

INTRODUCTION TO TAROT

Lesson Four

KEY 6. THE LOVERS



Nails fasten things together. Swords cut them apart. Thus there is a contrast between the letter printed on the Lovers and that which is assigned to the Hierophant. The latter is, basically, a symbol of union. The fundamental idea expressed by Zain †, “the sword”, is division.

The scene in Key 6, again, is, in several respects, an antithesis to that of Key 5. As in Key 5, there are three principal figures, but the superior one—the angel—makes a contrast to the Hierophant; and the two below him, by obvious implication Adam and Eve in their garden, are nude, whereas the ministers kneeling before the Hierophant are clad in ceremonial vestments. Furthermore, the ministers in Key 5 face inward toward the Hierophant, with their backs toward the observer of the picture, and away from the background, where the sun is at its midmorning position in the East.

The principal lesson of this Key is of importance to all who wish to make best use of their powers. In simple terms it is this: Superconsciousness (the angel) sheds its influence impartially upon both self-consciousness (the man) and subconsciousness (the woman). In spite of the ancient philosophical terminology which makes subconsciousness seem to be what Orientals call the “inferior” nature, while self-consciousness is termed the “superior”, these two are coequal.

That is, they are fundamentally so; but when these two aspects of the personal nature of man come under the “curse” mentioned in the allegory of the Fall, the woman then becomes subject to her husband. Her restoration to her rightful place of equality is one of the great practical works of Ageless Wisdom.

Despite the miseries which St. Paul's theological interpretation of the allegory of the Fall has visited on womankind throughout the Western world, there is a great truth in the allegory itself. Subconsciousness is always amenable to suggestion, and, unless rightly directed by self-consciousness, falls easily under the sway of the appearances and illusions having their source in physical sensation.

These appearances and illusions are pictured in Key 6 as the serpent coiled round the tree behind the woman, and the tree has five fruits, in reference to the life of the physical senses, which seem so attractive to those who yield to its temptations. It is not that the life of sensation is in itself evil, but, from beginning to end, all that man knows by sensation consists of pairs of opposites—good and evil, as the Bible allegory puts it. Such knowledge is of no value whatever as a means for wise self-direction. It has a specious appearance of being useful, but the error of those who believe they can make out a successful course in life by making themselves familiar with all the pairs of opposites is that nobody can possibly acquire this knowledge.

As the allegory of the Fall puts it, Adam and Eve were perfectly happy so long as they were obedient to the Lord. When they listened to the serpent, they found themselves in trouble right away.

The “Lord” is the personification of superconsciousness, pictured in Key 6 as the Angel. So long as the personal life is under the direction of that truly superior aspect of Being, all goes well. Just as soon as the connection with superconsciousness is broken by mistaken endeavors to plan one's life in accordance with the reports of physical sensation, all goes wrong.

Remember, the “Lord” is not an outside ruler who imposes his will on human beings. There is no such ruler. For though the true Self is, in one sense, superior to any human being, and has an existence which extends far beyond the limits of any human personality, that same Self is the innermost reality at the core of every single human life. By depending on that, and on that only, for guidance and sustenance, one's life is regulated and arranged from a level superior to the best results of self-conscious reasoning, and superior to the best which subconsciousness can imagine.

Key 6, then, pictures the situation which is the logical consequence of the steps pictured by the Keys preceding it. When the Magician is consciously related to what is above him, every pattern he makes (symbolized by the arrangement of his implements on the table before him) is a good one. From this it follows that the record on the scroll of the High Priestess is clear and definite; and then the mental imagery produced by subconsciousness is the good wheat in the Empress' garden.

Under such conditions, the Emperor is no petty tyrant, but is really so completely identified with the **One Self** that every conscious state of him who maintains this relationship with the superconscious Self is so imbued with the influence from above that, to all intents and purposes, what theology calls “God” acts directly through that personality. Thus it is that the Emperor, though he is just the Magician in another guise, is also one with the Fool, and is therefore pictured with a single eye and a white beard, in subtle reference to occult representations of the Ancient of Days. His clear vision is supplemented, and its true significance is made manifest, by the Voice of the Hierophant. Thus it follows that the happy state of balanced and harmonious relationship pictured by the Lovers is brought about.

The two human figures in Key 6 are nude, not only because the symbolism is derived from the allegory of Adam and Eve, but also because they conceal nothing from each other. Just as a man and woman who love have no shame, and no secrets from one another, so the two aspects of human personal consciousness, when they stand in correct relation to superconsciousness, have none of the concealments which are too often characteristic of the relation between these same two aspects of personality in the greater number of men and women.

In a later Key we shall see a picture of the destruction of false knowledge. One of its striking features is a catastrophe affecting two people, both fully clothed. The average person is in disguise. His words and face say one thing. His inner thoughts say something very different. He is always "putting on an act" but he himself is the most deluded victim of his pretenses.

