

LESSON 12

CHESSED - MERCY

'The fourth Path (Sephira) is called Cohesive or Receptive Intelligence because it contains all the Holy Powers, and from it emanate all the Spiritual Virtues with the most exalted essences. They emanate one from another by virtue to the Primordial emanation, the highest Crown, Kether.'

This Sephira is called Cohesive Intelligence because when ascending the Tree from Malkuth to Kether it is the highest level of development in terms of manifestation (showing the unification of the masculine Geburah with the feminine Chesed) for when the Abyss is crossed, manifestation is lost to emanation. In terms of descent, Chesed is Receptive Intelligence because it is the manifested point of Binah - the Mother - and as such, represents that receptivity associated with its feminine nature, hence its title of Mercy.

Chesed is not only the Sephira of Mercy but the Daughter of Binah as well. Since it is formed from the receptive part of Binah it takes that part of its nature which is extreme and strongest, granting clemency and hope to all who enter or draw from its realm. By virtue of its extremism its centre is then considered masculine though its outer shell shows a strong empathy with the water element. Chesed is in fact the start or finish (depending on ascent or descent) of the second Triad of

the Sephiroth and its Rabbinical title is the Microprosopus (the Lesser Countenance) which in simplified terms is the manifested universe, the materialisation of the Macroposopus which is the grand scheme of emanations from the higher planes.

One of the magical experiences of Chesed is the 'Vision of Love'. This refers to the fraternal love of ones fellow man and this is amply illustrated in the Yetziratic Text which states that Chesed 'contains all the Holy Powers, and from it emanate all the Spiritual Virtues with the most exalted essences'. These are of course directed from the highest source (within the individual). The motives for such feelings are beyond reproach because they come from the deepest yearnings of the soul and as such wish to embrace all with the eternal love of all living creatures, for it is written in Ps XXV 10: 'All the paths of Tetragrammaton are Chesed and Aemeth, Mercy and Truth.'

The Magical weapon of Chesed is the Wand of the Chief Adept of the R.R. et A.C. In the ritual of the 5=6 the following description is given: 'My Wand is surmounted by the Winged globe, around which the twin serpents fo Egypt twine. It symbolizes the equilibrated force of the spirit and the four elements beneath the everlasting wings of the Holy One.' Another viewpoint put forth by a Golden Dawn member shows a different aspect of the representative features of the Wand: 'The winged disk also stands for the divine egg of Isis mounted on a phallus while the twin serpents show the balanced energies of union - the highest point of religious ideals. As the equalising force balancing the

two currents relates to the androgynus concept we cannot help but associate it to Philosophical Mercury.'

The Geometric association to Chesed is the square in a circle. Mathers, in a Golden Dawn Knowledge Lecture (related to Chesed) wrote the following: 'The square is an important lineal figure which naturally represents stability and equilibrium. It includes the idea of surface and superficial measurement. It refers to the Quarternary in all things and to the Tetrad of the letter of the Holy Name Tetragrammaton operating through the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth. It is allotted to Chesed, the fourth Sephira and among the planets it is referred to as Jupiter. As representing the four elements it represents their ultimation with the material form. The four angles also include the idea of the two extremities of the horizon, and the two extremities of the Median, which latter are usually called Zenith and Nadir, also the four cardinal points. The number of degrees of a great circle cut off between its angles will be 90 degrees, the number forming the astrological Quartile or Square aspect, potent and evil. There is only one way of inscribing a square in a circle, that is, reflected from every second point'.

The Virtue of Chesed is Obedience and the meaning of this word is to submit to the control of or to comply to the commands of. When applied to Greek or Hebrew philosophy this virtue leans very heavily in the direction of the wife obeying the husband which fitted into the written and oral traditions of the then law of both man and God. However, when taken from an esoteric stand-

point relating to this Sephira that the true course of action of life has been outlined by the emanations of Chesed and the individual must obey these guidelines or principles set down by Karma if the true value of life is to be discovered and utilised.

The Vice of Chesed is simply Disobedience and typifies the actions of a rampant force which shatters the boundaries of our designs and for the most part goes against the common good. This shows the lust for power as the feminine instincts of Chesed are reproduced and multiplied then taken to an extreme.

