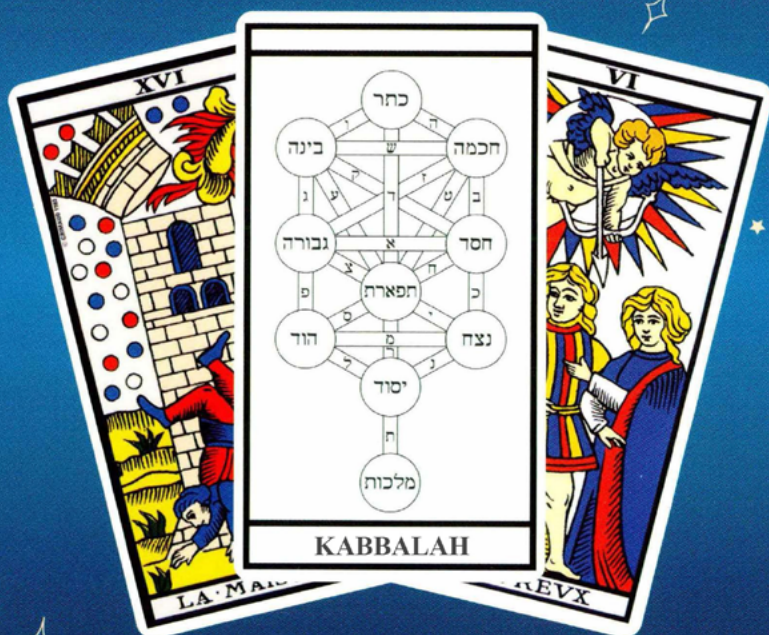


Josselyne Chourry

# The Tarot in the Light of Kabbalah

and other games





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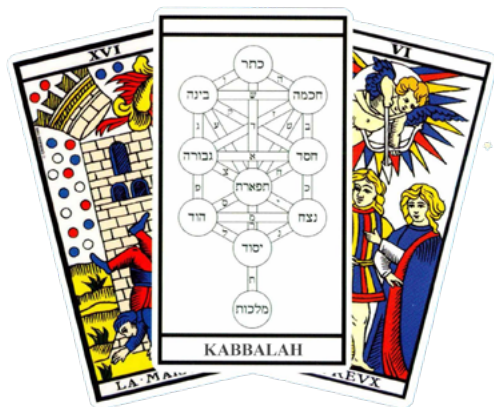
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# The Tarot in the Light of Kabbalah

and other games



**Josselyne Chourry**

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# INTRODUCING THE TAROT

According to some, the Tarot first appeared in the Middle Ages, while others claim it appeared much earlier in the Mediterranean region. Some believe it to be a Gnostic legacy of the Cathars, or a game that originated even further afield, in Egypt, Persia, or China. But what matters is the real origin of this game whose cards have lost, with time and certain recreations in several versions, the full content of their symbolism in all the major arcana. Therefore, we probably now have a fragmentary image of the original cards. However, as a system, the Tarot's impressive graphics suggest that the Tree of Life may have been its initial reference structure.

The “major” arcana is made up of twenty-two cards bearing a specific number and referring to each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Tarot-Kabbalah comparison, or if you prefer, the Tarot-Torah comparison (to make a nice play on words), shows that two systems, albeit independently developed, come together on a symbolic level. We will now turn our attention to the allegorical journey represented by the Tarot's arcana and their spiritual effluvia.

Like Kabbalah, the Tarot invites us to take the path of our interiority. That is why we are leaving the research on the true origins and the history of the Tarot to the experts, and we will simply outline the following developments: In 1343, Petrarch (1304-1374) wrote *Books of Things to be Remembered* (*Rerum memorandarum libri*), in which he referred to the art of memory, and the images he studied were called “Triumphs.” They appear to be the ancestors of our Tarot cards. Documents attesting to the Tarot's existence date from around 1365 to 1375, in cities such as Florence, Siena,

Viterbo, Barcelona, and Paris. The first known Tarots were produced by guilds of engravers and illuminators in the second half of the fourteenth century, followed by the famous Venetian Tarocchi in the fifteenth century.

Could it be a Tarot deck being played by *The Fortune Teller*, the title of a 1508 painting seen below, by Dutch painter and engraver Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533)?



The Tarot was largely introduced to France under Francis I (1494-1547), and with good reason, since this king, who founded the Imprimerie Royale (Royal Printing Office), belonged to a brotherhood grouping together the various guilds involved in the making of the Tarot and its mysteries. In fact, this brotherhood was called AGLA, and its sign of recognition was the number 4, which corresponds to the Emperor's card. Meetings were held in Paris, on rue de l'Arbre-sec.

AGLA (אגלא) – Notarikon (from right to left according to the Hebrew script) of “aTHa GuiBoR Le-hoLaM ‘aDoNaï” – “You are powerful and eternal, Lord.”



Among the engravers and card artisans of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, there would have been three classes, reminiscent of the three grades of Freemasonic lodges. These three classes are divided as follows:

- Apprentices (valets) who often used a nickname.
- Brothers (horsepeople) who used a pseudonym.
- Initiates (queens and kings) who had a “heraldic” title or surname.

Although the Tarot also had its Quattrocento (the Italian name given during the fifteenth century Renaissance period) influences, its imagination and representations undeniably stem from the tradition of medieval illuminators with their knowledge of antiquity and alchemy. One of the oldest French Tarot decks is that of Catelin Geoffroy in Lyon in 1557, of which only thirty-eight cards remain today. Three Tarot decks from the seventeenth century have survived:

- The first is an anonymous Parisian game.
- Next comes Jean Noblet’s game (1650), the very first to feature names for the cards.
- The third deck (1650) is that of a card artisan master whose surname is Jacques Viéville. Nevertheless, this deck is atypical, and purists consider that it does not belong to the Tarot of Marseilles tradition, as some cards do not follow its pattern. It is the only complete deck from the seventeenth century and is preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (National Library of France).

These three decks comprise seventy-eight cards with influences from the Bologna and Milan Tarots. The “rules of the game” come from the oldest dates of this period too, having been printed in Nevers in 1637 by the abbot Michel de Marolles (1600-1681), a frequent visitor to the salons of the famous French author Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701), and a collector of prints (around 123,000 collected over 40 years and purchased in 1668 by Jean-Baptiste

Colbert on behalf of the king to found the Cabinet des Estampes de la Bibliothèque Royale (Cabinet of Prints of the Royal Library).

\*

The eighteenth century saw the arrival of various Tarots, the most widespread of which include:

- Jean Dodal's Tarot (Lyon, 1701), which, while taking Jean Noblet's deck as its model, became a benchmark in the world of Tarot, so much so that it was nicknamed the "the villages' tarault or taraus" (note these particular spellings in archives from the early eighteenth century).
- The Tarot of Pierre Madenié (Dijon, 1709), which gave the deck its most finalized form and is said to be the favorite deck of occultists and tarologists.
- Jean-Pierre Payen's Tarot (Avignon, 1713), which deviates somewhat from the traditional canon (among other things, by introducing flowers).
- The Tarot of François Chosson (1736).
- The Tarot of François Tourcaty (Marseille, 1745).
- The Tarot of Claude Burdel (Fribourg, 1751).
- The Tarot of Nicolas Conver, card artisan master in Marseille, the original of which is kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale (National Library) in Paris.
- The Tarot of François Bourlion (1760), a card merchant active in Marseille from 1743 to 1791.
- The Tarot of Joseph Fautrier (1762).
- The Tarot of Bernardin Suzanne (1839) or Suzanne Bernardin. Could it be the work of a female card artisan master? Opinions are divided among Tarot historians.

The list is given as an overview, but it is not exhaustive, and there are many other Tarots that could have been listed. The name “Tarot of Marseilles” was not coined until 1859, by a certain Romain Merlin, in an article “Nouvelles recherches sur l’origine des cartes à jouer” [“New Research on the Origin of Playing Cards”] published in *La Revue Archéologique* (*The Archaeological Review*). And yet, the Tarot most studied today from an initiatory and esoteric point of view is known as the Tarot of Marseilles, even though it did not actually emerge in this city. It should be noted, however, that cards have been made in Marseille since 1630, and that the second half of the eighteenth century saw a revival of interest in the Tarot among occultists.

Tarots of Marseilles were mainly exported to Germany, and little by little the Germans began to print their own decks while keeping the French name.

But by the end of the eighteenth century, other Tarots were developing:

- The so-called Besançon Tarots, which include most of the trump cards with the exception of the Pope and the Popess.
- The Belgian Tarots of Rouen and Brussels.
- The esoteric Tarot of Antoine Court de Gébelin, Protestant pastor (1780) who joined Freemasonry at the “Amis Réunis (Friends Reunited)” lodge, and then the “Neuf Sœurs (Nine Sisters)” lodge, where he rubbed shoulders with Benjamin Franklin. He was also a member of the Philalèthes Order and probably that of the Elus-Cohen. He had an epistolary relationship with Jean-Baptiste Willermoz. The fashion of the day was for antiquity mixed with esotericism, and if there is no proof of the Tarot’s Egyptian origins, Court de Gébelin was probably at the origin of this allegation. He wrote: “If one were to hear that there still exists a work of the ancient Egyptians, one of their books which escaped the flames which devoured their superb libraries, and which contains their purest doctrine on interesting objects, everyone would

no doubt be eager to know such an extraordinary book. We certainly would. Well, this book of old Egypt is the Tarot deck, the cards” (*Le Monde Primitif (The Primeval World)*, Antoine Court de Gébelin - 1781). He devoted volume VIII of his unfinished treatise *Le Monde Primitif (The Primeval World)* to this game. Thus, the Popess or High Priestess was the deity Isis, the Chariot was Osiris triumphant, the Star was Sirius, etc.

- The divinatory Tarot of Etteilla (1785), made by a Parisian wigmaker by the name of Jean-Baptiste Alliette, better known by his pseudonym Etteilla (1738-1791). He earned part of his living from fortune-telling and his school of magic, and is quoted as saying: “Above science is magic, for magic is a continuation of science.” In 1783, he published an authoritative book on the Tarot. It was he who named the Tarot the “Book of Thoth” and wrote: “The Tarot is an ancient Egyptian book whose pages contain the secret of universal medicine, the creation of the world and humanity’s destiny. Its origins date back to 2170 BCE, when seventeen magicians gathered in a conclave presided over by Hermes Trismegistus. It was then incised on gold plates placed around the central fire of the Temple of Memphis. Finally, after various ups and downs, it was reproduced by mediocre engravers in the Middle Ages, with so many inaccuracies that its meaning was distorted.” From then on, the esoteric tradition of the Tarot was born and would flourish in the following century!
- The Tarot of Miss Lenormand during the French Revolution. Marie-Anne-Adélaïde Lenormand (1772-1843) was a bookseller and fortune-teller. She is said to have predicted a violent death for the revolutionaries Marat, Robespierre, and Saint-Just.

In 1848, master card-maker Baptiste-Paul Grimaud (1817-1899) set up his workshop. At the age of twenty-three, he was responsible for the development of playing card making and the Tarot of Marseilles. He took part in the 1900 Paris Exhibition.

The nineteenth century saw the culmination of the Tarot with the deepening of the study of Hermetic sciences, in particular by Golden Dawn. To this fraternity we owe the three key decks of the modern era:

- The Golden Dawn Tarot designed by Mac-Gregor Mathers (1854-1918).
- The Rider-Waite Tarot, designed by Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942) and published in 1909. This Tarot deck had the particularity of illustrating all seventy-eight cards, far more than the usual twenty-two. Some of the cards included symbolic figures directly inspired by Masonic rituals.
- The Thoth Tarot designed by Aleister Crowley (1875-1947).

We can also mention:

- *The Tarot of the Bohemians* by Papus (1865-1916). It is a richly illustrated book, with many explanatory figures.

The Ancients, with the ordinary power of their synthetic genius, had symbolized the whole of involution and Evolution by a sequence of twenty-two figures full of meaning, which constitute what occultists call the twenty-two Great Arcana. (excerpt from *The Tarot of the Bohemians*)

In this same work, Papus indicates that *Natural Table of Correspondences Which Exist Between God [the Divine], Man [Humankind] and the Universe*, by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), is based strictly on the Tarot.

In 1930, Paul Marteau (1885-1966), master card-maker, collector and heir to the Grimaud family, set the colors for the Tarot of Marseilles.

All mystery schools teach that there are fields of exploration that can take us beyond the limited perception of our senses to a broader awareness of the universe. Eliphas Lévi (1810-1875) considered the Tarot to be much more than a fortune-teller's tool – it was a key tool for all occult science. For him, the art of the Tarot only serves

as an “oracle” if it is mastered by the intelligence of the heart and magnetized by faith.

\*

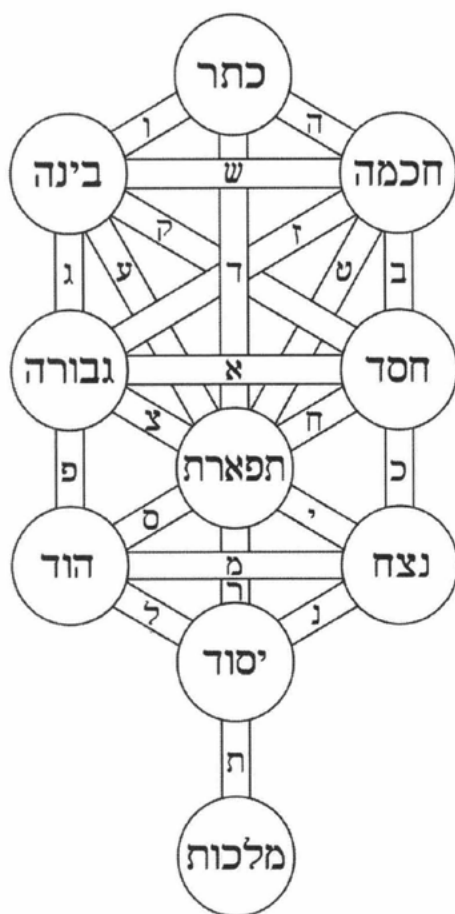
In fact, working with the Kabbalah or the Tarot depends on a personal choice. For example, focusing on a specific card or on a SePHiRaH, will enable us to work on an aspect of ourselves. This is why, before approaching the study of the Tarot in the light of Kabbalah, it is important to point out that there are several ways of approaching Kabbalah today; for there is the original Kabbalah stemming from Judaism, followed by a Kabbalah which is the product of the Italian Renaissance and which we call Hermetic Kabbalah. It was to the latter that the Golden Dawn referred in its applications to the Tarot. The differences between these two Kabbalahs can be striking in their interpretations and practical work. Let us not forget that it was Pico della Mirandola who, in the 72<sup>nd</sup> Kabbalistic Conclusion of his 900 theses, asserted that by adding the letter SHiN to the tetragrammaton YoD-He-VaV-He, we obtain YeHSHouaH.\*

יְהֵשׁוּעַ

---

\* - Note that Yeshua is written in Hebrew as YéSHouha יְהֵשׁוּעַ (YeSHouha BeN DaViD for the YeouDiM).





The traditional Tree of the SePHiRoTH

MaLKHouTH is not linked to the SePHiRoTH HoD and NeTSaH.

# THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE TAROT CARDS

If we start from the premise that the universe is an immeasurable circuit through and within which divine Energy flows, then there is a continuous back-and-forth flow of energy. The Sephirotic Tree illustrates this circulation by its paths between each SePHiRaH. These paths are the subjective experiences of moving from one SePHiRaH to another. Similarly, the Tarot cards are all paths for the circulation of energy. From this energetic vision, we can easily understand that the Kabbalah and the Tarot are mystical tools if we no longer consider them as mere intellectual, divinatory, or magical games. Thus, the paths can define stages of personal evolution, provided that we do not stagnate in the astral projection of their interpretation. This presupposes a balance between the constituent parts of our personality and our individual development process. All too often, the spiritual pitfall lies in the fact that many people turn to the occult and mysticism in the hope of unlocking mysteries and acquiring personal powers. But as there are no shortcuts to Knowledge, and no ready-made methods, these same people are quickly disappointed and burn what they had previously praised.

## INTRODUCTION TO TAROT

In the Tarot, there are seventy-eight cards divided into fifty-six minor arcana and twenty-two major arcana (including the Fool (the Mat) or “nameless arcanum” without number).

- The twenty-two major arcana, like the twenty-two Hebrew letters, reflect the Divine Plan and materialize the Divine Light. They represent the vertical axis of a cross.
- The fifty-six minor arcana: According to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the number 56 represents “the perverse Being at grips with the principles of nature and left to Its own justice; the Spirit of the Universe ascending towards its source.” Fifty-six is also the number of facets in a diamond cut for maximum brilliance. Fifty-six is therefore an ambiguous number, a number of mutation that conceals a hidden beauty that must be discovered through the power of one’s own research. This is why it could be the number of the Dark Night, the beginning of a new vision of the world. The minor arcana represent the horizontal axis of a cross.

These fifty-six cards are themselves divided into four “colors” or “suits.” Each of the four suits has a different symbol: wand, cup, sword, and pentacle.

The minor game is therefore composed of four suits (four worlds) each made up of ten cards (ten SePHiRoTH) beginning with the Ace. Reading the four suits as four worlds, we obtain the following:

- 1) Clubs or Wand for the World of Emanation (‘aTSiLouTH).
- 2) Spades or Sword for the World of Creation (BeRi’aH).
- 3) Hearts or Cup for the World of Formation (YeTSiRaH).
- 4) Diamonds or Pentacles for the World of Action (haSSiaH).



The division of the cards into four series also allows analogies with the four seasons, the four cardinal points, the four Evangelists, etc.:

Fire	Wand	Club
Air	Sword	Spade
Water	Cup	Heart
Earth	Pentacle	Diamond

The total seventy-eight is the secret key to twelve (sum of numbers 1 to 12) -> seventy-eight keys to the future of humanity and the universe. The seventy-eight-card deck dates back to the eighteenth century. Other decks existed with different numbers:

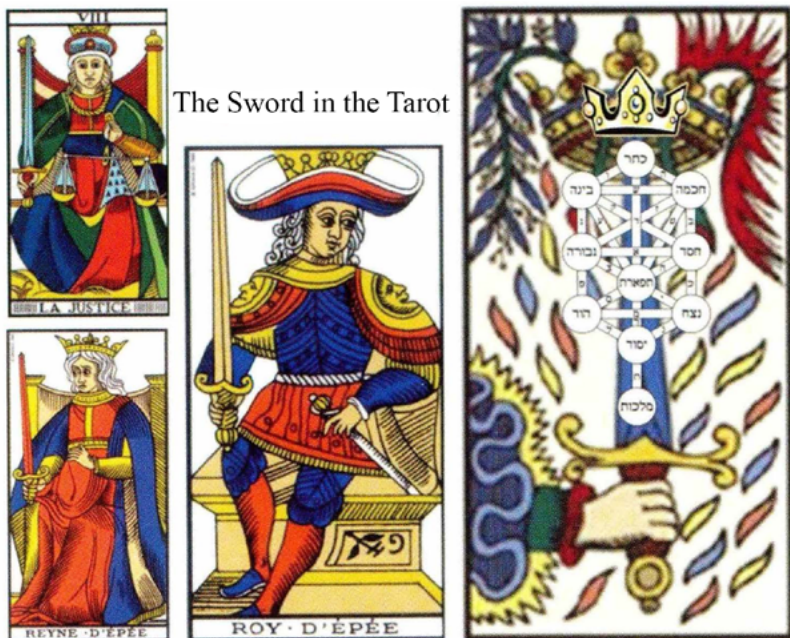
- There are ninety-seven cards in Florence’s Minchiate, a term that comes from an Italian word meaning “nonsense” or “trivial.” A letter written in 1466 by the poet and diplomat Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de’ Medici refers to this game.
- There are fifty Tarot cards in the fifteenth-century Mantegna Tarocchi. It is a set of fifty prints in the form of cards which, to be honest, are not really a Tarot deck, but rather humanistic images for literate people. Despite his name, it does not appear that the painter and engraver Andrea Mantegna (ca. 1451-1506) was the master engraver or inspiration behind this deck.
- There are sixty-two cards in the Tarocco Bolognese, versions of which date back to the fifteenth century. A popular seventeenth-century version designed by Giacomo Zoni is in the style of the Tarot of Marseilles, with nuances in tones.

