

Tableau 10

The tableau for this week is:

9	10	11
12	13	14
15	16	17

The magic square is:

12	17	10
11	13	15
16	9	14

The central Key in both arrangements is Key 13, DEATH. The constant summation of the magic square is 39. It shows reversal (Key 12), expressing the law of response (Key 9) by the agency of creative imagination (Key 3). Key 13 represents the principal means whereby the forces symbolized by the pairs of opposites in the tableau are balanced. Key 12 shows the outcome of this equilibration.

All the meanings of this tableau revolve around the idea of change symbolized by Key 13. Remember that although there is a sense in which Key 13 does relate to the phenomenon of the cessation of a particular personal existence on the physical plane, it also refers to many other deeply esoteric doctrines. The saying in the Bible to the effect that the last enemy to be overcome is death has a direct bearing upon these deeper meanings. Plainly and briefly, the doctrine of Ageless Wisdom is that the actual processes which bring about the death of the human body are expressions of laws and forces which need only be understood in order to release us from bondage of death. In other words, when we thoroughly understand what it is that makes us die, we shall also learn the secret of eternal life. It is because mankind has been afraid of death – so terror-stricken by it that few indeed have been those who have had courage to study it closely – that so little progress has been made in this important branch of occult

knowledge. The few who have looked death in the face, so to say, have had as their reward the revelation of a priceless secret. This is what the books of the alchemists mean when they say: “Dissolution is the secret of the Great Work.”

So begin your study this week by attentive consideration of Key 13 and its symbolism, reviewing whatever other words of explanation you have in other texts. Give special thought to the meaning of the symbol of the rising sun. Open your inner ears to any suggestion which may come to you from the Inner School concerning the seed-symbol in the upper left-hand corner of the picture. Notice that as the cards are laid out in the tableau, this seed-form seems to point upward toward the HERMIT; but in the magic square, it points toward the HANGED MAN. Consider in this connection all that you know about the letter YOD, to which THE HERMIT is attributed, and all that has been said in our writings concerning the significance of the element of Water. Similarly, observe that the rising sun is really one of the stars represented in Key 17.

Again, if you will consider the Keys 10, 12, 16, and 14, as they are placed in this tableau, you see at the top a symbol of the turning wheel of time, with the unmoved sphinx, symbol of the spirit of humanity, at its top. At the left is the Key that shows human personality as the temporary suspension of the whirling forces of the universe in a particular form. That is to say, one of the meanings of Key 12 is that a personality is like a whirlpool. It maintains its identity because of the energies that flow through it, and when those energies are turned in another direction, the whirlpool of personality disappears. Our apparent stability as entities on the physical plane is only a temporary state. If we fall into the error of supposing that physical plane existence is our whole being, if we permit it to mislead us into the delusion that a human life on the physical plane is an isolated fact, unrelated to the whole sweep of the cosmic manifestation, then inevitably, comes the terror and destruction pictured by Key 16, which is underneath DEATH in this tableau. Wiser counsel and certain types of experiment which are open to us will overcome the delusion. Then we shall see that physical existence is but an incident in our total life-expression, and the open way pictured by Key 14 will take us to the heights of spiritual realization.

Fundamentally, it is the energy of the Primal Will, symbolized by the light in the HERMIT'S lantern, which is at work in the various processes which break down the tissues of the human body. The breakdown of tissue releases that energy in our various forms of personal activity – thinking, feeling, and doing. Even so apparently an inactive person as a sage, who sits motionless in profound meditation, is nevertheless engaged in action, and one of the evidences of this is that genuine work in concentration and meditation makes the whole body break out into perspiration. In other words, intense mental work of the kind that leads to direct perception of the higher forms of reality breaks down cell-tissue just as certainly as does muscular effort. For perspiration is the invariable evidence that the skin is eliminating fatigue-poison, and fatigue-poison is the consequence of cell-disintegration. (Keys 9, 13, 17)

