

An Introduction

TAROT divination is not fortune-telling. The practice of fortune-telling is based on the false notion that human life is governed by luck, chance, or fate—by obscure powers at work outside the personality. True divination rests upon the occult truth that the causes of all events in human life are really internal, proceeding from the Cause of Causes—the Universal Intelligent Energy or Life-power which is the Source, Mover and Knower behind all the phenomena of the universe.

Because this Universal Intelligent Energy is omnipresent, it must necessarily be a real presence at any given point in space. Consequently it must be the real Presence at the heart of every human personality. That Presence is the True Self, the real I AM, the Concealed Divinity in the shrine of the temple of personality. This True self is the author of all phenomena, and its perfect knowledge includes all the details of phenomenal manifestation, past, present and future. It knows all events, and the significance of all events. Thus it knows the complete past, present and future of every human being.

Ordinarily this perfect knowledge of the True Self is hidden from us; but under certain conditions some part of it may be brought down into the personal level of awareness. The right use of Tarot provides the necessary conditions, because Tarot is a device invented by expert psychologists who understood the laws whereby the superconscious knowledge of the True Self may be brought to bear upon the specific problems which confront us as we function at the self-conscious level of our waking existence.

The Tarot Keys are composed of pictorial and geometrical symbols. These symbols are the natural “language” of the subconscious mind, a language older than any human tongue, a language from which all modes of human speech have been derived. Fundamentally we think in pictures, not in words, and this pictorial language, common to the whole human race, is the means whereby the subconscious mind may communicate to us the higher knowledge reflected from the superconscious levels of the True Self.

As you begin to study divination, bear in mind that it is not meant to satisfy your own or another's idle curiosity about the future. Take the work seriously. What you are about to learn is a method whereby you may bring to bear upon your own problems, and upon the problems of those who consult you, the light of the superconscious knowledge of past, present and future which is characteristic of the mental activity of the One Life-power. To deal lightly with this is truly to profane the most sacred of mysteries, and the penalty for such profanation is inevitable. He who debases Tarot to mere fortune-telling will rob himself of whatever insight he may possess. He will deceive himself and others by false visions, and may open the door to dangerous obsession by inimical astral entities.

The practice of divination offers you a real opportunity to serve, and will aid you to unfold intuitive powers of a high order. As you become more and more proficient, you will be called upon by persons beset by all sorts of perplexities, faced by all sorts of seeming obstacles, troubled by all sorts of appearances of inharmony. As you gain their confidence they will tell you their inmost secrets. **Never abuse that confidence.** Make it a rule not to discuss the affairs of your consultants—not even anonymously. There is altogether too much comparison of horoscopes, altogether too much discussion of the affairs of clients, in certain circles of persons interested in astrology, palmistry, numerology, and other divinatory arts.

Furthermore, avoid personal judgement of the lives of your consultants. Even when their views and conduct differ radically from your opinions and standards, remember that every condemnatory judgement is evidence that he who makes it is himself more or less in the dark. To divine well you must be in sympathetic rapport with your consultants, and there can be no sympathy where there is condemnation.

After these preliminary observations we may proceed to a brief examination of...

The Tarot Pack

For divination the best pack of Tarot cards now available is that given with this course of Lessons. It was drawn by J. A. Knapp under the supervision of Manly P. Hall, and is an excellent example of the exoteric Tarot. It has,

furthermore, the decided advantage that the cards are of such size that they may be conveniently shuffled and dealt.

In calling this an **exoteric** pack I mean that it is simply a better-drawn and better-colored version of that version of Tarot issued, some centuries ago, by the Western School of occult adepts, who purposely disguised it as a game. The Keys of this exoteric pack, particularly the picture-cards called major trumps or greater arcana, are neither so exact nor so explicit in their symbolism as are the cards of the esoteric Tarot. The later, at this writing, has not been published. The Rider pack, designed under the supervision of A. E. Waite, approximates the esoteric version. So does the set of major trumps drawn by Jessie Burns Parke some years since at my suggestion. Waite's version and mine approximate the esoteric designs we have both seen. The present pack of Mr. Knapp's is practically the same as any good example of eighteenth century exoteric packs, except for the small symbols added at Manly Hall's suggestion, which are mostly good. And the symbolism of these Keys is sufficiently exact for every purpose of divination. Even for the higher uses of Tarot it is not wholly incorrect.

In the original exoteric Tarot no Hebrew letters were printed on the major trumps. Since Eliphas Levi wrote **The Dogma and Ritual of Transcendental Magic** nearly all books on Tarot have reproduced the "blind" attribution of the letters to the major trumps first published in that remarkable volume. C. C. Zain uses yet another attribution, but if it is compared with that given below its inadequacy becomes evident. I have dealt with this whole matter in other of my writings. Here it is enough to say that Levi knew the correct attribution, but was under obligation not to reveal it. Hence he chose a blind which would lead the more discerning among his readers to discover the correct arrangement. Unfortunately, those of his admirers and disciples who have written books about the Tarot (including Papus, Stanislas de Guiata, Dr. and Mrs. Curtis, Manly P. Hall, and others of lesser note) have either failed to perceive Levi's blind, or else have felt themselves bound to perpetuate it.

