

THE SWORD

CHAPTER VIII

THE SWORD

“**T**HE word of the Lord is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword.”

As the Wand is Chokmah, the Will, “the Father,” and the Cup the Understanding, “the Mother,” Binah; so the Magick Sword is the Reason, “the Son,” the six Sephiroth of the Ruach, and we shall see that the Pantacle corresponds to Malkuth, “the Daughter.”

The Magick Sword is the analytical faculty; directed against any demon it attacks his complexity.

Only the simple can withstand the sword. As we are below the Abyss, this weapon is then entirely destructive: it divides Satan against Satan. It is only in the lower forms of Magick, the purely human forms, that the Sword has become so important a weapon. A dagger should be sufficient.

But the mind of man is normally so important to him that the sword

is actually the largest of his weapons ; happy is he who can make the dagger suffice!

The hilt of the Sword should be made of copper.

The guard is composed of the two crescents of the waxing and the waning moon—back to back. Spheres are placed between them, forming an equilateral triangle with the sphere of the pommel.

The blade is straight, pointed, and sharp right up to the guard. It is made of steel, to equilibrate with the hilt, for steel is the metal of Mars, as copper is of Venus.

Those two planets are male and female—and thus reflect the Wand and the Cup, though in a much lower sense.

The hilt is of Venus, for **Love is the motive of this ruthless analysis**—if this were not so the sword would be a Black Magical weapon.

The pommel of the Sword is in Death, the guard extends to Chesed and Geburah; the point is in Malkuth. Some magi make the three spheres of lead, tin, and gold respectively; the moons are silver, and the grip contains quicksilver, thus making the Sword symbolic of the seven planets. But this is a phantasy and affectation.

“Whoso taketh the sword shall perish by the sword,” is not a mystical threat, but a mystical promise. It is our own complexity that must be destroyed.

Here is another parable. Peter, the Stone of the Philosophers, cuts off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest (the ear is the organ of Spirit). In analysis the spiritual part of Malkuth must be separated from it by the philosophical stone, and then Christus, the Anointed One, makes it whole once more. "Solve et coagula!"

It is noticeable that this takes place at the arrest of Christ, who is the son, the Ruach, immediately before his crucifixion.

The Calvary Cross should be of six squares, an unfolded cube, which cube is this same philosophical stone.

Meditation will reveal many mysteries which are concealed in this symbol.

The Sword or Dagger is attributed to air, all-wandering, all-penetrating, but unstable; not a phenomenon subtle like fire, not a chemical combination like water, but a mixture of gases.¹

The Sword, necessary as it is to the Beginner, is but a crude weapon.

¹ The Oxygen in the air would be too fierce for life; it must be largely diluted with the inert nitrogen.

The rational mind supports life, but about seventy-nine per cent. of it not only refuses itself to enter into combination, but prevents the remaining twenty-one per cent. from doing so. Enthusiasms are checked; the intellect is the great enemy of devotion. One of the tasks of the Magician is to manage somehow to separate the Oxygen and Nitrogen in his mind, to stifle four-fifths so that he may burn up the remainder, a flame of holiness. But this cannot be done by the Sword.

Its function is to keep off the enemy or to force a passage through them—and though it must be wielded to gain admission to the palace, it cannot be worn at the marriage feast.

One might say that the Pantacle is the bread of life, and the Sword the knife which cuts it up. One must have ideas, but one must criticize them.

The Sword, too, is that weapon with which one strikes terror into the demons and dominates them. One must keep the Ego Lord of the impressions. One must not allow the circle to be broken by the demon; one must not allow any one idea to carry one away.

It will readily be seen how very elementary and false all this is—but for the beginner it is necessary.

In all dealings with demons the point of the Sword is kept downwards, and it should not be used for invocation, as is taught in certain schools of magic.

If the Sword is raised towards the Crown, it is no longer really a sword. The Crown cannot be divided. Certainly the Sword should not be lifted.

The Sword may, however, be clasped in both hands, and kept steady and erect, symbolizing that thought has become one with the single aspiration, and burnt up like a flame. This flame is the Shin, the Ruach Alhim, not the mere Ruach Adam. The divine and not the human consciousness.

The Magician cannot wield the Sword unless the Crown is on his head.

Those Magicians, who have attempted to make the Sword the sole or even the principal weapon, have only destroyed themselves, not by the destruction of combination, but by the destruction of division.¹ Weakness overcomes strength.

The most stable political edifice of history has been that of China, which was founded principally on politeness; and that of India has proved strong enough to absorb its many conquerors.²

The Sword has been the great weapon of the last century. Every idea has been attacked by thinkers, and none has withstood attack. Hence civilization crumbles.

No settled principles remain. To-day all constructive statesmanship is empiricism or opportunism. It has been doubted whether there is any real relation between Mother and Child, any real distinction between Male and Female.

