

TAROT INTERPRETATION

Lesson Two

The Tarot Keys for this lesson are the High Priestess, the Hermit and the Tower. Begin by reviewing the six lessons in Tarot Fundamentals dealing with these three Keys.

Then read this lesson, to get the general idea of the second step in spiritual unfoldment. After this reading comes the most important part of your work. The Life-power has a special message for you and you must make your mind receptive to this instruction from the One Teacher within. Because you cannot expect to do this in a day, you should make good use of your occult diary. Take a little time every day to listen to the Inner Voice and make note of every impression you receive.

Set apart a few minutes every day for this. It makes little difference what time you select, so long as it is not too soon after a meal. Choose a time you can keep daily, without being disturbed.

Take two or three good, deep breaths. Then formulate a question which concerns the stage of unfoldment you are studying. Expect to receive an answer. Sit quiet and listen.

You may seem actually to hear a voice. Or the answer may seem to rise in your mind as a thought. Possibly a symbolic vision may come. Whatever the form taken by the answer, after a few trials it will come during this time of quiet listening.

Write it down. If you hear what seems to be an inner voice, record its message. If you see a vision, describe it accurately. If ideas rise to the surface of your consciousness, set them down. At first the response may be indefinite. Perhaps there may be only some slight stirring of your emotions, some sort of **feeling** about the question you have put. If so, describe the feeling. Different temperaments react to this practice in various ways.

Be sure the writing follows meditation and that it simply records the response which comes from within after you ask a definite question. This is not automatic writing. You are not to sit passive, waiting for anything that may occur to you. You make yourself receptive to a particular kind of information.

You know the omniscient Life-power understands every detail of the subject about which you have inquired and is therefore able to answer your question. Your part is to provide conditions suitable for bringing the answer into the field of self-conscious awareness.

Two months from now, read over whatever has come to you within the next few days after you study this lesson. Then study the High Priestess, the Hermit and the Tower once more. You will discover things you do not see now, and you will be able to add to your notes. By that time you may feel that some parts of your first notes need modification or recasting. It is inevitable, as you ripen in consciousness, that you should find better and clearer ways to express the truth which is within you.

Thus, there will never come a time when you cannot improve your work somewhere, nor a time when you will know all there is to know. Never will you be denied the joy of making fresh discoveries, the happiness of finding new beauties in this wisdom teaching. The ripener you become, the more will you know and the better will you be able to express what you know.

Yet you should not begin your work with any tinge of feeling that these first steps are not important. What you get now, just as it comes, is what is best for your present stage of development.

The second stage of spiritual unfoldment has for its active principle the phase of universal consciousness represented by the High Priestess. This we have identified with what is variously labelled by modern psychology as **subconscious**, **subliminal**, or **subjective** mind.

It has been called also **transliminal consciousness**, and there is much in favor of this term. **Transliminal** means "across the threshold" and in some respects this seems to be a more accurate description of the consciousness symbolized by the High Priestess.

For one thing, it conveys no impression of inferiority, as do the words **subconscious** and **subliminal**. This mode of consciousness is what Hindu philosophy calls **Prakriti**. The wise men of the East say that **Prakriti** (subconsciousness) and **Purusha** (self-consciousness) are coequal and coeternal.

Through transliminal consciousness we can read the records of past expressions of the Life-power. Psychologists have found that subconsciousness has perfect memory. Nothing you ever experienced has been forgotten. Many years ago, experiments conducted in France by Colonel De Rochas, succeeded in tapping subconscious memories of previous incarnations. Under hypnosis, recollection has been carried back to birth, and then, told to go back farther still, the subject has related experiences of a person who lived several generations earlier and the accounts so given have been verified by ancient records.

Objection has been made that the result of such experiments is tainted by the operator's suggestion, and that consequently there is no proof that the subject recalls his own former existence. Yet the investigators have found old archives in churches and town-halls, showing that at the time mentioned by the subject, persons having the names he gives did actually live and that at the same time events occurred such as he remembers. Even if we concede that the

subject may not be reading a record of his own personal experience, the fact remains that through his subconscious mind he has access to some deep reservoir of memory.

