

Self-Consciousness

Begin this lesson in the same manner that you did the last, by considering in detail Key number 1, the MAGICIAN.

Consideration of the number, 1, will tell you that this Key must have something to do with beginning or inception. This is true, because it represents the initiation of the creative process on all planes of Nature. The creative process in the individual is initiated by the phase of consciousness which we shall term self-consciousness, or the OBJECTIVE MIND. Self is the distinctly human aspect of mental activity. It is the waking mind, which you are using to read these pages.

Self-consciousness initiates the creative process by formulating premises, or seed ideas. These sub-consciousness accepts as suggestions, elaborates by the process of deduction, and carries out in physiological function and organization. These two sentences outline a most important process. You use it continually without knowing that you do, because it is the basis of your intellectual knowledge as well as the state of your physical health. All of your physical and mental states are the results of your mental imagery; and you have the clue to success in occult practice when you thoroughly understand what is implied by the statement that ANY MENTAL IMAGE TENDS TO MATERIALIZE ITSELF AS AN ACTUAL CONDITION OR EVENT.

Geometrically the number 1 is a point, particularly a central point. In the Pattern on the Trestle Board the statement attributed to the number 1 is, “I am a center of expression for the Primal Will to good which eternally creates and sustains the universe.” The beginning of the creative process is the collection of the LIFE POWER at a center, and Its expression through that center. The sun of our solar system is such a center. It transmits the LIFE POWER in a form in which It can be utilized.

The idea is shown in two ways by the Hebrew letter Beth. Ancient forms of this character represented an arrow head, which clearly represents a point. The letter name means “house”, which is a definite location used as an abode. In the sense used here it refers to whatever form may be used as a

dwelling place for Spirit, and the form particularly referred to in this lesson is the human personality. The personality is a center through which the Spirit, or Real Self of man, expresses Itself. Do not be abstract about this. Think of your personality as a center of expression of your Inner Self. Try to realize what Jesus meant when He said, "The Father Who dwelleth within me, He doeth the works."

The title of this Key, THE MAGICIAN, definitely identifies the picture with Hermes, or Mercury, who presided over Magic. You will remember that Mercury was the messenger of the gods and in this capacity served to transmit, or express, their wisdom. This identification with Hermes is also connected with two meanings of number 1 as privacy or concealment, and thus occult knowledge. Magic is the art of transformation, and it is closely related to the Hermetic art of alchemy. Self-consciousness is the *transformer*. It and it alone, is able to set in motion the forces which bring about change, variation, etc. The fundamental *magical practice* is CONCENTRATION, or one-pointed attention to some selected area of one's environment.

The practice of concentration enables one to perceive the inner nature of the object of his attention, thus leading to the discovery of the natural principles which, when applied, enable us to change conditions. The higher phases of this are those which have to do with the underlying principles of human existence. Thus the reason you are using the Tarot Keys as objects of concentration is that they represent the basic modes of human consciousness.

Learn the following definition: CONCENTRATION IS THE COLLECTION AT A CENTER, OR FOCUS, OF UNITS OF FORCE. These units are always units of the LIFE POWER, because every unit in the universe, regardless of the form it takes, is made of the ONE FORCE. Thus you will understand that you do not concentrate attention. Attention is the *means* which enables you to concentrate units of *mental energy*. The result is that you intensify this energy so that you can direct it usefully. When you intensify the rays of the sun through a convex lens, they will burn your hand if you direct them upon it, but if you place your hand in the sunlight passing through a pane of window glass, the resulting sensation is merely a slight feeling of warmth. Never forget that you are directing a *real force* when you practice concentration.

Note the posture of the Magician in Key 1. With his right hand he draws power from above. With his left he makes the gesture of concentration. He is directing his power to a plane below that of his own existence for a specific reason. This picture shows clearly the magical process involved in an understanding of the correct use of the practice of concentration. The plane below the Magician is shown as a garden, which typifies sub-consciousness. When you concentrate you always seek to impress some definite image upon sub-consciousness, thus accomplishing some definite modification of the subconscious field of activity. You will understand this more completely next week, when we shall consider some of the powers of sub-consciousness.