The human mind, in despair, seeing insanity imminent in the breaking

¹ It should be noted that this ambiguity in the word "destruction" has been the cause of much misunderstanding. *Solve* is destruction, but so is *coagula*. The aim of the Magus is to destroy his partial thought by uniting it with the Universal Thought, not to make a further breach and division in the Whole.

² The Brahmin caste is not so strict as that of the "heaven-born" (Indian Civil Service).

up of these coherent images, has tried to replace them by ideals which are only saved from destruction, at the very moment of their birth, by their vagueness.

The Will of the King was at least ascertainable at any moment; nobody has yet devised a means for ascertaining the will of the people.

All conscious willed action is impeded; the march of events is now nothing but inertia.

Let the Magician consider these matters before he takes the Sword in his hand. Let him understand that the Ruach, this loose combination of 6 Sephiroth, only bound together by their attachment to the human will in Tiphereth, must be rent asunder.

The mind must be broken up into a form of insanity before it can be transcended.

David said: "I hate thoughts."

The Hindu says: "That which can be thought is not true."

Paul said: "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

And every one who meditates, even for an hour, will soon discover how this gusty aimless wind makes his flame flicker. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The normal man is less than a straw.¹

¹ But as it is said, *Similia similibus curantur*, we find this Ruach also the symbol of the Spirit. RVCh ALHIM, the Spirit of God, is 300, the number of the holy letter Shin. As this is the breath, which by its nature is double, the two edges of the

The connection between Breath and Mind has been supposed by some to exist merely in etymology. But the connection is a truer one.¹

In any case there is undoubtedly a connection between the respiratory and mental functions. The Student will find this out by practising Pranayama. By this exercise some thoughts are barred, and those which do come into the mind come more slowly than before, so that the mind has time to perceive their falsity and to destroy them.

On the blade of the Magick Sword is etched the name AGLA, a Notariqon formed from the initials of the sentence *Ateh Gibor Leolahm Adonai*, "To Thee be the Power unto the Ages, O my Lord."

And the acid which eats into the steel should be oil of vitriol. Vitriol is a Notariqon of "Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem." That is to say: By investigating everything and Sword, the letter H symbolises breath, and H is the letter of Aries—the House of Mars, of the Sword: and H is also the letter of the Mother; this is the link between the Sword and the Cup.

¹ It is undoubted that Ruach means primarily "that which moves or revolves," "a going," "a wheel," "the wind," and that its secondary meaning was mind because of the observed instability of mind, and its tendency to a circular motion. "Spiritus" only came to mean Spirit in the modern technical sense owing to the efforts of the theologians. We have an example of the proper use of the word in the term: Spirit of Wine—the airy portion of wine. But the word "inspire" was perhaps derived from observing the derangement of the breathing of persons in divine ecstasy.

bringing it into harmony and proportion you will find the hidden stone, the same stone of the philosophers of which mention has already been made, which turns all into gold. This oil which can eat into the steel, is further that which is written, Liber LXV, i, 16: "As an acid eats into steel . . . so am I unto the Spirit of Man."

Note how closely woven into itself is all this symbolism!

The centre of Ruach being the heart, it is seen that this Sword of the Ruach must be thrust by the Magician into his own heart.

But there is a subsequent task, of which it is spoken—Liber VII, v, 47. "He shall await the sword of the Beloved and bare his throat for the stroke." In the throat is Daäth—the throne of Ruach. Daäth is Knowledge. **This final destruction of knowledge opens the gate of the City of the Pyramids.**

It is also written, Liber CCXX, iii, 11: "Let the woman be girt with a sword before me." But this refers to the arming of Vedana with Sañña, the overcoming of emotion by clarity of perception.

It is also spoken, Liber LXV, v, 14, of the Sword of Adonai, "that hath four blades, the blade of the Thunderbolt, the blade of the Pylon, the blade of the Serpent, the blade of the Phallus."

But this Sword is not for the ordinary Magician. For this is the Sword flaming every way that keeps Eden, and in this Sword the Wand and the Cup are concealed—so that although the being of the Magi-

cian is blasted by the Thunderbolt, and poisoned by the Serpent, at the same time the organs whose union is the supreme sacrament are left in him.

At the coming of Adonai the individual is destroyed in both senses. He is shattered into a thousand pieces, yet at the same time united with the simple.¹

Of this it is also spoken by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Church in Thessalonica: "For the Lord shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord."

The stupid interpretation of this verse as prophetic of a "second advent" need not concern us; every word of it is, however, worthy of profound consideration.

"The Lord" is Adonai—which is the Hebrew for "my Lord"; and He descends from heaven, the supernal Eden, the Sahasrara Cakra in man, with a "shout," a "voice," and a "trump," again airy symbols, for it is air that carries sound. These sounds refer to those heard by the Adept at the moment of rapture.

