

The tableau for this week is:

10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18

The magic square is:

13	18	11
12	14	16
17	10	15

The central key in both arrangements is No. 14, **TEMPERANCE**. The constant summation of the magic square is 42. It shows discrimination (Key 6), as the consequence of the operation of memory (Key 2) through reason (Key 4). Thus, this tableau emphasizes memory as the source of material upon which reason works, to the end that discrimination may be expressed. Key 14 shows what is the real nature of the process whereby we develop discrimination. Key 6 typifies the outcome of this process.

Now, in Lesson 12 you were told that the “Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel” might well mean your association with some personality a little beyond you on the Way to Freedom. Yet it was also said that the messenger who guides you on your way, no matter how little advanced beyond you he may be, is, as messenger or guardian angel, but a channel to put you in contact with the One Identity symbolized by **THE HERMIT**.

This week you will find the emphasis falling on the thought that the process, whereby we develop discrimination through reasoning correctly upon materials afforded by remembered experience, is a process due in large measure to the fact that we are acted upon by intelligences more highly developed than our own. In other words, there comes a time in every person's occult progress when he realizes that he himself is in a sense the subject of an experiment. They to whom this idea is repugnant make evident by that very repugnance the fact that no matter how glibly they make think about occultism and talk about it, they have yet to experience in their own persons some of its fundamental verities. The plain truth is that none of us would be as far along on the path of attainment as we are had we not been worked upon, experimented with, tempered and modified with loving care by other human beings whose training and experience qualify them for this work. Sometimes it is only after long years that this truth dawns upon the student. He may suppose himself to be a perfectly free agent, doing just exactly what he pleases. He may be inclined to pride himself on his independence, on his perseverance, on his desire to advance to better things. But sooner or later he begins to realize that, all along, he has been under direction. As the years go by he can look back and see that he has been led, as gently and lovingly as the blind are led by those who care for them. With this realization comes a great humbleness, and a great thankfulness. One sees then that the protection and care of the ONE IDENTITY reach us through the channels of other lives. The better one knows that ONE IDENTITY, the clearer his consciousness of his relation to It, the more able is he to act as a director for those

whose grasp of the truth is not so clear as his. Thus we are all at various stages in human development. From Those above us we receive aid, and we are in some degree the materials with which their experiments are carried on. Similarly, when we realize the truth, we shall be carrying on similar experiments of our own. As Lao-tze says: "Imperfect men are the materials with which the wise man works." All this work consists in a series of demonstrations that every human personality is a center of expression for the whole series of cosmic cycles. By his work with those under his direction, the wise man learns, himself, more and more concerning the Law of Cycles. The effect of his labors on those who are assigned to him is always to make them, in turn, more and more conscious of the operation of the same law in their own lives. Remember, true occultism is not a system of beliefs. On the contrary, it is a system of verified and verifiable knowledge. The work of the practical occultist aims ever at the reduction of the number of his beliefs, and the substitution of positive knowledge in their place. In the main, the subject of the various experiments is the occultist's own organism. The great art of transmutation is the transmutation of one's own personal vehicle. Step by step it is raised and purified. Imperfections are purged out of it. New cells and groups of cells are made to function, until at last the work is completed by the substitution of the deathless spiritual body of the Master for the corruptible mortal vehicle with which he was born. (Keys 10, 14, 18)

Such transformations require fine adjustments, and they demand faith, too. Yet it is by no means blind faith. Rather is it the imaginative development, in concrete mental forms, of fundamental propositions or seed-thoughts

which are strictly reasonable, and which rest on the basis of proven and probable fact. Thus, over and over again the wise books admonish us to test every proposition in the fires of actual experience. It is not to the lazy that Nature unveils her beauty. (Keys 11, 14, 17)