The table represents the field of attention, which is the Magician's workbench. Upon it are the implements which he uses. There are Will (wand), Imagination (cup), Action (sword), and Form (pentacle). All transformations are dependent upon the ability of the objective mind to produce variations of these four elements.

The roses in the garden are red, to symbolize active desire which is the power that spurs us to accomplishment. Five are shown, because all desires spring from some kind of sensation. Every rose represents the number 5 (see lesson 2 on numbers) since that number governs the development of the petals. 5 is the number of Man and of his power to control the forces of Nature. It is the great magical number.

The white lilies represent abstract perceptions of truth, or principles and laws. They also represent the number 6 because that number governs the development of their flowers. 6 represents, symbolically, universal forces, such as are familiar upon this plane as light, heat, electricity and chemical forces.

The garments of the Magician show that the outer aspect of the LIFE POWER utilized in the practice of concentration is the active desire nature, while the inner reality is the white brilliance of the Primal Will. The serpent girdle is a symbol of eternity, and of the limitation of form imposed upon the One Force in all practice of concentration.

The black hair of the Magician symbolizes inertia, ignorance, and darkness, which is limited by the white band of enlightenment. The horizontal figure eight above his head represents dominion, strength and control. It is the mathematical symbol of infinity, that is, of the limitless Life Power. It likewise represents the law that opposite effects are produced by identical causes. The same law that makes iron sink is used by ship builders in order to float iron ships; the law that makes a kite fall to the ground is utilized in aviation; the laws that result in disease, misery and failure are those which intelligent adaptation employs in order to manifest health, happiness and success.

The arbor of roses is connected with the meanings of the letter Beth, since an arbor is the simplest kind of shelter, or house. The red roses suggest that the power which the Magician draws from above is modified by desire. This is true of all self-conscious activity. Every moment of our waking consciousness is motivated and conditioned by some type of desire.

The two points of the Magician's rod, as well as the red roses at the top and bottom of the picture symbolize one of the most important of the Hermetic axioms, THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS AS THAT WHICH IS BELOW.

Be sure to learn this axiom. It is a key to the understanding of many occult secrets.

Astrologically the planet Mercury is attributed to this Key. Mercury is said to rule the intellect and all of the functions of the objective mind. Thus it represents the mental power exercised in concentration, mathematics, constructive planning, all the sciences and all observations. Alchemical mercury is the metal attributed to the Magician, and this metal was reputed to hold a key position in the transmutation of base metals into gold. Try to penetrate the meaning of this symbolic attribution. Write in your notebook what you believe its meaning to be.

The yellow background refers to the intellect, to Air, and to the radiant mental energy that comes to us as sunlight. This color represents the same ideas wherever it is used in the Tarot.

Read this lesson once daily during your practice period this week. Before doing so be sure to look at the Tarot Key for five minutes. There is enough material in this lesson for a great deal of careful study. Do not slight it

because you think you understand it thoroughly after one or two readings. Such will not be the case, as you will readily find out by following up some of the lines of thought indicated here. It is important that you give the statements made in this lesson your most careful attention, because they tell you how to begin successful practical work, and unless you understand the beginning, it is quite useless to attempt to understand any other part thereof.

You may begin your practice of concentration this week by focusing your attention upon some particular detail of the picture. Examine it attentively, and try to think of everything you can in connection with it. Determine its shape, color, and any other physical sensation you connect with it. Compare it with similar objects and contrast it with unlike objects. Determine its relationship to other parts of the picture or to any of the other Tarot Keys. Develop the meaning of the symbol as given in this lesson and in your Tarot booklet. Write down any interesting ideas which may come to you in this connection. Use different part of the key each day.

This exercise is optional. Do it or not as you desire. If you do it you will receive a great deal of benefit from the practice. It is the aim of this instruction to supply the necessary elementary work in Tarot, and at the same time to provide practical instruction of a more advanced type for those who are ready to avail themselves of it.

It is never necessary to strain in order to concentrate; instead of screwing up your face and clenching your fists as though you expected the practice to require the use of your physical strength, simply forget about your body and calmly direct your attention to the object upon which you desire to concentrate. The main thing is not to allow your attention to waver. Check such tendency by bringing your attention back as soon as you catch yourself thinking about anything irrelevant to your subject. Do not become discouraged if you will find this difficult. You would have more cause for surprise if you did not find it so.