

# Transformation

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There are so many superstitions connected with the number 13 as a symbol of bad luck and disaster that you will not be surprised to find it connected with the Tarot Key entitled “Death.” But, like so many things in occultism, we shall find upon close examination that this is again a judgment founded upon appearance and superficial observation. Both the number and the title symbolize the Law of Transformation, which brings about dissolution and change. Most people have a great fear of change, not because change is usually adverse, but because its results are unknown. They fail to realize that without constant change life could not exist, and that even if it could the monotony of it would be unbearable.

13 is the number of two Hebrew words, Achad meaning Unity and Ahebah meaning Love. The significance of this is that the Unity, the One Power, from which all things proceed, is also the Love Power which is the true cause of all attractions and affinities. We generally think of Love Power as chiefly concerned with reproduction, and, as a matter of fact, to Key 13 is attributed the zodiacal sign that governs the reproductive organs. But the real meaning here is that it is this same Love Power that governs dissolution and the bodily change we call death. It governs both the beginning and cessation of bodily activities. This is important, and you will do well to ponder upon it. There are not two antagonistic powers, one making for life and the other for death. There is only a SINGLE power, having a twofold manifestation. Grasp of this truth is the first step toward right understanding.

Man fears death because he does not understand the meaning of this transformation. “Dissolution,” says an occult maxim “is the secret of the Great Work.” The dissolution of forms is imperative for growth. The breaking down of forms releases energy, which is utilized for further growth and development.

Stone disintegrates to form soil, and from soil the vegetable kingdom springs. Animals eat the vegetables, and incorporate their essences into a higher type or organization. Man eats both animal and vegetable forms,

and builds chemical energy in their cells into his own body, and if he learns a secret which is available for all who have ears to hear and are willing to work, man does more than this. He liberates himself from the conditions of physical existence, and by doing so become a master of the various energies which build his organism. When he has achieved this mastery he is able to maintain his physical body for many years beyond the ordinary span of human life. Furthermore, he is able to disintegrate it at will and to reintegrate it again.

This is an amazing statement. It sounds utterly preposterous to the average person. Possibly it is expecting too much to suppose that you will accept this teaching at the present stage of your progress. But whether you accept it or not, be sure that you know what this teaching is, because when you have put yourself in a position to examine the evidence for the doctrine you will undoubtedly be fully persuaded that it is no extravagant or fanciful claim.

More than that, you will ascertain its truth at first hand by performing the experiments that will bring it about.

As a matter of fact, you are beginning those experiments now, with this instruction. You have been taught that what is necessary is for you to form the right kind of mental images. You must visualize yourself as having a body that readily responds to the power of Will which you express. Your clear image of such a changed organism, which will be a perfect and beautiful body both in function and in appearance, will have the suggestive power which sub-consciousness will accept. Then it will proceed to bring about the desired transformations. You do not need to tell it how to do these things, for it already knows that far better than you do. Tell it what you want accomplished and make your picture as clear and concrete as you can.

Thus will man eventually triumph over physical death. But he has already triumphed over death, because man does not die. It is impossible to present the tremendous mass of concrete evidence which is available upon this subject. Suffice it to say that it is an ascertainable fact which anyone with a little time and interest can prove to his own satisfaction. At least he can prove existence beyond the state that we call death. But Ageless Wisdom declares that man is immortal, and can never die. Though his bodies change and disintegrate a thousand times, he nevertheless remains. If this were

not so the very meaning of life would be non-existent. You are approaching the time when you will know this to be a fact, as others who have preceded you upon the path of enlightenment know it.

The Hebrew letter Nun (pronounced “noon”) means “fish” as a noun and “to grow” or “to propagate” as a verb. The fish has, for centuries, been a symbol of the Christ, which is the immortal principle in every one of us. It is only as we grow “to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ” that we approach anything like a comprehension of life. The moment of super-consciousness, or true Self-realization, is mystically called the “birth of the Christ child” in each individual.

The idea of a fish is closely related to the other idea of propagation, since fish are among the most prolific breeders. It has been estimated that the offspring of a single pair of codfish, if they arrived at maturity, would fill the Atlantic Ocean from shore to shore. This idea of propagation is fully intimated by the attribution of the zodiacal sign Scorpio to this Key.

Scorpio is the sign that rules the reproductive organs. Here we have the strongest kind of hint that the force used in reproduction has a great deal to do with the liberating transforming power of dissolution discussed earlier in this lesson. Do not be misled by this intimation. It has nothing to do with the pseudo-occultism that is behind the formation of many free-love cults. We are speaking here of a force. This force is ordinarily utilized in the reproduction of species. It may be utilized for much higher purposes. It may be used to change your consciousness so that you will KNOW yourself to be immortal. It may also be used so to control the metabolism of your body that you can renew it continually, or if you so desire, dissolve it instantaneously, and as instantaneously reconstitute it.

Be careful not to get any false notions into your head concerning this. We are not suggesting any abnormal restraint of the sex functions, nor any enforced celibacy. Any special instructions along this line are always forthcoming when the student is ready for them. At present you are receiving information in order that your sub-consciousness may help you to advance to the stage where you are ready for more practical work. Purity of thought and action are important, for without them you cannot advance. For the rest, the instruction you are now receiving is all that is necessary for you at this time.

Scorpio is ruled by Mars, and it is the Mars force in the human organism to which we have been referring. Mars is also the ruler of Aries, represented by Key 4, which rules the head and brain. Aries is called the day house of Mars, while Scorpio is its night house. This is a clear suggestion that when the Mars force is raised so that it energizes certain brain centers, it brings one into the daylight of enlightenment and truth.

