

THE TAROT OF THE MAGICIANS



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1. Introduction and Background

The 78 cards of the Tarot deck contain all of the symbolic correspondences of the modern Western Esoteric Tradition. Yet the symbology captured by the Tarot is obscurely depicted in the images and allegories contained in each card, and is layered in such a way as to be somewhat ambiguous, allowing multiple interpretations and perspectives - a model of paradoxical truth. The Tarot has an astonishing density to it, and attempts by various pundits to dismiss its significance to the occult community should go largely unheeded. The ability to pack so much information in each card of the Tarot is no small feat, as anyone who has attempted to design and illustrate an entire deck by hand certainly knows. As a symbolic resource, the Tarot seems infinite. In fact, to the practicing magician, the Tarot represents all of the archetypes and symbolic allegories that a magician could use in a lifetime of practicing ritual magick. This is why some occultists refer to the 78 cards of the Tarot as the *Book of Thoth*, for the complete cycle of spiritual evolution and all its various themes and characters are succinctly represented therein. We could not imagine any lost grimoire nor any hidden arcane legacy greater than that of the Tarot.

We approach an analysis of the Tarot with the knowledge that it couldn't be anything but incomplete. Since the density of the Tarot symbology seems almost infinite, it is an impossible task to present all perspectives and interpretations. We instead seek to present some of the basic symbolic structures that underlie the Tarot, and so present a structure and a method of Tarot interpretation - for the cards do have meanings, yet they are very complex, and cannot be resolved in a word or a phrase. The Tarot mirrors the world as perceived through the *eye of spirit*, and so the meanings or interpretations of the cards cannot be resolved by the eye of flesh or mind. If C.G. Jung were to have succinctly defined his theorized *symbols of transformation*, then they probably would have looked like the Tarot. They would have been described as a collection of transformative inducing images, and that is an apt description of the Tarot. The Tarot is a tool that harnesses transcendental spirituality, used as both a mechanism to grasp the spiritual world, but also to realize the complex underpinnings of personal and collective destiny. As a system of divination, it characterizes the interactions of spiritual processes, and it can either open a window into the spiritual world for the mind to appreciate these interactions symbolically represented, or it becomes the very agent of active spiritual change and ultimate illumination.

The primary use of the Tarot has been to divine the patterns of fate, seen as either the motivating factors of both Deity and Humanity, or as the inner workings of destiny itself. The cards laid out in a reading reveal the hidden motivations and secret mysteries of people and situations in all times and locations. For the Tarot, consisting of a vast repository of psychological and spiritual archetypes that can be manipulated in either a random or deliberate manner, is not reserved for passive divination alone. The Tarot is also the blue-print used for the construction of magickal workings, and so the magician aspires to master the 78 cards and all their symbolism in order to master the art of transcendental magick itself.

The secret to mastering the Tarot is to learn its underlying structures, and then apply that knowledge to each individual card. Once individual cards are understood, then one must be sensitive to the context of groups of cards as they appear in readings or as members of a class. Thus, there can be a variance of meaning applied to each card within a reading due to its context; but a card's intrinsic meaning is anchored to the matrix from which all the cards gain their significance. This matrix is the structure of correspondences that act as the constituent elements of each card, building up a unique meaning for each one.

The first structure found in the Tarot is the division of the cards into three distinct groups: the Trumps (numbered with Roman numerals I through XXI, and 0); the Dignitaries or Court Cards (16 cards of personages with royal titles); and the Naibs or Pip cards (Ace through 10 in the 4 suits). The Dignitaries and the Naib cards join to form what is called the Minor Arcana or Lesser Mystery; the mystery, or *arcana*, of the four Elements as represented by the four suits of the Tarot. The 22 trumps stand apart from the cards governed by the four suits, and these cards form what is called the Major Arcana, or Greater Mystery. It is theorized that each of these three different groups represented a separate deck of cards with a separate origin, and were incorporated into a single deck at a later time. However, from the point of view of the magician, these three groups represent merely a functional holism.

The second structure found in the Tarot consists of the four suits; and these divide the Naibs and the Dignitaries into smaller classes of cards. This division is represented by symbols of the Wand, Sword, Cup and Pentacle. It is no surprise that the grouping of these four classes are concerned with the four Elements. For the symbols representing the four suits are actually depictions of the elemental tools of the magician, and as a clue, these can be seen lying on a table, ready for use, in the trump card of the Magician. The archetypal four-fold division is also analogous to the mystical four letter word for God, the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, (YHVH), and the four Qabbalistic Worlds. The four suits act as an elemental base for the further qualification of each card. In addition, the cards of the four suits are further divided into fourteen specific valued cards, one for each suit, and this is known as the third structure. The Ace is called the root of the Element, and the four dignitaries of King, Queen, Prince and Princess, would represent the Elemental forces; and the rest are numbered two through ten, and along with the Ace, represent the ten spheres of the Ten Emanations of the Qabbalah. Therefore, the ten emanations are filtered through the four suits, being then the 10 Sephiroth of the Qabbalah as defined by the four Qabbalistic Worlds.

The trumps seem to have no division within them, and so they appear to stand outside the four-fold division of the rest of the cards. However, each trump has a Roman numeral affixed to the top of the card, except for the card of *The Fool*, and could thus be arranged numerically from I to XXI. The Fool card, which originally had no number, was often considered to be positioned either before or after all of the other 21 trumps. But by popular consensus, (occultists of the 19th century), the initial position became favored, and thus the assumed value of 0 became the adopted number for the Fool card. This is why the older Tarot decks assign no number to the Fool, and new decks (since the middle 19th century),

assign the value of zero.

To the magician, the Tarot cards represent the Treasure House of symbols, which he or she can use to build magickal workings. Each of the above structures represent the essential components of ritual magick. The only missing information that a magician would require are the ritual patterns themselves - the greatest secret of the Art of Ritual Magick. Yet the four Aces, the Court cards, the Naibs and the Trumps are defined collectively as the magician's lamen or *symbol of power*, and this unified talismanic image depicts the magick of the Tarot, with its powers, intelligences, inner world gateways, and symbols of transformation and initiation, which are thus arrayed and made ready for use.

The Four Components of the Magician's Tarot

The first and most important component for working magick are the four Watchtowers that make up the consecrated magick circle, and where all magickal activity occurs. These four Watchtowers are represented by the four Aces of the Minor Arcana. The four Aces represent the base of all magickal operations, and the classification or grouping of these four qualities are further mirrored in the grouping of the rest of the Minor Arcana. Each Ace represents the element of a specific Watchtower and all its associated correspondences; thus the Wands are Fire, the Cups are Water, the Swords are Air, and the Pentacles are Earth. The Watchtowers cause the magickal domain of a magick circle to be properly aligned to the four cardinal directions, and thus create a symbolic and sacred analogue to the outer world.

The second component are the 16 Dignitaries or Court Cards, and these symbolize the Elemental powers available to the magician for use in practical magick. The Tarot suit establishes the Element base, and the royal title of the Court Card represents the qualifying Element. In this fashion, the Kings are Fire, the Queens are Water, the Princes or Knights are Air, and the Princesses or Pages are Earth. Thus the King of Cups would be *Fire of Water*, and the Princess of Swords would be *Earth of Air*. The combination of Element base to Element qualifier produce 16 different forces, and these forces all called Elementals. These 16 forces are inspirational and emotional in nature, and the magician who controls them, controls the source of his/her own emotional basis - thus allowing for internal manipulation and self-control. These Elemental powers assist the magician to experience the various ecstatic states of consciousness induced through a powerful emotionally based stimulation, which also aids the magician in gaining higher level transformations, too. Elementals are the powers that the magician wields, and are the building blocks to more complex ritual magickal workings.

The third component are the 36 Naib cards (minus the four Aces) that represent the concourse of spirits or intelligences and their domains, both of which are available to the magician. Each card represents a separate reality of the spirit world or Inner Planes, and therein a transcendental mystery is presented. A hierarchy of spirits are associated with this domain and represent the order of spiritual beings that operate within it. The Naib card is

thus a gateway, which leads to a place where one of the 36 archetypal mysteries of the Spirit are paradoxically revealed. The manner of interpreting these cards is to use the Qabalah, and so their numeric values in the four suits correspond to the nine Sephiroth of the Qabalah (Chokmah through Malkuth) as expressed through the four Qabbalistic Worlds (Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah). The 36 decans of the Zodiac can also be used as correspondences to these 36 cards.