The true arrangement, long held in reserve by the School of Adepts who originally issued the Tarot as we now have it, came by accident into the possession of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. A former member of that society, convinced that its claim to direct connection with the Secret Chiefs of the True Rosicrucian Order was a false

claim, broke away from the Hermetic Order, published its rituals, and also made public the attribution given below. Three years prior to this I had myself been led to the discovery of the true arrangement, which follows:

Figure 1-1

Hebrew Attributions of the Major Trumps

1	Aleph	(A)	0 Le Fou
2	Beth	(B)	1 Le Bateleur
3	Gimel	(G)	2 La Papesse
4	Daleth	(D)	3 L'imperatrice
5	Heh	(H)	4 L'empereur
6	Vau	(V)	5 Le Pape
7	Zain	(Z)	6 L'amoureux
8	Cheth	(Ch)	7 Le Chariot
9	Teth	(T)	11 La Force
10	Yod	(I)	9 L'ermite
20	Kaph	(K)	10 La Roue de la Fortune
30	Lamed	(L)	8 La Justice
40	Mem	(M)	12 Le Pendu
50	Nun	(N)	13 La Mort
60	Samekh	(S)	14 La Temperance
70	Ayin	(O)	15 Le Diable
80	Peh	(P)	16 Le Feu Du Ciel
90	Tzaddi	(Tz)	17 Les Etoiles
100	Qoph	(Q)	18 La Lune
200	Resh	(R)	19 Le Soleil
300	Shin	(Sh)	20 Le Jugement
400	Tau	(Th)	21 Le Monde

This arrangement enables us to determine the astrological meanings of the major trumps. The key to these meanings is partially given in the various printed versions of the Hebrew **Book of Formation**, or **Sepher Yetzirah**. All versions of this book agree that the mother letters, Aleph, Mem and Shin represent the elements Air, Water and Fire. All versions also agree that the simple letters Heh, Vau, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, Ayin, Tzaddi and Qoph represent the signs of the zodiac. But none of the published versions agree as to the attribution of the seven heavenly bodies known in ancient astrology to the seven double letters, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Peh, Resh and Tau. These were probably kept secret when the Book of Formation was first published, for fear that the correct arrangement might lead to the premature disclosure of certain practical secrets. But as the correct arrangement has now come to light, its accuracy

will be obvious to every really competent symbolist. Learn these attributions by heart, so thoroughly that you recall them without the least effort.

Figure 1-2:

Astrological Attributions of the Major Trumps

0	Le Fou	Air; Uranus
1	Le Bateleur	Mercury
2	La Papesse	The Moon
3	L'Imperatrice	Venus
4	L'Empereur	Aries
5	Le Pape	Taurus
6	L'Amoureux	Gemini
7	Le Chariot	Cancer
8	La Justice	Libra
9	L'Ermite	Virgo
10	La Roue de la Fortune	Jupiter
11	La Force	Leo
12	Le Pendu	Water; Neptune
13	La Mort	Scorpio
14	La Temperance	Sagittarius
15	Le Diable	Capricorn
16	Le Feu du Ciel	Mars
17	Les Etoiles	Aquarius
18	La Lune	Pisces
19	Le Soleil	The Sun
20	Le Jugement	Fire; Pluto(?); Vulcan
21	Le Monde	Saturn; Earth

N.B. In the esoteric Tarot the numbers of the Keys corresponding to Leo and Libra are different from those given above. In the esoteric pack Strength, corresponding to Leo, is numbered 8, and Justice, corresponding to Libra, is numbered 11. So also in Waite's Tarot and in those which I use for philosophical work.

Besides the 22 major trumps there are 56 minor trumps similar to ordinary playing-cards, which are derived from the Tarot. The minor trumps comprise ten spot-cards numbered from Ace to 10, arranged in four suits, which are: Wands (Clubs); Cups (Hearts); Swords (Spades); Pentacles or Coins (Diamonds).

In addition to these numbered cards, each suit includes four court-cards. In the Knapp pack these are designated by letters, as follows: King (K); Queen (Q); Knight or Warrior (W); Page or Servant (S).

Kings represent Spirit; Queens are symbols of Soul; Knights or Warriors correspond to the astral body; Pages or Servants represent the physical body. These are their more general meanings. Their particular divinatory meanings will be given in the lessons wherein the separate cards of each suit are explained from the divinatory standpoint.

