

TAROT INTERPRETATION

Lesson Twenty-five

The Tarot tableau for this lesson is:

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

For the special purpose of these lessons, we are using the four horizontal rows of these magic squares, reading them from right to left. In formulating the meditations, the same reading is followed for the first four days. The meditation for the fifth day follows the diagonal upward from left lower to right upper corner, and the meditation for the sixth day follows the descending diagonal from the left upper to the right lower corner.

Remember that this is by no means the only way to read the square. Every row may be read in either direction, and just as their addition is always the same, so is the meaning. Yet that meaning comes forth from a different sequence of ideas according to the direction of the movement along the line. The sequences not used in these lessons should be studied as well as those which are the basis for this present verbal presentation of the teaching.

For example, the outcome of the sequence 4, 14, 15, 1 is precisely the same as that of the sequence 1, 15, 14, 4, and that outcome is represented by 7, considered as the expression of 4 through the agency of 3. Or in Tarot, the constant meaning of all additions of these rows of Keys is summarized by the Chariot, considered as being the representation of the power of the Emperor working through the agency pictured as the Empress.

Remember that there are many ways by which this result may be reached. There are four horizontal, four vertical, and two diagonal rows . . . ten in all . . . all adding to 34. Since each of these may be read in two directions, the square shows twenty different ways of arriving at the same final result. All twenty should be considered because no two ways are precisely alike. The progress of ideas in each instance follows a different order. It is valuable to work out every sequence even though one arrives always at the same result. Variety and repetition emphasize the fundamental idea by means of these twenty different approaches.

This week we begin with the Magician and end with the Tower, so that the whole square is in some measure concerned with the second stage of spiritual unfoldment, symbolized by the latter Key. Notice also that the constant summation of the various rows is esoterically related to the number of Key 16, since the reduction of 16 is the same as the reduction of 34, namely 7.

There can be no awakening for an inattentive man. He who is content with superficialities never reaches the second stage of unfoldment. This does not mean that some persons are doomed to eternal bondage, merely that all awakening is a consequence of aroused attention. Nobody remains forever content with superficialities. But some awaken gently while others are rudely roused by painful experiences which force them to consider more attentively the nature of their surroundings.

Perhaps our earlier awakenings are all more or less of the sort pictured by Key 16. The time comes, however, when our houses of delusion may be overthrown without the accompaniments of terror suggested by the symbolism of that Key. In a measure we are prepared for the event. Experience has taught us that no problem is solved until some structure of ignorance, some Tower of Babel, has been knocked down. Even then it often happens that we are astounded when the event does come to pass. For years, perhaps, we have cherished some pet delusion. Then, all at once, we have another glimpse of reality and over goes one more stronghold of error. Something we always supposed to be true turns out to be just the opposite.

Our power comes from above and so do the higher forms of knowledge, but it is at the self-conscious level of our waking life that the transformations occur. Everything constituting our environment is subject to our self-conscious thought, and is a reflection of that thought. Self-consciousness **is** the Magician, **is** the Transformer. We do not have to make it so, nor is occult training directed to this end. On the contrary, occult training is concerned solely with the right application of our inherent magical power (Key 1).

Thus the first lesson to learn, whenever we are confronted by any appearance of restriction, by any semblance of bondage, is that this appearance is itself a form conjured up by our own magic power. Difficult as it is to accept, the occult doctrine is unequivocal. Every appearance of adversity is built up by the mental power working through the person to whom the appearance is presented (Key 15).

Thus a true alchemist-magician looks upon no condition whatever as being really adverse. He has adopted toward his surroundings what Rudolf Steiner somewhere calls the "confident attitude." He has no fear of circumstance. Thus anything which seems to be evil he regards with special interest. Like the shepherd in the New Testament parable, he is interested in the lost sheep of the House of Israel. To set in order what seems to be an example of disorder is to treat evil as raw material for transmutation into the very forms of expression which will best suit his purpose. This is the great secret of his work (Key 14).

Occult practice, then, does not confer magic power nor enable one to attain it. What it does is to make us aware, through experience and reason, that we **have** magic power; and then such training is concerned with the orderly exercise of the power we have, to the end that by such exercise we shall see around us, objectively, a set of circumstances which agrees with our mentally conceived patterns (Key 4).

This does not mean, of course, that a true theurgist, or "Godworker," has power to impose on the world surrounding him a pattern which represents only his personal notions of the way he would like things to appear. Rather does it mean that he formulates patterns in accordance with the way things really are. He knows, in short, that he lives in a universe on which he may depend for every good and perfect gift and the beginning of all his projects is the recognition of the absolute dependability of the laws and forces of the universe (Key 12).

His practice leads also to perfect reciprocal activity between self-conscious and subconscious modes of his personal mentality, and to the harmonious relation of both to the superconscious Self (Key 6). Thus he becomes a conscious vehicle of the Life-power, and his magic succeeds, because in every instance his "personal" volition is but the expression of the true cosmic order (Key 7). "My will is to do the will of him that sent me," is an accurate expression of the genuine theurgic state of mind (Key 9).

A theurgist is said to tame wild beasts because he thinks of all the forces in his environment as being essentially friendly to him. For him, nature is never an enemy, but always an ally (Key 8). The play of forces round him is seen to be the manifestation of the same laws which are at work in his own being; and, more than this, he recognizes the highest and dominant power in the cosmic mechanism as being identical with the Principle of individuality at the heart of his own life (Key 10).