The fourth component are the 22 trumps or Atus (Italian *Attuti*), and these closely follow the twenty-two stages in the literary cycle of the hero. The symbolic nature of this heroic cycle is that it actually describes the Cycle of Initiation, that spiritual and psychological process that illustrates the recursive pattern of transformation undergone by the individual seeker, and even the Deity itself. Thus this cycle is broken into two distinct but related cycles, and these are the cycle of the Transformation of the Individual, and the cycle of the Transformation of the Cosmos, or the Cosmogonic cycle. The latter cycle is usually perceived by the individual as a cosmic spiritual vision (myths of origin and final destiny), the realization of which completes the alignment of the inner individual psyche (the beholder) to the outer non-dual spiritual source of all being.

These four distinct components of the Magician's Tarot are used selectively to flesh out the skeletal structure of a ritual pattern. The symbolic images of the 22 trumps allow for the use of the process of transformation when incorporated into a ritual; if all 22 are used together and are arranged in the sequence of the cycle of initiation, then the ritual is of an initiatory nature. The 16 dignitaries establish the quality of magickal powers employed, and the 36 Naibs represent the gateways into the spiritual world (the decans), and their associated powers and intelligences - the questing place of all magicians. The four Aces, although constant, represent the watchtower correspondences of the magick circle, and also the magickal tradition that one is working through.

As a system of divination, the Tarot cards are randomly chosen and laid down into a pattern or predetermined format (*Tree of Life, Celtic Cross, etc.*), and then analyzed. This represents the passive method of Tarot divination. There is also a method of divination known as a *forced* or *active* Tarot reading, where the cards are deliberately chosen instead of randomly selected. A reading thus deliberately chosen and laid out into a reading pattern where the cards are meditated upon, visualized, magically charged, and then projected outward into the material world, is a form of magickal ritual. Sometimes the reading pattern chosen for the cards in a forced reading does not correspond to any of the reading patterns typically used for divination, and would not be interpreted as such. This is because the reading pattern of a forced or active reading may be exclusively magickal, and not designed for a passive interpretation.

Conclusion

The Tarot requires a structure or symbolic grid to determine the significance of each individual card. Each card does have a specific meaning, although it is very complex, and

it cannot be resolved in a word or a phrase. The Tarot mirrors the world as perceived through the *eye of spirit*, and so the meanings or interpretations of the cards cannot be resolved by the eye of flesh or mind. The Tarot consists of four components: the four Aces as the four Watchtowers in a magick circle, the 16 Dignitaries as the Elemental powers, the 36 Naib cards as the gateways (decans), inner plane domains and spiritual hierarchy, and the 22 trumps as the aspects of the cycle of initiation. Thus, the structure of the Tarot can be seen as a structure of magick itself, representing the components of magickal rituals, but not the ritual patterns. A Tarot reading can be passive or active, becoming itself a powerful magickal ritual when used actively.

2. Correspondences of the Tarot

The basic attributes of the Tarot consist of the following four Occult systems: the Four Elements, the Ten Sephiroth of the Qabbalah, the Seven Planets of the Ancients, and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac.

- The seven planets are the Seven Planetary Intelligences of the ancients, and are applied to the correspondences of the Naib cards, 2 through 10, of the four suits.
- The four elements represent the four suits and the four royal titles, and they are grounded in the four Qabbalistic Worlds.
- The ten Sephiroth of the Qabbalah correspond to the numerical value of the Naib cards, Ace through 10 of the four suits.
- The twelve signs of the Zodiac are the standard zodiacal attributes, and are applied to the Naib cards, 2 through 10. The zodiacal sign's element matches the suit's associated element.
- The twenty-two trumps incorporate all of the above attributes of the Elements, Planets and Zodiacal signs, to cover the correspondences of all of the trumps. However, two attributes over-lap, and this occurs with the element of Earth and the planet Saturn, where both correspond to the 32nd path of the Tree of Life, (The World, Atu XXI). Otherwise the combination of 12 Signs, 7 Planets, and 4 Elements would make for 23 instead of 22 trumps. This will be covered in the attributes of the 22 paths of the Tree of Life.

The following sets of correspondences are used to define the qualities of the above sets of attributes. Examined separately, the student can then become familiar with their meaning and significance, and understand how they are aggregated to determine the matrix of the Tarot, and identify the nature of the cards to which they are associated. The descriptions used to qualify these attributes is by no means exhaustive, so the student should use them as

suggestive meanings, and develop a deeper understanding through the study of the Qabalah and Astrology.

The Seven Planetary Intelligences of the Ancient

- *Sun* - Identity (ego), pride, dignity, self-expression, individuality.
- *Moon* - Emotions, feelings, sensitivities, moods, internal or psychic perceptions.
- *Mercury* - Communicative, intellectually active, verbal, curious, commercial activities (commerce).
- *Venus* - Desire, love, friendship, artistically creative, poetic, sensual.
- *Mars* - Aggressive pursuits, courage, disciplined action, self-motivation, impulsive.
- *Jupiter* - Compassion, idealism, sympathetic, grandeur, pomp, ostentatiousness.
- *Saturn* - Judgement, rules, restrictions, karma, responsibilities, determination.

The Four Elements

Fire - The Element of Fire represents light, illumination, realization, understanding, insight, it is electric, expansive, volatile, and it is perceived in the image of a lightning bolt (a Yod). It is the primal creative power that is both swift and violent in its expression. The Yod also symbolizes the archetype of masculinity. It is unbounded and consists of pure intellect. The Yod as Fire is like the flash of knowing in the Universal Mind. The first stage of creation is the conception of form as an idea or thought, and therefore Yod symbolizes the primordial thought. This awakening of consciousness, although not yet individuated, represents the initial state of being as the dawn of consciousness. This state is symbolized by the archetype of the Universal Mind, and it preceded all beings of flesh and the manifestation of intelligence as found in the organic synthesis of the brain.

Water - The Element of Water represents sensation, feelings, emotions, empathy, receptivity, magnetic, contractile and stable, it is the archetypal feminine quality that polarizes and gives meaning, significance and value to the archetypal masculine quality, which is Fire. The origin of consciousness consists of thoughts as ideals, but they only become activated when they interrelate and form patterns of meaning. The evaluation of an abstract concept gives it a meaning that it might not otherwise possess. Pure symbolism has no intrinsic meaningfulness. Symbols gain their meaning through contrast and context.

Air - The Element of Air represents mediation, ordering and structure, intellect and will (personal volition), synthesis, mutability and all forms of mental cognition. Air represents a form of capriciousness and chance, because at the level of manifestation, the determination of Spirit no longer applies. We are not governed by fiat or fate, but by the application of our own true will and personal desires. Air symbolizes the ego as self, that aspect of consciousness which acts as an ordering principle that gives the illusion of unity to the self, and thus emulates the true unity of Spirit. Air is the principal element that causes Fire and Water to become merged into a single whole, and so it has the qualities of both Elements as its activating nature - therefore, Air is ruled by both logic and feeling.

Earth - The Element of Earth represents the manifestation and magick of animated existence - the power of the life force as it acts upon all living and inanimate things. This is the merging of Spirit and Matter that gives living things their peculiar nature of being animate and also inanimate, sentient and physical. The Element Earth cloths and binds up the other three elements so that they have the ability to become manifest and realized in the world of matter. The Element of Earth also causes the other three elements to define themselves in a more concise and existential manner, so that the qualities of Fire become energy, Water becomes liquid, Air becomes gaseous, and Earth becomes the obdurate and hardened quality of matter. Yet with this domain of matter is also life, and this represents the four elements activated by the fifth element, the essence of Spirit and the domain of conscious sentience.

Qabbalistic Correspondences of the 40 Naibs

The Four Aces: The Aces represent the pure expression of the Four Elements as symbolized by the four suits. This pure expression is the highest spiritual value (Kether), of the element, and so they represent all potential, not yet manifest in any tangible form. The Aces represent an intrusion of spirit in its purest and elementary quality when they occur in association with other cards in a reading.

The Four Twos: The Twos represent the Qabbalistic Sephirah of Chockmah, where the element of the suit achieves its first manifestation. This manifestation is pure and uncontaminated by material concerns, and therefore, the elements appear in their original simplicity and harmonious nature. The essence of the meaning of the Twos is the experience of wisdom or insight about the matter associated with the suit.