If you will look again at the cards, as laid out in the tableau, you will notice the symbol at the bottom of the wheel, just over the letter R, and over the 13th key. This is the alchemical symbol of dissolution, but it is also the special character used by astrologers to designate the sign Aquarius, to which sign the MAN whose head appears in the upper left-hand corner of Key 10 is also attributed. Notice that the man's head is in the same relative position as the seed-symbol in Key 13, and that it is also in the same relative position as the falling crown in Key 16. Man is the seed-form of a state of life-manifestation BEYOND HIMSELF. The great error that besets him is the supposition that his PRESENT STATE is the crown of creation. In a sense, to be sure, that which is the essence of human life is none other than the one great Reality. The error is in the supposition that the Great Work is brought to its completion by the appearance of the "natural man." When the human race stops, so to say, and loses its vision of the beyond, then confusion and terror come. Read the Bible story of the Tower of Babel, and you will notice that the desire to build a memorial of present glory was the cause of all the trouble. In Key 16 you see the same error pictured. The TOWER is a symbol of a vain attempt to arrest the onward flow of the Life-Power. It represents the sum-total of all the errors that grow out of the folly that humanity, as it is now, is the be-all and end-all of the creative process. Human personality as we know it is really just a STAGE of that process, and beyond it lie untold and unguessed glories. More than this, some few human beings in every generation, grasping this truth, have in their own persons verified it, and have passed beyond the limitations which to most

of us appear to be fixed and unalterable laws. There are persons who are not bound to the surface of the earth by gravity. There are persons who know the thoughts of others. There are persons who are not restricted to one spot on this globe, where their physical bodies happen to be. And even some of us, who have caught a glimpse of the tremendous possibilities in this seed-form we call “Man,” have had our own small assurances that our limits are by no means so fixed as we once supposed. (Keys 10, 13, 16)

Even the exoteric dogmas have their germ of truth, because they answer to some intuition of the human heart. We may smile at the popular notion that death is the gate to a heaven where all the injustices that appear to be so rampant on this earth will be made right. And the popular notion is certainly crude enough. Yet there is a deep occult sense in which it is true that by dying we get into the heaven-world where evil ceases to hold us in bondage. Have you ever stopped to think that even the person who began to study this course of lessons is actually no more? To the degree that your occult study has brought you enlightenment, to that degree the disintegrative process symbolized by Key 13 has eliminated some portion of the person that you were when you began your studies. Problems that terrified you have been adjusted. You can see the working of justice now in conditions that formerly appeared to you to be unmixed evils. Your faith – an open-eyed, reasonable faith – enables you to look forward to further adjustments. You have come to know that whatever bondage you seem to be suffering under is really due to ignorance. And you are beginning to understand that ignorance is but the resistance of certain portions of your physical organism to the passage of the light of the Life-Power’s perfect knowledge of all things. Thus, by dying to the old personality, you have already had glimpses of your true place in the scheme of things –and that true place is in very truth the “heaven” where no unrighteousness can enter, where sorrow is at an end, where perfect adjustment is the unvarying rule. (Keys 11, 13, 15)

Returning to my simile of the whirlpool, as a symbol of personal existence on the physical plane, let me remind you that every whirlpool is in a state of intense activity. Yet the working power of that activity is the flow of the river through the whirlpool. So it is with human life. False mysticism is the refuge of those deluded souls who believe that by refusing to occupy themselves with action they come closer to reality. Such people are

continually trying to get out of doing what their hands find to do. True realization is what is pictured by THE HANGED MAN, namely, that the motive power is not in the personality. One suspends the false notion that what one does is self-originated. True mystics, therefore, are never mere quietists. They are prodigious workers. Some of them, to be sure, work with their brains and their nerve-centers, rather than with their hands – but they work, just the same. Yet in all they do, they are aware that their personal activity is but a phase of the world-process on which that activity depends. This mental attitude is especially favorable to those subtle changes of the body chemistry (closely connected with the nerve-currents active in the region of the body ruled by Scorpio) which bring about that awakening of the higher functions of the brain. As these higher functions begin to manifest, the consciousness of the person changes. He dies to the old man, and rises again into the higher order of knowing which the old books on magic call “The knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.” In this connection, let me give you a hint. “Angel” means messenger. The particular angel who now has charge of the unfoldment of your life need not necessarily be anything like what most persons imagine angels are. There are angels and angels, and that center of the Life-Power’s expression which is the means of leading you up higher is your particular angel for this stage of your journey along the Way to Freedom. (Keys 12, 13, 14)

