

How to Read the **TAROT**



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by
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Preface

The method of reading the Tarot found in this book was created by me specifically for use with the Waite deck. The design of each card of the Major Arcana is full of meaning, and the Minor Arcana are incredibly rich with meaning in contrast to their traditional form.

The creator of the deck, A. E. Waite, although born in America, lived most of his life in England and was a British citizen. He is best known for his creation of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck. (Rider was the name of his publisher.) His book *Pictorial Key to the Tarot* which was commercially published in 1910 is not of much value because the interpretations of the cards are a lengthy and confusing hodgepodge. However he wrote two booklets on Tarot divination for the private use of his own Rosicrucian Order which, though virtually unknown, I discovered by seeming chance and found very useful. The great value of the deck is its elaborate illustrations which are richly symbolic. It was the only deck to be so illustrated since the Sola-Busca Tarot in Italy in 1491. The cards were drawn by a professional illustrator, Pamela Colman Smith, at the detailed instructions and supervision of Waite himself.

Decks have a character, even a personality, of their own. When reading for others, there are some decks that can refuse to answer that particular person, and there are some decks that give vague answers to vague people and clear answers to “together” people. I have used decks that would only speak of spiritual matters to spiritual people, and only of material matters to material people. Once a woman wanted a reading about her physical health and the deck I was using “talked” only about her spiritual health. In contrast the Waite deck always answers clearly and completely for every person or question, and answers exactly what you ask.

The term “Sacred Tarot” is more applicable to the Waite deck than to any other. As I went through the various cards, noting their makeup and meaning, this was never far from my mind. Although the Waite deck will reveal the aspects of even the most mundane subjects, it is evidently first and foremost a revealing of the highest mysteries of Spirit. This has been my continual experience.

Abbot George Burke

Introductory Remarks on Interpretation in General

The interpretations I will be giving of the individual Tarot cards need not be memorized exactly or slavishly adhered to. Rather, you should carefully and thoughtfully read this book through a few times (three should be enough, but each person is different) to get it set well in your subconscious. Then forget about it and let your intuition work on it and bring the meanings to mind whenever you need it. Of course you can keep this book at hand for reference from time to time.

The important thing is that the cards “speak” to you through your intuition which will become increasingly sensitive to the message of the cards.

It is also necessary to keep in mind that on occasion a card can mean something very different from the usual meaning. A card may mean something ninety-seven percent of the time, but the other three percent must be taken into account by us as well. On occasion a card does not mean what will happen if a certain course of action or thought is or is not taken, but rather means what will not result—what will be avoided—if that course is or is not taken.

The Tarot is often referred to as the Book of Thoth. A major point of this particular way of reading the Tarot is that we read it by “turning the pages” and not by laying out a spread of any kind. That will be described in the next section.

It is not advisable to ask mere Yes/No questions. The way I shall describe in the next section is much more satisfactory.

In this system we pay no attention at all to whether cards are reversed or upright. What a card means upright is what it means reversed. We only consider the meaning of the cards in themselves. That makes things much easier, as we do not have to remember two different sets of interpretations of the cards. Furthermore, in the way I always shuffle all the cards are upright.

On occasion the overall or general meaning of a card is what we are being told. But very often only one element or part of the card’s design is conveying the message. Often it is something that we have never noticed before since it is so small or not a major component of the card as a “picture.” I have often had small background figures be the indicators of the message. This being so, you should first look at the card very calmly and wait to see if a particular meaning arises spontaneously or some particular thing in the card draws your attention. For on occasion the cards themselves act like buttons that activate your inner mind, even producing an impression that seems completely unrelated to the card. If so, do not hesitate or feel unsure, but go along with it and find out the message.

As I say, sometimes the whole or overall impression of the card is enough. But also see if one part seems to stand out more. By that I mean that some part can seem to be more noticeable than another. You may see it as more vivid in color, or

you may get the impression that it is moving slightly. You may feel that some part is pulsing or somehow alive. Sometimes a part really strikes your eye and just draws your attention to it. On occasion it is as if nothing else exists on the card but that one thing.

After getting a general impression of the card, scan it carefully, noting each figure or section in turn carefully. Remember: every part of the card can at some times be important and at other times be utterly unimportant. So there are no more or less important elements by their nature. It changes from reading to reading.

The details of the Waite cards are truly amazing. None are mere art or for just filling in a design. Everything has meaning waiting to emerge at the necessary time. These cards are truly esoteric, created for psychic use.

You can read these for years and still see something in the cards that you never saw before. In the Six of Cups the little boy is giving the girl a cup of flowers. That is what people usually pay attention to, and that is natural. Yet I remember a reading in which the meaning was in the little figure that is walking away in the background. In one reading the thing that mattered in the Four of Swords was the design of the stained glass window. In another it was the Latin word Pax (Peace) in the halo of the Virgin Mary in the same card. The grief motif of the Nine of Swords is very striking, but I have had readings in which the carved design on the bed was the key to the message. Once I did a reading as to whether I should go to a very mountainous area. The card I got was Major Arcanum Four, the Emperor. When I studied it the mountains in the background seemed vibrant and alive, despite their dull coloring. Nothing else in the design drew my attention. So I went to the mountains.

Disregard nothing that catches your attention. For example, in interpreting the Magician card no one ever comments on the table—only on what is lying upon it. But it could be the table that is significant in the reading. You could be asking: “How shall I approach such and such a situation?” and you get Arcanum One, the Magician, and what strikes you immediately is the table. It could mean that you must lay all your ideas or plans “out on the table,” presenting them and letting things happen as they may, remaining as passive as is the table. Or it could mean that as the table supports or carries the things placed upon it, so must you be. Or it could mean that you must work for the support you need.

Let me repeat that first you look at the card in general. You simply look and calmly determine if the entire card in general is speaking to you. Whether it is or not, you still scan each element in turn to see what may communicate with you. It is likely that on occasion both the overall impression of the card and one or more of its details will elucidate one another. Let the Tarot speak to you in its own way.

Attunement with the Cards, Shuffling and Divining

Attunement with the cards

The Tarot cards are psychic instruments and you need to get them attuned to your mind and vibrations. You do that by handling them. This can be done in many ways: spreading them out and mixing them around at random, simply sitting and holding them (not in their box or a container), laying them down one at a time and picking them back up, holding the deck and going through it one card at a time, putting the top card on the bottom—whatever occurs to you.

Do not let anyone touch your cards in any way such as cutting them or breathing on them. I used to do this until I learned better. Your cards are yours and yours alone. Keep it that way always. They must be in tune with you and you alone. What if someone just reaches out and touches them? Never make a fuss but politely ask them not to do that again. Explain why if you think they will understand. Then shuffle again, looking at the cards very intently. If they do it again like an impulsive child, you must decide how to respond. I would tell them that if they do it again I will not read for them. If I am not in charge of my reading it will be erroneous or worthless. Remember: the cards are alive in a very real sense.

My shuffling procedure

If you can shuffle the cards by hand as is done with ordinary playing cards, do so if you prefer. But I have met quite a few people that found it either awkward or impossible. With me it is impossible. So here is how I do it, and you might like to try it.

1) Hold the deck in your left hand with the pictures facing up, and with your right hand take about one third of the cards off the top. Then with another finger divide the remaining cards approximately in half and put the cards in your right hand between the halves in your left. There is no need for each “third” to be exactly a third. Oftentimes the number of cards varies significantly. It does not matter. That, too, is part of the process. Let what is natural happen.

2) Hold the deck in your left hand, face up. With your right hand take the top card and hold it with your right thumb and forefinger on top of it and your other fingers beneath it.

3) With your left hand bring the deck up to that card, almost touching it, and with your left thumb push the next card forward. With your right thumb and forefinger take that card and slip it on top of the card already in your hand.

4) Again push a card forward with your left thumb but slip it underneath the cards in your right hand.

5) Keep alternating steps 3 and 4 until all the cards are in your right hand.

If “something happens” and you do one of these steps incorrectly, putting a card on top when it should be put on the bottom, or vice versa, LET IT BE. That is the way it should be, and the cards are taking charge. Whenever a blip or glitch or mistake seems to happen all on its own, then that should be agreed to. As I say, the cards are taking charge. (If you prefer another explanation, then adopt it. But let what has happened spontaneously alone. This is crucial.)

Here is a very important point: In this system you need not reshuffle for each question during a reading. Shuffle once as described and ask all the questions you want during that reading. But in each new reading, whether for yourself or others, at the beginning shuffle as I have described before consulting.

Further linking with the cards

After the shuffling is done, hold the deck and gently blow three times on the “bottom” end and three times on the “top” end. As I have said, when giving a reading I used to have people blow on them while I held them, but realized that was nonsense: I was doing the reading, not them, and the cards should be in tune with me completely.

Reading the Tarot “book”

Each card is a page of the book, and you read the book by holding it in your left hand and with your right hand reaching forward and taking a segment of the cards away and putting them behind the cards in your left hand. The card whose face is now up and visible is the page you read.

When I was a little child I used to have a daydream fantasy of a book whose pages were blank, but when I wanted to know something, I would open it up at random and everything I wanted to know would be written out on the page. Perhaps I was intuiting my future, because this way of reading the Tarot is exactly like that. I cut the cards, but get the same result as turning pages of a book.

This method is much more efficient than the “spread” approach. When I used the Celtic Cross spread doing readings for others, to lay out the cards took time and then often the question was something that could be answered by one card. After adopting the “book” method, I would just turn over a thirty-minute hourglass and tell the client: “As long as that sand keeps running, ask all you want.” And we could cover a tremendous amount of questions and get much fuller answers quickly. For example, suppose a question is: “What is the wisdom quotient of my answering this letter?” If I am told to answer it, then I ask: “What should be the character or tone of my reply?” Before that I might have asked: “What is the character or tone of this letter I received?” Or even: “How should I regard this letter?” With this method you can quickly cover various aspects of a single question. If you keep laying out spreads for every single question a tremendous amount of time will be wasted to no purpose.

One of the most valuable aspects of this way of reading the cards rather than using a spread is this: Since you put behind the others in your hand the cards you

take off the top of the deck to reveal the “message” card, it can come up again in the reading if you ask a few times about the aspects of the central question. I have had this occur quite a few times. You will see what I mean when this happens for you. Without that possibility the reading may not be complete.

Leaving the cards in their own order

Again: after a reading always leave the cards just as they are. Do not redeal or arrange them to be in a certain order. When the Major Arcana “migrate” to one another in my system so there may be anywhere from two to six of them together, I do not care at all. If that is the natural order for the cards there is no point in disturbing it. For decades now I have found that the reading is in no way affected, and in subsequent shufflings they migrate away from one another.

The question for the Tarot

Now you are ready to question the Tarot. When reading on my own, I always have the question(s) written down before I shuffle. And I note down the card that is the answer card: I keep a Questions Log. (I do it on a computer, but it can be handwritten on paper. I used to keep my record in a stenographer’s notebook.) It is good to write down the question because that way you really have in mind what you want to ask. Write down or enter the answers while keeping the cards in your hand. *If for some reason you have to lay them down, then you should shuffle the cards again.* Some manual dexterity is required!

Since there is intelligence quotient, IQ, I usually ask (and usually silently): “What is the wisdom quotient of...?” and complete the question. Sometimes of course I ask: “What would be the result of...?” You should vary it according to the type of question. But the wisdom quotient form is what I use at least eighty percent of the time. Also you must ask the same question again with “Not” in it. “What is the wisdom quotient of *not* doing...?” This is because what you are thinking of doing might give a somewhat positive result, but if you do not do it, a more positive result will be reached. Then you know that you need another approach to the matter being asked about. For example, you might ask: “What is the wisdom quotient of my buying an X-Brand computer?” The answer might be a good one, but not doing it might be better because you should buy another brand of computer. The “Not” form will reveal that.

But remember that sometimes the card, whether Do or Not Do will mean what you will avoid by doing or not doing something. For example, you may ask, “What is the wisdom quotient of my buying a new car?” and you get the Tower, which usually means disaster of some sort. It can mean that getting a new car will be a disaster in some way, but it can mean that you will avoid a disaster, such as an accident or major breakdown in your present car if you do not get a new one. On the other hand, you might ask: “What is the wisdom quotient of my *not* buying a new car?” and you get the Tower. That can either mean not buying it will be a disaster or that not buying it will avert a disaster. You must decide by your

intuition.

The wording of the question is supremely important. You will get the exact answer to the exact question. For example, I may be thinking of buying a new car. I could ask: "What is the wisdom quotient of my buying a new car?" I could get a very good answer, but since I did not say "at this time" in the question, the cards could mean that a long time in the future it would be good to buy a new car. And if I get a negative answer it can either mean to not buy a car at all, or to not buy new car, but get a used one. So when it applies, always mention the time factor.

Sometimes a certain thing is definitely going to be done, so instead of asking about the wisdom of it, you ask: "What will be the result of...?" Of course that can be used for something that may or may not be done: "What *would* be the result of...?"

Those who keep asking the same question over and over because they don't like the answer will mess everything up for themselves because that is childish and dishonest. No further answers to that question will be real answers. The cards can clam up and let any card come up. The offence of course is not to the cards, but to your own mind and intuition.

However, despite the foregoing, ignore the cards if you feel strongly that they are wrong, because no system is infallible. But I have only ignored the cards three times over the decades I have consulted the Tarot, and each time I definitely regretted it. Obviously my life was not ruined, but a great deal of trouble would have been avoided and a great deal of benefit gained.

Even as important: do not ask the cards about every single little decision to be made. No one wants to make a mistake, so a lot of people divine on everything to "make sure." Part of growth is making your own decisions much of the time.

The Questions Log

PLEASE keep a Questions Log. If you do not you will forget the answer, remember it incorrectly or even forget that you asked the question at all. This is because even though you may not feel it, when you consult the Tarot you are entering into an altered state of consciousness. It is not drastic or dramatic, but it is very real. And therefore you will most likely forget or misremember it, just like you can forget your dreams—they just slip away after a while. Many times I have awakened at night from a vivid dream and thought it was so significant and important that I would never forget it. But the next morning all I remembered was thinking I would not forget it! I have forgotten Tarot answers within five minutes of asking them—this is no exaggeration. And I have "remembered" completely wrong as well and sometimes gotten the answers and the questions mixed up. Often that was very serious. So I have kept a log almost from the first of my Tarot consulting. I have even come back nearly a year or more after a consultation, needing to get it straight. And my memory has often proven faulty, so much so that if I had acted on my "memory" I would have made some very serious mistakes.

For this reason I always make an audio recording of the important readings I do

for others, because if they ask me later about the reading I never remember a bit of it. Recording your readings and giving the recording to your consultant is a very wise thing to do.

A very important point about card interpretation

It always amazes me how on target the cards are and how specific they can be, but there is one aspect that sometimes occurs: the cards lead you to something you are not aware of now. For example, I may ask the cards: “What is the wisdom quotient of my going to X Dealer to buy a new car?” and the cards indicate strongly that it is good to do. Then on the way there I pass another dealership and from their sign discover that their prices and terms are much better than the place I asked about. What do I do? I ask the question again, this time with the name of the newly discovered dealer. If it is more favorable, I buy my car from there. This sequence will have occurred because I did not know of the second dealership, or did not think of it in my Tarot consultation, so the cards told me to go to the first one so I would pass the second one and find a better deal there. So if you are following through on an answer from the cards and discover another possibility, ask again. That is all right. And know that by not going to the first dealer you would not be “breaking faith” with the cards. They are leading you to something better than you were originally asking. I have often found that the cards were leading me to something different through the answers they gave me.

When there is no specific question

Some people may ask you for a card reading who are used to consulting psychics to just find out what advice they might give them spontaneously, and so have no actual question in mind. In that case you ask (mentally because I find it is best to ask the question silently when reading for myself or another): “What does this person most need to know?” Or even: “What does this person most need to do?” Then you can go on from there.

And sometimes...

Sometimes you get a good card for both “shall I do it” and “shall I not do it.” That means it is all right to do it, but there is no harm or loss in not doing so. But what if you get a negative card for both? It can mean that it does not matter; do or don’t, things are not going to be good. However, in both instances, if you get such answers, ponder very seriously as to whether the questions are all wrong, or if there is another form of question you should have asked. For example, suppose I have fifty acres of land. I might ask about selling it and get a negative card for both selling and keeping. It could mean that I should not sell all of it, only part. Or that I should not sell it but donate it to someone and get the positive karma. This I can tell you: to succeed in Tarot consultation you have to think thoroughly, deeply and creatively in formulating your questions.

And realize that there are some questions that the cards will not answer because

they are ridiculous or inappropriate. (These are usually Yes/No type of questions.)

The nature of divination

Certainly divination can reveal the future, but it does so within the context of its real nature and purpose: Diagnosis. It reveals the character and the future of something in order for the consultant to know what to do regarding it in the wisest way. Even the indication of the future is to enable the consultant to understand its nature—which includes its possibilities or inevitable developments. Divination reveals the aspects of a situation and its possible developments and the consultant decides what to do, or not to do, about it. The cards are not fatalistic, and a good diviner can at times discover how the consultant can change situations to his advantage. So divination is a tool by which a consultant can take charge of his life and direct it as much as is possible. Divination is not fortunetelling at all. It is all about shaping our own fortunes (futures).

And the bitter pill

It is possible to cloud and cut off your intuition. There are many ways to do so and most of humanity is engaged in them. But the diviner needs to be cautious. What I am working up to is the fact that when you read for someone you cannot change or keep back any aspect of a reading because you feel they will not like it or have some kind of negative reaction. If you do so it will interfere with your future clarity of intuition. Lying, even by omission, always has a negative reaction. In most situations you must go ahead and as diplomatically as possible tell them the full message of the cards.

One time I told a woman: “You must start keeping a very close watch on your husband.” They had built a new house and it had been ready for weeks to move into, but her husband kept delaying moving in with lame excuses. At the same time he had put an answer machine on their telephone to make sure his wife did not make calls he would not know about. So when I advised her to start watching him she realized that she should be listening to the answer machine, too. She did, and found that he had been keeping a girlfriend in the new house all this time! The next time I saw her she thanked me and told me she was really enjoying her nice, new divorce. If I had not told her what the cards showed, who knows what would have resulted.

In rare cases you can (sometimes must) just refuse to do the reading, giving whatever excuse you think will pacify them. Once at a psychic fair, when I was still doing spreads, the cards showed that the teenager consulting me was truly psychotic and would very likely end up a serial killer or something equally horrendous. I had no idea how he would react, but I gave him his money back and made some excuse that implied it was a lack on my part that made my reading for him impossible. To my amazement he told me with evident satisfaction that a lot of people, including psychics, had been unable to read for him because his vibrations and future were beyond their ability to divine. That obvious, arrogant sociopathy

only confirmed my impression of the cards and I was glad that in his case I could invoke the adage: Don't Go Away Mad: Just Go Away. I never learned of his future development.

Finally: never immediately say upon seeing a card, "Oh, this card means so-and-so," unless you have a truly strong intuition. Instead look at it calmly and carefully and ask yourself what this card is "saying." As Davey Crockett used to say: "Be sure you're right, then go ahead."

Take the leap

Sometimes you may find that you have a very clear idea of the meaning of a card, but feel hesitant to tell it to the consultant. Often this is because you think it does not make sense, and therefore the consultant will think you are incompetent and utterly mistaken in your interpretation. Or that it is so specific if you are wrong you will really look a fool. Go ahead and take the leap. One time I saw that the consultant had just incurred the enmity of several powerful people, but had simply walked away from them—that the situation had been supremely drastic. I forced myself to say this, and she replied: "Yes. I have just come from firing the entire board of directors of a corporation." Sweet relief! I was right.

The deniers

Some consultants that will look you right in the face and lie, claiming what you are saying is not at all true. Do not budge. Repeat what you see. They usually then tell the truth: you are correct in your reading. One time I told a woman that a man had no interest in her at all, but was hoping to eventually steal from her. Oh, no. Over and over she kept saying: "But why does he give me gifts?" "To deceive you," I replied. "It is just an investment in future robbery." After a few minutes she said, "Yes, I know that is how it is, but I am going to get as much as I can from him and then tell him to go away." Gee, thanks.

"Wha...???"

And then there are those that all through the reading look at you like "you must be crazy," make all kinds of faces and mime every kind of doubt and denial signal. And then say: "That is exactly right." Terrific. I hope you are charging them money.

The Waite Tarot Cards and Their Basic Meanings

The way to use the Waite deck most effectively, as I said earlier, is to read through all the descriptions of the cards and their meanings I am now giving you *three* times at least. Do not try to memorize them deliberately. Just read carefully and let the information go into your subconscious. Then go ahead and divine and see what your intuition tells you they mean. No book can tell you all the possible meanings—in fact, they can tell you very few compared to the infinite meanings possible. Certainly you can read the book all over again after a while and keep it at hand to consult, but realize that you must develop your ability to divine relying on intuition alone. And if you come up with another way of reading the cards or want to use traditional spreads, do so. You must become a master of the Tarot, and that is only by following and deepening your intuitive abilities. But remember: No matter what a card may usually mean, it can always mean the opposite. Or, instead of a card meaning what will result, it can mean what will be avoided.

Definitely intuition is a major factor in reading the cards, but do not worry that you are not intuitive/psychic or perhaps not as much as you need to be. Just go ahead and work with the cards and you will discover you are intuitive, for the simple using of the cards is a means of developing psychic perception. (This will not apply to duds, who are always with us.)

Oh, by the way: Do not worry about the word “Arcana” being used about the cards. It is just a mystical and mystifying term that pompous diviners like to use instead of wearing a turban with a jewel or staring into a crystal ball. The cards are intuitive pictures intended to evoke your intuitive insight. That is all, and that is enough. You will find out.

We are ready to begin.

The Major Arcana

I–The Magician



Commentary

This card is not depicting a magician in the usual sense. Rather, it shows us a theurgist, one whose magic is really a religious exercise, who is working for the deification of the world itself through the divine power which is passing through him and flowing into the earth which responds by producing abundant roses and lilies both above and below. Theurgy is a Greek word meaning “divine work.” A theurgist is a “divine worker.”

Although it is divine power that he conveys to the world, the symbol of eternity above his head indicates that he does so through divinized consciousness. (Waite considered it a sign of the Holy Spirit, and therefore of the consciousness of eternity and infinity.)

The wand he is holding is identical on both ends. This represents the two polarities of positive and negative that form the basis of manifestation within this

fundamentally dual creation. The two ends are mirror reflections of one another to indicate the occult maxim: “As above, so below.” Everything “below” is a reflection of what is “above,” which is the principle on which the theurgist works: that essentially what is above is that which is below, and vice versa. Absolute unity is the truth of all things. In *The Odes of Solomon*, a collection of the earliest Christian hymns, this is found: “The likeness of that which is below is that which is above; for everything is above; and below there is nothing, but it is believed to be by those in whom there is no knowledge.” In other words, “below” does not exist in itself, but is really a manifestation of “above.” This unity is perceived through knowledge (gnosis).

