

TAROT INTERPRETATION

Lesson Twenty

THE SURE SUPPORT

The tableau for this week is:

10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18

The magic square is:

13	18	11
12	14	16
17	10	15

In both arrangements, the central picture is Key 14, Temperance. The constant summation of the magic square is 42. It shows discrimination (Key 6) as the consequence of the operation of memory (Key 2) through reason (Key 4). Thus this tableau emphasizes memory as the source whence reason draws the material with which it works, to the end that discrimination may be expressed. Key 14 shows the real nature of the process whereby we develop discrimination. Key 6 typifies the outcome of this process.

Now, in Lesson 19 you were told that the "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel" might well mean your association with some personality a little beyond you on the Way to Freedom. Yet it was said also that the messenger who guides you on your way, no matter how little advanced beyond you he may be, is, as messenger or guardian angel, a channel to put you in contact with the One Identity.

This week you will find the emphasis falling on the thought that the process whereby you develop discrimination through reasoning correctly on materials furnished by memory is a

process due, in large measure, to the fact that you are acted upon by intelligences more highly developed than your own. There comes a time in every person's occult progress when he realizes that he himself is in a sense the subject of an experiment. They to whom this idea is repugnant make evident by that very repugnance that no matter how glibly they may think and talk about occultism, they have yet to experience in their own persons some of its fundamental verities.

The plain truth is that none of us would have made any progress along the path of attainment had we not been worked upon, experimented with, tempered and modified by the loving care of other human beings whose training and experience qualify them for this work. Sometimes it is only after long years that this truth dawns on the student.

He may suppose himself to be a perfectly free agent doing just exactly what he pleases. He may pride himself on his independence, on his perseverance, on his desire to advance to better things. But sooner or later he begins to realize that all along he has been under direction.

As the years pass, he can look back and see how he has been led, gently and lovingly, as the blind are led by those who care for them. With this realization comes a deep humility and a great thankfulness. One sees then that the protection and care of the One Identity reach us through the channels of other lives. The better one knows this One Identity and the clearer his consciousness of relation to it, the more able is he to act as a director for those whose grasp of truth is not so firm as his.

We are all at various stages of human development. From those above us we receive aid and in some degree we are the means they employ to carry out their experiments. When we realize this truth, we shall be able to undertake similar experiments of our own. As Lao-tze says: "Imperfect men are the materials with which the wise man works."

This work consists in a series of demonstrations that every human personality is a center of expression for the whole series of cosmic cycles. By his work with those under his direction, the wise man learns more and more concerning the Law of Cycles. The effect of his labors on those who are assigned to him makes them, in turn, more and more conscious of the operation of the same law in their own lives.

Remember, true occultism is not a system of beliefs. On the contrary, it is a science consisting of verified and verifiable knowledge. The work of a practical occultist aims ever at the reduction of the number of his beliefs and the establishment in their place of positive knowledge.

In the main, the subject of the various experiments is the occultist's own organism. The great art of transmutation is that of the transformation of one's personal vehicle. Step by step, it is raised and purified. New cells and groups of cells are made to function and at last, the work is

completed by the substitution of a deathless, spiritual body, a Master's body, for the corruptible, mortal vehicle with which he was born. (Keys 10, 14, 18)

Such transformations require fine adjustments and they also demand faith. This faith is the imaginative development, in concrete forms built from mental substance, of fundamental propositions or seed thoughts which are strictly reasonable and which rest on a firm basis of proven and provable fact. Over and over again the wise books admonish us to test every proposition in the fires of actual experience. It is not to the lazy that Nature unveils her beauty. (Keys 11, 14, 17)

One of the hardest lessons for the beginner on this path of practical occultism is what Jesus expressed dramatically by his doctrine of non-resistance. With characteristic Oriental exuberance of metaphor, he brought the principle down to the plane of personal relations. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him."

