

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Twenty-four

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

In Hebrew Wisdom, the number 10 is called Malkuth, the Kingdom. A kingdom expresses the will and authority of its ruler. The Tarot Keys from 0 to 4 inclusive add up to 10, and a few minutes inspection of these Keys will show you that they represent everything fundamental to the meaning of the noun “kingdom”.

A Greek name for 10 was Pantelia, signifying “all complete”, or, “fully accomplished”. Westcott says: “Note that ten is used as a sign of fellowship, love, peace and union, in the Masonic third token, the union of two five points of fellowship.” Ten is also the number of complete manifestation, according to the Qabalists.

A correct comprehension or mental grasp (Kaph) of the ten aspects of the Life-power mentioned in the statements numbered 1 to 10 in The Pattern on the Trestleboard serves to place the ruling power in its right position in our thought.

This ruling power is the Reality designated by the Hebrew divine name יהוה, Yahwe or Jehovah, identical in basic meaning with the Jove or Jupiter of the Romans.

The title of Key 10 refers to Jupiter, called “Lord of Fortune” by astrologers. The perfection of good fortune is brought about by the right functioning of a center in the human body known in occultism as the Jupiter center. Anatomists call it the solar plexus.

Do not be misled by their name for it. It is not the Sun center. This group of nerve cells, sometimes called the epigastric plexus, is situated in the abdomen behind the stomach. Among the several ganglia it contains, the most important are the semilunar ganglia. This organ, sometimes known as the abdominal brain, controls all the abdominal viscera and has command of assimilation. Its occult functions have to do with activities by means of which we may synchronize our personal cycles with the universal cycles of the Life-power's self-expression.

The solution of the quadrature of the circle, mentioned in our quotation from Eliphas Levi at the beginning of the previous lesson is indicated by the total value of the eight letters on the wheel. Reckoned according to the Hebrew values, they add to 697 and the sum of the digits of this number is 22. If the Roman letters be reckoned according to their values in the Latin Cabala Simplex, the total of the Hebrew and the Roman is 74 which reduces to the number 11.

The relation of 22 and 11 to the quadrature of the circle goes back to ancient times. 22 represents the relation of the circumference of any circle to its diameter. This is only an approximate “squaring of the circle”, but it is close enough for all practical purposes. The ratio is that of a circumference of 22 to a diameter of 7 which is the same ratio as that of a circumference of 11 to a diameter of $3\frac{1}{2}$. Both these numbers, 7 and $3\frac{1}{2}$, occur as symbolic numbers in the Bible and in other occult writings.

The fact that this quadrature is only approximate has its own lesson for us. We never can take the **exact** measure of a manifestation of the Infinite because the Infinite itself is immeasurable. But we **can** make approximations. This truth has been brought home to modern science by the Quantum Theory. Close averages, rather than absolute measures, are the tools of scientific research.

The relation between 22 as circumference and 7 as diameter is a key to many occult formulas of much value. It occurs in the Bible, in the hieroglyphics and architecture of Egypt, in ancient magical medals, in certain passages of Oriental books on Yoga, and elsewhere. As you progress in your occult studies, it will come up again and again.

The tetragram (four-letter combination) of characters Levi mentions is shown in the middle circle of the wheel. At the top, under the letter T, is the character for alchemical Mercury. At the right, beside the letter A, is the symbol for alchemical Sulphur, at the left, beside the letter O, is the barred circle representing alchemical Salt. Above the letter R, at the bottom of the circle, are the two wavy lines sometimes used by alchemists to symbolize Dissolution. Because this symbol is used also for the sign Aquarius, and Aquarius corresponds to the Man among the living creatures, it may be understood to represent Man as the dissolver of the phantoms of illusion.

Mercury, Sulphur and Salt, the three “principles” of the alchemists, correspond to the three gunas, or qualities, mentioned by writers on Hindu philosophy. Do not be confused by “principles” and “qualities”, as used in the special senses here indicated.

Mercury corresponds to the Sattva-guna, or Wisdom. In these lessons we call it superconsciousness.

Sulphur corresponds to the Rajas-guna, or passion and desire, inciting to action. This is the main characteristic of self-conscious awareness.

Salt corresponds to the Tamas-guna, or the quality of inertia. This is the dominant characteristic of what we call subconsciousness.