¹ Compare the first set of verses in Liber XVI. (XVI in the Taro is Pé, Mars, the Sword.)

This is most accurately pictured in the Tarot Trump called "The Angel," which corresponds to the letter Shin, the letter of Spirit and of Breath.

The whole mind of man is rent by the advent of Adonai, and is at once caught up into union with Him. "In the air," the Ruach.

Note that etymologically the word *συν*, "together with," is the Sanskrit *Sam*; and the Hebrew ADNI is the Sanskrit ADHI.

The phrase "together with the Lord," is then literally identical with the word Samadhi, which is the Sanskrit name of the phenomenon described by Saint Paul, this union of the ego and the non-ego, subject and object, this chymical marriage, and thus identical with the symbolism of the Rosy Cross, under a slightly different aspect.

And since marriage can only take place between one and one, it is evident that no idea can thus be united, unless it is simple.

Hence **every idea must be analysed by the Sword. Hence, too, there must only be a single thought in the mind of the person meditating.**

One may now go on to consider the use of the Sword in purifying emotions into perceptions.

It was the function of the Cup to interpret the perceptions by the tendencies; **the Sword frees the perceptions from the Web of emotion.**

The perceptions are meaningless in themselves; but the emotions are worse, for they delude their victim into supposing them significant and true.

Every emotion is an obsession; the most horrible of blasphemies is to attribute any emotion to God in the macrocosm, or to the pure soul in the microcosm.

How can that which is self-existent, complete, be *moved*? It is even written that “torsion about a point is iniquity.”

But if the point itself could be moved it would cease to be itself, for position is the only attribute of the point.

The Magician must therefore make himself absolutely free in this respect.

It is the constant practice of Demons to attempt to terrify, to shock, to disgust, to allure. Against all this he must oppose the Steel of the Sword. If he has got rid of the ego-idea this task will be comparatively easy; unless he has done so it will be almost impossible. So says the Dhammapada:

Me he abused, and me he beat, he robbed me, he insulted me:
In whom such thoughts find harbourage, hatred will never cease to be.

And this hatred is the thought which inhibits the love whose apotheosis is Samadhi.

But it is too much to expect of the young Magician to practise attachment to the distasteful; let him first become indifferent. Let him endeavour to see facts as facts, as simply as he would see them if they were historical. Let him avoid the imaginative interpretation of any facts. Let him not put himself in the place of the people of whom the facts are related, or if he does so, let it be done only for the purpose of comprehension. Sympathy,¹ indignation, praise and blame, are out of place in the observer.

No one has properly considered the question as to the amount and quality of the light afforded by candles made by waxed Christians.

Who has any idea which joint of the ordinary missionary is preferred by epicures? It is only a matter of conjecture that Catholics are better eating than Presbyterians.

Yet these points and their kind are the only ones which have any importance at the time when the events occur.

Nero did not consider what unborn posterity might think of him; it is difficult to credit cannibals with the calculation that the recital of their exploits will induce pious old ladies to replenish their larder.

Very few people have ever *seen* a bull-fight. One set of people goes for excitement, another set for the perverse excitement which real or simulated horror affords. Very few people know that blood freshly

¹ It is true that sometimes sympathy is necessary to comprehension.

spilled in the sunlight is perhaps the most beautiful colour that is to be found in nature.

It is a notorious fact that it is practically impossible to get a reliable description of what occurs at a spiritualistic *séance*; the emotions cloud the vision.

Only in the absolute calm of the laboratory, where the observer is perfectly indifferent to what may happen, only concerned to observe exactly what that happening is, to measure and to weigh it by means of instruments incapable of emotion, can one even begin to hope for a truthful record of events. Even the common physical bases of emotion, the senses of pleasure and pain, lead the observer infallibly to err. This though they be not sufficiently excited to disturb his mind.

Plunge one hand into a basin of hot water, the other into a basin of cold water, then both together into a basin of tepid water; the one hand will say hot, the other cold.

Even in instruments themselves, their physical qualities, such as expansion and contraction (which may be called, in a way, the roots of pleasure and pain), cause error.

Make a thermometer, and the glass is so excited by the necessary fusion that year by year, for thirty years afterwards or more, the height of the mercury will continue to alter; how much more then with so plastic a matter as the mind! **There is no emotion which does**

not leave a mark on the mind, and all marks are bad marks. Hope and fear are only opposite phases of a single emotion; both are incompatible with the purity of the soul. With the passions of man the case is somewhat different, as they are functions of his own will. They need to be disciplined, not to be suppressed. But emotion is impressed from without. It is an invasion of the circle.

As the Dhammapada says:

An ill-thatched house is open to the mercy of the rain and wind;
 So passion hath the power to break into an unreflecting mind.
 A well-thatched house is proof against the fury of the rain and wind;
 So passion hath no power to break into a rightly-ordered mind.