The Four Threes: The Threes represent the Qabbalistic Sephirah of Binah, where the first pure manifestation (wisdom) is joined with a qualifying formation (understanding), thus giving it stability. The essence of the meaning of the Threes is the resolution of insight, which causes the birth of true understanding of the matter associated with the element of the suit.

The Four Fours: The Fours represent the Sephirah of Chesed; and whereas the Threes represent stability and formation, the Fours cause solidification and formation through the expression of ideals. The essence of the meaning of the Fours is the organization of ideas which cause the emergence of ethics; and these bestow their grace through compassion upon the matter associated with the element of the suit.

The Four Fives: The Fives represent the Sephirah of Geburah which gives direction and volition to established ideals. The Fives bring about the activation of ideals for constructive or destructive purposes; the advent of motion to ideal causes stress and instability. The essence of the meaning of the Fives is that they are motivators for good or ill, upon the matter associated with the suit.

The Four Sixes: The Sixes represent the Sephirah of Tiphareth which gives balance and harmony, thus resolving the motivational energy of the Fives. The Sixes cause the establishment of the spiritualized individual, the harmonizing of ideals and their application to the self. The essence of the Sixes is that they resolve the outward seeking of ideals with the inner realization of the ideal which is self expressed. Each of the four suits represent a different aspect of idealized self expression.

The Four Sevens: The Sevens are attributed to the Sephirah of Netzach, which having departed from the harmony of the Sixes, are troubled by the intrusion of desire. The influence of Netzach causes the self-certainty of Tiphareth to be compromised by self doubt and the need for external reassurance. The essence of the meaning of the Sevens is the influence of insecurity driving the individual to seek outward fulfillment in the matter associated with the element of the suit.

The Four Eights: The Eights are attributed to the Sephirah of Hod, which represents the rational intellect attempting to re-establish order after the impact of the Sevens. The Eights are the mind's defensive techniques to rationalize internal emotional insecurity, and thus give the self a sense of understanding and ultimate control. The essence of the Eights is the re-establishment of internal order through the imposition of rational thought. And this temporarily resolves the matter associated with the element of the suit.

The Four Nines: The Nines are attributed to the Sephirah of Yesod, and thus the resolution of insecurity becomes balanced by the reformation of the self through dreams and fantasies. The individual has accepted the limitations of desire and allows them to be fulfilled through the power of the imagination. The essence of the Nines is the re-establishment of balance through the acceptance of physical limitations and the subsequent creative exploration of the inner mind through dreams and fantasy. The power of fantasies, in the inner mind is reflected through the matter associated with the element of the suit.

The Four Tens: The Tens are attributed to the Sephirah of Malkuth, and thus represents the solidification and final fruition of the process of each suit. The old adage, “as ye sew, so shall ye reap”, is herein potently realized. The four Tens signal the end or the final resolution of a matter; and only the nature of the process will determine if the outcome will be positive or negative.

Correspondences of the Signs of the Zodiac

- *Aries* - Initiative, ambition, impulse, leadership.
- *Taurus* - Values, endurance, thorough, materialism.
- *Gemini* - Communication, adaptable, dual, curious.
- *Cancer* - Feelings, moods, receptivity, nurturing.
- *Leo* - Nobility, loyalty, generous, affirmative.
- *Virgo* - Logical, orderly, service orientated, analytical.
- *Libra* - Just, courteous, sociable, balanced, hopeful.
- *Scorpio* - Intense, passionate, desiring, secretive.
- *Sagittarius* - Pursuit of knowledge, optimism, liberty, adventure.
- *Capricorn* - Patient, cautious, perfectionist, seeking security.
- *Aquarius* - Inventive, friendly, modern, non-conformity.
- *Pisces* - Devotion, compassion, idealistic, benevolent, sympathetic.

3. The Major Arcana

The twenty-two cards that are known as the Major Arcana are distinguished by the appearance of Roman numerals at the top of each card. Each trump card (from the Italian, *Triumphe*) also has an appellation at the bottom which qualifies it. These cards are quite unlike the others in that they cannot be assigned to any of the four suits, thus they are outside of the actions of the four elements, and by default, are assigned to spirit.

The trump cards resemble the Italian iconography of the late middle ages, and most

particularly the paintings representing classical Christian allegories. The trumps are also called the *Atus*, and this name comes from the French *Atout* or the Italian *Atutti*, which means *trump*, and they are also called in French, *Honour*; and so each of these twenty-two cards represents a specific allegorical virtue (honor). The allegorical concepts, however, seem to stand as a collection of individual statements, and do not seem to form any kind of unified expression or concept, despite the fact that they are ordered in sequence by Roman numerals. The occultists of the 19th century continued to place the cards in this numerical order, they resolved the issue associated with the Fool card as being the number 0, and then associated the sequence of the cards to the paths found upon the Tree of Life, which were originally the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Tarot Trumps added greatly to the correspondences of the twenty-two paths of the Tree of Life, and allowed these paths to gain a greater significance, and the twenty-two trumps also seemed to gain a greater significance by this association. But the mystery of the over-all meaning of the trump appellations were not resolved by this association. The ascent and descent of the Tree of Life by means of the twenty-two paths seemed to be the only explanation for the traditional ordering of the trumps. And for many years this association represented the furthest point in the evolution of the over-all structure and meaning of the twenty-two trumps. It was hardly better than no explanation at all. Further scholarship seemed to be incapable of elucidating any other order within the Tarot Trumps, and so the over-all significance of the trump appellations appeared to be an unresolvable mystery. However, the trumps, as associated with the paths of the Tree of Life seemed to indicate some kind of cycle, and most likely, a cycle of transformation or initiation, where the passage up the Tree represented the evolution or initiation of the individual, and the passage down the Tree represented the involution of Deity as it produced every more dense emanations of itself. This turned out to be a most fruitful association, and so I concluded that the trumps were the cycle of initiation.

The cycle of Initiation is the archetypal pattern of human spiritual evolution. This pattern consists of twenty-two stages within four sections that depict the passage of the initiate into and out of the domain of the collective unconscious. Once entry is gained, the initiate undergoes a supreme transformative ordeal, and then he/she returns to the world of the light, bearing a renewed vision of the self and its place in the world. The cyclic nature of this pattern is continually repeated in the magickal progress of the magician, thus giving a spiral nature to the process of spiritual evolution.

The origin of this decisive pattern of twenty-two stages is found in the writings of Joseph Campbell, particularly in the book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The reasoning that led Campbell to choose exactly twenty-two stages is unknown, and therefore it was probably an arbitrary deduction on his part. However, when discovering that the twenty-two stages in the literary examples of the mythic hero's journey matched the twenty-two trumps of the Major Arcana of the Tarot, there was also found the key to understanding this pattern of initiation. It is a truism that a magician seldom believes in coincidences, especially when the results are so meaningful. Therefore, the original initiation cycle was deliberately hidden in myth, literature and in the trump cards of the Tarot. What was undefined and hidden were the

actual detailed stages of this pattern, which Joseph Campbell abundantly supplied.

In his book Campbell gave a detailed explanation of each of the twenty-two stages in the hero's journey and split these stages into four sections, representing the major distinctive features of the process. The first was the Descent wherein the hero gains entry to the Underworld or faraway land and experiences a transformative change. The second was the Ordeal (the Supreme Ordeal), as the process whereby the hero was united with his shadow half, and through this integration received in the form of a vision a renewed basis for life, the magickal boon. The third section was the revelation of the vision, the Cosmic Cycle, which was the basis for the magickal boon. The final section was the Return, where the hero and his vision (boon) were reintegrated into the world of humanity.

The twenty-two stages of the initiation cycle can now be compared to the Trumps of the Tarot; however, the sequence of this progression is not the same as that numeric sequence which is printed at the top of each card. The sequence of Roman numerals at the heading of the Trumps (except the Fool) appears to represent the arrangement of the cards as they compare to the Paths on the Tree of Life in the Qabalah, with the Fool starting the sequence with the value zero. But the arrangement of the cards for the Cycle of Initiation is based upon the mythic journey of the hero. The resultant pattern is logical only in terms of the sequence of events of the hero's journey.

Therefore, because it has been revealed that the twenty two stages of the cycle of the hero match the twenty-two trumps, it remains to be shown that the two systems indeed directly correspond.

