

Things are not always what they seem

Not all those people who participate in the planetary service of Triangles have an interest in astrology, but we know that some do. And they will no doubt be aware that we're moving through the ending of the eclipse portal for this period of the year, with tomorrow's Cancer full moon being accompanied by a lunar eclipse. The full moon occurs on Tuesday at 5:38 pm here in New York and the live stream meetings occur tonight in New York and tomorrow night in London and Geneva.

Eclipse portals are times when there is an intensity of energy that underlies events, particularly this year because of some major astrological alignments that have been playing out and which will continue through until January 2020, following the Festival Week period.

Such periods are important times for viewing life and its events from a new angle, for seeing more deeply behind the outer complexities and entering into the world of meaning which are normally more veiled. We can, therefore, achieve a new perspective at such times. We can step back from the obvious conclusions and from that more detached position, hold back on too rapid conclusions and view things more dispassionately. A story about a farmer illustrates this attitude.

The Farmer's Fortune?

Once upon a time there was an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years. One day his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came to visit. "Such bad luck," they said sympathetically.

"Perhaps," the farmer replied.

The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. "What great luck!" the neighbors exclaimed.

"Perhaps," replied the old man.

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune.

"Perhaps," answered the farmer.

The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out.

"Perhaps," said the farmer...

And so it goes with all life. Circumstances continually arise which by their very nature appear one way, seemingly good or bad. But as the parable of the farmer illustrates, the wise person steps off the roller coaster of reactivity, the kaleidoscopic pulls and pushes of life in the three worlds and becomes, through this cultivated non-reactivity, the master of circumstances rather than being mastered by them. Such a person sees beyond the obvious, the form. This is the course of wisdom, a wisdom conferred as the result of long experience.

Such a person comes to realize that little can be gained through the whirlwind of reactivity but much through the cultivated ability to become the Observer. As this Observer grows within us we learn the wisdom of this way of living and being.

But the reality is that it is difficult to achieve this detached observation within our world wherein so many things vie for our attention. The challenges have the tendency to pull us in one direction, towards solidifying into one point of view and hardening there. There are techniques that can help us become more fluid. One such technique is the cultivation of the opposite thought to that which is gripping us in one direction. Through this means we bring in a balancing energy and become open to other ways of looking at situations, we call in the soul and as we keep calling it in, acting "as if," this more expansive way of being gradually becomes more natural to us.

So often the ancient teachings illustrate the way of release from life's difficulties for they carry within them the wisdom of the ages. Too often today in the spiritual marketplace people are searching endlessly for a magic formula, a quick fix to the problems confronting them. When, in reality, the tried and true teachings of the ages have stood the test of time and although they will generally present a longer, slower route, to transformative possibilities, it will be a safer route, carrying fewer risks and pitfalls along the way. For no matter the seeming difficulties of the time in which we are living, the ancient techniques are applicable today, for they are techniques of soul control and the soul knows no age, is timeless.

In Book II of the Yoga Sutras -- called "The Steps to Union" we find a sutra that expands upon this technique of calling in the opposite quality as a balancing factor the farmer cultivated. Sutra 33 states, "When thoughts which are contrary to yoga are present there should be the cultivation of their opposite." This is the Tibetan Master's translation. But he comments that because the ancient Sanskrit was such a multi-faceted language wherein one word will stand for an entire idea, the complete meaning of the sutra can really best be captured in two different translations and he offers the one by Charles Johnston as a fine compliment. His translation is "When transgressions hinder, the weight of the imagination should be thrown upon the opposite side."

The commentary on the sutra gives the techniques to realize this goal of bringing balance to one's life and they are paraphrased here:

1. As a man thinketh so is he. That which we realize in our lives is a direct result of our thought processes. In other words, to change our lives we must change our thoughts.
2. Thoughts are of two kinds; those tending to form-building, to limitation, to physical plane expression; those which tend towards the higher realities. These latter thoughts lead to union with the soul, the inner god.
3. When it is found that the thoughts habitually cultivated are productive of astral and physical reactions they hinder soul contact.
4. Contrary thoughts to these must then be cultivated; These thoughts will be the direct opposite of the inhibiting thoughts.
5. The cultivation of the new thoughts that lead to yoga are realized through three kinds:
 - a. The new thought concept that will be contrary to the old thought current, must be ascertained and considered. This is a mental process.
 - b. The use of the imagination must be cultivated to bring the new thought into manifestation. This brings in the realm of desire and consequently the astral or emotional body is affected.
 - c. Then follows definite visualization of the effect of that which has been thought and imagined, as it will manifest in the physical plane life.

This threefold process will be found to generate energy, vitalizing the etheric body and its reorganization (*The Light of the Soul*, pp. 190-91, paraphrased).

So with these practical applications of mental science in our tool belt we can begin to follow in the lead of the farmer and become more skilled Observers. Kathy Newburn