

LESSON 51

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAROT

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For the modern occult student the name Tarot is common-place and is mainly noted for its divinatory prowess. The Golden Dawn designs however were one of the first to combine the meanings of mythology, astrology, numerology, alchemy, geometry and kabbalism into a unified pictured form with the key word being synthesisation. It is not the purpose of this paper to go into a lengthy Tarot history as this would require an entire book in itself to explain (see Encyclopedia of the Tarot by Kaplan), but to present to the student a framework from which many more attributions can be added as they progress through the studies.

The Tarot is in fact a deck of cards that are 78 in number. The twenty two Trumps (Major Arcana) correspond to the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet and the 22 Kabbalistic Paths, the 16 Court cards (Royal Arcana) correspond to to the Sephiroth of Chokmah, Binah, Tiphareth and Malkuth, and the 40 cards of the Minor Arcana are related the ten Sephiroth with the four Aces applied to Kether through to the four tens associated to Malkuth.

The actual meaning of the word Tarot is something that is quite frankly open to debate. The most likely consideration is that it is French for Tarocchi, which was the Italian name for the deck of cards which according to some historians was derived

from the word Trionifi. When applying gematria to the phoenetic pronunciation of Tarot (which is Taro) we find that Tora=Law and Troa=Gate (in Hebrew). Other examples with latin show Rota=Wheel and Orat =Speaks, however these fanciful explanations for the modern day occultists are really nothing but synchronicity. Explanations by occult authors such as Court de Gebelin, saying that the Tarot came from Egyptian sources, are equally open to debate as no scientific evidence has come to trace the Tarot back past the 14 century except from the writer Covelluzo who said they were introduced to Italy in 1379 from Naib. If this were true the designs of the Italian packs that we still use in part today would have been the first modernisation from the Arabian decks and given the Italian archetype, would have been a major overhaul from the African pack, providing however that one ever existed.

The immediate origin of the Golden Dawn Tarot designs were based on the 17th and 18th century French Tarot designs (sometimes known as the Marsellies Tarot) which themselves were based on earlier Italian packs. The following lessons on the Tarot have been deliberately devoid of heavy Kabbalistic and mythological symbolism and have been simplified so that the student can deal with the bare bones of the cards themselves without being confused by waves of symbology. As one studies each Tarot Trump, turn back to the lessons on the Kabbalistic Paths that the trump is associated to, then start applying these additional references to the Trump as well.

Within recent years it has been quite acceptable for, say, an astrologer, to rely more on his or her astrological knowledge to get an interpretation of the Tarot, just as a Psychologist would possibly use mythology and a numerologist numerology while a Kabbalist would use the Hebrew Letters. From this point on such a type of thinking must cease as the cards are in fact the synthesis of a large variety of overlaps and must be treated as such when exploring their meanings. Therefore the student must not think "astrology", or "numerology", or "Hebrew", but to think "Tarot".

In the description of the cards there is provided a basic analysis of the card giving its base essence. Then what follows is a twelve stage description of how the card's energy interacts in life experiences. These twelve divisions are based on the twelve astrological house divisions, which should provide a clear format, or guide, for Tarot divination in life experiences.

It was a great ploy of occultists at the beginning of this century to refer to the 'true keys of the Tarot'. Some have taken this to mean the Hebrew Alphabet but generally for authors like Waite, they referred to Biblical keys taken from pertinent chapters. A good look at some of the French decks will confirm this also. Chapter ten of Revelations is a good example of this when studying the Waite Trump of Temperance which was later rectified by Case:

'And I saw a mighty angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it

were the Sun and his feet as pillars of fire:...and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.'

Another example of this type is the card the Empress. Looking again at the Waite pack and the Case restoration we have in Chapter 12 of Revelations: 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' Earlier French decks of the 17th and 18th century were also well aware of these keys as the Empress in many decks had the emblem of an eagle on her shield: Revelations Ch 12 verse 14: 'And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of a serpent.'