He understands himself to be the incarnate Law, and restores the Law-giver to His rightful place on the throne of the palace of human personality (Key 11). This understanding is his, not as a consequence of sterile speculation, not as the outcome of mere reasoning, but rather as the result of a vivid interior perception which has been described in these pages as hearing the Inner Voice (Key 5).

In every ritual of initiation, the candidate passes through a mystical death, and this dissolution refers to the passing away of the old concept of separate personality. The mortal, separate man must die. He must be reborn as the immortal man, one with the Father, before he may exercise his magical powers (Key 13). New mental imagery must take the place of the old race-thought. The very idea indicated by the word "man" must be reconceived, and thus we find in the Apocalypse the statement: "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev. 2:17).

Similarly, in various occult schools the initiate adopts a new name representing his highest aspiration, or the mental conception of himself which his work is intended to build into his personality (Key 3). Yet this new name is not really new. Rather is it a reconstitution or restoration of something which has been forgotten. Thus a Chaldean Oracle admonishes us: "Explore the river of the soul, when, and in what order you have come; so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may rise again to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason."

Of like import is the parable of the Prodigal Son, where we read that "he came to himself." At the basis of all magical work is recollection of the true meaning and power of the Self (Key 2). The lightning-flash of inspiration which awakens us, and at the same time overthrows our prison of delusion, is always a flash of this self-recollection. When we remember what we really are, we escape from the bondage of the sense of separateness (Key 16).

Nearly always our errors have their roots in fear; and generally these fears are part of the race inheritance. The occult point of view is just the reverse of what common sense, so-called, dictates. The fourfold occult maxim runs: Know, Will, Dare, Be Silent; but the race-mind has little courage. Popular proverbs disguise cowardice as prudence, and we are all more or less infected by this poison (Key 16). Absolute faith is indispensable to a practical occultist . . . faith which is established by most careful weighing of evidence, faith arrived at by careful discrimination (Key 11).

Such faith is established when persistent effort has made subconsciousness a clear mirror, reflecting superconscious knowledge into the field of self-consciousness (Key 6). The beginning of such discrimination is the mental attitude the Magician typifies—continual endeavor to keep in touch with the power source above the conscious level, combined with habitual alertness. This is the fruit of long practice in concentration, directed steadily to watchful consideration of every detail of self-conscious experience (Key 1).

Magic effects no change whatever in the essential nature of things. Neither does it modify in the least the orderly sequences of cosmic manifestation. A magician awakens himself from a dream of delusion, that is all. He changes his point of view. He stops thinking of the world as being his adversary, stops seeing it as something opposed to his will. Instead, he sees it as his domain, as the instrument for his self-expression, as something subordinate to the Spirit within him which is his true and only Self.

Seeing it thus, he so experiences it (Key 4). For such a person, all need for artificial means of self-protection ceases. For him, all the counsels of cowardice which the world calls prudence have no meaning. He rests secure in the consciousness that even at this moment his personality is a vehicle for the power of the ever-victorious Lord of Creation (Key 7). He has transferred his consciousness from the outer rim of the Wheel of Fortune, with its succession of ups and downs, to the spiritual center where there are no fluctuations (Key 10).

Not even death can frighten him, for when he has arrived at this state of consciousness he has made contact with that which is unaffected by any external change whatever. In that contact he finds that even death is an aspect of the activity of the One Self. For the skeleton reaper of Key 13 is, in fact, a representation of the transforming power of that Self, even as the other Keys of the series are representations of other aspects of the same power (Key 13).

Such are some of the meanings of this tableau, but they do not exhaust the significance of the Keys. You will do well to make entries in your occult notebook concerning any point which occurs to you as you look at the Keys. In your daily practice, and during the last five minutes of the practice period, it may be well to use only the four Keys concerned with the day's meditation. At the beginning of each practice period, the entire magic square should be laid out and not less than five minutes should be devoted to careful inspection of the Keys and observation of their relations to one another.

Another hint. In every row of Keys notice what Key links any particular Key to the one which follows it in the row. For example, in the top row, the first card is Key 1, and the second is Key 15. The link between these two is Key 14. Again, the link between Keys 14 and 4 is Key 10. Follow out this hint with the other rows.

MEDITATIONS

FIRST DAY: Keys 1, 15, 14, 4. I am a direct agent of the Limitless Life. The world I see is the projection of my own mental patterns. My true Self transmutes every semblance of adversity into a means for the perfect manifestation of my heart's desire. I rule my domain.

SECOND DAY: Keys 12, 6, 7, 9. Because I am essentially one with the Source of all existence, all things work together for my good. The elements of my personal consciousness are in harmony with themselves and with the superconscious Life which is their Source. My personal volition is not of myself, but is a calm expression of the universal order. The light that lighteth every man shines on my path today.

THIRD DAY: Keys 8, 10, 11, 5. All nature and all her forces are my allies. The motive power of the cosmic mechanism is seated in my heart. I am the incarnate Law. The word of Power utters Itself within the sanctuary of my inner life.

FOURTH DAY: Keys 13, 3, 2, 16. Today I die to all the delusions of the past. The New Image comes to life in my heart of hearts. I recollect my true place in the universal order. I waken from delusion.

FIFTH DAY: Keys 16, 11, 6, 1. I dare to be what I truly am. My faith is immovable. For I know what must appear as the inevitable consequence of what I have already discovered. It is my prerogative to be an administrator of the Cosmic Will.

SIXTH DAY: Keys 4, 7, 10, 13. The Spirit of Life which I am, rules all things. It is ever victorious. It is, even now, master of every condition. This day I dissolve illusion.