

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Eleven

REASON



This week use Key 4, the Emperor, as the basis for your five-minute meditation before taking up the lesson. As you look at it, remember that the Emperor, as his name shows, is the consort and complement of the Empress. Compare the two Keys and discover for yourself as many points of contrast between them as you can.

The key-word for the number 4 is **Order**. Meanings closely allied are: system, regulation, management, supervision. Thus 4 clearly relates to the classifying activity of self-consciousness, induced by the response of subconsciousness to impressions originating at the self-conscious level. This classifying activity is **reason**.

Mental imagery is useful to us chiefly after it has been systematized or put in order. Then it becomes valuable in our daily lives as a means to regulate, supervise and manage our

affairs.

When mental imagery is not systematized, we are creatures of our emotions and desires—impractical dreamers unable to meet adequately the problems life presents to us. Note that verb, “presents”. Our problems are not evils. They are **gifts**. Every problem conceals a principle which, when understood, may be applied to the production of manifold useful and beautiful results. Reason helps us to discover the principles hidden in problems. Reason enables us to face life's experiences squarely and transform all seeming evil into good.

The Emperor is an executive. The noun **emperor** means “he who sets in order”, and to set things in order is the chief function of an administrative officer. Thus the title is closely bound up with the various meanings of the number 4.

The authority of the Emperor is exercised over the progeny of the Empress. She is his consort, subject to her husband. Her motherhood depends on him. On the other hand, his sovereignty depends on her motherhood. Unless the universal subconscious activities bring forth a universe, the cosmic self-consciousness has nothing to govern. Because she is the manifesting power, which brings forms into being, he has something to rule.

This is true also in man whom occultists call the Microcosm, or “universe in little”. The activity of imagination is subconscious response to acts of attention and observation originating at the level of self-consciousness (the Magician). Yet the Magician, who appears now as the Emperor, would have nothing to control or transform did not subconsciousness send up from its depths a stream of images to be classified and arranged by the exercise of reason. Hence in Key 4 we find the Emperor seated on a height **overlooking** a stream which waters the Empress' garden, and has its source in the shimmering robe of the High Priestess.

In geometry, 4 is represented by the square, an old symbol for the physical plane and for things concrete. Specific mental images, in definite, logical order—“precept upon precept, line upon line”—are the foundations of reason and good sense.

The number 4 is also connected with the idea of measurement, for by use of reason we are enabled to take the measure of our experiences so as to interpret them correctly. Without such rational right measurement of experience we continue to mistake the illusory for the real. Thus we make (for we cannot help being creative) conditions in our personal world which have the appearance of misery, poverty, disease, discontent, and the like.

The letter printed on the Key is ה, Heh, and its name means “window”. A window admits light, symbol of knowledge, and air (Life, Spirit) into the house (Beth) of personality. A window, again, permits outlook, survey, supervision, and so on. Hence the function of sight is attributed to the letter Heh.

Windows, one might say, are the eyes of a house. Even so the eyes of man have been called “windows of the soul”.

Sight is also closely allied to reason. We find ourselves confronted by a problem. We study it and reason out the answer. When we succeed in so doing, we say, “I see.” Bad reasoning is perilous. Thus we read: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

In Hebrew, the letter Heh is used as a definite article, like “the” in English. Reason defines. Thus reason works at the self-conscious level, for to define anything is to name it, and in occultism self-consciousness is associated with Adam, the namer.

Often one hears a colloquial expression commonly used in connection with something unknown or queer. “Name it, and it's yours.” Whatever the origin of this bit of slang, it expresses an actual truth which we see clearly as soon as we understand the real significance of naming anything. Think it over.

Definition limits, sets boundaries, particularizes, specializes, enters into details. The activities designated by these verbs are those which enter into the making of a constitution for any

social organization, from that of a high-school club to that of a nation. Its constitution is, for any organization, the supreme authority.

All laws must agree with the constitution, and laws themselves are definitions. What we call “laws of nature” are simply human definitions and descriptions of the way events follow one another in some particular field of observation.

Furthermore, our personal definitions (or naming) of the meanings of the events which constitute our life-experience have great **suggestive** influence on our subconsciousness. In one sense, every man makes his own law and is the author of the constitution of his personal world. His life-experience conforms in large measure to the constitution he makes.

