

**T**he fifth stage of spiritual unfoldment corresponds to Keys 19, 12 and 5. Review the lessons dealing with these Keys and their corresponding letters, in *Tarot Fundamentals*. Review also the meanings of *ruach*, or Spirit, as given in the first lesson of this series.

Note that Key 19, which represents this stage of unfoldment, corresponds to the first letter of R V Ch. Key 5, also connected with this step in the Path of Return, is the second letter of that word. The letter Mem, and the Hanged Man, because M I M means Water, and because the Key represents a most perfect state of receptivity to the influx of the universal Life-power, have many correspondences to the letter Cheth, and to Key 7, inasmuch as Cheth represents the watery sign Cancer and the lunar influence, and the letter Mem represents the Great Sea, which is also the Great Mother, the subconscious aspect of the Life-power.

Resh is truly a symbol of the ruling principle in human personality. To it is attributed the Collective Intelligence, concerning which we are told: "Thence astrologers, by the judgment of the stars and the heavenly signs, derive their speculations and the perfection of their science according to the motions of the stars."

The intelligence so described is precisely the kind that all true scientists utilize in their work. It observes facts, classifies them, discerns hidden links of relationship and order, formulates laws. It is the consciousness which reasons inductively from particulars to generals, fits facts and inferences together to frame hypotheses. In short, it is self-consciousness. Hence we know that in this stage of unfoldment a new type of self-conscious awareness is developed.

A double letter, Resh stands for a pair of opposites, Fruitfulness and Sterility. Fruitfulness, because the onlooking of the *universal* self-consciousness incites the activity of the universal subconsciousness, and thus brings about all the rich productiveness of the world of Name and Form. Sterility, because the same self-conscious awareness, working through personal centers of expression, at last penetrates by induction through the veil of Name and Form, and prepares the way for return to the Nameless and Formless Source of All. Through self-consciousness the Life-power involves itself in relativity and the illusions of appearance: by the same kind of conscious activity it extricates itself from the bondage of appearances, and returns to the seeming

sterility of the No-Thing.

Even the number of Key 19 implies the same thing. It is a combination of 1, which as a symbol of beginning suggests seed-forms, and therefore fruitfulness, with 9, which as a type of "ending" suggests the cessation of production, and therefore sterility. Similarly, the Magician, numbered 1, is a young man at the height of his virility, while the Hermit, numbered 9, is a sterile sage, at the close of his life-journey. So these Keys may be read, from one point of view. Yet perhaps we should say that this last interpretation is strictly from the standpoint of the world of appearances, and that one truly versed in practical occultism might well reverse the interpretation of the numbers 1 and 9, and yet be telling the truth. Such are the paradoxes of occult speech.

The universal self-conscious level of the Life-power's activity is the actual reality expressed in all phases of personal self-consciousness. Through some personal vehicles the expression is clear and unobstructed. Through others it is partial and distorted by the imperfections and inadequacies of the personal vehicle. Just as a great singer's voice, sent over the radio, sounds in all the receiving sets, and yet is heard with varying degrees of clarity and purity of intonation, according to differences in the quality of the receivers, so is the Life-power's perfect self-consciousness distorted when it manifests through an undeveloped personality.

This power is now unfolding through us. It has brought us to the point of sharing some part of its knowledge of itself. So long as we remain within the limits of ordinary human consciousness, we must continually remind ourselves to work in harmony with the law of the Life-power. We must remember that Spirit works primarily through our self-consciousness, and through the higher centers of our brains. Then, from what we know of self-consciousness and its modes of operation, we shall see that our liberation demands trained use of the senses, accurate and logical deductive reasoning, and intelligent application of the law of suggestion. These come first.

Next we must bear in mind the fact that the Life-Breath links all things together, and that this uniting agency is at work in the field of subconsciousness. Subconsciousness, as we have had occasion to say before, is not a personal possession. It is universal, and a human being is simply one of its innumerable channels of manifestation. It unites us to all other persons everywhere, to all creatures living on planes below man, and even to the vital essence of all those forms of appearance which used to be called inanimate, and are now classified as inorganic. This linkage is not merely to terrestrial beings, but also to everything in the universe, even to the outermost limits of space.