The Twenty-two Stages of the Cycle of the Initiation

Part I - The Separation or Departure

1. The Summoning or Call to Adventure; the Revelation of the Vocation of the Hero (Atu: XX - The Last Judgment)

As a proclamation that the process of self-transformation is about to commence, the initiate receives a warning from the mythical herald that announces the coming crisis. The call occurs not when our lives are comfortably sheltered, but only when we come to the precipice of our psychic existence. This occurrence of warning or the heralding of drastic changes can be seen in the unfolding of world history, and as an analogy, the call is not always perceived as such both by the individual facing a personal crisis and by the world. However, if the call is heeded then it begins a process of self-awakening that represents the first step in the transformation of the self. The crisis has occurred because the present institutions and societal solutions are no longer effective. In the individual, this represents that stage of life where the old methods of living and coping have become outmoded and the identity of the self is dangerously unsupported.

2. The Refusal of the Call; Folly or Internalization (Atu: 0 - The Fool)

The call has its opposite in the powers of inertia and resistance to change. Often this problem of inertia can only delay the inevitable changes, and it can make them more difficult, even negative. The powers of inertia preserve the fabric of the social structure and bolster the identity of the individual with contrived defense mechanisms. However, these forces also dull the initiative of resourceful individuals and insulates the self from new ideas and information. But the resistance is ultimately futile and changes come whether or not the individual or the world is prepared.

The obstinate refusal of the call has its effects in the loss of personal direction and control, thus causing one to be at the mercy of capricious elements. The result of this loss of control may represent the disintegration of all order both in the self and in the world. However, the loss of control may instead indicate a willed introversion that represents the need of the individual to digest the purpose of the changes and then to submit to them under his/her own terms. The seeker who has received the call may need a pause in the action of life to integrate the new forces emerging in the wake of change and realize the overall significance of the event.

3. Supernatural Aid or Intervention; Meeting the Spirit Guide (Atu: II - The Priestess)

When change finally does occur it is experienced as a supernatural event that is all-encompassing and also predetermined. Herein the hero encounters the Guide of the Pathways, the teacher who will direct the seeker through the ordeals of self-transformation by offering hope as a protective force. The Guide offers to the hero a glimpse of what is to be gained if the ordeal can be mastered, that state of perfection that was known at the beginning of life, the singular, "I AM." The domain associated with the Guide is the sanctuary, the temple as refuge and place of spiritual teaching. The Guide often manifests in society as leaders of great tenacity and resourcefulness who appear in times of trouble to assist humanity through a crisis.

4. Crossing the First Threshold; Meeting the Fierce Guardian (Atu: IX - The Hermit)

After the Guide has been met, the seeker encounters the Guardian who stands before the threshold of the underworld that presages the dark night of the soul. The threshold represents the limit of what is permitted by society or is capable of definition by the self. The Guardian is the principal obstruction or issue that has caused the transformative powers to be unleashed, and the seeker must resolve this issue and receive its wisdom in order to freely pass. In the act of crossing the threshold this limit has been irreparably penetrated and the consequences are represented by the fact that there can be no turning back. Beyond the boundaries of the known are the limitless possibilities of the unknown. Therein the conscious

identity faces the prospect of being absorbed into the world of the shadow (our negative self-image) and the magick of the collective unconscious.

5. The Belly of the Whale; the Underworld (Atu: XVI - The Blasted Tower)

Once the threshold is crossed and the Guardian overcome, the seeker enters the world of the collective unconscious, which is the domain of the inner mind, the soul of humanity. The underworld is like a subterranean temple or grotto wherein the mysteries of the soul are revealed. The structure of the old self is completely destroyed and the seeker is forced to reintegrate the self along new parameters. This begins the process of the transformation of the self, for the old outmoded ways have been invalidated and the new way has yet to be defined.

Part II - The Trials and Victories of Initiation

1. The Road of Trials; the Dangers and Lesser Ordeals (Atu: X - The Wheel of Fortune)

After the seeker has crossed the threshold and undergone the death of the old self, the fragmented facets that remain are forced into awareness so that the seeker may succeed in overcoming the lesser ordeal of the trials of life and death. These trials cause the annealing of the seeker's purpose and the corresponding purgation of all the irrelevant ideals and beliefs that were part of the fragmented facets of the old self. This is a process of purification through attrition and negation, but it also defines what is newly relevant and significant.

2. Meeting the Goddess; Infancy Regained (Atu VI - The Lovers)

The ultimate ordeal is represented as the marriage of Light and Darkness, the reunification of the self. This can be perceived as a peaceful joining, the result of the successful completion of the trials. It can also be represented as the choice between alternate possibilities, or as the conflict of good and evil, Light and Darkness. The world has been reduced to a mythic polarity that requires either a peaceful integration, the domination of one force by the other or a complete annihilation, which is the reduction of the self to its core.

The dominant theme in this stage consists of the revelation of the powers of the Goddess, the feminine archetype. These powers are the dual forces of life, death and their associated metamorphosis in the World of the Spirit and the world of the flesh. The womb of the feminine archetype is also the tomb, making the regenerative process beyond all evaluations of good and evil despite the fact that it manifests as both Light and Darkness. The Goddess is also the Queen of the Mysteries because of her association with the cycles of the Moon and the rebirth of nature in the Spring. Therefore, she is also the agent of the transformative

powers both in physical nature and the human psyche. Thus the powers of magick are both within and without the self.

3. Woman as Temptress; Agony of Separation (Atu XI - Strength)

This particular stage has two distinct definitions associated with it: The first represents the perspective that is part of the old age of Pisces; that is the joining of the Light and Darkness in the prior stage must not imbalance the seeker and cause him/her to seek the Darkness over the Light. It also represents the fact that self-indulgence must be avoided in order to purify the self, and therefore it is also the path of asceticism.

The second definition is nearly the opposite: Through the passions evoked by the stimulation of the senses and the resultant ecstasy that they cause, the seeker is delivered to the transcendent level of existence. This is done not by the denial of human nature, but by its affirmation and exaltation.

These two definitions are like the opposite sides of the same coin in that they both represent the same thing. The most basic and common spiritual issue is found in both the renunciation of the world for the spirit and the renunciation of limitation and denial. Both definitions represent a divergence from the blind acceptance of societal values. The world as it has been conceived is thus rejected.

4. Atonement With the Father; Establishment of Inner Values (Atu: XV - The Devil)

Once the seeker has abandoned the normally accepted social values and renounced self-limitation and denial, then the seeker must abandon the old personal identity itself, with all its associated habits and superstitions. Therefore, the seeker experiences the lifting of the guilt of self-judgment and reestablishes a connection with the Deity that is more relevant to the true nature of the inner self than what he/she had previously held. The abandoning of the old self-image is very difficult, for we are bound to our petty ego by ingrained habits and self-sustaining defense mechanisms. To undergo this process of severing, we must seemingly die a second time since crossing the Underworld threshold. The subsequent rebirth of a spiritual identity represents an atonement for harboring the false identity that had erected a barrier between the self and the Absolute.

This stage also represents the traditional idea of an initiation. After the candidate has been stripped of all egocentric support and purged of all inferior motivations and pursuits, he/she is invested with the vocation and responsibility of being a proper mediator for the Absolute Spirit. Thus he/she becomes the agent for forces that are beyond the domain of the narrow perspective of individuals, and these concern the societal and cosmic levels of being. The initiate has received a role in the divine plan and a vocation as a reward for having passed the tests of initiation. Thus the initiate has taken a great step towards becoming the initiator

and dispenser of a spiritual lineage and has assumed the earthly role of that of the All-Father, filled with the peace and serenity associated with the replacement of blind faith with knowledge and the certainty of experience.

5. Apotheosis; Self as Exalted Being (Atu: I - The Magician)

The initiate has now reached the core of the underworld, having bravely passed all tests and assumed all transformations. Thus he/she has achieved oneness with the highest spiritual expression of the self and has passed beyond the veil of bondage and the vicissitudes of life. The initiate is now truly liberated, and the values of good and evil are no longer meaningful. Because the self is no longer encumbered by the cares of life and reunited with its eternal spiritual double (the Higher Self, or God/dess Within), the seeker is wrapped in the mantle of glory and exaltation of his/her own spiritual truth. The seeker is also prepared to share in the greater mystery of the Cosmic Cycle, for the barriers between the Absolute and the individual have been removed with the destruction of the petty ego and there is nothing that stands in the way of the pure vista of the Absolute Spirit and its evolving and emanating processes.