Yet at the same time, every man is living in the **real** world, and his happiness or misery is the direct consequence of the conformity of the constitution of his private world to that of the real world (if he be happy), or of the discrepancy between his private world and the real world (if he be miserable).

The first of the twelve zodiacal signs, Aries, the Ram, is attributed to the letter Heh, and is therefore pictured by Key 4. As the first sign, it symbolizes the outgoing, ordered, cyclic motion, emanating from the Primal Will—the beginning of cosmic manifestation. According to astrological tradition, Aries rules the head and face, especially the eyes, and dominates the higher functions of the brain.

Mars, the planet of war and conflict, but also the protector of fields against the attacks of enemies, is the ruler of Aries. In practical occultism, Mars stands for a force at work in the human body. It is active in the brain, and gives tone to the entire muscular system. Thus it is the instrumentality of execution and of realization. Through this Mars force man deals with the world of his environment and sets that world in order.

Astrological traditions tell us the sun is exalted (that is, finds its highest expression) in Aries. From this we may understand that in our world the highest manifestations of solar energy are those which are expressed in the human functions and powers governed by Aries and symbolized by Key 4.

Every one of these functions and powers is actually the result of transformations of solar energy in the cells of the human brain. Of all mechanisms and organisms on this earth, our brains are the most wonderful and the most powerful. They are run by solar force as is every other organ in our bodies.

Strictly speaking, the brain does not transform solar energy into thoughts. What it does accomplish is the transformation of this energy into rates of vibration which enable the personal consciousness to receive ideas which are eternally present in the Universal Mind, and are being broadcast continually throughout space. The principle is similar to that used in

radio where an electric current in the receiving set establishes vibrations which may be attuned to those originating in a broadcasting station.

The receiving set does not make the music. Neither does the brain make thought. What happens is that the brain provides the necessary conditions, as does a receiving set, so that thought may be **expressed**.

The Emperor, then, represents the Sovereign Reason. Every law in nature reflects reason. Reason is the source of all the operations of the Life-power in the world of manifestation.

The Emperor is the Establisher, the Founder of all things, the Framer of the Universal Constitution. In the field of human personality, the universal constituting power is made manifest in man's ability to see through outer appearances into the real nature of his environment. Actually, this power of vision is something which embraces the whole complex machinery, mental and physical, whereby the Spirit within becomes aware of the universe.

Note also that numerically the Emperor is the union or sum of the Magician and the Empress. This is one reason for identifying the Emperor with the Magician. Another is that the "theosophical extension" of 4, or sum of the numbers from 0 to 4, is 10, and the digits of 10 reduce to 1 by addition. Thus the Emperor is essentially 1, or the Magician, but the extension of his power is 10, or the Wheel of Fortune.

Yet 4 is also the sum of 2 and 2, and the multiplication of 2 by 2. This hints that the Emperor, though he seems to be thoroughly masculine, is really an expression of the power of 2, the **root matter** symbolized by the High Priestess. This reminds us that reason is an expression of memory. Beneath all forms of reasoning is the fundamental activity of **retention** and **recollection**, symbolized by Key 2. Develop these number hints in your notebook.

As you color the Key this week, compare its symbolism with that of the Empress. Look for contrasts. Look also for details which bring out the truth that what the Emperor represents is complementary to what is pictured by the Empress.

COLORING INSTRUCTIONS

KEY 4. THE EMPEROR

Yellow:	T-cross and circle in right hand.
Green:	Foreground.
Blue:	Stream at base of cliff.
Gray:	Stone cube, except ram's head.
Violet:	Belt, flaps of tunic (not borders, nor medallion on left shoulder.)
White:	Borders of tunic flaps and belt; medallion; ram's head; beard and hair; border only of inverted T on globe in left hand; sleeves.
Gold:	Inverted T, and cross on globe, framework and points on helmet.
Brown:	Slopes from height in foreground to stream's edge.
Orange:	Background above mountains.
Steel:	Leg armor and breastplate.
Red:	Globe in left hand (not inverted T or cross), helmet (except borders and points), mountains and cliffs.