## THE 10 MINOR ARCANA

*Ace of Wands* – Root of the powers of Fire – KeTHeR in ‘aTSiLouTH – reference to the “Staff of Moses.”

*Ace of Cups* – Root of the powers of Water – KeTHeR in BeRi’aH – Reference to the “KiDDuSH Cup” used during SHaBBaTH in Judaism.

*Ace of Swords* - Root of the powers of Air – KeTHeR in YeTSiRaH – Reference to “the Divine’s swords of Light” (for Christians, reference to “the two-edged sword of Revelation”).



*Ace of Pentacles* – Root of the powers of the Earth – KeTHeR in haSSiaH – Reference to a seal, the “shield of David.” In the Tarot of Court de Gébelin, there is a rose in the center of the Ace of Pentacles.

2 of Wands – HoKMaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

2 of Cups – HoKMaH in BeRi’aH

2 of Swords – HoKMaH in YeTSiRaH

2 of Pentacles – HoKMaH in haSSiaH

3 of Wands – BiNaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

3 of Cups – BiNaH in BeRi’aH

3 of Swords – BiNaH in YeTSiRaH

3 of Pentacles – BiNaH in haSSiaH

4 of Wands – HeSSeD in ‘aTSiLouTH

4 of Cups – HeSSeD in BeRi’aH

4 of Swords – HeSSeD in YeTSiRaH

4 of Pentacles – HeSSeD in haSSiaH

5 of Wands – GueBouRaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

5 of Cups – GueBouRaH in BeRi’aH

5 of Sword – GueBouRaH in YeTSiRaH

5 of Pentacles – GueBouRaH in haSSiaH

6 of Wands – THiPHeReTH in ‘aTSiLouTH

6 of Cups– THiPHeReTH in BeRi’aH

6 of Swords – THiPHeReTH in YeTSiRaH

6 of Pentacles – THiPHeReTH in haSSiaH

7 of Wands – NeTsaH in ‘aTSiLouTH

7 of Cups – NeTsaH in BeRi’aH

7 of Swords – NeTsaH in YeTSiRaH

7 of Pentacles – NeTsaH in haSSiaH

8 of Wands – HoD in ‘aTSiLouTH

8 of Cups – HoD in BeRi’aH

8 of Swords – HoD in YeTSiRaH

8 of Pentacles – HoD in haSSiaH

9 of Wands – YeSSoD in ‘aTSiLouTH

9 of Cups – YeSSoD in BeRi’aH

9 of Swords – YeSSoD in YeTSiRaH

9 of Pentacles – YeSSoD in haSSiaH

10 of Wands– MaLKHouTH in ‘aTSiLouTH

10 of Cups– MaLKHouTH in BeRi’aH

10 of Swords – MaLKHouTH in YeTSiRaH

10 of Pentacles – MaLKHouTH in haSSiaH

We also find the Earth-Water-Air-Fire elements already mentioned:

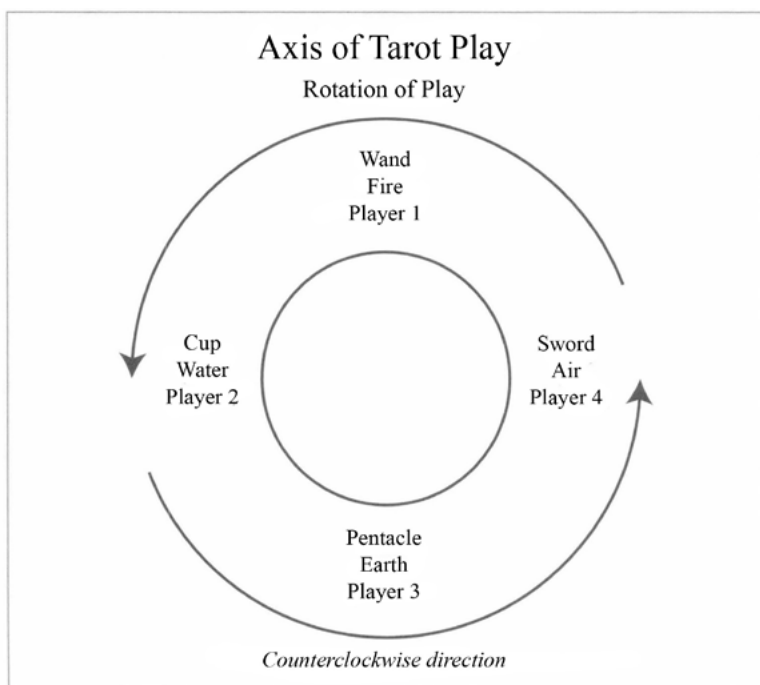
- The Wand corresponds to Fire, the animal kingdom, the body, and the senses.
- The Cup corresponds to Water, the plant kingdom, the heart, and the emotions.
- The Sword corresponds to Air; the human kingdom, the spirit, and the spiritual.
- The Pentacle corresponds to the Earth, the mineral kingdom, matter, and pragmatism.



There are ten Wand cards, ten Cup cards, ten Sword cards, and ten Pentacle cards. If we take a Tarot deck and look closely at the minor cards, we are surprised to find that the Pentacle cards are not numbered.

When reason fails to provide the explanations we are looking for, the power of myths takes over; and there is the myth of a coherent structure of the universe linked to the figure of a person. Classical Western imagery illustrates the correspondences between the planets and social activities, between the signs of the zodiac and certain parts of the body. The Tarot offers an even more subtle illustration, since the architecture of its images itself forms the bridge between the two universes: sometimes a mirror of the world, sometimes a mirror of a person under the gaze of the observer. This double game explains its fascination.

(Jean-Marie Lhôte, in *Court de Gébelin, Le Tarot*,  
Berg. International Editeurs, 1983, p. 11)



Tarot is ideally played with four players.

Six is the number of cards set aside during the distribution. The rest is nicknamed “the talon.”

Cards are dealt counterclockwise.

Seventy-two is the number of cards needed to start the game, i.e., eighteen cards per player.

Note that  $72=7+2=9$

$18=1+8=9$

Seventy-two is the number of years it takes for the vernal point (spring equinox) to complete an ecliptic cycle (in retrograde direction). The equinox precession cycle (linked to the gravitational force of the Moon and the Sun) is about 25,920 years. This phenomenon is due to the fact that the Earth is not a perfect sphere, but is bulging slightly at the equator and flattened at the poles. If we look at the figure above, we can see two opposing movements:

Water (cup) extinguishes Fire (wand) and waters the Earth (pentacle).

Air (sword) fans Fire (wand) and dries up the Earth (pentacle).

Fire – ‘eSH = 301

Water – MaiM (always plural in Hebrew) = 90

Earth – ‘aDaMaH = 50

Air – ‘aViR = 217

Total word values are equal to 658 as ‘oRoTH Gué’ouLaH (Lights of Redemption).

$6+5+8=19=1+9=10=1+0=$  ONE

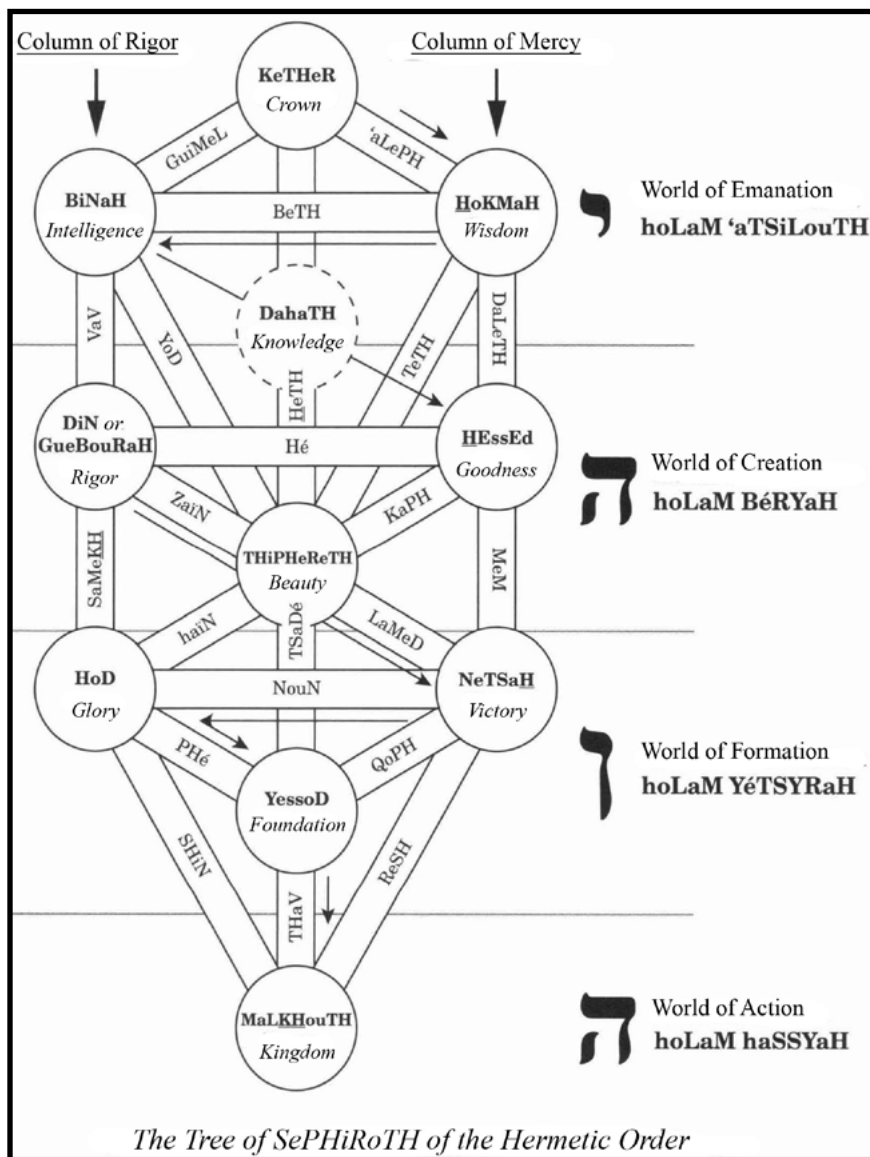
And yet, in every life adventure, there is always a constant, which is the ONE on which multiplicity rests. The aim of this demonstration is to reveal the part of the mystery or SoD (secret) that is veiled in any process, be it creative or recreational. We will see that one of the major cards is unnumbered. But in fact, the Tarot has two special cards:

- The nameless arcanum (death), card number 13.  
 $13 = 1 + 3 = 4$
- The unnumbered arcanum (the fool), card number 22.  
 $22 = 2 + 2 = 4$

Name and number operate in gematria, and the Tarot, like the THoRaH, conceals signs to be decoded.

Speculative research will only bear fruit if it becomes operative. The theoretical preparatory study presented in this essay corresponds to the work of an apprentice or initiate.

Each form achieves harmony only through the equilibrium of its proportions. The Tarot's numerical structure is based on the ternary and quaternary. But is the architecture of the Tarot like that of a Temple?



MaLK HouTH is linked to SePHiRoTH HoD and NeTSaH

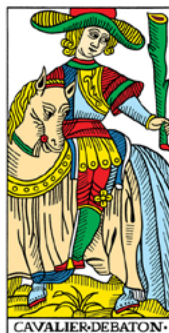
## CHARACTERS IN THE TAROT

Four Pages:

- The Page of Swords serves the Queen and King of Swords.
- The Page of Pentacles serves the Queen and the King of Pentacles.
- The Page of Wands serves Queen and King of Wands.
- The Page of Cups serves the Queen and King of Cups.

Four Knights:

- The Knight of Swords is always partnered with the Page of Wands.
- The Knight of Pentacles is always partnered with the Page of Cups.
- The Knight of Wands is always partnered with the Page of Swords.
- The Knight of Cups is always partners the Page of Pentacles.



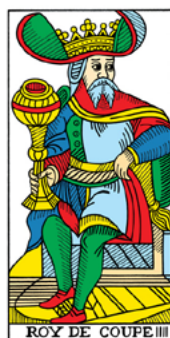
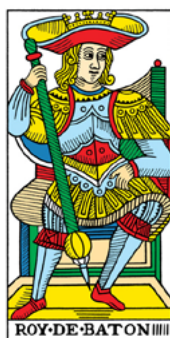
Four Queens:

- Queen of Swords.
- Queen of Pentacles.
- Queen of Wands.
- Queen of Cups.

### Four Kings:

- King of Swords.
- King of Pentacles.
- King of Wands.
- King of Cups.

Among these four kings, the king of Pentacles is particularly miserable compared to the others, he does not have a crown nor an elaborate costume, and his throne is a simple chair.

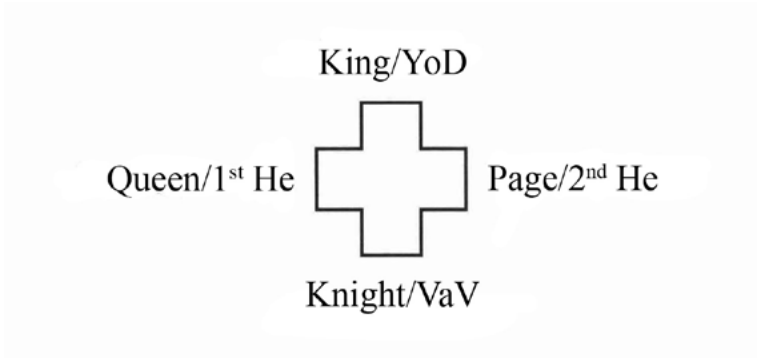


Now that we have seen these sixteen characters, let us see how they relate to the Kabbalah. Let us take a look at Papus's writings: "According to the ancient oral tradition of the Hebrews, or Kabbalah, there is a sacred word which, to the mortal who discovers its true pronunciation, holds the key to all divine and human sciences. This word, which the Israelites never pronounce and which the High Priest utters once a year amidst the cries of the profane people, is the one found at the highest level of all initiations, the one that radiates in the center of the flamboyant triangle in the thirty-third degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, the one that stretches over the portal of our old cathedrals, it is formed of four Hebrew letters and reads Yod-He-Vav-He."

- The king represents the active, man.
- The queen represents the passive, the woman.
- The knight represents the neutral, the adolescent.
- The page is the fourth term in this series.



יהוה



- The four elements (wand, cup, sword and pentacle) can be symbolized by a black triangle pointing downwards;
- The four honors or characters (page, knight, queen and king) can be symbolized by a white or red triangle pointing upwards.



Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), in his *Clavis abs cunditarum rerum*, and Eliphas Levi (1810-1875), in his *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, applied Tarot symbolism to Christianity:

- The YoD or Tarot wand represents the episcopal crosier.
- The 1st He or cup represents the chalice.
- The shape of the VaV or sword represents the cross.
- The 2nd He or Pentacle represents the host; a transition from the natural to the supernatural world, which may explain the

particular representations (no numbers and poverty of the king of Pentacles) attached to this figure.

The Tarot is a kind of memory aid for the Kabbalah, what Samuel Gabirol humorously qualifies as “Pocket Kabbalah.”

By adding the multiplication of these four symbols times four characters (16) to the preceding four times ten minor cards, we get fifty-six cards. When added with the twenty-two major cards, we get the seventy-eight cards in total to make up a complete Tarot deck.

## THE TWENTY-TWO MAJOR ARCANA

Let us take a look at the twenty-two major arcana. They are numbered in “progressive Roman numerals.” Thus we have VIII (5 and 4) and not IX (1 and 10).

The advantage of the Tarot is that it illustrates the paths of the Tree of Life, making them less abstract. The representations provide keys along the initiatory path. Tarot is not just a game, it is a means of awakening consciousness.

- Seven of the arcana feature left-facing beings = oriented towards the past (the Magician, the Popess, the Emperor, the Hermit, Temperance, the Star, and the World).
- Five of the arcana feature right-facing beings = oriented towards the future. (the Fool, the Empress, the Hierophant (Pope), Strength, Death).
- Five of the arcana show beings facing forward = oriented towards the present (Justice, the Hanged Man, the Devil, the Moon, and the Sun).
- Three of the arcana represent beings in transition between past and present (the Lover, the Chariot, the Wheel of Fortune).

The remainder of this book will examine each card in the light of Kabbalah and its symbolism. To do this, I invite you to bring along a Tarot of Marseilles to illustrate the explanations.

# THE TWENTY-TWO MAJOR ARCANA AND THEIR SYMBOLS

## THE MAGICIAN



*At left: Tarot of Marseille; at right: Tarot of Wirth.*

Number: 1

Hebrew letter: 'aLePH

French letter: A

Greek letter: Alpha

Ideogram: Ox

Planet: Mercury

The magician is holding a wand (stick) in his left hand and a coin (pentacle) in his right, which he is preparing to make disappear. He is standing behind a three-legged table on which are, among other things, a bag, dice, a goblet (cup), and a knife (sword). So we see that he is connected with the four suits.

In some games, each die shows us sides  $1 + 2 + 4 = 7$ .

Twenty-one is the number of possible combinations with 2 dice.

Fifty-six is the number of possible combinations with three dice. Remember that there are fifty-six minor arcana and fifty-six verses in the Book of Genesis, which recounts Creation in six days followed by SHaBBaTH, the seventh day of rest. Moreover, BeR'eSHiTH (beginning, genesis) is written with six letters in Hebrew. Fifty-six is a multiple of seven.

If there are only two dice on the table, with sides 5 and  $1 = 6$ , we find the symbolism of creation in 6 days.

In *The Dwellings of the Philosophers*, Fulcanelli depicted the relationship between the die and Alchemy. The Greek etymology of the word die and its form mean “cube.” Esoterically speaking, the die represents the cubic or cut stone of initiated builders, and the Philosopher’s Stone for alchemists. Nicolas Flamel refers to the hieroglyphic book of Abraham the Jew, consisting of three times seven pages = 21. This is an illuminated manuscript containing twenty-one painted figures, each adapted to the twenty-one operations of the Work.

In the Tarot of Marseilles, the magician has a heel on his left foot, indicating that he is certainly limping. This reminds us of Jacob’s limp after his struggle. This injury to the thigh and hip will induce a limp, but also a change of name, since from that moment, Jacob will be called Israel. Now, the Kabbalists say that a circle is pure when it is drawn, but impure when it has been drawn. A circle with a limp becomes a spiral, expressing a movement that becomes a permanent projection towards transformation. The Magician invites us to this movement. Note that the Magician’s hat is shaped like an

inverted figure eight (symbol of infinity). His arms and body form an 'aLePH.

One arm pointing towards earth, the other towards heaven, illustrating the words of Hermes Trismegistus: "As above, so below." The table evokes the Emerald Tablet. The position of his feet forms a square.

