

THE LANTERN VOL. 12 NO. 1 TRANSLATIONS

Life's Breath

When the wind blows through the foliage of the Eastern Cottonwood tree, it makes the gentle clapping sound of falling rain. It is distinct from the sound a conifer produces when the wind wraps and folds around it. The sounds stir up different emotions in us as we listen. Like the beautiful polka dots and sharply contrasted colors of the Monarch butterfly's wings, or the reflection of the blue and white hues of the sky blending with the brown-green of the winding stream, these inner experiences are reflections of the One Life, Itself unseen, known only through its manifestations. The world is our shared experience of this Life as we express its universal force through our individual lives. The awareness of this process of reflection and expression is embodied in the sixth verse of The Pattern on the Trestleboard: – "In all things, great and small, I see the Beauty of the divine expression". This also refers to the sixth sphere on the Tree of Life: Beauty.

This issue of The Lantern is woven around the idea of the Seed. This world is the flower of the Seed that is the Life Breath, expressed so vividly through the imagery of Key 0, The Fool. By studying it we can learn how to deepen our relationship with this Seed-Force and the continuously unfolding creative process that flows from it. Sometimes when a cloud hides the Sun, the air becomes unruly, and the natural space is filled with the sound of rustling leaves. Then, when the sun reappears, a deep stillness emerges, and the brightness of the landscape intensifies. Nature breathes through sound and color. It is a perfect reflection of how we are on the inside. Sometimes the world seems radiant – a perfect experience. But sometimes we feel stuck and discouraged – our experience becomes difficult to manage. The Ageless Wisdom teaches us that life is never stuck. It always shines as Itself.

A teaching Order, B.O.T.A. guides aspirants to the understanding that we are all petals of the Flower rising out of the Seed of the One Life. The articles presented in the Lantern were originally given as talks at the Order's international Zoom meetings that were started as a response to the new conditions imposed upon our group work by the global Covid-19 Pandemic. In other words, a new expression, a new flower of unity bloomed from the center of the experience of separation, illustrating perfectly how the Seed of Life will always find fertile ground, and how it will always continue to grow and shine for all – even when we allow our personal struggles to veil the ever-present radiance of its Eternal Being. These talks and articles remind us that the Light of that One Force is always there for us. That the world and all its manifestations will never cease to be like the leaves of the Eastern Cottonwood tree: Dancers upon the waves of Life's Breath.

Seeds: Germinal Principles of Life

Botany and Tarot

By a Frater from the U.S.A.



My fascination with plants started with an interesting fact about bees. Experimenters have discovered that a bee's vision extends beyond our own. Our eyes see from red to violet, the rainbow shown in Key 14, but the bee sees into the *ultraviolet*. As a result, bees can easily distinguish among many flowers and their petals that to us look alike.

What we can realize from this is that the colors of flower petals are not designed for *our* eyes, but the bee's; they are signals to attract the bee to a specific flower. Furthermore, experiments showed that flowers vary in their ultraviolet reflection over different parts of the petal. So if we could see flower petals as bees see them, they would be even more beautiful and varied!

Bees are special workers in nature as primary agents of fertilization and my talk today is about seeds as germinal principles and their relation to the letter name *Daleth*, **ד** associated with Tarot Key 3, *The Empress*.

Plant seeds are extraordinary objects. They are compact, easily stored and some are capable of survival over long periods through freezing temperatures or prolonged drought, conditions that would kill the parent plant. They are hardy little things, or in some cases, hardy big things like the coconut.

To get an idea of what constitutes a seed, let's look at the definition. A plant seed is defined as the fertilized ripened ovule of a flowering plant containing an embryo and capable of germination to produce a new plant. Boy, is that a mouthful. I'll say it again. A plant seed is defined as the fertilized ripened ovule of a flowering plant containing an embryo and capable of germination to produce a new plant. Two items of interest here are the words embryo and germination. You'll note the connection here to Tarot Key 3, *The Empress*.

Now the word embryo comes from a Greek root meaning to swell and refers to something as yet undeveloped. If you've ever watched a rose bud grow, it appears to swell and then at a certain point, the calyx separates as the petals continue to grow and expand. It's an amazing thing to watch.

The embryo of a plant seed consists of a primary bud, a root, and one or two rudimentary leaves. The Greek word chosen to define this rudimentary leaf is cotyledon, meaning cup-shaped hollow. The image I have is that of an open hand preparing to have something dropped into it...

The next item of interest, from our definition of the plant seed, is its germination. Equipped with everything needed to make a new plant, a seed simply waits until three vital environmental conditions have been met: an ample supply of water, optimum temperature,

and situated in a well-aerated soil. Think about this, the seed is waiting for the proper proportion of air, water, and heat, to begin its growth and reproduction.