6. The Ultimate Boon; the secret knowledge of the soul is revealed. (Atu: VII - The Chariot)

The initiate receives from the Absolute Spirit a vision that consists of the secret knowledge of the seeker's soul, which is his/her place within the divine plan. This potent affirmation causes the part of life that it touches to become inviolable, and thus it takes upon itself the transcendent qualities of the Absolute. Armed with this reaffirmation of life, the seeker's purpose in life has become profoundly renewed and regenerated. The seeker has thus received the boon, the gift of grace that reinvigorates and inspires anew the seeker's direction and quest for truth.

The boon actually consists of a vision that imparts knowledge to the seeker. This vision is a revelation of the Cosmic Cycle as the Birth of the World and all that it contains. The progressions of creative emanations coming forth from the Absolute Spirit are symbolically realized in the physical and historical processes of the world. Also revealed is that this process has an end, a termination of all that exists, and the final spiritual affirmation of the design and plan of the Absolute that comes to fruition. The seeker is shown the place in this progression that he/she occupies, and thereby through this vision gains an understanding of his/her future destiny and purpose.

Part III - The Cosmogonic Cycle

The Cosmogonic Cycle unrolls the great vision of creation and destruction of the world that is granted as a revelation to the successful hero. The vision is revealed to be the boon that

is the goal of the heroic quest.

0. World Navel; the Central Origin of All Things (Atu: XXI - The Universe)

The background of the Cycle of Initiation and the Cosmic Cycle is the ever preexistent source of all that was, is and will be. The Source of all things is the principal provider of all manifestation, the grace of the emanations of the Spirit and its role as that which sustains all manifestation. The Cycle of Initiation reaffirms the placement and importance of the Source and reestablishes its effectiveness from the diminishment that necessitated the advent of the threshold crossing. The individual as well as the world draws from this resource and when it is obstructed, all manifestation perishes.

The place wherein the Source dispenses its bounty is the very center of being itself, the invisible yet always present source of good and evil, life and death. It can be symbolized as the World Tree, the World Mountain, the Ladder of Lights, the Limitless Well of Souls and by other symbols. However, this Eternal Source and the relationship that all manifested nature has with it, represents the hidden, basic motif of the Cosmic Cycle, as well as the Cycle of Initiation of the individual.

1. Emanations; Emergence from the Void (Atu: XVII - The Star)

From the background of Eternal Night, which is the domain of the Eternal Source, emerges the first principle of Creation. As this creative effort moves from the highest levels of being to the lowest, the emergence of consciousness presages the evolution of physical life. The first principle is the Light or the Logos, the intelligible will to act and create. The first principle is not eternal, for it also has a beginning and an end. However, the eternal twilight of the world of the Source remains forever.

The first emanation is represented by the passage of individual consciousness out of the collective unconscious source. The origin of all beings is steeped in dreamlike mythic images that defy translation, buried as they are in the fabric of Creation itself. This process of emanation has its representation in the human psyche, as the passage from deep sleep to waking has its intermediary in the manifestation of dreams.

2. Virgin Birth; Creative Roles of Women and the Mythical Golden Age (Atu: III - The Empress)

The first principal emanation requires a transforming medium so that the potential residing in the Source can become the actualized product of Creation. That transforming medium in numerous guises was the great Mother Goddess, the primal mediatrix who was instrumental in the release of the creative emanations from the Source. The unmanifest is drawn out of

its complacency by the magnetic powers of the feminine, thus the medium of transformation becomes the womb of the Virgin Birth, the creation of life directly from the unmanifest.

The first Creation becomes the pattern by which all else is modeled, and it represents the archetypal patterns that imprint all creation. The archetypal level is symbolized by the Golden Age of Greek myth or the Paradise of the Garden of Eden. In this place there is no decay, change or birth. All the potential that will ever be has already been formulated, for there is no change in Paradise, only the interplay of various archetypes.

3. Transformation; the Age of Death and Suffering (Atu: XIII - Death)

The archetypes of Creation manifest the world of physical forms and organic being, giving it structure and a sense of order. The merging of consciousness and physical life represents the activating powers of transformation that are inherent in physical manifestation. For herein there is birth, life, corruption, decay and ultimately, death. The physical world is continuously changing, and the spirit that is locked in matter must learn to master the process of transformation in order to complete its spiritual process of evolution. Here is the paradox, that as physical matter corrupts and decays it brings forth new life to replenish itself as a whole. The Egregore of life resides in the consciousness of its individual parts, and these may experience a psychic evolution within a single manifestation, sharing in the collective fate of the group. Thus there are two processes at work simultaneously, the action of entropy on physical matter and the action of synergy on the part of consciousness.

The Age of Death is also represented by the age of history, the time of human endeavors and accomplishments. History is the emanation process as it manifests through the space-time continuum and it highlights the godlike accomplishments of the human spirit. As beings of flesh and spirit, we are forever shifting and seeking, searching for that which represents for us the eternal purpose of existence.

4. Dissolutions; the End of the World (Atu: XII - The Hanged Man)

The fate of all physical manifestation is dissolution, termination in death and disorder. For many, it is the only moment where the individual becomes aware of the transcendental process, the imposition of the supernatural upon the mortal connection of flesh and spirit. Herein the power of transformation reaches its final goal, the end of change and the return to the archetypal level of existence. The descent of spirit into matter is analogous to the ascent of consciousness into union with its source. Thus both evolution and incarnation partake in the synthesis of spirit and matter.

The ending of life represents the return to a higher level, and this is the mystery of the dying God, the sacrifice of divinity for the sake of the spiritual immortality of humanity. The individual spirit of human consciousness unfettered by the limitations of physical existence

makes its progression from conscious awareness to superconscious via the transcendental process. Therefore, the stage of dissolution is yet another form of transformation, a symbol for the end result of spiritual evolution, which is enlightenment.

Part IV - The Return and Reintegration with Society

1. The Refusal to Return; the World Denied, the Completion of the Path of the Mystic (Atu: VIII - Justice)

The attainment of the boon and the metamorphosis of the seeker still requires him/her to return to the mundane world. It is customary for the cycle of the inward and outward pathways to be completed by a corresponding return from the depths of the inner-world of the collective unconscious. However, for some paths to enlightenment (especially those that are mystical) the attainment of the blessing of the Deity is all that is required of the individual, and having renounced the physical world, the seeker lives in the world of the spirit and never returns. For the magician the cycle must be completed so that the wisdom of the inner-worlds is able to regenerate and restore the purpose and beliefs of the outer world. The seeker who completes the cycle must now confront the issues that prevent his/her return, and they are associated with the tasks of translating the knowledge of the boon into the language of the everyday world.

2. The Magic Flight; Escape/Crossing the Return Threshold (Atu: XVIII - The Moon)

The return cycle has its own associated resistances and trials that the seeker must undergo. The pristine state of accomplishment is followed by the darkness and pain associated with the rebirth and reintegration of the newly formulated self back into the mundane world. There is another threshold to be crossed and it has a guardian at its gate similar to the guardian of the threshold of the entrance. Thus there are obstructions and potential self-betrayal in the process of reintegrating with the physical self, and the seeker must hold fast to what is true rather than what is illusory.

3. Rescue from Without; the Healing of the Fisher-king (Atu: IV - The Emperor)

The seeker may require assistance from a mediator to complete the process of reintegration. The mediator consists of the affirmation that links the World of the Spirit with the world of humanity. That mediator is the communion of spirit within and without, the flesh. Throughout the inner journey of the spirit of the inner self, the outward self has been an automaton, acting without the inspiration or the intuition of the soul, being merely a cog in the machine of social intercourse. The process of reintegration consists of the realization of the sacredness of physical conscious existence and the return of the spirit to the flesh.

The seeker is awakened by a profound occurrence, which is the question that heralds the return of the spiritual dimension amidst the drudgery of mundane existence. The return is precipitated by the desire to know and the asking of the fateful question by either the seeker or some intermediary: "Who am I?" The answer is self-determining (I am a Man/Woman and more) and reestablishes the meaning of the inner journey, thus translating the vision into the beliefs and mythic motifs of the society of which he/she is still a part. The act of interpretation causes the message to lose something of its original purity. Thus it will eventually fail in its turn and have to be replaced in the trials of yet another inner journey.

4. The Reoccurrence of the Boon; the Expression of the World Redeeming Vision (Atu: XIV - Temperance)

The vision of the inner journey, which is the boon the seeker gained, integrates the inner and outer worlds. The vision presents the individual with his/her place in the process of the evolution of the world and a method of revealing to humanity their place in the divine plan. The message must be depersonalized and made to express the purer forms of the archetypal level. The medium may consist of art rather than religion, and the cycle of initiation becomes a process by which the soul of humanity expresses its inner self through the palettes and canvas of painters, the clay, wax or wood of sculptors, the sonnets of poets, or the visions and beliefs of great leaders. The expression of the vision represents the creation of new meaning for a culture or society.

