

TAROT: ORAT, ROTA, TORA

YEAR OF THE IRON SERPENT

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Tarot has the meaning of speaking, the wheel and the law, as shown in its letters. The Orator unveils and lays bare the hidden meaning. The Wheel is the wheel of life, fate and evolution, changing in time, pointing to the stars, naming the astrologic age and turning from life to death to life as the Universal Law, the Hebrew Thora, Buddhist Dhamma, Amero-Indian Medicine-Wheel, the Zodiac, and Hindu Samsara.

The Tarot have an extremely old origin. In their youngest manifestation they appear as the Book of Wisdom, attributed to the Egyptian God Thoth. Thoth is the God of Wisdom, said to have reigned as king of Egypt during the “First Time” – Zep Tepi – 52.000 years ago. Foreseeing the major cataclysm that befell the planet about 10.500 B.C. – known in legends from all over the world as the flood, the deluge -, Thoth is said to have hidden and protected the “most secret knowledge”, in the interior and layout of the three pyramids of Gizeh. The Tarot are the hieroglyphic pictures created by the survivors of the cataclysm in Egypt, whence all occidental, historic western heritage has its roots. Other survivors in the east are known through the Nacaal Mystery Schools. There, a similar knowledge-system was developed, wherefrom the I Ching in China and the Indo-Aryan Astrology of India are the most well-known examples. Still other survivors of the cataclysm arrived in the Americas, wherefrom stem their particular astronomic and astrologic calendars, oracles of the Earth and of the Moon, highly developed astronomy, and a system of transcendent medicine which also functions as a spiritual teaching.

To Thoth, also known by his later Greek name Hermes Trismegistos, are attributed all systems of Magic, Alchemy, the very invention of the written Word, Music, Medicine, and the Egyptian variant of Astrology. His famous “Tabula Smaragdina”, the “Emerald Tablet”, is the basic text of all western, occult, initiatory, “hermetic” knowledge, the corner-stone of the Rosicrucian temple, integral part of the legacy left by “religious” orders as the Templars, Knights of Jerusalem and their later off-shoots. Thoth, as the ancient God of Wisdom, figures as the teacher of the great Gods Isis and Osiris, and the later God Horus, their son, owes him worship and respect.

The last transmutation of the word Tarot, Ator, signifies “adoration of the Divine”. As “Ator = Adore”, it stems from the newer Goddess Hathor, as the latest reflection of the previous “Time of the Gods”.

Largely predating the pharao-kings known as “Followers of Horus”, these divine figures stand out in the mists of time before the flood, before the building of the pyramids, in a world-cycle during which the cosmic wheel’s spokes pointed to the pole-star Vega, brightest of all “circumpolar stars”, and a constellation predating the age of Leo. As a last vestige of that time the Sphinx at Gizeh, also known as “the silent guardian of the secrets”, looked due East, towards the rising of the constellation of the Lion at the spring equinox.

Thoth, whose legacy lies in the 78 cards of wisdom, and in the system that later became known as the Quabbala, resembles the mythical creator of the I Ching, Fu Hsi (Fu Hxi), and indeed both systems mirror each other.

In a comparison between the most ancient oracular “wisdom-systems” we find, in the West – the Occident – 78 Tarot cards, divided into 22 cards of Major Arcana or Trumps, and 56 Minor Arcana, divided into four suits representing 4 elements. Also, we find the system of the Quabbala with its “Tree of Life”, a glyph or picture containing 10 “Sephilot”- “power-spots”, focuses of divine radiation, an equivalent of the Eastern system of “Chakras”. The mystical Jewish tradition of the Quabbala, a variant of the hermetic Egyptian Quabbala, has accorded the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet to the 22 Trumps and given Hebrew names to the Sephilot on the Tree of Life. Sumerian, Chaldäan, Babylonian, Phoenician and, later, Greek and Roman Astrology has added the signs and names of the Zodiac and the 7 “old” planets to the Tarot and the Quabbala. Hebrew and Greek became the “lingua franca” among the scholars of the occidental systems.

