

LESSON 32

TWENTY-THIRD PATH

'The twenty-third Path is the Stable Intelligence and is so called because it has the virtue of consistency among all numerations.'

The twenty-third Path lies between the Geburah and Hod and is called 'Stable Intelligence'. The entire concept here is one of consistency. The two sephiroth that balance this Path give rise to a type of punishment (from Geburah) or restriction while the lower sephira tells of splendour. Since Geburah is the first of the two sephiroth, the restriction or punishment must be imposed first to form the splendour and it is through this that the stability is formed. 'No pain, no gain', is a modern expression that applies quite well here and reminds us that no development can occur without birth and growing pains.

Mem is the letter of this Path and has a numerical value of 40. Other words of the same value are GZL meaning 'to take away by violence', ChBL 'to bind or connect', YL 'cry out', LAT 'to hide or cover' and LTA 'keep close to the ground'. All of these reinforce the harsh aspect of Mem's nature and shows the merging of the higher forces into the lower. As a word, Mem has a value of 90 and equates to words such as PY meaning 'mouth of a well or entrance' and SL meaning 'raise or exalt'. This relates to going into an opening and being raised up or exalted (in spirit).

de O'livet considers that Mem as a consonant relates to a nasal sound. As a symbol it depicts that of the mother which shows creativity and productivity. Its grammatical influence is that of the passive feminine state of being. When it is placed at the beginning of a word it shows a pliable state while at the end it becomes a collective sign which unites with the abstract essences of the word. It can be described as an expressive article in which the names or movement of an action is merely an instrument which is divided in essence.

The Tarot card associated to this Path is the Hanged Man, which is a complex form. It depicts a man in a rocky cove or cave suspended by his feet with his head in a triangle. The most obvious concept at first glance is that the individual is undergoing hard times and possibly even some form of punishment. The triangle around his head however shows us that he is being immersed in a situation, a type of baptism, which results in a union of both lower and higher forces. Carl Jung stated that the purpose of pain is to make man more aware of himself and this is a situation that fits this card. The man undergoes a type of illumination through ordeal and as such the old concepts of the psyche are lost and a new reconstructed individual emerges from the sea of chaos.

The Egyptian goddess of this Path is Heqet who is usually depicted with a frog's head and is linked to both death and birth. Legend has it that she (along with Shu) were born from the

mouth of Ra. Also she was associated with the midwife as she was present at the birth of the creation. Heqet was in fact a goddess of transition and is looked on to ease the transformation from one state of existence to another (such as in death and rebirth). Though she is sometimes associated to Hathor Heqet, she is a goddess in her own right as a fertility diety.

Poseidon is the Greek diety associated to this Path and is the god of the sea as well as lakes and rivers. One particular aspect of Poseidon's adventures applies here and that is the battle he had with the giant Polybutes (whom Poseidon hurled a cliff at) thus drowning him in the ocean off the islet of Nisyros. This aspect of Poseidon's exploits is shown in the tarot card the 'Hanged Man' who is in fact Polybutes submerged in the the inlet in which Poseidon carved out his doom. Another Greek association here is the god Oceanus.

Neptune is the Roman god linked here. He was the son of Saturn and Ops and brother of Juno, Pluto and Jupiter. He is usually shown in a chariot of shells drawn by dolphins or horses.

One of the magical weapons of this Path is the cross of suffering. Though linked to the crucifixion, when used in the terms of the R.R.et A.C, in esoteric terminology it relates to an aspect of the 5=6 grade ceremony when the postulant is literally bound to a cross and made to take the obligation. During this part of the ceremony the second Adept says (while holding the rose cross out in front of him);

'The symbol of suffering is the symbol of strength. wherefore bound as thou art, strive to raise this holy symbol in thy hands, for he that will not strive shall not attain.'

The cup and wine which are also associated here are a continuation of the cross theme and are the instruments from which the bound postulant is anointed on the hands, feet, heart and brow.

The virtue of this Path is spiritual initiation and is the point where all suffering and hardship start to make sense and this realisation is the first phase of illumination. This is where understanding and appreciation come after stress. In modern terms it is where one reaches the breaking point, though here its esoteric significance is realised for what it is, initiation into the higher realms. Spiritual initiation, like the eastern concept of satori has many different levels.

The vice of this Path is estrangement. Here one has suffered so much that all the suffering is blocked up. All the lessons that one has come by are now kept from day to day consciousness which effectively prevents a merging of the mind and body which would give illumination. This is because the present mode of consciousness finds it cannot cope with the day to day pressures and tries to escape by blocking things out. It shows the psyche is not yet under control or ready to accept the present lessons one has been learning. The only way out of it is to try and consciously corner the psyche by facing up to reality.

The magical powers of this Path are quite varied and cover

such subjects as talismatic work and crystal gazing. All of these of course relate to the impregnation of the lower forces by the higher. This is the ability to command the higher powers to come and manifest themselves in this plane of existence. To be able to do this shows that the adept can call on his knowledge of spiritual hierarchies and yet still be able to control and direct them into performing a desired task.

A mineral drug associated here is potassium which affects the body by taking away its waste products. Along with other elements it helps regulate the water control in the body. Fundamentally potassium is a diuretic that purifies the body's internal mechanism. Any type of mental or physical stress draws heavily on the body's supply of this mineral so it is important to regulate its intake through liver, fruit and vegetables.

The vegetable drug of this Path is a tincture of Artemisa (Artemisia dracunculus) or Tarragon as it is sometimes called. An infusion of this drug is said to induce psychic dreams as well as having both culinary and medicinal values. As an oil it is used in talismatic rituals to act as a catalyst in bringing the higher forces through to impregnate the talisman. Also if taken internally (as an oil) it produces a relaxing effect and allows the higher forces to act through ones aura using much the same technique as a medium does.

