

**COMPANIONS OF THE STONE**  
**Correspondence Course in The Elements of**  
**Traditional Western Esotericism**

**Lesson 5**

Concepts of power or energy have a central place in many of the ideas about magic commonly found among those uneducated in it. From "The Force" and its many equivalents in fantasy and science fiction, to the less clearly defined notions of magical or occult "powers" widely current in our culture, through to the continuing if largely fruitless efforts of parapsychologists to find some detectable energy at work in certain kinds of psychic phenomena, this set of concepts pervades modern thinking on the subject. This is understandable; current technologies, developed out of a scientific worldview in which these kinds of thinking are primary, provide modern minds with their principal metaphors for magic.

Magic, however, is not a technology, and it does not base itself on scientific models of the universe. The secret of attaining "magical powers" is not a matter of finding some sort of socket of cosmic energy and inserting the right kind of plug. In fact, the idea that magic has primarily to do with gaining "power" or "powers" is again largely a modern construction, having little or nothing to do either with authentic traditions of magic, on the one hand, or the experience of magical practice on the other.

It is important that this point be grasped, and grasped well, because some of the material covered in this lesson and the next can too easily be misinterpreted in terms of these common cultural habits of thought. Concepts of energy do have a place in the traditional lore of magic, although the concepts differ significantly from those of science, and the place is different as well. In this lesson some of these ideas will be presented, and in subsequent lessons several ways of working with energy in the magical sense will be taught. In dealing with all this material, you will find that a certain amount of attention to the assumptions you may be carrying, and to the possibility of misunderstandings based on them, will keep you from some common mistakes.

**Levels of Becoming**

One way of beginning to understand the magical concept of energy begins with the system of five levels of being presented back in Lesson 2. As you will recall, this scheme mapped out five phases of existence between pure spirit or potentiality, at one end, and pure matter or manifestation, at the other. (If you are not sure you understand the system clearly at this point, you may find it useful to review that section of Lesson 2 before reading further.)

As presented, this system appears static, like a layer-cake of five layers. At a deeper level of understanding, it is anything but that. Each of the five phases interacts with the others, directly and indirectly; each emerges out of others and in turn produces others. This complex web of processes can be symbolized, in a somewhat simplified form, as a system of energy flows.

In this system, the primary flow -- like the main current of a river, in which other eddies and currents are carried along -- is from the spiritual to the material. Patterns of force emerge out of the pure potentiality of spirit, take on progressively more concrete shapes as they descend through the levels, and finally come into complete manifestation in the realm of matter. This flow is the driving force of the creation of the universe -- a continuous process, in Western esoteric teachings, rather than a once-and-for-all event at the beginning of time.

The descending flow of creative energy is also, in a sense, the primary secret of magic. Everything at the material level of being represents the endpoint of a pattern of force moving down the planes, and is created and sustained by that pattern of force. If the pattern can be shaped or redirected at another level, therefore, the material manifestation will change accordingly, to the extent that the inertia of the realm of matter will permit. The methods of magic, then, are simply ways of taking hold of a descending current of creative force and shaping it in accordance with will.

In addition to this descending flow, however, there is another, balancing it, which moves in the opposite direction: from matter to spirit, from fixed manifestation toward free potentiality. This ascending flow emerges from its opposite at the farthest point of matter, and returns to it opposite at the farthest point of spirit, forming a cycle. Where the descending flow drives the process of Creation, the ascending flow is responsible for the process of Redemption -- the return of the individual being to wholeness and freedom. Where the descending flow is the primary secret of magic, then, the ascending flow is the primary secret of mysticism.

In the lessons to come, you will be taught ways of working directly with these two currents of energy. For now, think about them and what they imply. What parts of your experience of the world might support these ideas? What parts might contradict them?

### **The Number Two**

In the same way that One refers to unity and to unification (to making things one, and to being made one thing), Two refers to duality and to doubling. In cosmological or mythological terms, this is described in terms of the emergence of two, or duality, out of one, or unity. This emergence is often described in terms of an un-self-conscious awareness becoming aware of itself, and thus becoming double, each part becoming aware of the other.

This rather abstract notion has some very concrete parallels. In a relationship between two people, for example, in which others are in one way or another shut out or irrelevant, there are not only two people, but two kinds of experience. If I am speaking with one other person, for example, I can be aware of the other person -- or I can be aware of the other person's being aware of me. I become aware that there are, in fact, two versions of me: one the one that I'm aware of, and the other the one that the other person is aware of. There is awareness from the inside, and awareness from the outside, and both of us have both kinds. Furthermore, it is impossible to have an encounter between two people in which this is not going on (although it is certainly possible for people to lose track of this).