The Mineral drug associated to Chesed is called Stannum (a homeopathic medicine made from tin) and acts mainly on the liver though its psychological benefits are said to bring people out of themselves by making their nature more jovial. Stannum has a defined effect on diseases such as arthritis though overall when used medicinally it alters the cell structure and enriches the blood which when simplified is called molecular nutrition. The entire concept of this mineral drug is one of preservation for if correctly prepared it can be administered both externally and internally.

The God name for Chesed in Atziluth is AL which when translated simply means God. The Hebraic roots of this word show signs of power and extensive movement. As a hieroglyphic symbol it shows both concentric and excentric force. On the journey up the Tree AL has the effect of loosening the bonds of physical existence and preparing the soul for its journey through the

abyss to the prematerial state. If the soul thinks it is ready to cross, Mercy is then given by AL to let it depart from Chesed but the success or failure of the crossing is really up to the individual will of the soul. If the soul is unprepared for the crossing AL will help by instruction in loosening the Karmic ties by providing a life or series of lives on earth that if the soul experiences can provide the correct criteria for a safe crossing.

The Briatic emanation of Chesed is reflected in the Arch Angelic name of Tzadkiel which means "Righteous of God" (another version of this name is Zadkiel and when translated is "Gods Justice"). The modern implication is that a certain state of purity (for the want of a better word) has been achieved. Tzadkiel works directly under the influence of AL and establishes Karmic patterns for us to observe and which are in fact our last bonds of materialism. Tzadkiel in fact establishes a law or pattern for us to follow that is considered Merciful for it is his job to make sure the wheel of cause and effect is evenly balanced. Tradition states that Tzadkiel assists his fellow Archangel Michael in holding the Holy Standard during the battles with evil. It is this Archangel that stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son and as such is often associated with Mercy.

The Yetzirac influence are the Chasmalim who are called "Living Creatures" and sometimes called "Dominations". The oral tradition associated with this angelic choir is "To dominate; procure liberty; vanquish enemies; give the authority of Princes over all kinds of persons - even Ecclesiastics". The Chasmalim

in fact have the task, during our lives on earth (while under the reign of Chesed) of manipulating the Karmic patterns, or in simple terms, discriminate the adverse influences of the other Sephiroth. They bring together and separate people for the common development of the individual souls concerned. It is they, on a day to day basis, who control the Karmic Law of Chesed.

Jupiter is the Assiatic influence of Chesed and has earned the title of "The great benefic" because its general meanings are associated to good health, wealth and happiness. This is truly the guiding planet of the beautiful people. Its base meanings are attributed to expansion and growth in all aspects of ones life. The esoteric concept of Jupiters effectiveness is to consider growth in the universal consciousness both in an individual as well as a group or even on a national format. The magical image of Jupiter is that of a mighty throned king which is also the image of the Sephira.

The Qlipothic element of Chesed is called the Gagh Shekelah and they are sometimes called the "Disturbing Ones". They have often been seen as black cat headed giants. The chief angels of the Gagh Shekelah are Aziel, Chataiel and Agniel. Their duties are varied but it is said that they attach themselves to weak members of the human race so that they can drain their power. In return they give instruction in the evil sciences and teach how to use such arts as astrology for the benefit of the Qlipothic forces. The energy here is one of general weakness in most

fields of endeavour from psychological to the physical.

The Tarot cards associated to Chesed are the four fours which show the beginning of manifestation. The emanations above the abyss have come down and crystalised. The Four of Wands as Lord of Perfected Work shows the harmonising transition through the Abyss while the Five of Cups shows the Blended Pleasure brought about by a more thorough unification with the lower Tree. The Four of Swords shows Rest from Strife which the new growth needed after the perilious journey from Binah, a period of convalescence. The Four of Disks as Lord of the Earthly Power shows the completion of a cycle - Perfection.

In Egyptian mythology Amen was King of the Gods and was identified by two long plumes surmounting his headdress. The word Amen means "something which cannot be seen, hidden". Another root form of Amen is Men - "to abide, permanent". This refers to the creative power beyond the horizon, the renewer of life. He was the God of Heliopolis and Thebes. The main point of observation here is that Amen is not only known for his creative powers but for his expansive ones as well (such as governing two major civilisations - at that time). Isis is yet another association to Chesed and in her earlier period she was considered a water goddess. This is because she sprang from the Abyss of Water, the source of life and hence her association to this Sephira.

