

Tableau 18

The Tarot tableau for this lesson is

6	16	17	3
11	9	8	14
7	13	12	10
18	4	5	15

The constant summation is 42, which indicates Key 6, The Lovers, considered as the operation of the principle symbolized by Key 2 working through that represented by Key 4. This square also corresponds to the fourth stage of spiritual unfoldment represented by Key 18.

Key 6, as you know, represents the Disposing Intelligence, corresponding to the letter Zain. Key 2 stands for the Uniting Intelligence, which is attributed to the letter Gimel. Key 4 is the symbol of the Constituting Intelligence. We are told in the Book for Formation that the Uniting Intelligence is the “essence of glory,” and I have explained elsewhere that this essence is mind-stuff, which is symbolized by the robe of the High Priestess, blue and shimmering because it represents the “Water” of the alchemists, the Astral Fluid which solidifies, so to say, in all the forms of the physical plane. Thus, this lesson has to do with the means whereby that Astral Fluid is utilized through the activity of the Constituting Intelligence, which is said to “constitute creative force in pure darkness.” The Constituting Intelligence operates principally through the organs which have to do with the function of sight. It is the phase of the Life-Power’s activity which leads to true vision.

The power of true vision is a spiritual power whereby the Astral Fluid is condensed into visible outer forms. The sight center in the brain, when it is perfected, and when it is enabled to exercise its highest functions through the metaphysical light, which streams through it after the pineal body has begun its occult functioning, is like a lens, through which the Astral Light, in fluidic form, is actually projected into the outer conditions of the physical plane. Read very attentively here, for this is an immediate

instrument of the Constituting Intelligence, which actually builds the forms and conditions of the outer world. The mysterious power of transformation exerted by adepts, the power of miracles, the power to heal sick bodies, the power to bring about changes in the constitution of material forms, is none other than this.

To see truly is to be able to control the positive and negative currents of the Astral Light. These are the solar and lunar currents of Prana, concerning which one of the Hindu books declares: “To those men who practice, and thus always keep the sun and moon in proper order, knowledge of the past and future becomes as easy as if they were in their hand.” In the alchemical books, also, the Great Work is said to consist in right control of the Sun and Moon. Note the implication here. The Sun and Moon are, respectively, the luminaries of day and of night, the sources of the light whereby we are enabled to see. Thus, the alchemical book tells us that the Great Work is performed by the Sun and Moon, with the aid of Mercury.

From your earlier studies of Tarot, you will remember that the Disposing Intelligence attributed to the letter Zain is also related to the Mercurial sign, Gemini, represented by Key 6. In the Tarot, Mercury is symbolized by the Magician, and you have been taught that the Emperor is the same as the Magician – that the Emperor is the Magician, after his union with the High Priestess has transformed her into the Empress, who bears his children. Thus Mercury, the planet ruling sight, according to astrology, is occult connected with the letter Heh, by Mars. The head and brain, and particularly the eyes and the sight center, are the instruments of what is personified as Mercury. The force at work in these centers is the Mars force. Thus in Key 1, the Magician, we see the central figure wearing a red outer garment. Again, in our color scale, the tint assigned to Gemini is orange, and on the Tree of Life the same color is given to Splendor, the 8th Sephirah, called the “Sphere of Mercury.” Orange is the mixture of red, the color of Mars, and yellow, the color assigned to Mercury in our scale. All this may seem very involved and technical, but it is included here for the benefit of students who have special aptitude for following up clues that lead to the solution of alchemical and magical problems. Readers whose bent lies in other directions need only remember that the essential fact

indicated by all these correspondences is that the mental element in true vision is Mercurial, but that the force involved is predominantly of the Mars quality.

Seeing truly is as much an act of imagination as it is a manifestation of the laws of practice. Our physical vision has to be supplemented by mental imagery (Key 3). The perception of true relationships is super-sensual, and results from meditation. To see truly, in fact, requires the correlation of all our senses, and the sublimation of their reports in a higher order of knowing (Key 17). From superficial sense knowledge, we gain nothing but materials for a structure of error, certain sooner or later to be overthrown by a sudden influx of light from super-conscious levels (Key 16). The balance of conscious and sub-conscious activities symbolized by The Lovers cannot be maintained so long as the sense of separateness persists, for while we are imprisoned by that delusion the conscious and subconscious phases of our personal awareness are, so to stay, in disguise. Thus, the falling figures in Key 16 are shown clothed, but in Key 6 the man and the woman are nude, to indicate that neither hides anything from the other.