Certainly we all carry with us a perfect record of whatever we have experienced in this incarnation. And one may learn whatever he needs to know concerning previous physical expressions of the particular tendencies of the Life-power which are now unfolding through his personality.

We offer no argument for the doctrine of reincarnation. Argument settles nothing whatever. Objections come from persons who are wanting in a certain kind of experience. We choose words carefully when we say we **know** that the particular complex of activities now projected through the personality of the writer of these lessons is a continuation of activities which, at other times and places, were projected into physical existence as other persons, whose lives were occupied with circumstances and responsibilities quite different.

We say we **know**, because we remember those other persons, with as vivid a recollection of emotional and intellectual experience as that which enables us to identify this present "Paul Foster Case" with a youngster of ten, whose reputation for devilry was emphasized by his father's prominence in the affairs of the local Congregational church. Paul Case remembers being that boy. In exactly the same way, he also remembers being a Rabbi who wrote a Qabalistic commentary on Genesis. For him, one memory is just as valid as the other.

The scroll of the High Priestess symbolizes this cosmic memory, to which we all have access. Keep in mind the fact that the two aspects of the personal expression of the Life-power (Purusha and Prakriti, self-conscious and subconscious, Magician and High Priestess) are **coexistent**. The Life-power is both. It is the superconscious unity of which these two are the poles.

Wherever the Life-power is present the two poles are present and they are present in their entirety. What seem to us to be personal manifestations of self-consciousness or of subconsciousness are really expressions of the Life-power in self-conscious or subconscious modes.

Logical necessities of the process whereby the Life-power manifests itself, result in the illusion of personal separateness; but when reason has taken us this far, we may go on to make experiments which free us forever from the **delusions** resulting from uncritical acceptance of the illusion. We have continually to remind ourselves that we are not really separate beings, until we establish subconscious recognition of our essential unity with the Life-power.

Careful observation of nature, using the objective concentration represented by Key 1, will enable us to discover the essential unity of Being behind the veils of manifold appearance. This discovery has to be transferred from self-consciousness to subconsciousness. We make the discovery by watching closely what occurs in the plane of existence we perceive by means

of our senses. From this plane we get facts, which we use in the process of inductive reasoning.

At this point in our unfoldment we do not experience the unity of Being as we shall know it when we become riper. We perceive it intellectually as a premise or hypothesis. This we turn over to subconsciousness. It is the seed the Magician plants in his garden.

In considering the first stage of unfoldment we saw that subconsciousness is always amenable to suggestion and that it controls all vital functions. It is the mistress of the body-building process. It determines cell-structure. When subconsciousness is impressed with the idea of the unity of Being, every cell of the trillions in the body is modified by that impression. The suggestion accepted by subconsciousness tinges the consciousness of all the cells.

From the moment self-consciousness impresses subconsciousness with the premise of non-separateness, the mental state of the whole cell community begins to be changed. Some of the cells do not adapt themselves easily to the new conception of personality. They die, and are eliminated from the body. Their places are taken by new cells, new "wine-skins" to hold the "wine" of the new idea.

Thus a gradual change in body structure is effected, until a moment arrives when there is a sufficient number of new cells to make possible a flash of personal realization of the truth.

Weeks and months, perhaps years may pass while these imperceptible changes in cell structure are being accomplished. The person in whose body these changes occur has no inkling of what goes on; but all at once comes a flash of direct perception which seems to upset his whole house of life. This sudden, catastrophic glimpse of reality is pictured by Key 16.

Sometimes this vivid experience temporarily paralyzes one or more of the person's faculties. One may be struck dumb by it. Another, like St. Paul, may go blind. Even when the physical effects are not so marked, there is a forcible tearing apart of the structure of personal consciousness, so that he who is passing through this experience may fear for his sanity. Sudden as it is, this experience is the culmination of an orderly series of mental and physical changes, just as a thunderstorm is the culmination of a gradual accumulation of electrical energy. It does not come until one is prepared to stand the shock.

