

TAROT INTERPRETATION

Lesson Twenty-Two

INSPIRATION

The tableau for this week is:

12	13	14
15	16	17
18	19	20

The magic square is:

15	20	13
14	16	18
19	12	17

In both arrangements the central card is Key 16, the Tower. The constant summation of the magic square is 48. It shows the adept's reversal of ordinary states of consciousness (Key 12) as the result of the working of the law represented by Key 8 through reason (Key 4). This tableau shows that in order to reason correctly, we must profit by the law that all subhuman states of the life-force are under the control of the subconscious level of human mentality. Faulty reasoning is often the result of our ignorance of the law. Key 16 shows the state of consciousness which is the result of our release from complexes of mistaken opinion.

The constant summation of the magic square, 48, is also the number of the word **כוכב**, Kokab, (כ, 20; ו, 6; כ, 20; ב, 2). This is Hebrew for Mercury, the planet. It therefore relates to all things Hermetic, and in particular to the power of attentive concentration pictured in Tarot by the Magician.

Kokab, however, has a more general meaning than its special application to the planet Mercury. It is the generic Hebrew term for "star." Thus the Great Magical Agent, which Eliphas Levi calls "Astral Light," would be **אור הכוכבים**, Aur ha-Kokabim, "Light of the

Stars.” The numeration of these two words is 310, and this is the numeration of **רוש** to conquer, of **שכב** to bind, and of **יש** is, are, essence, being.

The Astral Light, Levi writes, is the blind force souls must conquer. It binds us so long as we remain in ignorance of its nature and laws. Yet it is the material basis of our being, for it is the substance of heaven and earth diffused throughout infinity. When we master and direct its currents, we become depositaries of the power of God, for the Astral Light, the First Matter of the alchemists, is the power whose superconscious manifestation is represented by Key 0, whose self-conscious modes of expression are symbolized by Key 1, and whose subconscious law of operation is pictured by Key 3. Thus it is of some interest to note that the number 310 is also the number of the noun **נפיר**, a young lion. (See Key 8)

The central idea of this lesson, represented by Key 16, is the overthrow of error by right knowledge. Your other studies of Key 16, have told you that the basis of all error is the delusion of separateness pictured by the lonely peak on which the Tower is built. Right knowledge is symbolized by the lightning-flash which is also the symbol of the flaming sword, representing the ten Sephiroth of the Qabalists.

Now, in Hebrew the “flaming sword” (Gen. 3:24) is **להט החרב**, lawhat ha-khereb (44 plus 215, or 259). Lawhat, which is translated “flaming,” means also “magical,” or “the force of enchantment.” By numeration it is connected with the noun **דם**, dam, blood. Ha-Khereb, the sword, is equal by numeration to **ארוח** a path, a narrow way, and to **זרח**, to irradiate, to rise (as the sun).

Briefly stated, the esoteric doctrine indicated by the Qabalistic correspondence is that the magical force is in the blood, that to direct it is to find liberation, and that as it rises in our consciousness and sends its radiance through our lives, we are set free. It is called the flaming sword in the story of the fall of man because that story refers to the descent of consciousness from higher and inner planes to the physical. The sword “turns every way” because it is the fire force in the blood stream circulating through our bodies, and therefore turning in every direction. It keeps us out of Eden, for the time being, so that we may gain knowledge of the physical plane. Yet this same force in our blood is what we must learn to use in order to overcome the delusions which cause all our difficulties.

In order to break up our complexes of error, represented by the Tower, we must adopt the mental attitude expressed by Key 12. Conscious and voluntary reversal of our thinking is indispensable. This reversal must be practiced continually.

We must reverse the notion that we are in any sense separate beings. We must reverse the notion that we are personally independent, and substitute for it the truth that we are related mentally and spiritually to the cosmic whole, and utterly dependent thereon. We must also reverse our notion of what we mean by the pronoun “I,” and see the identity of that “I” with universal Spirit.