The Theurgist wears red, the color of the Holy Spirit, the Power and Wisdom of God, but inside he wears the white robe of his own divine Self. He is bound about his forehead with the white band of a chrismale, a linen cloth which in ancient Christian usage was tied around the heads of those who were anointed with holy Chrism in the initiatic rites of Baptism, Confirmation (Chrismation) and Consecration to the Episcopate. This represents the illuminating presence of the Holy Spirit that rests upon him and manifests as illumination and inspiration.

Encircling the waist of the Magician is the serpent which is joined by its mouth holding to its tail. This signifies that his powers are “in circuit,” and not bleeding out. It represents self-contained power, self-contained energies. It also shows that he has mastered all his powers, inner and outer. The serpent is around his waist because that is the location of a reservoir of life energies usually called “the solar plexus” in Western occultism, and the hara center in Taoism.

Plenitude of power and of its mastery is shown in this way. For although the Magician conveys power from heaven to earth, he is able to do so because he possesses power himself, being an Initiate of Power—the Holy Spirit.

On the table, which is actually an altar, are the instruments of his craft: cup, sword, pentacle and staff. The cup represents divine communion in the spirit, the sword represents spiritualized intelligence by which he sees truly, the pentacle represents both protection/defence and stability, while the wand represents the capacity to wield power and convey it as well as creativity in the highest sense. All four endow him with perfect mastery of the internal and external worlds.

The serenity of the Theurgist’s face indicates his complete establishment in the inner “peace of God which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

Notice he does not look up to heaven, but his attention is downward. Yet that represents the contemplative way, which we will see again in the Hermit card where the Hermit also has his head and eyes downward.

So this is the card of the bringing of the divine force or the divine plan into manifestation upon the earth. It is the earthly revelation of the Divine Wisdom.

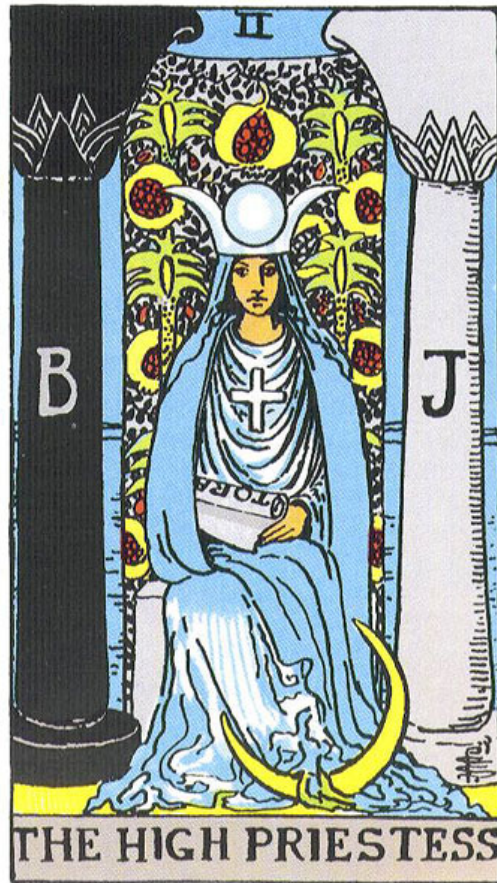
Divinatory meaning

In a reading it indicates everything I have listed above and more, such as a situation which can be solved with spiritual work or theurgy, cooperation with the

divine plan or order; a situation in which the divine will is being expressed; communication with higher realities ("heaven"); being oneself a divine intermediary; the ability to bring the higher into the lower; and that which all enables this to be done: immersion in things of the spirit, in the consciousness that is spirit.

It can be a call to learn and apply the wisdom symbolized in the card, to ourselves become the theurgist, the divine Magician.

II–The High Priestess



Commentary

Almost as dominant in this card as the High Priestess herself are the two pillars, black and white, which bear the letters B and J. They represent the dual polarities of relative existence, the principles known as yin and yang in Taoism. They are the very substance of which the cosmos, gross and subtle, is formed.

They represent the two pillars that stood at the entrance of Solomon's temple. The one on the left was named Boaz, which in Hebrew means: "In him/it is strength." On the right stood the one named Jachin: "He/It will establish."

The meaning is that the Holy Wisdom (Agia Sophia), the High Priestess herself, is the strength and stability of everything in existence. She is existence. She is both Power and Consciousness.

The two pillars have designs of lotuses on them which symbolize the attainment of supreme wisdom and consciousness.

Behind her is the veil which separates the Absolute from the relative which itself is the veil that blinds us to the Absolute Reality. They are the "time and space, which veil our earthly eyes from the excess of Thy glory," in the words of Bishop Wedgwood in the Liberal Catholic Mass.

Only when we step beyond time and space can we become face to face with

Absolute Reality. That which the High Priestess symbolizes can remove or admit us behind that veil.

She is Cosmic Law and Cosmic Order known in Sanskrit as *Ritam*, and the Gnosis of that Law and Order.

And now we come to the figure of the High Priestess herself. Her crown symbolizes the divine duality (the two horns) and the divine unity (the circle or globe) which are really one. She is the consciousness that encompasses both duality and unity in complete dominion. The color blue of her clothing symbolizes the infinity of the blue sky—limitless consciousness.

On her breast is the equal bar cross representing perfect balance and the cosmos itself which consists of four objective elements extending in the four directions.

She holds the scroll of Divine Wisdom which emerges from Infinity. Only a bit of it is extended toward the viewer, and we only see the letters TORA, but can assume that the complete word is Torah, which in Hebrew means instruction, doctrine and law.

The consciousness that is the High Priestess alone can unroll the scroll of Cosmic Law and make all mysteries plain to us.

Beneath her foot is the crescent moon representing material consciousness which has no light of its own but only reflects the light of the sun—spirit-consciousness—and is continually in flux: waxing and waning like the moon.

She both masters and transcends material consciousness. She both touches it and does not touch it. It is under her power, yet it is as nothing to her.

“He that loveth wisdom loveth life: and they that seek Her early shall be filled with joy [Ecclesiasticus 4:12].

“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes: and I shall keep it unto the end [Psalms 119:33].

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law: yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart [Psalms 119:34].

“The path of the just is as the shining light: shining more and more unto the perfect day [Proverbs 4:18].”

So says the Gradual of the esoteric Mass rite of the Liberal Catholic Church.

The High Priestess is inner law, inner force and inner wisdom. This can manifest correctly through spirituality alone.

The High Priestess is not really outward-turned. Of course she is looking at us, but she is looking at us because we are seeking to get beyond her pillars. She moves aside, she lifts the veil and we go out, passing beyond her.

Divinatory meaning

This card tells us that the matter we are considering is one that either is a result of cosmic law and order or that which we can only resolve or bring to fruition by knowing and following that law and order.

It is also telling us to gain the knowledge of this law and order and keep it uppermost in our minds, including in the interpretation of this card. Therefore it

may be telling us to gain that knowledge or to follow what we already know.

It may also be telling us that if we follow this counsel more of the divine knowledge will be revealed to us.

It can also mean that what we are asking about is itself a message of divine law and that we can only comprehend it through knowledge of the law.

It may also simply mean that we must pursue divine wisdom.

It can also be telling us that the reason we do not know the necessary course of action and feel helpless regarding it is that a veil is over our intellects or intuition and we must cut through it.

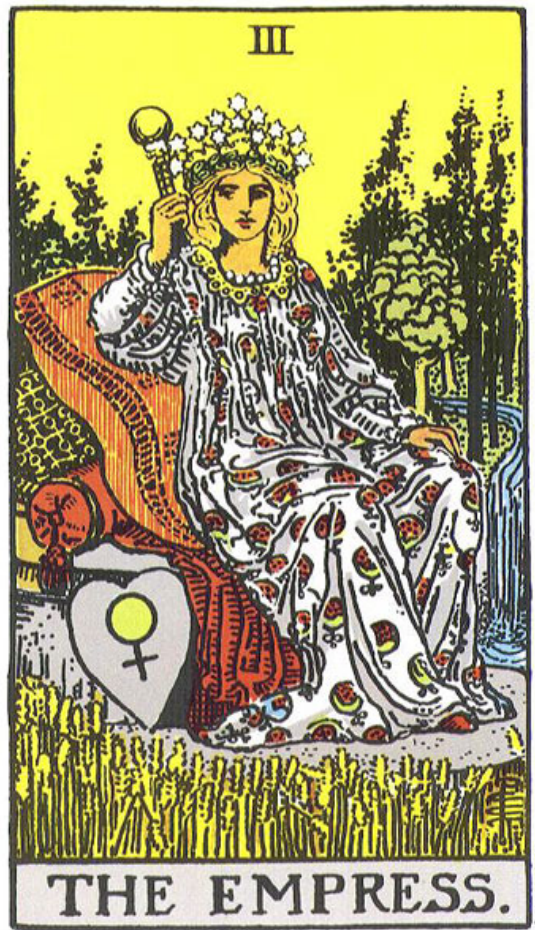
It can even mean that it is our own negative will or the pursuit of selfish and ignorant goals that is the veil blinding us. Spiritual ignorance is indeed the worst veil of all.

Of course it may not be about us, personally, but is showing us the situation of someone involved in our question. It can even be the blindness of people around us or of society in general.

And of course it can merely mean civil law, despite the exalted nature of the card.

The Tarot speaks to us on all levels and we must keep that in mind when consulting it.

III–The Empress



Commentary

The Empress is crowned with twelve stars. Quite a few things are divided into twelve and can mean, since they are on her head, the knowledge of them. There are twelve signs of the zodiac, for example, and there are six chakras connected to six levels of relative consciousness (the seventh being linked to transcendental consciousness), but each one of the lower six is divided into positive and negative, so there twelve chakras, six being mirror-images. Through these chakras twelve states or levels of consciousness are manifested. In the Bible we get a lot of twelves, all with esoteric meaning. The Empress knows them all and possesses the powers that go with them. The lower part of her crown is a double crown of laurel leaves, the sign of victory and ultimate mastery.

So this is no “mother earth” type of card. Rather, it is the card of all-embracing wisdom of the creation. Her scepter which looks very like an ear of corn is topped with a globe representing both earth and the spirit. (The ancient Egyptians considered the sphere the best symbol of the spirit, which is why they often depicted winged symbols indicative of the spirit flying through the passages of eternity to reach the transcendental state of being.)

Pearls and a gold collar ornament her robe that is decorated with blooming flowers. This whole card is one of richness and abundance. This is human life in its positive fruition, not in the negativity of materiality, but materiality in its positive state.

Her throne is not a formal, monarchical throne at all, but is composed of very soft and comfortable components signifying ease and tranquility and absence of any discomfort or strain whatsoever.

The heart-shaped shield on the ground bears the sign of Venus—not the symbol of sexuality or voluptuousness, but of beauty in all things.

The ripened grain at her feet symbolizes abundance and creativity (rather than material fertility) as well as great potential, for each grain of each stalk can produce another stalk and therefore increase perpetually.

A river, symbolizing life-force flows at her left hand.

Her throne is established on a high stone, signifying both stability, even perpetuity, and the condition of being above her domain, not within and part of it.

In the background are forests, but her domain is cultivated and orderly. Nothing wild is found there. Everything is tamed under her scepter. Yet all is real and natural.

Rather than just material life, however, she is a symbol of the Good Life in the sense of wisdom and intuition regarding the externals of life, of seeing their intellectual and spiritual character.

Divinatory meaning

Read the foregoing and keep in mind that this card is speaking to us of all those things.

The Empress represents fecundity and activity—physical, mental and spiritual. It is also accomplishment. It is an abundance card, but the abundance of understanding as well as material abundance.

It is also great gain, great opportunity and great potentiality. It both promises and advises this as a goal.

We see over and over that material prosperity can destroy the unaware possessor. But the Empress is the opposite of that. It certainly is mastery of possessions and their wise use, and the potential for even more, but always under the rulership of higher awareness.

This is a spiritual card because the universe itself is the manifestation of Spirit.

Assurance based on intelligent assessment of one's status is indicated here. A very positive, happy and satisfying future is one possible message.

Again: creativity in abundance.

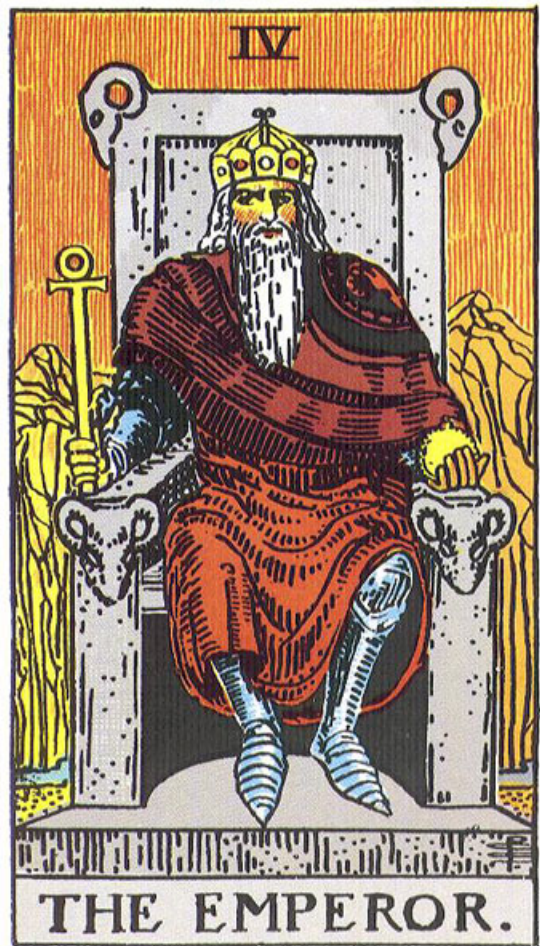
This card can tell us that a certain course of action or acquisition will result in great profit and strength. It is certainly an indication of prosperity. The nature or character of the acquisition will determine in what aspect of life this will manifest.

Sometimes it means what you have gained, sometimes it means what you can gain.

It is a picture of confidence, a card of tranquillity and confidence.

If we are consulting about a physical enterprise this card may mean the force which will bring about this situation.

IV–The Emperor



Commentary

The first thing we see is the back of the throne that has two ram's heads on either side. Two rams are on the arms of his throne. In ancient Egypt the ram was considered a symbol of power, including warlike power. Rams were the Egyptian symbol of the Pharaoh and of royalty.

They were also considered to have divinatory powers and could give answers to yes or no questions. (The method has not been described—hopefully it was not reading their entrails as the Romans did later.) Here, of course, it is a symbol of martial and monarchical power.

The figure of the emperor is very like that of Charlemagne, who embodied both martial, cultural, monarchical and spiritual power. So this card can cover many areas of rulership and mastery.

Note that the symbol of infinity we found in the Magician card tops his crown which is of gold (solar power and life) and adorned with rubies and moonstones indicating alternating action and reflection.

His scepter is more indicative of spiritual than material power. His orb is not surmounted by a cross, but a circle like that crowning the scepter of the Empress.

His legs and feet encased in armor leaves no doubt as to his martial character and intentions, his endurance and austerity which is emphasized by the stony mountains. Behind him there is a desert, though a river flows through it.

This is a card of uncompromising authority and direction. It is inflexible. There may be wisdom here, but no mercy. It is based on spiritual and intellectual insight, but it is nevertheless unbending, even harsh or cruel.

The face is austere, but calm and devoid of stress or severity. His white hair and long beard indicate that he is seasoned, with much experience.

So this Emperor is demanding, uncompromising and yet benevolent.

There is no trace of passion or emotion in this card.

The depictions are spare to underline the straightforward character of the card.

Divinatory meaning

This card can be an exhortation to authority and even toughness, or it could indicate what the consultant is up against—the old cliché: you can't beat city hall.

It could even mean to keep a stiff upper lip or grin-and-bear-it. Certainly it represents a virtually immovable and unchangeable situation or attitude—either recommended or to be recognized as opposing the consultant.

Naturally, law is represented here, whether civil, spiritual, or natural. Whether the consultant is to employ, obey or submit to it is for the reader to determine.

Further the card can indicate strong will and determination.

Strength is its primary character. This is the antithesis of weakness.

It is not a “be happy” card, but a card demanding much.

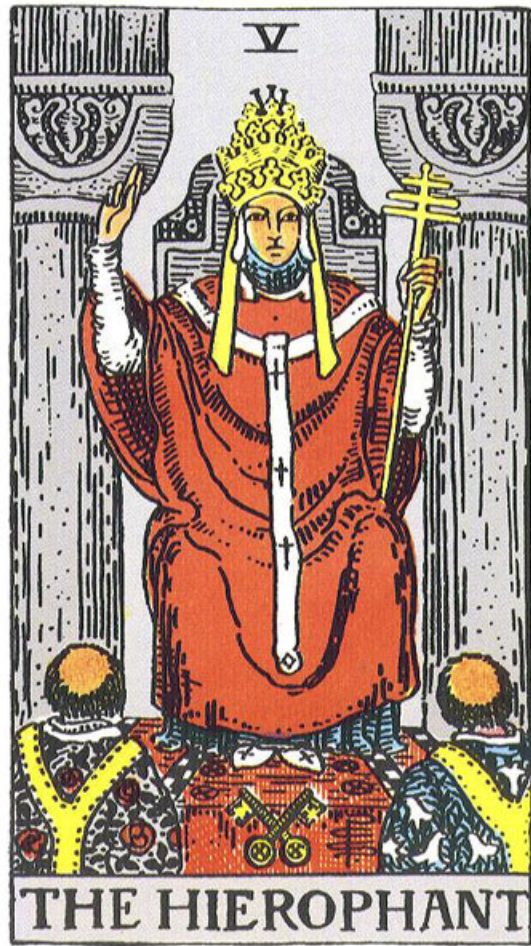
Consider the traits of the card and determine which the consultant is being told to cultivate or evoke from himself, or which the consultant is facing in the question.

This card could sometimes indicate just utterly, one-two-three-four, very precise and mathematical thinking, very ordered thinking and very ordered life.

It could also be either telling you to be inflexible, or it could be warning you against it.

That you will have to decide.

V–The Hierophant



Commentary

The Hierophant, like the High Priestess, sits between two pillars. But hers has a veil between them to be gone beyond, whereas the Hierophant sits right between them because he is Revealed Religion.

But he is not just exoteric religion, he is the esoteric Reality that true religion leads us to. This will never be transcended, because this is religion in the truest sense, the process of going back to God. As the old spiritual says: “So high you can’t get over it; so low you can’t go under it; so wide you can’t go around it: You must come in at the door!”

The back of the throne has a solar symbol on either side, for the highest religion is linking with the sun in order to pass through it at death and win the higher worlds beyond birth and death.

He wears a triple crown reminiscent of the Papal tiara to indicate that he has perfect knowledge and mastery of the three levels of existence: material, astral and causal, as well as the body-mind-spirit complex. He represents the outer spiritual-religious teaching and authority and is himself in essence the inner realm of teaching and authority. The Hierophant does not just teach—he Knows. He is

spiritual law, from highest to lowest.

The W (for Waite) at the top of the crown can safely be ignored. It is a kind of inside joke, and not much of one at that.

He is wearing a linen amice upon his head beneath the crown, which from ancient times was considered to represent “the helmet of salvation” (Isaiah 59:17; Ephesians 6:17) in the vesting prayers of the priests and bishops.

His throat is swathed in blue to tell us that he speaks from the vastness of the sky: infinity. It also means that he speaks wisdom specifically. He is clothed in red, the color of the Holy Spirit, both teacher and sanctifier, the color of spiritual power. Boundless power and consciousness is his clothing.

A bishop normally wears the two lappets on the back of his mitre hanging down his back, but here they are in front to indicate that the Hierophant leaves nothing hidden, but reveals all. The lappets indicate the positive and negative aspects of all things.

The Hierophant wears the pallium worn by all Roman Catholic archbishops to show that he is of the highest possible rank. It is the counterpart of an Eastern Orthodox bishop’s omophorion which represents the Lost Sheep being carried back to the fold on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd. Since the pallium is made only of lamb’s wool it is likely that originally it, too, had that meaning.

His shoes, with crosses on them, means he walks in the way of righteousness and teaches others to do the same.

His right hand is uplifted in blessing, and also represents exhortation and instruction in the spiritual law and its application.

The Magician had to have a wand to convey power, but the body of the Hierophant is a repository of the divine power and needs no intermediary. As Saint Ignatius said, “Wherever the bishop is, there is the whole church, and where the bishop is, there is Christ,” meaning the initiatic Christ-power.

In his left hand he holds the patriarchal cross to indicate his supreme office, but it is spiritual rulership.

At his feet are the crossed keys symbolizing his power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). They are more importantly the keys to the Mysteries—or are themselves the Mysteries as keys to the highest experience and knowledge.

Before him kneel two clerics wearing a medieval form of the pallium. But since that same shape was also used on priest’s vestments, there is no telling which is intended. It may be both, showing that the Hierophant is both bishop of bishops and priest of priests. Certainly it means the highest in office and authority.

Here, too, we find the motifs of roses and lilies.

The two clerics certainly represent ritual worship and the sacraments which transform those who participate in and partake of them with conscious understanding supported by a life lived in conformity with the highest spiritual

principles.

Divinatory meaning

All the above-cited characteristics can indicate meanings in divination.

The card certainly means religion, but whether exoteric or esoteric you will need to determine.

And it is revealed religion, not just philosophy or theology. It is wisdom that leads onward to higher wisdom.

It also symbolizes mastery and understanding—often all-embracing mastery and understanding.

The Hierophant is the teaching of truth and is Truth itself. He is both teaching and knowing.

This card can mean the Holy Spirit and oracular pronouncements.

It is the card of all things being revealed.

The Hierophant card says that we must walk in truth and righteousness as well as teaching truth and righteousness.

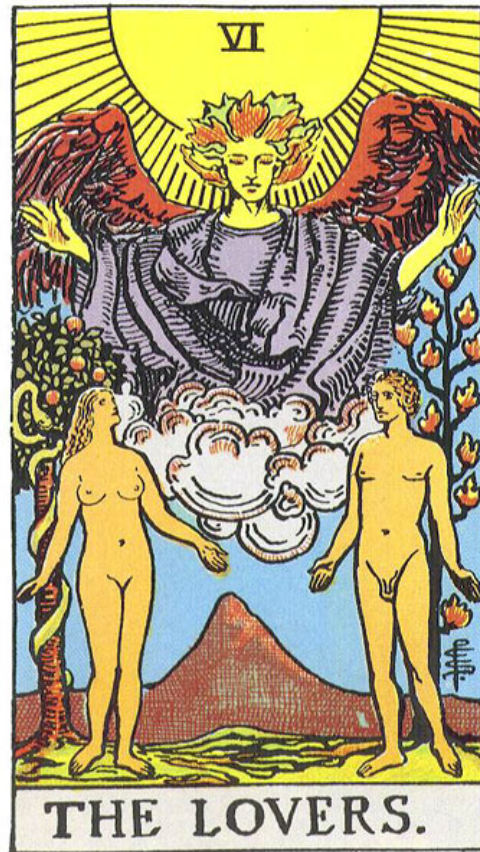
Spiritual blessing is also part of this card's message.