Until the Great Work is completed, it seems to us as if we were ourselves making the various experiments, but when the operation reaches its term; we know that the personality has been the subject of an operation conducted by the True Self, from super-conscious levels (Key 14). The conscious mind is no more than the transmitter of light from above. Thus, in the fundamental Tarot tableau which you studied in the First Section, the Magician is placed over Strength, to indicate that the subconscious modifications come immediately from him; but at the same time, he is shown lifting up his right hand, holding the wand, and pointing downward with his left hand, as if to indicate that he is merely a transmitter of energy. The power, therefore, which tames the lion in Key 8, has its origin in the super-conscious. It comes from the height on which the Hermit stands, and its direct effect is concerned with the processes of body-building which are related to the zodiacal sign Virgo. In other words, what we are considering now at this point is: The progress of any human being along the Path of Return, which leads to adeptship, and from adeptship to mastery, is really a series of bodily transformations. It is a chemical process of purification and sublimation, which results in the weaving of a finer and subtler vehicle for

the Spirit (Key 9). It is also a process which brings about the elimination of the grosser elements of the physical organism, and the fine adjustment of all the forces within it (Key 11).

In a sense, then, our personal unfoldment is more than personal. It is a special manifestation of universal laws and forces in the field of action represented by the life of a particular personality. The whole universe manifests within and through each of us (Key 10). Our lives are always utterly dependent upon the cosmic life; but until we reach a certain stage of unfoldment, we do not know it. We come to this stage, and then we become aware of our dependence, and gladly submit ourselves to the cosmic life (Key 12). This results in the utter dissolution of the false, seemingly separated personality, and this dissolution is the “mystic death” (Key 13). It is the transfer of consciousness from the vehicle to THAT which is the rider in the vehicle. It is a change from the bustle and disquiet of separateness to the still calm of the One Life. Therefore is the chariot, in Key 7, shown at rest, and the sphinxes couchant.

In reality, then, there is no adversary. As man progresses in understanding, he synthesizes into one Prince of Darkness the hosts of devils that were imagined by his ancestors. Yet even this Enemy is but a figment of his imagination. Just as a page of cipher manuscript contains inevitably the clues which enable a cryptographer to decipher it, so do all the semblances of antagonism which the universe presents to the uninitiated reveal to the better instructed the fundamental truth that all things are really working together for the liberation of man’s spiritual powers (key 15). Sooner or later, every human being reaches the stage of unfoldment where the meaning the “Way of Liberation is made plain. The Inner Voice speaks, and as we listen and obey, delusion vanishes (Key 5). Then we see all things as they really are. Thus true vision, which seems to set everything in order, is really no more than perception of the order which is eternally present. The vision does not impose order in the place of disorder, even though that is what seems to happen when the results of true vision are noticed by those who, as yet, are unable to see truly. Just as the outlines of objects are not really blurred, though they seem blurred to a sufferer from astigmatism, so the processes of the universe are never disorderly, nor ever antagonistic to human welfare; and when our vision is corrected, we simply see the order which has been there all the while (Key 4). This better seeing is the result of

a definite bodily transformation. It is brought about by the sublimation of the natural body – by a gradual alteration in the body chemistry and structure which makes the physical organism a suitable vehicle for the manifestation of higher rates of vibratory activity than those which are expressed through the physical organism of the merely natural man (Key 18).

The fact that adeptship and mastery are the consequences of profound alterations in physical chemistry and structure cannot be too strongly emphasized, for in these days there is a tendency to accept the error that liberation is a matter of the mind alone, or, at least, a matter having to do with higher planes, to the exclusion of the physical (Key 18). The mystic death mentioned on the preceding page is a real dissolution of physical cells, an elimination of the cells which have been impressed with the errors of the consciousness of separateness (Key 13). The elimination is automatic, to be sure. In large measure it is imperceptible; yet it is none the less actual. For when the animal nature is brought under control, it ceases to be the animal nature (Key 8). The initial impulses that effect this thorough-going transformation are passed down into the organic level from the human level of sub-consciousness, however, and they follow changes in our mental imagery, changes effected by acts of concentration (Key 3).