The symbol for dissolution, which stands also for the sign of Man, Aquarius, reveals an important truth. In both alchemy and yoga (which have the same objectives and work with

the same materials by identical methods), man learns to dissolve the various forms of appearance which surround him, extract their essence, assimilate that essence to himself, and project it in new forms modified by his creative imagination. Here, in a sentence, is the theory of practical occultism.

In the smallest circle is shown the alchemical symbol for Spirit, the Quintessence. This corresponds to the Akasha of the Hindus. The symbol is an eight-spoked wheel like that on the outer garment of the Fool.

The center of the Wheel, as Levi says, represents the First Unity whence all motion originates. The central POINT is the Archetypal World of the Qabalists, symbolized also by the knobs at the top of the staff and crown of the Hierophant. It is the world in which all the potencies of manifestation, however extensive that manifestation may be, are concentrated into a single POINT.

Surrounding this center, the smallest circle stands for the Creative World or mental plane. This is symbolized also by the upper bar of the Hierophant's staff and by the topmost of his three crowns.

In the next circle are the alchemical symbols of the forces active in the Formative World. This is represented by the middle bar of the Hierophant's staff and by the second of his three crowns.

The outer circle, containing letters which suggest the manifestation of the WORD, or the Logos, stands for the Material World, or World of Action. This is symbolized by the lowest bar of the Hierophant's staff and by the lowest of his three crowns.

The eight segments of the smallest circle divide the circumference into arcs of 45 degrees. 45 is the value of the Hebrew noun **אדם**, Adam, the generic name for humanity, like the Latin homo, which also adds to 45 by Latin Cabala Simplex. What is suggested here is that the essential spiritual being, or Quintessence, is the same Life-power which is the spirit of humanity.

The eight radii of this circle remind us that 8 is the number of Hermes and of Christ. They indicate that the secret of mastering circumstance is to be sought in the fact that the innermost spirit of humanity is identical with the ruling power (Christos, the Anointed) which sets into motion the wheeling activity of the cosmic cycles.

The field wherein man may apply the royal power of the Central Spirit is in the Formative World. He does this by combining the three alchemical principles in the Great Work which dissolves all seeming obstacles by the "philosophical Mercury". This is the right knowledge of true comprehension suggested by the meaning of the letter-name Kaph, the grasping hand.

Dissolution makes available the various energies locked up in form. (This corresponds to our second law of thermo-dynamics. Ed.)

The letters in the outer circle spell יהוה, Jehovah, in Hebrew, and Rota, wheel, in Latin. The letters of Rota may be arranged to form a sentence, in Latin: Rota Taro Orat Tora Ator. It means: The Wheel of Tarot speaks the Law of Ator. Ator is one Latin spelling for the name of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, personifying Nature and Venus. Thus the law of Ator is the Law of the Empress in Tarot. These letters are written in the outer circle to remind us that the Material World is really the plane of the uttered WORD of the indwelling Spirit.

The serpent on the descending side of the wheel is yellow to represent light. Its wavy form symbolizes vibration. It stands for the descent of the serpent power, Fohat, into the field of physical manifestation. Thus it represents the involution of light into form.

Hermanubis, the red figure rising on the right side of the wheel, stands for the evolution of form, and is a specific symbol of the average present development of human personality. He has a human body with a jackal's head to show that humanity as a whole has not evolved beyond the intellectual level. His ears rise above the horizontal diameter of the wheel to indicate that through interior hearing man is beginning to have some knowledge of the segment of the cycle of evolution through which he is destined to rise.

The segment of the wheel between Hermanubis and the Sphinx contains the letter Yod which is represented in Tarot by the Hermit. What completes the unfoldment of man, and develops powers beyond his intellectual level of consciousness, is an organic change. To effect this is to accomplish the Great Work, and the letter Yod is a symbol of that accomplishment. For the perfection of the Work is the identification of the personal "self", the Ego seated in the heart, with the Ancient of Days, the Silent Watcher of Key 9.

The Sphinx symbolizes the perfection of this identification. She carries a sword, the weapon corresponding to the element of air, to the Formative World, and to the letter Zain, represented in Tarot by Key 6. Thus her weapon stands for conquest in the Formative World or plane wherein the subtle forces of the Life-Breath are at work. This conquest is effected by right discrimination.

The Sphinx combines the two principal elements in the symbolism of Key 8. She has a woman's head and breasts combined with the body of a male lion. She is the union of male and female powers, the perfect blending of forces which, at lower levels of perception, appear to be opposed.