Although it is popular to talk about spiritual versus religious, in this card means that the two are one, and the Hierophant can mean one or the other or both.

The Hierophant is the spiritual power of both freeing and binding, of holding on and letting go.

All that is of true religion can be attained by following the Way of the Hierophant.

VI–The Lovers



Commentary

The prominent depiction of the sun at the top indicates that this is a fortunate card, a card of blessing and spiritual power.

The great angel whose hands are raised in blessing is a solar angel under the aegis of Archangel Michael, the ruling angel of the sun, and may be the Archangel himself. His hair is the fire of the Holy Spirit indicating his possession of divine consciousness.

Abundant blessing is shown here, blessing that results in positive fruition. It is a coming into play of the Divine Plan and is the power and guarantee of its accomplishment.

The cloud beneath the angel is the Cloud of Divine Presence which was always seen over the tabernacle when God spoke with Moses and which covered Sinai when Moses went to commune with God on the top of the mountain.

Although this card in other decks depicts a glorification of carnality, sexuality and human “love,” that is really the serpent described next—this card is different as we can see.

The tree on the left is the tree of knowledge of good and evil and that on the right is the tree of life whose leaves are medicine for healing. Around the trunk and lower branches of the tree of knowledge we see the serpent, the force of ego and

delusion, especially self-delusion.

In front of the tree of knowledge we see a female figure, not unclothed to “glorify” the naked human female form, but to depict the divine feminine in all things, including human beings, unveiled and fully seen in its meaning. In front of the tree of life we find an unclothed male form representing the divine masculine in all things as well as in human beings.

They are unclothed because they are alien to the transgression of Adam and Eve who covered themselves because their auras of light had dissolved when they transgressed.

There is no shame in these two because they are the presence of virtue in the higher nature of the human being. They embody both divine knowledge and the power of divine restoration through the healing of that which has transgressed.

They are not the Adam and Eve of fallen humanity, but the spiritual archetypes who are part of the higher self of all sentient beings.

They are also the life-sustaining condition of perfect harmony and balance—for they are really one. Yet, the female figure represents divine duality and the male figure divine unity. Both are essential—and essentially one.

The high mountain in the background symbolizes the elevation of consciousness needed to restore ourselves to this paradisiacal condition. In both Old and New Testaments of the Bible, mountains were ascended for communion with God.

This card shows the true, natural condition of the human being.

It also shows divine blessing and abundant good fortune proceeding from spiritual roots.

Divinatory meaning

This card speaks to us of all the foregoing characteristics.

When speaking of mundane subjects it means cooperation and harmonious activity.

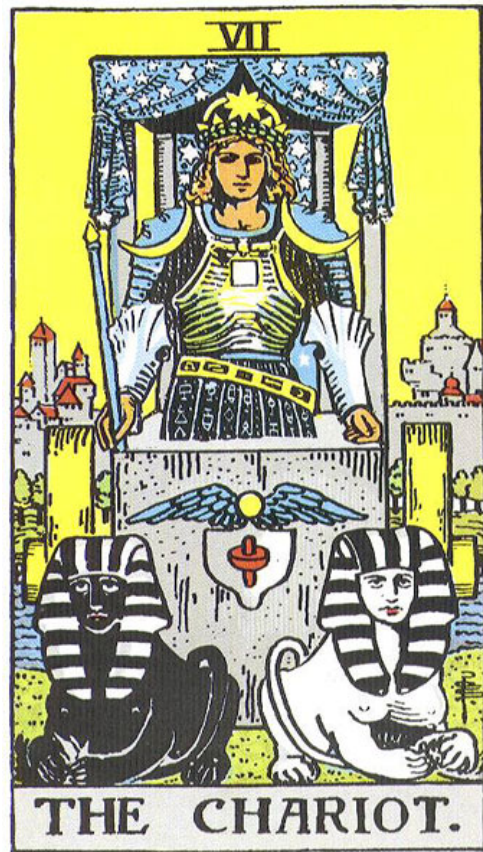
It can even mean liking and kindly feeling between people.

So the exalted nature of this card should not keep us from realizing the possibility of its reflecting in lesser levels the exalted meanings outlined previously.

It can even mean simply getting along with others, neighborliness and personal compatibility.

Partnership is another possible meaning.

VII–The Chariot



Commentary

Fundamentally this card is a picturing of someone established in the highest state of consciousness and conscious mastery.

The canopy and back of the chariot are made of blue cloth—in fact, blue is the dominant color of this card, representing a wisdom that is “of the heavens” in the sense of being untrammelled by the thought and ways of earth, a wisdom that roams free in the sky of unfettered intelligence and consciousness. The canopy and back cloth is covered with stars, underlining the idea of heavenly, starry wisdom. Certainly esoteric and psychic knowledge/wisdom is indicated.

Crowns in the Tarot indicate the awareness of those depicted. The gold crown of solar wisdom on the head of the Charioteer is topped by a large, eight-pointed star. Since eight is the number of infinity, the transcendent “eighth day” level of consciousness recognized by the original Christians as the Day of Resurrection beyond all lesser strata of awareness and knowing, he possesses this in its fulness. He is immeasurably beyond the Hierophant in every way. Like the Empress, the lower level of his crown is one of laurel leaves, of victory and rulership. Knowledge of earth and heaven is his. Therefore his face is wise.

The curious epaulets on his shoulders are faces bordered by crescent moons. Whether intentional or not, the eyes of one are open and those of the other are

closed. This may represent day/night, inner/outer or revealed/concealed knowledge and awareness. Or it may be a form of yin/yang energy, universal in scope. Whichever it might be, they are on his shoulders indicating strength, including reserved and potential strength, as does the upper and lower armor on his arms.

At the center of his chest is suspended a silver lamén with nothing on it that can be seen. A lamén is a general term for a magical pendant worn around the neck so that it hangs upon the breast over the heart. Its uses vary but generally it is an emblem of authority and the grade of a magician, though there are other uses. It often expresses the character and powers of the wearer, or the powers that are to be invoked in the magical operation. One type of lamén is a talisman which functions as a storehouse of some particular kind of energy, the kind that is needed to accomplish the task for which it has been constructed. The fact that it is blank may mean that it is the formless Absolute, the realm of Spirit alone that he attunes himself to and by means of which he directs the chariot.

He wears a golden belt with astrological signs upon it and a lower garment with sigils and other magical symbols on it. These both indicate his possession of abundant knowledge of these items, but also indicates that they are of lesser (lower) estimation in his mind. They are clearly subordinate and secondary in his view.

He holds in his right hand a scepter similar to that of the Magician, but it is blue and tipped with gold indicating its significance of spiritual rulership. Interestingly, his left hand is closed and relaxed. All control comes from the right.

Most striking is that fact that there are no reins in his hands or anywhere, showing that his direction of the chariot comes from his thought-and-will power alone, the power of his unfettered mind.

Odd as it certainly is, he appears to be rising out of a cube of stone—not a very chariotlike substance. Does this say to us that he has no “lower body” at all, not even the symbolic presence of that part of the body which contacts the earth and from which so many problems of humanity arise? It seems very likely. He is pure, stainless and untainted intellect.

But what is this cube of stone? It is what the occultists called the Cube of Space which is existence itself and embodies the entire universe—indeed relative existence. It means that there is nothing not under his dominion. His is a truly universal domain. Earlier we considered eight as the number of infinity, and here might be a good place to convey what I find an interesting bit of information. Among the strictly traditional Eastern Christians the altars for the performing of their hieratic rituals are exact cubes, as well. Furthermore, the altars in the most ancient tradition are exactly thirty-eight inches in height, width and depth—the dimension that results from the joining of eight nineteen-inch cubes. This is because there are only nineteen possible dates for the Resurrection of Christ according to the Eastern Christian reckoning (which originated in Egypt). And the eight cubes represent both totality of time and timelessness, both immanence and transcendence. Consequently it is considered that their rituals possess those characteristics also,

and that whatever rites are done involving the altar affect the entire universe of time and space. They look upon their eucharistic rites especially as having cosmic significance and effect.

On this cube we find two symbols. The upper one is the winged orb which was the usual Egyptian symbol of the soul flying through the halls of eternity from birth to birth. The other is a shield upon which we find the picture of a spinning top, an object which was used in antiquity for gambling and even divination, just as the dreidel is today during Hanukkah. (The Hanukkah dreidel was invented when the Greek king Antiochus and his army occupied Israel in the second century BC and the people saw the soldiers using them for divinatory purposes.) Thus it is a symbol of destiny and karmic law. There may appear to be elements of chance in the world and human life, but there really are none. All are karmic destiny. The two symbols are juxtaposed to indicate this. They touch, and the upper (therefore dominant) one is the spirit whose evolution demands the operation of exact laws of cause and effect, of action and reaction. It almost looks like the winged orb is carrying the shield, that karma is an essential part of its progress. This is a dominant theme of the Bhagavad Gita. So the Charioteer goes nowhere at whim, only according to precise cosmic law. And by the way, speaking of going somewhere: the stone cube is resting on the ground. So what are the wheels for? Obviously the moving of the chariot is not according to the physics of earth. Spiritual force alone can move it.

The chariot is drawn by two sphinxes, black and white to indicate their positive/negative, yin/yang character. They are the substance of which the universe is made. Yet, they are not connected to the chariot in any way, because although the charioteer controls them, both he and his chariot transcend them and do not really “touch” them at all. Again it is shown that by thought and will alone are they directed.

Behind the chariot is a flowing river. Is it time which the Charioteer has obviously passed over and beyond? Or it is an indicator that the Charioteer has brought the chariot to the Other Shore of which Buddha spoke and was long before him a theme in India? Certainly it represents a crossing over of some kind. And certainly for the better. Since earliest time rivers have been the boundaries of countries and counties. So it may be that the Charioteer has gone beyond the ordinary bounds of life.

Divinatory meaning

If you get this card when you ask about the wisdom quotient of doing something, it often means it is a good idea.

It can also mean that you must use your intelligence and higher faculties for something, including esoteric knowledge.

Certainly will power and intelligence, including spiritual intelligence, are indicated here.

It can also be telling you that dominance of the situation is needed, that you or

the consultant must take charge.

Since the Charioteer has no reins, it can also mean a situation over which no control is possible. Or it may be that you must employ spiritual means, not material.

Also it can mean you have to “cross a river” to manage.

The river can also mean that some time should pass in the making of a decision, to wait and see; look before leaping.

It always means Be Wise in some form.

It also counsels to be rational about a situation or decision.

It may also be saying that the situation is karmic, or that karma must be kept in mind when making a decision.

Certainly it can indicate that the spiritual must rule or take precedence over the external or material.

The spinning top can mean that you are taking a chance, a gamble—that you should avoid doing so. And it can mean that you *should* take such a chance.

You see why you need intuition to get the message right!

The sphinxes are not connected to the chariot, so it can mean that dualities should not influence you.

On the other hand, it can mean that you should work with those forces.

It can also indicate conflict from contradictory elements either in the consultant or in the subject of the consultation.

Frankly, I think that the sphinxes holding their tails is an artistic device because the illustrator could not figure what else to do with them. They cannot be upright against the chariot, and cannot be underneath the chariot because there is no underneath—it rests fully on the ground.

And that brings us to the message that the movement desired by the consulter may only be accomplished by higher and subtler forces or means.

VIII–Strength



Commentary

The first thing we note is the sign of eternity which we have already found in two previous cards. But in this card its meaning is the key to the entire card: Highest Consciousness–Divine Consciousness, actually, since the spirit of each one of us is divine. The spirit is finite, not infinite, but nevertheless divine. Without this consciousness there is no perfect mastery of life. It is the ultimate strength. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). The Hebrew words translated might (*chayil*) and power (*koach*) mean human qualities, not divine attributes. It is those who attain to their inmost, divine consciousness that have really discovered the Mystery of Life that is the Mastery of Life.

The very delicate flowers adorning the head of the figure indicate the extreme subtlety of the ruling consciousness. The tranquility of the face indicates that only in perfect calmness can the power that is Spirit either arise or be used. Similar flowers encircle her waist to indicate that the material energies even of the body have been transmuted into spirit-consciousness, that the body itself is a manifestation of divine Light.

The lion is licking the hand of the woman in evident loving affection to indicate

that what before had been raging and threatening is now not just harmless, but harmonious, supporting what it previously would have destroyed. The lion represents danger, destruction, death, passion, animality, and what the early Egyptian Christian Gnostics called “the lion-faced power,” that has been tamed. Negative things can be turned positive, and this is represented by the lion’s tail, which is in the exact shape of the leaves of the tree of life in the Lovers card.

Divinatory meaning

Although Waite says that this card “has nothing to do with self-confidence in the ordinary sense,” it certainly can in divination. It is also advice to take hold and control a situation.

Certainly it advises to make spirit-consciousness our strength, and to apply the laws of morality and spiritual life.

It depicts intellectual, moral and spiritual strength. Also it represents the necessity to conquer danger, destruction, death, passion, animality, and the lion-faced power—to lay hold on very literally and master the opponent or opposition.

The card both represents what is to be accomplished and the need to accomplish the needful.

It also recommends that when possible we should turn enemies into friends and opponents into allies.

Even though it is a card of spiritual consciousness, it can also be an indication of the necessity to use our intelligence and intuition.

It can be a statement that in the final analysis our problem is spiritual and therefore spiritual means must be employed for its solution.

It also means that we must not just take into account the obvious aspects of a situation, but both the subtle and hidden aspects.

It tells us that it is not just possible to conquer, but to change that which is conquered. Negative can be changed into Positive.

The flowers on the head and around the waist of the woman also represent spiritual potential which should be cultivated.

It also tells us that our own spiritual development may either be the entire answer to the problem, or at least a part, which will help to bring about its solution.

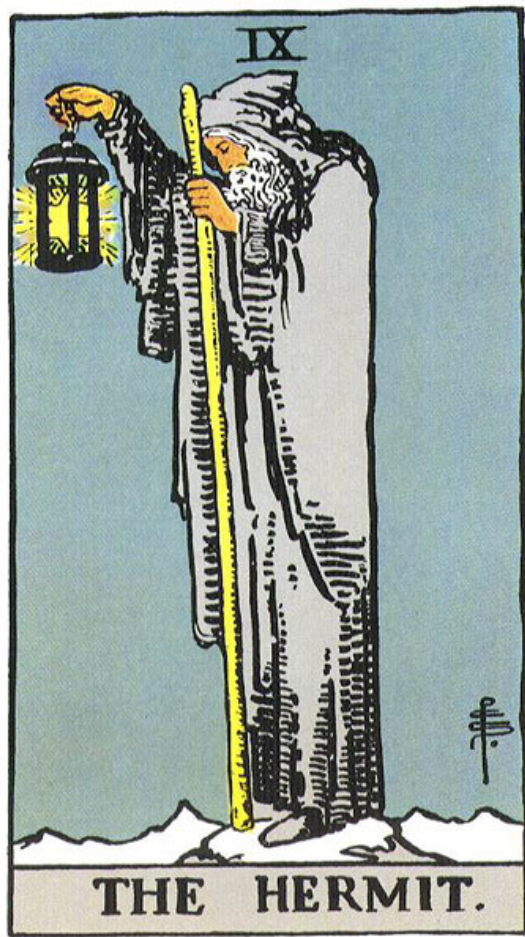
The woman is holding the lion’s mouth, permitting it to lick her hand, so this can indicate that there should not be complete repression, but give leeway for what is positive in a negative person, situation or object.

In some readings it can mean to just use material force.

And of course this card is definitely a depiction of empowered will.

If the woman had not conquered the lion it would surely have eaten her. So in divination it can mean that if we do not master what threatens or opposes, we will be “eaten” by it.

IX–The Hermit



Commentary

The figure is a monk wearing the habit of a Benedictine and even looks like he could be Saint Benedict himself.

In his right hand he holds a lantern inside which shines a six-pointed star of wisdom—the wisdom of spirit which frees from all things below.

He is not lighting his way, for his eyes are closed, absorbed in the Inner Light. He is lighting the way for others, who hopefully will see him from afar.

He holds in his left hand a sturdy staff for journeying.

He is standing on the heights of a mountain range. They are white, but I really believe that is to indicate that he stands upon the pinnacle of the realm of Light, and do not represent snow.

He stands and holds forth his lamp to summon those wandering in the valleys and wilds and on the surging seas to scale the heights and ascend back to their Source: God.

At the same time it is a search, but an inner search.

Waite commented: “I have said that this is a card of attainment, and to extend this conception the figure is seen holding up his beacon on an eminence. His

beacon intimates that ‘Where I am, you also may be.’”

Divinatory meaning

This is a call to the highest (or higher) knowledge.

However, in a reading it may also simply mean to either act on present knowledge or to seek further knowledge on the subject of the consultation. It can mean the consultant should heed a call or invitation, or that he should give the call himself.

It can mean that the consultant must seek inner light or self-understanding, or that he should heed what intuition or insight he already has.

Despite the obvious meaning of the card’s nature, it certainly can mean that the consultant should seek his way. But even there, the inner light cannot be ignored.

It can also simply be a call to action or seeking.

Both inner and outer quest can be indicated here.

Hidden knowledge is also a subject of this card.

As Waite said, this is a card of attainment and may be an urging toward attainment, or even to realize what one already has.

It can also mean that the consultant is preventing his acquisition of what he needs to know or find.

The staff in the Hermit’s hand can mean that a long and arduous journey is required to attain what the consultant desires.

It can also mean: Stop wandering around and get focused.

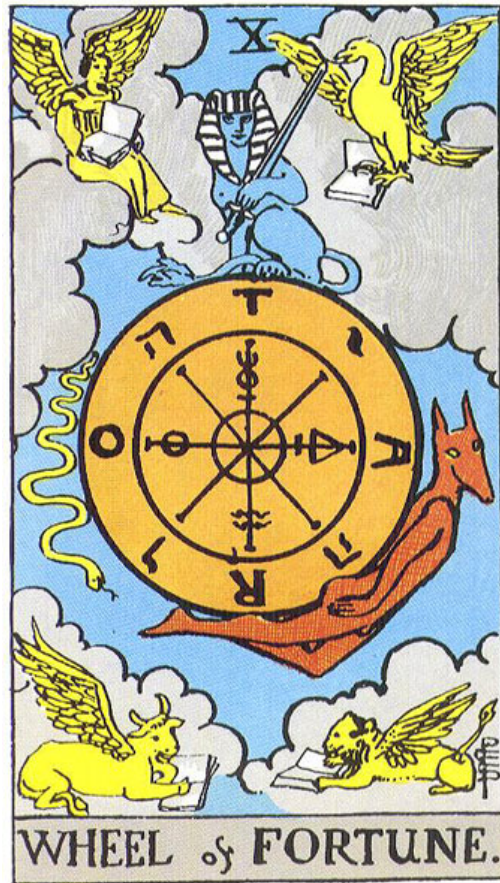
It can also be telling the consultant to act on his own and rely on himself alone—like a hermit—or to not do so, that he should work or consult with others.

It can be advising the consultant to seek solitude—or to stop being solitary. Isolation is not always independence, may be the message.

It can be the call to study, even.

The Hermit’s staff may simply mean strength of some kind, or even stability.

X–The Wheel of Fortune



Commentary

In the four corners we have the four living creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation as usually depicted in Christian art. Since they each hold a book, they can symbolize the Four Gospels. At top left is the winged Man representing the Gospel of Matthew which emphasizes the human incarnation of Jesus and the virtue of reason. At top right is the Eagle representing the Gospel of John which emphasizes the divinity of Jesus and the virtue of spiritual vision and union with God as the goal. At bottom left is the winged ox representing the Gospel of Luke and the virtue of sacrifice. At bottom right is the winged lion representing the Gospel of Mark and the virtue of courage. And these figures can represent bodies of knowledge symbolized by them, as well.

The central figure of the card is the Wheel itself containing magical (including astrological) symbols and the English letters for Tarot (Taro) and Wheel (Rota). This represents drastic or even total change, a complete turnabout, often resulting in a completely opposite situation.

Atop the Wheel is the Sphinx whose tail is like that of the lion in the Strength card. So we know its character is spiritual and transformative. She holds a sword, so power is here, as well as opposition to that which is negative. And as Waite says,

she represents stability—not stagnation, but “stability amidst movement.” This is very important. In mythology the Sphinx propounds a riddle and if you do not know the answer she eats you. So do the constant turns of the wheel of birth and death, and the wheels of change within our life. Therefore it is crucial that we know the meaning of her riddles, the biggest of which is life itself.

Almost completely beneath the wheel, pressed down and held by the wheel, is a jackal figure that could be Anubis, Egyptian god of death and the underworld. The only figure in the Tarot deck that is uglier than the jackal is the Devil. The jackal represents, evil, corruption, stealth, cunning and deception—everything repulsive and harmful.

At the left side of the Wheel is a snake crawling downward, also intending no good. This is power, craftiness, treachery and everything the jackal represents but in a more sophisticated and smooth manner. Also, the snake is more intellectual while the jackal is more emotional.

Divinatory meaning

This card can predict great change or the prevention of change.

It can be personal destiny changing or an external change.

It can be predicting a change in the mind or even the consciousness of the consultant.

It can also mean either the beginning or end of a cycle—or a continuation.

It is potentially thoroughly psychological.

It might even be telling you that someone (perhaps your consultant?) is bipolar or outright schizophrenic.

You must determine whether it is talking about inner or outer life.

There are psychic tides in the universe and this card certainly deals with them.

The Wheel may be turning or it may be stopped in stasis. If it appears to be moving, notice whether the Wheel is turning and in what direction, so the new ascendancy can be determined.

I have found that it usually means sudden, usually unexpected and intense change(s) which usually will prevail for quite some time.

It represents repression and suppression either overt or hidden, conscious or subconscious.

Although it may be a positive card I have found it to be occasionally negative.

