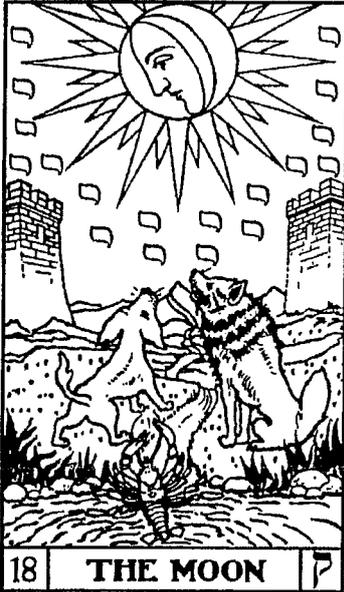


INTRODUCTION TO TAROT

Lesson Ten

KEY 18. THE MOON



The most ancient form of the letter Qoph was a picture of a large knot tied in a cord. Later, this letter was represented by a symbol which stood for the back of the human head, and this has been conventionalized in the character \aleph .

The letter-name also means "back of the head". Its occult attributions show that the Sages of Israel shared with wise men from the Far East the knowledge that some of the most important organs of the human body are located at the rear of the brain. This part of the head contains the posterior lobes of the cerebrum where the sight center is placed. It also houses the cerebellum.

Just below the posterior lobe of the cerebellum is a knot of nerve tissue called the medulla oblongata. It unites the brain to the spinal cord and its branches. Thus it is the connecting link between the higher centers of sensation, thought and action in the head, and the subordinate centers in the trunk. The medulla itself is indeed a knot, presenting many problems to anatomists and physiologists.

Faulty as ordinary methods of studying the nervous system may be, because tissues examined under the microscope are taken from dead bodies, it has been found that the medulla governs respiration, regulates the movements of the heart, and is the principal center controlling the circulation of the blood. Besides these, it has other functions of basic importance in maintaining bodily health and activity from day to day. This knot of nerve cells in the back of the head is what keeps us alive and its functions are carried on without interruption while we sleep.

Sleep, therefore, is assigned to Qoph in one of the tables in HIGHLIGHTS because, primarily, what consciousness remains active during sleep is expressed through this center at the back of the head. Yet there are further reasons for attributing sleep to Qoph. Those who are able to use finer senses than do most persons can study the functions of living organisms. Thus they have learned that the back of the head contains groups of cells which may be directly influenced by practices described by modern psychology when it explains suggestion . . . i.e., they are amenable to suggestion.

Treatments depending on affirmations are based on the law of suggestion no matter what may be the theories held by persons who give such treatments. The fact that every metaphysical healer gets about the same percentage of healings as any other indicates this clearly.

The principle is always the same. By means of words, or other devices, the healer helps the patient to form consciously a specific image of the desired result. He makes his patient **expect** this result. Then the desirable image is impressed on subconsciousness.

This image is transferred from the upper brain, through the Moon center behind the root of the nose, to the Venus center in the throat. From the Venus center it radiates through the entire sympathetic nervous system. At the same time it is transferred also to the cells of the medulla and from them to the cerebro-spinal nervous system.

Thus the Moon center (pituitary body) and the medulla may be considered as being two related centers. The former is connected with the sympathetic nervous system, the latter with the cerebro-spinal system. Remember that they are both relay stations between brain and body. Impulses pass through them downward from the brain and upward from cell groups in the trunk and limbs. Because of this close connection between the functions of the Moon center, symbolized in Tarot by the High Priestess, and those of the medulla, represented by Key 18, the latter is named "The Moon".

Corporeal Intelligence, or Body Consciousness, is attributed to Qoph in HIGHLIGHTS. After what you have just read concerning the medulla, this attribution will be easy to understand. The Hebrew word translated "corporeal" is from a root which means "to rain upon", and the symbols of Key 18 include a reference to this.

The main thing to remember is that Key 18 has to do with the physical body and its activities. This is important because much pretended occultism assumes that the Great Work aims to separate the "higher principles" from the physical body. Beginners are often led astray by these false doctrines. Those who do not know are forever talking about the "weight of the flesh", or the "thralldom of matter". They create the impression that the body is an enemy, that there is something evil in flesh and blood, that the one thing to be desired is to suppress the physical organism and subdue its normal functions.