The Golden Dawn however does not have any secret keys associated to the Tarot other than the picture on the card which predominates other associations. The easiest method of finding out the essence of the card is to try and understand its general meaning and why the cups, disks, wands and swords are placed in certain positions in the card. When this is done then see how the meaning can alter to suit different astrological house allocations (which were chosen for their diversity). It is also suggested that you start a file index system for each card and as each card is studied record additional meanings that you have found. A simple method of doing this is to simply sit quietly and gaze at the card and record the impressions as they come to mind. The time spent on this could take a few minutes or an hour

but try to be consistent. If this type of exercise is done daily (rotating the cards) the cards will eventually act as triggers for doorways into your subconscious giving you access to tremendous energy reserves and is a meditation exercise in itself.

When colouring the Tarot it is important to refer to the four colour scales to get the exact colours needed. The Trumps are formed from the combination of the four colour scales and in some instances the complementary colours as well. The Minor Arcana are also coloured from the four colour scales. The Wands relate to the King Scale, Cups - Queen Scale, Swords - Prince Scale, Disks - Princess Scale. The main elemental emblem is the colour of the planet and the background is the colour of the sign. When both these colours are similar a complementary hue generally surrounds them for identification and separation. The Royal Arcana are painted separately to the elements but with a dual association. More information on the colouring of the cards is given in each lecture for each individual card.








---ooOoo---

THE MAJOR ARCANA

No.	Name of Trump	Letter	Attribution	Path
0	The Fool	𐌷	♁ ♃	11th
1	The Magician	𐌸	♁ ♃	12th
2	High Priestess	𐌹	♁ ♃	13th
3	Empress	𐌺	♁ ♃	14th
4	Emperor	𐌻	♁ ♃	15th
5	Hierophant	𐌼	♁ ♃	16th
6	Lovers	𐌽	♁ ♃	17th
7	Chariot	𐌾	♁ ♃	18th
8	Strength	𐌿	♁ ♃	19th
9	Hermit	𐍀	♁ ♃	20th
10	Wheel of Fortune	𐍁	♁ ♃	21st
11	Justice	𐍂	♁ ♃	22nd
12	Hanged Man	𐍃	♁ ♃	23rd
13	Death	𐍄	♁ ♃	24th
14	Temperance	𐍅	♁ ♃	25th
15	Devil	𐍆	♁ ♃	26th
16	The Blasted Tower	𐍇	♁ ♃	27th
17	Star	𐍈	♁ ♃	28th
18	Moon	𐍉	♁ ♃	29th
19	Sun	𐍊	♁ ♃	30th
20	Judgement	𐍋	♁ ♃	31st
21	Universe	𐍌	♁ ♃	32nd

THE MINOR ARCANA

The Reference of the Small cards to the 36 Decanates of the Zodiac.

Sign	Degree	Decanate of Planet	Card	Number of Decanate
	1 - 10	♂	2 of Wands	1
	10 - 20	☉	3 of Wands	2
	20 - 30	☽	4 of Wands	3
	1 - 10	♀	5 of Disks	4
	10 - 20	☽	6 of Disks	5
	20 - 30	♃	7 of Disks	6
	1 - 10	♄	8 of Swords	7
	10 - 20	♂	9 of Swords	8
	20 - 30	☉	10 of Swords	9
	1 - 10	♀	2 of Cups	10
	10 - 20	♁	3 of Cups	11
	20 - 30	☽	4 of Cups	12
	1 - 10	♃	5 of Wands	13
	10 - 20	♄	6 of Wands	14
	20 - 30	♂	7 of Wands	15
	1 - 10	☉	8 of Disks	16
	10 - 20	♀	9 of Disks	17
	20 - 30	♁	10 of Disks	18
	1 - 10	☽	2 of Swords	19
	10 - 20	♃	3 of Swords	20
	20 - 30	♄	4 of Swords	21
	1 - 10	♂	5 of Cups	22

































































♁	10 - 20	⊙	6 of Cups	23
	20 - 30	⊙	7 of Cups	24
♂	1 - 10	♀	8 of Wands	25
	10 - 20	♁	9 of Wands	26
	20 - 30	♂	10 of Wands	27
♁	1 - 10	♁	2 of Disks	28
	10 - 20	♂	3 of Disks	29
	20 - 30	⊙	4 of Disks	30
⚡	1 - 10	♀	5 of Swords	31
	10 - 20	♀	6 of Swords	32
	20 - 30	♁	7 of Swords	33
♁	1 - 10	♂	8 of Cups	34
	10 - 20	♁	9 of Cups	35
	20 - 30	♂	10 of Cups	36

THE TREE OF LIFE ON THE TAROT

The pack of 56 cards - i.e. the full four suits without the 22 Trumps - expressed Kabbalistically represents the mysterious working and operating of the ס.ד.ן.ס.ד.י throughout the Ten Sephiroth, and in the four Worlds of Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah.