In the Tarot of Wirth, the cup is transformed into a chalice, as if to signify an invitation to drink the divine nectar. Further, the Magician is dressed as a "bachelor" (a word derived from the Latin *baccalarius*, originally used to designate a knight without fortune). It is interesting to note that a magician, who is likened to a fairground and showman performing sleight-of-hand tricks, can be transformed into a bachelor in search of knowledge. Wirth's Magician outfit features five buttons (none in the Tarot of Marseilles), evoking the five senses or the five modalities of the soul in Judaism. The bag does not appear on this card.

Whatever the Tarot cards may say, the Magician is a novice on the threshold of a new life (*vita nova* in Italian). The *Vita Nova* is a collection of poetry by Dante Alighieri, but also a breviary for initiates, the breviary of the Faithful of Love (in the image of the Knights Templar, who worshipped Our Lady intensely). The Magician is the apprentice who begins an initiatory process. It is the beginning of the path to individuation.

להטוטן - LaHaTouTaN(e) in Hebrew takes the meaning of magician in a broad sense, but the word is translated as juggler. The spelling of this word is interesting:

- Letter LaMeD to start with, the only letter to rise above the others like a sprout trying to reach Heaven. Knowing that letters are written below a line, this one has a lower and an upper part. It is also the last letter of the THoRaH. It expresses the inner strength that drives a movement towards a noble goal. It is at once the letter of teaching, transmission and sublimation. As it happens, disciple, student is THaLMiD.

- The letter He that follows is unpronounceable (this letter corresponds to the silent H) and is exhaled. It is the letter of vital breath. When there is not enough air, you open the window or skylight. The Ha'ari (Isaac Luria) describes it as “a light letter without materiality,” and goes on to say that “this letter is but the mist of mists,” in allusion to HaVeL HaVaLiM – “mist of mists” translated as “vanity of vanities.” This is strange, because the letter He appears twice in the Tetragrammaton. Looking at its spelling, one can see an opening at the top, a skylight that allows the Divine Breath to penetrate. It was this letter that was added to the names of aBRaM and SaRaï to become ‘aBRaHaM and SaRaH and rebalance their respective energies.
- The letter TeTH is the only letter in the alphabet open to the sky. It is used twice in the word LaHaTouTaN.
- The letter VaV, also used twice, is also contained in the Tetragrammaton.
- Finally, the letter NouN (which has the peculiarity of changing graphics at the end of the word), is of Aramaic origin, and represents a fish and evokes that which is hidden and engulfed in the depths, hence the idea of proliferation and fecundity. It is also sometimes the illusion of freedom and the place where we learn to swim in the murky waters of the unconscious. A symbol of collectivity, NouN's problem is to free oneself from dependence on others.

This first card therefore comes under very promising auspices!

## THE DIE AND CUBE OF THE SEpHER YETSiRAH

Most games have distant origins, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what they are. Nevertheless, they have come down to us by traveling to various countries, sometimes giving rise to legends. The dice game, for example, has its own Greek legend, with a certain Palamedes inventing it to play with his companions when they were besieging the city of Troy. But it seems that the

game existed long before the Trojan period, as dice have been found in Egyptian tombs. Archaeologists have identified dice in various places in ancient times, albeit with variations in the order of the inscriptions. Historians attest to the appearance of dice games in France in the twelfth century, and what could be more natural than for our Magician to play this game? The game carries a symbolism linked to numbers, and the famous dice game of 421 adds up to a total of seven for its three digits.

In Hebrew, 421 is the sum of the letters THaV = 400 + KaPH = 20 + ‘aLePH = 1.

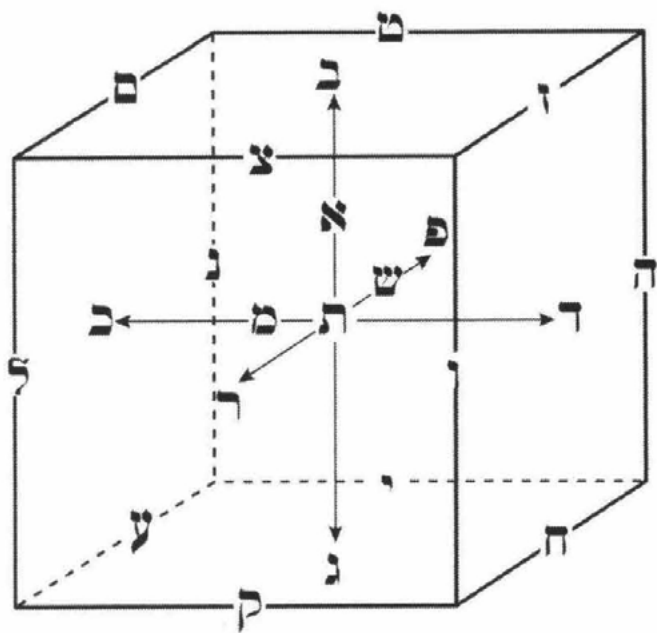
There are not any words made up of these three letters but ‘eTH (with) followed by the letter KaPH, which expresses the palm of the hand, aptly illustrate the gesture of the player who throws the dice “with the palm of his hand.”

The die is also a cube with six square faces.

The ten Sephiroth and the twenty-two Paths are generally geometrically represented as a Tree, but one finds in the SePHeR YeTSiRaH the suggestion of a geometric representation. Starting with verse 5-2 about the twelve simple letters:

Their foundation is the twelve diagonal boundaries: the east upper boundary, the northeastern boundary, the east lower boundary, the south upper boundary, the southeastern boundary, the south lower boundary, the west upper boundary, the southwestern boundary, the west lower boundary, the north upper boundary, the northwestern boundary, the north lower boundary. They extend continually until eternity of eternities; they are the boundaries of the Universe.

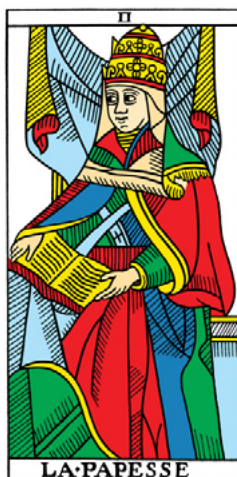
Carlo Suarès (1892-1976) illustrated the six directions of space with the six faces of a cube, on which he placed “the twelve diagonal boundaries” on the twelve edges of the cube.



*Cube of the SePHeR YeTSiRaH according to Carlo Suarès.*



## THE POPESS (OR THE HIGH PRIESTESS)



Number: 2

Hebrew letter: BeTH

French letter: B

Greek letter: Beta

Ideogram: House

Astrology: Cancer

This card evokes the curious legend of Pope Joan. This story was told often in the thirteenth century, but does not appear to be a true fact. Its literary source is the *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum* (Chronicle of Popes and Emperors) written by a Dominican monk, Martin of Opava. Other sources attribute it to Jean de Mailly, in 1255. There was indeed a Pope John VIII, enthroned in 858 and Martin placed Joan (also known as John VIII) there. As early as the fourteenth century, with the legend having circulated, Boccaccio wrote on the subject. It is said that it was because of this affair that, in order to ensure that the future person elected to the papal post was indeed a man, they introduced the ritual of the pierced chair. Here, a deacon would verify the virility of the future pope by uttering

the phrase: “*Habet duos testiculos et bene pendantes!*” A nod to the ancients who designed the Tarot!

It is said that the Popess was unmasked when she gave birth. As a midwife or wise woman, she urges us to bring out (give birth) the best in ourselves. She holds a book open, but her gaze is elsewhere, as if she was meditating on the words she has read. This dignified woman wears a tiara that protrudes beyond the frame, and the veil behind her is shaped like two angel wings at the level of the head, thus of thought. She reflects our inner quest. Introspection, observation, gestation and intuition are the qualities suggested by the Popess. The columns behind her are veiled and not yet accessible at this stage of the journey, and the Popess is the matriarch guardian of the threshold. She has the book open, but one has to make the text vibrate to cross the columns of the temple. She resembles an ancient high priestess who symbolizes mystical gestation, the one who invokes and prays, who intercedes and emits the vibrations necessary for higher consciousness during initiations.

The Popess as archetypal mother invites us to connect with our inner divine spark and manifest it in the world. Simply part the winged curtain and fly between the columns. Beneath her long blue cape (the color of the sky) that hides her feet, she wears a red dress (the color of the earth that formed ‘aDaM) with two yellow ribbons intertwined in the shape of a cross. Looking closely, one can see a black mark like a keyhole. The Magician dared, the Popess knows and shows the way. Holder of the secret, she embodies duality, the binary, she shows the way to transmission and perseverance. She is the guardian of Knowledge in its feminine polarity.



*Women of the Tarot*

## SPRITUALITY AND DIVINATION

Words are not necessarily needed for communication. There are also non-verbal messages such as hand gestures, voice intonations and modulations, facial expressions, body mimics and supports like the Tarot that call upon other modes of expression. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that a face-to-face verbal exchange contains far more information than any other non-direct exchange (phone, mail, email, social networks, etc.). Face-to-face contact exerts a reciprocal influence on our verbal relations, creating an exchange which, when a genuine dialogue is established, becomes a vibratory force. Judaism has developed the study in duo with PiLPouL (controversy), and Talmudic discussion, which is the basis of study, and is also an encounter between two protagonists, in an approach that tends to enliven the texts, sometimes bordering on the subversive. Controversy goes beyond the confinement of a word-truth through a word-contradiction, because confronting ideas is also an ability to listen to the other, and vice versa. Controversy is the triumph of otherness and humility, because its principle is not to surpass one's interlocutor with egocentric knowledge.

The Tarot sometimes provokes passionate debates between proponents of divination (and in particular its use in clairvoyance) and adherents of a mystical and spiritual Tarot. Can the Tarot be considered a pictorial language? It belongs to the realm of non-verbal messages, which focus attention on images and interpretation, but can it start a controversy and create exchanges? Would not there be a truncated relationship between the one who draws the cards and the one who interprets them?

These messages are intellectual, cultural and symbolic:

- The intellect observes, notes, analyzes and constructs a descriptive plan of the images. This is the first level of an average observer.
- Culture is what drives the choice of designs and characters. It is undeniable that the Tarot is culturally and religiously influenced by Christianity, with cards such as the Pope and

the Popess, and traditionally by monarchy (King and Queen). But that is not all!

- Symbolism allows us to universalize images. This allows us to encounter ancient influences and adaptations to astrology, alchemy, and Kabbalah.

That said, divination contains the word “divine,” and suggests that the Tarot is more than just the reading of cards to reveal the future. The psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) highlighted symbols and archetypes, and it is now almost a given for many people that we are immersed in a field of energies that enables conscious or unconscious exchanges between the tangible and the intangible. The key is to approach tarology with an open mind, ignoring the excesses inherent in any divinatory art. Tarot cards, like astrology, incline but do not govern. The future to come is not a statement about the future, but an invitation to adapt to events in the manner of weather forecasts, in order to guide our being in full awareness.

Uses of the Tarot	
Divination	Spirituality
Guides the existence Moral support Emotion Belief level Psychic process	Internalizes the being Letting go Aspiration Knowledge level Spiritual process
<i>The two are not mutually exclusive.</i>	
Two columns of the Tree of Life	
Rigor GueBouRah	Mercy HeSSeD

## OCCULT SCIENCE OR SCIENCE FICTION?

Is it a mistake, or an unfortunate presumption, to try to predict the future using cards or the stars? Should not the so-called occult sciences be as much a part of research as science itself? Some inventions were ignored or blamed in their time, before blossoming

into useful applications in the future. Consequently, are not the occult sciences science fiction in the service of the seeker of light, provided they do not just satisfy the egos of pseudo-mages?

Science fiction often has an air of mystery, occult reflections, and religious reminiscences that carry the reader away on the wings of a sacralization of fictional phenomena. It turns out that some past fictions have become present realities. Are Leonardo da Vinci's futuristic drawings not part of this esoteric fiction?

Is it not said that genius is refracted in madness? Was not the man who first invented the steam engine a little crazy? Benjamin Franklin's lightning rod first emerged in his brain, but where do thoughts come from? Note that we do not speak of the occult as an art but as a science, whereas astrology has become an art to the benefit of astronomy, which is considered a science. There was a time, however, when the two rubbed shoulders. Not mixing genres is sometimes a question of eras and interpretations.

"Who knows where human audacity will end in the field of its victories and conquests over the occult powers of the Universe?" reads the preface to *L'homme rouge des Tuileries (The Red Man of the Tuileries)* by Pierre Christian. But we could also meditate on this sentence on the next page: "The invisible only exists through the finesse of our organs." Undeniably, subtlety acquires more perceptions than coarseness. Similarly, knowledge is more apt to decipher the mysteries of the universe than ignorance.

That being said, it is not theoretical books (and today's Internet) that reveal the hidden secrets of the occult sciences and the understanding of symbols, but Knowledge transmitted and experience lived in one's inner being. It is not in the hubbub of the media and society that the sacred word circulates, but far from the tensions and vile passions of having.

A skeptic may deny the Divine Light veiled in all things, but like the sun's rays, they cannot extinguish its luminosity across space. Before science largely explained and measured our galaxy, the sun had the emblematic role of a resplendent divinity, for "The HOW

is revealed at all hours, for those who know how to measure the immense dome of the heavens, a living Bible in which each star is a letter, each constellation a phrase, each phenomenon a page, each solar evolution a volume” (*L’homme rouge des Tuileries*, Editions de la Maisnie-Trédaniel, p. 3). In summary:

- Letters – Stars.
- Phrases – Constellations.
- Pages – Phenomena.
- Book – Solar evolution.

Occult science or science fiction call upon the unknown, and all that is unknown is a plunge into the interstellar void of our neurons. The unknown attracts and frightens, intrigues and repels at the same time, and astronomers’ fascination with “black holes,” which raise many questions, stems from the same exhilarating search for another dimension. The unknown is often no more than a potential known, which sometimes ends up being solved. But other unknowns will titillate curiosity and replace the first arrivals. The thin trickle of a stream has no idea that over the centuries it will become the bed of a river. The Divine Word is like a seed, but it will remain sterile on the stony heart of the skeptic.

“Light shines only on eyes that see, but it begins at all hours for the eyes that open” (*L’homme rouge des Tuileries*, p. 15).

## THE EMPRESS



Number: 3

Hebrew letter: GuiMeL

French letter: G

Greek letter: Gamma

Ideogram: Camel

Astrology: Moon

Is the Tarot feminist in that, at the beginning, it honors the Popess (High Priestess) and the Empress?

Presence and elegance are the hallmarks of this card, but so are benevolence and attentiveness. This empress, presented from the front, does not emanate despotic authority, but enlightened guidance that incites respect. In her hand she holds a scepter surmounted by a cross and wears a crown. The cross designates the spiritual and the crown the temporal. The back of the throne resembles two wings. The Empress embodies creative intelligence, the symbol of the anima and openness to intuition.

To her right is a cubic shape reminiscent of a baptismal font, evoking the birth of life in matter. In some decks, the Popess is dressed in red, but wrapped in a blue cloak (verticality), whereas the Empress's lower body is sometimes dressed in red and her upper body in blue (horizontality). Nevertheless, some Tarot decks reverse the colors.

In addition, on her right arm (left for us) she is holding a kind of shield on which an eagle is depicted. In Christian iconography, this is the symbol or attribute of John the Evangelist (nicknamed "The Eagle of Patmos"). It is also an emblem of imperial power and strength, since it is also on the Emperor's card. It was the emblem of the Roman legions, and centuries later Napoleon made it an imperial symbol. The eagle and scepter express the duality of this Empress, endowed with both temporal and spiritual powers. Near her neck, a triangle pointing upwards adorns her clothing. It expresses the number 3, but also a pyramid at the level of the heart.



## THE EMPEROR



Number: 4

Hebrew letter: DaLeTH

French letter: D

Greek letter: Delta

Ideogram: The door

Astrology: The Sun

He exudes strength and will. Together with the Empress, they form the embodiment of feminine (yin) and masculine (yang) energy. The eagle (solar power) is located at the level of the earth (placed on the ground). Nevertheless, we have seen that the Empress also wore the eagle, but at waist height and looking the opposite way as the Emperor's eagle. In fact, it would seem that each carries one of the two meanings of the eagle: a sign of spiritual power in the case of the Empress, and of temporal power in the case of the Emperor. One and the other are complementary. They also hold their respective scepters in different hands: left for the Empress, right for

the Emperor. The Emperor embodies the power of action, the symbol of the *animus*, and invites us to become aware of our strengths.

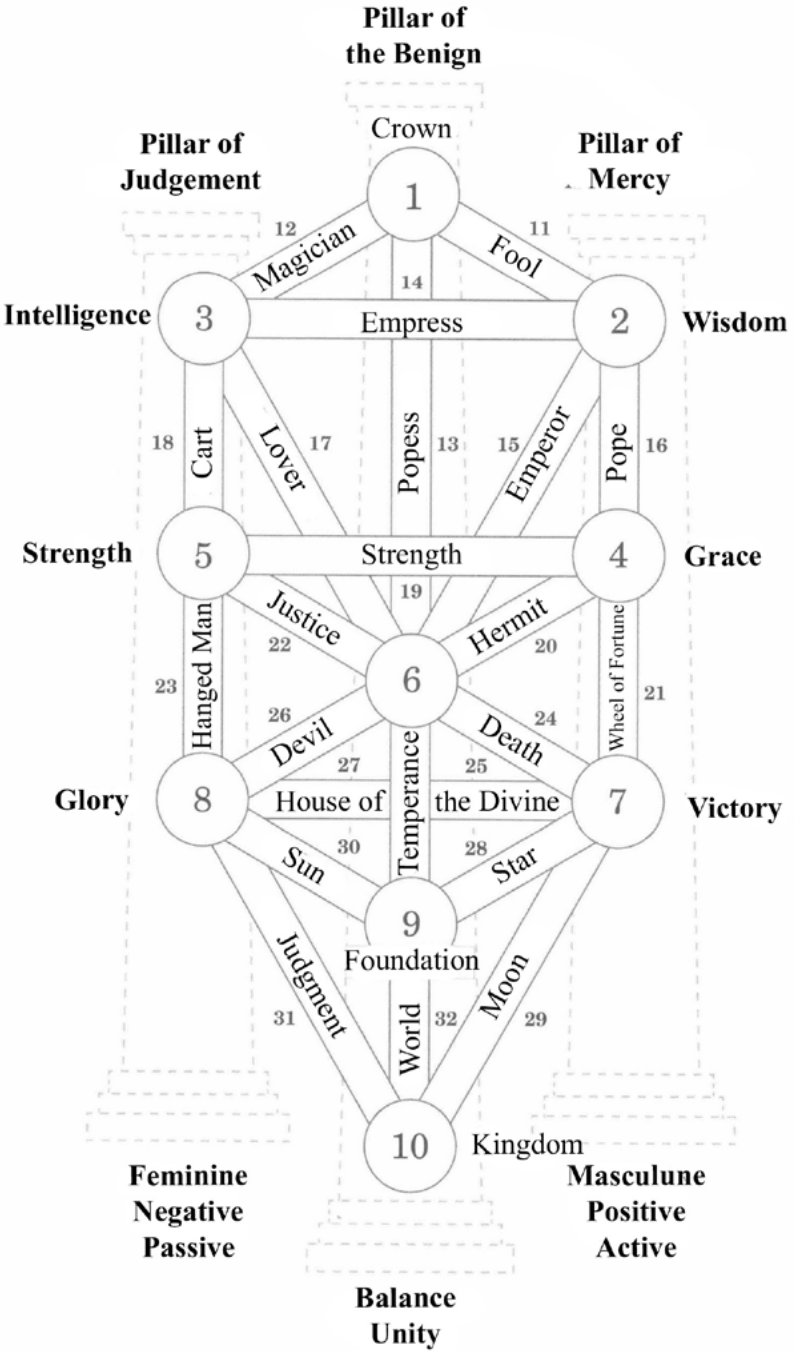
However, the Emperor is not fully seated on his throne, which is a sign of vigilance. In fact, his legs form the number 4. The Emperor is facing the Empress. Wearing a red bodysuit over a blue garment, he wears a red and gold crown, the edge of which protects the nape of his neck. This curious crown is both crown and helmet. He holds his scepter upright like a torch. Further, the bottom of the shield and one of the eagle's feathers seem to sink into the earth. The Emperor's throne is rather square with no spirals. It resembles a cube firmly anchored to the ground.

