

Discrimination

Contrary to our procedure in the previous lessons of this course of instruction, we shall consider the meanings of the Hebrew letter Zain before we go into those of the number 6. We do this for the reason that the meanings of the number grow out from, and are dependent upon, certain other meanings of the symbology of Key 6, as you will perceive directly.

In Hebrew the letter Zain (pronounced “zah-yin”) means SWORD. Among other things the sword is an instrument of cleavage, something which is capable of making sharp divisions. This refers to a human faculty which the Hindus call BUDDHI. It is the determinative or discriminative faculty, the power to perceive differences. It is this power that is at the root of self-consciousness, since it is only with the self-consciousness mind that things are perceived as many apparently unrelated parts rather than as a single UNITY.

Note carefully that the MANY are only apparently unrelated. Buddhi is the power which makes things and conditions seem to be real in and by themselves. Yet these seeming realities are but reflections of the ONE REALITY in the universal sub-consciousness. The occult teaching is that all such reflections, i.e. everything, which changes, and is impermanent, is illusion, and therefore unreal. Since it is the attention of self-consciousness to particular ideas that acts upon sub-consciousness to bring those ideas into active manifestation, this power of being able to perceive differences, that is, to create illusions, is a fundamental necessity in order that individual self-consciousness might have existence. Otherwise all would be undiffused substance, unperceived by anyone, and hence, in effect, without existence, but only subsistence.

You will avoid confusion as to how self-conscious perception is the thing that makes self-consciousness possible if you will remember that manifestation is simply the way the ONE IDENTITY appears to ITSELF, and the instrument of ITs Self perception is that which is the faculty of self-consciousness in man. As the Book of Tokens puts it, “For the sake of creation the One Life that I am seemeth to divide itself, becoming Two.”

This division is called the superior nature and the inferior nature. Though they are termed superior and inferior, each is equally as important as the other, for the superior nature is that which we are considering in this lesson as *Buddhi*, represented also by the Magician, while the inferior nature is the universal subconscious matrix upon which the superior nature acts, represented by the High Priestess.

Discrimination becomes most valuable to man when he uses it to perceive the difference between the real and the unreal. As long as he is a slave to appearances he perceives unreality, but when he begins to awaken from the dream of sense to the inner knowledge of his true nature, then he begins to understand reality. The Tarot pictures reality in terms understandable to sub-consciousness. It tells man the truth about appearances. Hence the intelligent study and contemplation of its symbols constitutes a phase of right discrimination. It is a distinct method whereby you turn from the unreal towards the real.

The number 6 means RECIPROCATION. Reciprocation is the act of giving and receiving mutually. You now see why a discussion of discrimination precedes that of reciprocation. Reciprocation is a relationship between distinct and separate parts. As it is to be understood here reciprocation is the relationship existing between the self-conscious and subconscious phases of mental activity, for the self-conscious mind gives suggestions which sub-consciousness receives, works out, and gives back to self-consciousness.

Reciprocity between opposites, when it is harmonious, is always of the same nature as that which we call LOVE. An inharmonious relationship is akin to HATE, which is the inversion of Love. Both love and hate are human emotions, but an eminent Master of occult wisdom once made a statement to the effect that they are spiritual emotions. This means that these are really root emotions, and that all other emotions and desires take on the character of either one or the other of them. The Bible says that God is Love; hence we perceive that we approach God through the emotions and desires that have the attractive, beautiful character of the primal Love impulse rather than the selfish and separative motivation of hatred.

A moment's thought will make clear why this is so. If both emotions are spiritual they must alike be immortal. When cosmic manifestation occurs the process of involution takes place. This process is the separation of the One Thing into many parts. The force of Hatred is involutionary, and properly belongs to that phase of manifestation. But we as human beings are upon the path of return, or in process of evolution. In other words we are headed back toward Unity. Consequently the force we must employ is the synthesizing, attractive force of Love, and our desires and emotions must be colored by that force. It is always a uniting force of great power. We utilize the separative faculty of discrimination, which we have already developed, to enable us to understand the illusive nature of separateness, and to enable us to determine the true color of our emotional life, and Key 6 tells us that it should be colored by emotions akin to Love.

The title, THE LOVERS, brings out the fact that pairs of opposites are not antagonists, but complements. The lovers are not simply the man and woman in the Key, but represent all opposites. Thus the main lesson to be drawn from the title is that right understanding of the universe shows it to be, in all of its details, an expression of the power of love, as the right and balanced relationship existing between the seeming many parts of which the universe is apparently made up.

