

TAROT INTERPRETATION

Lesson Twenty-One

RENEWING THE MIND

The tableau for this week is:

11	12	13
14	15	16
17	18	19

The magic square is:

14	19	12
13	15	17
18	11	16

In both arrangements the central Key is number 15, the Devil. The constant summation of the magic square is 45. It shows our consciousness of the overshadowing presence of the One Identity (Key 9) as the consequence of the operation of intuition (Key 5) through reason (Key 4). Thus this tableau shows intuition as the source of material upon which reason works to the end that we may become truly responsive to the One Identity. Key 15 shows what brings us to this awareness. Key 9 is the Tarot representation of that awareness itself.

The constant summation of the magic square is the number of the word אדם, Adam (א, 1; ד, 4; מ, 40). Thus we may expect to find that this square of Tarot Keys yields some definite answer to the question, "What is Man?" Again, 45 is the extension of 9, or the sum of the numbers from 0 to 9 inclusive, so that this constant summation of the magic square points to the complete expression of the power represented by Key 9.

If we put all these ideas together it begins to be evident that here Tarot is reminding us:

1. That reason is not limited for materials to past experience, or to the sense life. It may receive

material from above its own level, and when that higher knowledge comes down, it must be fitted just as carefully into our reasoned constitution of the universe as anything learned from observation, as anything called forth from memory, as anything suggested by imagination. The Emperor, in other words, does not surrender his rule at his own level even to the Hierophant, and reason must check up on intuition before intuition can be of use to us at the self-conscious level of human life.

2. That although awareness of the One Identity comes to us intuitively, this intuition is not complete realization. To attain to realization, the intuition must be perceived at the conscious level of reason, and at that level built into our mental scheme of the cosmic order. This is necessary because full realization of our relation to the One Identity requires certain definite changes in our bodily structure and chemistry.

It is true that the merely natural man **cannot** receive the higher knowledge of the Spirit. It is true also that the bodily changes which enable him to receive that knowledge must be effected by the agency of the subconscious mind. But the subconscious mind is normally under the direction of the self-conscious level of awareness. True it is that, as Key 6 intimates, we may so train subconsciousness that she will act as the reflector of superconscious knowledge into our field of personal awareness. Yet to give us a full realization, subconsciousness must change our physical bodies, and this it cannot do unless we accept such transmutation as not only possible, but also reasonable.

This is the inner significance of that passage which says: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Here recall that Key 9 represents Intelligence of Will.

3. That the place of Man in the cosmic order is to act as an agent whereby the Cosmic Will may be proved, or tested and tried. Man, where evolution leaves him, is ready for transformation. Evolution can carry him no farther along the path. A thousand thousand generations hence will find no man liberated from conformity to "this world" unless he participates in his own self-evolution. The unique position of man, among all the creatures we know anything about, is that he can change his body by changing his mind and thus provide himself with a new instrument through which the Life-power may manifest the higher levels of its infinite potencies.

Faith is required for this, but all attributions of Key 11, which represents the Faithful Intelligence, show us that this is not blind faith. The properly instructed student of Ageless Wisdom has a deep and abiding faith, rooted in observation, and perfected by reason. The problems of life do not **look less terrifying** to an occultist than they do to an ordinary man. The difference is that the practical occultist has been through a course of training which makes him know that no problem is really so bad as it looks.

As he advances in his experimental work he learns also that there are sources of knowledge and power other than those reported to us by our senses. He is not sense-bound, for when he begins to succeed in his practical work, he becomes actually a new creature.

His outward appearance may not be strikingly different from that of the rest of humanity. His inner life, however, is of a different kind. He knows himself to belong to what is virtually a new species on this planet—a species, so to say, self-generated. (Keys 11, 15, 19)

In the passage just quoted from St. Paul, the original Greek says: “Be not fashioned in accordance with this age.” Such is the invariable message of Ageless Wisdom. Therefore are its adepts always like strangers, even among their own kin, men and women whose whole course of life is looked upon with distrust, and, unless they conceal their aims and convictions, such persons are often denounced and persecuted, even unto death. What is the fashion in any age is never the Inner Truth, for fashions change under the influence of the race subconsciousness. The practical occultist aims, first of all, to reverse conditions by reversing his thought. His views are in nearly every respect the exact opposites of those held by a merely natural man.