This emergence of doubleness out of a unified situation is what is technically called "polarity". The word is often used rather loosely to describe any situation in which there are two components, but it really means something more. It refers not to any two miscellaneous things, but to the development of doubling out of a prior unity. For example, any loaf of bread that we look at has a left and a right side. But no matter how we slice it, we can't get a slice of bread that has only a left side and no right side. Once a unity is made manifest, duality arises if only out of the act of definition that draws the boundary that makes the think what it is.

This is mirrored in the divine name associated with Chokmah, Yah, which is composed of two letters, Y (yod, which is associated with fire, and is primordially active) and H (heh, which is associated with water, and is primordially passive or

receptive). The name embodies the polarization of consciousness into subject and object, a polarization that springs into being as soon as consciousness is differentiated.

### **Symbolism of Chokmah**

In this lesson, as in the last, you will need to learn a selection of the symbols attributed to the Second Sephirah. These are as follows:

The Divine Name: YH (pronounced "Yah");

The Archangel: Ratziel, "Secret of God";

The Order of Angels: Auphanim, "Wheels";

The Astrological Correspondence: Mazloth, the Zodiac;

The Tarot Correspondence: the four Twos of the pack.

As before, these correspondences will need to be committed to memory. (One help to doing this is to make flash-cards, with the name of the Sephirah on one side and the correspondences on the other.) The first four of these symbols are also to be written in on the four circles of Chokmah on your Tree of Life diagram; once this is done, the Sephirah should be colored gray.

### **Reading**

For this lesson, the assigned readings from The Mystical Qabalah will be Chapter VIII, "The Patterns of the Tree," and Chapter XVI, "Chokmah, the Second Sephirah." The first of these gives an overview of some of the interactions between the ten spheres of the Tree of Life, while the second covers the core symbolism of the second of those spheres.

As you go through these chapters, compose a brief paragraph (of about five sentences) describing the main ideas of each chapter. Use your own words, or use phrases and sentences taken from the text, as you prefer. Write them down and include them with the test for this lesson.

### **Exercises**

#### Number Exercise

The material and exercise on number symbolism covered in the last lesson will have given you a first glance at this aspect of

the traditional lore -- and, perhaps, a more personal sense of the meanings of Unity. This lesson's work is intended to expand on both of these.

The number you'll be working with for the next two weeks is the number two, and your task will be to notice, and think about, everything in your experience that can be described by, or is linked with, this number. Again, you may find it useful to keep a list, in your practice journal or elsewhere.

As with the number one, you will find that the number two appears in certain classes of manifestations. For example, some dualities -- light and shadow, for example -- are formed from the presence and absence of a single thing; others -- up and down, for instance -- are relative positions along a single scale or continuum; still others -- male and female might be an example here -- are complementary functions of a single process. Other classes may suggest themselves to you as well. As always, keep notes on your work in your practice journal.

#### Meditation

This lesson's meditative work will follow the same pattern we introduced in Lesson 4. The one difference is that for the next two weeks, the topic of your meditative work will be the four Twos of the Tarot. These can be seen as symbols of the expression of Chokmah, the Second Sephirah, through the four elements and Four Worlds. As before, work with one card in each meditation session, and feel free to draw on this lesson's readings and your other studies.

You may find it useful at this point, as well, to go back over the instructions on meditation given in Lessons 3 and 4, and to compare these with what you have been doing. Memory can be a tricky thing, and the mind is capable of twisting even the clearest of material into strange shapes.

As you did with the Aces, you will need to come up with a single word that expresses the meaning of each of the Twos as you understand it. These should be committed to memory, and will be part of the test for this lesson.

You should do at least four sessions of meditation over the two weeks you spend on this lesson, and you may wish to do more. As before, every day in which you do not do a meditation, you should do the relaxation and attention drill given in Lesson 3.

#### Ritual

The Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, as given in Lesson 3, should

be performed each day. As you work with this rite over the next two weeks, pay particular attention to changes in the way the space around you feels before, during, and after each portion of the ritual.

To summarize, then, the work for this lesson is as follows:

First, to perform the meditation or the attention exercise each day.

Second, to perform the daily review each day on going to bed.

Third, to perform the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram each day.

Fourth, to work on the number exercise over the next two weeks.

Fifth, to keep a record, and to prepare an account of your work to send to your tutor.

## Test

The following questions are intended to help us track your progress through the work of this lesson. As before, your responses should be typed or written legibly on 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of plain white paper, with your name and address written in the upper right corner of the first sheet.

- A. Copy out an account of one of this lesson's meditations from your magical record.
- B. Copy out an account of one working of the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram.
- C. Give the four keywords you found in your meditations for the Twos of the Tarot deck.
- D. Describe some of the meanings of the number two you found through your work with the number exercise.
- E. Copy out the paragraphs you wrote to summarize ideas from the assigned reading for this lesson.

Please mail in your responses to P.O. Box 95536, Seattle, WA 98145. "Attn: Tutorial Committee" should be written on the envelope.