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Beloved Companion:

Chesed, The Fourth Sefirah
Title; Chesed, Mercy.

Magical Image; A mighty crowned and throned king.

Situation on the Tree; In the centre of the Pillar of Mercy.

Yetziratic Text; The Fourth Path is called the 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 of the Primordial Emanation, the Highest Crown, Kether.

Titles Given to Chesed; Gedulah, Love, Majesty.

God Name; El.

Archangel; Tzadkiel.

Order of Angels; Chasmalim: Brilliant Ones.

Mundane Chakra; Jupiter: Tzedek

Spiritual Experience; Vision of Love.

Virtue; Obedience

Vice; Bigotry: Hypocrisy: Gluttony: Tyranny.

Correspondence In The Microcosm; The left arm.

Symbols; The solid figure: Tetrahedron: Pyramid: Equal-armed cross: Orb: Wand: Sceptre: Crook.

Tarot Cards; Four of Wands: Perfected work.
Four of Cups: Pleasure.
Four of Swords: Rest from strife.
Four of Pentacles: Earthly power.

Between the Three Supernals and the next pair of balancing Sephiroth upon the Tree there is a great gulf fixed which is called by mystics - the Abyss. The next six Sephiroth, Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod and Yesod constitute what Qabalists call Microprosopus, the Lesser Countenance, Adam Qadmon, the King. The Queen, the Bride of the King, is Malkuth, the Physical Plane. We have, then, the Father, (Kether), the King and the Bride, and in this configuration of the Tree there is profound symbolism and great practical importance in both philosophy and magic.

The Abyss, the gulf fixed between Macroprosopus and Microprosopus, marks a demarcation in the nature of being, in the type of existence prevailing upon the two levels. It is in the Abyss that

Death, the Invisible Sefhirah, has its station, and it might aptly be named the Sefhirah of Becoming. It is also called Understanding, which might be further interpreted as Perception, Apprehension, Consciousness.

These two types of existence, Macroprosopus and Microprosopus, serve to indicate the potential and the actual. Actual manifestation, as our finite minds can conceive it, begins with Microprosopus; and the first aspect of Microprosopus to come into being is Chesed, the Fourth Sefhirah, situated immediately below Chokmah, the Father, in the Pillar of Mercy, of which it is the central Sefhirah. It is balanced across the Tree by Geburah, Severity; and this pair, Geburah and Gedulah, form the 'Power and the Glory' of the final invocation of the Lord's Prayer; the 'Kingdom' being, of course, Malkuth.

As we have already seen, we can learn much from the position of a Sefhirah in the pattern of the Tree; and from the position of Chesed on the Pillar of Mercy we see that it is Chokmah upon a lower arc. It is emanated by Binah, a passive Sefhirah, and emanates Geburah, a katabolic Sefhirah, whose mundane Chakra is Mars with all his warlike symbolism, who is Saturn upon a lower arc.

From these things we can learn a great deal about Chesed. It is the loving Father, the protector and preserver, just as Chokmah is the All-begetter. It continues the work of Chokmah, organising and preserving that which the All-Father has begotten. It balances with mercy the severity of Geburah. It is anabolic, or upbuilding, in contra-distinction to the katabolism, or down-breaking of Geburah.

These two aspects are very well expressed in the Magical Images assigned to these two Sephiroth. These Magical Images are both kings; that of Chesed a king on his throne, and that of Geburah a king in his chariot; in other words, the ruler of the kingdom in peace and in war. The one a law-giver and the other a warrior.

The analogy of physiology gives us a clear understanding of the significance of these two Sephiroth. Metabolism consists of Anabolism, of the ingesting and assimilating of food and its building up into tissue; and Katabolism, of the breaking down of tissue in active work and the output of energy. The by-products of Katabolism are the fatigue-poisons which have to be eliminated from the blood by rest. The life-process is an everlasting upbuilding and downbreaking, and Geburah and Gedulah (another name for Chesed) represent these two processes in the Macrocosm.

