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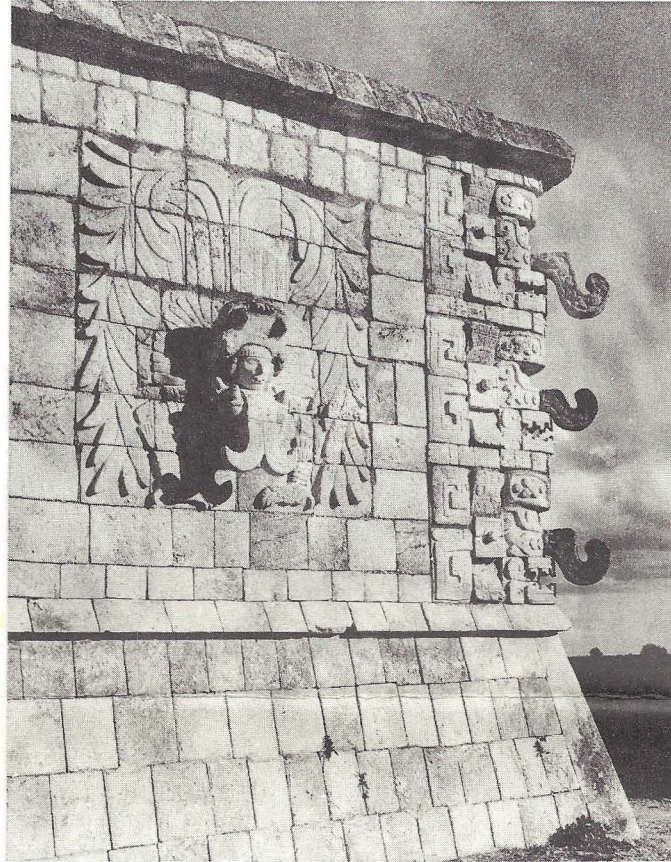
VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Degree 8 - 9

Number 218

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What Are Your Plans?

Mayan Revelation Number 218

Division of Friendships

Friendship

Keeping Friends

Have the Right Friends

In Life's Relationships

Making Friends

The Elements of Friendship

Making the Most of Friendships

BELOVED CENTURION:

We now take up the department of your life inventory called the "Division of Friendships", and what a powerful force friendships exert in our living. Friends are as companions on a journey, who ought to aid each other to persevere on the road to a happier and more prosperous way of life.

There are few people who really understand just exactly what a friend is. We never have more than one or two really deep friendships in a lifetime, and when you hear someone talking about the many, many friends he has, just be sure he really does not have any really deep, abiding friendships.

The finest and most constant friend is, as you have heard me say before, something rare and hard to find, and a faithful friend is a true image of God. The Bible tells us that a friend will love at all times, and that is the truth, I believe. He is able to see our faults, but loves us in spite of them. Other blessings that we have may be taken away from us, but if we have acquired a good friend, we have a blessing that improves in value when other blessings fail.

Another thing I would like to stress right here is the importance of not making friends too quickly. One of the true tests of real friendship is when they, without speaking a word to each other, can find happiness in just being together. Nothing more is needed. But when you are sure, then be constant and true and be willing to pay the price, which is a self-sacrificing love. Friendship is a deep thing. It is something in which we give more than we receive.

In Mayanry, your studies have been concerned greatly with character and, after all, character is so largely affected by our friends that we simply cannot afford to be indifferent as to who and what our friends are. They help make us what we are, which is one of the reasons I emphasize being careful in selecting them. And when you know in your heart you have made a wise choice in friendships, never sacrifice, but rather, nurture them.

Before proceeding with the lesson, I would like to give you a bit of oriental philosophy that I find very thought-provoking. Here it is: "The sun is one hundred thousand leagues away, and the water roses that open to the light of day are in the pool; the moon, friend of the night-blooming lotus, is two hundred thousand leagues distant; but friendship knows no separation that divides it in space." When we understand these words, we truly understand what real friendship is.

The following prayer will help you to attain perfection as you continue with your life inventory:

PRAYER

I ask Thee, Heavenly Father, to guide me as I explore ways to extend and expand my life through friendship. Let all my friendships be worthy both on my part and that of those with whom I associate. Amen.

§§§ FRIENDSHIP §§§

ANYONE interested in making the most of his life must have arrangements to widen its influence and interests, so as not to get wrapped up in himself and develop an introverted and ingrown personality. We have pointed out ways of extending one's thought life and giving outreach to his attitudes as a health conserving process. Now we come to that development of the process of living by which we actually extend our personal touch on life and the world, even to great distances in time and space. You can put it down in your inventory as your division of friendships, your department of human relations.

The Book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 4, Verses 9-12, states the fundamental value of friendship when it says: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

If any one of us could or should map his personal world, when he had indicated himself and his personal interests that would be only the center. The boundaries would reach around all his friends and what he and they mean in each other's lives. The frontiers would be very wide indeed.

We think of friendship as a sacred and golden bond between two lives; but it is a multiple bond, and some of its strands may reach into other lands and other years, even lifetimes. One never knows the reach or the power of his friendships. In Longfellow's poem, The Arrow and the Song, one shoots an arrow and breathes a song into the air. Long afterward he finds the arrow in an oak, but the song he finds in the heart of a friend. So it is with influence and friendship. This could have been true no matter how far away the friend may have been in time or in distance.

While you will find that all your life interests have extension possibilities, your real department of expansion is that of your friendships, for they will represent you wherever they are. You live, send influence to, and draw benefits from every spot on earth where you have a friend. When you find a friend you take a long step toward larger living and exerting your power in the world.

Friendship can grow volunteer like weeds, brambles, and inferior plants; but the most of the great and valuable friendships are planted, tended, and cared for like choice flowers or valuable fields of grain.

§§§ HAVE THE RIGHT FRIENDS §§§

OF course the value of your friendships depends on the kind of friends you have, and the increase of that value year by year depends on the kind of additional friends you seek. The right kind of friends can make you, even as the wrong kind can break you.

This is not saying not to befriend people who need you and know it. Reach a hand, of course, to anyone who wants you to help him make something better of his life, or to anyone groping in the darkness who will accept a light. From such as these many enlarge their lives, and you may be proud and fortunate one day to call them friends. That is something everyone of us should do at every opportunity.

But remember to raise them up and not let them pull you down. And do not be deluded by the old falsehood that the way to help anyone is to get down on his level. Nothing could be more untrue. How can you help anyone up when you are on no higher level than he?

Here is exactly where the difference lies:

Be a friend to anyone who honestly wants you to help him up to your level, but beware of the one who thinks he is called upon to help you down to his. You will find some groping and inferior souls who think they are the ones who have the secret of life, and that they must lead you into their ideas and ways. They are not seeking instruction but offering it. At that stage you can do nothing for them. At that point they will either harm, hinder, or annoy you. Leave them alone till they want your help, then give it freely and with a friendly hand. They are then possible friends, and their gratitude can make them actual ones.

For your real friends seek those whose friendship will be inspiring and helpful to you. Have as many as you can whose association will help you to be better, stronger, and wiser. Have as many as you can who will share your quest for what is really best in life, and who will follow the high road side by side with you. Next to this have friends who give promise of becoming such, but remember that there is basis for friendship only where there is congeniality of interest and aim. Discrimination at this point will both save and gain you much.

§§§

Have friends then, but let them be the right ones. Do not clutter up your life with those who will weaken and try you. Treasure the association of those who will bless and benefit you, leaving some room for those whom you can benefit and bless. Good friends will sometimes open to you values of which you would not have dreamed, or lead you to heights you would not have attained. All of them will be companions on the road to good and not hindrances to lure you into roads of mediocrity and failure.