A Greek association here is Poseidon, the Greek divinity of

the Ocean, lakes and rivers. He was the son of Rhea and Cronus and brother to both Zeus and Pluto. He was a god of possessions and wealth and went after both greedily. The Roman god of Chesed is Jupiter which is derived from the Latin 'Jovis Pater - Father Jove'. The Roman Jupiter was a god of light as well as a warrior god of justice. It must be considered that in early Rome Jupiter took a number of different forms and functions, especially as an agricultural god, later these were amalgamated into one diety.

The Hindu god of Chesed is Brahama and is a diety often depicted with four faces (which are associated to the four Vedas) showing the doctrine of 'All Knowledge'. He also has four arms (the four aspects of inner development) and is often shown seated on a lotus, holding a lotus (higher consciousness growing from the murky swamps where the lotus often grows, higher intellect from the clay of man). Brahama, as a divinity, is the creator to the world and the stars. To achieve the state of consciousness (in Yoga) represented by Brahama is to perceive the divine essence from which all things come. Creativity and divine inspiration are two key words associated to this divinity. Another Hindu diety that could be associated to Chesed is Indra. He is a God (often depicted riding a chariot and holding a bow) who is both an agricultural as well as a warrior godform. Indra was the brother of Agniand and is often called the Lord of Heaven.

The precious stone of Chesed is the Amethyst. In the ancient text "Speculum Lapidum (by Leonardi)" considered that this stone

could control mens thoughts and enhance the intellectual qualities. As a charm it was said to cure drunkenness and promote sobriety. This also extends into more amorous areas such as quelling ones passions. In war the Amethyst was a charm of victory and protected the wearer from diseases. It was a stone of particular importance to both Christians and Rosicrucians because its colour relates to the aspect of self sacrifice shown in both religious doctrines.

The Olive is associated to Chesed and was used in religious festivals for anointing as well as being used medicinally as an astringent. From a symbolical viewpoint the Olive is associated with safe passages which is epitomised by the dove returning to Noahs Arc with an Olive Leaf. The oil of the Olive is reported to have helped a number of illnesses when used as a demulcent, a laxative, and has also helped in dissolving gall stones. According to Greek mythology the Olive was chosen as a symbol of peace, and agriculture when it was chosen over Poseidon's horse to represent Attica.

The magical animal of Chesed is the Unicorn, usually depicted as a white animal (esoteric philosophy considers though that the Unicorn is multicoloured) with a single curved horn projecting from its forehead. This single horn in fact shows the unification principle and is said to absorb all poisons. It is also a symbol of fertility and legend has it that the only way to capture a Unicorn is for it to be approached by a virgin where it will lay down defenceless. Its alchemical meanings are many but

generally it is considered to be a catalyst for unification.

Opium is one of the vegetable drugs of Chesed. It is obtained by bleeding the Opium Poppy and harvesting the Sap (when it has dried). From a physical viewpoint, taking this drug produces a deterioration in the cell structure. Its medical effect is that of a sedative, anodyne, narcotic and toxic. Its properties contain codein, narcotine, papaverine, thebaine and narceine. The mystical or magical use of this drug seems to elevate the various layers of consciousness through the dream state. Aleister Crowley published a poem in the Equinox, called "Opium-Smoker" and is of interest because it was based on personal experience.

Cedar is the perfume of Chesed and is an aromatic wood that has been known in Biblical times. The perfume extracted from it is said to promote longevity and good health. The magical association this perfume is one of attracting the opposite sex and it is also said to give the wearer a shrewd business in order to obtain wealth. Also it is a perfume of justice and power to the wearer.

The Rosicrucian grade associated to this Sephira is the Adeptus Exemptus (Exempt Adept) and is depicted by the symbols 7=4. Paul Foster Case in his book "True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order" asks when describing this grade 'Exempt from what' and speculates that it is freedom from personnel participation in anything. Dion Fortune in her "Mystical Qabalah" is of

the opinion that when one reaches this level he or she is free from Karmic ties. Yet another view of looking at this grade is that the Adept is Exempt from the normal restrictions that are placed on the lesser ranks within the Order. It is his job to forge ahead new links and try new areas of study since he is at the top of the Second Order. Being Exempt from the restriction of limitation also allows personal experimentation into frontier states of consciousness. The Adept, at this level, is not yet free from Karma as this occurs only when the abyss has been crossed and the chains of materialisation are shattered.