Remember the fundamental doctrine of Ageless Wisdom: ALL FORMS OF LIFE-EXPRESSION ARE VEHICLES OF THE ONE IDENTITY. Behind and above your particular “guardian angel” for the present moment is the overshadowing perfection of the One Identity. He (or it may be she) to whom is entrusted the work of supervising the present stage of your progress is but the messenger and representative of that Supreme One. The journey you are making toward the heights is the Way of Return. It is the upward arc of the wheel of manifestation. You, like all the rest of humanity, are like Hermanubis on the WHEEL OF FORTUNE. Your spiritual eyes are beginning to catch glimpses of that glorious Beyond which the Fool sees (hence the eyes of Hermanubis are level with the letter “A” or Aleph, on the Wheel). Your spiritual ears are beginning to understand the Great Message, are beginning to bring to you some inkling of the truth that your real being is one with the ONLY ONE. Your faith is being confirmed by experience, even as it is founded on reason. You do not blindly believe. Ageless Wisdom says to you: “Come, let us reason together.” It shows you relationships

between the various phases of existence which are passed over by most persons. It sharpens your powers of observation. It shows you the footprints of the Master Principle, and develops your creative imagination, so that you can see with the eye of faith what your physical eye has not yet witnessed. On its practical side, it is enabling you to make fine adjustments in your thinking, and is teaching you how to direct your emotional life into better expression. All this is making you gradually into a new person. What you were is passing away. What you are is better than what you were. And as your spiritual vision grows stronger through creative imagery, you will come to understand that pregnant saying: “Beloved, *now* are we the children of God, and (although) it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be, we know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, *for we shall see Him as He is.*’ (Keys 9, 10, 11)

The world of natural men and women see Him as He is not. Because of this, the “God” of exoteric theology all too often seems more devilish than divine. And the fearful image of the Devil in the Tarot Keys is, as you have read before, a picture of God misunderstood, or mentally seen as He is not. This vision of terror has been conjured up by the collective imagination of the natural man, who looks with dread upon anything which threatens the continuance of the fixed states of existence in which he mistakenly puts his trust. The natural man fears change, dreads novelty, detests difference. Conformity is his fetish, and when any of his fellows dares to be different, he will go to any length to suppress the innovation and get rid of the innovator. Examine closely the picture of the Devil. He represents all that does not “fit in” with our comfortable preconceptions. But the Life-Power will not be limited by our ignorance, and so the natural man personifies its unknown activities as the demon. (Keys 15, 16, 17)

Meditations

FIRST DAY: Keys 9, 13, 17. The resistless energy of the Primal Will courses through me. It breaks down every obstacle to its onward movement. It opens my understanding so that I perceive the beauty of the Great Pattern of manifestation. THE ONE IDENTIFY TRANSFORMS ME INTO ITS LIKENESS AND OPENS MY EYES TO THE PERFECTION OF ITS PERFECT LAW.

SECOND DAY: Keys 10, 13, 16. I am ascending into a higher order of being. This very day is a day of change from the imperfections of the past into a closer approach to the Divine Reality. The lightning-flash of inspiration overthrows my mistaken structures of ignorance and prejudice. I AM AN EXPRESSION OF THE ETERNAL PROGRESS AND TRANSFORMING POWER OF LIFE, WHICH BREAKS DOWN EVERY PRISON-HOUSE OF IGNORANCE.

THIRD DAY: Keys 11, 13, 15. Mine is a reasoned faith. I die daily away from the misapprehensions of the past. I begin to see that evil and seeming injustice are but aspects of the One Good, stages of the Life-Power's unfoldment which I have yet to understand. I AM A CENTER OF THE POWER OF ADJUSTMENT, WHICH OVERCOMES AND TRANSFORMS INTO BEAUTY EVERY APPEARANCE OF EVIL.

FOURTH DAY: Keys 12, 13, 14. The Life-Power is me, and flowing through me, does all this. My thoughts and words and deeds are but phases of the Great Transformation. Let them be guided this day by that Messenger of Reality whose office it is to guide me in the Way to Freedom. I AM CALM AND POISED IN THE MIDST OF ALL THESE CHANGES; FOR I KNOW THEY ARE TRANSFORMING ME INTO A MORE PERFECT IMAGE OF THE ONE REALITY.

FIFTH DAY: Keys 9, 10, 11. The One Identity watches over me. The cycles of necessity bring me ever nearer to the Inevitable Perfection. The forces of my life are balanced and true. MY TRUE SELF IS THE WITNESS, AND THE MOVER, AND THE REGULATOR OF PERFECT WORK.

SIXTH DAY: Keys 15, 16, 17. There is no bondage save that of ignorance and fear. Am I in prison? Then I have built the walls myself. Reality needs no walls for its protection, nor will Truth suffer herself to be veiled. SEEMING EVIL IS MY OPPORTUNITY TO BREAK DOWN SOME BARRIER OF IGNORANCE AND FIND MY WAY INTO THE PARADISE OF THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE.