

# TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

## Lesson Fifteen

### DISCRIMINATION



Contrary to our procedure in the previous lessons of this course, we shall consider the meanings of the Hebrew letter ז, Zain, before we go into those of the number 6. We do this because the meanings of the number grow out from, and are dependent on, certain other meanings in the symbology of Key 6.

In Hebrew, the letter-name Zain means “weapon” or “sword”. Thus it suggests active instrumentality employed in overcoming inimical entities or forces.

Among other things, a sword is an instrument of **cleavage**, something able to make sharp divisions. This refers to a human mental faculty the Hindus call **Buddhi**. It is the **determinative** or **discriminative** faculty, the power to perceive **differences**. This power is at the root of self-consciousness, since it is only by the self-conscious mind that things are perceived as many apparently unrelated parts, rather than as a single unity.

Note carefully that the **Many** are only apparently unrelated. Buddhi is the power which makes things and conditions **seem to be real in and by themselves**. Yet these seeming realities are but reflections of the ONE REALITY, mirrored in the universal subconsciousness.

The occult teaching is that all such reflections, i.e., everything which changes and is impermanent, are phases of illusion, and therefore, in the absolute sense, unreal. Since it is the attention of self-consciousness to particular ideas which acts upon subconsciousness to bring these ideas into active expression, this power of being able to perceive differences, that is, to **create illusions**, is a fundamental necessity in order that individual self-consciousness may be manifested.

To avoid confusion as to how self-conscious perception makes self-consciousness possible, remember that manifestation is the way the **One Identity** appears to **Itself**, and that the instrument of its self-perception is what is active in man's mental life as self-conscious awareness. As THE BOOK OF TOKENS puts it, “For the sake of creation, the One Life that I am seemeth to divide Itself, becoming Two.”

The two units resulting from this semblance of division are termed, respectively, the **superior** nature and the **inferior** nature. Though distinguished as superior and inferior, the one is really as important as the other. The superior nature is what we are considering in this lesson as Buddhi, represented in Tarot by the Magician. The inferior nature is the universal subconscious matrix, which reacts to the direction of the superior nature and is the Tarot High Priestess.

Discrimination becomes more valuable to man when he uses it to perceive the difference between the real and the unreal. While he is enslaved by appearances, he mistakes the unreal for the real. When he begins to awaken from his dream of sense to the inner knowledge of his true nature, he begins to understand reality.

Tarot pictures reality in terms which subconsciousness understands. It tells the truth about appearances. Intelligent study and contemplation of its symbols therefore constitutes a phase of right discrimination. This is a practical method whereby you may turn from the unreal to the real.

The number 6 means reciprocation, the act of giving and receiving mutually. This is a relationship between distinct and seemingly separate entities, or a relationship between parts of an organism or mechanism. In this lesson, reciprocation is the relationship between self-conscious and subconscious phases of mental activity. Self-consciousness **gives** suggestions to subconsciousness. The latter **receives** the suggestions, works them out, and **gives back** the results to self-consciousness. In connection with Key 6, reciprocation is also the relationship between superconsciousness and human personality, when the latter is considered to be a combination of the two poles of personal mentality, self-consciousness and subconsciousness.

Remember that **self-consciousness** is not the **Self**. The true **Self** is identical with superconsciousness. Self-consciousness is that phase of the Life-power's activity which manifests as **awareness** of the **Self**, but the **Self** which is the subject of this awareness is Itself superconscious. Subconsciousness is a term used to designate the totality of the Life-power's activity below the level of self-consciousness.

Reciprocity between opposites, when it is harmonious, expresses itself in the field of the emotions as **love**. An inharmonious relationship is akin to **hate**, the inversion of love. Love and hate are human emotions, but an eminent Master of occult wisdom once said that they are **spiritual** emotions. He meant by this that love and hate are root-emotions, and that all other emotions and desires take on the character of either one or the other.

The Bible says God is love, but it speaks also of God's wrath, and a great German seer, Jacob Boehme, says the wrath, or fire-spirit, is the root of nature. Through love we approach the inner, superconscious life of God. Hate takes us into the field of the divine wrath, and we become identified with the cycles of necessity and pain which characterize nature in its

apparent separation from the divine.

If both love and hate be spiritual, they must be eternal. When cosmic manifestation takes place, the process of involution becomes operative. This process is the separation of the **One Thing** into the appearance of many parts. This is what Jacob Boehme calls the “fiery anguish” of the turning wheel whereby all things come into separate manifestation. We, as human beings, are on the Path of Return which is the process of evolution. We are headed back toward Unity.

To keep going in the right direction, we must employ the synthesizing, attractive force of love, and our desires and emotions must be rooted in that. Love is always a uniting power.

All this has to do with discrimination, because we must employ this separative faculty in order to determine the true color of our emotional life.

The title of Key 6, The Lovers, brings out the idea that pairs of opposites, however antagonistic they may seem to be, are really complements. The Lovers are not simply the man and woman in this Key. The symbols in this picture stand for all opposites as well as for the special opposition of self-conscious and subconscious forms of mental activity. Thus the main lesson to be drawn from the title is that right understanding of the universe shows it to be, in all its details, an expression of the power of love, which produces harmonious balance in the operation of the various pairs of opposites which enter into the pattern of manifestation.

The astrological attribution to Key 6 is the zodiacal sign Gemini, the Twins. Here is another expression of the basic idea of discrimination and separation. The astrological Symbol for Gemini is  $\text{♊}$ . It brings out the fact that opposites are really different aspects of the One Thing, just as heat and cold are the two extremes of something we call temperature, or past and future the extremes of what we call time, and so on.

The planet Mercury rules Gemini. In Tarot this planet is symbolized by the Magician. Self-consciousness is the phase of mental activity which controls the faculty of discrimination and utilizes it for the acquisition of knowledge concerning the true meaning of man's environment.

No planet is exalted in Gemini. Right discrimination balances the activity of all man's inner forces without exalting any of them above the others. Remember, the inner powers of man are the true planets of esoteric astrology. Because the universe is **one**, and all things in it are related, there is a correspondence between the stars outside man's body and those interior centers of force which are the occult planets. Yet the stars the wise man rules are the **interior** stars, not the celestial bodies in outer space.

Mercury, or self-consciousness, is the maker of interpretations and has rulership over subconsciousness through the law of suggestion. When we make unskillful use of this power, we interpret experience incorrectly. The result is mental confusion which is reflected into our

external lives as misery of various kinds. As we become better trained, our interpretations become more accurate, and order takes the place of chaos in our mental life and outer circumstances.

Discrimination begins by accurate classification of differences. From this knowledge it passes to a yet higher perception wherein it finds that every pair of opposites is really a dual manifestation of a single activity. Then it goes on to discover that these reconciling unities are themselves under the law of polarity. When we succeed in discovering the unity which is a reconciler between two known opposites, we have found also something which is either the positive or the negative pole of another pair of opposites.

This, however, does not go on indefinitely. The process of right discrimination leads at last to mental recognition of a unity which transcends all pairs of opposites, a Unity we cannot define or speak about in positive terms, a Unity for which silence and darkness are the most appropriate symbols. This Unity, however, is no mere intellectual abstraction. It may be known directly, perceived immediately, even though neither words nor forms can be found whereby to express it. Such direct cognition is the outcome of true discrimination, the result of our learning to unify the pairs of opposites and so rise above their influence.

Hence the mode of consciousness associated with Zain in Hebrew Wisdom is “Disposing Intelligence”. To dispose is to arrange, to classify, to set in order. Primarily, however, it means “to pose apart”, or to separate. Thus we may expect the symbolism of Key 6, which we shall analyze in the next lesson, to indicate an activity characterized by duality, contrast, and a tendency to divide things and conditions into separate classes sharply distinguished from one another.

The function assigned to the letter Zain and to Key 6 is that of the sense of smell. An ancient occult treatise says: “Properties are discerned by the nose.” Smell is always associated in language with discrimination. Our English noun “scent” is from a French verb meaning to **discern by the senses**. Odors are known to be among the most powerful, and at the same time most subtle means of stimulating the associative functions of the mind. Hence the Egyptian god Thoth, corresponding to Hermes and Mercury, was sometimes represented as having a jackal's head because of that animal's keen sense of smell.

Keep close watch this week upon your desires and impulses. Check up on your tendency to obey impulses without first submitting them to the light of reason. Make an effort to discriminate between helpful actions and unimportant ones, between those which are purely selfish, and those which reflect the influence of the unifying force of love. Be careful to discriminate intelligently. There is altogether too much of the idea that in order for an impulse to be good it must be wholly unconcerned with personal happiness or pleasure. No bigger mistake can be made, for love expresses itself in happiness, joy and well-being. Poor discrimination may make some persons believe that happiness and well-being are concerned with selfishness; but any one who has developed a sense of “other-consciousness”, or

awareness of the relation between his own mental and physical states and those of other people, suffers from no such delusion.

## COLORING INSTRUCTIONS

### KEY 6. THE LOVERS

- Yellow: In every case, except the sun, the yellow in this card is beside red, or red and green. The five fruits on the tree behind the woman are yellow, with red cheeks. The flames behind the man are yellow, with red at the base, after the manner of the blue and yellow in an old-fashioned gas-jet flame. The Angels hair is yellow, red and green. The Angel's flesh is yellow, somewhat diluted.
- Blue: Background, but not above Angel's head.
- Green: Foreground and foliage, serpent on tree, Angel's hair (with yellow and red).
- Violet: Angel's garment; mountain (dilute the color for the mountain).
- Gold: Sun and background above Angel (if not gold, use yellow).
- White: Clouds.
- Blonde: Woman's hair.
- Brown: Tree trunk behind woman.
- Red: Angel's wings. See also note under Yellow.