Chesed, being the first Sefhirah of Microprosopus, or the manifested universe, represents the formulation of the archetypal idea, the concretion of the abstract. When the abstract principle that forms the root of some new activity is formulating in our minds, we are operating in the sphere of Chesed. Let an example serve to make this clear. Supposing an explorer is looking out from a mountain over a newly discovered country and sees that the inland plains lying behind the coastal mountains are fertile, and that a river flows through these plains and makes its way to the sea through a gap in the mountain chain. He thinks of the agricultural wealth of the plains, transport down the river, and a harbour on the estuary;

for he knows that the scour of the river will have made a channel by which ships can come in. In his mind's eye he sees the wharfs and the warehouses, the stores and the dwellings. He wonders whether the mountains contain minerals, and pictures a railway line alongside the river and branch lines up the valleys. He sees the colonists coming in, and the need for a church, a hospital, a gaol, and the ubiquitous saloon. His imagination maps out the main street of the township, and he determines to stake corner lots that he may prosper with the prosperity of the new settlement. All this he sees while virgin forest covers the coastal belt and blocks the mountain passes. But because he knows that the plains are fertile and that the river has come through the mountains, he sees in terms of first principles all the enterprise that follows. While his mind is working thus, he is functioning in the sphere of Chesed, whether he knows it or not; and all those who can also function in terms of Chesed and think ahead as he does, seeing the thing that must arise from given causes long before the first line is drawn on the plan or the first brick laid in the trench, are able to possess themselves of the valuable land where the wharfs must be built and the main street must run.

All the creative work of the world is done thus, by minds working in terms of Chesed - the King seated upon his throne, holding sceptre and orb, ruling and guiding his people.

By contrast with this we observe the people whose minds cannot function above the level of Malkuth, the Bride of the King. They are the folk who cannot see the wood for trees. They think in terms of detail, lacking any synthetic principle. Their logic is never able to reach back to origins but is always materialistic. They are never able to discern subtle causes, and are the victims of what they call the caprices of chance. They are unable to discern subtle conditions, nor can they work out the line that primary impulses will follow, or can be made to follow, when they are coming down or being brought down into manifestation.

The occultist who does not possess the initiation of Chesed will be limited in his function to the sphere of Yesod, the plane of Maya, illusion. For him the astral images reflected in the magic mirror of subconsciousness will be actualities, he will make no attempt to translate them into terms of a higher plane and learn what they really represent. He will have made himself a dwelling in the sphere of illusion, and he will be deluded by the phantasms of his own unconscious projection. If he were able to function in terms of Chesed, he would perceive the underlying archetypal ideas of which these magical images are but the shadows and symbolic representations. He then becomes a master in the treasure-house of images instead of being hallucinated by them. He can use the images as mathematicians uses algebraic symbols. He works magic as an initiated adept and not as a magician.

The mystic functioning in the Christ-centre of Tiphareth, if he lacks the keys of Chesed, will also be hallucinated, but in a different and more subtle way. Upon this level he will read the magical images truly enough, referring them to that which they represent and giving them no values save as tokens, as St Theresa has so clearly shown in her 'Interior Castle'. He will fall into the error, however, of thinking that the images he perceives and the experiences he

undergoes are the direct and personal dealings of God with his soul, instead of realizing that they are stages on the Path. He will find a personal Saviour in the God-man instead of in the regenerative influence of the Christ-force. He will worship Jesus of Nazareth as God the Father, thus confounding the Persons.

Chesed, then, is the sphere of the formulation of the archetypal idea; the apprehension by consciousness of an abstract concept which is subsequently brought down the planes and concreted in the light of experience of the concretion of analagous abstract ideas. Equally, in its macrocosmic aspect, it represents a corresponding phase in the process of creation. Materialistic science believes that the only abstract concepts are those formulated by the mind of man. Esoteric science teaches that the Divine Mind formulated archetypal ideas in order that substance might take form, and that without such archetypal ideas substance was formless and void, primordial slime awaiting the breath of life to organize into crystal and cell. The latest researches in physics have revealed that every substance, without exception, has a crystalline structure, and the lines of tension that the psychic perceives as etheric stresses have been revealed by the X-rays.