The truth is the exact opposite. While we live on the physical plane, our task is to refine our physical bodies, to purify them, to effect subtle changes in their structure. The aim of a true occultist is to begin where nature leaves off and to go on to perfect the work of evolution which nature cannot complete without man's co-operation. The Great Work aims to build a perfect physical vehicle which shall be truly a "temple not made with the hands, eternal in the heavens".

Do not be misled by that last word. We live in the heavens now. Is not this earth one of the innumerable heavenly bodies flying through space under the guidance of the Universal Mind? Are we not living our lives by transformations of energy from a star, receiving this energy

from it, and, by means of this energy, communicating our own influence to the rest of creation? The lie that heaven is distant—whether in time or space—must be made to vanish like mist in the light of the truth that the heavens are here, in this very time and place.

The sign of the zodiac attributed to Qoph is Pisces. Pisces governs the feet and a path worn by human feet is a conspicuous symbol in Key 18.

In medical astrology, Pisces has a reflex influence on the part of the body which is governed by Virgo. This also is suggested by Tarot because the number 18, reduced, is 9, the number of the Hermit. Again, the height whereon the Hermit stands is the upper end of the path which begins in Key 18.

Occultists often use puns to fix their doctrine in the minds of their pupils. Hence the feet are said to represent understanding. This is why the sign Pisces is associated with the Way of Liberation and with Body Consciousness. Until we understand the principle involved, we are unable to apply it. The principle is this:

All manifestation is light vibration. On the physical plane, the expression of the higher powers requires the presence of suitable physical instruments. These instruments must be built within the human body by an extension of the process which has brought the body to its present stage of development.

Number 18 expresses the power of 8, manifested through the agency of 1. Key 8 is a symbol of control of the animal nature having special reference to the functions of a center (the sun center) near the heart. Key 1 symbolizes the direction of subconscious powers by means of acts of attention. Key 8 represents the power of the sun. Key 1 stands for Mercury. Key 18 is named "The Moon". By number and title, therefore, this Tarot illustration of the occult meanings of Qoph corresponds to the alchemical dictum, "The Great Work is nothing but the operation of the Sun and Moon performed by the aid of Mercury."

The alchemical process is a physical process directed and controlled by mental means. It aims at a transformation of the human body. When this transformation is effected, the adept has a physical vehicle by means of which he is able to exercise unusual powers, among them being the ability to transmute metals. His own body is his laboratory and its organs are the "secret vessels" employed in the work of an alchemist.

In Key 18 the moon has sixteen principal and sixteen secondary rays, thirty-two in all. These refer to the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom, the thirty-two modes of human conscious energy represented by the Qabalistic diagram of the Tree of Life. These are, so to say, woven together to make the human personality and its bodily vesture. Subconscious powers, typified by the moon, are the active agencies in this operation.

From the moon fall eighteen Hebrew Yods. In the colored version these letters are red and yellow to represent the life force which is fixed in the chemical composition of the blood. In

exoteric versions of Tarot, they are often pictured as drops of blood, and this “rain” of blood is the connection with the Hebrew root mentioned in the third paragraph of page 2 of this lesson. In symbolic language these falling Yods say, “The power of Yod is what descends into physical embodiment. It is the power of the Will of the Ancient of Days.”

On either side of the path are battlemented towers, forming a gateway. The design is intended to suggest that each tower is connected with a wall. According to the occult tradition we have received, this is the wall which marks the limits of physical sensation and perception. Yet it is not a final boundary. Beyond it lies a vast region of experience and the way leading into that region is open for all who have courage to follow it.

The dog and the wolf are animals of the same genus, both canine. The wolf is a result of natural evolution. The dog is a product of human adaptation. Thus the dog represents art in the widest sense of that term, while the wolf represents natural conditions which may be modified by adaptation.

The path lies between these extremes of art and nature. In the foreground it traverses a cultivated area bounded in the middle distance by the towers. This is the field of experience available to all because it is within the limits of ordinary sensation.

The path leads beyond this into blue distances representing the planes of consciousness we may enter when we have changed our bodies, chemically and structurally. This region of the Beyond may be entered also during sleep and trance; but knowledge so gained is imperfect because it has to be brought into the field of conscious awareness through a physical vehicle not yet adapted to the requirements of the higher orders of knowing.