5. Master of Two Worlds; the Key to the Inner and Outer Realities (Atu V - The Hierophant)

Once the seeker has learned the mysteries that surround the processes of the inner and outer journey, he/she becomes a mediator for their continuous cycle. The ability to readily translate the experiences of the World of the Spirit into newly formed ideals and the ability to control the process of transformation resulting in the mastery that restores the meaning of life are the ideal achievements of the Cycle of Initiation.

This mastery is symbolized by the Hierophant who holds the keys to heaven and earth, thus "Whatever is loosed in heaven is loosed on earth," and "As above, so below." The person who has attained this mystery must bypass all the ephemeral pleasures of egocentric existence for the vocation of spiritual service. Therefore, having been reborn in the light of truth, the relevancy of personal gain and glory is ended. Such a person has become the pure instrument of the divine plan, the channel of the Absolute Spirit, as it communes with the nature of individual humanity.

6. Freedom to Live; the Function of the Ultimate Boon (Atu: XIX - The Sun)

The seeker who has resigned his/her personal will, and thereby gained the mediation of the Absolute Spirit, also receives the blessing of knowledge and the certainty of perfected faith. As an instrument of the divine, the seeker has been released from the bondage of all social and psychological restrictions and limitations and is completely liberated. There are no restrictions imposed on an individual who can easily travel between the inner and outer worlds, for what is not possible in one world is possible in the other.

The power of selfless actions and unworldly concerns are the domain of the enlightened seeker. He/She is powerful in insight and unencumbered in action, thus representing the pure spiritual archetype manifested in the human body. This is the nature of the spiritual master, as well as the incarnated avatar. The quality of eternal renewal has as its essential nature that which never truly dies. It only changes its outer appearance and remains inviolable in eternal manifestation.

A Synopsis of the Cycle of Initiation - (Excerpt from Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 245)

The Mythological Hero, setting forth from his common day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The Hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the Kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion).

Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the Goddess-Mother of the World (sacred marriage), his recognition by the Father-Creator (father-atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again -if the powers have remained unfriendly to him - his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary): if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of the dead (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir).

The Cycle of Being: the Cosmic Cycle - (Excerpt from Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 266)

The cosmogonic cycle is to be understood as the passage of the universal consciousness from the deep sleep zone of the unmanifest, through dreams, to the full day of waking; then back again through dream to the timeless dark. As in the actual experience of every living being, so in the grandiose figure of the living cosmos: in the abyss of sleep the energies are refreshed, in the work of the day they are exhausted; the life of the universe runs down and must be renewed.

The cosmogonic cycle pulses forth into manifestation and back into non-manifestation amidst a silence of the unknown. The Hindus represent the mystery in the holy symbol of AUM. Here the sound A represents the waking consciousness, U - dream consciousness, M - deep sleep. The silence surrounding the syllable is the unknown; it is called simply "the Fourth". The syllable itself is God as creator-preserver-destroyer, but the silence is God eternal, absolutely uninvolved in all the openings and closings of the world.

4. The lesser Arcana

The Four Aces

The four Aces represent the base of the Tarot structure of the Minor Arcana. The four Aces are considered the potency of Spirit acting through the four elements, thus radicalizing them.

(Yod) - The Source of the Spirit of Fire - Ace of Wands:

A great luminous hand is issuing from the clouds and grasping a club which has three branches representing the branches of the Tree of Life. The right and left hand branches have three flames and the center, four flames; thus yielding ten, which is identical to the number of Sephiroth on the Tree of Life. Twenty two sparks of flame surround it, representing the 22 paths. These are arranged in the configuration of the 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, known as the three Mothers (Aleph, Mim, and Shin), the seven Doubles, and the 12 Singles, (being the 3 Elements, the Seven Planets and the 12 Zodiacal Signs). The center of the card is a flaming torch that symbolizes illumination, insight, and the revelation of knowledge concerning certain matters. The emphasis of this knowledge is spiritual in nature, as is the method by which this knowledge is revealed.

(Heh) - The Source of the Spirit of Water - Ace of Cups:

A great luminous hand is issuing from the clouds and supporting on its palm a chalice, seemingly a great emblem of the Holy Grail. From it is flowing a fountain, cascading pure water on all sides to fall into the calm body of water below. Therein is perceived lotus

flowers and water lilies. The letter signifying the Supernal Mother is traced in the spray of the fountain. The chalice is symbolic of the love-cup, which contains the elixir of a love-potion, a drink spiked with the physical traces of the one who is seeking to seduce another. However, the emphasis here is purely spiritual, and so the love bond which is caused is the joining of humanity to Deity. And so this card symbolizes the source of spiritual love and compassion that emanates from the union of mind and spirit, and manifests as a symbolic sacrament for the blessing of all humanity.

(Vav) - The Source of the Spirit of Air - Ace of Swords:

A great luminous hand is issuing from the clouds and grasping the hilt of a sword whose point supports a golden crown from which hangs, on the right, the olive branch of peace; and on the left, the palm branch of suffering. Six sparks of flame descend from the sword, representing the concept that peace (six, as the Sephirah Tiphareth, equals harmony), only issues from the balance between constructive and destructive uses of the sword. Yet the sword represents the power of the individual will which can ennoble one when it is perceived as one's spiritual destiny. Thus the Ace of Swords becomes a symbol for the spiritual destiny or True-will of an individual. And when the spiritual side of the Sword is grasped, it can guide the wielder to a peaceful resolution of all relevant issues.

(Heh) - The Source of the Spirit of Earth - Ace of Pentacles:

A great luminous hand issues forth from the clouds and is holding a branch of a rose tree upon which is fixed a large pentacle, formed of five concentric circles. The five concentric circles culminate in a white inner circle (spirit), wherein is inscribed a red equal armed cross. Emanating from this center circle are twelve white rays, signifying the 12 signs of the Zodiac. A white winged globe is placed above the concentric circles, and placed in its midst is a red Maltese cross. The rose branches have four flowers in full bloom and two rose buds. This card symbolizes the active life force, which is the source of spiritual life and the seeming miracle of birth. Yet this source of life is not inexhaustible (signified by four roses), but it does contain the potential of spiritual rebirth (two rose buds). The winged globe represents the fact that the life- process is guided by a divine wisdom that can be revealed to anyone who ardently seeks it.

The 16 Dignitaries

The 16 Dignitary or Court cards of the Lesser Arcana represent the energies or powers active in a reading or a magick ritual. The hierarchy of the dignitaries consists of King (Fire), Queen (Water), Knight or Prince (Air), and Page or Princess (Earth). This four-fold hierarchy of dignitaries establishes a qualifying element to the base element of the suit. Thus, the combination of qualifier and base produces a hybridization of the four elements, known

as the 16 Elementals.

Wands

King of Wands: Fire of Fire. Lord of the Flame and the Lightening; King of the Spirits of Fire; King of the Salamanders. Card significance: Activity, generosity, fierceness, pride, swiftness, realization of an issue through a specific insight.

Queen of Wands: Water of Fire. Queen of the Thrones of Flame; Queen of the Salamanders. Card Significance: Adaptability, guiding authority, persistence, intuitive insight.

Knight of Wands: Air of Fire. Prince of the Chariot of Fire; Prince of the Salamanders. Card significance: Brilliance, strength, courage, violent aggression, active pursuit of knowledge.

Page of Wands: Earth of Fire. Princess of the Shining Flame and Empress of the Salamanders. Card significance: Cleverness, guile, daring, romantic inclinations, implacable, emotionally volatile.

Cups

King of Cups: Fire of Water. Lord of the Waves and the Waters; King of the Hosts of the Sea; King of Undines and Nymphs. Card significance: Graceful, sensitive, purity, the pursuit of ideals, romantic love, self sacrifice.

Queen of Cups: Water of Water. Queen of the Thrones of the Waters; Queen of the Nymphs and Undines. Card significance: Tranquility, illusions, dreams, psychic insight, peacefulness.

Knight of Cups: Air of Water. Prince of the Chariot of the Waters; Prince of Nymphs and Undines. Card significance: Love of subtlety, esoteric beliefs, secrecy, psychological self-analysis.