Finally, since the Spirit unfolding through us presents itself to us as a power working always toward definite, articulate expression, we shall take pains to make our speech truly representative of our con-

sciousness. It is folly to suppose that one may have any lasting experience of the higher consciousness before he has attained to ripeness in the lower stages. To enter the consciousness beyond thought requires as its preliminary no little clarification of the consciousness for which thought is the vehicle. One means of clarification is right speech. One mark of readiness for the higher kind of knowing is ability to express thought in clear, precise, accurate terminology.

Great sages always speak with authority. Jesus was a master of the spoken word. So was Buddha. So was Ramakrishna. A truly illuminated man knows what to say, and how to say it. He may not employ long-winded polysyllables, but he will certainly choose appropriate and beautiful words, and will so combine them that what he thinks is made intelligible to others.

Analytical psychologists, led by Carl Jung, have rediscovered a truth long familiar to occultists, namely, that symbols are universal. We do not have to invent any theory of migration to account for the fact that persons living far apart use the same symbols to express the same ideas. The human mind is practically the same in every place and in every age, so that when a man tries to express an idea, the mental laws of association and representation determine the symbol he selects. It is on this account that symbolism is truly a universal language.

Analytical psychology has discovered also that the dream symbol of a little child always refers to the impulse toward sex-expression. This is a key to the meaning of the two little children in Tarot 19, for the same rule holds good in occult symbolism. What does this imply? Simply that the power we control and direct in practical occultism is the power which, for innumerable generations, has insured the perpetuation of the race. In this way it provided vehicles for the slow evolution of the potencies of the I AM through human bodies. That slow evolution brings us at last to a stage of development where we may, and must, consciously participate in the working of the Life-power that regenerates our minds and bodies.

The little children are its symbols, because at this stage the power that was formerly utilized for physical reproduction only is directed into other and higher channels. Thus the 19th Key shows the children turning their backs on the wall which represents the sense-life. They represent a transmutation of the creative force from a lower or slower rate of vibration to a faster or higher rate. They dance in a fairy ring, in which the basic pattern of design is that of the Wheel of Fortune, to show that this higher rate of vibration synchronizes their activity with the spiritual forces represented in Key 10 by the central circle of the Wheel. In this connection, observe that 10 is the number resulting from adding the digits of 19.

The goal of the Great Work, which is here depicted as a dance, is the height beyond the pillars of the 18th Key. It is also represented in

Tarot by the central figure of Key 21. Note that the children, like that figure, are dancing. Dancing is movement to music, in which rhythm is the basis. Rhythm, traced back far enough, is the basis of astronomical fact, and is the key to truth in astrological interpretation.

In Key 18, the beginning of the Path of Return is shown. The shellfish crawling out of the water represents just what the children stand for in Key 19; but in Key 18 the higher is encased in the lower, as the vital and directive parts of the shellfish's organism are concealed in its bony carapace. The children of Key 19 have been liberated from this hard and fast appearance of form, which in this Key is represented by the wall. They are on their way to the perfection of self-consciousness.

This is what we have called fourth-dimensional consciousness. This is a *name*, but it is far from being a definition. Jacob Boehme tried to describe this higher order of knowing, but what he wrote sounds like gibberish, unless one has shared his experience. Then it makes perfect sense. The visions of Ezekiel and St. John describe the same thing, but they convey little to the average reader.

Yet we should read writings like these over and over again. No effort should be made to understand, or to interpret them. They were not written for that purpose. They are meant to prepare the mind of the reader to have the same experience. The more one's consciousness unfolds, the more intelligible do these descriptions become. The same may be said of the writings of the genuine alchemists. Thus d'Espagnet, in his *Hermetic Arcanum*, insists that any man who wishes to apply himself to Hermetic Philosophy should make use of few authors, and should not be contented with reading them once or twice, but should read them ten times or more, without becoming discouraged. When this is done, here a sentence becomes luminous, there a phrase once dark turns crystal-clear. Books of this kind are meant to be tests for our advancement. The riper we become, the more they have to say to us.

The little children in Key 19 remind us also that in this stage of unfoldment one grasps definitely the truth that one is really and truly a child of the Life-power. During this fifth stage, by persistent practice in meditation on the consequences of this perception, it becomes evident that personality does nothing of itself, that it is merely a vehicle and instrument for a power having aims extending far beyond the limits of personal vision.

Do you doubt this? Then read history, and see how the Life-power has worked to its own ends, without respect for persons. Or look back over your own life, to see how significant were little things you hardly noticed at the time they occurred, and to see, too, how relatively unimportant were many things which, at the time, you supposed to be the only things of any real account.

