sun.

Before meditating upon the letters and Tarot Keys corresponding to Gimel, sound the key-note, and visualize the color of the thirteenth path. Then proceed with the meditation on the letters.

After this, meditate upon the letters and Keys of the word Kether. When you have finished with Kaph and the Wheel of Fortune, continue by intoning the Divine Name, אהיה, Eheyeh, as follows:



Then see yourself at the center of a sea of white brilliance. We find this difficult to describe. White, cold, fire comes as near the reality as anything. See this white radiance whirling out from the center, which is your real Self, into infinity. Realize also that the center is absolutely still.

Success in this meditation will bring results that cannot be described. The little "self" will be lost for the time in the Great Self. Of the further results it is not lawful to speak, save that they are summed up in the Hindu phrase, "Sat-Chit-Ananda," which means "Existence-Knowledge-Bliss." May your faithful practice bring you speedily to this Supreme goal.