

REVELATION

The third stage of spiritual unfoldment, as represented by the Tarot, is Revelation. By revelation we mean unveiling, disclosure, exposure, rather than discovery. For Key 17 tells of the operation of something above the personal level rather than the result of purely personal activity. The disclosures that are made at this stage are not perceived with the physical senses, they are not something arrived at by the reasoning mind from external observations. Quite the reverse: they are perceived only when that mind is completely stilled and the senses sealed.

The Hebrew letter Tzaddi (pronounced as written) means “fish-hook.” A fish-hook is a symbol of angling. Thus it is related to our ideas of experimentation, quest and research. It is a quest for that which is not yet definitely realized, a sort of groping, a feeling one’s way, “fishing” for something. What is clearly indicated here is that the fish-hook symbolizes some agency or instrumentality whereby one attempts to solve secrets or enigmas, whereby one follows a more or less faint trail leading to the solution of a mystery.

This agency, symbolized by the fish-hook, is meditation, which is the function attributed to Key 17. Patanjali defines meditation as “an unbroken flow of knowledge in a particular object” and we shall see that Key 17 carries out this definition to the letter. Meditation is close, or con-

tinued, thought. It is deep reflection. It is a continuous dwelling upon one central idea, a diving down into the depths of the mind to the ideas associated with the main thought, fishing for truth, so to speak.

You will note that such association of ideas forms the basis of Tarot practice. You will find this carried out even further when you come to study the Qabalistic correspondences later on. Keys 1, 2, and 3 symbolize the process extremely well. First the selection of some definite object, upon which attention is focused (Key 1). Then the associative process, represented by the meaning of the letter Gimel (Key 2), which result in the fertile mental imagery, the true understanding, represented by the Empress (Key 3).

The numerical value of the letter Tzaddi is 90. This is also the value of the letter name M I M (Mem) which is associated with Key 12, the Hanged Man. This indicates the probability of a cross correspondence between the two letters, and the ideas represented by them. Such a correspondence is evident even in the meanings of the letter names. For certainly a fish-hook (Tzaddi) immediately makes us think of Water (Mem). It is, in fact, an instrument for lifting fish out of water. Water, you will remember, is the Universal Sub-consciousness, the Substance from which all things exist. Follow out this idea for yourself.

In connection with Key 12 you will recall that the title, The Hanged Man, is synonymous with the "Suspended Mind" which signifies, among other things the suspension of the activity of personal consciousness as the result of profound meditation. This suspension is called Samadhi in

Sanskrit books on Yoga, and is said in those books to lead to the revelation of the highest truths.

As stated above, in meditation, by keeping the stream of consciousness flowing in relation to some special object, we gather impression after impression from that object. As a consequence of this our minds actually take the form of that object. We become more and more identified with it, and thus we become aware of the inner nature of the object. It reveals itself to us.

The object of meditation is usually a problem of some sort, and this problem is most important. Just as you must have the right kind of bait before the fish will bite, so you must have some definite object for meditation. The solution of the problems is the reason for meditation. Because it is a problem, it appears to be the adversary of the person engaged in meditation. It may look like the very Devil himself, but the practical occultist knows that this is but the first appearance, and thus he disregards it. He knows the solvent power of consciousness, and how to apply it.

The first thing to do in meditation is to silence the superficial activity of the personal consciousness. Just as the fisherman sits quietly, so must the man in meditation learn to wait patiently until the fish of thought takes the hook. The hook is always a specific question. Those who imagine that they are meditating when they sit passively, imitating a jelly-fish in their mental attitude, are sadly mistaken. For, although it is true that we do not discover truth, it is also true that our mental attitude must be one of active quest. We must not be content merely to sit still in the hope of enlightenment. Still we must be, but at the same time intent upon receiving light on our problem. The right mental attitude is one of quiet, but alert, receptivity. In

this attitude we are able to hear the voice of the Hierophant, and he will speak distinctly and very definitely.

As we become skilled in the practice of meditation, we find that about all we have to do with the disclosure of new aspects of truth is the preliminary work of selecting some specific problem as the pivot of our meditation. In old Egypt there used to be a statue of Isis, with an inscription beneath is asserting that no mortal had ever lifted her veil. This continues to be true. Yet the veil of Isis is lifted again and again for those who are duly and truly prepared to look upon her lovely presence. Man does not lift her veil. She lifts it herself. Neither does Nature deliberately hide herself from us. The veil that conceals truth is the veil of human ignorance, and that veil may be removed by the practice of meditation.

The number 17 is composed of the digits 7 and 1, where 7 represents the power that is expressed, and 1 the agency through which it is manifested. 7 refers in Tarot to The Chariot, and consequently to the receptivity which is indispensable in meditation. To succeed in meditation we must be keenly aware that the personality is the vehicle of Life Power and we must understand that the Life Power, being the Logos, or Creative Speech, finds expression in all forms. It is because that Word is actually seated in our hearts that we are able to receive its disclosures of truth. The mental attitude which is symbolized in Tarot by the Magician is the means whereby the truth so disclosed may be put into practical application. Man is, by his nature, the transformer of his environment in accordance with his perceptions of reality. He IS that, whether he applies his power wisely or unwisely. We are the magicians, projecting our own circumstances by our mental imagery. When

we realize this truth about ourselves, and act upon it, we shall understand the true significance of that old saying of Francis Rabelais, "DO WHAT THOU WILT!"