For untold millenniums the merely natural man has regarded every other person as a potential enemy and has feared nature as an opponent. Ageless Wisdom denies this fallacy and the progress of modern science confirms the truth of the denial. Even exoteric laboratory research demonstrates by actual tests that nothing in nature is intrinsically inimical to man. Everything has its use. Even the deadliest poisons, rightly understood and applied, may be used by us to enhance our happiness and enlarge our boundaries of control over circumstance.

Yet, before we may accomplish anything, we must realize our utter personal dependence on the cosmic order. We must see that all our troubles result from ignorance of the way things really are. We must destroy our ancient habitations of error by the influx of the light of truth. (Keys 12, 14, 16)

Even death must no longer be looked upon as evidence of the unfriendliness of nature. Still less may we regard it as the working of a power of spiritual evil, malignantly opposing the welfare of mankind. By certain types of experiment it is possible to prove that the very forces which bring about the death of a human body may be so directed that they will, first of all, awaken centers in the brain which can register our experiences as conscious persons during the periods when we are not functioning on the physical plane. This knowledge gained, we may pass to a yet higher stage of unfoldment.

In this higher stage, the adept makes for himself a physical vehicle so enduring, so perfectly and radiantly healthy, and so free a channel for the manifestations of the subtle forces of nature, that he may continue to exist on the physical plane for a period of years far in excess of the ordinary life-span. When he does lay aside his physical body what occurs is not death in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a simple stoppage of physical function and **conscious** separation of the higher vehicles of personality from the physical instrument. Thus, by his ability to remain a long time on the physical plane as an adult human being, an adept has

opportunity to make experiments and solve problems requiring protracted research. (Keys 13, 14, 15)

All this has its beginning in an intellectual recognition of the truth that every human personality is a particular expression of a universal order. At first, this perception assumes the form of belief. It is a conviction forced upon us by careful reasoning, following observation of the course of nature. Then comes imaginative development of the seed idea and the building up of definite mental images of the logical consequences to which this idea leads. Here all the creative powers of the mind are brought into play.

Furthermore, since mental images tend always to find outlet in action, the fostering of the seed idea by imagination results in actual alterations of circumstance. These demonstrate the validity of the original thought. Little by little, the old habits of thinking are reversed, and there comes into manifestation a corresponding reversal of one's outer situation. Joy takes the place of sorrow, health supplants disease, prosperity manifests itself in place of poverty, wisdom displaces ignorance. (Keys 10, 11, 12)

This process of verification begins with the overthrow of false notions. By substituting accurate observation for superficial acquaintance with surface appearances, we store our memories with records of knowledge of things as they are instead of with vague impressions of things as they look. Then, by meditating on what we have learned, we begin to see relationships unperceived by most persons, and our meditation also effects an adjustment of the balance among certain centers of force in our bodies.

This is what is represented by the symmetrical arrangement of stars in Key 17. The stars symbolize forces at work through astral and physical centers which are closely connected with the endocrine glands. Through right adjustment of the functions of these glands, the body chemistry is changed and we are then transformed from the state of the natural man into the state of spiritual humanity. The seed of right thought bears fruit in perfected bodies. By this process we are graduated from the school of natural humanity, to take our rightful place in the ranks of the "twice-born." (Keys 16, 17, 18)

It cannot be made too emphatic that the methods of practical occultism are directed to the end of effecting a distinct **physiological** modification. We hear much of adepts and masters, and, in certain quarters, altogether too much about astral bodies and other finer vehicles of personality. Finer vehicles there certainly are and as part of our training, we have to learn how to function in them consciously. We have to learn also how to impress on the physical brain a record of this higher functioning.

On the other hand, some teaching found in books purporting to deal with practical occultism is such that it leads to the belief that the physical body is only an obstacle to spiritual development. This is a gross error. An unhealthy body is certainly a bar to occult progress. Wise books insist that physical health must precede any attempt to work with finer forces,

especially in those forms of practice which, in the Orient, are called Yoga, and in the Occident, Alchemy and Magic.