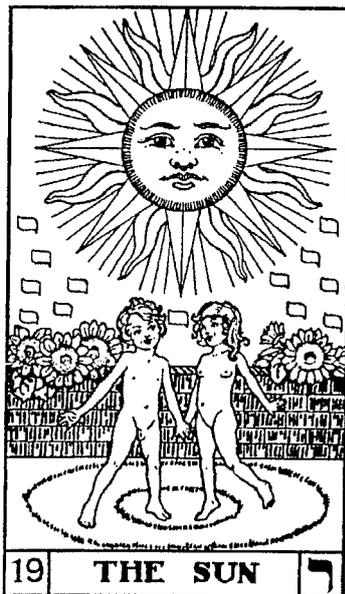
The rise and fall of the path refers to the law of periodicity. This, as we have seen, is an idea related to the various symbols of polarity represented by the High Priestess. Yet, though there are ups and downs along relatively short distances on this path, the road itself is a continual ascent.

It begins in a pool which represents the universal subconscious plane of life activity. This is the same pool we have seen in Keys 14 and 17. From it rises a crayfish, an animal wearing its skeleton outside and using that bony carapace as a shield against attack. It symbolizes the early stages of unfoldment in which the student thinks of himself as being separate from the rest of nature.

The alchemical dictum, “First the stone, then the plant, then the animal, then the man, and finally the god,” is suggested by the stones and plants at the edge of the pool, by the crayfish, dog and wolf, and by the path and the towers—the former marking the progress of man, and the latter, structures built by him. The path leads through the opening guarded by the towers. It is through structures effected by human artifice that the Way of liberation leads man to the Beyond and up to the height where the Hermit, symbol of the divine stage of unfoldment, stands lighting the way for those who climb toward him from lower levels.

The practical use of Key 18 is to evoke from your subconsciousness its deep knowledge of the truth that spiritual unfoldment here on earth necessitates physiological transformations. Practice with this Key sets in motion activities whereby subconsciousness applies its natural control of the body to effecting minute alterations in blood chemistry and in the structure of cell groups. Ultimately, this makes the body a suitable instrument for performing the Great Work.

KEY 19. THE SUN



The contrast between Qoph, the back of the head, and Resh ר, the face or countenance, needs no comment because it is obvious. The letter-name Resh, signifying “head, face, or countenance”, carries with it the same ideas of supremacy we associate with the English noun “head”.

The word “countenance” is from a Latin verb meaning “to hold together, to contain”. Similarly, the Hebrew for “face” means also “the sum-total”. There is a sense in which a human personality is summed up by its face, and whatever be the defects in our knowledge of physiognomy, our faces do tell a story to competent readers. Hence the table in HIGHLIGHTS has the ancient Qabalistic attribution to Resh, the “Collective Intelligence”. This is the consciousness which sums up all other modes of mental activity.

The head of anything is its directive principle. The head of an enterprise is the one who knows the ends or objectives toward which the enterprise is directed. He is also the person responsible for the initiation of various activities leading toward these ends.

In numbers, the end of a cycle is represented by 9, and the beginning by 1. Hence 19, indicating the working of 9 through 1, is a numeral symbol of the effect which a destined end (9) produces, through acts of selection and initiative (1). In Tarot, 19 is the Hermit manifesting through the Magician.

In our lives, what the Hermit stands for is a goal. We work toward it. All practical occultism aims at reaching the height whereon the Hermit stands. Yet the truth is that the powers we utilize to reach this goal are themselves derived from that One Source. We apply them through mental activities symbolized by the Magician. The result of this application brings about the state pictured by Key 19. Note that both the Magician and the Hermit are related to Mercury.

The title of Key 19 is “The Sun”. This is also the name of the heavenly body corresponding to the letter Resh. The activity of the sun is a direct manifestation of the power of the Originating Principle of the universe. The radiant energy of our day-star is a particular expression of the universal radiance. It provides substance for the formation of all terrestrial bodies, and it is also the power-source for all movements of matter on the surface of this globe.

Behind it is the invisible Spiritual Sun. The **power** of our sun is identical with that of the Spiritual Sun, but our day-star is only a physical presentation of something greater which shines through all suns and stars and is eternally, whether it be manifested in physical form or not.

The sun in this picture has, as always in alchemical symbolism, a human face. It is the “Face in the Sky”, and this detail confirms the correctness of the attribution of Key 19 to the letter Resh.

The day-star is pictured with eight salient, or pointed, and eight wavy rays. Each ray is divided by a line so that the total number suggested is 2×16 , or 32. This is the number of the Paths of Wisdom or aspects of conscious energy. These have been spoken of also in connection with the lunar rays mentioned on page 3 of this lesson.