Chesed is the level on the Tree where Masters are met and their teachings open up new mysteries schools. Esoteric tradition has repeatedly stated that Masters, (a term to equate those beings above the Abyss that have returned to humanity from time to time to help it), have appeared in the flesh (Mathers, Felkin and Case having asserted they have met them), and not just figments of the misty Astral planes. With the exception of Felkin (who claimed the rank of 9=2) Mathers and Case reached the grade of 7=4 in the R.R. et A.C. which they considered the limit of the grades one could attain in this life though both still allowed plenty of scope for development on this level. Dion Fortune made the valid point in her "Mystical Qabalah" when she said: 'The title of Master should therefore be given only to those who are free from the wheel of birth and death.' Though this is not the Golden Dawn concept of what a master is (at 7=4 level), I must concur with her, it has been a fact that too often prestige is given to Order ranks which human nature is not fitted to bear.

When one first enters Chesed (in Assiah) one finds the new level of experience is almost limitless but when the top of Chesed is reached in Atziluth the limitations then become just modes of thought. This necessitates opening up oneself to completely new concepts, most of them beyond the present comprehension, we know that we have a change but are not exactly sure what the change will be. At this point the involuntary action of our psyches take over and propel us through the Abyss. Though this is basic evolution and the Karmic lives and currents do prepare us, accidents do happen and individuals are thrust ahead of their times and it is usually they who are caught in the filters of the Abyss. Though on the whole, an Adept who has reached the top of Chesed, in relationship to the concepts of the various esoteric Orders, would be proficient at the technicalities of this level but not those beyond them. For it is only when the Adept has been taken out of this level (excluding accidental crossings) that he can be considered a Master of it.

Araboth is the Seventh Heaven associated to Chesed. Its meanings are varied but the root ARB meaning a mixture has been cited as one source of its origin. Also the Hebriac roots of AR = power and movement when combined with BTH = inner dwelling place is just as valid an association. The two main angels of this Palace are Zeburial and Tutrbebial. This heaven assures us of a safe place that remains so throughout eternity that one can reach through prayer, meditation, and human actions, on the earthly plane. ARBTH = 603 which equates to a place of

abundance, in the positive sense.

The King of Edom associated to Chesed is Jobab (YUBB = 20). This word is formed from the root YU which roughly translated means every intelligent (luminous) manifestation. The arabic and Coptic roots mean both Sun and Moon respectively. The second root BB relates to interior expansion or hollow. When placed together we find an luminous intelligence in a hollow void. The root ChZH (20) can be related here and means settled or fixed into place. This refers to Jobab being in a position that is fixed and cannot be altered. Another root TATA (20) which signifies a deep hole or the creation of one.

The Hell associated to Chesed is called Gihebem and means 'silence'. This ascribes to the period of loneliness where one has to leap into the void and trusting on ones past actions for salvation. It is a time of change in every sense of the word and shows that if one has passed the test they will leave the Hell behind but if not they will remain there forever. It is the time where ones punishment is loneliness, being far away from the divine source of nourishment.

ASSOCIATIONS

TITLE:	CHESED - MERCY
TITLE IN MICROCOSM:	LEFT SHOULDER
ATZILUTH NAME:	AL
BRIATIC NAME:	TZADKIEL
YETZIRATIC NAME:	CHASMALIM
ASSIAH - PLANET NAME:	JUPITER
QLIPPOTH:	GAGH SHEKELAH
HINDU CONCEPT:	BRAHAMA
EGYPTIAN DIETY:	AMEN, ISIS
GREEK DIETY:	POSEIDON
ROMAN DIETY:	JUPITER
GEMSTONE:	AMETHYST
MAGICAL WEAPON:	WAND OF CHIEF ADEPT
MAGICAL EXPERIENCE:	VISION OF LOVE
AROMATIC:	CEDAR
VEGETABLE DRUG:	OPIUM
MINERAL DRUG:	STANNUM
PLANT:	OLIVE
ANIMAL:	UNICORN
TAROT ASSOCIATION:	4 FOURS
VICE:	DISOBEDIENCE
VIR ^T UE:	OBEDIENCE
GEOMETRIC ASSOCIATION:	SQUARE
THE HEAVENS:	ARABOTH
KING OF EDOM:	JOBAB
HELLS:	GIHEBEM
ROSICRUCIAN GRADE:	ADEPTUS EXEMPTUS