Arabic, as also “occidental” in a way, has accorded its own “symbol equals number” philosophic system towards an interpretation of the Tarot. This should be observed, for not only the Hebrews integrated the ancient Egyptian numeric codes; serious scholars of the Koran actually accord more importance to the numbers than to the written words. In fact, today the Arabic number-symbols, from 1 to 9, have supplanted all previous systems of counting.

In the East – the Orient – we find the already mentioned Chakras, normally 7 in number (yet expandable to 12 and 13), which reflect the Sephilot on the Tree of Life and are

practically used in Hindu medicine, Ayurveda, and in Chinese Acupuncture (as the main relays of the “meridians” and subtle energies of the body). Of course the 7 Chakras have their correspondences with the 7 planets. The Hindu Yoga and also medicine employ the Nadis, the subtle channels of ethereal energies, whose numbers follow the harmonious path of 1, 4, 8, 12, 16, corresponding to the Wheel of Dharma, from Brahma to Creation.

The Orient has developed various oracular systems, of which the I Ching is the most famous. The I Ching are composed of two forces or “basic attributes”, Yin and Yang, united in Polarity, as tangible manifestations of all-pervading, transcendent Tao. Combined into Trigrams, Yin and Yang give rise to 8 “elements”, the Trigrams grouped into 64 Hexagrams are the Chinese equivalent of the 78 cards of Tarot. Ancient Hindu and later Indo-Aryan elements have been integrated in what is today the huge body of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism (just as Hebrew and Greek, and finally Arabic, were integrated in Quabbala and Tarot): the five elements of Sanskrit, the Tattwas, and certain aspects of Astrology.

Chinese, Hindu and Tibetan “Holy Science”- such as eastern medicine, Zen, Ch’an, and all initiatory methods of meditation – is the equivalent (albeit somehow more profound and more practical) of the hermetic western “Holy Science ” – Alchemy, Magic, Greek and Celtic-Druid “initiation-stages”- which has led to Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry and all modern practical “science”. Yet the Hebrew and Greek influences, with all their “hermetic” symbolism, have also effectively barred the way for a total integration of the complete occidental heritage, which would necessarily include the science of the Druids, the Germanic Runes and all their special symbolism, and the large and interestingly overlapping, mutually according heritage of the Celts and American Indians. Were all these pieces of wisdom integrated, all the East with all the West – whereby Polynesian, Australian, Inner-Asian and African traditions would prove to fit nicely into the grooves of the “universal wheel”- , then the original, wholly unfolded Book of Thoth would lay exposed and all secrecy, doubt and ignorance as to its content dispersed in the light of truth.

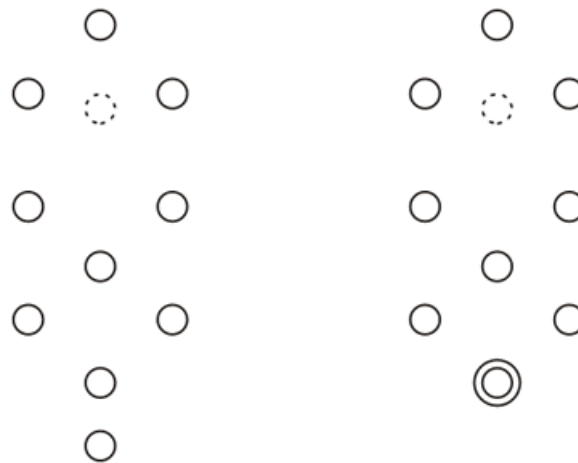
Both the Tarot and the I Ching, as also Astrology, owe their survival through the turbulences of time to their oracular functions, which Man, even in the midst of book-burning and Vandalism, did not want to renounce.