The tattwa applied to this Path is called Apas which relates to the water element and is depicted by a silver crescent. By

direction it is a downward movement with the keyword to describe its function being 'contraction'. It relates to any type of liquid formation and represents the sense of taste with the tongue being the body organ that it is most related to.

The Indian diety associated here is Sarasvati, who was originally a goddess of the rivers and waters but later grew to a diety who represents wisdom and music. As a form she is usually shown as a beautiful woman with four arms and is generally seated on a lotus.

The gemstone of this Path is the Beryl or Aquamarine. Legend has it that any one who wears beryl is unable to be defeated in battle, and has his intellectual capacity expanded. Other attributions associated to it are, that it can keep a married couple together by being able to rekindle lost or waining love; Andreas, Bishop of Ceasarea in the 5th century wrote the following on this stone:

'The Beryl, imitating the colours of the sea and of air, and not unlike jacinth, seems to suggest the admirable Thomas (St. Thomas), especially as he made a long journey by sea, and even reached the Indies, was sent by God to preach salvation to the peoples of that region.'

The Beryl also gained some fame as a shewstone in which some could make images appear. In this type of clairvoyant work it remains as yet unsurpassed.

One of the plants associated here is Watercress (Nasturtium

officinale) which is usually found in streams and usually has a high content of manganese in it which is used as a blood purifier. Another plant that can be classed here is that of kelp which is found in the ocean and is used as a type of cleanser for the body as it has a high iodine content, it works mainly on the thyroid and is an ideal body toner.

Willow as an aromatic applies to this Path. An incense can be made up from the leaves, bark, or both. Its ritual association is to death and rebirth but also it is used for love, attraction and for divination and protection. Willow incense has often been used by many civilisations in fertility rites. Also it has been used by a number of sages who use the shewstone (crystal ball) and is said to help prevent illusion as well as obsession. Another aromatic that can be used here is Verbena, which is widely used as an enchanting aromatic and is often worn by a woman who wishes to attract the attentions of a particular individual.

The order of beings associated here are the varieties of water spirits such as the Nymphs, Undines and Nereids. The Nymphs generally come under the water spirits who reside not only in the sea but in any form of stream or river. Though there are both male and female Undines they have mainly been depicted by men as females who were young and beautiful. Offerings by ancient cultures to them included milk, honey and oil. The Nereids were mainly associated to the ocean and were said to be the daughters of Doris and Nereus and had the power to calm rough seas, all

were under the will of Neptune who commanded them to attend the needs of the ocean. Sailors often offered sacrifices to them for safe and prosperous voyages.

The Supreme Elemental King of this world is called Thahebyobeatan while the Element King of the spirits is Niksa. The Demonic King of Water is called Ariton who also goes by the name of Egin (from the Hebrew root OGN "delay" or "hinder") which is said to be from the Hebrew root ORH "to bear oneself" or "be naked". Mathers considered that it may have been taken from the Greek word Arhreton meaning "secret" or "mysterious" with an emphasis on the negative aspect. The Greek root Aix "goat" also may be a possible origin for this word. Ariton has 22 servants under him.

The Archangel related to this Path is Michael who is associated to the cardinal point of the west. Michael is of course the archangel of both water and of the Sephiroth of Hod. The chief ruler of water is in fact Tharsis (ThRShIS=970), this relates to other words of the same value such as MLTz meaning "smoothness and slipperiness" and RAaN meaning "flourishing" which show a distinct relationship to water. The root ThR means "turn around" or "circular arrangements" while SHI which means "tribute, justice". These collectively show that Tharsis relates to a watery form that nourishes (in the sense of a gift or tribute). The angel of this Path is Taliahad while the Cardinal Direction that water represents in the West and is known by the Hebrew name of Maim.

The Holy River associated to this Path is Gihon: 'And the name of the second River is gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush (Ethiopia).

The Whale is a mammal associated to this Path and in general relates to anything swallowed, absorbed or concealed. The biblical story of Jonah and the Whale is a good example of this. In modern times however the Whale has developed a whole new set of symbols and relates to the merging of the higher and lower forces which also hints at resurrection, rebirth and regeneration. It also relates to the soul incarnate passing through its karmic sufferings.

ASSOCIATIONS

YETZIRATIC TEXT:	STABLE INTELLIGENCE
HEBREW LETTER:	MEM
TAROT:	HANGED MAN
EGYPTIAN DIETY:	HEQET
GREEK DIETY:	POSEIDON
ROMAN DIETY:	NEPTUNE
ELEMENT:	WATER
PLANET:	NEPTUNE
MAGICAL WEAPON:	CROSS OF SUFFERING, CUP & WINE
VIRTUE:	SPIRITUAL INITIATION
VICE:	ESTRANGEMENT
MAGICAL POWER:	TALISMANIC WORK, CRYSTAL GAZING, ETC
MINERAL DRUG:	POTASSIUM
VEGETABLE DRUG:	TINCTURE OF ARTEMISA (TARRAGON)
TATTWA:	APAS
INDIAN ASSOCIATION:	SARASVATI
GEMSTONE:	BERYL, AQUAMARINE
PLANT:	WATERCRESS, KELP
AROMATIC:	WILLOW, VERBENA
ORDER OF BEINGS:	WATER SPIRITS
ANGEL - ARCH:	MICHAEL
ANIMAL:	WHALE
CARDINAL POINT:	WEST (MAIM)
ELEMENTAL RULER:	THARIS
DEMONIC PRINCE:	AZAEAL