The general divinatory meaning of the four suits of minor trumps is as follows, but each card has a separate meaning to be considered later:

Figure 1-3:

Divinatory Meanings of the Four Suits

This suit...	...represents these concepts...	...and element.
Wands	Work, enterprise, ideas; the energies of the spiritual plane or archetypal world (Plato's world of ideas)	Fire
Cups	Desires, hopes, wishes; emotional activities; the states and forces of the mental plane, the creative world in which mental patterns are formulated;	Water
Swords	Action, and therefore conflict of forces; the states and activities of the astral plane, the formative world of unseen forces which build the conditions of the physical plane;	Air
Coins or	Things, possessions; the concrete objects	Earth
Pentacles	and bodies of the physical plane; the objectification of the energies and forces of the higher worlds or planes represented by Wands, Cups and Swords;	

The Significator

This is the card chosen to represent the Querant, or person for whom a divination is made. This may be Le Bateleur (Key 1) for a man, or La Papesse (Key 2) for a woman. In a subsequent lesson you will find a method for selecting the Significator, based on the Querant's birth-date; but many good diviners invariably use Le Bateleur for a man, and La Papesse for a woman.

Formulating The Question

This is the first step in a divination. When you divine for yourself, state the question as you begin to shuffle the entire pack. If you are divining for another person, let the Querant formulate his question as you begin to shuffle the cards. If the Querant has formulated his question before sitting down opposite you at the table where the divination is to be made, bid him or her concentrate upon the question, and, if possible, endeavor to restate it while you are shuffling. This formulation of the question by the Querant is wholly mental, and the Querant should be careful to say nothing whatever, at the beginning of the divination, that will indicate the nature of the question.

First Operation

The diviner shuffles the entire pack until he feels like stopping the shuffle, or until the pack begins to feel heavy in his hands. One comes soon to recognize this feeling. **While shuffling the diviner should mentally and most earnestly invoke the aid of the true self to assist in the operation.**

After the shuffle the diviner hands the entire pack to the Querant, who cuts it once, completing the cut so that the portion of the pack which was at the bottom when the Querant received it from the diviner is now on top.

The diviner now takes the cards, and with his left hand cuts the pack into two piles, from right to left, on the table before him, thus:

Pile	Pile
1	2

He then cuts each of these into tow piles, again to the left, and with his left hand, so that Pile 3 is taken from Pile 1, and Pile 4 from Pile 2, as shown below.

Pile	Pile	Pile	Pile
4	2	3	1

These four piles of cards, counting from right to left, represent the four letters of the Hebrew divine name, YOD-HEH-VAU-HEH (IHVH, or Jehovah), thus:

HEH 2	VAU	HEH 1	YOD
Pile	Pile	Pile	Pile
4	2	3	1

The diviner now examines these piles of cards, to find in which one the Significator, (Bateleur or Papesse) is located.

If the Significator appears in the YOD Pile (No. 1) the diviner says to the Querant: “Your question is about the beginning of some enterprise, about the root-ideas behind some matter. It is more concerned with causes than with outward conditions, and may have to do with the spiritual life.”

If the Significator appears in the HEH Pile (No. 3), the diviner says: “Your question has to do with your desires and wishes, with the formation of plans, with some state of your emotions or affections, with matters in which your feelings are deeply affected.”

If the Significator is in the VAU Pile (No. 2), the diviner says: “You want to know what to do, what action is best to bring about some result, either to avoid some conflict with others, or to overcome some conflict which has already come up. Your question is somehow connected with inharmony, with disappointment, either actual or threatened.”

If the Significator be in the 2nd HEH Pile (Pile 4), the diviner says: “Your question has to do with the things of the outer world, or practical life. It is almost wholly concerned with material affairs.”

The beginner will do well to commit these paragraphs to memory, until he has progressed far enough to depend more completely on intuition. In any case the substance of what the diviner says to the Querant is always as above.

Be careful at this point not to let the Querant state his question to you. You should be able to state it to him, by reason of the position of the Significator. You may have to add some few words of explanation to those suggested above, but unless the Querant acknowledges that you have correctly determined the main substance of his question, abandon the attempt to divine for him, and do not resume it for at least two hours. Better still, wait until the next day. If you are unable to determine the nature of the question by the position of the Significator the divination is

“not radical,” as astrologers say of those indications in a horary chart which indicate that no attempt should be made to give advice or delineation. **Never proceed with a divination unless you have been successful in this first operation.**

Practice

Before continuing with the next lesson, you should practice every day, at first by yourself, and then with a sympathetic friend. Carry the whole first operation through, up to the formulation of the question, in accordance with the position of the Significator. Put a different question, and a different kind of a question, each time. Keep a record of your practice, in which you note:

1. the number of attempts;
2. the number of times the Significator fell in a pile that corresponded to the question;
3. the number of times the Significator did not so fall.

Continue this preliminary practice for at least one week before going further.