This sort of play-acting is precisely what is meant by the word "hypocrisy", and the woes Jesus pronounced on hypocrites must not be misunderstood as being punishments inflicted on them by Jesus, or anyone else. The miseries which they suffer are logical consequences of conflicts in their own minds. Being full of guile, they cannot be members of the spiritual Israel. Guile is evidence of the person's own self-deception. Since the literal meaning of "Israel" is "He shall rule as God", only one in whose life everything is under the divine guidance pictured by the Angel in Key 6 can be free from guile.

Certainly no human being may hope to play God successfully, though many attempt this impossibility. Yet he who deliberately surrenders his personal life to superconscious direction becomes an immediate agent of the only God there is. In this connection it may be noted that the name of the disciple who was called "an Israelite indeed", because of his freedom from guile, is given in the Gospel as Nathanael, which, in Hebrew, means "gift of God".

In picture language, then, Key 6 gives to your subconsciousness a definite suggestion which has tremendous and far-reaching consequences. It says:

"The two aspects of human personality are different, but equal. One is not 'better' than the other. Each has its own special powers and its own special field of operation. It is not the office of self-consciousness to tyrannize over subconsciousness like an old-fashioned husband. Nor is it the part of subconsciousness, as some silly pseudo-psychologists suppose, to take charge.

"These two must have no concealments. They must leave one another free to carry out their own particular types of activity. Self-consciousness observes the objective world and gathers accurate data. Subconsciousness acts as the connecting link between self-consciousness and superconsciousness.

"It is through subconsciousness that our contact with the Voice of the Hierophant is established. It is through subconscious channels that we arrive at understanding of **significance**. It is also through subconsciousness that new ideas and new mental imagery come into manifestation."

More might be said along the same lines, but we bring this introduction to Key 6 to a close with a practical suggestion. After looking at this Key, and absorbing as much of its meaning as you can with the aid of what has been said in this lesson, use your ingenuity to frame a special message to your own personal subconsciousness. Let the words be your very own, but let the central idea be this:

“From now on, subconsciousness, you are no longer amenable to suggestions framed by me at the level of my personal self-consciousness, unless those suggestions are confirmed by superconsciousness. You are free from the errors of the misinterpretations I have made in the past.”

The effect of this deliberate, reasoned surrender of all personal domination over your subconsciousness is by no means the same as turning over your personal life to the vagaries of subconsciousness. The results may not be apparent immediately, yet, in the long run, you will find that all conflicts between your subconsciousness and your self-consciousness are cleared up. You will find yourself experiencing, day after day, the wonderful and beneficent results of superconscious guidance.

This does not mean you will never make mistakes. Your self-conscious mind has limits. It is fallible. That you may gain skill in using it, you are left free to make errors of various kinds. Guidance will not turn you into a puppet.

What is avoided by this suggestion and its consequences is the echoing, or reverberation, of such mistakes through your subsequent history. When the subconscious mind knows that it is not to accept as premises for elaboration any opinions or commands of self-consciousness unless it has also received confirmation for them from superconsciousness, the consequences of our superficial errors are easy to overcome, and easy to correct.

KEY 7. THE CHARIOT



A sword is primarily a weapon of offence. Again, as a cutting instrument, it is related to such ideas as division, separation, partition, and the like. In contrast to these ideas connected with the letter Zain are those related to the letter Cheth ח, the name of which is the Hebrew noun for “an enclosure, a fence”. These include such contrasts to offence and separation as defense, protection, inclusion, and the like. The primitive character for this letter, surviving in the English alphabet almost without change as the capital letter “H”, was a crude picture of a fence or palisade.

Again, to Zain and the Lovers the sign Gemini is attributed, and the astrological symbol ♊ suggests separation; but to Cheth the sign Cancer, the Crab, is attributed. All the astrological meanings of Gemini relate to ideas of separation, distinction, discrimination and classification, and in the human body this sign is said to govern the hands, arms, shoulders and lungs—all

in pairs. In contrast, astrological interpretations of Cancer stress its protective, sheltering and shielding characteristics, and in the human organism, the mammary glands which nourish babies, and the bony wall of the chest, which protects stomach, lungs and heart, are said to be governed by Cancer.

From most ancient times, the number 7 has been held in special veneration. It has certain peculiar mathematical properties which were noted by Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers, who named 7 Phylactics, in reference to its supposed protective powers.

The scene in Key 7 presents many contrasts to the Lovers. Key 6 shows everything in a state of nature. The human figures are nude. They stand in open country, and their surroundings show no trace of human invention or human handicraft. Key 7 multiplies the “fence” idea in various ways. In the background is a city, surrounded by a stone wall. At the foot of the wall is a river, which is another defense to protect the inhabitants of the town. In the foreground, the chariot is a portable fence, and the rider wears armor which protects his body—especially his chest—against injury. Furthermore, to confirm the attribution of this Key to the sign Cancer, each shoulder of the rider bears a lunar crescent, and the Moon is the ruler of Cancer.

Close examination will show that the face in the crescent at the left of the picture is forbidding and severe, while that on the other side wears a smiling, benign expression. A similar contrast is shown in the faces of the two sphinxes crouching before the car.