Now this is familiar to anyone who has grown plants from seeds. However, as Qabalists, we can associate these principles with the three Mother letters, *Aleph*, *Mem*, and *Shin* - *Aleph*, being the principle of Air, *Mem* the principle of Water, and *Shin*, the principle of Fire.

To get a visual idea of this, let's think of the *Cube of Space*. The three Mother letters are the internal coordinate lines or connecting links of the six faces of the Cube of Space. These three coordinates intersect at the center of the Cube, assigned to Key 21, *The World*, and the planet Saturn. In Key 21 we have the picture of the Cosmic Dancer, surrounded by an oval wreath, and we see the idea of a seed at the center of the Cube of Space! These three principles provide the environmental conditions necessary for our growth in the world.

Also fascinating is that some seeds, in addition to the basic needs of air, water, and heat, have special added requirements *before* they will germinate. Among these are pre-treatments with either cold or heat, scratching or etching of the surface of the seed, called *scarification*, the need for thorough washing, and being scorched by fire.

The *skin* of a seed is its *seed coat*. Now the color, texture, and thickness of the seed coat vary from species to species. Thick seed coats need to be scarified, that is, the seed's surface must be etched or scratched to make minute openings through which water can cross the barrier that the coat presents.

Hard seed coats may actually require passing through a bird's digestive system or the strongly acidic stomachs of large animals. For some seeds, this mode of scarification is so essential to germination that they are packaged in colorful, nutritious fruits to attract an animal's attention and to reward it with food for having swallowed the seeds. A side benefit derived from this kind of relationship is that of wide dispersal for the seed, including a bit of fertilizer to help things along.

Does this sound familiar to our personal experience? Like some seeds, many of us need to pass through great hardships before we can begin to grow in spiritual awareness and compassion. And you might even say these hardships also come with their own little bit of fertilizer!

The seed coat, as mentioned, forms a barrier of protection. This barrier or hedge of protection is also associated with the Hebrew letter *Cheth* meaning fence. Let me borrow for a moment from the *Book of Tokens* and the Meditation on *Cheth*.

“I am the hedge of protection,
Enclosing the field of existence.
In this field, thou dwellest,
And I am thy defense
Against the darkness which is without.

Yet is this hedge of safety

Also a wall of limitation,
And the darkness against which it defendeth thee
Is the radiant Darkness of the Limitless Light,
Too brilliant for thine eyes.

This is so beautiful! Whether we are aware of it or not, protection is provided until our germination and growth are possible.

So, how does the study of seeds relate to Tarot? Well, Tarot is our seed catalog! It is a catalog of fundamental seed ideas, presented as clear images to be used as germinal principles from which particular forms of expression can be manifested. As a home gardener might select seeds to plant for both food and beauty, so too can we use Tarot to select and plant appropriate germinal principles into our subconsciousness for both food and beauty in our personal and spiritual lives.



דלת

So let's see what the letter name *Daleth* has to suggest in regard to our spiritual germination. The first letter is *The Empress*. She is the Great Mother principle in nature and pictures the reproduction, multiplication, and growth of seed forms or germinal principles and their perfection as vehicles of expression. The letter name means door, actually the leaf, that which permits the entry or exit of something. The door has always been a feminine symbol representing reproduction and birth, the entry of life into manifestation. The door swings open to receive the seed, the divine desire to manifest some aspect of its life and then the door closes to retain this germ of life during the period of gestation, and opens again to send the newly formed creation into the world.

Notice the roses next to *the Empress*. The seed of a rose will **only** produce a rose and there is a verse from the musical "The Fantasticks" that expresses this:

"Plant a carrot, get a carrot, not a Brussels sprout.
That's why I love vegetables; you know what they're about."

If we can always depend on a seed to produce the same result, there must be present some principle of inward direction in its action and we can see this in the middle letter of דלת associated with the letter *Lamed*, the Ox-goad, and the Tarot Key titled Justice. By reducing 11, its number, we see the root idea is Tarot Key 2, *The High Priestess*. Hence, *The High Priestess* as the principle of memory forms the basis of a seed's action in knowing how to bring forth a new plant.

Lamed as a verb means to instruct so our actions form a basis for our experience. What we learn gets elaborated as subconscious deduction, which in turn, becomes the seed of future experience. The animating life of these deductions has to do with our motives, the feeling or emotion that goads us into action. Consequently, our discrimination in honestly perceiving our motives determines how quickly we learn from our mistakes.

The end result leading from our spiritual germination, active growth, and ultimate perfection as a vehicle of expression is symbolized by the letter *Tav*, Tarot Key 21 titled *The World*, symbolizing Cosmic Consciousness. Our spiritual seed form has grown into a new plant, matured through experience in the world, and produced the fruit of divine awareness. Hence, we have first-hand knowledge of our identity with the One. We see then, in these three Keys, **דלת**, a beginning, middle, and an end in the Tarot commentary on our cosmic spiritual germination and growth process.