Continual practice in discrimination, continual exercise of intellectual power, to the end that the functions of conscious and subconscious levels of the personal life may be rightly exercised, is required to effect the changes I have been describing. Here I may seem to contradict what I have just been saying, to the effect that the work is really performed by the Higher Self. That contradiction, however, is only apparent. In Key 6, it is the power of the angel above the man and woman which is specialized in their particular activities. The angel, therefore, is understood as being the real actor. Nevertheless, what is below him acts also. To say that the One Self does the work is by no means to absolve ourselves from effort. So long as effort seems necessary, so long it is necessary. The illusion of separateness is not what we are working against, but the *delusion* which fails to recognize the illusion as such, and fails also to understand that precisely that illusion is necessary to the Life-Power's self-expression in the universe and in the life of man (Key 6). The real Self of every human being is none other than the Eternal Watcher pictured in Tarot as the Hermit. But so long as one is not

completely identified with that One, the illusion of separateness persists, and this requires us to act as if our own practice and our own efforts were what bring about the changes through which we attain to liberation (Key 9). Whether we know it or not, we are utterly dependent on the universal Life-Power. Whether we know it or not, we do nothing of ourselves. Knowing this marks a definite stage of spiritual unfoldment. We ripen into it, as a fruit which is acid and poisonous in its green state ripens into sweetness and healthfulness in due season (Key 12). With such knowledge comes a new attitude toward seeming adversity, toward the criticism of others, and especially toward the mental state of those who misjudge and calumniate us. The unripe person hates his adversaries, longs for a day in which he shall be freed from all adversities, damns those who speak ill of him, and unless he is perfectly comfortable, questions the justice of cosmic law. He who is ripe truly loves his enemies, knows that no proverb is truer than the saying, "Sweet are the uses of adversity," pities the mental darkness of those who misunderstand and condemn him, and looks upon discomfort as a signal that he has an adjustment to make somewhere in his personal mechanism (Key 15).

Persons who are attracted to Tarot and similar studies are those who are approaching ripeness. They are those who have had glimpses of a higher state of human existence than that which is pictured to us in our daily newspapers. Thus they have attracted the notice of those riper men and women who are ahead of us on the Path of Return. From those riper elder brothers and sisters of mankind comes all such teaching as this. It is a teaching based upon Their own experience, an experience we may share, if we will.

Meditations

FIRST DAY: Keys 3, 17, 16, 6. The harvest of wisdom ripens in the field of my sub-consciousness. Day by day, my vision of truth becomes clearer. I welcome the overthrow of my former errors. THE OVERSHADOWING PRESENCE DISPOSES ME TO FAITHFULNESS.

SECOND DAY: Keys 14, 8, 9, 11. In this day's experiences, the One Life refines and purifies my personality. I am made whole by the Universal Medicine. The One Will forms my flesh and blood according to its perfect pattern. THE LAW OF LIBERTY SETS ME FREE.

THIRD DAY: Keys 10, 12, 13, 7. The Life-Power already is all that I want to be. Its power is the immovable basis of all my personal achievement. That power dissolves everything in my personality that seems to obstruct its free self-expression. I AM BEING FASHIONED INTO A PERFECT VEHICLE FOR THE VICTORIOUS ONE.

FOURTH DAY: Keys 15, 5, 4, 18. I fear no evil. For as I listen and obey the instruction of the Inner Voice, delusion vanishes. I see the Heavenly Order wherever I look. FOR I AM BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE LIKENESS OF THE ONE SELF, THAT SELF WHICH SEES NAUGHT BUT THE PERFECTION OF ITS SELF-MANIFESTATION.

FIFTH DAY: Keys 18, 13, 8, 3. Today marks another stage of progress along the Path of Return. Today marks the utter dissolution of some error of the past. Today is a more perfect expression of the inexhaustible strength of the One Life. TODAY BRINGS ME NEARER THE GOAL OF TRUE WISDOM.

SIXTH DAY: Keys 6, 9, 12, 15. This day I manifest harmony. I look upward toward the heights. I rest secure in the knowledge of my union with the Life-Power. I RENEW MY STRENGTH.