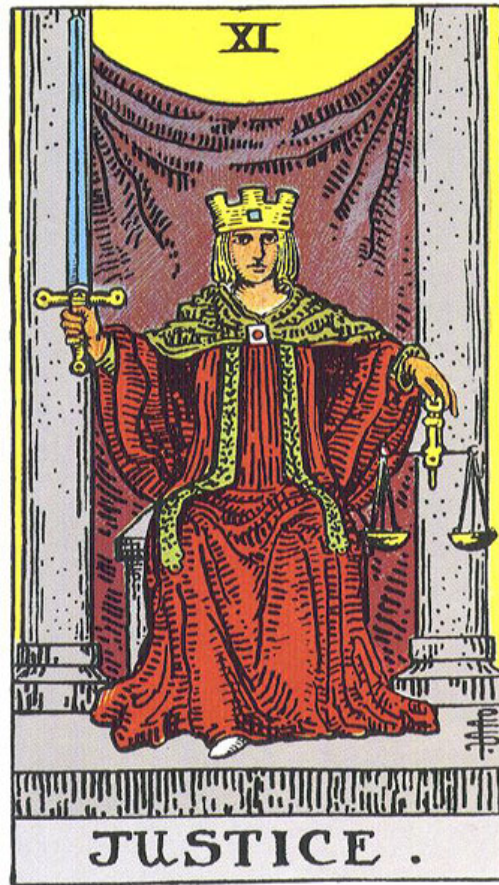
It is certainly a warning card, but sometimes with no advice other than to be wary and prepared—usually for the worse if not the worst. When it comes up my reaction is almost always Oh No.

But sometimes the Wheel has no meaning at all in the reading, but rather one of the corner figures is the message. The traits of whatever that figure depicts, human, eagle, ox or lion, is the message: what is now, what is to come, or what will or will not result. These figures possess spiritual power and almost always mean good things. But as I have said, there is nothing in a card that cannot at times mean its opposite.

This is why a good Tarot reader is something rare, for there is no labyrinth as complex as the Tarot. Sometimes you may be in despair as to what can possibly be the meaning. Just take a deep breath, let it out, relax and just *perceive*—not think—just see and feel.

A tremendous amount of divinatory meaning is in every card, but in this card it is especially so.

XI–Justice



Commentary

There are two pillars—in this case representing absolute stability and unwavering principle.

Between the pillars is a purple veil—not covering anything from view but the background of the figure of Justice himself. The color purple indicates royal power and divine law. It is not a royalty of ordinary earth but of the Heavenly King. Conformity to this law is itself a divine quality even in the human being.

Justice wears a crown with a single gem. Since the gem is blue we can assume it is a sapphire. Sapphires are considered stones of destiny that bring mental clarity and clear perception—qualities embodied in Justice. So the crown of justice is clarity of perception and wisdom.

The green cloak and stole (symbol of authority) tell us that Justice is a living and growing thing, grounded in the green earth and not the blue sky. The cloak is held closed with a silver brooch bearing a large red stone, no doubt a ruby.

The robe of Justice is red like the stone and represents power and dominance.

In his right hand Justice carries an upright sword representing the power of intervention and command. It is an ever-present warning to those who would subvert or transgress the Law.

In his left hand he holds a balance scale indicating his purpose of harmony and impartiality. It also represents fairness, a taking into account all factors and a weighing—a determining of the character—of all things. In imperial Chinese law the function of a judge was to repair all wrongs if possible—not just punish. He was to restore the moral equilibrium that existed before the commission of the crime. This is the purpose of Justice in the Tarot as well.

Note the large eyes of Justice, a trait not found in other cards. This symbolizes alert and determined vigilance. The Justice of the Tarot is not blind—absolutely the opposite.

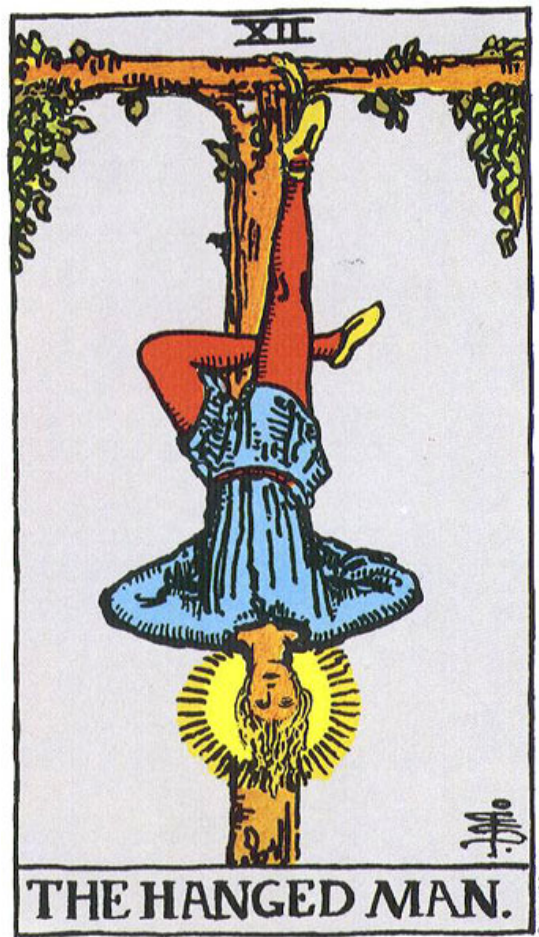
If Justice was a female figure she would represent the just retributions manifested through karma and the consultant's external life, but here justice is the illumination of the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, and it is indeed a judgment of them. Consequently this can be a card of conscience.

Both reward and punishment can be meted out by Justice. And understanding may sometimes be imparted by him.

Divinatory meaning

All the characteristics of Justice as applied to the life and personality of the consultant are to be taken into account to determine the Tarot's message when this card is revealed in a reading. The consultant is being told to both be and do those things we see in Justice. Which are most relevant at the moment is the role of the reader to determine.

XII–The Hanged Man



Commentary

The Hanged Man is suspended by his right foot from a Tau formed by a living tree with leaves. His left leg is bent in a pose of relaxation and control expressing both contentment and peace.

His upper garment is not falling down through gravity. This tells us that the Hanged Man is above earthly force and maintains perfect order, as we can see from the straightness of his entire body.

His hands are behind his back indicating that his suspension on the Tau is completely voluntary. Indeed, he may be holding himself against the tree by his unbound hands. But certainly he is a state of willing passivity and is “keeping his hands to himself” and not attempting to change or “do” anything.

His face is tranquil and alert.

His hair, in contrast to his upper garment, is falling straight down in response to gravity. So he is aware of his reversed position.

A blazing halo (not just a glow) of golden light surrounds his head.

Is the Hanged Man really hanging downward, or is he standing upright, and it is only our misperception that sees him in suspension? Turn the card around and see

what is your impression.

Whether standing or suspended, the Hanged Man's position is completely voluntary and therefore an expression of his higher, spiritual will.

Divinatory meaning

This card depicts someone who in the eyes of the world is in a situation completely opposite to the way things really are.

In a very simple reading it means that we must be willing to be misunderstood and misperceived. So it is a humility card to some extent. For example, sometimes a person is in the right but apologizes to those in the wrong in order to bring about peace and stability. There is often a positive aspect to being seen or thought a fool.

This is a card of going completely against the current of common thought or action. It is a willingness to seem helpless when really in control, a willing acceptance of limitation.

There certainly is an element of self-sacrifice in this card—mostly of the ego. In the Russian Orthodox Church there is great admiration for those who voluntarily are “fools for/in Christ.” It is a kind of martyrdom that is really a redeeming act and one that leads to greater life and freedom.

This card can be telling us to be at peace in a problematic situation.

It is also a card telling us to see things as they are, not as they only seem to be.

Those who are willing to sacrifice for the good of themselves and others, who are willing to risk the scorn of the crowd, certainly wear a halo of blessed awareness far beyond that of the world and its slaves.

One message of this card is that we must give before we can receive.

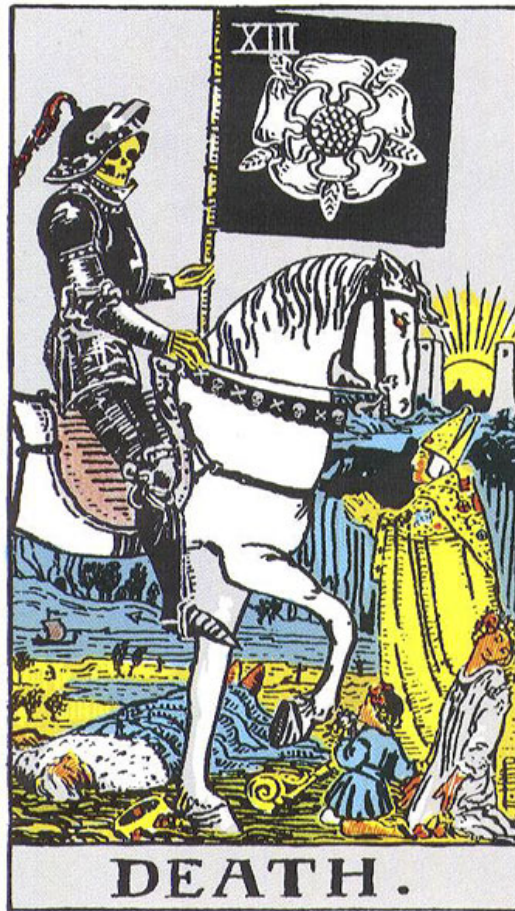
It is also a card of giving up for the benefit of ourselves and others. Unselfishness and generosity are the keynotes.

As Waite said: “He who can understand that the story of his higher nature is imbedded in this symbolism will receive intimations concerning a great awakening that is possible, and will know that after the sacred Mystery of Death there is a glorious Mystery of Resurrection.”

Many times we must be willing to be upside down, because upside down in the world is right side up to God.

It may be calling us to a more spiritual view of things, or it may be simply telling us to make sure we are seeing things correctly.

XIII–Death



Commentary

At the top we find the Mystic Rose, which often has a gold cross in the very center to underline the meaning of new life through “death” of the old life. (The rose with a central cross is also the symbol of the Rosicrucian tradition, of which Waite’s order, the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, was a part.) This is on the banner held in the left hand of Death. So this says to us that the message and purpose of Death is rebirth, either physically or mystically. Like the Cross, Death is really the gateway to further, and hopefully higher, life.

Death is in full armor to indicate his invincibility and therefore inevitability.

The red streamer on the back of his helmet indicates that his ultimate purpose is life. This has to be so, since there really is no death, but life whose changes often appear to us as death.

He guides his white steed, symbol of positive purpose, with his right hand to indicate that Death is never at any time a random matter, but is according to strict cosmic law.

The skulls and crossed bones on the horse’s halter may seem a macabre touch, but that is because we do not know their origin. Originally they represented the

skull and bones of Adam which were kept as relics through the ages, and which the Hebrews brought with them into Israel and deposited in the earth on top of the hill which would one day be known as Golgotha. The cross of Jesus was set up over them (their exact location had been long forgotten). At the earthquake when Jesus left his body, the stones beneath cracked and the blood of Jesus flowed down over the skull and bones of Adam, thus completing the cycle begun long before. So even though in later times they were put on poison containers, they represent life which is in time always redeemed.

As the horse steps forward, irreversibly, a king is seen dead on the ground with all his finery, including a crown that has rolled from his head. This is the vanity of authority, even “absolute” authority. A small child and an older girl kneel in anticipation of their death. A bishop stands in supplication before Death, but the symbol of his spiritual power, a crozier, like the king’s crown, lies beneath the horse’s feet. None escapes or banishes Death.

Looking far away beneath the horse, we see a river flowing toward our right. On the river is an Egyptian boat, specifically of the type put in tombs and known as a “spirit boat.” Contrary to earthly ways, the boat is flowing toward an immense waterfall which it will surmount by going vertically against the current and entering into a tranquil river without waves which leads onward between two towers and into the sun, which is not setting but rising. This symbolizes the ascent and entry into the Solar World through which we passed to come into material manifestation. The sun is itself the gateway to even higher worlds which lead eventually to merging with the Infinite Light that is the Absolute.

Without Death this great pilgrimage could not be made.

Divinatory meaning

Death is real as a process, but is nothing in itself. Life is real. But we often have to die to realize that fact.

This card can definitely mean death is in the future, or that the present situation was evoked by a past death.

It can also indicate the absolute end of something.

It also may mean the beginning of a new cycle.

Sometimes it is telling us to ourselves make the end or the beginning.

We must learn to not fear Death in any form. As Waite says, it can mean moving from lower to higher. Certainly Death is not at all “the grim reaper,” even when expressing our karma. It is we who decide by our life whether Death will be an ascent or a descent, progress or regression.

Those who seek higher life and consciousness must realize that entry into them must of necessity be the “death” of that which was before. There is no way to undertake a journey if we refuse to move from where we are at the moment. Sri Ramakrishna told of people who rowed hard all night to find in the morning that they had not moved an inch because they had not hauled in the anchor.

Losing is not always a gaining, but gaining is always a losing of some sort.

As Waite also points out, this card can mean “rebirth, creation, destination, renewal, and the rest.”

Great change is certainly a death of much of the past.

Death is a part of life. This is the essential message of this card.

Death and life and karma are inseparable.

This card can indicate a complete changeover or clean sweep in some aspect of our life; or it may be telling us that we should make that change ourselves.

Like the Alaskan salmon, we must swim up the waterfall of life and emerge into the river of peace which will lead from duality to Unity.

Death can mean a satisfactory completion of something.

The wise embrace seeming death and discover life, and the foolish embrace seeming life, and find death.

XIV–Temperance



Commentary

The aura of the angel's head if seen completely would reveal an eight-pointed star, representing transcendental consciousness, an awareness far above this world and yet fully cognizant of it and interacting with its highest aspects. The symbol of the sun upon his forehead underscores this.

His wings are spread in full power. Even when standing still he is inwardly in flight.

The Holy Name and the lamén upon his breast further indicate his divine level of consciousness, especially the upward-pointing triangle representing the tripartite nature of man oriented to the highest.

He pours the Water of Life from one gold (the metal of the sun and life itself) chalice to another. The diviner should ascertain whether it flows from the higher to the lower or from the lower into the higher. This is no small point.

One of the angel's feet is on solid ground, yet tentatively, as the ground is small in size, and only his toes rest upon it. This depicts minimal contact with the material side of things.

His other foot is immersed in the water to a greater extent, and tells us that his intention and awareness is primarily focussed on the wellsprings of life: the Spirit.

For that water, too, is the Water of Life: Divine Life.

Daffodils, the flowers of Spring and renewed life, are in bloom nearby. They, too, indicate solar influence.

From the shore of this River (or perhaps Sea) of Life, a path leads onward into mountains above which the Sun blazes in the shape of a Crown, the attainment of perfect Light and Life. Whether this sun is rising or setting is the question for the diviner to determine.

Divinatory meaning

There can be no denying that this card does show a tempering and a balancing, but that is perhaps the least important of its possible messages.

This card is a call to assume one's own higher consciousness and then deal with the things of either earth or heaven. Attunement with the Divine is a key element.

Because of the movement of the water from higher to lower and lower to higher in the gold cups there is a profound symbolism of alchemy, reminding us of the ancient alchemists distilling an essence only to mix it back in with the baser elements and distill it again, often for many times, each distillation increasing its potency.

It can mean that there will be many beginnings and endings in the subject of the reading or in the consultant's dealing with it, or even in the consultant's life.

So this card tells us that intellectual and spiritual alchemy should be brought to bear on the subject of the consultation.

This is a transmutation card in essence, calling for the consultant to bring about a metamorphosis, a transformation, rather than a mere resolving of or coping with a situation.

Higher understanding (insight) is required to elevate the subject itself to a higher mode of existence and meaning (relevance).

Both matter and spirit come into the subjects revealed through this card, but even matter must be seen as a manifestation of spirit.

There is a definite attention to duality, but for the result of unity.

Ultimately this card carries the message that we must in time leave the shore of this body of water, turn around completely, and begin the ascent to increasingly higher levels of thought and deed (and therefore consciousness) until we enter into the crowning light of Perfection and become ourselves the Light.

This card can also mean the reconciliation of opposites.

XV–The Devil



Commentary

The first thing that we notice about the Devil is the inverted five-pointed star which represents the reversal of the human being—especially the consciousness—in the utter degradation and corruption of the divine image in the human being. Yet this is also a form of the Star in the East seen in some depictions of the Nativity in which a ray of light is shining down from the downward point upon the newborn Christ. So it can be the beginning of the ruin of the Devil's power and his bondage of humanity.

He has the horns of an animal and the ears and wings of a bat, indicating that he is a being of darkness to whom the light is abhorrent and even painful. That is why the most effectual exorcism of evil is the invocation of light and blessing, not a fulmination against evil and evil spirits—that is just flattering them.

His right hand is raised in threat and cursing, in domination by fear and hatred.

In his left hand is a torch which he is extinguishing or subverting, since all forms of light are detested by him, and fire is a spiritual element that is essential to all authentic religious ritual. In ancient India fire was considered a symbol of the spirit. So the Devil is wary of it at all times, since fire linked to spiritual realms can effortlessly vanquish him. Miracles are often the result of simply lighting a candle and praying, especially if offered before an altar or a sacred depiction.

The lower part of his body is animal and his feet like deformed hands. He may appear half human, but he is all beast in his inner nature and will.

He is seated on a stone block with a ring to which two chains are linked. The chains are around the necks of a woman on the left and a man on the right. They have horns on their heads since they are turning into the image of the Devil. Their red hair represent the fire and fever of delusion and desire that consumes their higher minds and judgment. Their tails remind us of the Lovers card because the woman's tail has the form of fruit and the man the leaves of the tree of life. The image of God cannot be expunged from any human being, but it can be so perverted and twisted that it is a mockery and defiance of that sacred nature.

These two seem to be bound to the Devil, but that is not so. Their thralldom is completely voluntary. Look at the chains around their necks. They can slip them off in a moment and be free. But they are on the road to the ultimate evil open to humanity: the state in which evil is their good, in which all is as reversed in them as is the torch held by their false and lying master. He may be the father of lies, but they are themselves striving to become lies. Of course they will not succeed, but that will only make them hate and flee the truth even more.

The message is simple: Bondage and freedom are in the will—nowhere else. This card is the card of false bondage, the bondage in the mind that grips most of humanity in some degree. Religion which teaches that the Devil is mighty, virtually the equal of God, and before whom human beings are so many mites to be crushed is not the religion of God but of the Devil. The only power he has is the power surrendered to him by his slaves and dupes who are freely choosing the way of destruction.

So this is a card of hope. A friend of mine wrote a play in which a man had a conversation with an angel. When the angel said it was time for her to return to heaven, the man says: "How I wish I could go to heaven!" The angel asks: "Do you *really* want to go to heaven?" He says: "Of course," and there comes a great whooshing sound and that is the end of the play. He really wanted to go to heaven, so he went therein an instant. Only intensity of desire had been lacking, and once he had it... whoosh!!!

Divinatory meaning

This is the ugliest card in the Tarot, yet it can have a very positive meaning.

It is also a character card, showing the nature of a great deal of humanity, though in varying degrees. It can be depicting a person who is intelligent but is living like a beast, like an animal. Such a person is only human in the theoretical level, but is bestial in the actual level. People like this always insist that their carnal life is really spiritual, including their sexual relations. You know what I mean. A woman once told me that she was really tired of going to spiritual centers where men talked high philosophy but pinched her when she turned around. On the other hand I knew a man who volunteered as a waiter in a restaurant run by a spiritual group. Women were continually leaving their telephone numbers on the table and

some even pinched him! So this card may be indicating this kind of person.

It is showing the extinguishing of the faculty of light and upward aspiration in a person.

There is really no evil, just the absence or the corruption of good. This should be kept in mind, because this card is not just telling us something is evil or wrong, but that it is a violation of nature. We can take a picture and turn it upside down and leave it there for centuries. But in a moment it can be turned right.

This, card, then, shows the total culpability of “bad” people and those who seem to be caught in evil.

This card tells us two basic things: 1) something is evil; and 2) that evil is a lie in some way.

False bondage being the key character of the Devil card, it therefore can be the indication of the end of false bondage and the restoration of the right and the good—just whatever stands out when the diviner calmly looks at it.

Sometimes the card is telling the consultant that either he is playing a game and is fully responsible for his negative situation, or that a person he is concerned and consulting about is fully responsible for the situation.

The Devil card tells us that we are always in control, that evil has no real power over us. Certainly, fear and hatred are the red carpet we roll out for the Devil, but we can choose to roll it back up.

Perhaps the consultant is being told to grab the torch from the Devil and run for the exit—the ability is there.

People continually create excuses for themselves and talk on and on about obligations and duties. Or they explain why they cannot do what should be done. But it is all lies.

Sometimes the consultant is completely sincere and believes there are reasons why he “cannot” do what is right and best. You must tell him that he is mistaken. This is a reflection of the Devil in them, even if slight.

Be prepared for the consultant to reject and even be indignant about the message of this card, not being willing to either accept his responsibility for a situation or the responsibility of someone he is concerned for.

Ego is the constant refuge from truth.

Occasionally the traits of the Devil will be revealed by this card as the traits of the consultant, or the person being asked about, or a situation. Oftentimes the situation was created by the consultant.

This card is a warning against staying on the path of false bondage and excuse-making, lest much worse follow if it is continued.

This is a card showing spiritual suicide, willful self-destruction. It is always a card of will turned against the willer himself.

This card can be a message for the consultant to flee from something or someone, or it may be telling you the diviner to stop wasting time with the consultation or consultant.

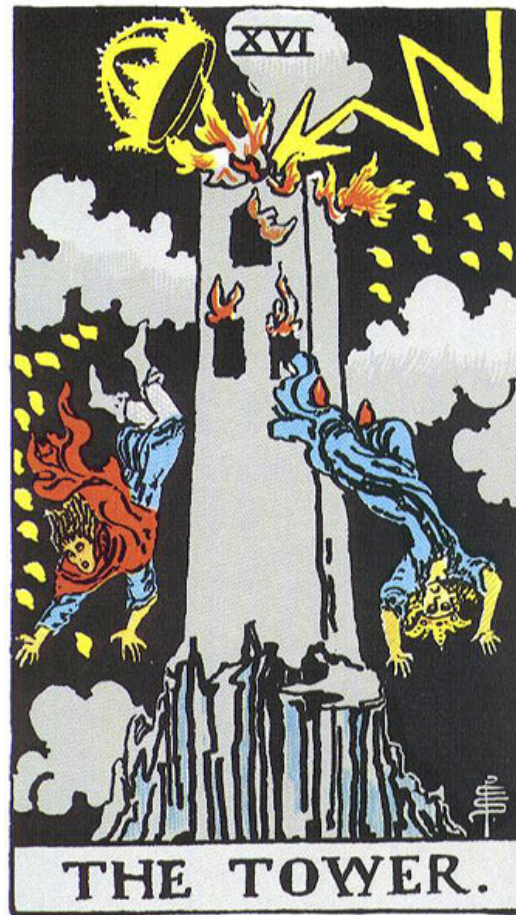
The consultant may need to be shown that bondage and freedom are in the will

and he should act accordingly.