One of the hardest lessons for the beginner on this path of practical occultism is that which Jesus dramatically expressed in his doctrine of non-resistance. With characteristic Oriental exuberance of metaphor, he brought the principle down to the practical plane of personal relations. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou are in the way with him." For untold millenniums the merely natural man has looked upon every other person as a potential enemy, and upon nature as an opponent. Ageless Wisdom denies this fallacy, and the progress of modern science confirms the truth of the denial. Even exoteric laboratory research demonstrates by actual experiment that there is nothing in nature intrinsically inimical to man. Everything has its use, and can be employed by us to enhance our happiness and enlarge our boundaries of control. But before we can accomplish anything, we must realize our utter personal dependence on the cosmic order. We must see that all our troubles are the result of our ignorance of the way things really are. We must destroy our ancient habitations of ignorance by the influx of the light of truth. (Keys 12, 14, 16)

Even death must no longer be looked upon as an evidence of the unfriendliness of nature. Still less must it be regarded as the working of a spiritual power of evil, malignantly opposing the welfare of mankind. By certain types of experiment it is possible to demonstrate that the very forces which bring about the death of a human body

can be so directed that they will first of all awaken centers in the brain which can register our experiences as conscious persons during periods when we are not functioning on the physical plane. This knowledge gained, it is possible to pass to a yet higher stage of unfoldment, and then the adept makes for himself a physical vehicle so enduring, so perfectly and radiantly healthy, and so free a channel for the manifestation of the subtler forces of nature, that he may continue to exist on the physical plane for a period of years far in excess of the ordinary life-span. And when he does lay aside his physical body, what occurs is not death in the ordinary sense of the word. Thus, by being able to remain for a long time on the physical plane, the adept masters easily the most difficult of human problems. (Keys 13, 14, 15)

All this has its beginning in an intellectual recognition of the truth that every human personality is a particular expression of an eternal order. At first this perception assumes the form of belief. It is a conviction which is forced upon us by careful reasoning, following close observation of the course of nature. Then comes imaginative development of the seed-idea, and the building up of definite mental images of the logical consequences to which that idea leads. Here all the creative powers of the mind are brought into play. Furthermore, since mental images always tend to express themselves in action, the imaginative development of the seed-idea produces actual changes in circumstance which demonstrate the validity of the original thought. Little by little all the old habits of thought are reversed, and there comes into manifestation a corresponding reversal of one's situation. Joy takes the place of sorrow, health supplants disease, prosperity is manifested

instead of poverty, and wisdom replaces ignorance. (Keys 10, 11, 12)

This whole process of verification, then, begins with the overthrow of our false notions. By substituting accurate observation for superficial acquaintance with surface appearances, we store our memories, with records of our experience of things, as they are, instead of with impressions of things as they look. Then, through meditating upon what we have learned, we begin to see relationships unperceived by the majority of human beings, and the process also effects an adjustment of the balance among certain centers of force in our nervous system. This is what is represented by the symmetrical arrangement of stars in Key 17. These stars represent forces at work through physical centers which are closely connected with the glands of the endocrine system. Through the right adjustment of the functions of these glands, the body-chemistry is changed and we are transformed from the state of the natural man into the state of spiritual humanity. The seed of right thought bears fruit in perfected bodies. It is by this process that we are graduated from the school of natural humanity, and take our rightful place in the ranks of those who belong to the "twice-born." (Keys 16, 17, 18)

I cannot make it too emphatic that the methods of practical occultism are directed to a distinct physiological modification. We hear much of adepts, and in certain quarters, altogether too much about astral bodies and other finer vehicles of personality. Finer vehicles there certainly are, and we have to learn, as part of our training, how to function consciously in them, and how to impress upon the physical brain a record of that functioning. But not a

little of the teaching to be found in books purporting to deal with practical occultism, is such that it leads to the belief that the physical body is only an obstacle to spiritual development. This is a gross error. An unhealthy body is certainly a bar to occult progress, and all the wise books insist, therefore, that physical health must precede any attempt to work with the finer forces, especially in those forms of practice which in the Orient are called Yoga, and in the West, Alchemy. This is one reason why these lessons have so little to say about that kind of practice. Experience has taught me that even such relatively simple and carefully chosen exercises as I have sometimes given for work with the finer types of vibration are often misapplied. Careful as I have been to give explicit directions, some of my pupils have disregarded my plainly stated warnings against psychism and against overdoing work of this type. Even the best efforts of a teacher cannot altogether avert the consequences of misguided enthusiasm on the part of some of his pupils. Nor can they eliminate the tendency of some types of mind to think that they know better what to do than the person they have accepted as their instructor. So let me repeat. "Astral work" is dangerous for persons who are not in perfect physical health. Furthermore, the main object of occult practice is not the development of the higher and finer vehicles.