As the Tarot lack any integrated statements as the I Ching have to offer, the uniting motto of both may be found in a Chinese commentary to I Ching-sign number 43, Kuai (also called “Overthrow of Evil”):

*“The strong disperse the weak ;
Kuai teaches so.
Prosper the good man’s way ;
To grief all small men go.”*

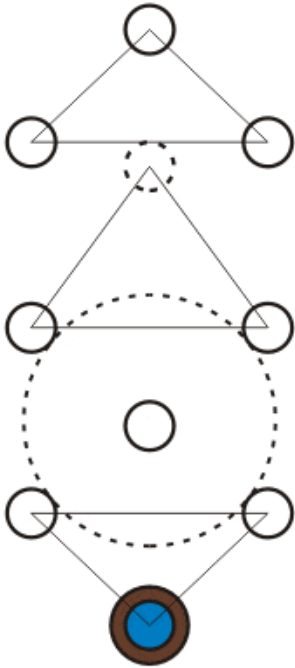
(I Ching, James Legge translation)

The Tarot, having passed from Egypt to Central Asia, and later returned to the Near East, reappeared with an adjunct of Hebrew connotations, and it is this mingling of Tarot with Hebrew elements that gave rise to the Quabbala as it has appeared in published form. As will be demonstrated later, all ancient wisdom is the same all over the world, only the modes of symbolism vary with time and place. With the quabbalist interpretation in view, it should be pointed out that the “Tree of Life” is reported to have consisted of 8 “Sephiraot” in the oldest times, i.e. the topmost Sephirah, “Kether”, was removed to form a circle around the whole configuration (God encompasses all Creation), and “Malkuth” and “Yesod” (Earth and Moon) formed one symbol only. In this way the quabbalist symbolism is wholly integrated with all known traditions of the ancient and new World, based upon the holy number 8.

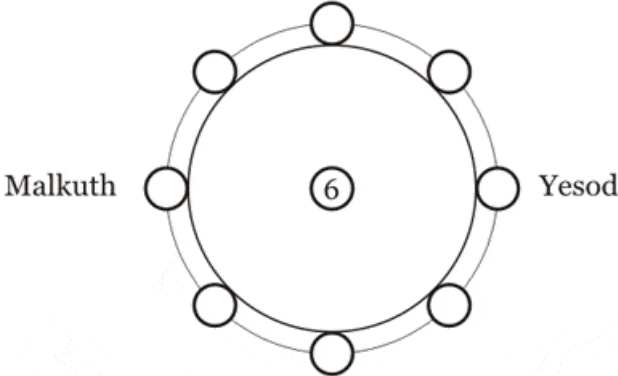


Tree of Life in traditional form.

Kether to Malkuth, with Da'ath indicated (subtle circle).



Tree of Life centered on Tipheret.



Centered on Kether.

Therefore the Sephirot are associated with the Earth, Moon, Sun and planets in an upward movement. Malkuth is the densest form of manifestation, yet also its most sublime in its perfect material form, reflecting Kether in this sense from where arose Creation as such. Malkuth is also called the “quadripolar magnet”, encompassing all the elements and forces. Yesod is associated with the Moon and forms a binary system with Malkuth. As a satellite of Earth, and also due to their commonly shared subtle [Astral](#) and [Noëtic](#) or mental spheres). Thus we speak of the binary Earth-Moon-Sphere.

Netzah stands for Venus,

Hod for Mercury,

Tipheret for the Sun,

Geburah for Mars,

Chesed or Gedulah for Jupiter,

Binah for Saturn (and all “trans-Saturn” planets), and

Chokhmah for Polarity (2).

Polarity is the first, yet intangible manifestation issuing forth from the indefinable primary force of Kether. It represents a quality which pervades all manifestation and is also symbolic of the last stage within the quest, before final “unity with God”. The “hidden Sephirah”, Da’ath, stands for the whole solar system and the sublimest aspects of Mind and Spirit and Soul. It thus also incorporates not only the “trans-Saturn” further planets, already symbolised by Saturn, but also the “sister-stars” of the Sun, whose mental or noëtic spheres have not been explored individually. It is easy to see that the Sephirot could also be numbered from down upwards, giving God the number of excellence: 10. In fact, apart from the Zero, 0, which takes the place of God, the Tarot follow this course and even double it, for at 20 we find the last all-inclusive symbolism of “Manifest Creation”. Also, the 9 repeats by $2 \times 9 = 18$: the card called “The Moon”, and the 19 represents the central all-powerful force or the central power ruling its own system: “The Sun”. By associating the “number of creation” – 3 – with the “number of dynamic change” – 7 – the Tarot arrive at 21: “The Universe”. This will suffice for a first aperçu of the dynamics involved in the whole system, the Book of Thoth: the Cards of Wisdom.