Finally, it is obvious that the Roman numeral for 4 is IV and not IIII, and yet this will be a peculiarity that we will find again in other cards: seeing Roman numerals that do not respect their usual spelling.

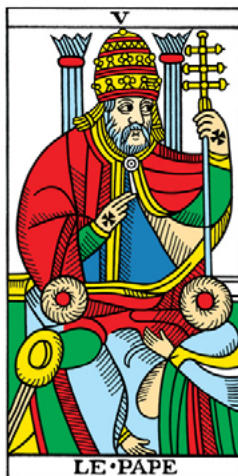
The location of the cards on the Sephirotic Tree does not always correspond to the Hebrew letters assigned to them. All of this is subjective! So let us beware of certainties when it comes to comparisons! Let us remember that no one holds the truth, and that our questions and our work are only fragmentary visions of this great truth. Therefore, we are going to focus on the meaning of the letters that accompany the cards, rather than on their location on the Tree of Life (although this is only indicative here).



*Tree of Life with Tarot cards (with variations)*



## THE POPE



Number: 5

Hebrew letter: He - ה

French letter: E

Greek letter: Epsilon

Ideogram: Window

Astrology: Neptune

The pope was not an official title in the Catholic religion. In the ninth century, the term was used to designate exclusively the bishop of Rome, who had become the supreme head of the whole Church. The Pope wears a beard, the sign of a patriarch, an elderly man full of life experience. He is seated, and behind him are two columns evoking the pillars of Rigor and Mercy of the Sephirotic Tree. These two columns are also reminiscent of those in Solomon's Temple. Placed in the center, the Pope is the pillar of equilibrium (the place of the masters).

- The left column, the pillar of Justice GueVouRaH, is called Boaz (“strength in it”).
- The right column, the pillar of Mercy HeSSeD, is called YaKHIN (“it establishes”).

Only one hand is covered by a yellow glove, decorated with a Maltese Cross. The other hand (the right) gives the blessing. His tiara is identical to that of the Popess. But his does not extend beyond the frame of the card. Further, it is surprising that the Pope’s card does not follow the Popess’s card, as is the case for the Empress and Emperor. As for clothing, the blue and red colors are reversed between the Pope and the Popess.

He holds a triple cross in his left hand, also known as a papal cross or hierophant. Each crosspiece symbolizes a plane of consciousness (instinct, awareness and knowledge), i.e., a stage in the religious hierarchy, but also in certain initiatory hierarchies (apprentice, companion, master).

Finally, at the Pope’s feet, two figures kneel before him, wearing tonsure like monks, they are seen from the back. Their small stature suggests children. Behind the one on the right, we can see an arm, and we can guess another figure outside the card frame. Together with the Pope’s tiara, the tonsures form an upward-pointing triangle, symbolizing spirituality.

At the Pope’s Adam’s apple, a black stone holds his cape. In addition to its practicality, this stone symbolizes verbal expression.

In alchemy, the card of the Pope is linked to the dissolution phase that unites mind and body, allowing matter to rise. The Pope is the archetypal father, the guardian of wisdom that enables the integration of the spiritual dimension.

Note that this is the first card to feature several characters. Three figures could symbolize Mercury, Sulfur, and Salt. Some say that the Pope corresponds to the “alchemical red Lion,” i.e., the Sulfur of the Philosophers. Five is the number of Quintessence.

## THE LOVER



Number: 6

Hebrew letter: VaV

French letters: U, V, W

Greek letters: Epsilon

Idiogram: The hook

Astrology: Aries

This is the second card with multiple characters. We see our lover surrounded by two women of different ages, with Cupid (or Eros) above his head. The latter symbolizes the force of attraction. The woman in profile (of a more mature age) maternally rests an arm on the lover's shoulder, as if encouraging him or offering advice. The younger woman is facing forward, pointing with her left hand at the heart of the lover, who seems hesitant, as if he has a choice to make. We can think of the mother on the left, the son in the middle and the future wife on the right.

The Lover is bare-legged and his tunic has various rays of color. This is the first non-plain garment after the Magician. The colors express zest for life, rather than the rigor that suited the Pope and the Popess, or the Emperor and Empress. With the Lover, we enter the world of action, to be directed towards discernment through the use of our free will. The Lover symbolizes the tension between opposites and marks the trial of choice for the initiate.

In Hebrew, VaV is a hook, but also the letter that serves as the coordinating conjunction “and.” It is a letter with the ability to unite, to link, to bring into relationship. But if left to its own devices, it sticks to everything and risks creating an aggregate with no orderly form, so it is important to give it a direction, a meaning; in other words, to put a conscience into VaV. It is easy to see why this letter suits our Lover so well.

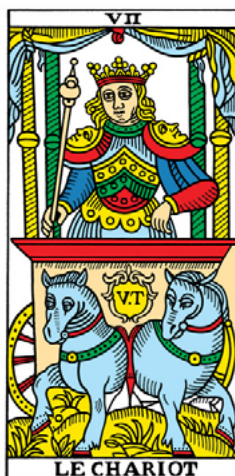
Cupid flying like a bird could evoke, for the young man in love, the bird that leaves the nest to take flight. Here, the Lover leaves his family to start a new one, but is not this also a form of initiation? It is a card that evokes a new birth, a transition, a passage... and that is why the moment is one of uncertainty. The legs and lower body are the parts of the body closest to earthly matter, in which the young recipient is still anchored. He needs to strip off like Francis of Assisi\* to detach himself from his possessions. The upper garment has vertical stripes pointing heavenward.

What kind of love is this card talking about? It plays on the duality of our being, and it could be the spirit leaving the world of matter for spirituality... the passage from the old person to the new person?

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\* To signify his renunciation of his paternal inheritance, he stripped naked before the tribunal of the bishop of Assisi.





## THE CHARIOT

Number: 7

Hebrew letter: ZaiN

French letter: Z

Greek letter: Zeta

Ideogram: Arm

Astrology: Sagittarius

The chariot represents the body and the driver represents the spirit. The driver does not need to hold the reins, and his chariot seems to be under the control of his mind. He wears a crown because he is his own king. In his right hand, he holds a spear. It just so happens that in Hebrew, the letter ZaiN is a letter of separation (unlike VaV), but above all the letter of choice through free will, the letter of discernment. It is also the letter of letting go, of the freedom of the being who has dominated its oppositions through

the action of its will submitted to the Divine Will. Its name comes from the Aramaic word for “arm.” By its shape and energy, it is a double-edged sword whose numerical value is 7. Seven is a number that evokes the sacred, symbolizing a dynamic of fulfillment. After the tension of the Lover, the Chariot symbolizes the reconciliation of opposites.

Here is a driver on his way to achievement who seems to know where he is going! However, the chariot rests on two wheels that diverge completely, and here is our driver, so sure of himself on the surface, but quite concerned. Despite his objective, the road ahead is not an easy one. Even the horses in the carriage take different directions. Further, their bodies seem to be incorporated into the carriage (reminiscent of children’s merry-go-round horses). Their blue and red colors<sup>5</sup> evoke the spiritual and the temporal. The chariot is reminiscent of the vision of the divine chariot described by the prophet Ezekiel.\*

The Book of Ezekiel, Chapter I, Verses 15 to 17 reads: (15) “As I gazed at the living creatures, I saw wheels on the ground, one next to each of the four-faced living creatures.” (16) “All four wheels looked the same: their inner parts gleamed like beryl, and their structure seemed to be that of a wheel inside a wheel.” (17) “When they moved, they could go in any of the four directions without turning as they moved.”

In Seventh Heaven or Palace,\*\* human souls are in the Light of the One who sits on the “Throne of Glory,” while the angels and spirits serve at the feet of the throne. These four feet are the four

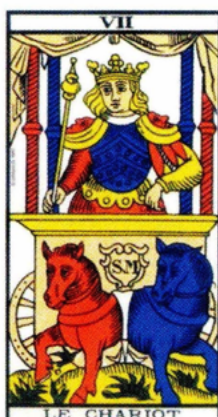
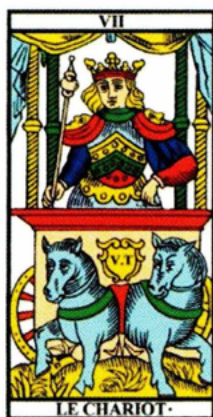
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\* HeZeQui’eL (in Hebrew **חזקאל**) is an Old Testament prophet whose name means “May the Lord strengthen him.” He is credited with the Book of Ezekiel, which describes the Tetramorph, the “four living beings” pulling the divine chariot.

\*\* There are seven HeKHaLoTH (“Palaces”): These are hierarchically superimposed abodes for human souls, angels, and spirits. At the center of each Palace stands a column. In this Seventh Palace resides MeTaTRoN.

peripheral universal Axes resulting from the refraction of the middle column; they are the four HaYoTH Ha-QoDeSH (“holy lives”) of Ezekiel’s vision, which carry the Throne and whose sweat produces the NaHaR DiNouR (“river of fire”). All other spirits and angels are grouped below the HaYoTH and determine the four supra-spatial cardinal points of cosmic expansion, from which all other quaternaries derive. These four HaYoTH also evoke the Tetramorph of Ezekiel’s vision, formed by four animals: lion, bull, eagle, and person.

The driver’s shoulder pads feature two identical Janus-like faces, or do they evoke the sun and moon? The chariot is covered by a canopy supported by four small columns (two blue and two red). On the coat of arms are the letters S and M: Sulfur and Mercury? In fact, could these be the engraver’s initials, as other decks feature different initials? Depending on the Tarot decks, twelve dots appear on a wheel, evoking the twelve signs of the zodiac. The ground is covered with plants.



*Different representations of the Chariot. At right is the Chariot from the Tarot of the Bohemians of Doctor Papus (Gérard Encausse).*

## JUSTICE



Number: 8

Hebrew letter: HeTH

French letter: H

Greek letter: Eta, Theta

Ideogram: The hedge

Astrology: Libra

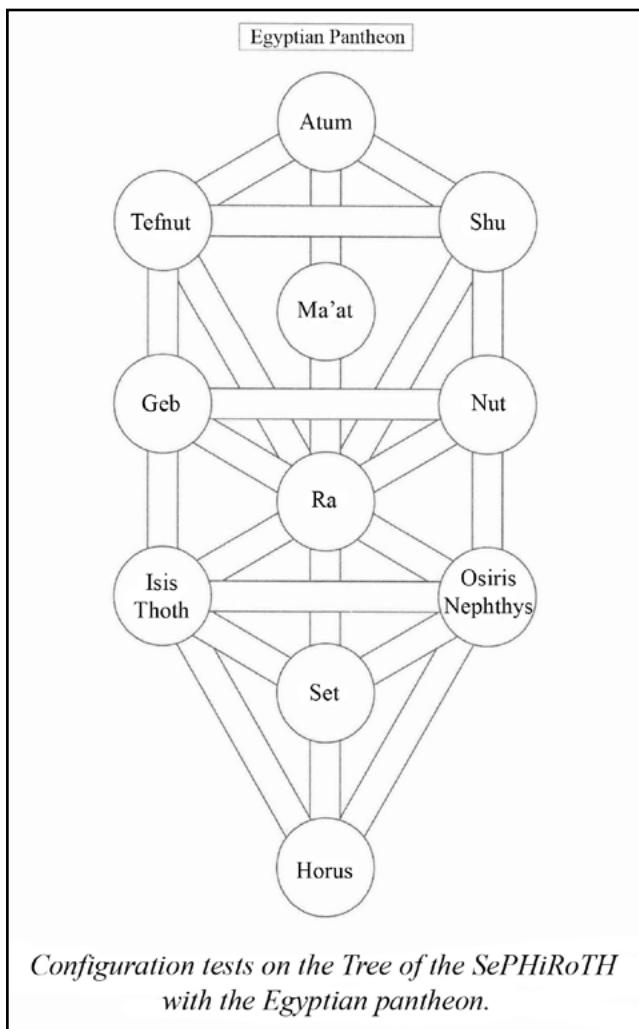
Justice is usually represented by a blindfolded woman (a sign of impartiality) with scales in her left hand and a sword in her right. Here, the card of Justice holds a sword in her right arm (verticality) and scales in her left hand (horizontality). Sword and scales form a right angle. However, the scales are slightly tilted. The throne is high and concave, and the sword merges with one of its sides. Same hieratic position as for the Popess and Empress. She also wears a crown and looks straight ahead. Incidentally, this is the first card in the Tarot that is staring us right in the face. Her clothes are blue and red but her lower body has a rounded shape. She wears a yellow

necklace that resembles the braids in her hair (or a hangman's noose). Could Justice let itself be hindered? What danger lurks in this card?

By its shape, the letter HeTH resembles a scale, but it has a dual nature: paradoxically, it is both the letter of discrimination and the letter of mental barriers, if the attraction-repulsion movement is tilted to one side. Indeed, it does not take much to turn a barrier into an impenetrable boundary or a simple protection. Its numerical value of 8 encourages divine service. Eight inclined is the symbol of infinity, as we have already seen with the Magician's hat. Justice evokes a sense of integrity.

Justice evokes the Egyptian goddess Maat, who presided over the weighing of souls. In fact, if we look hard enough, we can find the Egyptian pantheon in the major Tarot arcana.

As with the colors and major arcana, placing the Egyptian deities on a Sephirotic Tree is highly subjective, but once again demonstrates the adaptability of this structure to many cultures, religions, and mythologies. Just as there are several Egyptian cosmogonies, the locations of the deities vary, although the Heliopolitan cosmogony remains the most widespread, with a solar demiurge.



Words of Ra, Master of the Nine:

I was alone, for nothing had been begotten; I had, then, emitted from myself neither Shu nor Tefnut. I was evolving... I gave birth to the gods Shu and Tefnut, and after having been One, I became Three: they sprang from me and came into existence on this earth... Shu and Tefnut begat Geb and Nut and Nut begat Osiris, Horus-Khent-n-Maat, Seth, Isis and Nephthys from a single birth. (Excerpt from the Papyrus Nesi-Amsu).

*Paout Pesedjet (Origin of the Nine)*

Ra

Tefnut

Shu

Nut

Geb

Osiris

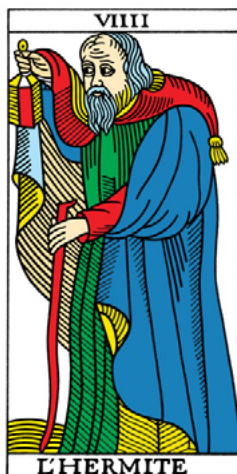
Nephthys

Horus

Set

Isis

## THE HERMIT (OR THE VEILED LANTERN)



Number: 9

Hebrew letter: TeTH

French letter: T

Greek letter: Tau

Ideogram: The hedge

Astrology: Capricorn

Normally, nine is written IX in Roman numerals, but here it is written VIII. The number 9 is a particular number that can be used to verify a mental calculation using the technique of proof by nine.

Here is an elderly man with a beard and long hair. His age evokes the wisdom of the ancients. What a beautiful analogy with the sign of Capricorn, for the Hermit is linked to Chronos, the master of time, and Saturn, planet of slowness and those who take their time. The Hermit is also the symbol of perseverance in search of peace profound. The Hermit archetype evokes first and foremost a feeling



of loneliness and nostalgia, but when it reaches maturity, it improves like wine, and its number 9 shows that it has completed a cycle. The Hermit is the sign of appraisal, of a life fulfilled by the enrichment of lived experiences. He assumes his incarnation and the lantern in front of him shines to the left (symbol of the past) and pushes back the darkness. Will he turn around so that the light illuminates the initiatory path towards our spiritual future?

His staff, reminiscent of the caduceus of Hermes or the staff of Moses, is not a support but a contact with Earth. Is this the last link with Earth before reintegrating the Divine?

The Hermit's cloak is as blue as the sky, on which we expect to see stars shining. One side of his cloak conceals the light from the ignorant. He is ready to guide the initiate towards his orient and the Inner Master. The bottom of his robe is pleated like the pages of a book. Around his neck is a red hood with a yellow pompom. He can conceal himself at any moment, for Knowledge is earned and not accessible to the indolent. We wait for him to turn to the right (symbol of the future). We think he is walking, and moving forward, but he seems rather stopped, introspective. What hidden corner is he looking at? What lesson does he draw from the past? Is it not rather an invitation to the experience of detachment?

He has three wrinkles on his forehead, like three levels of consciousness. His name is spelled with an H, like Hermes, like Hierophant. Is he not a messenger? What does the letter that represents him tell us? TeTH is the only letter open upwards. This letter, with its numerical value of nine, completes the series of letters of the archetypal degree of unities. It is the letter of transformation, change, introspection. It carries the ability to isolate oneself in order to open up to a higher level, and is said to prevent the sky from closing in. It is the beginning of the spiral of change in consciousness.

## OLD AGE, PROOF OF WISDOM?

(Study: Chapter 48 / verses 8 to 20 - PaRaSHaTH VaYéHi)

Before leaving this world, the patriarch Jacob gathered his children around his bed to bless them. This is the first time in the THoRaH that a father blesses all his children, without any being cast out or excluded. By blessing his children, Jacob defines for each of them their particular role within the people of Israel. It is this fraternity that will later justify the birth of the 12 tribes, and thus the people of Israel.

8 – Then Isra’el noticed Yosef’s sons and asked, “Whose are these?”

9 – Yosef answered his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” Ya’akov replied, “I want you to bring them here to me, so that I can bless them.”

The verse begins with the conjugated verb וַיִּרְאֵה VaYaR’ (he) noticed, saw (sense of seeing what is said). The (he) implies “Isra’el” also known as Jacob, whose new name is used here after the battle with the angel. Thus, in front of his grandsons MeNaSHeH and ‘ePHRaïM, he has a vision of their descendants, among whom are three idolatrous kings of Israel (here meaning nation) who will be responsible for splitting the Land of Israel in two.

אֶפְרַיִם	‘ePHRaïM	Ephraim = 331 (also means “fruitful”)
מְנַשֶּׁה	MeNaSHeH	Mansseh = 395 (also means “forgotten”)

In the verses that follow, we will see that Manasseh the eldest was “forgotten,” and that Jacob, by a kind of prescience or intuition, preferred his brother Ephraim the “fruitful.” This is the art of studying the Bible in Hebrew, in order to draw out its hidden depths in the words!

