

Tarot And The Kabbalah

Lesson Fourteen

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This time we will travel from Sphere 5, Severity, across to Sphere I4, Mercy, on pathway number 8. The path is represented by Major Arcana Key, VIII, Strength. The esoteric keyword for this card is “Courage”.



This lady bends over a lion, “The King Of The Beasts,” gently opening (or some say closing) its mouth. The lion appears to be gentle in turn, trusting the lady to do as she will. There is a garland of living greenery loosely draped over the lion's neck, again symbolizing his trust in the lady for allowing her to put it there. Above her head is a figure eight lying on its side. This is called the “Cosmic Lemniscate” which is an esoteric symbol of eternal life. Obviously, it takes courage for her to work with the lion this way, and “courage is its keyword.

Esoterically, the lady represents our conscious human self, while the lion symbolizes our lower animal self. Both of these are important to our survival—the higher “conscious self” to make our choices and decisions rationally, and the lower “animal self” to take care of our material needs and our safety issues. But—it's important that we keep these in their proper place. We need always keep our consciousness in control. Otherwise, we will become too aggressive, too ready to fight, whether literally or figuratively.

At this point in creation, the Creator has learned about Wisdom and Understanding, Severity and Beauty. Now It needs to balance Severity with Mercy. Severity teaches about rules and laws. But—Mercy keeps the door open for forgiveness. If we paid the full price for our mistakes, we'd never be able to grow; we'd be too busy paying penalties. So, in the process of Creation, the Creator made a place for us to learn from our mistakes and move on. This holds true for the Creator as well; remember, we are each an integral part of the Creator and Its Creation. So, in giving us Mercy, It gets the same Mercy through us.

Now: the baby has grown and has now become a young teenager. He/she has reached a place in life where his decisions and choices make a difference to others. (I'm going to use the generic “he” rather than specifying each time. Just know that I always mean “he/she”, or s/he.) This puts him in a position of needing to learn responsibility for his choices. However, due to some of the mischief he

often gets himself into, he will certainly need this “mercy” from time to time. After all, he's just learning about responsible choices, and it takes time to learn it.

In the case of his creation of a project, he hasn't yet become capable of planning things out completely rationally. Mistakes are made along the way. But since there is the possibility of “Mercy”, he is able to re-start a few times during the process, and eventually either reach a successful completion, or learn the lessons inherent in the failure. The most important thing, here, is that he must have the courage to face up to these failures and learn from them. And, although he doesn't really understand it yet—he can always start again. This is a lesson that frequently takes a very long time to learn. Unfortunately, many people never do. For them, each failure can be devastating.

Now: As for the adult we've been following, he too will make mistakes along the way and, again, some of them will lead to failure in the project, whether large or small. If he has been learning the necessary lessons along the way, these failures should not make *him* feel like a failure.

It's unfortunate, but we seldom learn much about life when things are going well. We just sit back, fat and happy, and enjoy ourselves. It's when life offers challenges that we are forced to learn or perish, so to speak. It's the challenges which teach us the lessons we need to learn.

So, with any luck, he faces his temporary failures with courage, learns from them, whatever they have to teach, and continues his “education” in this school we call life.

In a reading, we need to remember the importance of the keyword, “Courage”—without the courage to face the challenges, we cannot learn from them. So... ”You may be about to face some challenging circumstances in the near future; they may even have begun already. Do you recognize what I'm referring to? If not, keep your eyes open; it seems to be on the way. The important thing to bear in mind, here, is that you need to have the courage to face up to this challenge. There are lessons to be learned from this, so you don't want to try to avoid it. It serves an important opportunity to learn something you really need to learn.”

That's pretty much how I would read the card. If you are using the keyword I'm suggesting for you, you might read it the same way (or similar).

See you next time.

Bright Blessings ~ Gary