And he may whine about your “incompassionate” speaking of the truth.

Many consultants will come to you because they are bored, want to see what a reading is like, or to be told what they want to hear. In other words, they want you to be the Devil for them. Some want the truth, but many do not. Some want to be able to tell you that you are a liar or crazy. Be sure you get your fee before you read.

XVI–The Tower



Commentary

Two things capture our attention in this card: a lightning strike right into the top of the Tower and a gold crown of immense size being precipitated off to the left, and obviously headed for oblivion. Apparently the crown was the capstone of the Tower, so it represents strength, power and influence that have been unseated by divine fiat—since the lightning comes from above.

Since the Tower was built upon rock we can assume that its destruction and overturn is something previously considered impossible, even inconceivable.

Fire is exploding from the top, the side and out the windows indicating a total conflagration. Obviously virtually nothing will be left of the Tower but the stoney precipice on which it was erected.

This is truly a card of The End, keeping in mind that endings are often beginnings. So this card can be one of clearing the slate for something new. But it is a cataclysmic change, as rapid as it is total. A complete upset.

There is nothing pleasant about the events of this card, even if the destruction and overturn is for the best. The medicine may heal, but it will be bitter.

The clouds of smoke spreading everywhere indicate confusion and

bewilderment, complete disorientation, a complete annihilation of all order that prevailed before.

Besides the flames of the burning Tower, on both sides we see small uniform-sized flames. While these flames may simply be sparks or burning, flying bits of the Tower, in this deck such flames usually represent the flames of the Holy Spirit, flames like those that rested on the heads of the initiates at Pentecost. So again we see the divine power and even the divine Presence in the phenomena of this card.

Two figures are falling headlong on either side of the Tower. The one on the left sees where he is falling, but the one on the right sees only where she is falling from. So this indicates having a grasp of the future or the course of things, and having nothing but a knowledge of what is past, the origins of the holocaust. Both are needed for intelligent understanding. The two are thoroughly terrified, but the woman retains her crown.

Since there is seen nothing below but the rock of the mountain, we cannot imagine anything but death for the two. Yet we cannot say that positively, for if divine providence has ordained this disaster who can say what will be their ultimate fate?

Divinatory meaning

Take everything I have said above in consideration of what may be its message for the consultant.

This is a prophecy of tremendous upheaval and overturn that is also tremendously terrifying and totally unforeseen.

Divine law (karma) is in complete charge of the situation, and the ability to stop, reverse or even mitigate it is nonexistent.

This is a total smashup of some level of the consultant's life or subject of inquiry. Lightning, fire and panic reign. The overwhelming advice of this card is: wait and assess the extent of the damage when it is all over.

The catastrophe is either coming or has come.

That is all this card tells in broad outline, yet in the details you may find further analysis or even advice and assurance. That is the nature of the Tarot.

One lesson here is the fact that nothing is absolutely sure, stable or lasting.

There is no reason why this card may not be telling the consultant to bring the whole thing about in some aspect of his life or associations.

Certainly the divine hand is in this.

This card can mean loss of an important position, loss of prestige, perhaps a project that seems stable and completed and in a sense crowned with success, but suddenly overturned.

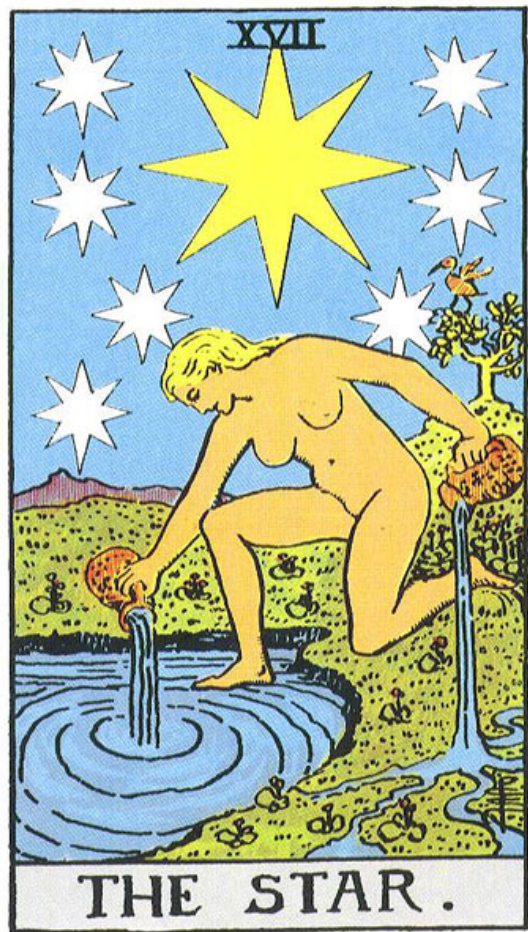
This is not a slow degeneration, but a Big Blast. Yet it could be slow—we must not say no to any meaning being possible.

See if one of the two figures seems more prominent, more alive or striking, than the other.

Certainly this card can be very positive or very negative in meaning.

It is a card of drastic change or revolution.

XVII–The Star



Commentary

We certainly see why this card is called The Star. Dominant at the top of the card is a large gold star, indicating that it is solar and therefore spiritual in character. At the very least it would indicate great intelligence, no doubt mingled with matching intuition and insight.

The central Star and its seven satellites have eight points, indicating their transcendental character. Each of the seven is a reflection of the central Star. Their white color underlines this. They are the planets of the central sun. Thus they indicate the entire solar system, linking this card to definite astrological meanings such as the psychic cycles and tides which astrology deals.

This card is primarily a card of cyclic change—either passing or emerging. In a consultation it is speaking of a span of time, and you must decide if it is coming or going, beginning or ending. Definitely it is telling the consultant that a certain time period is crucial in dealing with whatever subject has been inquired about.

This is a card of change; whether rapid or slow is up to your intuition as diviner. Whatever the card has to say at the moment may not be always of meaning or value, but only for the time period it is concerned with.

On the right side we see a hillock topped by a plant on which a bird is perched. It is the mustard tree of Jesus's simile grown from a tiny seed, the symbol of faith, in which the birds can perch, rest and even nest. Faith has some part in both the meaning of the card and the intended advice. No doubt acceptance of the cyclic nature of the card is indicated by the tree and the bird. And it can also mean that the consultant must act "on faith" in the subject of the consultation.

This is a card of revelation. That is why the figure has no clothing—nothing is covered or hidden.

She pours the Water of Life on the earth and into the water, purifying and divinizing both. This indicates balance, harmony and concord.

Some of the water poured on the earth finds its way into the water under her right foot indicating a fusion or mingling of what might seem opposite forces or attitudes, at least some mingling, even if minimal. It can also mean that something will end up something (or somewhere) else in time.

Though the main message is about a span of time, it can also be a counseling to combine what is now disparate.

Or it can even be an exhortation to not be one-sided in attitude, ideas or actions.

Divinatory meaning

All the above! And more.

The tiny little flowers growing on the ground can be advice to pay attention to or give value to small things.

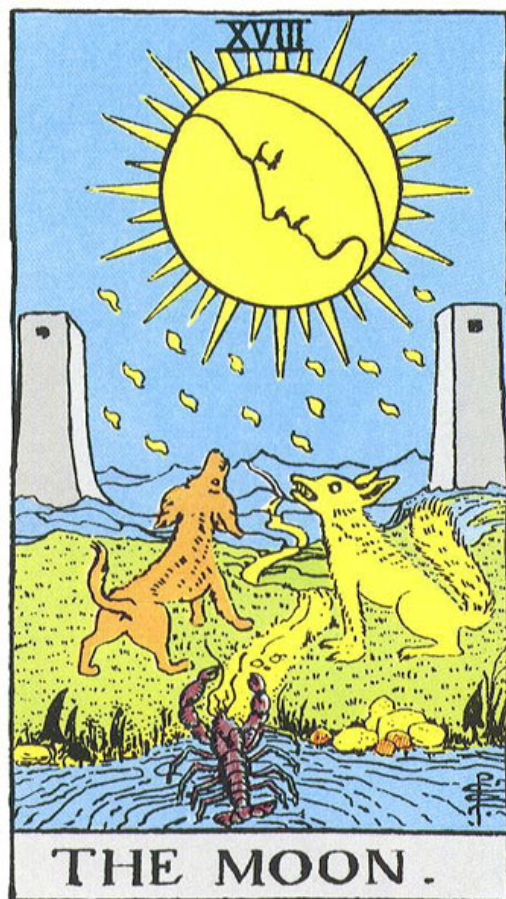
It is my experience that the Tarot simply has no limits in meaning. As I have said previously, this card can indicate what will or should happen, and it can mean what will not or should not happen.

The consultant must be willing to act upon what it reveals. This card tells the consultant that change depends upon acting at the proper time, just as a ship sails with the tide, not according to the clock.

It can even mean that the consultant has to get busy and look after something and foster it the way a gardener does to his garden.

The earth can mean matter and water the spirit. In this case the stream of water flowing back into the water indicates return of the spirit to Spirit.

XVIII–The Moon



Commentary

At the very top is the Moon, and in the Moon a tranquil face with closed eyes betokening profound inner awareness. The eyes do not look at the outer appearance, but are seeing the inner reality of the situation. Below the Moon are flames of fire, the flames of the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

So this is a card of awareness, personal interior awareness and awareness of hidden factors and hidden forces inside and outside. It certainly includes the subconscious mind, but as it affects the conscious mind and its world. It indicates spiritual perception that encompasses both inner and outer things. It is also a refusal to enter into dialogue with dark forces, but a remaining centered in one's own positive awareness.

The two towers are those we have seen before in other cards. They may represent duality, but are certainly way-markers for the traveller, indications of the way beyond that leads to the mountain heights on the horizon. This may be spiritual, intellectual or material in indication.

The path between the towers is also coming down to the foreground of the card, ending in the water, from which an ugly, threatening creature is rising as though trying to catch hold of the moon. Yet how small it is for such an ambition! Coming

up from the water means it originates in the subconscious, or in some readings it means it has unseen, even unsuspected, origins.

On the shore, on either side of the path like the towers, are two canine animals. The one on the left is a normal dog but the other is a wolf, jackal or hyena. Both are baying at the moon in a threatening manner, making noise and creating confusion. One is tame and the other is wild, but they are expressing their common, primitive nature which is obviously hostile to and even evoked by the Moon and its light.

Divinatory meaning

This card is telling you about hidden or previously unforeseen situations, people or influences. It is usually a card of warning in some form.

It is advising the consultant to make sure he is fully aware of hidden forces and yet calm and at peace no matter how virulent they may be.

The flames of the Holy Spirit show that spiritual intuition is revealing the situation and can even guide the consultant in dealing with it.

There is no doubt that it can indicate hidden [secret] enemies, danger, calumny, darkness, terror, deception, occult forces and error. Yes; all those, and it is up to you to know which this may mean for the consultant.

It also may be telling the consultant to look within and use intuition in diagnosing and treating the problem.

Further it may be telling the consultant that the problem basically lies within him and must be dealt with accordingly. "Save yourself and others around you will be saved," as more than one saint has said.

The towers are saying that there is a way out and beyond.

Sinister and even threatening as this card seems, in essence it is a card of hope and assurance. For what can a couple of howling beasts and some underwater bugaboo do to the Moon? They cannot reach it, so all they can do is threaten and make a racket.

The need for calmness and clarity of perception is clearly part of the message of this card.

Although the Moon is in the sky and tranquil, that does not necessarily mean the consultant should just do nothing—but sometimes it does.

However, it very often is a Fear Not card.

As mentioned before, the howlers are making confusion and want to incite fear, and that must be taken into consideration in clearing up the situation.

It can be a very positive thing when negative people get aroused and swing into action. It means the consultant is on the right track much to the chagrin of the wrong-trackers.

Frequently the major response needs to be an interior one.

At the same time esoteric knowledge may be used to combat the enmity and opposition.

There is evil in the world and it shows its face on occasion. The consultant must realize this.

The opposing forces or individuals are not innocent. They are negative and know what they are doing, or planning to do. Never should excuse be made for them. They are not tools, they are colluders. They are part of the evil. And that includes those very close to the consultant whom he might want to excuse. They do not “mean well.” Unlike the persecutors of Jesus, they *do* know what they do. This has to be faced by the consultant, who must get busy and push this negative onslaught right back where it originates.

The Moon may be tranquil, but it is not passive. The action taken may be as hidden as the attack, but it must be done.

And having said all this, I must point out that the Moon card may be a picture of the consultants’ own mind, that as Pogo once said: “We have met the enemy and they are us.” Sometimes the yapping dogs are our own self-doubts, our own negative attitudes toward ourselves, even self-destructiveness.

This card can also mean deception: either self-deception or deception from others.

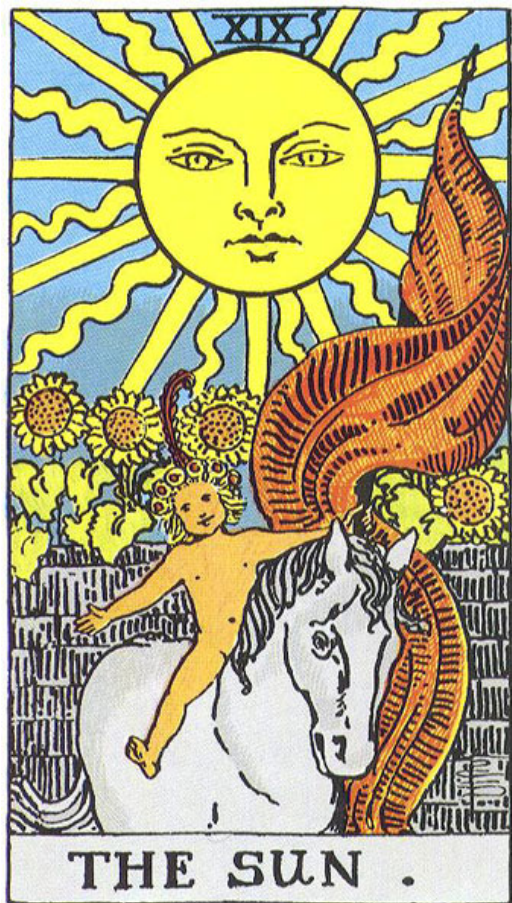
It can mean danger from the unseen world, the world of negative spirits and occult forces.

C. C. Zain (Elbert Benjamine) in his book on the Tarot says that this card can mean the dangers of false psychism, the danger of evil: destructive evil trying to deceive or harm us. It can also mean danger from foolish spirits that do not realize the harm they are doing.

The Moon is, or can be, a card of evil and danger, psychic or material.

Sometimes the card is simply telling us to avoid those things: Touch Not.

XIX–The Sun



Commentary

The dominant figure in this card is the Sun himself in all his glory. There is no doubting that the Sun is fully conscious and represents Consciousness itself.

Between us and the Sun is a wall—a very solid wall. And on that wall are flourishing sunflowers facing away from the sun and toward us. But since it is their nature to face the sun, turning toward it each day as it journeys from east to west, there must be another Sun drawing them toward itself that we do not see. The Sun we are looking at is the Sun within the relative world, the Sun of spirit within relativity. But the Sun they are facing is the inner Sun of Spirit, the plenitude of Consciousness.

The Sun the flowers and other figures look toward is the Sun of the transcendental world, the world of the Spirit within which the individual spirits journey toward perfect union with It after they leap over the wall dividing the two realms from one another. Of course there is only one Sun, but in our present experience they seem to be two, since the Divine is manifesting as both the Relative and the Absolute.

In the foreground we find a naked child astride a white horse, holding in his left hand a huge orange banner, orange also being a solar color and the color of fire

which is an earthly form of the fiery, blazing Sun. This child has just leapt over the wall on the back of the horse, which represents cosmic energy that operates in all things, including the physical, astral and causal bodies of the individual human being. The entire human complex is an evolution machine.

The naked child is the spirit, the true nature of the individual human, which by utilizing the cosmic energy of evolution inherent in its bodies has transcended duality and its laws of continual rebirth and death. Since it has left all the coverings of ignorance and self-forgetfulness behind, it is naked—being only what it is. It is crowned with small sunflowers representing its totally spiritual consciousness which is the determining factor in its leap over the dividing wall. The red feather in its crown is its joyful self-celebration in its new freedom, because it has attained the full answer to the prayer:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.
Lead me from darkness to the Light.
Lead me from death to Immortality.

Spiritual freedom is the message of this card. But it can also mean freedom of any kind, for all true freedom leads to spiritual freedom if taken advantage of fully.

And that is it: Free At Last. It is up to to you discern what exactly that means to the consultant.

Divinatory meaning

This card is telling the consultant that he should strive toward freedom (you will have to determine *from* and *to* what), has already attained freedom, or must become established in his freedom.

It also may be telling the consultant to make spiritual growth and freedom his primary life focus.

And it may be telling him that because he has left that spiritual orientation out of his life he is in the present condition or situation. He must learn to use his spiritual faculties and begin living in spiritual consciousness, in spiritual perspective.

He should note that no one has jumped over the wall along with the child, so he should be prepared for it to be a solitary journey that may seem folly to everyone else around him.

This card is a message to divest ourselves of all that is not ourselves, that is obscuring and even hiding our true Self from our present state of awareness.

It can be an exhortation to seek the hidden treasure within: the true Self.

We should live in the real world, not the false world of appearance and illusion.

And we should use what we have within us to get over the wall. The ability is there, but we must get in touch with it and use it.

The card can also be advising us to learn what the particular “wall” that divides us from the fullest life might be and to get over it or break through it.

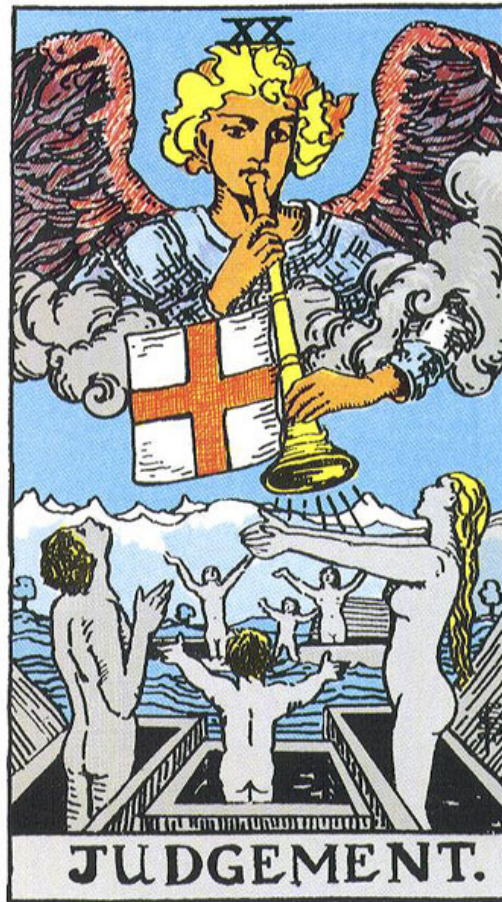
There is no compromise or accommodation in this card. It is All Or Nothing.
(Most people settle for nothing.)

The sunflowers tell us to keep facing the Sun of spirit only, turning from everything else.

A friend of mind used to say: "You will only get in life what you settle for." Settle for nothing but the Ultimate.

The highest meaning of this card is to seek God and leave all else behind. The highest level of consciousness must become our permanent, unchanging state.

XX-Judgement



Commentary

This is a resurrection card. Why it is called Judgement I have no idea, even though conventional Christian belief is that first comes the resurrection and then the judgment. But there is no element of judgement in this card at all.

At the top we see the angel sounding a trumpet with a banner of the Cross attached to it. However, the cross is an equal-bar cross, not the cross of crucifixion but the bar of equalization, of perfect balance and stability. Certainly eternity is just such a state; not immobility, but a condition in which unhindered evolution can proceed without causing any disruption of the perfect rest and clear peace that characterizes eternity.

Therefore this card represents a very real awakening into “newness of life.”

Responding to the trumpet, people are arising from stone tombs whose lids have been thrust aside. All have their hands raised in praise, rejoicing and thanksgiving.

Freedom, release and unalloyed joy characterize this card.

Divinatory meaning

This will not be hard to figure out. It is a resurrection into a new phase of life—an awakening, even a revelation and a call to higher life.

Or it can indicate renewal in some aspect.

Certainly this can be a Eureka! card.*

This resurrection can be physical, mental or spiritual. But it is definite. There is nothing tentative or tenuous about this resurrection. It is here to stay; no possible retrogression is shown here.

It is very hard to imagine that the consultant will not know what this card is talking about, because resurrection of any kind is a moving from a prior state to something quite new and different.

Of course, the card may mean that the consultant must resurrect himself or some factor in his life, either past or potential.

It may be warning him that he must not underestimate or undervalue this new cycle he has entered.

The figures of men, women and children may be an indication of a total resurrection of the individual, or it may be a resurrection of the consultant's past, present or future in some degree.

Usually this card depicts resurrection of consciousness, and sometimes the creativity needed to objectify that resurrection in practical life.

The attitudes of the figures indicate that this resurrection is a good and happy thing and therefore that the consultant must be view it as such, since it can be a negative habit to consider change as unsettling, chancy or possibly detrimental.

It can also be advising the consultant to bring forth something, to stop delaying and bring about a needed—perhaps drastic—change. Wake Up! may be the message. Resurrect Yourself.

It can also be telling him to turn back to the past and build on something there, or to let the past live rather than stifle it.

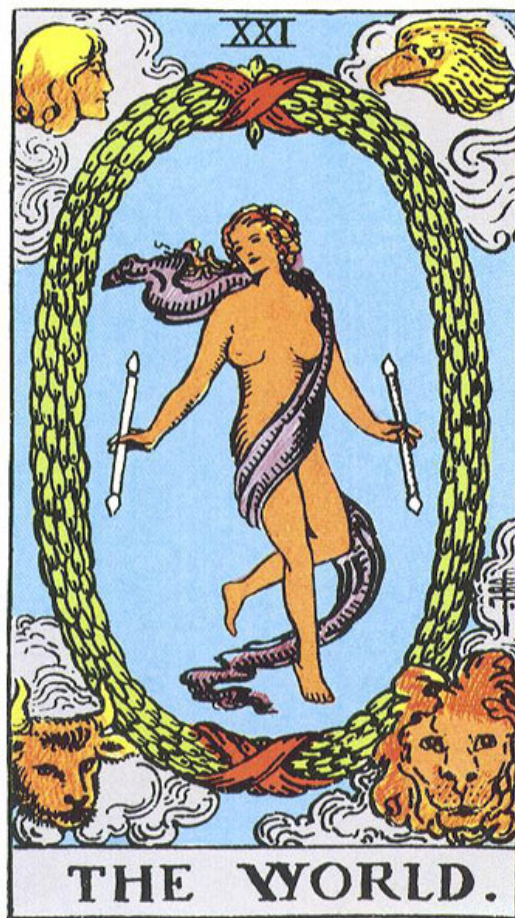
Sometimes it can mean that the resurrection is not good or favorable and it should not be permitted to affect the consultant or his life. But frankly I doubt if that will ever happen in your readings.