It destroys forever the delusion of separateness, just as a lightning flash gives a traveler a momentary but clear picture of the road he is on and destroys whatever false notions he may have formed of it while stumbling along in the dark. The darkness may close in again and as time passes, some details of the vision may grow dim; but the flash of realization cannot be forgotten and the memory of it will spur the traveler. It will give him courage to pursue his journey to its end.

Therefore is the path assigned to the letter Peh called the “Exciting Intelligence” and it joins Victory to Splendor on the Tree of Life. This experience is at once a realization that the I AM, by reason of its own nature, is even now the conqueror of every limitation and it is also a flash of intuition which gives one a glimpse of the dazzling glory of the perfect expression of the Limitless Light.

The flash of realization is a momentary sharing of the Life-power’s perfect Self-Knowledge. It seems to contradict everything in previous experience because all previous experience has been colored by the sense of separateness. The consciousness of the Life-power finds expression in the words, “I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

Prior to having this experience, the human consciousness is, “I am a poor mortal, surrounded by millions of other mortals who are actual or potential enemies and by natural conditions even more inimical.” Suddenly to realize that all this is a lie, suddenly to see that one is immortal, suddenly to perceive that all other human beings and all conditions of personal experience are working together to bring about the perfect manifestation of a cosmic plan which in essence is the outworking of the inmost reality of one’s being—this is a reversal of personal and race consciousness so radical, that for a time, it overwhelms us.

This experience is not an acquisition. Neither is it a miracle. Because you are a center of expression for the self-conscious aspect of the Life-power’s activity, a time arrives in the evolution of this consciousness through your personality when the premise of the unity of Being is formulated in your conscious mind. This premise then becomes the starting point for a series of subconscious operations that build into your body new cells which are able to give expression to the Life-power’s self-knowledge.

The flash of inspiration therefore, is a participation in the Life-power’s perfect, all-embracing recollection of itself. For a moment one remembers who and what he really is.

Thus the lightning flash of Key 16 may be understood to be a ray of light from the Hermit’s lantern. When the experience comes, it seems that we have seen something new. The light seems to come from above and from afar. In truth, the Light-bearer is close at hand, here with us now and always—“closer than hands or feet.”

We have emphasized the physiological changes which precede this realization, yet only a very careless reader will jump to the conclusion that we are trying to persuade you that this sudden illumination is nothing more than a physical phenomenon. To think so would be a grave error. We consider it best to make the nature of the process as clear as possible, so that you may see it as an orderly manifestation of cosmic law and not as a miracle.

The physiological explanation of this stage of spiritual unfoldment may be carried much farther, since the occult meanings of the letter Yod corresponding to Key 9 provide some important clues. Yet certain considerations we need not now discuss make it seem best to

limit ourselves to giving a few hints. They who are ready will be able to follow these clues to their logical conclusions.

First of all, consider the astrological attribution of the letter Yod. Note the sign of the zodiac and the part of the human body ruled by it. Note also the planetary ruler of the sign. Then, remembering that this second stage of spiritual unfoldment results from a change in cell structure effected by subconsciousness, ask yourself what these astrological correspondences mean.

They point to a part of the body where an important change occurs. They indicate the power which initiates the transformation. When you have made this knowledge your own (never forgetting that it is already latent in you), you will be able to make special applications of the law of suggestion, which will accelerate the transformations of cell structure we have described. We are not being willfully mysterious. Here is an opportunity for you to find out something for yourself. When you do discover it, you will understand some of the reasons for our reticence.

The principle behind this is that personal effort is the price we must pay for the discovery of truth. To tell you the answer to the problem, instead of showing you how to find out for yourself, would be a violation of cosmic law. You never really know it unless you find it out in just this way. Nobody can tell you so that you really comprehend it. Actually, you know the answer already. Get it into conscious awareness and then apply it to hasten your unfoldment.