Page of Cups: Earth of Water. Princess of the Waters; Princess and Empress of the Nymphs and Undines. Card significance: Kindness, tenderness, rapture, voluptuousness, acting out of fantasies.

Swords

King of Swords: Fire of Air. Lord of the Winds and Breezes; King of the Spirits of Air; King of the Sylphs. Card significance: Activity, skillful strategy, decisiveness, boldness, cleverness.

Queen of Swords: Water of Air. Queen of the Thrones of Air; Queen of Sylphs. Card significance: Observation, objectivity, analysis, understanding one's motivation or the motivations of others.

Knight of Swords: Air of Air. Prince of the Chariot of the Winds; Prince of the Sylphs. Card significance: Idealistic pursuits, impractical, theoretical (but unproven), impulsiveness, impetuosity, restlessness.

Page of Swords: Earth of Air. Princess of the Rushing Winds; Princess and Empress of the Sylphs. Card significance: Stern, vengeful, firm and aggressive, rebellious and destructive, anarchistic.

Pentacles

King of Pentacles: Fire of Earth. Lord of the Wild and Fertile Land; King of the Spirits of Earth; King of the Gnomes. Card Significance: Laborious, patient, earthy but dull and heavy, the ambition to become materially secure.

Queen of Pentacles: Water of Earth. Queen of the Thrones of Earth; Queen of the Gnomes. Card significance: Tradition, silence, practicality, kindness, organization, growth.

Knight of Pentacles: Air of Earth. Prince of the Chariot of Earth; Prince of the Gnomes. Card significance: Competence, generosity, trust, fidelity, purposeful action, methodical.

Page of Pentacles: Earth of Earth. Princess of the Echoing Hills; Princess and Empress of the Gnomes. Card significance: Womanhood in its ultimate expression, femininity, sensuality, natural integrity, enchantment, physically charming.

The 36 Naibs or Pip Cards

The rest of the Minor Arcana consists of the 36 Naibs or Pip cards. These cards traditionally represent the issues and intelligences of the Tarot. Each card is attributed to a specific Element (suit), Qabbalistic Sephirah (its numerical value and sequence), and a Planet within a Zodiacal sign. The attributes join together to forge the meaning of the card, whereas the card is not represented by any of the attributes separately, but a hybridization of all of them.

Wands

2 of Wands: Lord of Dominion. Chokmah in Atziluth (Fire). Mars in Aries. Card significance: Uncontainable energy, enthusiasm, initiative, courage, ardent belief in idealistic values.

3 of Wands: Lord of Established Strength. Binah in Atziluth (Fire). Sun in Aries. Card significance: New beginnings, new activities, impatience, aggressive actions spurred by decisive thoughtfulness.

4 of Wands: Lord of Perfected Work. Chesed in Atziluth (Fire). Venus in Aries. Card significance: Passion, volatile emotions acting upon all-consuming ideals, self-centeredness, impulsive, lack of foresight, irresponsible.

5 of Wands: Lord of Strife. Geburah in Atziluth (Fire). Saturn in Leo. Card significance: Stubbornness, self-centered pursuits overcome common sense, authoritarian, the inflexible belief in one's infallibility.

6 of Wands: Lord of Victory. Tiphareth in Atziluth (Fire). Jupiter in Leo. Card significance: Self-confidence, generosity, good sense of diplomacy, love of drama.

7 of Wands: Lord of Valor. Netzach in Atziluth (Fire). Mars in Leo. Card significance: Overly forceful, strong, determination, opinionated, passionate about beliefs, unable to give quarter or to give up personal pursuits.

8 of Wands: Lord of Swiftmess. Hod in Atziluth (Fire). Mercury in Sagitarius. Card significance: Understanding social structures, law, convention; prophetic insight into the unfolding social destiny.

9 of Wands: Lord of Great Strength. Yesod in Atziluth (Fire). Moon in Sagitarius. Card significance: Idealistic, religious pursuits and philosophic conjectures which also are lacking in objectivity, religious conversion.

10 of Wands: Lord of Oppression. Malkuth in Atziluth (fire). Saturn in Sagitarius. Card significance: Serious minded-ness, sober, strict and unwavering in beliefs, moralistic, self-disciplined, but also austere and humorless.

Cups

2 of Cups: Lady of Love. Chokmah in Briah (Water). Venus in Cancer. Card significance: Emotional harmony, love, romantic feelings, sensitivity, the need for emotional fulfillment.

3 of Cups: Lady of Abundance. Binah in Briah (Water). Mercury in Cancer. Card significance: Unconscious desires, emotions and needs ruling the heart, friendship, kindness.

4 of Cups: Lady of Blended Pleasure. Chesed in Briah (Water). Moon in Cancer. Card significance: Psychic sensitivity, emotions easily influenced, moodiness, deep emotions that offer a sense of security, feelings of desire.

5 of Cups: Lady of Loss in Pleasure. Geburah in Briah (Water). Mars in Scorpio. Card significance: Powerful feelings obscure all common sense, jealousy and possessiveness, relentless pursuit of desires, unwitting sacrifice or loss.

6 of Cups: Lady of Pleasure. Tiphareth in Briah (Water). Sun in Scorpio. Card significance: Self-transformation, enjoyment of sensual pleasures, uninhibited, openness in terms of needs and feelings.

7 of Cups: Lady of Illusory Success. Netzach in Briah (Water). Venus in Scorpio. Card significance: Strong sexual desires, lust, debauchery, secret liaisons, adultery, lasciviousness.

8 of Cups: Lady of Abandoned Success. Hod in Briah (Water). Saturn in Pisces. Card significance: Excessive worry, paranoia, neurosis, anachronistic fancies (dwelling upon the past), emotions tempered with humility and empathy.

9 of Cups: Lady of Material Happiness. Yesod in Briah (Water). Jupiter in Pisces. Card significance: Compassion, charity, solid intuition, inner sight, kindness, realization of the heart's desire, this card is known as the *wish card*.

10 of Cups: Lady of Perfected Success. Malkuth in Briah (Water). Mars in Pisces. Card significance: Emotional stress, repressed emotions, indecisiveness, secretive, the hidden desire to be received, the repressed need to share one's feelings.

Swords

2 of Swords: Lord of Peace Restored. Chokmah in Yetzirah (Air). Moon in Libra. Card significance: Balance, appreciation of beauty and harmony, equilibrium.

3 of Swords: Lord of Sorrow. Binah in Yetzirah (Air). Saturn in Libra. Card Significance: Justice, equality, the effects of retribution or Karma, the need for responsibility, the results of commitments.

4 of Swords: Lord of Rest from Strife. Chesed in Yetzirah (Air). Jupiter in Libra. Card significance: Morality, mediation, refuge or sanctuary, religious ideals restoring order and equality.

5 of Swords: Lord of Defeat. Geburah in Yetzirah (Air). Venus in Aquarius. Card significance: Coldly impersonal, friendly but overly casual, superficial, eccentric, lacking any convictions, the ending of ideals, anarchistic.

6 of Swords: Lord of Earned Success. Tiphareth in Yetzirah (Air). Mercury in Aquarius. Card significance: Objectivity, openness, search for truth and equality, rational analysis and the discovery of order.

7 of Swords: Lord of Unstable Effort. Netzach in Yetzirah (Air). Moon in Aquarius. Card significance: Stubbornness, excessively biased by one's ideals, gullible, irrational impulses seeking expression, the desire for independence at all costs.

8 of Swords: Lord of Shortened Force. Hod in Yetzirah (Air). Jupiter in Gemini. Card significance: Philosophy, idealism, love of learning, highly communicative but also indiscrete, talkative.

9 of Swords: Lord of Despair and Cruelty. Yesod in Yetzirah (Air). Mars in Gemini. Card significance: Abuse, overly critical, restlessness, irritability, temperamental, uncontrollable anger, violence, and hostility.

10 of Swords: Lord of Ruin. Malkuth in Yetzirah (Air). Sun in Gemini. Card significance: Inability to cope with issues, need for consistency, constant changing opinions causes confusion, imagination may run wild.

Pentacles

2 of Pentacles: Lady of Peace Restored. Chokmah in Assiah (Earth). Jupiter in Capricorn. Card significance: Material expansion from a solid base, journeys and relocations, material fortunes increase and cause betterment.

3 of Pentacles: Lady of Material Works. Binah in Assiah (Earth). Mars in Capricorn. Card significance: Ambition, the quest for achievement, directed and disciplined activity, decisive action from established plans.