Let then the Student practise observation of those things which normally would cause him emotion; and let him, having written a careful description of what he sees, check it by the aid of some person familiar with such sights.

Surgical operations and dancing girls are fruitful fields for the beginner.

In reading emotional books such as are inflicted on children, let him always endeavour to see the event from the standpoint opposite to that of the author. Yet let him not emulate the partially emancipated child who complained of a picture of the Colosseum that "there was one

poor little lion who hadn't got any Christian," except in the first instance. Adverse criticism is the first step; the second must go further.

Having sympathized sufficiently with both the lions and the Christians, let him open his eyes to that which his sympathy had masked thitherto, that the picture is abominably conceived, abominably composed, abominably drawn, and abominably coloured, as it is pretty sure to be.

Let him further study those masters, in science or in art, who have observed with minds untinctured by emotion.

Let him learn to detect idealizations, to criticize and correct them.

Let him understand the falsehood of Raphael, of Watteau, of Leighton, of Bouguereau; let him appreciate the truthfulness of John, of Rembrandt, of Titian, of O'Connor.

Similar studies in literature and philosophy will lead to similar results. But do not let him neglect the analysis of his own emotions; for until these are overcome he will be incapable of judging others.

This analysis may be carried out in various ways; one is the materialistic way. For example, if oppressed by nightmare, let him explain: "This nightmare is a cerebral congestion."

The strict way of doing this by meditation is Mahasatipatthana,¹ but

¹ See Crowley, "Collected Works," vol. ii, pp. 252-254.

it should be aided in every moment of life by endeavouring to estimate occurrences at their true value. Their relativity in particular must be carefully considered.

Your toothache does not hurt any one outside a very small circle. Floods in China mean to you nothing but a paragraph in the newspaper. The destruction of the world itself would have no significance in Sirius. One can hardly imagine even that the astronomers of Sirius could perceive so trifling a disturbance.

Now considering that Sirius itself is only, as far as you know, but one, and one of the least important, of the ideas in your mind, why should that mind be disturbed by your toothache? It is not possible to labour this point without tautology, for it is a very simple one; but it should be emphasised, for it is a very simple one. **Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh! Waugh!**¹

In the question of ethics it again becomes vital, for to many people it seems impossible to consider the merits of any act without dragging in a number of subjects which have no real connection with it.

The Bible has been mistranslated by perfectly competent scholars because they had to consider the current theology. The most glaring example is the "Song of Solomon," a typical piece of Oriental erotic-

¹ By interrupting thus doggishly, the bark of a dog will remind you, for the next week or two, of this.

ism. But since to admit that it was this would never do for a canonical book, they had to pretend that it was symbolical.

They tried to refine away the grossness of the expressions, but even their hardihood proved unequal to the task.

This form of dishonesty reaches its climax in the expurgating of the classics. "The Bible is the Word of God, written by holy men, as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. But we will cut out those passages which we think unsuitable." "Shakespeare is our greatest poet—but, of course, he is very dreadful." "No one can surpass the lyrics of Shelley, but we must pretend that he was not an atheist."

Some translators could not bear that the heathen Chinese should use the word Shang Ti, and pretended that it did not mean God. Others, compelled to admit that it did mean God, explained that the use of the term showed that "God had not left himself without a witness even in this most idolatrous of nations. They had been mysteriously compelled to use it, not knowing what it meant." All this because of their emotional belief that they were better than the Chinese.

The most dazzling example of this is shown in the history of the study of Buddhism.

The early scholars simply could not understand that the Buddhist canon denies the soul, regards the ego as a delusion caused by a special faculty of the diseased mind, could not understand that the goal of the

Buddhist, Nibbana, was in any way different from their own goal, Heaven, in spite of the perfect plainness of the language in such dialogues as those between the Arahāt Nagasena and King Melinda ; and their attempts to square the text with their preconceptions will always stand as one of the great follies of the wise.

Again, it is almost impossible for the well-mannered Christian to realize that Jesus Christ ate with his fingers. The temperance advocate makes believe that the wine at the marriage feast of Cana was non-alcoholic.

It is a sort of mad syllogism.

Nobody whom I respect does this.

I respect So-and-so.

Therefore, So-and-so did not do this.

The moralist of to-day is furious when one points to the fact that practically every great man in history was grossly and notoriously immoral.

Enough of this painful subject!

As long as we try to fit facts to theories instead of adopting the scientific attitude of altering the theories (when necessary) to fit the facts, we shall remain mired in falsehood.

The religious taunt the scientific man with this open-mindedness, with this adaptability. "Tell a lie and stick to it!" is *their* golden rule.

There is no need to explain to even the humblest student of the magick of light to what this course of action tends.

Whether Genesis be true or geology be true, a geologist who believes in Genesis will go to Gehenna. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

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