

LESSON 13

GEBURAH - STRENGTH/SEVERITY

'The fifth path (Sephira) is called radical Intelligence because it resembles Unity, uniting itself to Binah, Understanding which emanates from the Primordial depths of Chokmah, Wisdom.'

The above statement of the Yetzirac Text tells us that this Sephira is associated to Unity and equates this with both Binah and Chokmah. In fact Geburah and Chesed are merely the manifested energies of Binah and Chokmah and hence the analogy. The aspect of Unity here is unification of Geburah and Chesed as a separate polarity. The term "Radical" means touching that which is fundamental which shows the underlying meaning of the term "Radical Intelligence".

Geburah is the 5th Sephiroth and has the dual title of both Strength and Severity. It derives its power and formation from the masculine centre of Chesed which is the opposite extreme from Binah above it. For when Mercy and strength are harmoniously joined they produce Understanding, since its outer shell is masculine and its inner nature is feminine. To use words like Strength and Severity to describe Geburah is really an oversimplification, for example, Strength without application has no virtue. By using polarity one begins to understand the nature of this Sephira a little better. Chesed is Mercy and its opposite

is not quite Strength of Severity but a form of martial aggressiveness, hence the relationship of Geburah to war is very apparent. There are certain destructive qualities associated to this Sefhira such as hate, anger and revenge but all of them are based on relativity as without the mercy of Chesed none of the passions of Geburah would emerge. In short, an army or war cannot engage without an enemy.

The Magical Image of Geburah is a mighty warrior in his chariot (armed and crowned). Here we have the warrior aspect not only prepared for battle but eager for it as well. It is from this image that the martial aspects of Geburah are over the present. Within this context, there is a certain amount of tension present for here we have the warrior constantly on guard with almost eternal vigilance which can be a strain on the emotions and resources. Since the pendulum sways both ways a backlash to this type of behaviour is very real and should be watched for.

The Magical experience of Geburah is a vision of power. Now this relates directly to the energies of this Sefhira. By the way of ascent, the power is the growth of the rebirth aspect which is experienced in Tiphareth. Here the new energy is now matured and has gained both in stature and strength. In terms of descent, Geburah is the Sefhira that shows the establishment of the newfound masculine energy which also signifies power.

There are a number of Magical Weapons associated to Geburah,

but the one of importance is the sword. It is a symbol of a guard as well as justice and enforcement. In alchemy it is a symbol of the conjunction due to its concept of penetration. In the Golden Dawn paper on the Magical Sword it says: 'The sword is to be used in all cases where great force and strength are to be used and required, but principally for banishing and for defence against evil forces. For this reason it is under the presidency of Geburah and of Mars, whose names and forces are to be invoked at its consecration'. The spear has also much the same function as the sword while the scourge is a symbol of severity and punishment. The chain is the chain of mourning, a symbol of the heaviness of binding obligations.

One of the geometric symbols of Geburah is the Pentagon and another is the Pentagram, of this Mathers wrote: The Pentagon, first form, reflected from every second point. The Pentangle can be traced in two ways; reflected from every second point, when it is called the Pentagon; and reflected from every third point, when it is called the Pentagram. The Pentagram as a whole is referred to the fifth Sefira Geburah. The Pentagon naturally represents the power of the Pentab operating in nature by the dispersal of the spirit and four elements through it. The number of the degrees of a great circle cut off between its angles is 72 degrees, the number forming the astrological Quintile Aspect, good in nature and in operation. It also answers to the dispersal force of the five letters YEHESHUAH.

The Virtue of Geburah is energy which relates not only to

the drive of completing projects but also the courage to hold fast on to ones convictions in the face of adversity. Those individuals who come under the influence of Geburah will have to go out and build, creating new situations in place of old but also showing the ability to compete with others, as in many instances new endeavours financed by Geburah are built on old ones which will have been torn down as a result of contact with this dynamic force. As a virtue it is the ability to fight evil and win, then convert it to good.

While the Virtue of Geburah is energy, its vice is self destruction which is caused by the rampant force of Geburah over extending itself. This destructive quality is in the self and is the point where something has over reacted its boundaries. The force that it has tried to conquer then, in turn, conquers it. Here the force of this Sephira has utilised a vehicle that is unprepared to handle its energies.

The two additional titles of Geburah are Justice and Fear. These actually relate more to the martial constancy of Geburah's war like attitude. Both these titles relate back to Geburah's image of a warrior in a chariot. Justice shows that the warrior will come to the aid of those in his domain while fear shows the reactions when his laws have been broken.

As a mineral drug of Geburah, Iron directly effects the blood, especially the Haemoglobin. This in turn makes our blood supply oxygen rich which produces more energy. The term used for

which mineral substances that are taken into the body is called Chelation and if absorbed have a potency of up to ten times greater assimilation. The esoteric aspect of Iron as a mineral drug brings out a stabilising effect of holding firm to ones karmic pattern.