4 of Pentacles: Lady of Earthly Power. Chesed in Assiah (Earth). Sun in Capricorn. Card significance: Conservation, well knit organization or institution (the Fortress), dependence on the status-quo, law and order.

5 of Pentacles: Lady of Material Trouble. Geburah in Assiah (Earth). Mercury in Taurus. Card significance: Common sense, lack of imagination, shrewdness, fear of change, apathetic, blindness to critical issues caused by imagined fears.

6 of Pentacles: Lady of Material Success. Tiphareth in Assiah (Earth). Moon in Taurus. Card significance: Steadfastness, perseverance brings forth success, overly cautious and formulated methodologies, understanding other's needs.

7 of Pentacles: Lady of Success Unfulfilled. Netzach in Assiah (Earth). Saturn in Taurus. Card significance: Inability to make decisions or to take advantage of opportunities, fearful and distrusting, xenophobia.

8 of Pentacles: Lady of Prudence. Hod in Assiah (Earth). Sun in Virgo. Card significance: Selectivity, discrimination, methodical, practicality, fickleness, public service.

9 of Pentacles: Lady of Material Gain. Yesod in Assiah (Earth). Venus in Virgo. Card significance: Pragmatic idealism, application of ideologies, appreciation of beauty in nature, very fickle about personal tastes.

10 of Pentacles: Lady of Wealth. Malkuth in Assiah (Earth). Mercury in Virgo. Card significance: Practical reasoning, precision, accuracy, detail orientated, excellent scope of entire problem, focused insight and recognition of causes and effects.

5. *Tarot Divination*

Invocation of the Angel of the Tarot:

(Take the cards in your left hand, hold your right hand over them and say:)

"I invoke thee, IAO, that thou wilt send HRU, the Great Angel that is set over the operations of this Secret Wisdom, to lay his hand invisibly upon these consecrated cards of art, that thereby we may obtain true knowledge of hidden things, to the glory of thine ineffable Name, Amen."

The above invocation was taken from the Book of Thoth, written by Aleister Crowley. Although the student may not desire to memorize and thus use this invocation, a brief study of it reveals much about the attitude the initiate should take towards Tarot divination. The student may seek to use this invocation to produce one more in line with his or her spiritual path or tradition.

The word *divination* comes from the Latin *divinitas*, meaning *God-like*, and also, *the Power of Prophecy*, and thus this word signifies the understanding of individual fate as ordained by the Deity. The word *divination*, then, is the revelation of hidden or occult knowledge concerning the destiny of individuals or even nations. The adherents of classical philosophy believed in a world that was wholly deterministic, and so divination was the natural method for discovering the basis of that which was pre-ordained and fated to occur. However, in the current era, sages have come to accept an ideal that would have been unthinkable in antiquity; that personal destiny is determined by individual decisions and actions (and also a lack of decisiveness) rather than ordained by the laws of fate. It is also not enough to simply know or intuit the future, but one must act upon that knowledge in order to fulfill his or her potential. Thus, all systems of divination do not reveal what is fated to happen, but assist the diviner to understand the critical power of individual choice. This fact admits that there is a greater potential for seemingly chaotic occurrences than the average individual would be willing to admit, and also the future is not already determined, but is represented as a complex branching of possible paths. Each point of a critical decision in the life of an individual is called a *nexus-point*, because more than one pathway branches out from the decision made at that point in time. But over-all, this does not contradict the ideal that the process of world evolution is following a specific pattern. It is just that this pattern is so very complex and quite dynamic, and its ultimate resolution is unknowable.

The Tarot cards represent a very deep and complex set of symbolic structures; and as previously stated, perhaps the entire collection of correspondences of the Western Esoteric tradition are herein depicted. But the method of Tarot divination causes these 78 cards of highly interactive symbolism to be randomly shuffled and selected, thus allowing chance to

shape and effect the outcome of the reading. For the combination of structure (the significance of each card) and randomness, and through the interplay of unconscious symbology (our perception and interpretation of the cards) and chance work together to form the divinatory experience, which is called a Tarot reading. Yet because of the potent symbolic nature of these cards, the archetypal level of the collective unconsciousness of humanity is superimposed over the mundane complexity and seemingly randomness of individual human existence. Thus a Tarot card reading is actually a very spiritual process, and a very magickal one, particularly if the individual becomes aware of the larger correspondences and implications of the archetypal level, i.e., the World of the Spirit.

In order to perform a reading, the diviner must maintain a quiet and inner tranquility. He/She must be receptive, open, and inwardly perceiving in order for the reading to be successful. This mind-state may be obtained from meditation or a period of quiet reflection upon the subject of the reading.

The Tarot cards should be thoroughly shuffled, erasing all past patterns, and by causing the cards to be randomized, thus establishing a new pattern in the sequence of the cards. When the subject of the reading is fully considered and pondered, then the diviner proceeds to cut the cards, dividing the deck into three groups and then recombining them in a different fashion. The cutting inaugurates the reading process, and primes the deck for the commencement of the reading.

Structures of Tarot Divination

Although there are many structures or patterns that can be used as a guide for laying out the Tarot cards, only three will be considered here. No single structure is better than another; and a method invented or adapted is highly useful so long as one uses it consistently and skillfully.

The Celtic Cross

The most commonly used method is known as the Celtic Cross. The layout uses the cross structure by placing cards before, behind, above and below the center card which acts as the significator, (a card which represents the subject of the reading or its primary issue , i.e., a question). Also, an ascending line of four cards to the right of the cross (known as the wand or scepter) are used to identify and determine the outcome of the matter associated with the subject of the reading. The significator card also has a card covering it, repeating the larger cross with a smaller one. This covering card, forming a small cross, represents an opposing influence to the significator, and must be overcome in order for the issue, represented by the significator, to be resolved.

The four cards which make up the scepter are represented in ascending order by the key

concepts of *identity, surrounding circumstances, hopes and fears, and the ultimate outcome*. By observing the illustration of the Celtic Cross layout (following this section), the student will quickly understand the significance of each position within it.

The Tree of Life Reading

The second card reading layout, and, I believe, the most versatile, is the Tree of Life. A knowledge of the 10 Sephiroth of the Qabalah is helpful, but not absolutely necessary. The ten stations divided into four sections are quite self explanatory, especially when compared to the facets of the human psyche, which they seem to model.

The three sections of this layout consist of the triangles of Spirit, Mind, and Emotions, with the physical self lying suspended below the triangle of the emotions. Each of the three sections consist of a left hand position (inner or unconscious self), and a right hand position (exterior or conscious self), and a mid position (ego or identity), which unites the other two. This mid position represents the core of the perceived-self, which acts as the mediator of the unconscious and conscious worlds.

In addition to the ten cards and their relative positions described above, there is the signifier card, which is drawn from the bottom of the remaining cards and represents the primary issue as symbolized by the Tree of Life layout. A design of this layout can be seen in the back of this document.

These eleven cards represent the Tree of Life reading, but the remaining cards are called the *Daath* pack. The Daath pack contains the wisdom that can be summoned by asking further questions regarding the subject of the reading, laying out a variable number of cards in a linear reading, and discovering their significance. The prior eleven cards are not rejoined to the Daath pack, but represent the nature of the matter. The rest of the cards can be used to answer specific questions, but these must be tied to the subject of the Tree of Life layout.

The Linear Reading

A linear reading, such as that which is drawn from the Daath pack, can be used alone and by itself. This is known as a simple linear reading, and I have found it most useful for general Tarot divination. With the use of the linear reading, one can dispense with the Tree of Life layout if one seeks a simple answer to a question, or the presentation of a sequence of events not connected to a person. A linear reading is a layout of several cards in a straight line without any type of overlay interpreting the position of each card. Rather, the relationships between the cards gives the reading its significance and ultimate meaning. Thus a negative card surrounded by positive cards can denote the overcoming of that negative quality by the emphasis of the positive qualities surrounding it. Also, there can be perceived certain patterns of cards, which together can relate to a specific matter, while the other cards

would thus relate to other aspects of that central question or issue.

The ability to read patterns into a linear reading more potently exercises the effect that the cards have upon each other, and thus it is unlike any other Tarot layout. It takes a lot of experience to perceive these patterns, and a lot of practice is required in order to master this technique. However, the beauty of this layout is that it teaches so much more about the cards, revealing an intrinsic level to them that could not otherwise be perceived.

Appendix I

A Short Bibliography

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