As we can cultivate the beauty and function of plants, so are we cultivated spiritually till we ultimately become masters of germinal principles and take our place as conscious co-creators; gardeners of the universal germinal principles of the Holy Tarot!

A Summary of Keys 0-10

By a Soror from the UK



I love stories – fact or fiction – and I believe that our spiritual journey always tells a story at every point. As an absolute beginner in Tarot studies, I find that catching the story behind the technical details helps my understanding of the practical application of each step of the journey. For me, the series comprised of Keys 0 to 10 evokes a sense of the beginning, through to completion, of the “events” that make up Part 1 in a story of many Parts. Every Key of the Tarot is said to be a synthesis of the Keys preceding it. In this brief discussion, we will take a whistle stop tour at each of Keys 0 to 9 in order to see how they all come together in Key 10, *The Wheel of Fortune*.

In studying each Key, we can try to get a feeling of its significance to our inner growth by placing ourselves inside the Key and seeing ourselves as the main character of that Key, in order to get an insight of its teaching. May I suggest therefore, that we take a moment or two at each stop to contemplate the Key as it is displayed.

7 – Cheth In *Cheth*, I am the rider of the Chariot. I hold the invisible reins controlling and guiding the Sphinxes which would otherwise pull the chariot along if I allowed them. The Sphinxes, which represent the senses, are therefore stationary, immobile and so the senses are still. The chariot itself is the “Fence”, the enclosure, the well-ordered “House” wherein I live and move and have my being.

[Key 7 The Chariot]

“The Lord is in His holy Temple. Let all the Earth keep silent before Him.”

8 – Teth In *Strength*, the work of transformation intensifies. Self-consciousness and Sub-consciousness working together as Spirit, contend with the flesh to purify the personality; the Temple must be made fit for purpose; the earth must be filled with the Glory of God.

[Key 8 Strength]

***“Breathe on me, Breath of God
Till I am wholly Thine
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with the Fire Divine.”***

9 – Yod In *The Hermit*, the excited anticipation of youth has matured into the tranquility and compassion of experience as he contemplates the field of activity below. The Light that completely fills the interior is veiled externally by the dark robe but continually shines through his lamp – even as the very figure of 9 depicts the One Life Spirit (0) shining through the Personality (1).

[Key 9 The Hermit]

***In my Supreme abode I stand as the Onlooker. Because of mine
unwavering contemplation, the Stream of Manifestation continueth on
its course”***

10 – Kaph That Spark of The One Light which set out on a journey of Self-expression as The Fool has made of Himself, a fit, well-ordered, balanced, and sanctified Temple for the shining forth of His Light in the World of expression and action. The Wheel of Fortune is that Centre of Activity and the Sphinx sits in balanced equilibrium as a witness. In the world of frantic activity and change, he sits in the field of energy that is ceaselessly revolving around him, doing nothing, but simply witnessing the panorama of transformations proceeding from His Light.

[Key 10 Wheel of Fortune]

***“Of my own self I can do nothing, The Father in me, He doeth all”
THE KINGDOM OF SPIRIT IS EMBODIED IN MY FLESH.***

REFERENCES:

KEYS 0,1, AND 3 – THE BOOK OF TOKENS | KEYS 2 AND 4 – THE PATTERN ON THE TRESTLEBOARD | KEY 5 – PSALM 46:10 | KEY 6 – SPONTANEOUS PRAYER EVOKED BY A REV. ANN DAVIES’S TALK | KEY 7 – HABAKUK 2:20 | KEY 8 – FROM “BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD”, A PENTECOSTAL HYMN BY EDWARD HATCH | KEY 9 – THE BOOK OF TOKENS | KEY 10 – JOHN 14:10, THE PATTERN ON THE TRESTLEBOARD

“Nature is the manifesting power of that One Identity. In all nature no force opposes itself to that One. All the forces of nature, with no exception, are instruments for expressing the free will of that One Identity. Whatever appears to the contrary is illusion, and the acceptance of that illusion for truth is the delusion that binds the ignorant.”

– Paul Foster Case on Key 3 – *The Empress, from The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order*

We Live

A Poem by Reverend Ann Davies

Think you that we were born to Die?
Ah no! Not so!
Not you... Not I...
Nor silvery drop of moon drenched dew
That disappears from earthly view
In the flame of a dawning sky.

Think you that life can cease to Be,
For you? For me?
Ah no! Not so!
Clothed in cloaks of mystery
We ebb... We flow...
Warmed by heaven's deathless glow,
Eternal sparks of Divinity,
Timeless the Soul of you and me,
Ever, forever... We live.