This takes a lot of practice, for it does not come naturally to us. Eventually, this practice will result in the overthrow of all our subconscious complexes of error. More, it works directly on our physical bodies changing them just a little every day, altering both chemistry and structure until at length we are released from bondage to three-dimensional appearances and come actually to know ourselves as four-dimensional beings. Remember, we do not **become** four-dimensional beings by this practice. We only become directly and positively **aware** that we are, and then we can exercise powers belonging to that state. (Key 12, 16, 20)

What we call the Mars force is directly involved in the transformation of personality which overthrows error. The magic power flaming in our blood stream, and flaming, too, in every tissue of our bodies, flows out of the symbolic North, the place of darkness and terror which represents all things unknown, toward the East and South, representing enlightenment and power. It is by control of forces which in every generation of ordinary humanity have inspired terror, and have been surrounded with taboos, that the real magician first of all transforms himself, and then, through himself, his world.

He works first upon himself, that he may build a different organism capable of registering vibrations in his environment which pass unperceived by those who have not made themselves over. This new organism is able also to direct forces which an ordinary human body cannot manipulate. Thus the true magician finds himself in a new world which he orders in ways which seem miraculous to ignorant persons. He denies and destroys his old "self," for that false self is really non-existent. Thus all magic includes self-immolation.

Out of the destroyed false self, sacrificed on the flaming pyre of right knowledge, rises, like the fabled Phoenix, the true Self. This regenerated Self is the solar being whose instruments are the transmuted human consciousness and subconsciousness. A true magician is consciously identified with the great Intelligence whose physical brain is the Sun. There's a real occult statement for you! It says much in few words. May you extract from it its full meaning! (Keys 13, 16, 19)

This same Sun-Spirit is the Holy Guardian Angel pictured in Key 14. Fortunately for us, we do not have to perform the Great Work with no more than the meager equipment afforded by our personal consciousness. The personal consciousness is being worked upon, and at one stage of the work it is utterly broken up in order that it may be reconstituted. Thus you will not fail to notice that the lightning-flash in Key 16 comes from outside the Tower and springs from a solar disc.

Adepts who are close to the final realization say with St. Paul, "I die daily." They are conscious of the dissolution of the persons they used to be, and they rejoice in it. In alchemy, this stage of the Great Work is called **putrefaction** because it is actually the complete disorganization of all the combinations which entered into the make-up of the old personality. Refusal to enter into this stage of the Great Work keeps many students from making any real

practical demonstration. Remember, **you cannot stay as you are and become an adept**. The path is a path of reorganization, and to gain the crown at its end, you must pass far beyond the states and conditions of ordinary human personality. (Keys 14, 16, 18)

What particular problem confronts you now? That is your starting point. Try to realize **now** that the real nature of that problem is this: **You are mistaken** about something! What you are ignorant of, primarily, is some aspect of your own real power. There is power enough to enable you to meet that problem. There is wisdom enough to correct your error. Yet nothing will help you so long as you hang onto the error. This problem you face is no real exception to the general perfection of the cosmic order. It is really an opportunity for you to get rid of a pet bit of nonsense you are treasuring. Few people like to be told this, but the few who have ears to hear are the ones who eventually become adepts and masters.

The ordinary human reaction to any problem is either to run away from it, or else to blame somebody else, or the stars, or Fate, or Karma for it. The unusual reaction to a problem is to see in it an opportunity for the unveiling of some hitherto unrecognized aspect of truth.

You have heard of "The Dweller on the Threshold" perhaps? And if you are well-read on this particular topic, you know that the "Dweller" is none other than your false self. On what threshold does he stand? On the threshold of the Adytum of "God-nourished silence." On the threshold of the Gate of Eden. On the threshold of Paradise. Remember that "paradise" means literally "an enclosure." The path of liberation leads **within**. The powers which release us are **within**. What more need be said? (Keys 15, 16, 17)

Reverse the ordinary attitudes of ordinary men and you attain to the consciousness of the adept. You do not become anything that you are not now. Strange doctrine this, but true. You do not become, but you do enter into a new region of knowledge. You do not add to yourself anything. You find what you already possess. Franklin, Galvani, Faraday and Edison did not bring electricity into the world. Their **knowledge** of it was the germ of this electrical age.

Reverse ordinary states of human consciousness and you die to the personality that you were while those states dominated your mind. You die, but in dying you learn experimentally that there is no death, and find yourself liberated from the notion that you must have a physical body in order to be alive. For those experiences which abolish the consciousness of death come relatively early on the path of liberation. Reverse the false appearances of "this world" and you will find that the "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel" is actually **Self-knowledge**.