Having set out on the right road yourself, always find out before you accept anyone into the closer bonds of friendship whether he is going your way or wants to do so. If not, he will be a detriment to you, and you will be no help to him, no matter how long it may take you to find it out. Like everyone you can, and befriend everyone you can, but limit your close fellowship to the best.

Cling to the friends who have proved themselves, accept others of whose

possibilities you are sure, and keep the doubtful cases on the waiting list. Let them prove themselves, as you have so often had to do.

*** MAKING FRIENDS ***

ANY survey of the condition of a business enterprise is made with a view to discovering its condition and outlook with a view to strengthening it and preparing for further growth and development, and, of course, this applies to the business of living as well as that of rendering a service for material profit. You are thinking of the expansion, strengthening, and progress of your life and its interests, and just now we are thinking of the important interest of friends and friendship. The trade tycoon considers how to make money. In the living of life we must sometimes consider how to make friends.

It is often said that one cannot have too many friends. That is true, provided they are friends worth having. We are not now thinking of people who only annoy you, waste your time, and get you into embarrassing situations; but of the people who make your life more worth living and whose lives are made more worth living by their association with you; the people whose association with you strengthen you like added strands to a cord.

One needs a definite policy and program in friendship making just as in any other field of production. Therefore, it is wise to face the subject thoughtfully and develop definite policies. This may well begin with three questions. First, what kind of friendships are best for you? Second, where are they available? Third, how will you go about acquiring them?

A very important principle of friendship making is expressed in an old and familiar, but very wise saying - "If you would have friends, be one." In other words, the initial step is to show yourself friendly. Sometimes a special opportunity to do this will come, but always one can manifest the spirit of friendliness in the ordinary contacts and happenings of everyday life.

A second important strategy is, when you have made a beginning toward a worthwhile friendship, no matter how small, never let go. Cultivate it and advance it at every opportunity, without overdoing it, of course, always seeking to make it as important to the other person as it is to you. You may have any number of these friendships under cultivation at once. Some of them can turn out of infinite worth, and cultivating them should be a great pleasure.

There come a day and an hour in the processes of acquaintance when two people who have the capacity for deep friendship realize the fact. There is a kind of meeting of spirits, as though all unseen, two souls reached out and clasped hands. That is an important, perhaps fateful, moment. For better or worse it changes everything from that time on. Watch for such moments, and if they bode well, follow them up. Let it be true that something beautiful has been built into your life.

Some of these hours we find or make ourselves. Others are swept up as like something floating on the incoming tide. Each is an opportunity to begin making a friend. Watch for them, and whenever it is a treasure that has been left at your

feet possess it.

Naturally and properly you are always on the lookout for any honest gain you can acquire. A good friend is priceless gain, so be on the lookout for that too, and consider yourself vastly richer when you acquire one.

KEEPING FRIENDS

THERE are two faces to all wealth and kinds of wealth. One is acquiring it, and one is keeping it from getting away. In friendship as in everything else one of our problems and constant necessities is that of conservation. As in the case of material possessions, it is easier to lose a friend than to make one and it can be much more quickly done.

One of the things of which an inventory of any kind warns us is to guard against loss, because it reveals losses already made and not to be repeated. If a friend proves false, that is no real loss, so lose no time regretting it. But as Shakespeare's Polonius said to his son, "The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel." Having won them, avoid losing them. That is what your friendship inventory says to you.

You do not have to put on any special program for keeping friends, not the right kind of friends. You only have to be your best self in all your dealings with them, which is something you owe to yourself and everyone else as well as to them. Cultivate being yourself till it becomes automatic, and after that it will mostly take care of itself. Guard against the things that corrode friendship till it becomes a habit.

For friendship's purposes use your friends and let them use you. Then the friendship will be valuable to both, and the warmth developed by action will cement and seal the attachment all the more firmly. If one plants grain he has given effort and expects a yield. If one plants friendship and tends it he has given something of effort and value and may rightly expect some value in return. If he has done well, he will not be disappointed.