A brief summary of the meaning of Key 10 is: All cycles of natural manifestation are cycles in the orderly expression of One Power which is identical with the innermost Spirit of Man.

There is also a statement in THE KYBALION which has direct bearing on the meaning of Key 10. It is quoted from certain ancient writers who declared:

“The farther the creation is from the Center, the more it is bound; the nearer the Center it reaches, the nearer free is it.” —THE KYBALION p. 179.

YOU PARTAKE OF COSMIC PERFECTION

Look at Key 10 whenever your spirits are at a low ebb. Look at it when you feel a touch of impatience because you have not yet realized your heart's desire. But, most important of all, use this Key whenever you find yourself frittering away time, or doing relatively unimportant things when you ought to be busy with more urgent matters. To explain why the symbolism of this Key raises emotional tone, why it curbs impatience, and why it stiffens your backbone when you are trying to escape from important but distasteful tasks, would take pages of interpretation. What is important is that you take the prescription.

One outstanding meaning of Key 10 is that all manifestation is cyclic. All manifestation rotates. Spring, summer, autumn, winter—something like these seasons may be observed in all human activities. This ordered rhythm is all pervading. It does not change. Go **with** it, and you succeed. Try to go against it, and you fail.

Every seed has its appropriate planting season. Plant too early, and growth may suffer from winter-kill. Every person has emotional ups and downs. The recurrence of these cycles varies with different people, but a little observation will enable you to determine when the wheel is turning upward for you, or when its motion is on the downward arc. When you have found this out, make a practice of beginning new enterprises on the upward emotional curve. Go with the wheel and make your seasons agree with the cosmic ebb and flow. What you begin with plenty of drive and enthusiasm will keep on toward final realization, even during your “down” days. Only most of the activity will then be subconscious, and the best thing to do in these “down” periods is to play a little more, sleep a little longer, and confine most of your activity (so far as circumstances permit) to more or less routine matters.

Here you may find it profitable to make out a schedule of your daily activities and adhere strictly to it for a fortnight. Make appointments for every day. Protect your work-periods and your meditation-periods from interruption. You will not be able to carry this out 100%. Be sure to meet whatever interferes with your schedule in the mood of willing acceptance. This applies only to interference from outside. Do not yield to personal whims and feelings which tempt you to violate your schedule.

Finally, try your utmost to develop your awareness that all your personal activities are actually special expressions of the cosmic cyclic activity pictured by the Wheel of Fortune. Remind yourself again and again that the **Whole** is present in even the tiniest part. You will become increasingly aware of this if you look for the relation between your personal actions and the cosmic order. You will discover a fountain of riches within yourself which can never run dry.

The strife, the quarrels, the contentions
that thou witnessest day by day
Are the play of the Light and Darkness which I am.
All sense of effort,
All semblance of exertion—
Know these as illusion,
And with thy mind's eye
See me entering into all.

Know me thus as the Conciliating Intelligence,
Which rewardeth those who seek;
And know, too,
That whatsoever a man seeketh,
He desireth me.

From THE BOOK OF TOKENS
by Paul Foster Case

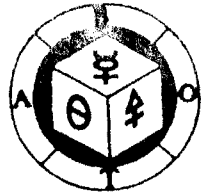
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Beloved Traveler upon the Path of Light:

Your own high aspirations and efforts have brought you thus far in the GREAT WORK. No doubt, there have been times when your study schedule was interrupted through outside interference; occasions when you despaired of assimilating your lessons; or moments when the weariness and inertia of the mass mind overwhelmed you. To you, who have persevered through such trials and tests, we extend our hand in loving fellowship.

Your devotion and loyalty do not go unnoticed. The Adepts of the Inner School are ever mindful of the earnest student. Many of you remain unaware . . . although this may not include you . . . of the subtle guidance you are receiving until much further along in the studies.

Make your lessons a part of your daily life. Applying the principles of the GREAT WORK when you are struggling against seeming difficulties will reveal their infinite value. The student who remains true to his ideals is the Builder of the "Temple not made with hands."

On behalf of the Officers of B.O.T.A., I want you to know that you are a part of us, not just a student, but an important member of an Ancient Order of Wisdom, an integral part of the whole.

Our love and blessings are with you always.

Fraternally yours in L.V.X.,

THE BOARD OF STEWARDS

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it ..."

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