A scene of blessings ensues between father, son and grandsons, encompassing the patriarch's posterity. This is why, despite the text's length, it is important to consider its development:

- 10 – Now Isra'el's eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. Yosef brought his sons near to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.
- 11 – Isra'el said to Yosef, "I never expected to see even you again, but God [the Divine] has allowed me to see your children too!"
- 12 – Yosef brought them out from between his legs and prostrated himself on the ground.
- 13 – Then Yosef took them both, Efrayim in his right hand toward Isra'el's left hand and M'nasheh in his left hand toward Isra'el's right hand, and brought them near to him.
- 14 – But Isra'el put out his right hand and laid it on the head of the younger one, Efrayim, and put his left hand on the head of M'nasheh - he intentionally crossed his hands, even though M'nasheh was the firstborn.
- 15 – Then he blessed Yosef: "The God [Divinity] in whose presence my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak lived, the God [Divinity] who has been my own shepherd all my life long to this day,
- 16 – the angel who has rescued me from all harm, bless these boys. May they remember who I am and what I stand for, and likewise my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak, who they were and what they stood for. And may they grow into teeming multitudes on the earth."
- 17 – When Yosef saw that his father was laying his right hand on Efrayim's head, it displeased him, and he lifted up his father's hand to remove it from Efrayim's head and place it instead on M'nasheh's head.

18 – Josef said to his father, “Don’t do it that way, my father; for this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head.”

19 – But his father refused and said, “I know that, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great; nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will grow into many nations.”

The Hebrew identity is not transmitted identically throughout the THoRaH. Jacob reverses the order of blessing. There is a torsion effect. Jacob reproduces what his own father Isaac had done to him. This is a recurring theme in the Book of Genesis: the youngest child receives the blessing from the Divine (Abel) or from the father (Isaac, Jacob, Ephraim). Here, there is no conflict between the two brothers, thanks to the wisdom of their grandfather Jacob-Israel.

Knowledge of the Scriptures is essential to Kabbalists, because of the many references in the Zohar. Father-son relationships are often evoked, testifying to a society where the elder is respected and listened to in a register of patriarchal values. Even if there is a societal and social gap with our times, biblical study remains a support for the study of Kabbalah. The past, whatever it may be, with its successes and errors, is a foundation, and the sage does not deny his past, but uses it to rectify the present and build the future.

Like the Hermit, the sage and the old man are often depicted with the stereotype of a white beard. The Hebrew language integrates this fact in its language:

ZaQeN זקן - “elderly person, ancient, being old” = 157.

ZeQeN זקן - “old age.”

ZaQaN זקן - “beard.”

aVRaM became ‘aVraHaM is ZaQeN.

True old age is wisdom. That is the difference between acquiring the Word of the Divine and physical old age.

In verse 10, the word MiZouQeN is used for old age = 197.

The three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the originators of the three times of prayer. And when we pray, we put ourselves on trial before the Divine. Hebrew magic once again with the following words:

HERE THéPHiLaH תפלה “prayer” = 515.

PaLeL פלל “to judge” = 140.

HiTHePaLeL התפלל praying = 545; same value as DeVeQouTH  
Ba’eL (adherence to the Divine).

- 20 – Then he added this blessing on them that day: “Isra’el will speak of you in their own blessings by saying, ‘May God [the Divine] make you like Efrayim and M’nasheh.’” Thus he put Efrayim ahead of M’nasheh.

## THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE (OR THE WHEEL OF FATE)

ה



ה

Number: 10

Hebrew letter: YoD

French letter: J, Y

Greek letter: Iota

Ideogram: The hand

Astrology: Jupiter

There are no figures on this card, but three animals: a blue sphinx on a platform at the top of the wheel, with red wings, wearing a crown and holding a sword. To the left in some versions is a flesh-colored monkey, head down, with only its tail showing an inverted verticality (like the Hanged Man still to come). Its skirt seems stiffened, and it clings tightly to the wheel that drives the sequence of cycles. On the right, there is an animal that looks like a hare or a sort of yellow dog, with long ears held in place by a red or yellow headband (depending on the deck), wearing a blue jacket with a red tailcoat. We can see that blue and red are once again the predominant colors of the Tarot,

with the occasional yellow and green. The primary colors are red, yellow, and blue.

Writer Arturo Pérez-Reverte describes the wheel as follows: “The three figures on it symbolize the three states designated in the Middle Ages by the words *Regno* (I reign), *Regnavi* (I have reigned), and *Regnado* (I will reign)” (*Le Club Dumas*, p. 294).

The wheel is the universal symbol of cycles and, curiously, its Latin name *rota* is the anagram of Tarot. Its hub is red with six spokes, and the crank is white. The hub evokes the Sun and six planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Earth (or Moon). But why the Wheel of Fortune? Fortuna is a goddess of Roman mythology. In ancient times, statuettes of her were used as good luck charms. Her attributes included the cornucopia and the wheel. Fortune comes from the Latin *fors*, meaning “fate.” Our Wheel, then, is it one of destiny, fate, providence, chance? In fact, this wheel looks very much like a spinning wheel. It symbolizes human destinies. In Greek mythology, the Moires were three women who spun, wove, and cut the threads of their work. These threads represented human beings. But here, there is no one turning the crank, invoking both our submission to the karmic cycle and our vocation to exercise free will with our Higher Self. It has to be said that with the Wheel of Fortune and its number 10, it is a new cycle that is beginning, but this card questions us with its sphinx, mock us, and demands fidelity from us like the dog that symbolizes this quality. The Wheel of Fortune shows us that it has a dual function, either it manipulates us, or we become capable of unlocking mental mechanisms to access a change that will enable us to accomplish and no longer undergo.

YoD is the letter of this card, the first letter of the word for the Eternal. It is said that the Eternal made the world between He (present world) and YoD (future world). With this card, we are at the junction of our past and our future, at the YoD point, which is worth ten and whose theosophical sum is equal to 1. YoD comes from YaD, the hand, and suggests that we take charge of our lives.

RoTa is an Aramaic magic square term, written with the letters ReSH—VaV to represent the O—then TeTH and ‘aLePH.

<b>Tarot and Hebrew</b>		
Ta	R	o(T)
THaV	ReSH	aLePH
ת	ך	א
THaV	RoSH	oTH
brand	head	sign

ך with a dot at the top, VaV becomes a vowel “o.”

ך with a dot in the middle, VaV transforms into the sound “u.”



## STRENGTH



Number: 11

Hebrew letter: Kaph

French letter: K

Greek letter: Kappa

Ideogram: Palm

Astrology: Mars

She stands with one foot slightly visible, as if in a dynamic state of movement. Her hat is in the shape of a “lemniscate” (a flat curve in the shape of an 8), reminiscent of the Magician’s hat. She wears a red cape and the dress of a young woman from a good family. The hat is embellished with carvings.

The lion’s mouth is open, held lightly by the hands of Strength. The letter KaPH is related to the hand, as it symbolizes the hollow, the palm of the hand, a space that can be filled, giving this letter the capacity to receive, transport and protect. Moreover, this letter has two spellings:

- ⌒·KaPH with a dot (DaGUeSH) in the middle, this is the full palm, equivalent to the letter “K.”
- ⌒ KHaPH is the empty palm that curves to receive, equivalent to the letter “KH” (pronounced like the Spanish *jota* at the back of the throat).

In Hebrew, force is called KoaH and is equal to 28, which corresponds to the twenty-eight letters of the first verse of Genesis, but also to the twenty-eight joints of human hands.

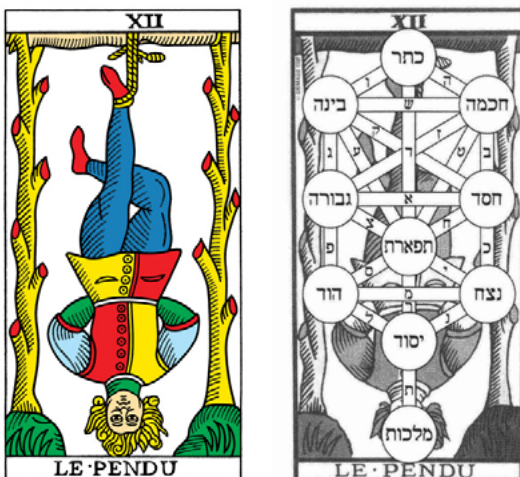
The woman and lion face to the right. This card is reminiscent of other characters such as Samson and Hercules. But here, a woman personifies Strength, not a male polarity. This seeming paradox is there to question us. What strength are we talking about? It goes well beyond muscular strength; it is an inner strength that masters all instinctive ferocity and impulses. Now, twenty-eight is also  $2 + 8 = 10 = 1$ , which evokes divine Strength.

No wonder this card is also called “Serenity.” The lion’s head rests on the woman’s belly. The beast is tamed, the animal strength disciplined, and the woman opens its mouth gently and effortlessly. How then can we fail to think of women with inner strength, such as Esther, who saved her people from extinction at the hands of Ahasuerus on the evil advice of Aman, or Mary, the mother of Yeshua!

This card also illustrates Beauty and the Beast. Beauty, as a spiritual force, masters the beast, which represents the ego. The brute force is animal-like and seeks domination, while the force of virtue is the attribute of a higher consciousness that seeks mastery.

May the Force (Strength) be with you!

## THE HANGED MAN



Number: 12

Hebrew letter: LaMeD

French letter: L

Greek letter: Lambda

Ideogram: The stinger

Astrology: Pisces

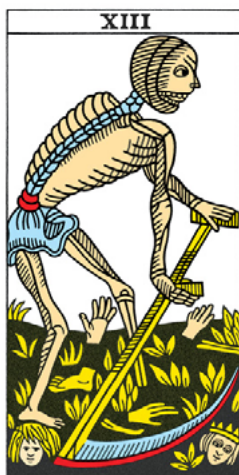
This is one of Tarot's best-known cards, because its position is so astonishing.

The Hanged Man bears a striking resemblance to the Magician. It is a young man hanging from a portico by his left heel (Achilles heel). His hands are tied behind his back. Note that, like the monkey on the Wheel of Fortune, the clothing is always static and never turns around, as it logically should, when upside down. The Hanged Man is facing us and, after Justice, is the second figure to look at us. The portico is composed of a transverse plank resting on two pruned

trees. Each tree has six red stumps, as if they were bleeding. Now,  $6 + 6 = 12$  like the number on this card.

However, apart from the two mounds on which the trees stand, the ground is not seen. The legs reproduce the movement of the letter LaMeD, but it is the only letter that rises higher than the others: this letter, already mentioned in the chapter on the Magician, conceals a profound symbolism of transmission. The figure of the Hanged Man can be perfectly inscribed in the Tree of Life. According to Papus: “In the Hermetic grade of the Rose-Croix (Eighteenth Degree of Scottish Rite Freemasonry), one of the signs of recognition is to place one’s legs in a cross, like that of the Hanged Man” (excerpt from the Tarot of the Bohemians). The Hanged Man embodies the letting go of the ego and a phase of transmutation.

THE UNNAMED ARCANUM  
(OR THE INITIATORY DEATH)



Number: 13

Hebrew letter: MeM

French letter: M

Greek letter: Mu

Ideogram: Water

Astrology: Scorpio

Here is a skeleton that evokes death, but whose spine looks strangely like an ear of wheat. This implies rebirth or regeneration, and death becomes a transition to another form of life. It is standing in profile and in a reaping position. After a cycle of twelve, the unnamed Arcanum arrives, signifying that renewal is at work.

The scythe is what cuts, what separates. Death is often represented by a woman called “the reaper.” But is not this blood-red scythe separating the wheat from the chaff?

The ground (Mother Earth) is littered with a bone, a foot and three severed hands. At the bottom of the card, on either side, are the heads of a decapitated king and queen. This is alchemy at its best!

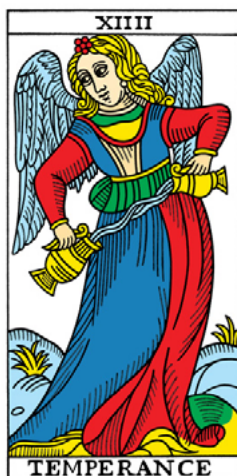
*The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (published in 1616) takes place over seven days in a castle where the wedding of a king and queen is to be celebrated. Christian Rosenkreutz, who has passed the test of the scales, is allowed to attend the wedding, but the king and queen are beheaded, and their remains transported to the Tower of Olympus. There, through an alchemical operation, the king and queen are resurrected. This “chymical wedding” and the unnamed Arcanum evoke the spiritual journey of every initiate, called to realize the union between their soul (the bride or queen) and the Divine (the bridegroom or king). To achieve this, one must die to oneself in order to be reborn!

MeM is a Mother letter, whose very shape evokes the idea of a womb. It represents the womb of a woman carrying new life, bathed in fetal waters, and by extension symbolizes the return to the center. The letter MeM is found in the words:

מת MeTH “death”  
אמת ‘ éMeTH “truth”  
מים MaïM “waters”

The letter MeM is equal to forty, which is reduced to four, like the number 13 of this card, which can also be reduced to four.

## TEMPERANCE



Number: 14

Hebrew letter: NouN

French letter: N

Greek letter: Nu

Ideogram: Fish

Astrology: Venus

Temperance is the art of moderation, one of the four cardinal virtues (along with Prudence, Fortitude, and Justice). It has the distinction of being located between the Unnamed Arcanum and the Devil. Its role as Temperance is thus exacerbated between two enigmatic cards, often interpreted negatively in an almost systematic way by the uninitiated.

We see a winged figure (symbol of elevation) with long yellow hair (like the Hanged Man), a gold-colored scarf and a red five-petal flower at the top of the forehead. The long dress is divided into two

sections of blue and red. This androgynous figure stands slightly bent, in a position reminiscent of the Magician.

The figure holds a container in each hand, one passive and one active, and pours water from one to the other, suggesting the circulation of energy from one pole to the other. How can we not think of Yeshua's transmutation of water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana? From the QaNaH wedding to the Chymical Wedding, is only a short step, an invitation to open our consciousness.

Some representations show the contents of a fluid passing from a silver vessel into a gold one. This is mercurial water passing from the moon to the sun, silver being the metal of the moon and gold that of the sun. Once again, alchemy is present. This card has the power of transmutation, represented by the transfer of energetic fluid. Temperance evokes Aquarius (water pourer).

Temperance's ideogram is the fish. We have already seen that the letter NouN, of Aramaic origin, represents a fish. NouN evokes that which is hidden and swallowed up in the depths. Only exchange and temperance towards others will set us free in the acceptance of our differences. The name of this card invites us to become moderate in all things, evoking a search for balance. Coming just after the Unnamed Arcanum, it is a card of appeasement and regeneration.

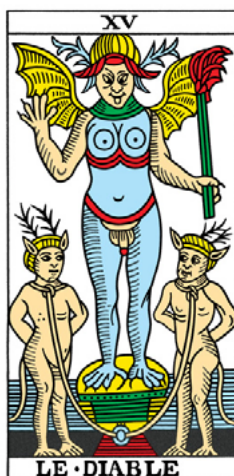
In the Rider Waite Tarot, Temperance is represented by the archangel Michael (MiKa'eL in Hebrew, which means

"Who is like the Divine?") MiKa'eL is the Sixth Superior Angel of the hoLaM BéRYaH (World of Creation).

World of Emanation	hoLaM 'aTSiLouTH
World of Creation	hoLaM BéRYaH
World of Formation	hoLaM YeTSYRaH
World of Action	hoLaM haSSYaH



## THE DEVIL (OR THE TYPHOON)



Number: 15

Hebrew letter: SaMeKH

French letter: S

Greek letter: Sigma

Ideogram: Post

What a strange Devil! You almost want to laugh at this representation, of which there are many variations. He is horned (it looks like a helmet), his hands and feet are clawed, he has bat wings, and the attribute of both sexes. He is androgynous!

This mischievous Devil is not scary. He stands, facing forward, on a pedestal. He is holding a kind of sword that seems to feature only one blade. He has crossed eyes, grimaces, sticks his tongue out at us on certain cards and waves his hand. It is as if this devil is mocking us. He is disconcerting. He wears deer antlers. Now, among the Celts, Cernunnos (or Carnonos) “The Horned One” is the

god of virility, of the woodlands, animals, the regeneration of life, and guardian of the gates to the other world. He lives by the cycle of the seasons: he appears at the winter solstice, marries at Beltane (May 1 in the northern hemisphere) and dies at the summer solstice. Then, at Samhain (from the old Irish word for “end of summer”), he emerges from the Underworld to embark on his “Wild Hunt.” The Christian devil would instead have ram’s horns.

With a rope he is holding a naked man and woman with donkey ears and horns. They also have clawed feet and tails. Gendered devils, their master is an androgynous Devil. Their status is inferior in the world of duality. The Devil is Lucifer (from *lucifero* in Italian, the “bearer of light”), fallen indeed, but with a certain grandeur. Yet this is not really what the card shows.

In the Church of Saint-Merri (named after the abbot Mederic, who died in 700) in Paris, a place frequented by alchemists in the Middle Ages, is found a “Baphomet” on its pediment. This little horned devil with a feminine breast bears a striking resemblance to the little devil in card fifteen of the Tarot of Marseilles. In the language of the birds, “Baphomet” is shorthand for “baptism of Metis.” In Greek mythology, Metis is the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, and an androgynous divinity.

Let us take a look at the letter that represents it. The ideogram of SaMeKH is the continuity of the NouN, it closes. SaMeKH has a delicate symbolism, difficult to pin down, as it is also attributed to the forces of evil. This may be due to the fact that its pronunciation evokes the hiss of a snake, and that it is subordinated to destiny, instinctive forces and selfish impulses. This letter seems to be animated by physical vitality while having a low spiritual vitality. It is also said to have a circular movement, which cannot be denied by its inward-looking shape, narrower than the final MeM, with which it should not be confused. Moreover, this letter comes from a hieroglyph representing a post, a support, the first element of a structure or memory support. It is a letter anchored in the meanderings of our memories, where animality still has the primary force of life instinct. The value of SaMeKH is 60. However, the number 1 and the number 5 of this card =  $1 + 5 = 6$ .

Not to be confused:

SaMeKH letter

ס

Final MeM letter

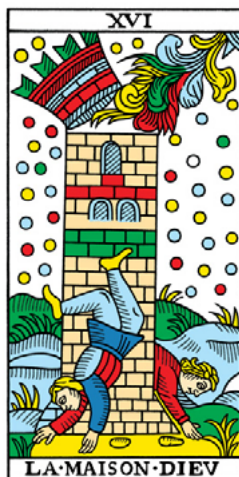
ם

As for the name “Typhoon” sometimes given to this card, it refers to an evil deity from Greek mythology. In any case, the Devil represents a test of temptation, or the passage of the Dark Night.\*

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\* *La noche oscura* is a mystical poem composed by John of the Cross, circa 1578. The term designates a trial through a fleeting experience of spiritual desolation, a kind of desert crossing in the mystical experience.

THE HOUSE OF THE DIVINE  
(OR THE TOWER STRUCK BY LIGHTNING)



Number: 16  
Hebrew letter: haiN  
French letter: O  
Greek letter: ?  
Ideogram: The Eye  
Astrology: Saturn

Here is a flesh-colored tower (stone or brick?) with no door and three bluish windows at the top, forming a triangle. But the top of this crown-shaped tower has been torn off. The lightning bolt that tore it off appears in the top right-hand corner of the card, like red and yellow tongues of fire, symbolizing the celestial fire of Divine Light. This immediately brings to mind the Tower of Babel, all the more so as two men (two workers?) are falling. Their literal fall evokes another Fall.