If friends move away from you, or you from them, do not let the bond rust away. Keep in touch. Distance can be an added value. The farther away you have friends, the more of the world is yours. There are many good means of communication now. Use them. The mails and the wires have wonderful power to keep hearts warm.

Try to weld friendships between and among your friends as well as between them and yourself. Do what you can to have them know and become friends to each other. What a closely knit group a number of friends can be! Such associations have endured for lifetimes and brought great value to those so related.

As friends prove fit share your deeper thoughts with them and take an interest in theirs. It is strengthening for people to know each other's hearts.

Give and take counsel in the right spirit. One of friendship's great values

is the opportunity to help and be helped over the rough places, and it is a great satisfaction to know the help is available either way. One might call it friendship insurance, for the helping hand is one of the last things to be forgotten and one of the surest things to be rewarded.

§§§ IN LIFE'S RELATIONSHIPS §§§

FRIENDSHIP is not local and the necessity for it is not limited. They are universal. Not only that but nothing else is a substitute for that golden relationship between human beings. The most sacred relationships require it, for it is one phase of the image and likeness of God upon us. It is something we receive, but which also prepares us to give of the riches of good will and kindness, and a mingling of that is what all human relations need.

People entering the marriage relationship should never forget that word and its meaning, nor even allow their sense of its importance to diminish or lose its continuity. Whatever else a husband and wife may be, unless they are friends their marriage is doomed to unhappiness if not dissolution. Wealth, position, even admiration, cannot take its place. One of its phases is mutual respect, and without that no marriage can be a happy and successful one.

If two people are considering entering into a business partnership one of the first things they should consider is whether they are truly friends and, whether under the strains and stresses of partnership, they can remain so. It takes friendship to avoid misunderstandings, to get around the differences there always are between two personalities, to find pleasure instead of irritation in the abrasion of constant contact, and to keep self-interest down to its normal proportions in all matters of profit or advantage.

It is the same with the relation between teacher and pupil. Teaching and being taught, guidance and being guided, require a basis of friendship to be successful. Friendship helps both to give instructions and to receive it. What teacher was ever successful who did not teach from the viewpoint and in the spirit of a friend? What pupil ever did well either in receiving instruction or applying it in later life who was not a friend of his teachers and did not accept their friendship? This capacity is one of the first things that should be considered in a teacher's qualifications, for it is one of the chief elements that will determine his success.

We find the same principle in operation when we come to the relationship between worker and employer. They must be friends if that relationship is satisfying and profitable to either. Otherwise it will result in tensions, suspicions, and resentments that will damage both the work and the men. It is not a one-sided responsibility. If there is a lack of good will and trust on either side, it will affect both sides, and it will be permanently costly.

What a blessing the spirit of true friendship is between neighbors! In the last analysis it is what makes any location a pleasant place to live, - and how much it would mean to a neighborhood if all who dwell in it were friends! That is probably one of the things that make heaven what it is. In such a neighborhood

there would be little room for unhappiness of any kind.

Even the success of the saving work of the Master required a friendship basis. Can you not hear His voice across the centuries, saying: "I call you no longer servants, for the servant knowing not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends"?

THE ELEMENTS OF FRIENDSHIP

AS a chemist applies reagents to determine what elements are in a compound or as a prism breaks white light into its various component colors, so we can understand friendship better if we make at least a general analysis of the ingredients of which it is composed. What all is blended together in what we call by that great and good name? What are the elements the absence of any one of which would leave it something else or something less than friendship?

One of them is trust. People have to believe in each other to be real friends. That is, they have to put faith in each other's integrity, word, good will, and friendliness. St. Paul wrote that Abraham came to be called a friend of God because he believed in Him. He trusted God enough to go where He told him and to do what He bade him, knowing that however dark the prospect looked it would always turn out well - because they were friends.

Another element of friendship is respect, understanding, of course, that this respect must be mutual. In friendship there are no one way streets. No good relationship can long be sustained without mutual respect. It is a prime sign of health, and the lack of it is a sure indication that all is not well. One not worthy of respect would not be worthy of friendship. Of course, we would find most people worthy if we really came to know them, but until we do we have no real friendship to offer on our own part.