Listen, for example, to Eliphas Levi, who tells us of the Great Magical Agent in these words: “The Astral Light is the key of all dominion. It is the first physical manifestation of the Divine Breath. The Gnostic represented it as the burning body of the Holy Ghost. It is represented on ancient monuments by the serpent devouring its own tail. It is the Hyle of the Gnostics. Lastly, it is the devil of exoteric dogmatism.”

That is to say, it is what Tarot represents by Key 15. But what a reversal of common opinion to say that the “key of all dominion” is the “devil of exoteric dogmatism!” Small wonder that sages have suffered martyrdom in every age when the herd mind has had the upper hand in the affairs of men!

The great problem the practical occultist has to face is one which assumes ever changing forms. It is the problem of his own ignorance, and particularly the problem of his ignorance as to the reversal of the currents of the Astral Light. He who solves this problem can rule all things, for he can so change his physical body that it may be used as an instrument for the direction of modes of force which would consume the ordinary physical vehicle of human personality. (Keys 12, 15, 18)

“Dissolution,” say the alchemists, “is the secret of the Great Work,” and they represent dissolution by the symbol which you see on Key 10 just above the letter R on the wheel. This is also the symbol for the sign Aquarius, the Water-bearer, the sign which has greatest power in the age we are now entering. It is peculiarly the sign of Man, represented on Keys 10 and 21 by the man's head at the upper left-hand corner of the design.

Thus it is toward what this sign represents that the Fool is looking. In chemistry, dissolution is now termed **analysis**, and this is what is meant by the alchemical dictum just quoted. Every problem has first to be analyzed. Its component parts must be separated from one another and carefully measured.

In Key 15 we see pictured many parts put together in disorderly, chaotic fashion. To understand this picture of the Devil, we must take it to pieces. Then only do we see that what it really represents is something both male and female, something found in all the elements (wings, air; eagle's talons, water; goat's horns and gross body, earth; torch, fire). Then it dawns on us that the whole design represents a disorderly combination of forces, and the reversed pentagram at the top of the picture gives us a clue to the cause of the confusion. Trouble comes whenever man's ignorance reverses his true position of dominion over the elements.

In general, every problem is a phase of what Key 15 symbolizes. Analysis of any problem into its parts is valuable because it shows where these parts fit into the cosmic order. Thus analysis leads to synthesis, and synthesis unveils the beautiful truth behind the ugly face of every problem. (Keys 13, 15, 17)

Man must participate in his self-evolution if he is to advance to higher levels than those represented by the consciousness of the herd-mind. Yet you must not understand from this that Ageless Wisdom holds that man has a power which he may contribute to the Great Work, or may, if he so determines, withhold from that Work. For then man would be more powerful than the Universal Spirit whence he came and could defeat the purposes of that Spirit. It is not until the work of the Spirit upon us, from within and without, has changed us so that we **realize** what is going on within us that we may be said to participate in the Great Work.

Those, for example, who reject the doctrine of Ageless Wisdom **cannot** accept it. St. Paul had this in mind when he wrote: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Up to a certain point, we are all **subjects** of the work of transmutation. Beyond that point, we become participants. From then on there is a subtle, but important, change in our mental attitude. We no longer fear problems. We welcome every problem as a fresh opportunity.

Problems do not **look** any less terrifying, but they cease to daunt us. Because we know ourselves to be centers of expression for a power wise enough to resolve every problem into its component parts, and bring those parts together again in an orderly arrangement, we face every problem boldly without bitterness of heart.

This state of mind does not come all at once. It is preceded by the breakup of many structures of false knowledge. Storm and stress precede the calm of serene meditation. Thus the Psalmist tells us that a heart utterly shattered and broken is not despised by God. He means that until we have dissolved our subconscious complexes of erroneous opinion, based on our acceptance of the illusion of separateness as being not an illusion but an actual reality, there is no possibility of advancing beyond the stage of bondage to problems and circumstance. This stage of extreme discomfort is the ordinary predicament of the natural man. (Keys 14, 15, 16)

Remember that the transformation begins with faith. Nor is faith limited to religion, philosophy, or metaphysics. Our scientists exercise a degree of faith which surpasses in intensity anything which is achieved by the ordinary religious devotee. No person, for example, ever saw an electron, or a gene, but few scientists doubt their existence. The fission of the atom was accomplished by men who had faith in things unseen which were revealed to them by the symbols of pure mathematics.