The Quabbala, in the Hebrew-Greek version having come down to our time, traces its origin back to the primal Adam. This is the mysterious Adam Cadmon, who participated in the compilation of the mystery – teachings that created the Bible. The Hebrew “quabbalist texts” have always included the Tarot within their teachings, yet not within the Sepher Jesira

and Thora texts. They were limited to the “ear-to-ear” secret teaching meant for practical work and not for theory. Thus only the “Clavicula Salomonis”, the “Keys of Salomon”, and the obscurely phrased secret knowledge named Mercava or Mer-Ka-Ba, make some reference to the cards of the Tarot. This is within the frame of “practical Magic”, as the Quabbala admits. The framework was supplied by hieroglyphic texts and symbols, and so the Egyptian origin is recognised (see Glossary: [Magic](#)). Whereas the system of the Sephirot – the Tree of Life – is classified as “metaphysical speculation”, the practical working system ([Magic](#)) is associated with the Tarot. This was kept so secret that only in the year 1900 A.D. a publication furtively mentioned the association of Quabbala with the Tarot as its practical application.

The study of the Tarot is thus burdened with Hebrew symbolism. Burdened, because the numeric and alphabetic computations rely on Hebrew codes of symbolism which are neither totally correct nor easy to follow. The Arabic numbers, moreover, were introduced world-wide, which carries a further complication. The interpretation of the Tarot, seen through this lens of high complexity, has seen many distortions with the passing of time. This was not the original idea, which first attempted to interpret a highly complex dynamic universe in as simple and easy a language possible. The symbols – Hieroglyphs – should each stand out in resplendent purity, reflecting a complex but translucent truth or cosmic law, each a single multi-faceted diamond of its own shade of colour, vibration, station in time and space, a microcosm reflecting its macrocosmic double.

This study will attempt to realign theoretic, abstract metaphysic speculation with the realities of modern time, thus realigning the Zodiac according to the most ancient sources, introducing the all-pervading aspects of [Synchronicity](#), placing the ethereal spheres at their proper “points of entry”, within the human body as well as within the celestial body of the solar system, and – nolens volens – realign the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to reflect their profoundest symbolism, namely their numeric codes.

With the realignment of the Hebrew letters and of the astrologic and planetary references, a certain realignment of “paths on the Tree of Life” was necessary. Newer studies of the Quabbala have also extended the Tree of Life, ascribing four “development-spheres” to a variable number of Sephirot, from 20 to 29. But these Sephirot are no longer named, they integrate the [Four Worlds of the Quabbala](#), and finally align along a central axis of either 7, 10 or 11 central focal points. Thus, these newer alignments of the Tree of Life aim to bring them into correspondence with the other known ancient wisdom-systems. This, the Tarot have always done, and so the alignment of the 22 Trumps of the Tarot with the Tree of Life

and its “paths” already takes into account all other known systems, thereby possibly leading to a Tree of Life of finally 78 “Sephira”.

As Man is composed of a triple body – physical, psychic-astral or vital-emotional, and mental-noëtic – all aspects must reflect within the dynamics of perpetual change, the movement of the Wheel of Dharma, the Karma created from action and reaction, thus giving rise to an interlocking system wherein the mental, imaginary impulse descends through the form-giving astral sphere, to finally manifest as tangible reality. This depends on the inner composition of Man, his/her inner harmony, and so the physical body is associated with “elementary might”, the astral body with “inner rank”, and the mental body with “inner step” or “elevation”. Thus we have a horizontal system coinciding with a vertical system, and both are seen as constantly moving spirals. By the motion of the spirals, Man places himself within and without the eternal fluid flux of Time and Space, finally: of Fate.

The Major Arcana, the Tarot-Trumps, finally only correspond to the first “three Chakras” or the “lower Trinity of the Sephirah Malkuth/Yesod, Netzah, and Hod”, within the 78 “pages of the Book of Wisdom”.

May this, the “second aperçu” of the dynamics involved within the Tarot, suffice to gain entrance “through the open window” of divine knowing and wisdom.

As the alchemic texts say: “*Ars longa, Vita brevis*”.