There can be no real friendship without good will on both sides. Mutual good will grows with its own exercise, but one-sided good will wastes away and dies. The same is true of good will when there is not enough of it. It is one of the things of which it is true that the more lavish we are with it the more we have. If you do not like someone else make sure it is not your own inadequacy in the way of good will that makes you feel so.

Another element of friendship, and a very important one, is what we may call the outgoing personality. Consider the difference between a sponge and a rose. One takes in. The other only gives out. It is this acquisitive nature that makes an animal or a human being predatory. Study Hofman's painting of Jesus and the rich young ruler. Notice the way each is holding his hands. You will see the symbol of what is meant here.

Still another element of friendship is the constructive viewpoint. It makes friendship productive, and makes it a real partnership because it gives friends more and more in common. Real friendship is always building, always improving, always progressing.

The final element of friendship we will mention here is one that reaches into sublimity. It is the recognition of human oneness. We are not many but one, and our treatment of each other is also to ourselves. If a family is to be happy, its members must be friends with each other, and under the fatherhood of God we are all fellow members of the human family.

§§§ MAKING THE MOST OF FRIENDSHIP §§§

FRRIENDSHIP is not a mere toy or keepsake. It is a living bond and a thing of dynamic power, something to care for and use so it can count for something vital in your life. Bear in mind that it is a super-asset, and that assets are made to use and invest. Friendship is not an asset to keep on deposit out of circulation, but one to function in the open field of life and action.

Use it. That is what it was built for, and therefore it will always be better off in use. Lack of use rusts away the edge of friendship as it does that of a cutting tool, and like such a tool use keeps it clean, bright, and ready. The processes of corrosion are quick and sure, and especially so with the ties between friends. Besides, an unused tool enriches no one.

Feed it. Friendship can no more remain healthy without nourishment than a living body can. Neither can it remain beautiful and effective. Communicate with your friends often and see them when you can. Keep an unimpaired mutual understanding between them and yourself. Be helpful to them when they need it and you can. We have said to use your friends. Let them use you as well. Let your friendship have real value.

Value it, and let your appreciation of it be expressed in both word and deed. Let it be priceless and indispensable to you, and say so. Remember that it stands next in importance to the affections in your life, and it is kept alive and active in a similar way - the giving of itself. Sit down sometimes and think of your friends, one after another, and of what it would be like to you if you lost them, or had never had them. Sometimes to lose a friend in a dream, and then awake to rejoice that it was only a dream, saves one from losing that friend in reality. You can do it in a daydream too, then hold more tightly to the precious bond.

Pay back value received, and keep accounts. Do not charge your friend with what he owes you. If he is a friend he will attend to that. Charge yourself with what you owe to him, and always try to pay more than you owe. The debts of love and friendship are measureless anyway. Have you not known friends who were always trying to surpass each other in the proofs of friendship, and did it not enrich their lives beyond calculation? Did it not also make and keep them selfless in their attitudes toward others as well?

Don't lose it. That is no empty warning, for losing friends is one of the easiest things in the world to do. That is true because all you have to do is - nothing. Far more friendships die of starvation than of disagreement. Too, a lost friendship is hard to regain and hold, for there are too many harsh memories to give it a chance to thrive again.

Count your friends as a miser counts his gold, or rather as a happy farmer looks across his fields smiling with rich, ripening grain when the harvest is near. This is one kind of wealth over which you have a perfect right to stand in pride and self-congratulation. Be as eager as the miser or the farmer, too, to increase your wealth in friendship and its pleasant fruits.

It is a great and good day at the close of which you have not lost a friend, and a still greater and better day at the close of which you can say you have found one.

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AFFIRMATION

I seek the happiness of the wealth of friendship, knowing that when I have it I have a holy thing.

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It is the sincere hope of your Instructor that this lesson has helped you as you take the inventory of your life.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.