Dr. George Crile has asserted that in every cubic inch of our muscles there are probably four billion tiny points of radiant energy, each of which has a temperature of from 3,000 to 6,000 degrees centigrade. His faith in the presence of these tiny hot points in our bodies is a reasonable faith, justified by the fact that living tissue emits ultra-violet rays. Hence Dr. Crile argues that since we know it takes a temperature of at least 3,000 degrees to produce ultra-violet rays, there must be these high temperatures in extremely diminutive hot points in our muscles. We do not feel the heat because the points are so tiny that they do not affect our senses.

This discovery, by the way, is a direct confirmation of the old occult doctrine that man is a microcosm. The newspaper dispatch in which it was first reported said: "We may say that protoplasm is a Milky Way consisting of 'solar systems,' infinitely diminutive, each created in its own image by the Sun's radiance."

More recently, physicists have announced that the conception of protoplasm as being a fundamental living substance is no longer tenable. Protoplasm, they say, turns out to be simply a certain combination of matter, and its component elements do not exhibit the characteristic vital phenomena we find expressed through the protoplasmic combination. What we call **life** is manifested so that we may observe its activity **whenever seemingly lifeless substances are combined in certain ways**. This, of course, means that the potentiality of life is present in all "matter," whether it be organic or inorganic. Hence what St. John said: "God can of these very stones raise up children unto Abraham," is seen to be literally true.

So, step-by-step, the advance of science confirms the ancient doctrines of occultism, and strengthens our reasonable conviction that human life is related to, and is dependent on, the entire world-organism. The whole universe flows through us, and the stuff from which our bodies are made is structurally a miniature copy of the stars of heaven.

This fiery energy is the basis of our existence as human personalities. The particular form of it which holds greatest possibilities for us is that which ordinarily finds expression through the reproductive function. When we know the nature of this energy, we can control its currents, and reverse their ordinary operation. By this means we may emerge from the bondage of the natural man into the freedom of the higher order of being for which the natural man is but a seed-form. In so emerging from natural humanity we shall be released, as our final demonstration, from bondage to the appearance of death which the Bible rightly describes as the "last enemy." (Keys 11, 12, 13)

Meditation is one of the most important practices involved in our release from natural humanity. It is primarily a state of intentional receptivity to the spiritual life which flows into our field of

personality from superconscious levels. We must open ourselves to that life in order to meditate. At the same time, we must keep self-consciousness on the alert, or around which, the stream of intelligence coming from higher levels may be made to flow. Right meditation should be aimed always at the co-ordination of all our energies, as hinted by the balanced arrangement of stars in Key 17, and this co-ordination has a physical result. Meditation changes the physical body, alters its chemistry and structure. Our emergence from the state of natural humanity is as definitely a physiological adaptation as is the emergence of the natural man from the animal kingdom. If we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, it is not less true that the result of the transformation is an actual regeneration, to which the wise refer when they say we must be born again. (Keys 17, 18, 19)

MEDITATIONS

FIRST DAY: Keys 11, 15, 19. Today I have fresh opportunities to adjust and adapt the forces of life. These opportunities come as the problems I shall meet this day. Through solving them I may become a new creature. **I have power to adjust all difficulties, for I am a direct expression of the ruling power of the universe.**

SECOND DAY: Keys 12, 15, 18. Today I set myself to reverse my former errors. Let me remember that whatever frightens me does so because I have not learned its meaning. Let me press onward in the Way of Liberation toward the goal of enlightenment. **I am an agent of the Spirit of Life, which knows the answers to all my problems, and is shaping my very flesh to the end that I may solve them.**

THIRD DAY: Keys 13, 15, 17. I am transformed by the renewing of my mind. There is no bondage for me save that of my own ignorance. That bondage I dissolve today through calm meditation. **I analyze my problems, and discern the opportunities they hold for me through my steady meditation of their true meaning.**

FOURTH DAY: Keys 14, 15, 16. I see myself today as the subject of the Great Work of spiritual transmutation. My bondage, however real it may appear to be, is only delusion. It will end when I am released from the prison of error I have built myself. **The One Self is working through me to solve every problem and release me from all erroneous opinion.**

FIFTH DAY: Keys 11, 12, 13. My faith is grounded in reason. I entrust myself to a cosmic order for which I have abundant evidence. Not even death frightens me, for I know its beneficent purpose. **I am poised and secure in the midst of change.**

SIXTH DAY: Keys 17, 18, 19. Today, in silent meditation, I shall catch a new glimpse of truth. For I am being transformed bodily by the new knowledge I am receiving. The process of regeneration is at work within me. **As I see truth, I am transformed into a more perfect likeness of my spiritual origin.**