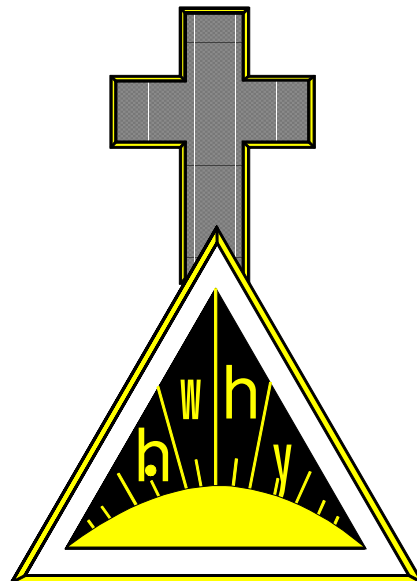


The Hermetic Order Of The  
**GOLDEN DAWN** Intl.

**MAJOR ARCANA SERIES**

**TOWER / PATH OF p**

**The Guide for Understanding  
the Major Arcana**



**PHILOSOPHUS 4=7**

*(The following description of the Tower Card is taken from the Philosophus initiation):*

"The twenty-seventh path of the *Sepher Yetzirah* which answereth unto p is called the Exciting Intelligence, and it is so called because by it is created the intellect of all created beings under the highest heaven, and the excitement or motion of them. It is therefore the reflection of the sphere of Mars, and the reciprocal path connecting j xii with dwh, victory with splendor. It is the lowermost of the three reciprocal paths."

"Before you upon the altar is the 16th Key of the Tarot which symbolically resumes these ideas. It represents a tower struck by a lightning flash proceeding from a rayed circle and terminating in a triangle. It is the Tower of Babel struck by the Fire from heaven. It is to be noted that the triangle at the end of the flash, issuing from the circle, forms exactly the astronomical symbol of Mars. It is the power of the Triad rushing down and destroying the columns of Darkness. Three holes are rent in the walls, symbolizing the establishment of the Triad therein and the crown at the summit of the tower is falling, as the crowns of the kings of Edom fell, who are also symbolized by the men falling headlong. On the right hand side of the tower is Light and the representation of the Tree of Life by ten circles thus disposed. On the left hand side is Darkness and eleven circles symbolizing the Qlippoth."

## **Esoteric Information**

The path color is scarlet, the planet that influences this path is Mars, and the literal meaning of p is mouth. The esoteric title is, "Lord of the Host of the Mighty." The path of p and the Tower card is a very important path, and is in fact, an important card because it connects the reasoning process of dwh with the center of intuition and desire, which is j xii. This path is an equilibrating path of the personality and relates to Mars and the North quadrant. This traditionally in the Golden Dawn system and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is known as the "Place of Greatest Darkness", as referred to in the Neophyte initiation when the Hierophant states, "Now take your position in the northern corner, the greatest symbol of Darkness." It is the place of greatest Darkness because it is said that the Sun has never been seen in that corner of Solomon's Temple. So, we use Solomon's Temple as a representation or archetype representing just that. Yet we are told by the Hierophant in the Neophyte initiation that "The Light cometh from the Darkness, yet the Darkness comprehendeth it not." In addition, enlightenment in fact has its beginnings in the hidden source of power which is terrifying to the minds of the ignorant. We see that p is a double letter, meaning that it is one of the gateways of the soul. It also means that it has two possible directions of passage. p literally means mouth, an orifice of the body that relates to taking nourishment into the system. Moreover, perhaps more importantly, it relates to speech and verbalization.

We see two functions taking place here, considering that p literally means mouth. In the first case we understand that it is a function of devastation, the teeth

chewing up food, which is then provided for nourishment for the body and allows the body to function and inveterate the personality. The spiritual nourishment, as it is called, passes into the system via the symbolic mouth. Speech or symbolic ideas pass out of the mouth which is very similar to a two-way highway. The importance of speech and sound cannot be over-emphasized, particularly coming from an esoteric standpoint. The vibration of the Divine names, for example, if uttered correctly, should be felt by the body and should have a direct effect on the physical body itself as well as the psyche of the individual.