Nevertheless, a card can mean just about anything at a certain time. That is why in the introductory material I advised you to read through the exposition of the cards two or three times and then forget about it and let the cards speak to you—not me. That is a primary trait of this deck, which is why those without divinatory ability either switch to another deck with very constricted and rote meanings, or continue to give worthless readings with this deck. I have observed at psychic fairs that those who use this deck are usually duds who do not really care whether they give a good reading or not—just so they get paid for it. However, use of this deck can mean you have found a real treasure, for like a good chiropractor (a rare thing, indeed), skilled readers of the Waite deck are worth more than their weight in gold. They truly do See All and Tell All.

* “Eureka” is Greek, meaning: “I have found it.” This is the exclamation attributed to Archimedes, who is said to have cried out “Eureka! eureka!” (I have found it! I have found it!), upon suddenly discovering a method of finding out how

much the gold of King Hiero's crown had been alloyed. Hence, an expression of triumph concerning a discovery.

XXI–The World



Commentary

As with the Wheel of Fortune, in the four corners we have the four living creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation. At top left the Man represents the virtue of reason. At top right the Eagle represents the virtue of spiritual vision and union with God as the goal. At bottom left the ox represents the virtue of sacrifice. At bottom right is the lion represent the virtue of courage. These four are the necessary factors to bring about the result so vividly shown in this card.

A crown of victory encircles a dancing female figure which can represent either the consultant or the subject of the consultation—even a person who is of significance in the subject.

She holds two double-headed wands which signifies total comprehension and control—potential and actual—of all things relating to this card.

Is the dancing figure stepping forward or backward, or is she doing a kind of stationary two-step—back and forth? Sometimes this is significant.

She is loosely swathed in purple, signifying her rulership of whatever the victory consists of or concerns.

The red bindings at top and bottom of the crown of victory indicate that it is

stable and even permanent.

Victory is the word of this card, and the freedom and hope it carries with it. It further indicates limitless possibilities, of rising above all limitation and opposition, for the figure dances in limitless space, in the boundless sky.

Total success is another meaning of this card. Freedom from bonds and from doubt and from the possibility of failure is also shown.

This card is called The World, but it actually shows someone who has transcended the world, who has conquered the currents of the world and gone up above the world to the infinity which is the source of it all.

Divinatory meaning

All of the above.

It is either a prediction or a picturing of what has already become a reality.

If one of the four corner figures stands out, then that quality is a key factor in the result shown by this card. And it may mean that quality must be cultivated to bring this victory about or make it permanent.

So this card means utter victory, utter success, complete mastery, perfect attainment, everything exactly right and the total fulfillment of desires and goals.

0-The Fool



Commentary

This is a card of being In The Spirit, even though it can come up in readings about mundane subjects.

(In fact, most of the major arcana in this deck are of a high spiritual order and meaning, which certainly indicates that reading about the highest spiritual questions and subjects can be done with this deck.)

The number of this card is Zero because it speaks of a realm completely outside the sequence of ordinary earthly life. It is a card of transcendental reality, of that which is untouched by the world and which the world cannot touch.

In the upper right corner of this card is a white sun in a golden sky. This is not the sun and sky of the material universe, but the spiritual sun and sky behind and beyond them. So we are seeing into the spiritual world and witnessing phenomena of the highest spiritual character.

The central object is the figure of a man walking along in a state of high exaltation dressed in rich clothing. Even his belt is formed of golden coins. There is nothing impoverished about this man.

In his right hand he carries a staff of the sort used in official state functions. It is

also the staff commonly used by bishops of the Eastern Church when in a semi-official, non-liturgical capacity. The fact that he uses it to carry his scrip (wallet) indicates that even what is mundane about him is really of an exalted and spiritualized character.

He wears a cap with a long scarlet feather like that of the spirit-child in the Sun card. Here, too, the red feather represents joyful self-celebration in freedom, because of having attained the full answer to the prayer: "Lead me from the unreal to the Real; lead me from darkness to the Light; lead me from death to Immortality."

In his left hand he carries a white rose matching the color of the sun, which symbolizes the full blooming of spiritual consciousness which is always with him—at hand.

A little white dog accompanies him. In medieval literature a dog was considered a necessary companion for a wanderer, especially a wandering artisan, storyteller or minstrel. This underlines the freedom and blessed homelessness of the young man.

Yet the whole world is his home. He is free of all confinement and therefore free of all limitation. He looks up to the sky because it is his abode.

High upon the pinnacle of a mountain, he seems as though he might walk right over the edge, indicating his utter heedlessness of earthly rules and order. If he did walk over the edge he would not be harmed for angels would bear him up lest he be dashed upon the stones below.

Taken all together, we see the traits of Divine Folly, of a Fool for Christ's sake—of the expression of the Christ Life in this world—a world which is so inimical to that folly which is the true wisdom of the real world of the spirit, and without which no one can enter there.

Below him are mountains that are mere dwarves in comparison with his vantage point.

This card depicts the blessed state of being in the wisdom which is foolishness to the world, and to whom the wisdom of the world is but foolishness. The Wise Fool would not be an inappropriate title of this card.

This is also a card of divine inspiration and creativity.

Divinatory meaning

This card usually means that whatever the consultant is contemplating is a truly inspired endeavor even though it might seem foolish or even dangerous.

It may indicate that the consultant is being led from on high. Certainly it is advising the consultant to move ahead without doubt or hesitation.

Often it means that an action is not only wise, but it should be quickly undertaken.

Go Ahead And Fear Not, is the assurance.

In some instances it can be advising the consultant to seek inspiration and insight.

The man's wallet indicates practical consideration as well as inspiration.

Whatever the world may think, he is no idle dreamer, and neither should the consultant be one.

Look carefully at the little dog. Is he bounding along joyfully with the man, or is he jumping up and barking to warn him of danger? For that can also be the message of this card. It can be saying that the consultant must not be like this man, carefree and heedless, lest he fall into disaster.

It may be telling the consultant to stop looking up and look down at the danger right at his feet.

Stop! may also be the meaning of this card.

So this card can also mean folly and not inspired wisdom. Never forget that a card can mean the opposite of its dominant meaning, and can mean what should or will be avoided rather than what will happen. Or what will or will not result.

It can also be telling the consultant to step outside conventionalities and normal thinking and perspectives, to see his situation with completely other eyes than his usual ones.

This card is definitely a call to creativity and unconventionality.

And it is positively saying: Fear Not.

The Minor Arcana

One of the great values of the Waite deck is its use of many figures and objects in the minor arcana, while those of other decks usually only show a certain number of pentacles, cups, swords or wands. Those cards have no meaning of themselves but assigned, traditional meanings for which there is usually no real basis. However, if the diviner accepts an interpretation, then the deck will respond accordingly—he hopes.

The imagery of the Waite deck supplies abundant meanings and though I will speak of many, they are but a fraction of possible meanings. No cards can speak as clearly as the Waite deck. I have seen this over and over.

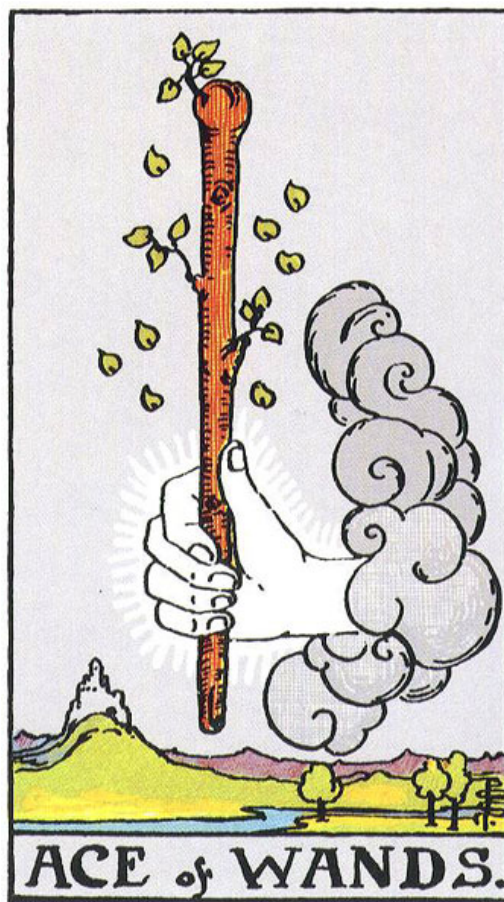
The ability of the deck to be absolutely specific is uncanny. I give an example in the section on the Seven of Cups.

There is no need for comment on the cards, just their divinatory meanings.

Wands

Wands represent power, potential, beginnings, projects and endeavors of any kind, establishment, building construction, business matters in general, strength, power, law and legal matters in general, growth and development, expansion, will power, determination, perception, rulership, mastery, control, government, rules and regulations, progress in general, possession, accumulation, success, intelligence, acumen, security, safety, protection, superiority, stability, creativity, vitality and health matters, including healing.

Ace of Wands



A hand radiant with power and strength firmly grasps a wand that is putting out living branches and leaves that remind us of the flames of the Holy Spirit.

Like all Aces, it can represent the beginning of something.

This implies growth and development in all the things previously listed proper to Wands: power, potential, beginnings, projects and endeavors of any kind, establishment, building construction, business matters in general, strength, power, law and legal matters in general, growth and development, expansion, will power,

determination, perception, rulership, mastery, control, government, rules and regulations, progress in general, possession, accumulation, success, intelligence, acumen, security, safety, protection, superiority, stability, creativity, vitality and health matters, including healing.

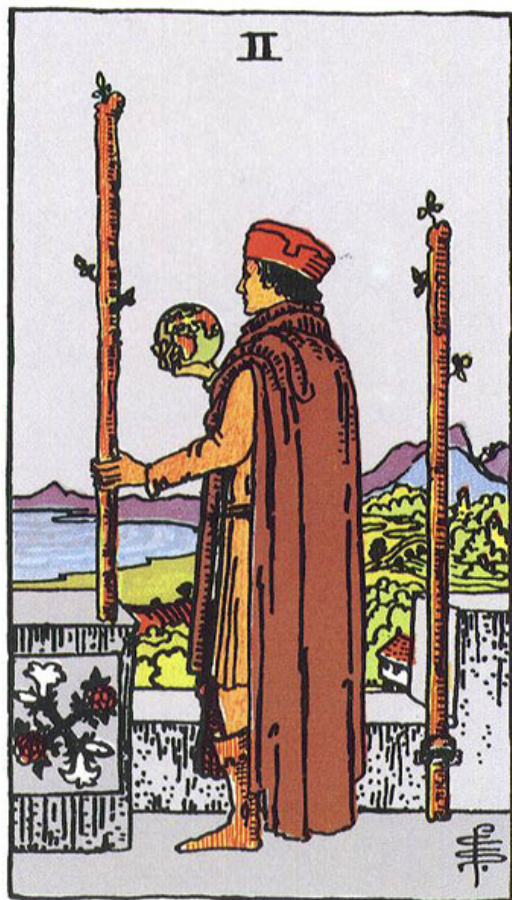
This card can imply invincibility and protection.

It especially implies tremendous strength and resource, even unlimited possibilities.

It is a card of being in charge absolutely.

If the fortress on the hill is the dominant figure in the card, it means perfect safety and being in an unassailable position.

Two of Wands



The man is standing on the parapet of a castle with a symbol of growth and attainment and in a prosperous and peaceful countryside with a tranquil bay, he is holding a wand in his left hand and intently studying a representation of the world in his right hand.

This indicates looking at the world in the connotation and perspective of interests relating to matters represented by wands.

It also represents thinking globally, expansively, cultivating great projects and

working with big ideas.

Awareness of potential gain and potential success as well as potential endeavors are all indicated here.

This is the card of intelligent expansion, of far-reaching goals and intentions and awareness of possibilities.

Obviously the consultant is being advised to do all these things listed here.

It may also be telling him that his present plans are of this character and therefore worthy and advisable.

It also indicates planning and working from a stable base. One staff is actually held by a strip of metal to the stone, underlining this.

Three of Wands



Taken all together, the subject of this card is one: future possibilities. This is represented by the three ships going out to sea that the man is watching from a high vantage point.

The color of the sea is golden, which means that the ships are sailing at dawn with the tide. So it is a card of beginnings.

This card may be saying that a project is a gamble, like sending forth trading ships. It can be a prediction of loss, for many times ships return empty or not at all.

Or it may be saying that as they have gone forth so shall they return, and be

predicting success or at least some gain.

Attention to the future is certainly indicated; that the matter under consideration depends on future developments and possibilities of all the things related to Wands as have been listed at the beginning of this section and in that about the Ace of Wands.

And that is it. It is a very simple card to read.

Four of Wands



In the foreground we see a kind of gateway festooned with vines, leaves and flowers. So this card indicates an opportunity, something to move toward and gain.

The two figures crowned with and waving the same things that form the top of the gateway are a prediction of future gain and happiness.

There is great welcome in this card which means that all will go well and the consultant will find everything congenial and helpful. It may indicate that the consultant will be helped by others in attaining his purpose.

At the left a gathering or some kind of festival is going on, which predicts success, enjoyment and happiness in association with others.

On the right we see a bridge that has the same vines, leaves and flowers of the gateway growing by and on it. This means an opening, an opportunity to cross over to prosperity and success.

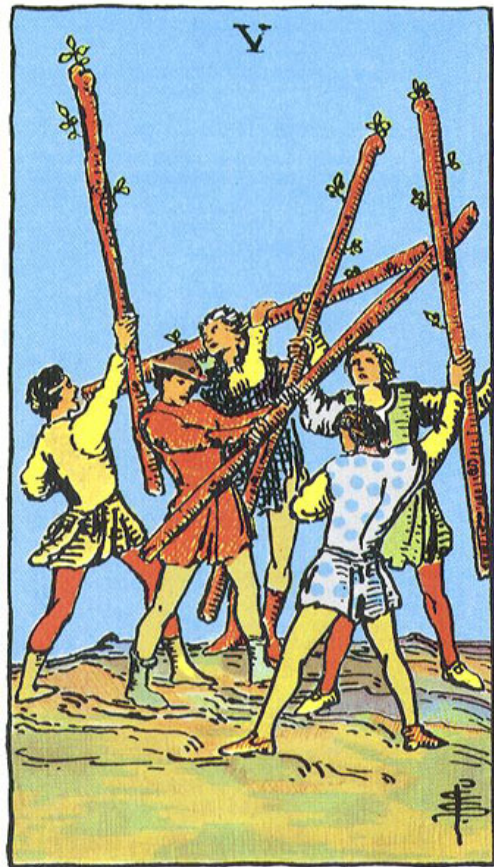
The bridge may mean a change of fortune, but it may also indicate that the consultant will actually go somewhere (travel) to get what he wants. It could even predict a move by the consultant as a requisite for his success.

The walled city in the background can mean prosperity to be attained, or it can mean that the consultant will be able to gain access to opportunities presently closed to him as represented by the wall.

Fundamentally this is an invitation to happiness, gain and success.

It is certainly a Go Ahead card.

Five of Wands



Five men are trying to arrange five wands into a pentagram. The one on the left is holding his up and enthusiastically calling out to the others. He is going to show them the way to manage, to get the solution.

It has always seemed to me that he has just entered carrying the wand that is the missing piece to the puzzle. So it, too, is a kind of Eureka! card.

In every reading in which this card has come up for me it has meant finding or being shown the needed object or knowledge that would complete the picture and enable something to be done successfully.

However, it could simply be an indication that cooperation and listening to one another can bring success to a group project, or even that one person should be the

main supervisor in a group endeavor.

These are simple interpretations, but certainly sufficient.

Six of Wands



This is a victory/success card, and very jubilant. The horse rider is crowned with laurel, as is his wand—so it is his leadership, work or knowledge that has brought about the victory. And he is being acclaimed by those around him who also carry wands, so they were following his lead and winning.

Here again we may have the idea that one person needs to set the tone and be the leader in some endeavor.

It may include the message that others must enter into the effort with the leader and conform their efforts to his, holding the same goals and ideas about how to succeed.

I have always found the expression of the horse as he turns around to look at the victor most amusing. In some readings it indicates that it must be realized that someone or some thing must also be given credit for success. Oftentimes we forget the maxim: "They also serve who merely stand and wait," and do not give credit to those who were not front runners and "big noises," yet without whose humble presence and effort the success would not have occurred or at least not have been such a great success. So no factor or person should go without appreciation and

recognition.

And this card may only mean that victory is assured in the future.

Seven of Wands



Standing on a high place, a man whose expression is agitated and even fearful defends himself with a wand against those who threaten him with wands.

Defense against danger or threat is the basic message of this card—either indication of defense that is going on or advice to take up defense.

This card can depict someone who is attacked by overwhelming opposition. It can be a diagnosis of the situation or recommendation of possible action.

It may also be depicting someone who has been driven back and back until he has had to stand and defend himself. In such a case desperation is the message, along with the statement that the defender has no other option than to fight to the end.

It can be an indication that the consultant must take a stand against opposition.

It may be picturing the situation of one person taking a stance against the many.

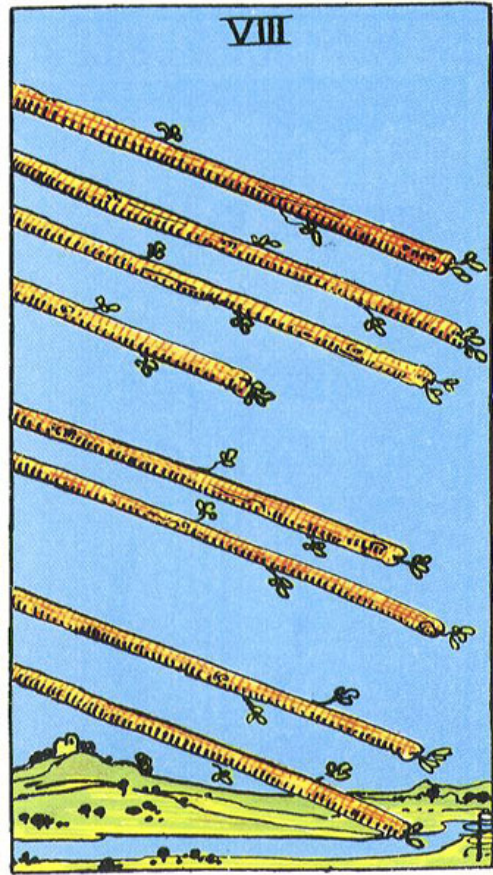
It may also be advice to fight to keep any ground that has been gained, or advice to be prepared for conflict and self-defense.

It is also saying that the high ground must be taken in any conflict. This may indicate that the consultant has already taken the higher ground and must retain it.

There is no indication as to how the conflict will turn out.

It is certainly a card of challenge and crisis, of fear and anxiety and even danger. And may also indicate anger and retaliation.

Eight of Wands



This is a very interesting card—the only card in the deck that has no human element in it whatsoever, since even the Ace cards have a hand holding the symbol of the suit. Nor are there any living figures such as birds. Just eight wands flying through the air.

Fast is the operative word for this card. It means something being done or occurring rapidly—a kind of lightning strike, a fast in and out.

So it may indicate the need for quick action, or the fact that something has or will occur rapidly, perhaps almost instantly.

The rapid flight of wands through the air will be over quickly, so the card may be saying that something will be of very short duration: a project, an event, a conflict or struggle, a span of time or even an idea or opinion. I have had it mean that a person would lose interest very quickly. And it could certainly mean that an association or relationship will last only a short time.

Rapid change is certainly part of this card's message. Since this is a Wand card, it usually means rapid development rather than rapid disintegration.

It can also mean a surprise of some kind.

In sum this card has basically two messages: fast and over quickly.

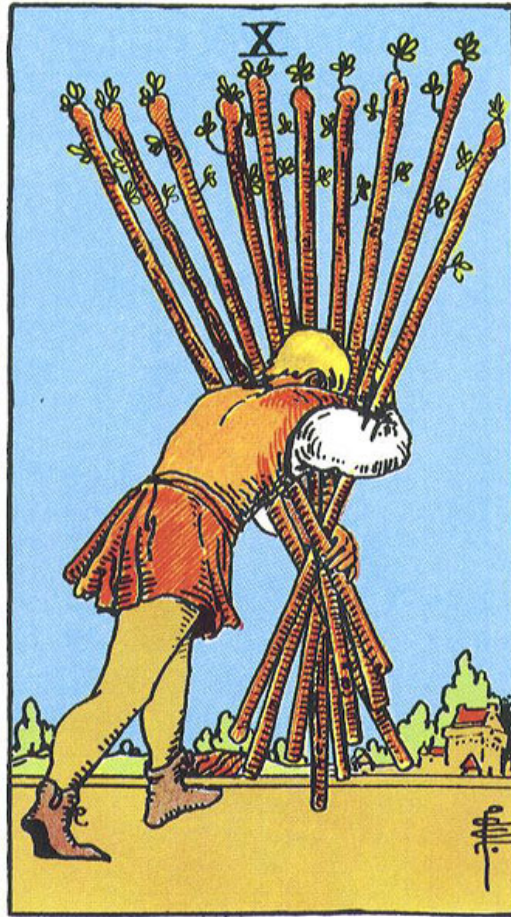
Nine of Wands



This is a very simple card: a man holding a wand has eight wands standing upright behind him. Since no action is going on, it is not a card of conflict, but obviously he is aware of the possibility of some kind of incursion and trouble.

Guarding, protecting, preservation, determination, vigilance, readiness, watchfulness, alertness, circumspection and caution are the words of this card. Your intuition will tell you the details and whether this is advice or a warning or admonition to be prepared for something.

Ten of Wands



This too is a simple card. A man is carrying a bundle of ten wands. Since he is bent over we know that it is heavy and an effort for him to carry.

This card can mean something that is too much to accomplish or handle, or that is precarious.

It may also mean that it must be accomplished in a short time because of the effort needed to sustain it.