What has happened? Did the two men want to build a tower that would touch the sky, as in Babel? At Babel, they all spoke the same language and understood each other, but their conceit and pride were punished. They began to “babble,” speak different languages and were scattered. But are they really two? Apart from their clothes, whose colors are reversed, they resemble twins. Could it be that this card represents the splitting of a single person into a physical body and an astral body?

Why is there a torn crown at the top of the tower? The royalties of this world are ephemeral, and only divine royalty is worth striving for. The quest for Knowledge must not be a challenge to the Divine. We must descend from the tower of material possessions. Further, the tower has three windows, like three eyes (two physical eyes and a third eye?). The Divine’s House is a test of pride that requires a lesson in humility.

haïN is the letter of observation, but it is also the eye when spelled out in full. It is therefore the letter of the observing eye, but also the letter of contemplative vision. Its numerical value 70 is that of SoD, meaning “secret,” the highest degree of study, since we speak of four levels of reading of the THoRaH.

In “the language of the birds” we could say “the soul and its divinity” instead of “the House of the Divine.” This tower is then MiGDaL GaDoL (great tower) and MiGDaL TSeDeQ (tower of justice).

The first “tower struck by lightning” to appear on fifteenth century Italian Tarots is that of Charles VI (Venice? 1480). In the Tarots of the Visconti Sforza family, the Devil and House of God arcana have disappeared.

## The Levels of Reading of the THoRaH

There are four of them. The simplest reading level, called PSHaT, is not just a literal surface reading, but already contains the depth necessary for a sound linguistic and mystical foundation. Without this PSHaT foundation, we cannot hope to reach the other reading levels to form the word PaRDeS (paradise):

P = PSHaT (simple): Reading and interpretation based on elementary meaning. This is the first fundamental level, which nevertheless contains all the other levels that will emerge with assiduous study = Need to read Hebrew—MaLKHouTH level.

R = ReMeZ (allusion): Interpretation of the multiple meanings of letters, phrases, dots, and signs—Work with guematria, notarikon, and temurah—Study of Aramaic to decipher ancient texts—Work with TSéRouPH (combinations of intoned letters)—YeSSoD level.

D = DeRaSH (exposition): Reading and commentary in all interpretation possibilities—THiPHeReTH level.

S = SoD (secret, mystery): Wisdom and Knowledge—mystical and initiatory path of the Qabbalah (path of Knowledge through Hebraic oral transmission) —Level of DahaTH.

## SYMBOLISM OF THE COLORS IN THE TAROT AND KABBALAH

Are the colors of the Tarot de Marseilles, set by Grimaud and then Court de Gibelin, the original colors of this deck? In any case, four essential colors are used:

- Red – The color of blood, energy, action, love and passion. It corresponds to the element Fire.
- Blue – Color of the sky and sea, of the depths, of the spirit. It corresponds to the element Water.
- Yellow – The color of sun and gold, of maturity and transformation. It corresponds to the element Air.
- Flesh – Normal color to represent the vulnerability of the human body, it represents matter, dominated and asserted in the other representations (table of the Magician, book of the Popesse, scepter and shield of the Empress, sword and scales of Justice, etc.). Its element is Earth.

White appears very rarely (angel's arrow in the Lover) and corresponds to the element Air.

Green, which naturally evokes plants and nature (Chariot and Hanged Man's grass), is the mark of regeneration and hope. It also corresponds to the element Earth.

As for Black, it is equally rare, coloring only the floor of Arcanum XIII. It evokes what is hidden and obscure. It can also correspond to the element Earth.

On the subject of color in Kabbalah, we have several studies, including one by Gershom Scholem. At a symposium on "Color" at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1995, Charles Mopsik (an eminent translator of the Zohar) spoke of the PaRDeS RiMoNiM (The Orchard of Pomegranates) by the great Kabbalist thinker Moses Cordovero. According to Cordovero, the symbolic use of colors goes back to the THoRaH (the Jewish Bible—Old Testament) and continues in the Talmud and the Zohar. And C. Mopsik adds: "The colors, because of their flexibility of use, their ability to blend, to fuse together in infinite nuances, are for him the best symbols of the sefirot of the divine world, which, although limited in number, are in relation with each other and form a network of exchange with infinite connections."

A system of correspondence therefore exists between colors and the ten SePHiRoTH making up the Tree of Life. However, in ancient Hebrew, and especially in Aramaic (the language of the Talmud), there are only a few colors: white, black and red, and green and yellow are often confused. Blue is absent. No comparison can be made between the Tarot and Kabbalah on this subject.

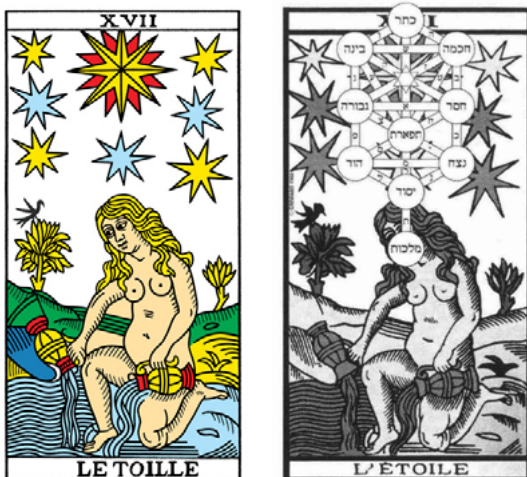
Further, not only are colors sensitive perceptions in the visible world through the refraction of light, but colors also have psychic manifestations, with repercussions at the level of the soul and our emotions. Each color has its own vibratory range and represents a specific aspect of Divine Light. The colors we perceive are therefore veiled and diminished, for we cannot see the great Light without being consumed by its luminescent Glory.

The four letters of the Divine Name have been diffracted into colors. This color system is compared with that of the 4 Worlds:

World of Emanation	hoLaM ‘aTSiLouTH	White
World of Creation	hoLaM BéRYaH	Red
World of Formation	hoLaM YeTSYRaH	Green
World of Action	hoLaM haSSYaH	Black



## THE STAR



Number: 17

Hebrew letter: Pé / PHé

French letter: P

Greek letter: Phi

Ideogram: Mouth

Astrology: Aquarius

It is a naked woman with long blue hair. She is kneeling on her left knee, like the knights at the moment of dubbing. This card invites us to bow before the nourishing Mother Earth.

We have already met a woman who has two recipients and transfers water from one to the other: Temperance. She was dressed with two wings on her back. Our Star woman is naked, and the stars are above her. Nudity here symbolizes purity, authenticity, and freedom of being. The young woman collects celestial energy, which becomes the water source of life, but she is still linked to the

earth. Yet she inspires confidence in those who open themselves to the wonder of non-separation.

There are eight stars symmetrically distributed in the sky. The eighth in the center is larger and has more branches with rays. It resembles a compass rose. The star emits light and represents a guide. Do we not say “having a lucky star”?

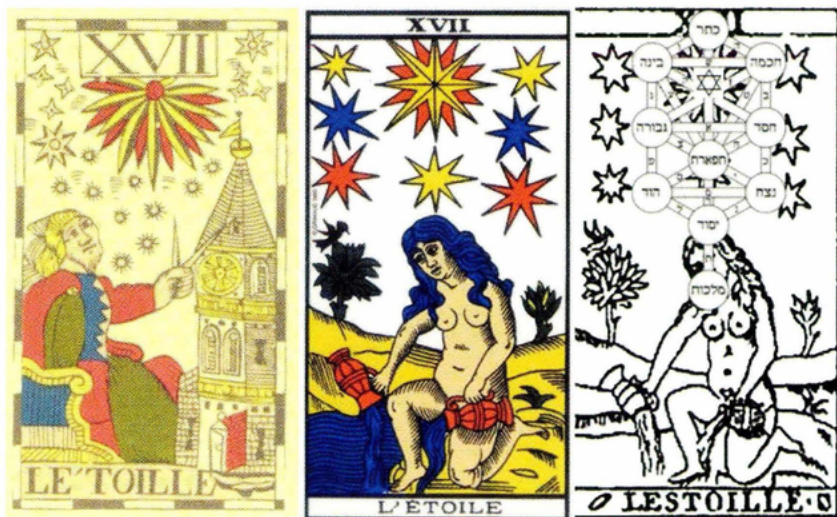
We can overlay the Sephirotic Tree on this card and see that KeTHeR is beyond the card, and that the largest star is at the location of Dahan (Knowledge), the invisible SephiRaH, placed beneath the Crown. Dahan represents, in the human being, the point of Knowledge but also of being, the point where identity and personality fade into Cosmic Consciousness. The star we must follow is that of Knowledge, which enlightens us. The Star is the card that embodies the ability to receive. With the stars above our figure, it can also be associated with dreams and the dream world. Moreover, the letter Pe is associated with transmission, with communication. In Hebrew, the mouth through which speech passes is called Peh.

If you look closely to the left, you will see a small bird on a plant. The bird's symbolism is generally that of spiritual elevation. It is also a symbol of freedom, and brings to mind a tale, the most poetic of the Gnostic works by Sheikh Attar Neyshaburi, an Iranian mystic poet of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: The Conference of the Birds.

In conclusion, we could imagine that this card is telling us: “Let us gather new harvests of stars!” In old French (in “François”), the star (étoile in French) was spelled “estoile.” On some cards, we find the spelling “lestoille” with two Ls and no apostrophe between the “l” and the word, also giving the illusion of a plural.

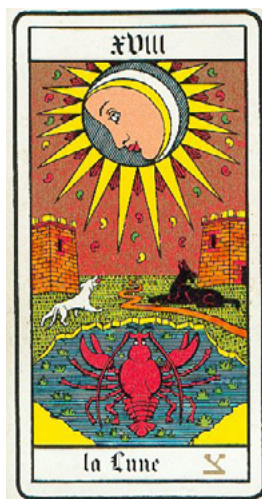
Finally, it should be noted that from the eleventh card onwards, none of the characters wears a crown, as if to mark the transition from having (the earthly world) to being (the spiritual world).

If you look at your Tarot deck, you will notice that from card XVII to card XXI, all the characters are naked.



*Different representations of the Star card: at left is the Flemish Tarot of 1780; at right is the “Lestaille” card with two “L”s and without an apostrophe between the first “L” and “estaille.”*

## THE MOON



Number: 18

Hebrew letter: TsaDé

French letter: X

Greek letter: Xi

Ideogram: Javelin

Astrology: Black Moon

After the Star, here comes the Moon!

The Moon is associated with the nocturnal world, dreams, the unconscious, and femininity. It is also associated with night and death. It is the realm of the shadow, the symbol of what is hidden and buried within each of us.

What do we see in this card? At the bottom of the pond is a crayfish, emblematic of the underworld, which devours all that is corrupt. The crayfish is an animal that molts by shedding its shell, thus regenerating itself. Further away, dogs (or wolves) howl at

the moon, like mediators between two worlds: the physical and the spiritual.

They seem to drink the “moonlight,” which falls in the form of drops.

The Greeks called the Moon “Selene” and still equated her with “Artemis” (twin sister of Apollo, the sun), with whom she illuminates the world and ensures life and fertility. But the Moon also represents intuition, premonitions, imagination, and clairvoyance.

Water is the predominant element, but it can become cloudy at any moment. The Water element appeared in card XIII, Temperance, then in card XVII, the Star.

The number of this card is 18, twice the number 9. We know that nine represents transformation, renewal, but whereas the nine of the Hermit and his lantern meant the light of wisdom, here the moon illuminates in the night a place of research to be found in the depths of one’s being. This Number 18 is therefore a new possibility for working towards the realization of the Great Work. But a quest also means the trials associated with free will, and the exercise of that will in a harmful sense or not. The aim of spiritual alchemy is to subdue one’s own demons, buried in the darkness of the unconscious, by sublimating the conscious forces that will enable the marriage of the moon and sun.

The moon is the symbol of femininity, the queen. This card of the Moon is therefore a phase of preparation for the Chymical Wedding, with the nuptial preparations.

Finally, note that the shape of the letter TsaDé, which governs this card, is that of a winding path, and its numerical value is 90, which equals nine in reduction.



The moon is generally associated with the SePHiRaH YeSSoD. It is written: “The Divine created the two great luminaries”; in the beginning, the two lights (moon and sun) were equivalent and

shared the same secret, adhered to each other and were on the same scale, so that they were both called “great” (Zohar of the Song of Songs 71a).

LeVaNaH לְנָה “moon” = 87, has for a root LaVaN לָבָן “white.”

On the other hand, its first two letters form the word LeV לֵב heart, itself of value 32 (like the 32 Paths of Wisdom).

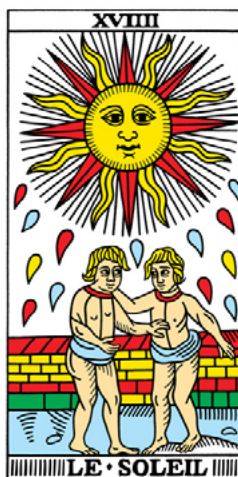
For the Hebrews, the moon also has a relationship with time, since the Jewish feast calendar is linked to the lunar cycle. The moon has three phases: crescent moon, full moon, and new moon, with an influence on plants and nature.

There are several reminders of duality in this card: two animals in the center of two towers like columns. There are also two tufts of grass between the dogs. On the other hand, crayfish and moon of the same color are opposite each other in the middle of the card. Strange symmetry in this card!

Dogs are psychopomps who guide the souls of the dead, associated with the Cerberus of Greek mythology, the polycephalic dog (usually with three heads) that guarded the entrance to the Underworld.

But the Moon, which plunges us into our inner depths, can also lead to liberation from our shackles.

## THE SUN



Number: 19

Hebrew letter: QoPH

French letter: Q

Greek letter: ?

Ideogram: Monkey

Astrology: Leo

In the Emerald Tablet, it is said: “His father is the sun, his mother the moon.” After the Moon comes the Sun, forming the legendary alchemical couple. The sun and moon can be found in a number of engravings and other manuals, such as *Mutus Liber*, *The Hermetical Triumph*, *Corpus Hermeticum*, and *The Rosary of the Philosophers*.

Genesis chapter I, verses 16 and 17: “God [the Divine] made the two great lights - the larger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night - and the stars.” These Luminaries were One before their dissociation into greater and lesser luminaries.

Ma'oR "luminary" =  $247 = 2+4+7 = 13$  like 'eHaD one.

The Sun completes the series of three stars present in the the Tarot. The Sun brings light, but also "brings to light," giving meaning to what is to be revealed. Strangely, there is a wall that separates or conceals from view, like a border between two spaces<sup>11</sup>. Is the Sun inviting us to a rendezvous behind this wall? Is it an obstacle to cross, or a warning?

The letter QoPH corresponding to the sun means "eye of a needle" (that which requires an effort to go through a narrow door).

In Matthew (19:24), we can read: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God [the Divine]." How should we understand this image? In reality, there was a small gate in Jerusalem called the "Eye of the Needle." It so happened that, after sunset, this gate remained open longer than the other large gates, which were more difficult to defend. Camels could only pass through by removing their loads. With this allusion, Yeshua invites the rich to detach themselves from material goods and enter through the gate of heaven.

QoPH is beyond, a new state that can be reached by going beyond ourselves. This letter serves the light to descend into the depths of the Earth and the densest parts of our being. An internal letter that shines in the depths of our being is like a midnight sun. QoPH works like a question mark!

Let us return to our Sun at its zenith, above the two children joined by the arms; they are animus and anima, Yin-Yang. Note that Number 19 is the first of our seventh and final ternary concerning the Major Arcana (19-20-21). Moreover, the number of the Sun 19 reduces to  $1 + 9 = 10 = 1$ . We also find the deliberately erroneous Roman writing of nineteen as XVIII instead of XIX. We also find the number 6, with 6 tears of the sun tears on either side of the children.

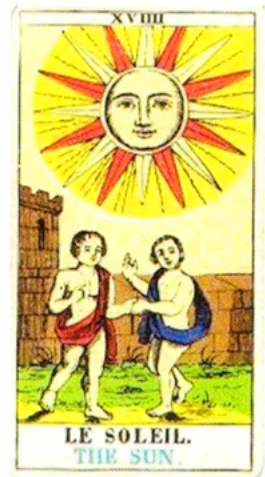
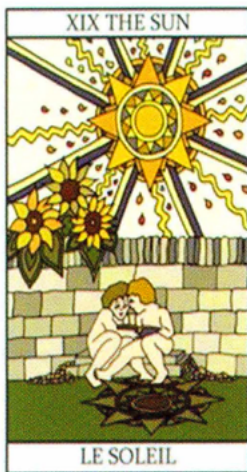
The Moon and Sun cards symbolize the "Alchemical Couple" and represent, in their reunited duality, the Philosopher's Stone with which we must complete the Great Work. This is the stage that



consists in creating the Hermaphrodite, i.e., the perfect fusion of the couple, the perfect osmosis of complementarities.

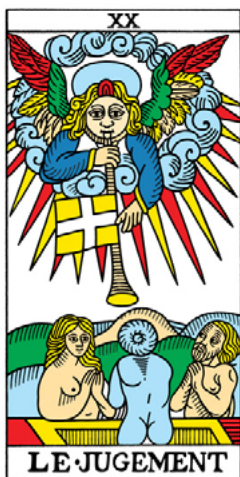
As for the luminous differentiation between moon and sun, it can be explained as follows:

- The sun is a star that extravasates its light in the galaxy.
- The moon has no light of its own, reflecting the light of the sun. It is like a diamond that reflects the sun's rays, like a symbol of its own inner light.



*Different representations of The Sun Tarot card.*

## THE JUDGMENT



Number: 20

Hebrew letter: ReSH

French letter: R

Greek letter: Rô

Ideogram: The head

Astrology: Lunar Nodes

At the very top, an angel surrounded by blue scrolls or clouds is blowing a trumpet, like the angel of the Last Judgment announcing the end of a cycle. Behind the angel lurks the sun.

At the bottom, two figures stand with hands clasped in prayer, while a young man with his back to us stands inside a cube. Note that this tomb, or baptismal font, is green in some versions (a reference to the Emerald Tablet?), the color of vegetation, and thus of renewal. The man and woman look at and welcome the young man in the center. The three figures form a triangle. Is this a reference to the Trinity or to a sephirothic triad? Is it a resurrection (like that of

Lazarus?) or rather a baptism? Is it an initiation? A symbol of rebirth and sublimation?

In the unfolding of the Tarot, there are three thresholds to cross in order to awaken to a higher consciousness, and gain access to the Temple of Knowledge:

- The first threshold was Card 7 of the Chariot, the chariot representing the body and the driver the spirit. Here, the being has dominated its oppositions through the action of its will, submitted to the Divine Will.
- The second threshold is Card 16 ( $1 + 6 = 7$ ) of the House of the Divine (or Tower Struck by Lightning), where the being must dominate pretentiousness and pride, and not disperse into the trap of the “spiritual ego” in order to hear the divine word.
- The third threshold is Judgment, and the being finally knows how to master their impulses and emotions. They are receptive to cosmic forces and laws, and put their will at the service of humanity’s evolution.

The letter ReSH forms the word RoSH (head), and with it we reach the summit, the ultimate passage where the choice of elevation or degradation remains. ReSH impels a movement of renewal through destruction followed by regeneration; it is the moment of the dark night: of crossing the desert, of doubt. It is the moment to plunge into the unknown, knowing to emerge into a greater light. It is not insignificant that the card that precedes Judgment is the Sun, and we better understand the image of the wall in this card before having acquired the capacity for judgment to cross it.