Next, we move into what has been often termed "words of power" or "Divine names." It is properly vibrated with a martian force, meaning authority, strength and energy, which helps to bring about the destruction of our personal towers or false concepts and institutions which we believe to be reality. In other words, through the proper vibration with this martian force, we literally begin to destroy our towers or our ego. In the destruction of our ego, it is then that we open ourselves to the Divine. We must also remember that though  $\rho$ , called the Blasted Tower, means to tear something down, at the same time we tear that something down we make room for something new. When we think of Mars we think of the god of war and the god of destruction. We must also, at the same time, know that it rules over fertility, crops and regrowth. So, as the ancient pagans would burn down their fields at the end of the season and turn over the ground, this was the preparation for new growth that would take place in the spring. In addition, as we think in terms of speech, we must remember that in the Gospel of John it says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the Word was with God." We see that "The Logos" is also called "The Word." As we examine the picture of the Tower card, we see in most depictions of this card a large phallic-looking tower in a desolate landscape, generally with figures falling from the top. The Tower may be apparently blasted from within or on fire, and in many figures it shows a crown being blasted off. To simplify this, basically what it is symbolizing is the destruction of our own perceptions or what we believe to be reality. The Tower is the concept of what most people call "I". In other words, the personality of our awareness is being shattered by an influx of force, revealing something of the nature of our True and Higher Self, the Divine Genius. The Tower can also symbolize all manmade institutions, whether it be churches, government, or anything that we place a perceived value on. We must not confuse the Tower with the striking down of evil or negative energy. In fact, the title of this card is often times referred to as "The House of God." We must learn as occultists that the building process of particular images and striking them down is a method used for forming stepping stones into the inner world. In other words, as the images and beliefs no longer become useful for our continual growth, they need to be torn down so that new and fresh images may be erected. It is on this path that we first encounter the Archangels in an anthropomorphic guise. This form standing from an outward point of view seems to be, to some, their reality, particularly if we don't believe that Archangels exist in the first place. What we are encountering and confronting are our pictures which have been established through centuries of meditative practices. These are useful creations of man rather than being the true pure consciousness of true Archangelic beings. To encounter the Archangels as formless, timeless, and without definition means to destroy another tower which we have created. Yet, nonetheless,

we consider these towers necessary and often times sacred. They are like expressions of ourselves, our bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit. Appreciating how sacred these symbols can be, we learn to apply the underlying principle of each path without being tied down and gagged by their artificial outward manifestation. We know that in reality any path we follow, by definition, is in fact artificial, whether it be Qabalah, Hinduism, Catholicism, Golden Dawn system, Western Esoteric system, Buddhism, or any path at all, and that each carefully laid brick of these structures will be ultimately destroyed.

The keys for better understanding the Tower card in its esoteric meaning is to look at the very isolation of this card. It will generally stand in a desolate mountainous or dark area. Most individuals in reality perceive themselves as some kind of distinct consciousness, a separate unit of consciousness. So, in reality, as the Tower is destroyed in each of us, we then are released to pursue our True Self, the Divine Genius. The lightening, thundering and sudden destruction of the Tower is a sudden realization or a flash of perception of our True and real Self. It is almost a glimpse of our Higher Genius, our real identity. That lightening oftentimes is depicted in a shape of a circle and spear of Mars to indicate Mars, which initiates the experience.

Golden Dawn tradition shows the lightening striking the crown at the top of the Tower card, indicating an obvious reference to rtk. What is really more significant is that the lightening is not necessarily striking the crown of rtk or our True Self, as depicted in the Supernals in the Yechidah, but is actually striking the false crowns of our existence. These are considered the crowns of manmade values, governments, religions, doctrines and belief systems, which we believe to control us. One of the meanings of the crown is the will, the primal will of rtk, which in fact, is our true reality or the representation the Divine essence within us. As we consciously set out through the magical system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the Western Esoteric system to destroy ourselves, we then open ourselves to the destruction of belief systems. It is only then we are made available to our True Will and Higher Genius. We see that Mars, as mentioned earlier, on the twenty-seventh path, the path of the Tower and p, corresponds to the sephira of hrwbg, the fifth sephira. The activity of hrwbg is one of tearing away obsolete values. We must re-emphasize emphatically that the sephiroth are the centers of objective energies, whereas on the paths we find that they are subjective or are in subjective use of those energies. In varying degrees, all the energies of all the sephiroth are on all the paths. In the case of the Tower card, the path of p, we would say that hrwbg is the dominant energy. We must also keep in mind that hrwbg and j xn, Venus and Mars, are linked. Those gods involved with hrwbg and j xn are known as the "Gods of Armies."

