

LETTER XVIII

The Moon, Arcanum of Intelligence

Quotations for Reflection

The intellect is characterised by
a natural inability to comprehend life...
But it is to the very inwardness of life
that *intuition* leads us—
by intuition I mean instinct
that has become disinterested,
self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object
and of enlarging it indefinitely.
— Henri Bergson (page 492)

The moon is the principle of *reflection*: just as it reflects the light of the sun, so does human intelligence reflect the creative light of conscience—and the latter is eclipsed when “materialistic intellectuality” prevails. (page 494)

Now, human consciousness is the field where three kinds of light are manifest: *creative* light, *reflected* light and *revealed* light... The three Major Arcana of the Tarot—“The Star”, “The Moon” and “The Sun” are those of light revealed from above, reflecting intelligence and creative consciousness. (page 495)

Here is the difference between the nature of intelligence and that of intuition of faith... The former is *understanding of that which is*; the latter is *participation in the becoming of that which is to be*. When Abraham left Ur and went to a strange country by way of the desert in order to give birth to a people of the future—some centuries after him—he acted as a *man of the springtime*, or a man of faith. When Solomon, in the treatise known under the title “Ecclesiastes”, summarised all that he had learnt during his life through experience and reflection, he acted as a *man of autumn*, a man of intelligence. Abraham was a “sower”; Solomon was a “reaper.” (page 502)

Intelligence and the intuition of faith sometimes approach quite near; they sometimes collaborate as allies; they sometimes complement one another in a way to give rise to the highest hope; but their true *fusion*, their complete and lasting alchemical marriage, is still not achieved. (page 503)

Profound meditation or KAVANA is neither only concentration of the light of intelligence with a view to the intensification of its clarity, nor is it only the endeavour of intelligence to arrive at knowledge of itself. Profound meditation is the endeavour of

intelligence to probe the dark depths which surround it and to which it finds access by means of sympathy, instead of through the exercise of its own logical, analytical and critical faculties. (page 506)

The third Great Arcanum—that of geniality in the domain of knowledge, the “gnostic Arcanum”—is situated at the crossing-point of the horizontal channel joining the Sephiroth CHOKMAH (Wisdom) and BINAH (Intelligence), and the vertical channel joining KETHER (Crown) and TIPHEREETH (Beauty). It is the state of consciousness that Cabbalists call DAATH, that the Hindu yogis call *samadhi*, and that we call here—with Henri Bergson—*intuition*. It belongs essentially to the world of emanation, i.e. the sphere of divine respiration, the sphere of the Holy Spirit. (page 509)

The unconscious, instead of shocking intelligence, allies itself with it, penetrates it, and becomes luminous within it. But this takes place only after the more-or-less long and painful experience of the crucifixion of consciousness on the cross formed by the pair of opposites: subjectivity—objectivity, and the pair of opposites: intelligence—unconscious wisdom. (page 510)

Direct communication between intelligence and wisdom is, truth to tell, only the development of conscience, which is extended from the domain of action to the domain of knowledge, and is awakened there to the point of becoming the light of intelligence. Conscience has two aspects, notably: a negative aspect (well-known and of which much is made in daily life), which manifests itself as warning disapproving an action before its execution or else as remorse disapproving of an action already committed; and a positive aspect (almost wholly ignored in daily life), which manifests itself as an impulse recommending an action before its execution and as serene joy after its execution. (page 511)

Now, St. John of the Cross, who was many times taken up in rapture through—or plunged in—union with the Absolute Being, also spoke in his writings of the state of the complete silence of personal intelligence, imagination and will—the state, therefore, where mental movements are suppressed; but he does not tire of repeating that it is the Divine Presence, of which the soul is enamoured, which effects this silence—this suppression of the mental movements—and not the human will. The state of complete silence of intelligence—and, moreover, of the imagination and will—is present in the soul set ablaze by the love of God. There is no psycho-spiritual “technology” here; it is the mutual love between the soul and God which does all. (page 514)

There is nothing of technique—here all is art and grace—in Christian mysticism, gnosis and magic. (page 515)

Esotericism is not a collection of extraordinary and unknown things, but rather it is above all a less ordinary and less known way of *seeing* ordinary and known things—of seeing their profundity. (page 516)

For although the moon—intelligence illumined by the sun—is eclipsed, it nevertheless exercises a constant influence on intelligence through a kind of rain, whose drops fall into the sub-consciousness of intelligence and produce there movement and confused, disquieting noise. (page 517)

For each Arcanum, in so far as it is an Arcanum, is not a doctrine but rather an event—that of opening the eyes, i.e. the opening up of an inner sense which permits things to be seen in a new way. (page 518)

Do you want to choose the way of the eagle which rises above antinomies or the way of the crayfish which retreats before them until arriving at complete absurdity, i.e. at the scorpionic suicide of intelligence? This is the point—i.e. the message to the human will—of the eighteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot. (page 523)