## THE WORLD



Number: 21

Hebrew letter: SHiN

French letter: C, CH

Greek letter: ?

Ideogram: Tooth

Astrology: Taurus

The last of the numbered major arcana, the World represents a woman in a crown of plants (oval, like a mandorla), or more accurately, a sacred dancer holding a magic wand in her left hand (like the Magician) and an enchanting potion in her right hand. She is in motion, her legs moving and her scarf fluttering in the wind. Thus she is often identified with Venus—Aphrodite. In fact, Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus* is reminiscent of this card. The crown is made of laurel (with gold).

Each corner of the card features three animals and an angel:

Taurus, Earth sign = Luke.

Leo, Fire sign = Mark.

The Eagle, Scorpio Water sign = John.

The Angel, Aquarius, Air sign = Matthew.

This is evoked in the Book of Ezekiel, which describes the Tetramorph, i.e., the “four living creatures” pulling the divine chariot. The vision of the divine chariot described by the prophet Ezekiel evokes the “mystique of the divine throne.” This heavenly throne sits atop seven palaces, surrounded by a hierarchy of celestial beings. The concept of the MeRQaBaH originates in the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel.

Chapter I, Verse 10: “As for the appearance of their faces, they had human faces [in front], each of the four had a lion’s face on the right, each of the four had a bull’s face on the left, and each of the four had an eagle’s face [toward the rear].” Christians saw in this the future description of the four Evangelists.

The number 21 is the number of perfection ( $3 \times 7 = 21$ ) or ( $2 + 1 = 3$ ). As  $3 \times 7$ , it corresponds to the structure of the MeNoRaH (7-branch candelabrum). If we consider twenty-one as the sum of  $10 + 5 + 6$ , we find the value of the letters YoD (10) – He (5) – VaV (6).

One question comes to mind: why a woman rather than a man as an allegory for the world? Perhaps because a woman represents the capacity to contain gestating life within her body, and a pregnant woman’s womb is a new world to come.

The letter SHiN also represents the element of Fire, as this letter radiates through its shape: three branches surmounted by a YoD, three flames representing the three levels of the soul, like a three-branched candelabrum: NePHeSH / RouaH / NeSHaMaH.

A handful of tarologists consider that this card should have the number 22 instead of 21, to complete the 22 paths of the Tree of Life. In this case, the “numberless card” would be inserted between Judgment and the World, and the World would have to have the

twenty-second letter THaV instead of SHiN. Personally, I have followed the numbering of the Traditional Tarot of Marseilles.

## THE LETTER SHiN WITH FOUR BRANCHES

In a medieval mystical book, the SePHeR Ha-THeMuNaH, a tradition is mentioned according to which the Hebrew alphabet is missing a letter. This “lost letter” is also referred to as the “letter of the world to come,” and its spelling is said to be the four-branch SHiN found on the TePHiLiN SHeL RoSH (phylacteries worn on the upper forehead by Jewish men at prayer). This letter is destined to be revealed by the messiah to come (for Judaism) and will become the symbol of a cosmic cycle based on HeSSeD (mercy). This four-branch SHiN is therefore a potentiality for transformation, participating in the TiQouN (Reintegration) of the world. Certain breathing techniques and meditative processes can bring us closer to these times to come, by infusing us with the modalities of our own inner transformation.

The three-branch SHiN is the Divine Force descended in the SHeKHiNaH, of which it is the first letter. It is also the first letter of the word SHaLoM (peace)!

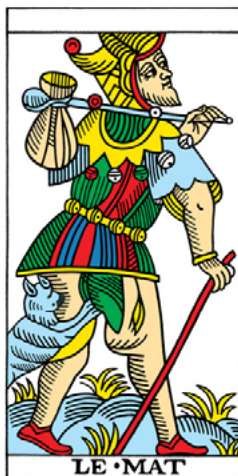
Kabbalists say that the four-branch SHiN represents the hidden dimension of the THoRaH. The four branches of SHiN penetrate the physical world with its four dimensions, as well as the four elements and the four matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. The four-branch SHiN is a cosmic letter that vibrates in all directions for those who know how to lift its veil of invisibility. The four-branch SHiN can be inserted into the Tetragrammaton, as four inverted branches emanate from the original Source. This SHiN has no numerical value.

Be that as it may, with three or four branches, SHiN remains a letter of fire that carries with it both creative and destructive power, for if it introduces positive words like SHaLoM, the fire diverted from a beneficial intention can take on the garb of the lie SHeQeR or the devil SHaTaN.

The letter SHiN with its four branches is an alchemical letter that invites us to metamorphose. The word metamorphosis in Greek means “beyond form,” and this beyond is our ability to access the knowledge of our innermost being!



## THE FOOL



Number: 0 - (22nd veiled card)

Hebrew letter: THaV

French letter: T

Greek letter: Tau

Ideogram: The cross

Astrology: Saturn

The card of the Fool (or the Beggar) represents a pilgrim with a bundle accompanied by a cat. The Fool is an unnumbered card, often associated with zero. It is also known as the “excuse,” because in a game, it acts as a joker. In fact, it gave rise to the joker in our card games. But is the Fool really the last card of the Tarot of Marseilles? Is it not the origin and the end, the Alpha and the Omega? Note that some Tarot decks have numbered this card as 22, or, more rarely, 21.

The Fool (Beggar) is said to represent a Fool (Italian: *il Matto*/the feminine *matta* indicates it would be the privileged card). The Fool



is the one who does not know where he comes from, or even where he is going. He is a wanderer, so to speak, who travels the world in all directions. He is also reminiscent of the jesters or companions who tour France, or the pilgrims with their staffs.

Note that the Fool is dressed like the Magician, i.e., like an acrobat, like an performer. He resembles the Harlequin of the *Commedia Del Arte*, or the king's fool. Moreover, the Fool is dressed with "little bells" (grelots in French), which, by consonant anagram, means

"the ogre." But if the Magician was static, our Fool is in motion. The Fool is tall, and his head touches the edge of the card (lame in French), ("the edge of the soul" (l'âme in French), in the language of the birds). We know a lot of great fools, including one named Gargantua, the famous hero of a book by François Rabelais (1483 or 1494-1553)<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, the Fool can be compared to a portrait of Gargantua, illustrating one of the first editions of the work: the figure is walking, with a large bell on his back. The symbolism of the bell takes us back to Gargantua, who ate "ringing rocks."

The Fool has a bundle (or pouch) at the end of his stick which he holds with his left hand while resting the stick on his right shoulder! A cat (or lynx) follows him and rips off his pants. Unperturbed, the Fool continues on his way in spite of everything. He goes off the beaten path to follow the path of his heart! He makes his way with determination, while the animal energy symbolized by this big cat tries to divert him in vain.

Is he really a fool? Perhaps it is not far from folly to wisdom! Seemingly carefree and ridiculous in the eyes of the profane world, the Fool is the initiate whose thoughts, words, and actions are now fertilized by the Divine Essence. He has a transcendent function beneath his apparent rags. But as we all know, "clothes don't make the man," or the fool for that matter!

In Hebrew, MaTeH means "stick" = 54 = 9 the end of a cycle.

In short, the Fool is a troublesome little fellow, a nonconformist, an original.



*Different representations of The Fool Tarot card.  
In the center is Portrait of Gargantua, illustrating one of the first  
editions of the work.*

Whatever the Tarot's real and historical origins, its purpose is to free people from their egotistic miasma, guiding them towards a constructive evolution of their own being. Aside from philosophers and mystics, aside from Kabbalah and alchemy, psychology has also detected in the Tarot a subtle approach to self-knowledge and liberation.

Although Tarot has ancient origins, with references to Hebrew letters, it has also been influenced by Christianity as it travelled through Europe. The Christian Kabbalah integrated Christ-Yeshua into the Kabbalah of the New Covenant, bringing its study back to its original vocation, stripping it of all intellectual speculation and advocating in it the "way of love." The Hebrew word QaBBaLaH contains at its center the letters BeTH (which becomes VeTH at the end of the word) and LaMeD. Inverted, they form the word LeV (heart). The Martinism of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (a disciple of Martinèz de Pasqually) saw the "way of the heart" fully assured by the mystical Kabbalah, which he incorporated into his teaching.

Nevertheless, the Christian Kabbalah\* does not exist independently as such, as it remains dependent on its essentially Aramaic and Hebrew roots, through its semantic construction and its foundations in the sources of Jewish tradition. But as a reception of the wisdom of the Almighty, the Kabbalah is undeniably part of a spiritual heritage. The “Christian flavor” that has been added to it is part of a ferment of cultures over the centuries, in which the sap of the Tree of Life can be felt. Everyone has their own particular vocation to fulfill, and YeSHuaH (Yeshua) is included in the Kabbalah as part of a continuum of spirituality. What is important for all is the deep desire for harmony in the world’s movement and procrastination.

Tarot is not an intellectual system; it appeals to our innermost selves in a blend of imagination and intuition. Even if it is simply a late adaptation of the Kabbalah, its path is commendable and deserves to be explored in the cultural and symbolic richness of this world.

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\* In fifteenth-century Italy, an intellectual and religious movement was born with an interest in the Kabbalah. For the proponents of this Christian Kabbalah (Pico della Mirandola and Johann Reuchlin particularly), the Tetragrammaton meant that the Divine had not yet fully manifested Itself, so by adding the letter SHiN, the Hebrew name YeSHuaH revealed Christ-Yeshua as the incarnation of the Divine among humans. It was Papus, founder with Augustin Chaboseau in 1891 of the Martinist Order, who introduced the name YeSHuaH.

The Tarot is a very flexible system. You can see many traditional symbols in it: Egypt, Kabbalah, astrology, Hindu deities, Jungian archetypes... If you connect the cards with another set of symbols, you discover that the cards speak in your language. It is not in the cards themselves, but something you bring to the cards, as the cards give it back to you. The question is what you do with the symbols in the reading.

(Words of Yoav Ben-Dov,\* during an interview with Yvan Bubloz for *Le Grimoire de Mnémosyne* blog)

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\* Yoav Ben-Dov (1957-2016), was a pupil of Jodorowsky and a Tarot specialist in Israel.

# APPENDIX I

## THE CASTLE OF CHANCE AND GAMES

In the book *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, written by William of Tyre (who lived ca. 1130-1186, mostly in Jerusalem), the strange story is told of the Castle of Chance (Azaz) near Aleppo in Syria, where a new game of dice was taught. The name is not insignificant, since *az-zahr* in Arabic means “dice game.”

Dice games use random procedures that disrupted the feudal world of the West. Indeed, in those days, the word “chance” – or rather, the idea of chance as it is understood by our contemporaries – did not exist. It was seen as the manifestation of the judgments of a divine power, and that is how legal duels were used. Imagine the head of the clergy with the crusaders in the face of this diabolical new game! The great question is: “Who stops the dice?” This question alone was horrifying when it was the Muslims (heretics for Christians) who stopped the dice! The Christian clergy then discovered that there can be effects with no identifiable causes, unless we accept that we all have the same Divinity.

For a long time, gaming seemed to be a marginal phenomenon (as opposed to the seriousness of work, culture, or religion), but today, gaming via consoles or computers is taking precedence over “manual” games and enters our daily lives in full force, without anyone asking metaphysical questions about the notion of chance.

The phenomenon of virtual gaming has even surpassed the notion of chance, becoming not only a social phenomenon, but also an economic boon.

How many of us know that most games began as a ritual. At the end of the Gothic period, the esoteric knowledge of the builders was, among other things, transmitted by cards. Thus, beyond the game's social phenomenon, lie forgotten arcana and a symbol veiled for most agnostic players. All mystery schools teach that there are fields of exploration that can take us beyond the limited perception of our senses to a broader awareness of the universe. The game would therefore have a meaning, and it is only a short step from there to finding meaning in chance.

In a game, sometimes you lose, sometimes you win, but sometimes by losing everything you can give more. But where do we draw the line between losing and giving? Once again, it all depends on how you invest yourself in a game: do you play to win, or for the pleasure of playing? Do you play for financial gain, or for the joy of sharing a good time with friends? We can see that the game depends on our desire to have or our aspiration to be! The ancients made no mistake about this, and in Persia, those who played the game with a spiritualist spirit were known as the

“People of the Seventh Heaven” or “the Divine's friends”: *walavat* in Persian. Could these “People of the Seventh Heaven” be the “Men of Women of Desire,” according to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, who each aspire to become a “New Person”? Could the game thus be a kind of initiatory path?

Games, in general, invite reflection and introspection. But first, what exactly does the Castle of Chance (Azaz) symbolize? – Having received its “arms,” “crusader” (initiate) can cross the “forest of trials” to reach the “inner castle” where the “princess” sleeps, waiting for the “kiss of love” that will awaken her. Once he has reached his “inner castle,” the crusader, now a “knight” (initiated), will realize the union between the finite and the infinite, the limited and the unlimited. But first, he will have passed through the three alchemical stages with his two arms, “the sword and the word,” which in turn will become one when he reaches the “Chymical Wedding” symbolized by “the kiss of love”: Unity.

The same initiatory process can be seen in Siegfried's kiss, which awakens Brunhilda (Siegfried is a legendary hero of Norse mythology who appears in a thirteenth-century epic poem, which later became Richard Wagner's multi-part opera *The Ring of the Nibelung*). It is hard not to think of Charles Perrault's story of *Sleeping Beauty*, although it is not a kiss that wakes her up, but the young prince's loving gaze: "He approached her, trembling and admiring, and knelt down beside her. Then, as the end of the enchantment had come, the princess awoke." The Brothers Grimm's story uses the kiss: "He bent over her and gave her a kiss. Then Sleeping Beauty awoke, opened her eyes and looked at him, smiling."

Whatever culture it comes from, the game is fundamentally a symbol of internal struggle and accomplishment. It is a universe in which to find one's place. Within a predetermined framework (the rules of the game), it combines the notions of law and freedom. It is neither a law made absolute, nor unrestrained freedom.

Dice, pawns, Tarot cards, and other games are all ways of circulating energy. If we examine a die, we can see in the six sides of this small cube and the six dots symbols of the manifested world in six aspects: the mineral, the plant, the animal, the human with its psychic body, and its soul-personality. These six sides of the die can be deployed in the form of a cross. The number 6 mediates between Principle and manifestation, symbolizing creation in six days, the six directions, but also the number of the trial between good and evil!

The square-shaped development of the die can also be seen as a cube. In fact, the word "cube" comes from the Greek *kubos*, meaning a six-sided die. The addition of the dots on two opposite sides always equal seven ( $1 + 6$  or  $2 + 5$  or  $3 + 4$ ). The cubic stone represents the masterpiece that a Freemasonry apprentice must accomplish. Starting from the rough stone, the cubic stone is an allegorical stone symbolizing the evolution of being.

A person is *homo ludens*, they love to play, and games have developed at every latitude. The alquerque is one of these ancient games, and the word comes from the Arabic *qirkat*. Some believe the

game originated in ancient Egypt, and stone-engraved boards have been found in temples all over the Mediterranean. Arab conquerors brought it to the Iberian Peninsula, and its board merged with the chess board to give birth to checkers (or draughts). Checkers and chess have in common the design of a checkerboard. (There are 100 squares in an international draughts board and sixty-four squares for regular checkers and chess.) The mosaic paving stones of Freemasonic lodges were inspired by this design. Referring to the game of chess, for Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the number 64 is “the complement of the octonary circle where the powerful number, after having traversed all the depths of the regions and existence of beings, re-establishes unity in its simple number, where it was divided and action where nothingness and death reigned.” In fact, chess represents the struggle between spirit and matter. A close examination of each chess piece (king, queen, rook, knight, pawn, bishop) is equally rich in meaning and would merit in-depth study. It is also worth noting that simple children’s games such as the Game of the Goose have surprising characteristics.

We can compare the Game of the Goose to human existence, where chance imposes problems (prison square, bridge or well, for example) and obstacles that resemble our daily trials and tribulations. The “goose” squares bring good luck, and all you have to do is add the letter “J” to the French word *jeu* (“game” in English) to form the French word *joie* (“joy” in English). One starts on the outside of the board and ends in the middle. The message is clear, and encourages us to find our own center. Traditionally, the game of the Goose consists of sixty-three squares (i.e., 7 x 9) winding up like a snail’s shell. The player is a pilgrim, who must retrace their steps and go backwards, to retrace their steps or go forwards. The squares that stop us in our tracks are obstacles to be overcome.

“Nothing is written on the path, it is we who trace it and invent it as we go along,” says Rabbi Marc-Alain Ouaknin, agreeing with another quote by the famous Goethe: “As long as you don’t practice it, this dying and becoming, you are only a dreary guest on this dark earth.... The mysterious path always leads inward, and every descent into oneself, every inward glance, is also an ASCENSION.”



Another game that requires only white chalk and the smoothest possible ground has often graced our playgrounds. Hopscotch consists of eight squares between Heaven and Earth, and can also represent a complete musical octave, from C to C. The game consists in hopping between the eight squares by pushing a pebble. But be careful, you are only allowed to put both feet on squares 4-5 and 7-8, as a respite between two tests. You start on Earth and work your way towards Heaven. Another form of hopscotch, what we might call round hopscotch, is reminiscent of the Gothic labyrinth on the floor of our cathedrals, or the aforementioned Game of the Goose. Unfortunately, apart from the famous Chartres Cathedral labyrinth, most labyrinths have disappeared. In principle, they were located in the center of the nave, and ran from the periphery to the center. They were nicknamed the “Place of Jerusalem” because the labyrinth enabled poor penitents to make a mystical journey without having to make the long and dangerous journey to the Holy Land.

But did you know that a simple deck of cards is made up of fifty-two cards with four suits to represent the four seasons of the year, and twelve figures to represent the twelve months. The four elements are also reflected in the structure of the cards:

Elements	Tarot	Cards
Fire	Stick	Club
Air	Sword	Spade
Water	Cup	Heart
Earth	Pentacles	Diamond

Originally, mahjong was a Chinese game with a symbolic square of 144 tiles: the thirty-six Bamboos representing the Earth axis, the thirty-six Points or Circles representing the celestial Wheel, the thirty-six Characters representing the changes in human life, the sixteen simple Honors are four times four directions or winds, the twelve superior Honors are four times three dragons, and the eight supreme Honors are four flowers and four seasons.

Whether we are throwing dice on the table or pebbles in hopscotch, shuffling cards or calculating the strategic moves of our pawns on a checkerboard, we are both masters of our strategy and dependent on chance. Strategy or skill is, in a way, our free will combined with knowledge of the game in question, but the luck factor belongs to the famous chance that made our feudal ecclesiastics tremble so much.

What is chance?

- For most people, life is full of strange coincidences.
- For the sage, chance represents the manifestation of the laws that govern Creation.

“Chance” is the name given to everything that escapes our ordinary field of consciousness. In life, chance is an appropriate opportunity that corresponds to the necessity of a moment, presenting an experience in a causal relationship with our level of consciousness. But if this seems understandable for acts that commit us to our life’s path, how can we link a simple throw of the dice to the manifestation of a law?

Mathematical studies have calculated the probabilities of the results obtained by a throw of dice, as follows: For a simple throw of a single six-sided die, which is considered balanced, the probability of obtaining any value from 1 to 6 is exactly  $1/6$ . The draw therefore follows a discrete uniform distribution. In probability theory, the discrete uniform law is a discrete probability law indicating a probability of occurring identical (equiprobability) to each value of a finite set of possible values.

After this somewhat complex definition for a neophyte in the field, let us keep the pleasure of playing by relying on simple chance, because in the end, if we know the inherent rule of a game, there are divine probabilities far more subtle to our minds.