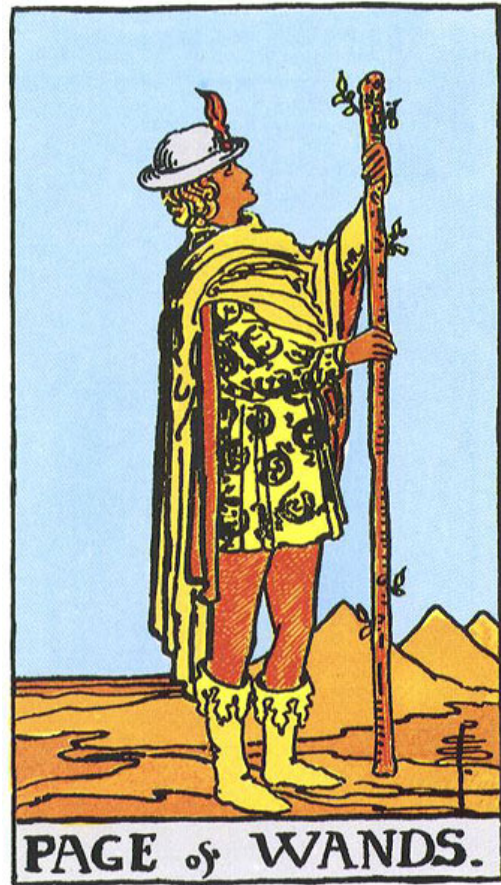
It can mean a person who has undertaken something that is either too much or extremely difficult and chancy for him.

This may even be a prediction of failure because of overestimation of one's own strength, or an underestimation of the project undertaken, either in its gravity, scope or in what would be required or just its nature.

Or it can mean that whatever the magnitude of the thing being contemplated, it can be successfully completed.

Since the ten card in any suit indicates an abundance of what that suit represents, it can be saying that the contemplated action or situation will provide the consultant with all that is needed, that it predicts complete fulfillment and satisfaction, that the subject of the reading will be all that is desired.

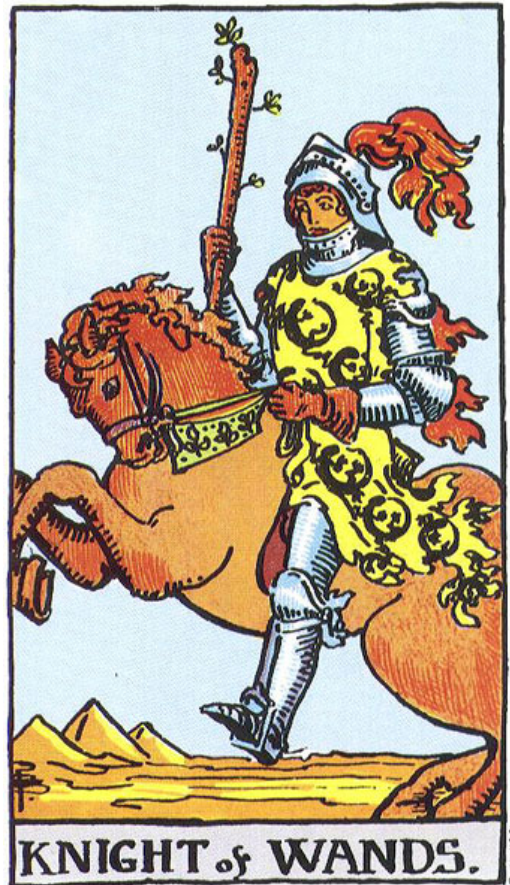
Page of Wands



In all the suits, pages are thoughts or plans about the things the particular suit deals with. So this card is either advising such thoughts or saying that they are taking place.

Again: Wands represent power, potential, beginnings, projects and endeavors of any kind, establishment, building construction, business matters in general, strength, power, law and legal matters in general, growth and development, expansion, will power, determination, perception, rulership, mastery, control, government, rules and regulations, progress in general, possession, accumulation, success, intelligence, acumen, security, safety, protection, superiority, stability, creativity, vitality and health matters, including healing.

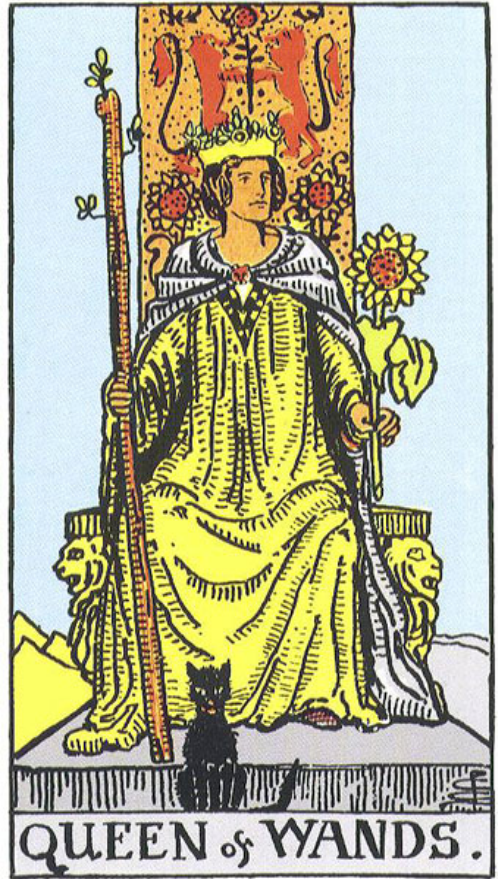
Knight of Wands



In all the suits, knights are actual actions about the things the particular suit deals with. For this reason they are holding the emblems of the suits in front of them as though presenting them to the world at large. The horses they sit upon represent the power necessary to accomplish those actions. So a knight also represents intelligent direction of actions as well as the actions themselves which relate to the things represented in that suit.

So the Knight of Wands represents actions in relation to: power, potential, beginnings, projects and endeavors of any kind, establishment, building construction, business matters in general, strength, power, law and legal matters in general, growth and development, expansion, will power, determination, perception, rulership, mastery, control, government, rules and regulations, progress in general, possession, accumulation, success, intelligence, acumen, security, safety, protection, superiority, stability, creativity, vitality and health matters, including healing.

Queen of Wands



This is a very important card. It shows strong and positive material consciousness and strength, and strength of will. Let us not forget that the Wands also mean will-power, and we can interpret everything in the light of the idea of will-power.

The tapestry behind the Queen depicts lions and sunflowers—and she holds a sunflower in her right hand. Both lions and sunflowers represent solar elements, and the Wands suit represents the fire element. Her golden crown (with green leaves), her yellow robe and gold throne underline this.

Beside the lions, two other animals are in this card. The brooch holding her cape closed is in the shape of a fox head. Sitting below the throne is a snarling black cat whose fur is standing up.

The sunflower represents benevolence, strength, success and prosperity. This give a clue to the general atmosphere of the situation depicted by the card, or it can be revealing the character of the person (usually a woman) represented by the card.

The fox and cat indicate feline traits, including intense selfishness.

The fox of course represents cunning and stealth.

The cat indicates possible hostility, opposition and perhaps treachery from some source associated with the Queen, though not from the Queen herself. The cat can also mean the need for caution, even in dealing with the Queen.

Together the fox and cat may indicate the character of either a person involved besides the Queen or the secondary character of the situation in which the Queen is the central figure.

If the card represents a person, be assured that she will not reveal her thoughts, nor will she deal with you straight on, but with caution and even wariness. She entrusts herself to no one, and never lets down her guard. She always weighs the implications of everything.

There is a reserve in the Queen and an intellectual ascendancy that tells the consultant he must use intelligence and circumspection in approaching the Queen, for she inspects and analyzes everything. Emotion or appeal to emotion can accomplish nothing good, and will no doubt bring harm. So will any kind of attempted manipulation or deception. Everything must be open and totally truthful and honest. The Queen is benevolent, but falsehood, deceit and dishonesty can turn her into an enemy.

This is a thoroughly No Nonsense card.

And it may be advising the consultant to himself be like the Queen.

King of Wands



There are salamanders and lions on the back of the King's throne, as the Page and Knight had on their clothing. These, too, are emblems of the fire element. He

also has a pendant in the form of a lion's head and salamanders on his cape. (Fire spirits, or elementals, are called salamanders.) His crown of gold has flames instead of the usual crosses in a medieval king's crown, and this underscores the fiery nature of this card. And there is a small salamander standing near his throne.

The King's left hand is held in a fist, which shows tension and possible hostility or aggression as well as apprehension and self-doubt.

The Queen was looking somewhat to the side and not at the reader/consultant, but the King is looking completely away, ignoring us, no doubt intentionally. He is distracted and preoccupied. He may be disinterested in us or he may not even be aware of us.

This has never been a congenial card in my experience. There is non-cooperation and indifference, perhaps tinged with a bit of belligerence, in this card, a definite unwillingness to even acknowledge our presence, much less interact with us at all.

This may indicate a state of things or a person with the King's attitude. It may be personal, toward us, or it may be a habitual attitude toward all.

The card may be warning the consultant that he will encounter this in any proposed action or project, or it may be warning him to not be like the King.

The salamander by the throne has never seemed to me to have much significance except as a symbol, an indication of the "climate" of the card, in contrast to the Queen's cat. Nevertheless it can mean some presence of fire or hostility better left unprovoked.

The entire card shows a situation or individual that must be approached with great wariness and caution. You might want to ask the consultant if it is absolutely necessary to chance an encounter like this instead of seeking an alternative.

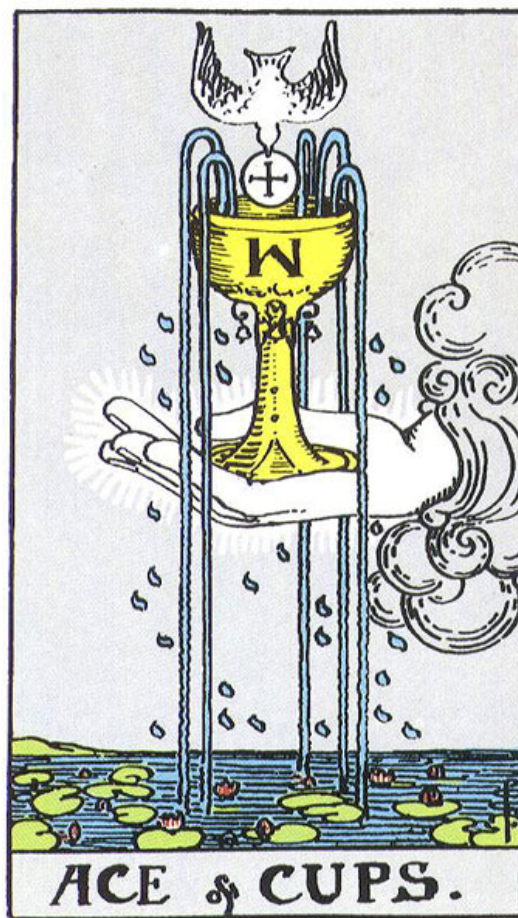
Certainly the King is a difficult personality, stubborn and narrow.

This card would be an ideal symbol of a person with great authority and wealth that only inherited it and has no concept of what to do or not do with it, and is better left alone.

Cups

Cups deal with the symbolic water element. Cups represent emotion, intuition, psychic abilities, imagination, inspiration and spiritual life in its various aspects, including guidance from spiritual, psychic or even divine sources, including the diviner's or consultant's own higher Self. They can also represent happiness and fulfillment as well as love, romantic and familial, and deep friendship. Interestingly, whereas the Ten card in other suits represents abundance of the things represented by that suit, the Ten of Cups only represents great happiness and satisfaction, especially in familial matters. It is the Ace of Cups that is the strongest card in the suit, representing abundance and strength of all the things listed above. It is certainly the most spiritual of all the minor cards in the deck and especially indicates spiritual inspiration and guidance.

Ace of Cups



As I have just said, the Ace of Cups is the strongest card in the suit, representing abundance and strength of all the things listed above. It is certainly the most spiritual of all the minor cards in the deck and especially indicates spiritual

intuition, insight, inspiration and guidance—even the descent of Divine Consciousness.

It also represents sacramental Christianity and the power of the Holy Spirit (the Dove and the little flame-water shapes beneath) manifested through those sacraments. So this card may represent religious life in its higher, even mystical, aspects.

It is also the beginning of spiritual life and its maintenance as well.

Divine communication is also shown here.

At the bottom of the card we find water and lotuses growing in it. In the East the lotus has for thousands of years been considered an emblem of spiritual growth and enlightenment, full realization-evolution of the spiritual potential in each one of us, so it may be telling you something about that in relation to the consultant. See how the Water of Life streams out of the cup to increase the water in which the lotus grows. Perhaps you will need to understand exactly what that “water” might be in the reading.

This card can be advice to cultivate or continue those things which Cups represent (you will have to determine which), or engage in or enter or strengthen those things, because they are crucial to the consultant.

Though the high, spiritual aspects are so evident in this card, it may be a message about personal and shared happiness and fulfillment—intense and spiritual love, for example.

This is a card that must be acted on or accepted right now, even if it is a call to some future development or attainment.

Two of Cups



I have always found this to be a fortunate card.

This is the card of offering exchange of love, good will, partnership or some type of cooperation. It can even be the establishing of some form of bond between two people or even groups of people, countries or businesses, etc. You may want to ask yourself if this is an offering of cups or an accomplished exchange. Also, do their crowns—laurel leaves and roses—have a significance? The laurel seems more proper to the man, and roses to the woman. Therefore ask: have they exchanged crowns as well, as in the Eastern Orthodox wedding ceremony? (Something certainly known to Waite.)

Above we see a winged lion's head watching. This is the Lion-faced Power written about by the ancient Christian Gnostics. Wherever this is, there is hidden danger, or at least a potential danger. It is in this card because all kinds of partnerships contain a strong element of risk of conflicts, betrayal and even worse. His presence is only there to alert you if that is the case in a particular consultation, but I have found that usually it has no meaning in a reading, but is there to fill things out if it is needed.

Below the lion's head is the caduceus, or rod of Asclepius, the healer. The god Mercury also carried this staff, and the planet Mercury rules health and healing, and

many medical associations use it in their logos. In this case it is a protection of the proposed union or cooperation. So in a reading it is a good idea to determine which seems more prominent or alive: the lion or the caduceus.

The cottage in the background may indicate domesticity of some sort.

This card is very calm, even noble, so it is not intended to depict passion, but real love: agape, not eros. Certainly it is a card of “the marriage of two minds.” Harmony is there, too.

On the mundane level, this could mean exchange of ideas, the offering of an opportunity, the proposal for a partnership or the offer of a partnership. It could even be spiritual cooperation. Certainly, exchange is the fundamental meaning of the card, but harmonious exchange congenial to both.

Three of Cups



This is a very happy card, actually a card of fulfillment and rejoicing—usually of more than one person, as association or cooperation of some kind seems implied.

The fruits and vegetables on the ground denote abundance, and although it is difficult to be sure, the figure on the right may be holding a cornucopia.

Everything is going well for these three as they dance around, and the future seems unobstructed happiness.

Naturally this is a good fortune and success card.

It can also be indicating a most fortunate partnership, for it is certainly a working-together card.

Four of Cups



This is a card of indifference or refusal, as the man's arms are crossed. So the first question is whether this is a right or a wrong indifference or refusal, wise or unwise.

The question will be whether the indifference or refusal is because he is disinterested or does not want what is offered, or because he already has enough of what is being offered.

The hand coming out of a cloud can mean that the offering is completely unexpected, "out of the blue."

Is there a possibility that the man does not even see the cup—that the offering is unknown?

I have found that often some psychic element is indicated by this card, or some kind of urging from the subconscious.

I have also found that frequently there may be a kind of obstinacy about the indifference or refusal, that it springs from laziness or simple contrariness.

There is also a kind of solitariness about this card, that the man is alone in this situation or is keeping it to himself.

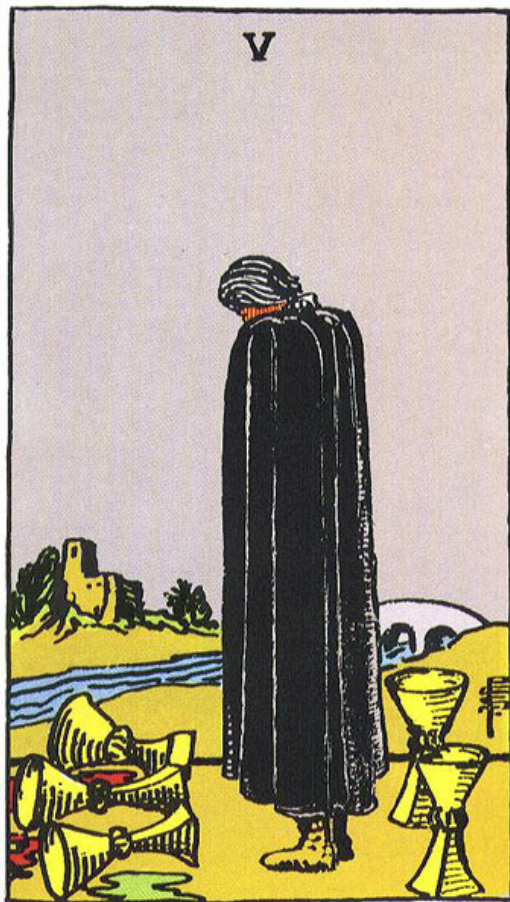
There is an atmosphere of discontent, disappointment or depression about this card, as well.

Keep in mind the things that cups represent to determine what particular thing is being ignored or refused.

Is the consultant advised to do the ignoring or refusal, or is the consultant who is being refused? It may be a prediction of future refusal.

This is a card of No. Is it No Interest, No Need or No Desire?

Five of Cups



This is card of grief, disappointment, regret or loss.

It may be a result of wasting something, or having neglected, delayed or refused something which was then lost.

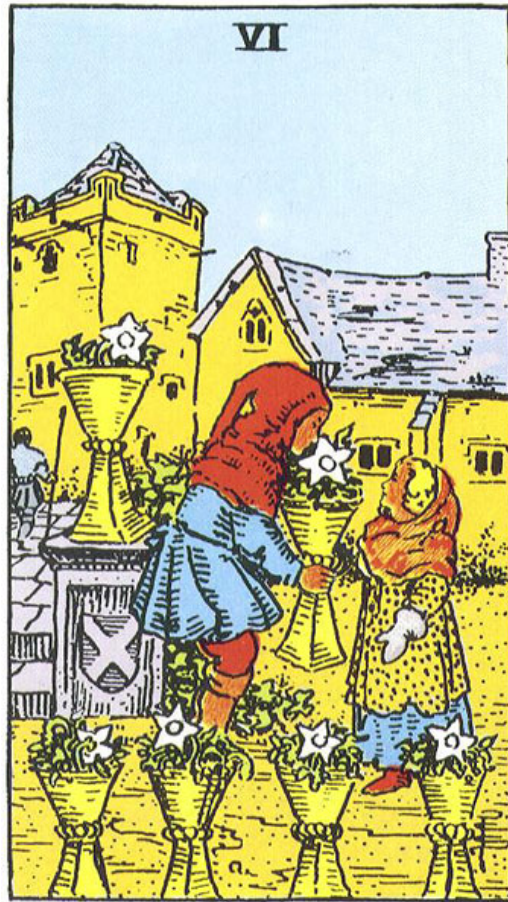
How did the cups fall over?

Does the building, river or bridge have a meaning?

Every time I have had this card turn up it indicates a permanent and irreparable situation, and therefore the grief.

The two cups left standing may be a message that it is not a total loss, however.

Six of Cups



Here again we have an offering. In this tranquil, idyllic and prosperous setting a boy offers a cup with a flower in it to a girl.

So this is a card of great affection and kindness.

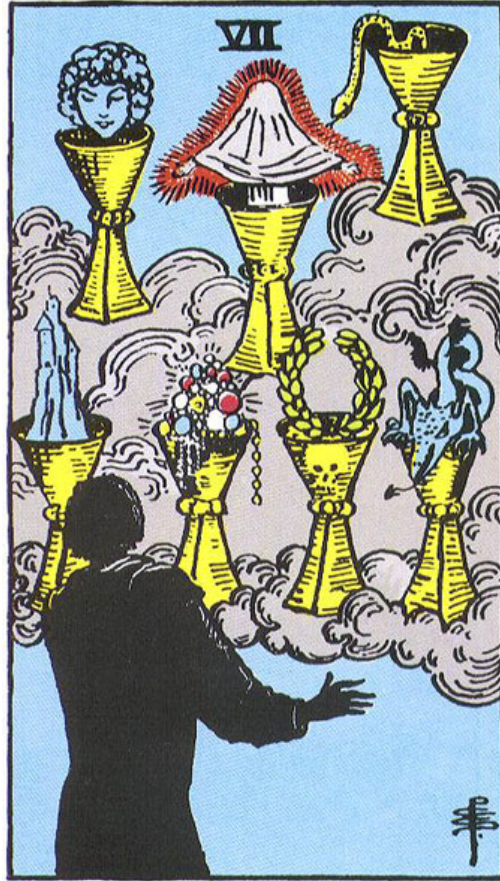
Since they are children this card does not depict the love of mature beings, so there is no touch of romance here, but the pure affection of children who are close to each other. The offering may be of something material or not, but it certainly indicates profound feelings for another. It radiates unselfishness and in no way is meant to gain something for the giver but the satisfaction of giving and expressing innocent and simple love. There is no ulterior motive here, just the joy of giving and expressing love. It is not impossible that the two are brother and sister.

There is marvelous simplicity of heart and feeling in this scene.

Will the girl accept the cup? I ask this because she is not looking at the boy, but to the side beyond him to the man with a long staff who is walking away. Is he part of this scene or not? He may even be the whole message.

The buildings themselves may be part or all of the message.

Seven of Cups



This is the most mysterious of all the cards in the deck.

In the foreground we see a man looking at the seven cups from which various things are emerging. I always think of him as a magician who has made a magical invocation and gotten more than he expected.

Look first to see if there is one cup that stands out. If not, the card can just mean a bewildering array of possibilities or events that have to be undergone.

Here are a few suggestions about the meaning of the cups:

1) A human head coming up out of the cup. This could mean communication from someone unexpectedly, it could even mean communication from the spirit world, because definitely the implication is that this is a disembodied entity, which is why it is blue.

2) A serpent crawling out of the cup. This looks very much like Saint Benedict's cup that is shown with the serpent representing the poison that was in the cup the evil monks gave to him. So this may mean something that is poisonous or the source of poison—not necessarily literally. This could mean hidden enmity and intention to harm, and even malicious thoughts or plotting. Since Saint Benedict made the sign of the cross over the cup and it shattered, this may indicate deliverance from a dangerous situation. Or the need to invoke spiritual power to ascertain the true character of something or someone.

3) A veiled figure surrounded by a red aura. This can be anything “veiled” to us, something that we do not understand.

The red may indicate danger. Or blood.

For example, I got this card in a health reading for a woman who was pregnant. The middle card on the top was the message, but all I got was some kind of risk, so I urged her to see a doctor (she was visiting her mother-in-law so had no access to her regular physician). It was discovered that there was a great danger of rupture of the placenta which could be fatal to the child and even her because of voluminous bleeding. So the card showing a figure under a veil (the placenta) with a red aura (blood) was amazingly on target. She was immediately hospitalized and remained so until the child was safely born.

Both caution and the unmasking of someone or something or some situation be indicated. Perhaps advised.