A very important and very imperfectly understood part in the Mysteries is played by those Beings who are generally called the Masters. Different schools define the term differently, and some include living adepts of a high grade among the Masters; but we consider that it is advisable to make a distinction between the incarnate and disincarnate Elder Brethren because their mission and mode of function are entirely different. The title of Master should therefore be given only to those who are free from the wheel of birth and death. In the terminology of the Western Esoteric Tradition the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus is assigned to Chesed, the term Exemptus, or exempt, indicating that freedom from Karma which liberates from the Wheel. I am fully aware that others may attach a different significance to the title, and that there are persons in incarnation who hold this grade. To these I reply that such persons, if the grade be a functioning one and not a mere empty honour, are karma-free and will not reincarnate. Such persons might justly be termed Masters, for their consciousness is of the grade of a Master, but as it is so necessary to make the distinction between incarnate and disincarnate adepts, it is better to qualify the classification by this minor distinction than to allow to humans a prestige which human nature is not fitted to bear. As long as an adept is incarnated he will be liable to human frailties in some degree, and to the limitations imposed by old age and physical health. It is not until he is free from the Wheel and functions as pure consciousness that he will escape from human bondage to heredity and environment; therefore the same reliance cannot be placed in him that can be placed in the true, disincarnate Masters.

A very important part of the work of the Masters is the concretion of the abstract ideas conceived by the Logoidal consciousness. The Logos, Whose meditation gives birth to worlds and Whose unfolding consciousness is evolution, conceives archetypal ideas out of the substance of the Unmanifest - to use a metaphor

where definition is impossible. These ideas remain within the Cosmic consciousness of the Logos like the seed within the flower because there is no soil therein for their germination. The Logoidal consciousness, as pure being, cannot upon its own plane provide the formative aspect necessary for manifestation. It is taught in the esoteric traditions that the Masters, disincarnate consciousnesses, disciplined by form but now formless, in their meditations upon the Godhead are able to perceive telepathically these archetypal ideas in the mind of God, and by realising the practical application of them to the planes of form and the line their development will follow, produce concrete images in their own consciousness which serve to bring the abstract archetypal ideas down to the first of the planes of form, called by the Qabalists, Briah. This, then, is the work that the Masters perform in their special sphere, the organising, upbuilding, constructive sphere of Chesed on the Pillar of Mercy. The work of the Dark Masters, who are quite different from the Black Adepts, is performed in the corresponding sphere of Geburah, on the Pillar of Severity, which will be considered in due course. The point of contact between the Masters and their human disciples is in Hod, the Sephirah of ceremonial magic, as is indicated by the Yetziratic Text, which declared that from Gedulah, the Fourth Sephirah emanates the essence of Hod. These hints given in the Yetziratic Texts concerning the relations between the individual Sephiroth are very important in practical occultism. Hod, then, may be taken as representing Chokmah and Chesed upon a lower arc, even as Netzach represents Binah and Geburah. This will be explained in detail when these Sephiroth are dealt with, but it must be referred to briefly now in order to make the function of Chesed intelligible.

We have now reached a point in the scheme of the Tree where the type of activity comes within the range of human consciousness. In our study of the preceding Sephiroth we were formulating metaphysical concepts. These concepts, although remote from immediate application to the life of form, are exceedingly important, for unless they are at the basis of our understanding of esoteric science we shall fall into superstition and use magic as magicians, not as adepts; in other words, we shall be unable to transcend the bondage of the planes of form and will be hallucinated and fall under the domination of the phantoms evoked by the magical imagination, instead of using them as the beads on the abacus of our calculations, which is as if the engineer used the slide-rule as if it were a foot-rule.

Chesed, then, reflects into Hod through the Christ Centre of Tiphareth, just as Geburah reflects into Netzach. This teaches us a great deal, for it indicates that for consciousness to rise from form to force, and for force to descend to form, it must pass through the Centre of Equilibrium and Redemption, to which are assigned the Mysteries of the Crucifixion.

It is to the sphere of Chesed that the exalted consciousness of the adept rises in his occult meditations; it is here that he receives the inspirations which he works out on the planes of form. It is here that he meets the Masters as spiritual in-

fluences, contacted telepathically, without any intermingling of personality. This is the true, and the highest mode of contact with the Masters, contact with them as mind to mind in their own sphere of exalted consciousness. When the Masters are seen clairvoyantly as robed beings, the colours of whose robes indicate their ray, they are being perceived, reflected into the sphere of Yesod, which is the kingdom of phantasms and of hallucinations. We are treading on precarious ground when we have to meet the Masters here. It is here that the anthropomorphic form is given to the spiritual inspiration which so misleads those psychics who cannot rise to Chesed. It is thus that the announcement of a spiritual impulse flowing out upon the world gets interpreted as the coming of a World Teacher.

In the Bonds of the Eternal Brotherhood,