The zodiacal sign Aquarius, the Water Bearer, is attributed to Key 17. Its symbol is the same as the alchemical symbol for dissolution. Thus it is directly connected with the ideas which we have considered in our study of Key 13. It is apparent that this key is closely related to Key 17, since the letter Nun means "fish." In the symbolic representation of the fixed signs of the zodiac, in the corners of Keys 10 and 21, Aquarius is the Man. Man is the great fisher for new forms of truth. Man is the possessor of that Universal Solvent, the power of human consciousness, of which we read in alchemical books. It is the most potent force at our disposal, in the solution of our problems. Meditation is the process whereby this is accomplished.

Aquarius is jointly ruled by Uranus and Saturn. These two are the first and last Keys of the Tarot Major Trumps, The Fool and The World. This is a sufficient hint that the practice of meditation will eventually bring about the answers to every question, from the most abstract to the most concrete. There are many other interesting ideas arising out of this co-rulership. See if you can follow some them out by meditating upon them.

The Title, The Star, refers directly to the Universal Light Energy which condenses itself into stars, the Reality behind their forms. And Meditation is the intentional, skilled direction of the spiral force of this energy in its course through the nervous system and the brain.

The Great Star is the Blazing Star of Masonic symbolism. It is the symbol of the Quintessence, or the fifth essence of the alchemists. This is clearly indicated by the

fact that it has eight principal rays. The eight spoked wheel, seen on the dress of the Fool, and the eight-pointed star are all symbols of this same Quintessence. It is the symbol of Spirit, of the energy which is transmitted by the sun. It has also eight very short secondary rays. These rays are shown fully developed in Key 19.

The seven lesser stars are also eight-pointed to show that they are manifestations of the same Quintessence. They also represent the seven alchemical metals: Lead, Iron, Tin, Gold, Copper, Silver, and Mercury. These correspond to the seven planets: Saturn, Mars, Jupiter, Sun, Venus, Moon, and Mercury. They are the symbols of the seven interior stars, or chakras, which are centers through which the One Force operates in the human body. This is a forerunner of the teaching that you will receive in later lessons. Then you will be told much more about these centers, and will learn much about their development. For the present this is not a necessary part of your instruction. Much teaching is extant with regard to the development of these centers. A great deal of this is very dangerous, because it either teaches those who are not duly and truly prepared the secrets of how much development may be brought about, thus wrecking the unfortunate individual who practices such instruction in much the same manner that a high powered electric current would do; or else it teaches wrong methods of development which force development, and the result is the same as that of forcing open a bud before it is ready. Be very wary of practices in this direction, unless you are sufficiently advanced to be able to discriminate, and know what you are about.

The Nude woman is Isis-Urania. She represents truth, and the practice of meditation reveals truth to us without

disguise, hence she is nude. Her legs are bent so that each forms an angle of 90 degrees, the number of the letter Tzaddi. The weight of her body rests upon her left knee, and is supported by the earth, representing the facts of physical existence. She maintains her balance with her right leg, and her right foot rests upon the surface of the pool. This implies that in meditation something occurs which gives solidity and supporting power to the ordinarily unstable mind-stuff symbolized by water. This is what the alchemists call “the fixation of the volatile.”

The two vases are the two personal modes of consciousness, self-consciousness and sub-consciousness. The ellipses on their sides symbolize the zero sign, spirit, or Akasha. Only two ellipses are shown, but there are really four, signifying the expression of Spirit in the four elements. From the vase in the right hand of the woman a stream falls which sets up a wave motion in the pool, and represents the activity of sub-consciousness set up by meditation. From the other vase a stream falls on land and divides into five parts, to represent the perfection of the five senses in meditation.

The mountain in the background is the same as the one in the 6th and 8th keys. It represents the perfection of the Great Work, which is the control of the inorganic forms of the Life Power’s activity, or the “mineral work” in alchemy.

The tree represents the human organism, and particularly the nervous system and brain. The bird is an Ibis, which is a fishing bird. The Egyptians associated the ibis with Hermes, or Mercury.

This week develop the exercise that you began last week. Formulate your desires into specific problems. Give

them your complete attention. Focus the spotlight of your consciousness upon them. Make every detail clear and definite. Then, with that as a basis, begin the fishing process of meditation. Do not try to think about your problem. Rather let the stream of consciousness flow past you. Observe carefully all of the ideas that develop in connection with the object of your meditation. Make every effort to keep on the subject.

Keep your object always in view. If you have any very strong impulses act upon them. Have faith in the consequences of your activity. And, above all, expect to get results. Yet do not be discouraged if you do not get them immediately. Only by persistent practice can you learn the art of meditation. But every minute you spend with it will repay you a thousand-fold in practical results.

The secret of Key 17 is found in a quotation from the meditation on Tzaddi in the Book of Tokens:

“Thinkest thou, O seeker for wisdom that thou bringest thyself into the Light by thine own search? Not so. I am the HOOK, cast into the waters of darkness, to bring men from their depths to the sphere of true perception. Entering that sphere, they must die to their old selves, even as fish cast upon the land must die. Yet do they die only to live again, and what before seemed life to them now weareth the aspect of death. Men think they seek Me, but it is I who seek them. No other seeker is there anywhere than Myself, and when I find Mine own, the pain of questing is at an end. The fish graspeth the hook, thinking to find food, but the fisherman is the enjoyer of the meal.”