This is one reason these lessons, written for our Associate Builders, have little to say about this kind of practice, namely breathing, physical, and other exercises. We have learned that even relatively simple and carefully chosen exercises are often misapplied.

Astral work, in particular, is dangerous for persons who are not in perfect physical health. It seems to be a characteristic of occult immaturity for the pupil to be sure he knows more than his teacher! Even the best efforts of a teacher cannot altogether overcome this tendency. Thus it becomes the part of wisdom to withhold detailed explanation of technical work from all but those who have given satisfactory evidence of their fitness to receive such instruction.

The main object of occult practice, moreover, is not the development of the higher vehicles. One of the fallacies of pseudo-occultism is the notion that these vehicles need development. What must be purified and perfected is the physical body. Your finer vehicles are all right, just as they are. The Great Work consists in the integration of the "strong force of all forces" here on the physical plane. This work includes various kinds of mental practice, and what you are doing with the Tarot Keys affords unlimited opportunities for this. The objective is the building of a new type of organism.

This new organism will not grow of itself. It grows by the application of the same laws and forces which have brought it to its present stage of "natural humanity." But it must be taken beyond this stage, and the only way this can be done is by conscious, intentional application of these powers to the end that the new creature may be evolved. This is why we insist that the unfoldment of a new kind of physical body, rather than the development of finer vehicles, is the object for which we are working. Remember that no work of this kind can succeed if one's efforts be directed to the wrong ends.

This being understood, it should also be easy to see that since subconsciousness is the body-builder, we shall get our new bodies as a result of its activities. From what we know of subconsciousness, it should be evident also that since its activities are automatic, and are determined by our habitual conscious mental attitudes, the first stages of the Great Work must be those which effect a change in our conscious thinking. It is for this reason that the Tarot series begins with the Magician, the Key which represents the use of our conscious intellectual powers in acts of attention, which attention, as you may see from a glance at the symbols of Key 1, is to be directed to the field of sensory experience. When we observe that field accurately, our minds are stored with true impressions, and these bear fruit ultimately in the regeneration of our bodies.

MEDITATIONS

FIRST DAY: Keys 10, 14, 18. I am on the upward turn of the Wheel of Life which brings me ever nearer the one true Goal. I embrace every opportunity to verify the truths of Ageless Wisdom. The Perfect Law is being built up in my body. **All that I am is related to the whole life-expression, and under the guidance of the Universal Mind, I press onward to the heights of liberation.**

SECOND DAY: Keys 11, 14, 17. I live my faith. It is a reasonable expectation of eternal progress. Every day I look for fresh revelations of truth. **My whole life is adjusted to the Greater Life that works through me to reveal its perfection.**

THIRD DAY: Keys 12, 14, 16. I am consciously reversing my former states of mind. I live my life under direction from the One Self. I welcome the overthrow of every erroneous opinion. **I am the unmoved witness of the great transmutation which puts an end to the sense of separateness.**

FOURTH DAY: Keys 13, 14, 15. I welcome change. I see in all experience that the One Life works upon me to purify my whole personality. I face problems with equanimity, for I am one with That which knows the right answers to them all. **This is a new day, and I meet its tests with joy, confident that every seeming adversary is but another opportunity.**

FIFTH DAY: Keys 10, 11, 12. The Spirit at the heart of the universe is one with my spirit. The law which rules the stars rules also in my members. My support is the Eternal. **I am unmoved by changing circumstance, poised in the midst of action, certain of support through all apparent vicissitudes.**

SIXTH DAY: Keys 16, 17, 18. This day the lightning-flash of some new knowledge of Reality rids me of another error. Let me be still, that I may see truth. The path is open before me, and I press onward toward the goal. **I am free from the sense of separateness, and I rest this day in the unbroken knowledge that even in my body I am being raised to a height beyond all former attainments.**