Geburah in Atziluth comes under the name of Elohim Gibor which means "Gods wars or battles". By the way of descent on the Tree we approach Geburah with a certain amount of caution as though the qualities of Mercy in Chesed have made us receptive to change, it is now bringing in the power of the senses. In ascent we view Elohim Gibor with a longing for justice. This is because we have come up through the hell of war and now wish for peace. The root of Gibor is GBR (205) = "to be powerful" which also equates with another root DRA = "to repel". Elohim Gibor purges us of our aggressions by making us act out the karmic play we are all in but directs us to the selfish side of our nature so that we can understand the full necessity of it and grow and develop from this experience.

The Briatic emanation of Geburah is through the Archangel Khamael while others (such as Levi) say it personifies divine justice. It is Khamael that appeared to Jesus (to give him strength) in the garden of Gethsemane. This Archangel is the one that gives us the strength to perform the martial duties of this Sephira. It is here that he must inject in us desire, hate, rage and fear so that we can experience these for the greater good. While he does not create these evil forces he does permit them to

manifest in us by standing slightly aside as we experience this aspect of evil. For Khameal is a tester of our nature.

The Yeziratic influence of Geburah is in the angelic choir called the Seraphim (which means fiery serpents). It is they who govern the karmic influence of our lives under this Sephira. They are the angels of Love, light and fire and produce in us these qualities through manipulation. They try to give us the chance to have our fill of experiences under their guidance. Though most of these will be unpleasant they are for the development of self and this point must never be overlooked.

The Assiatic influence of Geburah is the planet Mars. Its mundane effects are that of energy, construction, competitiveness, force, war, sudden impulses etc. It is important to realise that with this planet we have a force, a tremendous power that is to a certain extent blind in its direction. The esoteric Hebrew word for Mars is Madim (Mad = force or might) which is a name that reflects this planet's nature. In Mars we have the warrior, ready for action but the approacher must decide how he comes to him, as friend or foe. It is here we must examine our motives for if they be correct he will not harm us but if they be the opposite we are then in trouble.

The Qlippothic energies of Geburah are the Golahab or Burners with Fire as they are sometimes referred to. Their forms are said to be those of creatures with enormous black heads which are sometimes described like volcanoes in eruption. Their energy

is one of immense force which man picks up and directs towards others in violent action and aggressive behaviour. However the energy drawn from their sigil is short lived, like most of the energy coming from the lower Tree. Passions, vice and immorality are all the result of the negative aspects of this Sephira and its effect on man.

Horus is the Egyptian godform associated to Geburah. Since Horus is a god of many parts the one that has the most significance here is Heru-Behutet and he is usually depicted with a spear and a headdress surmounted with a solar disk. Behutet drove away darkness (and night) and the threatening elements such as rain clouds, storms, winds etc., which left the brilliance of the sun shine through. This is of course symbolic of the victory of light over dark forces. The battle between Horus and Set was a battle between Heru-Behutet and Set. Another title of Heru-Behutet was Lord of the Forge City where he was considered the master blacksmith.

Ares is the Greek god of war and was the son of Jupiter and Juno. As a god who originated in Thrace he was often shown as an armed warrior but was more noted for his rages than anything else. In battle, his weapon was the spear and was always said to be accompanied by the three comrades - war, fear, fright and strife (Deimos, Phobos and Eris). Every evil ill of war was associated to this god. Another association of interest is that of Hades, King of the Underworld. The Scandanavian god also attributed to Geburah was Thor, son of Odin and Earth, he was

also called the god of thunder and possessed the formidable hammer which could be utilised as a weapon of terror.

One of the important Hindu associations to Geburah is that of Vishnu. Although he is a warrior god he is opposite to the Greek God Ares because he fights against evil. The image of Vishnu, with his four arms (holding the mace, shell and lotus) is in reality a blending of both concepts of Thor and Ares into the god of preservation but one who will go to battle to defend it. There are many stories associated to Vishnu as a defender of the Righteous. One such example of this is Vishnu saving the royal elephant from a crocodile.

The Roman god of Geburah is Mars and his name is taken from the root MAR which means generative force. He was the father of both Romulus and Remus, the twins who founded Rome. Like a lot of other godforms he was first a god of agriculture. As a god of Spring he was called Mars Gradivus (from "growth") while as a god of war he was always seen with his companions who instilled not only fear (to the enemy) but honour and courage to the forces under his protection.

The Tarot association to the four fives shows opposition, strife and struggle, war, obstacles to the question in hand - ultimate failure or success as also shown. The Five of Wands is called "Lord of Strife" and shows swift bold action. The Five of Cups is "Lord of Loss in Pleasure" which signifies pleasure coming to an end - disappointment and loss. The Five of Swords

is "Lord of Defeat" and also shows loss but after a struggle - a battle lost. The Five of Pentacles is "Lord of Material Trouble" which shows payment for reward (of a material nature) - sometimes wealth gained at a bitter expense.