Wands	♂	Atziluth	Fire
Cups	♁	Briah	Water
Swords	♀	Yetzirah	Air
Disks	♁	Assiah	Earth


The four Court Cards of each suit represent the Elements counter-charged with each other. Thus:-

The King of Wands		of		.		of	
The Queen of Wands		of		.		of	
The Prince of Wands		of		.		of	
The Princess of Wands		of		.		of	
The King of Cups		of		.		of	
The Queen of Cups		of		.		of	
The Prince of Cups		of		.		of	
The Princess of Cups		of		.		of	
The King of Swords		of		.		of	
The Queen of Swords		of		.		of	
The Prince of Swords		of		.		of	
The Princess of Swords		of		.		of	
The King of Disks		of		.		of	
The Queen of Disks		of		.		of	
The Prince of Disks		of		.		of	
The Princess of Disks		of		.		of	

Therefore the Court Cards are the Vice-regents of the Name in the Worlds

The ordinary cards of each suit are classed under the Sephiroth in the World to which they belong. The Aces are invariably Kether. The other Cards are also referred to the 36 Decanates of the Zodiac.

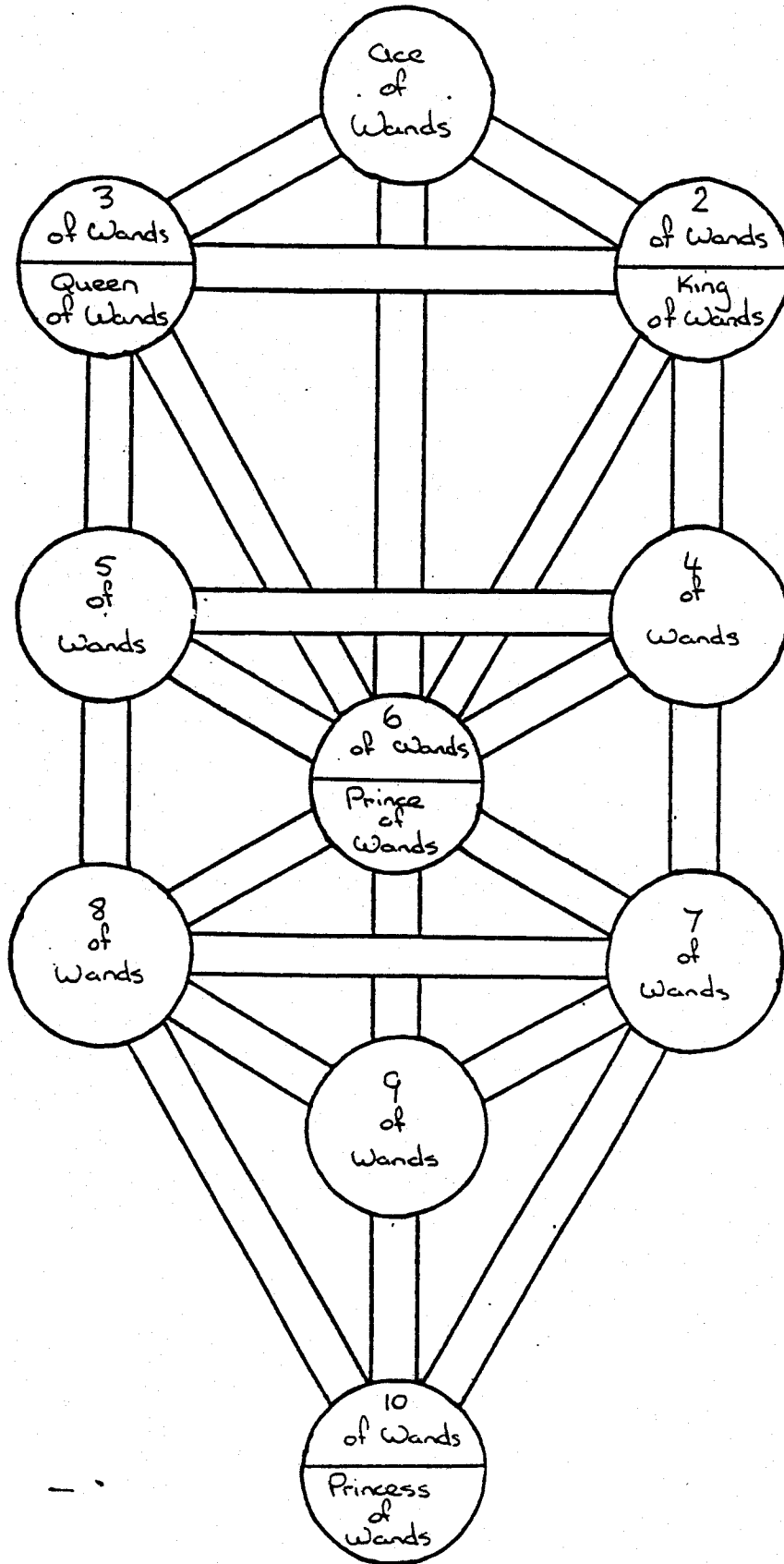
The Ace of Wands	.....	Kether of		and Atziluth
The Two of Wands	.....	Chokmah of		and Atziluth
" Three	"	..... Binah of	"	" "
" Four	"	..... Chesed of	"	" "
" Five	"	..... Geburah of	"	" "
" Six	"	..... Tiphareth of	"	" "
" Seven	"	..... Netzach of	"	" "
" Eight	"	..... Hod of	"	" "
" Nine	"	..... Yesod of	"	" "
" Ten	"	..... Malkuth of	"	" "