According to the Greek philosopher Democritus: “Everything in the universe is the result of chance and necessity.” Albert Einstein, in turn, said: “The Divine does not play dice.” Scientists have often

questioned the notion of chance. In an essay entitled *Chance and Necessity*, Jacques Monod (1910-1976) refutes predeterminism, which for him is a form of fatalism that sees in every event the hand of the Divine and the powerlessness of humankind. The novelist Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) wrote: “Chance is perhaps the Divine’s pseudonym when It does not want to sign,” and Einstein is credited by some for the famous saying: “Coincidence is the Divine’s way of remaining anonymous.” Therefore, could the Divine be hiding in a roll of the dice? How do you find a creative plan in a game?

Finally, is it necessary to distinguish between constructive chance and playful chance? If all games have such a strong esoteric connection, it is because the underlying chance certainly holds a life lesson to ponder. Who knows who the hand that throws the dice obeys?

Of course, we will be sure to emphasize the importance of *JE* (“I” in English) and *JEU* (“game” in English) in our ability to *JOUER* (“play” in English). The *devinette* (“riddle” in English) is also a game that needs no material support. In the word *DEVINette*, the word *DEVIN* (“diviner” in English) orchestrates the progress of the question. Thus a “devin” or “Devinette” are not only playful, but also suggests a more fundamental intention. By proposing a riddle to be solved, they open up various avenues in which the expression of language takes precedence. So is not life itself a kind of game that puts our ego (je (I in English)) to the test in an evolutionary enjeu (stake in English)?

<b>THE ARCANUM OF THE PLAYING CARDS</b> <i>Work from the books of Bernard Werber and Arnold Keyserling</i>			
<b>HEART</b> <i>Spring - Affective - VENUS</i>		<b>DIAMOND</b> <i>Summer - Travel - MERCURY</i>	
King:	<u>Scorpio</u>	King:	<u>Taurus</u>
	Death		Possession
Queen:	<u>Cancer</u>	Queen:	<u>Capricorn</u>
	Home		Profession
Jack:	<u>Fish</u>	Jack:	<u>Virgin</u>
	Faith		Work
<b>CLUB</b> <i>Autumn - Work - JUPITER</i>		<b>SPADE</b> <i>Winter - Death - MARS</i>	
King:	Work	King:	<u>Leo</u>
	Friendship		Lucifer-Master
Queen:	<u>Libra</u>	Queen:	<u>Aries</u>
	Circulate		Rahu*
	Society		Personality
Jack:	<u>Gemini</u>	Jack:	<u>Sagittarius</u>
	Development		Ketu**-Mission



Heart  
Consciousness



Diamond  
Matter



Club  
Energy



Spade  
Self-organization

\* Rahu is the deity of the eclipse in Hinduism (or ascending lunar node).

\*\* Ketu represents the Moon's descending node.

## THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX

If we examine the riddle of the Sphinx (a female creature with the body of a lion, the figure of a woman, and the wings of a bird), the following question was put to Oedipus (son of Laius and Jocasta): “What being, provided with a single voice, first has four legs in the morning, then two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?”

The answer is “a person,” because they walk on all fours in the morning as a child, stand on two legs as an adult, and use a stick as a cane in old age. If we transpose this question to the Tarot and dice game, we will look at it this way:

- Four legs in the morning –  $4 \times 10 =$  Minor Arcana divided into four series of ten cards.
- Two legs noon – two is the duality with the world of physical action and the world of the spirit, i.e., two types of arcana (minor arcana + major arcana).
- Three legs in the evening –  $3 \times 7 \text{ days} = 21$  ( $2 + 1 = 3$ ) = number of possible combinations with two dice.

The riddle, then, is not simply a game, but a way of engaging the responsibility of being under the gaze of the divine diviner. Games, then, are adjustments to our “I” to discover ourselves as something else?

The Tarot deck also has an enigmatic element in its images and names. The riddle here takes on a divinatory meaning in French.

- “The Tarot contains in 22 cards its lessons” in French (“*Le Tarot contient de 22 lames ses logons*”) hides the phrase “The tarot we hold, diviner of the soul, is the sound” (“*Le tarot qu’on tient, devin de Fame, c’est le son.*”)
- The Temperance card in French becomes “*Temp errance*” (“wandering time” in English).
- The Hermit in French (*L’Hermite*) is pronounced similar to “air mythe” (“myth of air” in English).

- The House of the Divine in French (*La Maison Dieu*) becomes “the Soul is its Divinity” (“*L’ame est son Dieu*”).
- The Magician in French (*Le Bateleur*) becomes “The stocking lures you” (“*Le bas te leurre*”).

In a way, the Tarot confounds us, as it is a crucible, a digging ground for a variety of meanings that open up new avenues of escape and vision.

## APPENDIX II

### THE SPINNING TOP OF HANOUCAH

HaNouCaH is a Jewish festival, the first post-biblical holiday to be instituted by the sages of the Talmud (Tractate Shabbath 21 b). HaNouCaH means “dedication,” “inauguration.” It is also known as HaG Ha-’oRiM, the “Festival of Lights.”

In the Middle Ages, a spinning top game was very popular with children in Germany. On the four sides of each spinning top were engraved the letters:

N for Nichts, “nothing”/G for Gut, “win”/H for Halb, “half (of the stake)” / SCH for Schlecht, “lost.”

Eventually, Jewish children gave these letters a Hebrew meaning:

NouN / GUiMeL / He / SHiN

נ ג ה ש

Whose initials form the acrostics:

NèS GaDoL HaYaH SHaM

A great miracle happened there.

NaSSi GaDoL HaYaH SHiMoN

Simon was a great prince.

This spinning top is held by the top to show that the miracle of HaNouCaH has preserved the superior part of humankind: its spirituality.

Unfortunately, it was also said that this game was used, among other things, to keep Jewish children awake so that they could flee

more quickly in the event of a pogrom after the Christians' midnight mass.

Since the birth of the State of Israel, the letter SHiN has been replaced by the letter Pe, the initial of the word PoH which means "here," so the Israelis say:

"A great miracle happens here."



# APPENDIX III

## EGYPTIAN TAROT AND CELESTIAL HIERARCHIES

(According to Paul Christian)

Here is an interesting curiosity from a book by Paul Christian.\* He describes ten circles representing 10 degrees in concentric order, from which energies rise and fall. Below, we see that the functions correspond to the celestial hierarchy according to Dionysius the Areopagite:

- Circle 1: Crown of Supreme Power – Seraphim.
- Circle 2: Crown of perpetual Intelligence – Cherubim.
- Circle 3: Crown of absolute wisdom – Thrones.
- Circle 4: Crown of infinite Love – Dominations.
- Circle 5: Crown of absolute Justice – Powers.
- Circle 6: Crown of supreme Beauty – Vertus.
- Circle 7: Crown of Domination – Principalities.
- Circle 8: Crown of Eternity – Archangels.
- Circle 9: Crown of universal Fertility – Angels.
- Circle 10: Crown of the terrestrial sphere, corresponding to the natural world.

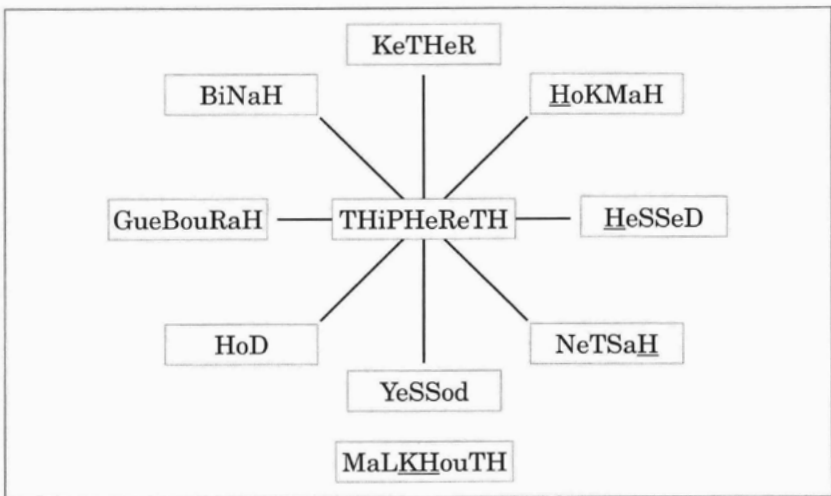
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\* Paul Christian: Pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Pitois (1811-1877), historian, bibliographer, and journalist. To him we owe the use of the terms *lames* (cards) and *arcana* for the Tarot. He was Charles Nodier's collaborator at the Arsenal Library, and also attached to the Library of the Ministry of Public Education. In 1853, he married for the second time, an Italian woman related to the Walter Scott family. He published *L'Homme rouge des Tuileries* in 1863.

Although the author does not indicate it, with a few variations, these circles are in line with the SePHiRoTH:

- Circle 1: KeTHeR.
- Circle 2: BiNaH.
- Circle 3: HoKMaH.
- Circle 4: HeSSeD.
- Circle 5: GueBouRaH.
- Circle 6: THiPHeReTH.
- Circle 7: HoD.
- Circle 8: NeTSaH.
- Circle 9: YeSSoD.
- Circle 10: MaLKHoUTH.

The representation of circles in a concentric order exists in Qabalah. The Tree of Life gives way to a circular configuration as shown below:



## CIRCLE 10 OF THE “ROSE-CROSS OF MAGI” (IN THE TERRESTRIAL SPHERE) AND THE EGYPTIAN TAROT (EQUIVALENCES WITH THE TAROT OF MARSEILLES)

This circle is divided into seventy-eight Lodges (like the seventy-eight arcana of the Tarot) and the first Lodges (or arcana) correspond strangely to the major cards of the Tarot of Marseilles. Let us take a look at the links with Egyptian occultism:

- Lodge 1: The magus – Egyptian hieratic letter A – *Athoim* (equivalence with Tarot of Marseilles: ‘aLePH and the Magician) – Divine Throne and Sun. The magus is an initiate into the Mysteries of Isis, standing in a white robe (symbol of purity), with a golden circle around his forehead (symbol of light), holding a golden scepter in his right hand (symbol of creative intelligence). The index of his left hand points to the earth. In front of him is a cup on a cubic stone, followed by a golden sword and shekel.
- Lodge 2: Gateway to the occult sanctuary – Egyptian letter B – *Beinthin* (BeTH and the Popess) – Throne of Gabriel and Moon. It is represented by a woman seated between two columns (red on her right and white on her left) forming the portico of the Temple of Isis. She wears a tiara surmounted by a lunar crescent. A transparent veil covers her face. She wears a solar cross and on her lap is an open book, half-hidden by her cloak.
- Lodge 3: Isis-Urania - Egyptian letter G – *Gomor* (GuiMeL et the Empress) – Throne of Anael and Venus, here is a woman seated at the center of a radiant sun, her feet resting on the moon and her head crowned with twelve stars (cycle of life). She holds a scepter surmounted by a globe (action on world governance) and an eagle in her other hand.
- Lodge 4: The cubic stone – Egyptian letter D – *Dinain* (DaLeTH and the Emperor) – Throne of Zachariel and Jupiter. A man sits on a cubic stone, wearing a crowned helmet. He

holds the scepter of Isis-Urania in his right hand and bends his right leg against his left to form a cross (symbol of the four elements).

- Lodge 5: Master of the Arcana – Egyptian letter E - *Eni* (He and Pope) – Throne of Amun and Aries. This is an initiator to the Mysteries of Isis, seated between the temple columns, leaning on a three-beamed cross. Two men are prostrate at his feet, one dressed in black, the other in red (good and evil).
- Lodge 6: The two roads – Egyptian letters U and V - *Ur* (VaV and the Lover) – Throne of Apis and Taurus. A man stands facing two roads. Two women stand beside him, each placing a hand on his shoulders. The woman on the right wears a golden circle on her forehead (personification of virtue) and the woman on the left is disheveled with a crown of vines (personification of vice).
- Lodge 7: The chariot of Osiris – Egyptian letter Z - *Zain* (ZaiN and the Chariot) – Throne of Horus and Gemini. A warrior armed with a sword and holding a scepter surmounted by a triangle stands on a cube-shaped chariot with four columns surmounted by a starry azure canopy. The warrior wears a gold circle on his head, adorned with three five-pointed gold pentagrams. The front of the chariot features the design of a sphere with outstretched wings. Three squares are engraved on the man's breastplate. Finally, two sphinxes (white and black) are harnessed to the chariot.
- Lodge 8: The scales and the Sword – Egyptian letter H - *Heletha* (HeTH and Justice) – Throne of Hermanubis and Cancer. A woman sits on a throne. She wears an iron crown and holds a sword in her right hand and scales in her left (symbol of justice). Her eyes are blindfolded and a solar cross is drawn across her chest.
- Lodge 9: The veiled lamp – Egyptian letter TH – *Thela* (TeTH and the Hermit) – Throne of Momphtha and Leo. An

old man walks with a staff and holds a lamp in front of him, half-hidden by his cloak (a sign of discretion). Is prudence not the armor of wisdom?

- Lodge 10: The Sphinx – Egyptian letter I-J-Y – *Jamin* (YoD and the Wheel of Fortune) – Throne of Isis and Virgo. We see a wheel with Hermanubis on his right, trying to climb to the top of the wheel, and Typhon on his left, descending. At the top is a balancing sphinx.
- Lodge 11: The Lion – Egyptian letter C-K - *Caitha* (KaPH and Strength) – Throne of Samael and the planet Mars. A woman closes a lion's mouth with her bare hands (sign of trust and care).
- Lodge 12: The Sacrifice – Egyptian letter L – *Luzain* (LaMeD and the Hanged Man) – Throne of Omphthah and Libra. A man, his hands tied behind his back, hangs by his foot from a potence made of two tree branches, each with six severed branches (extinction of life in the 12 solar rays). The bend in one of his legs forms an inverted triangle, with the man's head at the apex.
- Lodge 13: The Reaping Skeleton – Egyptian letter M - *Miche* (MeM and the Nameless Arcanum or Death) – No throne. A skeleton mows heads at his feet in a meadow.
- Lodge 14: The two urns – Egyptian letter N – *Nain* (NouN and Temperance) – Throne of Typhon and Scorpio. The genie of the sun pours a fluid (the essences of life) from one urn into the other (symbolizing combinations of elemental forces).
- Lodge 15: Typhoon – Egyptian letter X – *Xiron* (SaMeKH and the Devil) – Throne of Nephthas and Sagittarius. Here is a winged genie with a goat's head waving torches over a flaming abyss.
- Lodge 16: The Beheaded Tower – Egyptian letter O - *Olelath* (haiN and the House of God or the Tower struck by

lightning) – Throne of Anubis and Capricorn. A tower with battlements dismantled by the Fire of Heaven, and two men hurled into the air. One is crowned, the other not.

- Lodge 17: Star of the Magi – Egyptian letter F-P - *Pilon* (PéH and the Star) – Throne of Raphael and Mercury. A nude young woman is surrounded by seven stars, themselves surmounted by an eight-rayed flamboyant star. She spreads the fluids of life on earth with two cups, one golden, the other silver. A butterfly alights on a rose.
- Lodge 18: Twilight – Egyptian letter TS – *Tsadi* (TsaDe and the Moon) – Throne of Canopus and Aquarius. A crouching wolf and a dog barking at the moon stand before a tower on the edge of a path. A crayfish stands between the two animals, and the path disappears into the horizon.
- Lodge 19: Resplendent Light – Egyptian letter Q – *Quin* (QoPH and the Sun) – Throne of Ichthon and Pisces. Two children hold hands under a radiant Sun, their feet in a flowery circle.
- Lodge 20: Awakening of the Dead – Egyptian letter R - *Iron* (ReSH and Judgement) – Throne of Oraphiel and Saturn. A genie sounds a bugle above a tomb from which a woman, a man and a child emerge (human trinity).
- Unnumbered lodge: The Crocodile – Egyptian letter S - *Sichen* (The Fool but SHiN is not its letter in the Tarot of Marseilles) – No throne. A blind man carrying a full saddlebag bumps into an overturned obelisk. In front of him is a crocodile with its mouth open.
- Lodge 21: The Magi's Crown – Egyptian letter T - *Thou* (Le Monde but THaV is not its letter in the Tarot of Marseilles – there is an inversion between these last two Lodges). A lion, a bull, an eagle and a man occupy the corners of a square. Above them is a golden crown with seven stars.

Lodges 22 to 78 then set the 56 minor cards in motion: Master of the Scepter (Lodge 22), Mistress of the Scepter (Lodge 23), Fighter of the Scepter (Lodge 24), and Slave of the Scepter (Lodge 25) correspond successively to King, Queen, Knight, and Jack of Wands.

- Scepter corresponds to the Wand.
- Cup (ditto).
- Sword corresponds to the Foil.
- Shekel corresponds to Pentacle.

For the rest, it would take too long to list the remaining Lodges listed in detail in Paul Christian's book, pp. 103-112. According to the author, there is an astrological link with Circles and Lodges. In addition, Paul Christian speaks of a Tarot known as the "Samaritan Oracle," said to have been composed in Samaria after the disappearance of the Ark and the destruction of the Temple by Levites who had been able to avoid the Babylonian captivity. My research has failed to substantiate this thesis.

## THE BOOK OF HERMES-THOTH

The primitive Book of Hermes-Thoth is said to have been conceived in the land of MiTSRaïM (Egypt – or rather, the Egypts – a plural term in Hebrew, the grammatical form of the dual "Upper and Lower Egypt") and to have disappeared during the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses the Persian, who was crowned pharaoh under the name of Cambyses II. Whether real or purely symbolic, the Book of Hermes-Thoth consisted of seventy-eight loose leaves of gold leaf,

on which were engraved letters and numbers correlated with the seven planets, the twelve constellations and the thirty-six decans. The arcana in this book were called the "Gates" and allowed adepts to delve into letters and hieroglyphics, extracting allegories, symbols and number harmonies, and creating a figurative language of occult knowledge.

Despite the disappearance of the Book of Hermes-Thoth (and many others over the centuries), the transmission would have been carried out with the obelisks and temples of Egypt, the perpetuation and initiations into the Mysteries; those of Isis in Egypt, but also of Mithras in Persia, with Enoch and Solomon among the Hebrews, then traveling as far as Greece (Eleusis). Today, initiatic orders still maintain rituals and teachings that keep the Path of Knowledge alive over the centuries.

Immutable Knowledge has changed forms and places, but from Egyptian temples to the Gothic cathedrals of initiated builders, it follows its path and continues to take on different faces in the march of time.



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Although the Tarot is often used as a medium for divination, Josselyne Chourry reveals its deeper, spiritual dimension. Drawing on her in-depth knowledge of the Kabbalah, she draws a parallel between the twenty-two major arcana and the twenty-two Hebraic letters, showing that they reflect a Divine Plan in which humankind's destiny is inscribed.

Although the Tarot and the Kabbalah are two independent paths, they come together because they promote self-knowledge and support the awakening of consciousness. It is precisely this approach, this allegorical journey, that Josselyne Chourry presents by analyzing the Tarot in the light of Kabbalah. It then becomes a tool that can help us adapt to events, in order to guide our lives with full awareness.

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## THE AUTHOR

Having cultivated her taste for the arts, literature, and spirituality for many years, Josselyne Chourry is the author of *Kabbale et Connaissance*, *Qabbale et corps humain*, and *Du messianisme a la Conscience*. She is also a lecturer.