The vegetable drug of Geburah is a tincture made from the roots and leaves of Nettle. This drug contains a good deal of Iron, Tannin, Phosphates, Formic Acid etc. It is used as an astringent, diuretic, purgative, blood builder, stimulant and tonic. In ancient times Nettle was gathered (before sunrise) and fed to cattle to protect the farmer against night demons.

The Red Jasper is one of the precious stones of this path. It is noted as a gem from which imperial seals were made. As an amulet it could heal one injured in any type of hunting accident as well as keep one from being possessed. Among its medicinal qualities apart from bringing good health was a curing of blood diseases. Though Jaspers come in a variety of colours the Red Jasper relates more to curing one of diseases or ailments associated with the fire element and the martian influence.

The sixth heaven is related to Geburah and is called Makhon which means place or base. The Talmud says 'Makhon contains the reserves of snow, hail, harmful dew, round drops fatal to vegetation and its doors are in flame'. It goes on to quote Deut;28;12 'YHVH will open unto thee his good treasure'. This shows that the way to attainment is through the palace of trial and tribulation. If one accepts the challenge it can only benefit them, to

deny it one will fall to the fatalism that this heavenly Palace represents. Makhon is also called 'Palace of Will' for will is the only way one can survive the ordeal. The angels of this Palace are Rumial, Katmial, Gehegial, Arsabrsbial, Egrumial, Machkial and Tufrial.

The sixth infernal mansion of Retzeltoth means gates of death. This relates to the area where one experiences death, yet again, only this time it is related to Geburah. The concept teaches us that we are on the threshold of burning our bridges completely with the upper Tree and having little or no chance of redemption. This is a severing point with the upper Tree but it is still ultimately up to us whether or not we can reconnect the severed link.

The magical perfume or aromatic of Geburah is Tobacco. Since early days when this plant was used in incense form it created a pungent aroma and was used in the Americas as a prelude to a sacrificial ritual. Also it is used both as a stimulant and a relaxative before battle. The Mexicans used tobacco to identify with the rain goddess while the Mayans used it to appease the four elements.

The Edomite Duke associated to Geburah is Elah and the King is called Husham (HShM = 905 or 345). By the use of Gematria we find that 345 equates to 'Extract' or 'draw forth' while 905 relates to 'Precious Stone'. Together they relate to the emerging of crystallised matter. The root of Husham is HSh which is a

violent or disordered movement. Another root of possible origin is HUSh meaning "barrenness". The root AM shows a passive force which when merged with HSh releases its barren principles and gives birth to a material substance and takes on a positive movement.

The Imaginary animal of Geburah is the Basilisk. This is an animal with the body of a snake and the head and claws of a bird of prey. This is representative in Christianity as a symbol of the devil of Anti-Christ. Its main weapons are the eyes which could kill at a glance and like in the fight between Persues and the Gorgon, the only way to kill it is to see it first through a reflection.

A simplified explanation of the 6=5 grade of Adeptus Major is that in the 5=6 level he learns how to apply his trade in a practical manner, while in the 6=5 he must not only know how to, but he must become good at it. It is here that the powerful magician is brought through, a person to be reconned with on all levels of occultism.

ASSOCIATIONS

TITLE:	GEBURAH - STRENGTH/SEVERITY
TITLE IN MICROCOSM:	RIGHT SHOULDER - JUSTICE, FEAR
ATZILUTH NAME:	ELOHIM GIBOR
BRIATIC NAME:	KHAMAEL
YETZIRATIC NAME:	SERAPHIM
ASSIAH - PLANET NAME:	MARS
QLIPPOTH:	THE GOLAHAB
EGYPTIAN DIETY:	HORUS - HERU BEHUTET
GREEK DIETY:	ARES, HADES
ROMAN DIETY:	MARS
HINDU ASSOCIATION:	VISHNU
GEMSTONE:	RED JASPER
MAGICAL WEAPON:	WORD
MAGICAL EXPERIENCE:	VISION OF POWER
AROMATIC:	TOBACCO
VEGETABLE DRUG:	TINTURE OF NETTLE
MINERAL DRUG:	IRON
PLANT:	NETTLE
GEOMETRIC SYMBOL:	PENTAGON - PENTANGLE
ANIMAL:	BASILISK
TAROT ASSOCIATION:	4 FIVES
VICE:	SELF DESTRUCTION
VIRTUE:	ENERGY
KING OF EDOM:	HUSHAM
HELLS:	RETZELTOTH
THE HEAVENS:	MAKHON
ROSICRUCIAN GRADE:	ADEPTUS MAJOR