Often times, and sadly so, people make a blunder in assuming that the process of spiritual development is a process of sweetness and light. This is a misconception and this misconception has been primarily fostered by Christianity. Let us remember when Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace into the world, but I have come to bring a sword." The Tower card points out that inner growth must be at times painful and could almost be described as an overwhelming process. Nature is not always kind to us with its volcanoes, hurricanes and earthquakes.

The Tower card, the path of p, brings about sudden illumination or realization which is symbolized in the Golden Dawn card as a lightening flash.

Also, in the Golden Dawn card, two figures are falling off the top of the Tower. Paul Foster Case explains that this is a dual mode of lower personal consciousness. This is referring to consciousness and subconsciousness. MacGregor Mathers called these "The Kings of Edom." A. E. Waite apparently agreed with Mathers inasmuch that these two figures both wear crowns in the Rider Waite deck.

Reference to the Kings of Edom lead us to very subtle and sublime meanings of the Tower card and the path of p. The fall of the Kings of Edom refer to the conquest of the nation by the Jews. There is, however, a much deeper esoteric meaning to this fall or this sudden destruction as depicted in the Tower card, and symbolically refers to the Kings of Edom. On the other hand, the *Zohar* points out that in the creation of the Universe, there were at one time other Universes, other forms of existence, with which the Divine was displeased and which he then reduced to a state of chaos or a state of nothingness.

We can see other biblical implications depicted by the Tower card. It can and has been referred to as the "Tower of Babel", a parable wherein the relation of speech and the Tower is clearly shown. Remember that p refers literally to meaning mouth. Apparently, in this mythology, after the flood, the descendants were said to have settled in Babylon where they built a city of rock and brick. They also supposedly attempted to build a tower to God. They attempted to reach heaven, but apparently, according to the mythos, God seeing these men as course and vicious sought to punish them. So, with the destruction of the Tower of Babel by God, we see that the whole Earth, which at one point was under one language, all of a sudden, with the destruction, has various forms of language. In symbolic terms then the Tower of false notions results in confusion. In other words, as we build false perceptions in our life, we are literally building confusion. These false perceptions again deal with our own belief system as energized by the ego. Moreover, these are dealing with false societal perceptions such as governments, religion, etc..

In the majority of Tarot cards, particularly the Golden Dawn and Rider Waite decks, we see that there are three windows in the Tower. These three windows symbolically refer to the Supernal Triangle, meaning in essence, that the activity of the Tower somehow involves the True or Cosmic Self. According to Robert Wang, what happens is that the path of the Tower may be considered the affirmation of primal will, that it alone is the true crown thus bringing into balance in the self the pure positive hmkj , and the pure negative hnyb, which stand at the top of each pillar in our internal individual Tree.

In the Golden Dawn card, we see even more of a profound suggestion is made concerning these polarities. On the right hand we see the Tree of Life and on the left we see the Qlippothic tree. As the Tower is illuminated, hit by lightening and is struck

down, the opposites of good and evil are suddenly viewed completely different and in a new light. With this, one knows and realizes that all that is in the Universe is part of the one God, the one Creator, the one Unknowable One. Again, as stated, every created thing contains the seed of the opposite as pointed out in the Neophyte initiation where we see the Hierophant pointing out to the aspirant that in all things there are two opposing forces, the seed of the opposite of all things.

We must consider from an alchemical viewpoint that the Tower itself is phallic. We must consider that p, meaning mouth, may be interpreted as the opening of the male reproductive organ, that from which y (life seed from Light) is issued forth. We may wish to consider that the Blasted Tower in reality is nothing more than a phallus, shooting forth as it is exploding out the end, lightening of life-giving seed. Thus, we see that the Fire is both the destroyer and the renewer; as it destroys, it also renews. We have a force of transmutation of energy of one form to another. This is easily understood by throwing a piece of paper into a fire, soon, the paper will be gone but the energy is not, for it is merely transmuted.