We have to *learn* to be little children. "Of such," said Jesus, "is the

kingdom.” They who are the most open channels for the Life–power’s operation, they whose childlike confidence in guidance is the strongest, are those who are nearest to freedom.

There is no surrender of freedom in obedience to guidance. The Life–power’s methods are the fruit of its perfect wisdom. In perfect obedience is therefore our best assurance of success, in the little details, as well as in the more massive aspects of our activity. Nature is our adversary so long as we disagree with her. By agreeing quickly we make her our friend and servant.

To the degree that we accept the guidance of the Life–power, to that degree are we liberated from the worst of delusions, the notion that we do anything whatever of ourselves. Obedience soon brings us to understand that the law is not imposed on us from outside. It comes from within. We are personal expressions of it. The creative method of the universe is specialized in every human life. Every human personality is a fruit of the Tree of Life.

This is shown in the symbolism of Key 12. The attitude of personal surrender that it typifies is the one required and developed in the fifth stage of unfoldment. In this mental attitude, which is exactly the reverse of that held by most persons, we learn the secret of true repose, the arcanum of eternal rest. For when all things, from the least to the greatest, are done *through us* and not *by us*, then fatigue is banished. He who is really guided by the Life–power in all things wastes neither time nor strength. Best of all, such a person has forgotten how to be anxious about anything.

We arrive at this stage as the result of logical inductive reasoning. We experience this unfoldment by keeping after it. It comes because we seek it. Sitting down and waiting for it will never bring it. If we are truly beginning to be unobstructed channels for the flow of the Life–power, the expression of its potencies *through us*, its personal centers, will take form as persistence in study and practice.

Sooner or later in this work, which at first *seems* to be one’s own personal undertaking, a change of consciousness is effected, and it becomes evident that the personal self does nothing whatever. The Life–power is the real, and only, Artist. It accomplishes the Great Work in and through us.

Then one understands why the schools of secret science have always insisted on the pupil’s strict obedience to his teacher. We ought to know that when we follow the instructions of a teacher we really obey the I AM. The Life–power leads us to those personal centers of its wisdom who are qualified to help us. It even leads us to those whose own channels of expression are so distorted that the only lesson we can learn from them is the lesson of discrimination between true doctrine and ridiculous fantasy. But whoever the teacher, while we are among his pupils, we should obey his instruction. We ought not to

worship personalities. We must, nevertheless, be ready to accept the guidance of the ONE, speaking through the personal instructor.

Every teacher who knows this principle, when he speaks or writes, does his best to let the One Teacher find in him an unobstructed channel of expression. When the pupil makes himself a receptive hearer or reader, he then makes sure that he gets correctly the spoken or written words of his teacher.

Do not confuse this open receptivity to instruction with passive acceptance of whatever may be taught. The point is that you cannot exercise discrimination unless you really take in what has been said or written. Accept nothing until your own inner Teacher, identical with Him who speaks or writes through any instructor, confirms the doctrine.

In Tarot, that Teacher is the Hierophant. He is your own real Self. The ministers who kneel before him are the personal modes of self-consciousness and subconsciousness. The One Teacher speaks to you with a thousand tongues, writes His Law for you to read in all the innumerable symbols of the Book of Nature. See yourself as his child, possessing as your birthright all the potencies of divinity, all its powers of control over subhuman forms of being, organic and inorganic. Submit yourself without reserve to the guidance which comes, not from above and without, but from within, at the very center of your being. The law you must obey is not that of an alien sovereign, usurping the direction of your life. It is *your own law*, the perfect method whereby the Eternal One expresses through you. Open yourself to the instruction of that One, and you will not only know the law, but you will know also how to live it, moment by moment, day by day. Thus you will begin to live the Life of conscious liberation.

This, remember, is only the beginning. Hitherto, the forces at work have been operating for the most part at the subconscious level. In the first stage of unfoldment, one is first of all conscious of bondage. Then comes awakening to the sources of error. Meditation brings more light, but as yet freedom is a goal, not an experience. The same is true during the period represented by the 18th Key, when the new concepts are being built into the organism.

Only with the fifth stage of unfoldment does conscious liberation become a realized experience. But even at this stage the work is by no means complete. Hence in Key 19 we see little children, just on the verge of adolescence. There is more to come, and of this the next two lessons will tell you. But what is to come is simply a further degree of conscious unfoldment, which begins at this fifth stage.