In Key 6, the two human figures stand apart, though they do receive equal influences from the angel overhead. In Key 7, the two lunar masks are joined by the rider's body, and the two sphinxes are a team united in drawing the car. What is here intended is emphasis on the idea that Key 7 represents the unification and reconciliation of opposites.

In Key 6, the stress is on the antithesis presented by the two figures, male and female. In Key 7, the idea of synthesis is prominent in every part of the design. Furthermore, this synthesis is one which is achieved by human agency.

Psychologically, one of the meanings of Key 6 is discrimination; but all the meanings of Key 7 have to do with the synthesis of the various principles we have been considering up to this point. That synthesis is **Will**.

Ageless Wisdom declares unequivocally that an absolutely free will is part of the make-up of every human being. Yet it is equally emphatic in its denial that there is any such thing as a **separate** power of volition peculiar to each human being.

According to this doctrine, the only **Will** there is in the universe is what exoteric theology calls "the will of God". Yet the esoteric doctrine is a sharp variance from the exoteric fancy that any man has a will of his own which he can oppose to the will of God. When any man supposes himself to be possessed of such personal free will, he is suffering from a fundamental delusion.

In Key 7, one symbol of the esoteric doctrine of will is the river. It flows into the picture from outside, and flows out again. In like manner, the power we feel inside ourselves as that which we exercise in acts of volition, is not something having its **source** in our personality, but something which flows **through** the field of personal existence.

The word "vehicle", a synonym for "chariot", is, in fact, the clue to the whole esoteric conception of the function of human personality and to the esoteric doctrine of will. **Persons** are instruments and agencies of the **One Life**. Persons originate neither themselves nor their actions. That they do not originate themselves is a matter of daily observation, yet many do not see how contradictory it is to suppose that a personality, which is obviously the end product of a series of antecedent causes reaching far back into the past, should, in some strange fashion, have absolute free will of its own.

Do not mistake our meaning. We repeat that Ageless Wisdom insists on the reality of free will as a true component in the make-up of every human being. None of the modern doctrines of determinism, which make man a mere reaction mechanism responding automatically to various external stimuli, receive any confirmation from the true esoteric doctrine. Our denial of the personal element in free will is no denial of man's essentially free power of volition. What we are saying really is that the **person** is not the **man**—that the person is, as the very word **person** indicates, only a mask, or agency, or vehicle, **through** which the spiritual **Man** finds expression.

In Tarot, thus far, the **Man** has been symbolized by the dominant figure in each Key. The **Man** is the Fool, the Magician, the High Priestess, the Empress, the Emperor, the Hierophant, the Angel over the Lovers, and the Rider in the chariot. The **person** is represented by the Magician's implements, his robes, and the flowers in his garden. So it is throughout the series. Those elements in any Tarot picture which relate to personality are always subordinate—as the scroll of the High Priestess, the roses, wheat and shield of the Empress, the domain of the Emperor, the ministers kneeling before the Hierophant, and the two Lovers. If this be kept in mind, the inner meaning of Tarot will be more and more clearly revealed to you as you continue using it. For the whole purpose of these Keys may be summed up as **Self-revelation**, as a psychological training which will enable you to live in intimate contact with the **Self**, and to experience the beneficent consequences of this union.

Thus receptivity is the personal attitude indicated by this Key 7. The main purpose of a chariot is to contain its rider and that of a fence is to contain the field it surrounds. The field is not physically separate from the land outside. The wall is only a superficial and artificial means for setting apart a portion of the whole surface of the land for certain specific uses. Similarly, human persons are like fenced fields. They are not really separate. More than most of us realize, these walls which seem to set us apart from our neighbors are **artificial**. Little children are usually unaware of them. It is education and training which have erected most of these high barriers that hem us in.

Here again, because our education begins at a time antecedent to our earliest memories, we fail to realize that much of our seeming isolation is due to habits and attitudes imposed on us by parents and other elders. They who become highly proficient in occult training have to break down many of these “fences”.

When they succeed in doing this, they regain the use of powers which are man's rightful heritage. This is why we have insisted so often that occult training will not give you new powers. Rather will it restore to you powers which you did exercise in early childhood, but have now forgotten.

For example, little children are in telepathic communications with their parents. Every observant mother has innumerable evidences of this—but **observant** mothers are few. Most of them fail to grasp the significance of what is clearly indicated by much of the behavior of infants. Yet every practitioner of spiritual healing knows that the quickest way to heal a baby is to treat it through its mother.

In fact, most of the higher powers which we suppose to be unusual seem to be so because our faulty training has stifled them. Actually, we are all able to communicate with other persons irrespective of the physical spaces which seem to separate us. We are truly omnipresent because the true **Man at the heart of every human personality is none other than God.**

That the true Man is the real and only source of free will is what we must learn, and when we come to understand this fully and deeply, we shall know how to bring into effective action powers which now seem to be far beyond our present abilities.

To the beneficent wisdom of men and women who themselves regained the child state the race appears to have lost, we owe all we know of Ageless Wisdom. To them, who have become as little children, we are indebted for this marvel, the Tarot.