The notion that these vehicles need development is one of the great fallacies of pseudo-occultism. It is the physical body that must be purified and perfected. Your finer bodies are perfectly all right just as they are. The Great Work consists of the integration of "the strong force of all forces" right here on the physical plane. That work includes various kinds of mental practice, and work with

the Tarot Keys affords unlimited opportunities for this. But the objective is the building of a new type of organism. And, as I said at the beginning of this lesson, that new type of organism will not grow in and of itself.

It does grow by the application of the very same laws and forces which have brought it to its present stage of what I have called “natural humanity.” But it must be taken beyond that stage, and this can be done in no other way than by the conscious and intentional application of those laws and forces. I think it should be fairly easy to understand that no work of this kind can succeed if one’s efforts are directed to the wrong end. This is why I am insisting that the unfoldment of a new kind of physical body, and not the development of any of our finer vehicles, is the object for which we are working.

This being understood, it should also be easy to see that since the subconscious mind is the body-builder, we shall get our new bodies as a result of its activities. From what we know of the subconscious mind, it should also be evident that since its activities are automatic, and are absolutely determined by our habitual conscious mental attitudes, the first stages of the Great Work must be those which effect a change in our conscious thinking. It is for this reason that the Tarot series begins with the Magician, the Key which represents the use of our conscious intellectual powers in acts of concentrated attention, which attention, as you will see from a glance at the symbols of that Key, is to be directed to the field of sensory experience. When we observe that field accurately, our minds are stored with true impressions, and these bear fruit ultimately in the regeneration of our bodies.

Meditations

FIRST DAY: Keys 10, 14, 18. I am on the upward turn of the Wheel of Life which brings me ever nearer the one true Goal. I embrace every opportunity to verify the truths of Ageless Wisdom. The Perfect Law is being built up in my body. ALL THAT I AM IS RELATED TO THE WHOLE LIFE-EXPRESSION, AND UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND, I PRESS ONWARD TO THE HEIGHTS OF LIBERATION.

SECOND DAY: Keys 11, 14, 17. I live my faith. It is a reasonable expectation of eternal progress. Every day I look for fresh revelations of truth. MY WHOLE LIFE IS ADJUSTED BY THE GREATER LIFE THAT WORKS THROUGHOUT TO REVEAL ITS PERFECTION.

THIRD DAY: Keys 12, 14, 16. I am consciously reversing my former states of mind. I welcome every trial of my devotion to the One Reality. I welcome the overthrow of every erroneous opinion. I AM THE UNMOVED WITNESS OF THE GREAT TRANSMUTATION, WHICH PUTS AN END TO THE SENSE OF SEPARATENESS.

FOURTH DAY: Keys 13, 14, 15. I welcome change. I see in all experience that the One Life works upon me to purify my whole personality. I face problems with equanimity, for I am one with That which knows the right answer to them all. THIS IS A NEW DAY, AND I MEET ITS TESTS WITH JOY, CONFIDENT THAT EVERY

SEEMING ADVERSITY IS BUT ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

FIFTH DAY: Keys 10, 11, 12. The Spirit at the heart of the universe is one with my spirit. The law that rules the stars rules also in my members. My support is the eternal. I AM UNMOVED BY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, POISED IN THE MIDST OF ACTION, CERTAIN OF SUPPORT IN ALL APPARENT VICISSITUDES.

SIXTH DAY: Keys 16, 17, 18. This day the lightning-flash of some new knowledge of Reality rids me of another error. Let me be still, that I may see Truth. The path is open before me, and I press on toward the goal. I AM FREED FROM THE SENSE OF SEPARATENESS, AND REST THIS DAY IN THE UNBROKEN KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH THAT, EVEN IN MY BODY, I AM BEING RAISED TO A HEIGHT BEYOND ALL FORMER ATTAINMENTS.

SEVENTH DAY: Use only the Pattern.