The sun, then, symbolizes the conscious energy which is the source and mover of all terrestrial activities. It is not a blind, purely mechanical or chemical force. It is a living energy akin to ourselves. Physically and mentally we are sprung from it and belong to the same genus, though we are members of another species. What physical science knows about the sun is limited to its physical appearance and manifestations. Ageless Wisdom reveals something more. The sun is a focus of living consciousness, a **being** rather than a thing. One might as well try to sum up George Washington by cataloguing his physical characteristics as to say that the sun is nothing more than so much matter in a state of flaming incandescence.

From the sun fall thirteen Yods. In the colored Tarot they are orange, the tint connected with solar force in our color scale. The same tint is used in India to represent Prana, the fundamental energy of the universe.

The number 13 refers particularly to two Hebrew words having this number which signify Unity and Love. This indicates the occult doctrine that the force which unites and combines all things in this world is derived from the sun and is the attractive power which finds emotional expression in love.

Since these are Yods, and Yod is the number 10, the thirteen letters stand also for the number 130. This is the value of several Hebrew words whose English meanings are:

1. Ayin, the Eye, name of the letter Tarot symbolizes by Key 15;
2. A noun signifying “deliverance”;

3. The name of the Angel of Redemption;
4. The Pillars (Jachin and Boaz);
5. A ladder or staircase.

Thus, to the inventors of Tarot, the thirteen Yods represented the power which seems like an adversary because we misunderstand it. In truth this power sets us free, renews our lives, and delivers us from evil. Thus it is truly the Angel of Redemption. Its dual activities are represented by the pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which Solomon set up before the door of his temple. These are pictured in Tarot as the pillars of the High Priestess. This power works on various planes which are represented in occult fraternities by the degrees or grades through which the initiate advances, as if climbing a staircase. In the Bible this system of progressive unfoldment is represented by Jacob's ladder, and in Qabalah by the diagram of the Tree of Life.

The sunflowers represent the manifestation of the solar force in the organic world below man. Four flowers are open and the fifth is about to bloom. They represent four steps in the upward evolution of the physical embodiment of sun-power. These are the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, animal life, and human life at the level of the average man. The sunflower about to open is a symbol for the completion of the Great Work in the fifth kingdom, composed of regenerated humanity—the Adepts and Masters.

The wall represents the erroneous conception of “matter” built up by human imagination from sense experience. What we sense is **real**, hence the wall is built of stone, not of brick. Yet we mistake the meaning of our sensations. The five courses of the wall correspond to the five main physical senses. If we rely wholly on them, they are a barrier to further progress.

The children, a boy and a girl just at the beginning of adolescence, represent the unfolding of regenerated human consciousness in the two aspects constituting human personality; self-consciousness (boy) and subconsciousness (girl). In regeneration, the human aspect of subconsciousness is renewed and the Great Work does more than merely to bring the animal nature under control. The reconciliation of the Man and the Woman in us is pictured here. When we become “as little children”, the man-child of self-consciousness and the woman-child of subconsciousness are both regenerated.

The children dance in a fairy ring consisting of two concentric circles which themselves form a solar symbol. It represents the limitations of physical existence .

So long as we remain on the physical plane, we do not transcend those limitations. We do not need to. Health, happiness and success are not to be sought in some other world. We may experience them here. Wisdom, Truth and Beauty do not abide in some other sphere. Unless we learn to discover them on the physical plane, we shall not find them at all.

The power we employ is not, of course, limited to physical existence. What we are trying to make clear now is that the old, lying doctrines which lead man to neglect the world he lives in while he engages in vain endeavors to enter an imaginary heaven, are contradicted by this symbolism. The Great Secret (which remains a secret even when we declare it openly) is that physical existence is a spiritual fact.

Spiritual consciousness is the Stone of the Wise. Spiritual consciousness is an awakening to the **meaning** of what material consciousness supposes to be “nothing but” physical existence. It is a recognition of the spiritual substance of this world.

Ignorance calls this substance “matter”. Wisdom perceives it more clearly and wisdom is the result of a new birth. It is the discovery that even now we are truly Children of the Sun. When this knowledge comes, it wells up in our hearts as a song of joy and we turn from the limitations of the senses to the freedom of spiritual knowing.