The Ace of Cups Kether of  and Briah, and so on.

Swords, and Pentacles the Same (and Yetzirah, and Assiah respectively).

Cont...

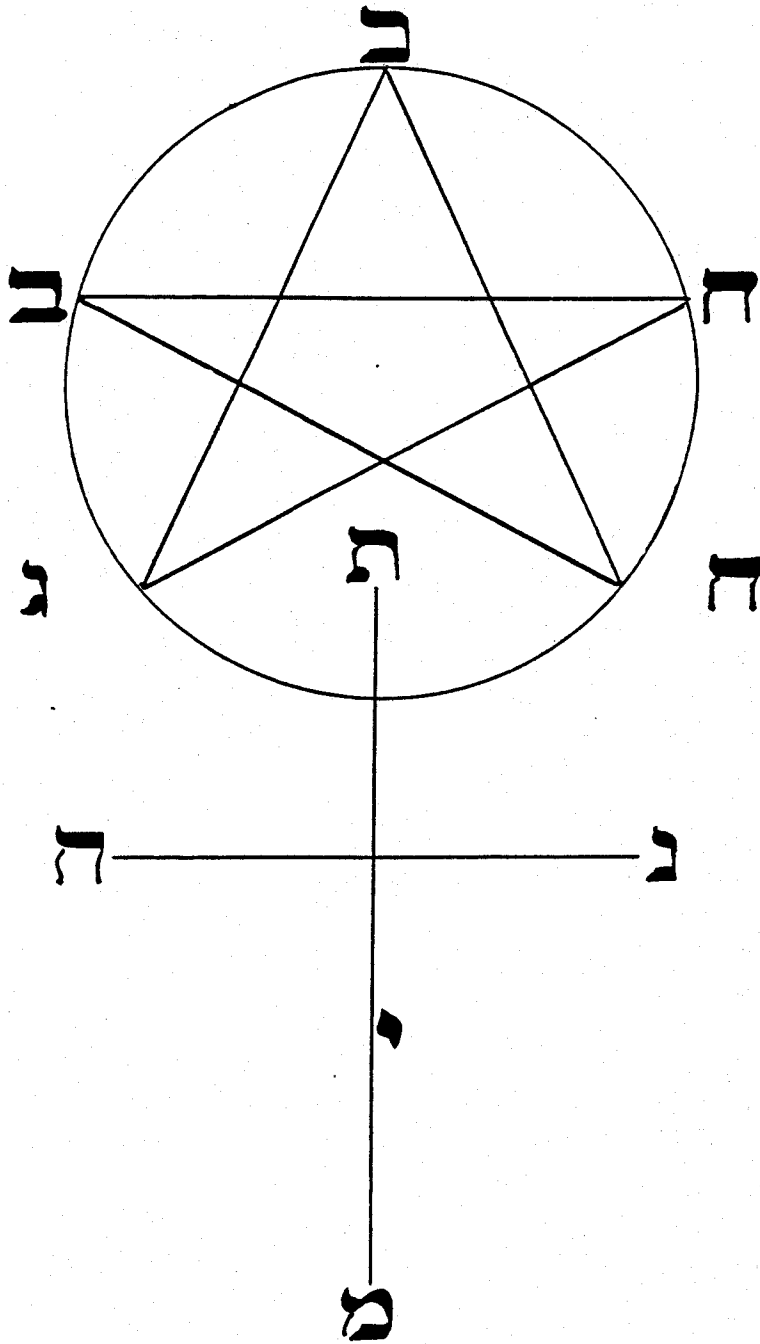
THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE SUIT OF WANDS