Can we be plainer? Yet how many will hear and understand? Listen again to the words of the wise written at the beginning of FAMA FRATERNITATIS, where they say the book was written "that man might thereby understand his own nobleness and worth and why he is called **Microcosmus**, and how far his knowledge extendeth into Nature." (Keys 12, 13, 14)

Remember, too, that the Life-power has to be incorporated in an organism before its higher manifestations may be expressed here on the physical plane. This is the occult truth behind all doctrines of incarnation. This is the hidden mystery of "the Word made flesh." The natural man has a natural body. The adept has an adept's body. The body you have now is the seed from which you may develop a higher organism; but you must participate consciously in the development. The actual building of your new body is accomplished at subconscious levels, symbolized by the moon above the path in Key 18. The way, or method, whereby this is accomplished is the middle way between the extremes of artificiality and the general averages of the merely natural. This way leads to actual regeneration.

Regeneration is no mere metaphysical term. It designates an actual generative process occurring in the practical occultist's physical body. As a result, he develops an organ for the solar consciousness mentioned in this lesson. Then his personal conscious and subconscious life is renewed and he becomes as a little child. From this regeneration he passes on to the next stage of unfoldment in which ordinary restrictions of time and space do not affect the adept's action. (Keys 18, 19, 20)

This that we speak of is not so far off in the future as you may suppose. Doctrines which pretend that this realization is far ahead of us are false. If we have the mentality to grasp the principle, we have already arrived at the stage where a large measure of realization is possible. This message is not sent you as a promise to be fulfilled some twenty incarnations hence, nor in some after-life to which death is the portal. It is a message of hope for the here and now intended to rouse your expectations of better conditions in **this** life. Remember, you **are** a four-dimensional being. You are not really bound by the limits of space and time. Your effective range is far beyond what most persons suppose.

Right now you can, and do, heal or hurt at a distance, and your personal activity affects the lives of others who may live thousands of miles away. What these lessons, and all similar teachings emanating from the Inner School, aim to accomplish is to awaken men and women to clear understanding of what they really are. You must know what you are doing before you can do it intelligently, before you can bring your performance up to the standard of virtuosity we call "adeptship."

Possibly it may seem to you that we set the mark too high. Not so. The world needs healers, needs thinkers who can consciously project their constructive imagery into mental space. Many are called, and if few are chosen it is only because, notwithstanding all that has been said and written about practical occultism, only a few understand what it really is, and fewer still are really working.

MEDITATIONS

FIRST DAY: Keys 12, 16, 20. The movement of universal forces is the basis of all my personal activity. Let me be free from the delusion of separateness. Let me be free from the belief that I am bound by time and space. **Doing nothing of myself, I yet enter freely into all activity, for my real life is the Universal Life.**

SECOND DAY: Keys 13, 16, 19. All things are made new for me this day. The errors of the past cannot imprison me. Today, even today, I am a new creature. **The seed of the new life springs within me into its unfoldment, breaking down all barriers and uniting me consciously to the radiance of my shining Self.**

THIRD DAY: Keys 14, 16, 18. My personal consciousness is being transmuted by my true Self. Its inspiration shatters the delusion which is the only bondage. In my flesh the magic flaming sword turns every way to cut off all that is false. **The alchemy of Spirit transmutes my bondage into freedom, and I press onward to the goal of perfect realization.**

FOURTH DAY: Keys 15, 16, 17. I rejoice at this day's problems. They are opportunities to break down the walls of ignorance. I watch expectantly for the unveiling of truth. **My problem is an opportunity to overcome error and see the beauty that really is.**

FIFTH DAY: Keys 12, 13, 14. The more I yield to the One Life, the more it yields itself to me. What was dies out as what I am becomes ever clearer. I am guided safely through this day. **Supported by the One Great Life, through all appearances of change, all my personal forces are truly adjusted by the One Self.**

SIXTH DAY: Keys 18, 19, 20. My subconsciousness is continually at work to build me a finer body. In that body is awakening the new life of the spiritual man that I truly am. I am set free from every limitation. **My body is regenerated into the divine likeness which knows no bondage of time or space.**