According to modern astrology, Uranus is exalted in Scorpio. In Tarot, Uranus is typified by the Fool, which you have learned represents super-consciousness. Thus, in man, the highest expression of the Uranian influence is that which results in the state of consciousness that brings firsthand knowledge of immortality, and this state is brought about through the activity of the Power of Love.

Scorpio is the eighth sign of the zodiac, and has what astrologers sometimes term “fundamental rulership” over the eighth house of the horoscope, which is the house of death and inheritances. This one fact is sufficient to indicate the real correspondence between the 13th Key and the sign of Scorpio. But we must take the hint conveyed by the fact that death and inheritance are both represented by the eighth sign. OUR MOST PRECIOUS HERITAGE IS THE POWER WHICH ORDINARILY MANIFESTS ITSELF IN DEATH. The very power which, because we misunderstand it, results in sickness and death, is the power whereby we may experience perpetual health and immortality. That power is the power of life and growth to all who know and obey its law. Only to those who disobey it is it the instrument of death and destruction. Ponder the connection between that which is represented by the eighth sign of the zodiac and that which is represented by Key 8. There is a very basic and important connection between the two, which you should be at some pains to discover.

In the design, the skeleton is, on the surface, the conventional picture of the “Grim Reaper.” Actually it conveys to the eye of the initiated a reminder that the bony structure of the body is the foundation of its every motion. It is because our muscles are attached to our bones that we can walk, move our hands and feet, and so on. Even the involuntary muscles have their connections with the skeleton, and could not move otherwise. Thus, what is shown here is really the basis of all of our bodily activities. Symbolically, therefore, it stands for that which is the indispensable basis of all function, of all growth and development. That something is the ONE POWER,

specialized in the reproductive functions of the body. This power is the seed power, and it is to this that the conventionalized picture of a seed, placed in the upper left hand corner of the picture, refers. Note that this little seed is composed of two ovals (that is, of two zeros). From the smaller oval five rays extend to the limits of the larger one. And the two ovals are united, or really one. Here is a simple hieroglyphic of the whole process of manifestation. The inner and smaller oval is the source of radiant energy, differentiated as Ether, Fire, Air, Water, and Earth. (You will learn more about the inner meanings of these elements in later instruction.) This energy fills the space enclosed by the larger oval, which, remember is ONE WITH THE SMALL OVAL. Here we have expressed a fundamental doctrine of Ageless Wisdom, namely: that an INNER POWER projects itself, or a seeming extension of ITSELF, as SPACE, (the larger oval), and fills that space with the forms of energy whose combination constitutes the body of the universe.

Write that idea into your notebook, and spend some time with it. Eventually you will come to the point where you will understand that it is a concise and accurate statement of the way the universe comes into being.

There are two details about this skeleton which will probably arrest the attention of any artist or anatomist who happens to see the picture. The figure is twisted at two points, one just above the pelvis and the other at the throat. This would be obvious if the skeleton was covered with flesh, for it would then be in a position that few contortionists could imitate. The meaning of this strange position is that the force here symbolized must be twisted or reversed, to perform its highest function.

The skeleton walks from North to South, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of perfection. He represents the framework of all progress – the disintegration of form for the sake of releasing energy.

The handle of his scythe is in the form of a letter T, referring to the ideas represented by Key 21. The blade is in the shape of a crescent, and refers to the powers of subconsciousness of which the moon is a symbol, and thus the blade is related to Key 2. It is made of steel, which is a form of the metal assigned to Mars. Mars is also symbolized by the red background of this key.

The river flows toward the sun. It starts in the north, and makes a bend so that it flows eastward. This brings out an important part of this symbolism. Ordinarily the idea of death would be connected with a setting sun, but in this Key the sun is *rising*. This clearly indicates that the power we see as death is really the power of life. Every dissolution of form means the birth of a new one. The rising sun is particularly connected with the letter Daleth and all of the symbolism of the Empress. A little thought upon this relationship will give you deeper insight into the inner means of Key 12. Notice, in this connection, that the digits of the number 12 add up to 3. The rising sun, then refers to the dawn of higher consciousness in the state of Samadhi typified by the Hanged Man. It is this dawn of a new order of knowing which is behind the transformation shown in Key 13.

The white rose refers to the planet Uranus, and has the same meanings as that in the hand of the Fool. The small plants refer to the idea of growth, and the meanings of Key 3.

The woman's head at the left of the picture is a symbol of Understanding, for reasons that will become apparent when you take up the study of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The man's head represents Wisdom and also Beauty.

Three hands are shown. Two are active and one is passive. The active hands represent the new works which result from the transformation indicated by this Key. The passive hand represents Yod, the Great Hand, of which we become aware in the higher order of knowing. Only one foot is shown, because this picture refers to the end of the Piscean Age, and the sign Pisces rules the feet. For this reason, also, the rising sun represents the dawn of the New Era, the Age of Aquarius.

This week give a great deal of thought to the idea of dissolution and change. Note how much it is a part of your daily life. Learn to welcome change, and overcome your fear of it. The future can hold only that which you have earned, in strict conformity with your past actions, and that which you are now engaged in creating. The one you cannot help. Face it without fretting about it. The other is in your own hands. See to it that your future is in conformity with the ideas of growth and transformation represented by this Key.

Let not the face of change be your enemy. The Bhagavad Gita says, “The wise in heart mourn neither those that live, nor those that die. Nor I, nor thou, nor any one of these, ever was not, nor ever will not be, forever and forever afterwards. All that doth live, lives always! To man’s frame, as there come infancy youth and age, so come there raisings-up and laying down of other and of other life-abodes, which the wise know, and fear not.” This is the philosophy of all who have wisdom and understanding, for they perceive that herein lies beauty.