The Atziluth of each World will include only the Ace, Briah the 2nd and 3rd, Assiah the 10 and Yetzirah the remaining numbers, 4 - 9 inclusive, and both properly belong to Briah, but the upper most point of the Yod touches Atziluth, wherefore it is referred thereto.

In the natural order of the Paths on the Tree, it is to be observed that the character of the respective Trumps allotted thereto, balance each other: e.g. Death and the Devil, the Magician and the Fool, the High Priestess and the Empress.

The three reciprocal horizontal paths are occupied respectively by the Empress ♀ : Fortitude ♃ : and the Tower ⚡ : the first being, as it were, the expression of that Beauty which results from the Harmony of Wisdom and Understanding; the second that Strength which is to be found in the Harmony of Mercy and Severity; while the third conveys the idea of that Vehement force which is the Harmony of Victory and Splendour. Fortitude ♃ is also placed, as it were, between the two fives of the Sephirotic Universe.



FRONTPIECE OF THE TAROT

OVER THE POLE

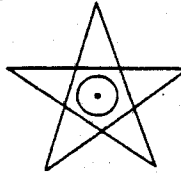
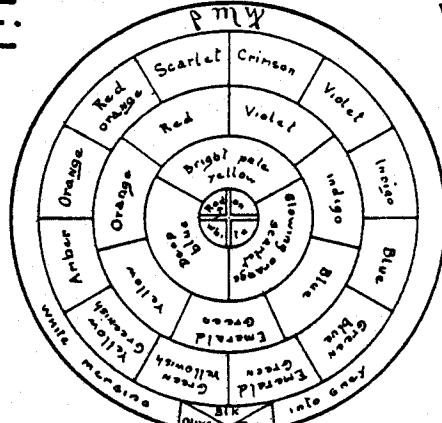
The front piece ~~opposite~~ consists of the Crux Ansata which is a form of the Rosy Cross. One arm is scarlet, with the symbols of Leo and the Wand in emerald green. Another is blue with the sign of Scorpio and the Cup in orange. A third is Yellow, with Aquarius and Dagger in violet. The last is the four colours of Malkuth. The background is black with the writing and Pentagrams in white. The Greek letters in the White Ring stand for the Angel HUA who presides over the operations of the Tarot and shows that all invocations come through Kether and above. The words around the Ankh are L.I.F.E., B.I.O.S (Greek for Life) and V.I.T.A (Latin for Life) and T.A.P.O (meaning Tarot).

L·I·F·E·

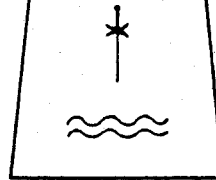
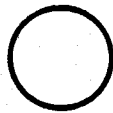
V·I·T·A·

T

A



Yellow,
Symbols in
Violet



B·I·O·S·

THE COMPLETE SYMBOL OF THE TAROT