The astrological attribution of Key 6 is to the zodiacal sign Gemini, the Twins. Here again you see the same symbolism of discrimination and separateness, and this is accentuated by the astrological symbol for this sign, which is II. This symbol also brings out the fact that opposites are really different aspects of one thing, just as heat and cold are different aspects of something we call temperature, past and future of that which we call time, and so on.

The planet Mercury rules Gemini. This planet is represented in Tarot by the Magician. Here again you see self-consciousness is the phase of consciousness which utilizes and controls the faculty of discrimination for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the true meaning of our conditions and environment.

The angel represents Super-consciousness. Thus he is the same as the Fool. He is shown resting upon clouds, indicating that the powers and activities of Super-consciousness are partly hidden from us because we have not yet

developed to the point where we can penetrate the veil that keeps us from experiencing it. Nevertheless the influence from Super-consciousness flows down upon us, whether we recognize its presence or not.

He is also the archangel of Air, Raphael, which explains his yellow skin, since yellow is the color attributed to the element Air. His hair is red, yellow and green, colors of the planets Mars, Mercury and Venus. This suggests that one of the most valuable applications of discrimination is in the selection of the desire motives (Mars) to which attention (Mercury) is given, the results of which are manifested in our mental imagery (Venus).

The violet robe is the color of royalty and dominion, which is the function of Super-consciousness. The wings are red, to indicate the right discrimination leads to right desire, which expresses itself in right action.

Above the angel is the golden Sun, symbol of enlightenment. It shows that all conscious activity is a manifestation of the same ONE FORCE that comes to us as solar energy. It is this same Force which is differentiated into all pairs of opposites, from the highest to the lowest.

The man is self-consciousness, and corresponds to the Magician. He looks towards the woman, for he cannot see the angel himself. Only in her eyes can he catch a glimpse of the higher Being. This is a profound truth, for we do not come into direct contact with Super-consciousness with the Self-conscious mind. Instead we perceive it as reflected in the mirror of sub-consciousness. This does not mean, however, that we contact Super-conscious at second hand, for both self-consciousness and sub-consciousness are human modes of consciousness. This symbolism simply means that sub-consciousness is the means whereby we reach a state whereby we can comprehend Super-consciousness so that we can interpret it in terms of self-consciousness, but that the experience itself is entirely a subjective one. Hence the inability of anyone to make his Superconscious experience intelligible to anyone else who has not had a similar experience.

The woman is the High Priestess and also the Empress, and represents the subconscious level of mental activity. Both characters are nude to indicate that neither has anything to hide from the other, and that perfect

reciprocal activity is possible only when the nature of each is entirely revealed to the other. Intelligent discrimination is possible only when all facts are revealed.

Behind the man is a tree bearing twelve fiery fruits. These represent the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve basic types of humanity. Behind the woman is a tree bearing five fruits. It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the fruits represent the senses. This again brings out the attribution of discrimination to Key 6, since our most important discriminations are those between good and evil, and the senses are our means of making sharp discriminations on the physical plane.

The serpent coiled around the tree represents the fiery Serpent power, which is the basic force in human personality. This highly esoteric force will be dealt with at length in the lesson on Key 8. He is also the serpent of temptation of the Bible allegory.

The mountain in the background is a symbol of attainment and realization. It is the height on which the fool stands and also on which the Hermit is shown on Key 9. Its summit is reached from either the position where the man stands or from where the woman stands. The apex is where both paths meet and are blended into one. This, together with the purple color (a balance of red [masculine] and blue [feminine]) again reminds us that Super-consciousness is reached only by perfect interaction between self-consciousness and sub-consciousness.

This week keep a close watch upon your desires and impulses. Check up on your tendency to obey impulses without first submitting them to the light of reason. You will be surprised at the number of times that you perform inconsidered actions. Make an effort to discriminate intelligently between helpful actions and unimportant ones, between those that are purely selfish and those which reflect the influence of the unifying, harmonizing force of love. Be careful to discriminate intelligently however. There is entirely too much of the idea that in order for an impulse or desire to be good it must be unconcerned with personal happiness or pleasure. No bigger mistake can be made, for love expresses itself in happiness, pleasure, and well-being. Poor discrimination may cause some individuals to believe that happiness

and well-being are concerned with selfish desires, but anyone who has developed a sense of “other-consciousness”, or action with reference to others is under no such delusion.

Don't discontinue this practice at the end of the week. Make it a habit, and it will be the greatest help you have in the evolution and development of your character. Unselfishness and consideration of others is an absolute necessity before marked progress can be made upon the path of occultism.