4) The castle rising from a cup may mean inaccessibility or isolation, or simply some kind of property. One time it was telling me that just as the castle is on a high rock and incredibly difficult to reach, in the same way I should plainly outline to an inquirer all the requirements for entering the monastery, especially the disciplines and what he would have to do to qualify himself.

5) The jewels heaped up in the cup obviously mean wealth or gain of some kind—not necessarily material.

6) The laurel crown in a cup means victory or success of some kind. However, the cup has a skull, the symbol of death or poison, just below the crown. So that could represent a victory or success that will have a detrimental, even deadly, effect on the supposed winner.

7) The malevolent-looking little gnomish type of dragon is definitely evil and represents malice and destructive intent—shamelessly so. It can even be an evil psychic force or entity of some kind. But it could be a person or group of people who are destructive in character.

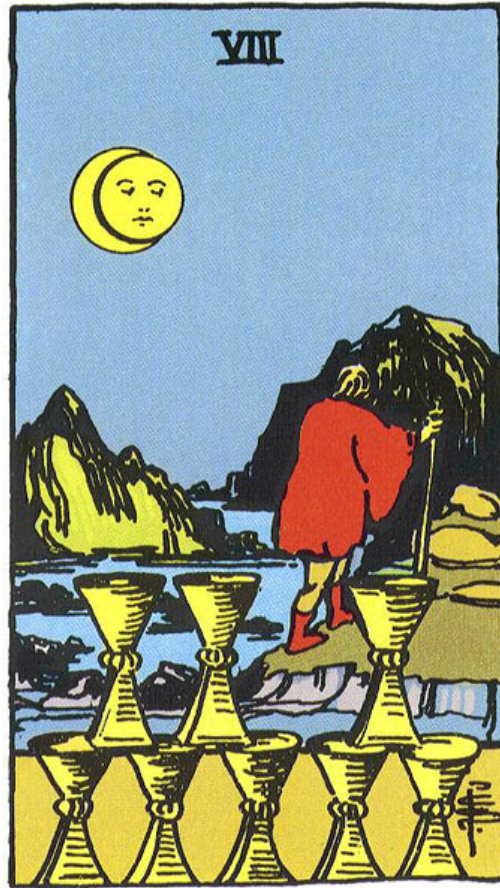
If one cup does stand out, then calmly look at it and see what your first impressions are. I know this will not be easy, but some astonishingly detailed and accurate things can be learned in this card.

Although a couple of these cups could be indicating material things, all seven cups are usually symbolic, even psychic.

By the way, this card can simply mean psychic confusion and incomprehension.

It can also mean unexpected events or results as well as astonishment, bewilderment, shock or fear at something.

Eight of Cups



At the top we see the moon in an advanced eclipse of the sun. You might want to determine if the eclipse is continuing or ending. Or if it is static, and therefore a symbol of not seeing something, of not being fully in the light of perception or intuition.

Certainly this eclipse may be a clue to what this card is showing us further down. By that I mean that the man is walking away because he does not understand or perceive the situation fully. For the eight cups are intact, not as in the Five of Cups where three are spilt.

This is a card of walking away, of abandonment—either because what is being left is not perceived rightly, or because he rightly sees it is to be refused or passed by or because the man does not even see the cups. He may simply be walking by, unaware of what he might gain, or the need of it.

There is no grief in this card, but there is a darkness, a lack of vision oftentimes, that is the source of the man's walking on. Is he heedless or unaware? If he is aware, why does he disregard what might be gained?

Like the Four of Cups, this may be a refusal card.

And sometimes it is advising the consultant to move on and give no heed to what is there. It can be a positive counsel.

Perhaps the man is going on because he considers that the cups are not his, or

that they have no meaning or value for him. And this may be true, though he may just as well be mistaken.

The scenery is desolate and may indicate that there is nothing there really for anyone—that everyone should pass it by. And the moon is tranquil—is that approval of the man's leaving the cups behind? Or does it mean that the eyes of his mind are closed? Or is the message in the scenery, a picturing of the consultant's situation or mental state?

I certainly have had it be advice to ignore something and pass it by. But it can be a warning against just that.

So is the man's action wise or foolish? Or inconsequential?

Nine of Cups



A medieval merchant sits before a table with nine cups—three times three, which signifies completeness.

Since these are Cups, not Pentacles, it is not monetary success and abundance we are being shown, but success and abundance of those things ruled by Cups. However, considering the nature of the Tarot, this card can be picturing success and abundance in any area. It is certainly a happiness card.

The fact that the merchant has his arms folded indicates completion—nothing

more need be done.

Great satisfaction and contentment, as well as security, confidence and assurance, are shown by this card.

This is not a card of luck, but of work well done.

It can be telling a consultant that all has been done that should be done, and therefore it should be left alone. Most gamblers lose everything because after winning a while they decide to win more—but lose. Over and over this happens. So the card is warning against this mistake.

This card can be a message to be content with what one has and not seek for more. John Rockefeller was asked how much money it would take to satisfy him, and he answered: “Just a little bit more.” This card surely warns against that “just a little more” mentality that often spells loss and even ruin.

This card can also be a prediction of outcome, of success.

Always keep in mind that every card can be either a Do or Don’t card.

So this card may be telling a consultant to not be like this merchant, not to seek abundance and security. And not to seek contentment in things relating to Cups.

But it is usually a very fortunate card and very positive and it means definitely, safely possessing what is possessed, without fear of loss.

Ten of Cups



This is a powerful card of unalloyed happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment, and often means that which is shared by others.

Study the figures in the card. Jubilation and a feeling of “home at last” is definitely shown here. And this in relation to all the things relating to all the suits, not just Cups.

This is the card of 100%—maximum experience and benefit of those things relating to Cups.

It does seem to be the end of the journey, but remember that it may be telling a consultant to begin that journey because this happy end is assured.

What I have written is brief, but any further meanings will come to you.

Page of Cups



Page cards always mean thoughts and plans regarding those things that are ruled by the suits to which they belong. Therefore this is a card of thoughts and plans in relation to those things represented by Cups.

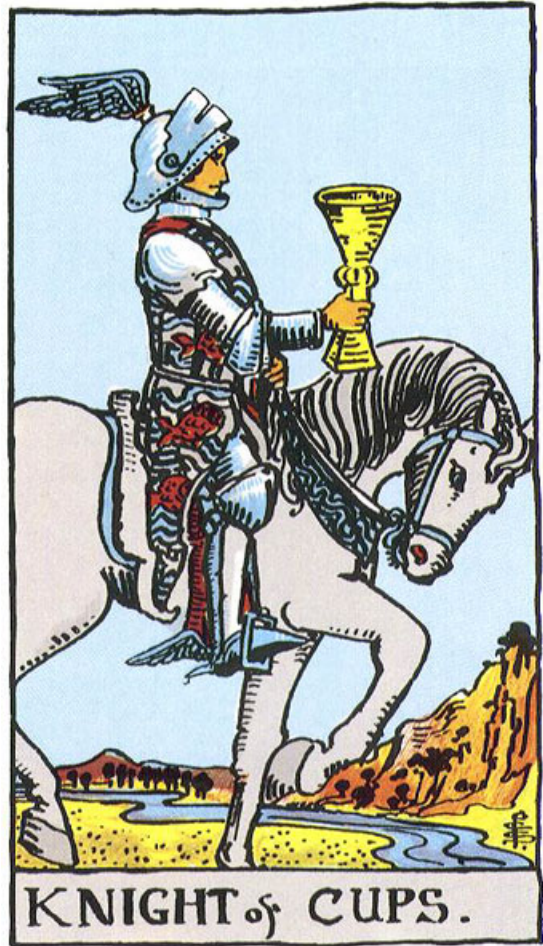
But there is a bit more. A fish is emerging from the cup and speaking to the Page, who is listening to it. This represents psychic/intuitional impressions or communications that are important to the matter.

So this may be an advising that the consultant use intuition (his own or another's) or an affirmation that he has already received some type of psychic impression.

Either way, intuition is being held forth as an important factor in the consultation.

Whether the intuition is incomplete, complete, reliable or unreliable is another question altogether.

Knight of Cups



Actions in relating to Cup matters is the character of this card.

Is the horse hesitating to move forward, or is he moving forward?

Is the river in the desert an indication that the actions of the knight may be “out of element”?

Or is it in danger of eventually disappearing beneath the sand?

Caution may be the message, but so also is the need to act relatively quickly.

Water is the element of cups, so why is this knight in the desert?

Is the message of the card going to be as water in a desert to the consultant? Or that something else will be?

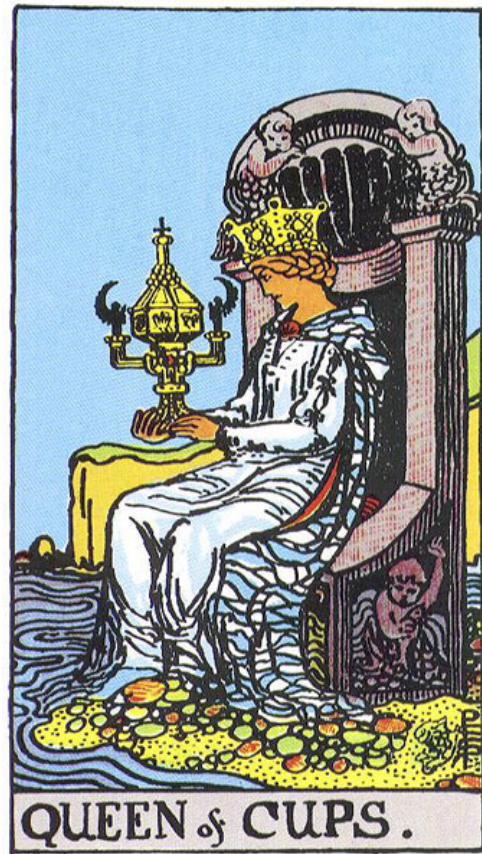
Does this mean that the consultant is not “in his element” in this consultation?

Wings on the knight’s helmet and his feet indicates a higher form of communication and involvement. It is also a symbol of mercury which is illusive and subtle and must be caught quickly and translated into the present situation.

The knight is sitting and holding forth the cup. This may indicate that the consultant must take the cup himself, or that in the thing he is consulting about it is necessary to just hold the matter or advice forward and have it taken by anyone else involved on their own volition.

In one reading I did, this card meant that the consultant should present his ideas or proposals, but that they should not be urged or pushed forward—only held out to be either taken or not taken, accepted or rejected. It must be in the hands of the presented, not the presenter. It must only be made visible and possible. The rest is up to others.

Queen of Cups



This is a person (or situation) involved in the matters of Cups.

The figures on her throne are of undines, the spirits of the water element, and underline her psychic character and the water element as the element of Cups. So also does the carving of the back into a seashell configuration.

She gazes with full concentration at a covered (crowned) chalice. The cross on its top and the adoring angels on either side indicate a possible sacramental character.

The chalice seems closed to her, so she is attempting to penetrate into it psychically, to discover the Mystery within. Therefore this is a card of applied psychic knowledge rather than intellect.

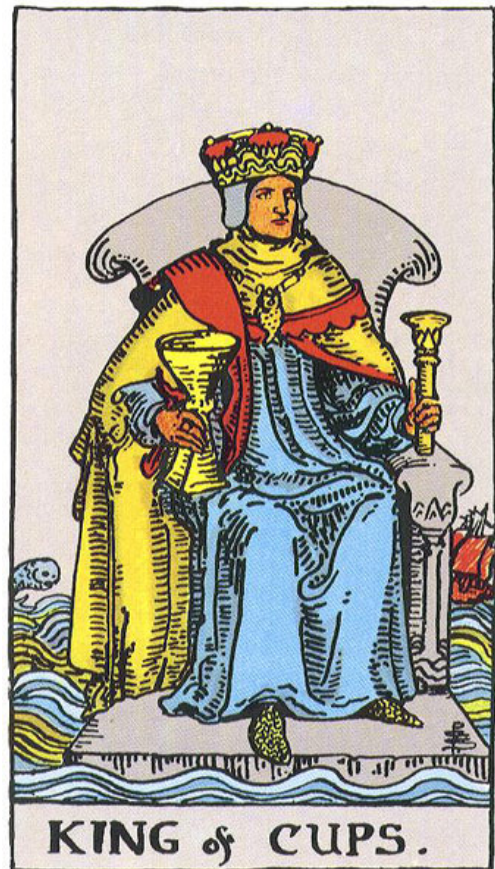
High as the symbolism is, in one reading I found that it merely depicted an unpleasant, controlling woman who insisted on knowing everything so she could direct everything. I was able to describe her personality completely. I even heard her

say a phrase that was often in her mouth—much to the surprise of the consultant who told me everyone around her was sick of hearing it continually. So be open to its message sometimes being on a quite mundane level.

As I said, it is a card of bending intuition and will to the discovery of something. Divination can even be part of the message.

This card can be advising the consultant to focus his mind and intuition on the problem or question and find its resolution or answer.

King of Cups



The water element is certainly obvious here: the fish pendant around the King's neck, the lotus scepter in his left hand, the lotus and water motif on the arm and side of his throne, the leaping whale, the ship and the surging sea around his throne.

This is a man or a situation thoroughly embodying all the things represented by Cups.

Unlike the Queen, the King is not intent on anything, but sits in tranquility and confidence. He does not look at us, but we must not forget that in the Victorian era of which Waite was a classic representative, people did not have their portraits or photographs made facing directly at the observer or camera. They always looked to the side because that seemed more modest and dignified. Neither of my

grandmothers ever had a photograph taken facing the camera, but always looking somewhat to the side. In a group photo taken when I was very small, all the younger people are looking into the camera, but my grandmother and those her age are all looking to the side. However, that is no reason to assume that in the Tarot it does not have some meaning, such as reluctance to deal with the consultant, or even a disregard of the consultant or inattention to his question.

The King may even be a psychic seer—as the Queen may be also.

This is a card of Psychic Presence. Yet it must not be forgotten that many other things are involved in Cups: emotion, intuition, psychic abilities, imagination, inspiration, spiritual life, spiritual inspiration, guidance from spiritual, psychic or even divine sources, including one's higher Self, happiness, fulfillment love romantic and familial, and deep friendship.

You will have to decide if this card is a person or a condition or a state of mind.

This card can mean a person with intuitional ability and rulership of intuition, or it can just mean that state of mind.

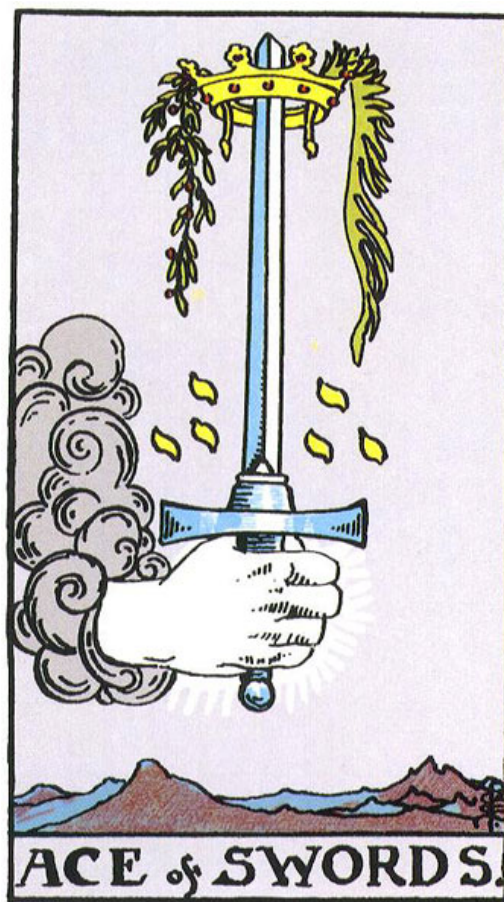
Mastery of emotion, mastery of intuition, mastery of spiritual force—all are indicated here.

He may even be someone who has transcended ordinary intuition. You will have to decide.

Swords

Swords represent conflict, opposition, disruption, anger, hostility, aggression, hatred, injury, destruction and violence—even war. Pain, grief, suffering, frustration and despair are also a major part of Swords. Offence—the opposite of defence—is definitely here as well. It can also mean girding up the loins and wading into the conflict in a positive manner, as well. It can be a card of taking charge, though a very aggressive taking charge. It can even be rulership, but rulership through the qualities of Swords. Cataclysmic or drastic change can also be indicated. Death, too, is in this suit as the Ten of Swords plainly shows. And fear is very much here. Swords may also imply swift action.

Ace of Swords



Since this Sword is crowned, it certainly can mean victory through the things represented by Swords. It is the distillation, the quintessence of all that Swords involve.

The green plants may even mean that something positive will result, that something will be planted or established through the Sword.

The little flames of the Holy Spirit tell us that something good and righteous may result from this card.

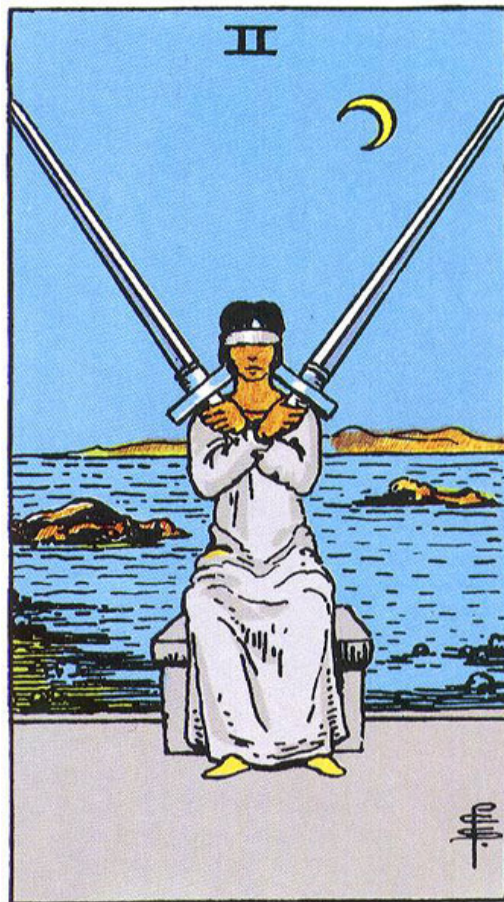
Though much that Swords deals with is unpleasant and upsetting, do not forget that something positive may be the actual message. But that positive meaning will still be Swordlike.

Certainly this is an Action and Take Charge card. And sometimes it is a Stand For The Right, Stand Up And Be Counted, card.

Victory in legal matters is definitely included in this card.

Force and Power are embodied in the Ace of Swords.

Two of Swords



The crescent moon in the sky indicates that there is minimal perception in this card—except for the fact of minimal perception.

Actually the moon here is a hint of The Moon card, and indicates an atmosphere of threat, even danger—a feel of being unsafe.

The sea in the background represents flux and uncertainty with little on which to become stable and sure.

The figure seated on the shore is blindfolded and is depicting the condition of having no idea what is going on and consequently being apprehensive, perhaps even

fearful, and certainly to some degree hostile.

This card shows someone who is unable to know what is really going on, or what will be going on.

As a result, she holds a sword in each hand, ready for assault—but how will that be possible when blindfolded?

So this is a card of No Way Out from the situation this card is showing us.

Hopelessness and practical helplessness is also part of this card's message.

Futility is the key word of this card.

Vigilance as well as readiness for conflict and self-defence is certainly part of the message, as well.

This card can represent that feeling of vague unease, of something not being quite right, that we have all experienced.

It is also conviction of something being wrong—but having no idea what.

This card may also depict a person who knows something is wrong, and even what it is that is wrong, but has no idea how it came about, who might be behind it. or what to do about it.

Awareness of negativity but unawareness of the cause or source is part of this picture.

In some readings the blindfold may mean nothing, and you must interpret that card as though the woman can see clearly and thus be ready for encounter with danger.

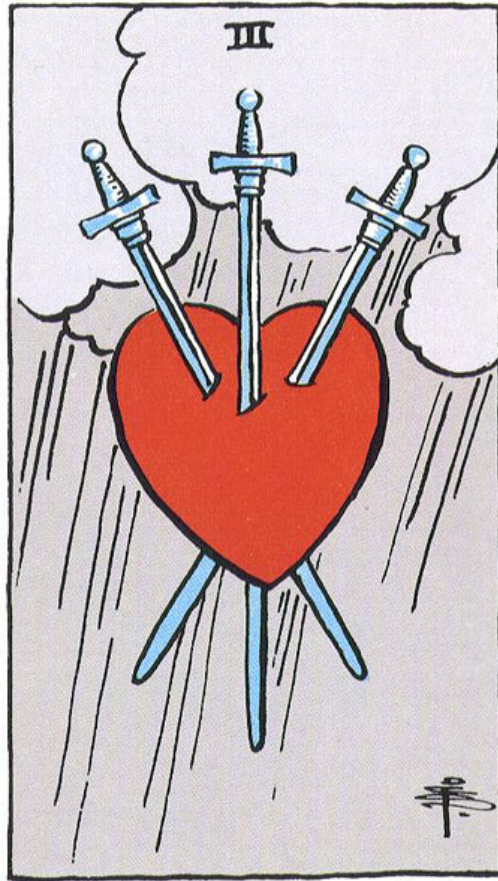
On the other hand, the blindfold may be everything, so the Sword character of the card will mean nothing. It will just be saying someone is blind or unaware.

This can certainly be a card of fear and isolation, even paranoia.

Sometimes, though, it advises vigilance and being alert.

And it can mean Take Off the Blindfold And See What Is Going On.

Three of Swords



Storm clouds and rain in the background tell us this is a card of agitation, even confusion as well as gloom and even darkness.

The heart pierced with three swords tell us this is a card of suffering, anguish, pain, grief, disappointment, sorrow, heartbreak and intense misery or unhappiness.

When this card comes up in a reading it is literally “a dire warning.”

I do not think you will have trouble figuring out the import of this card, but do not forget that it can be saying what is the situation now or what it will be if precautions are not taken, and even what will be prevented if right advice is taken.

Sometimes this might not be a prediction of actual pain or a real misfortune but a prediction of someone’s very negative emotional reaction.

Four of Swords



Now we have something completely different: the absence or cessation of conflict. Of course it is a tomb, but that is certainly a place of total absence of conflict or struggle. You will need to determine if this is a permanent state or only temporary, negative or positive.

A stained glass window shows a man kneeling before the Virgin Mary, in whose halo is the word Pax—Peace. So this part of the card means very definitely a positive peace and perhaps even a spiritual peace. Certainly it is blessedness.

Definitely the man whose statue is on the tomb has Entered Into Rest.

“Let it die” may be a good idea indicated by this card.

Or it could be referring to death, but I have never had it be so. Yet keep it in mind.

This need not be a passive card; it can also be active in the sense that it represents a conscious, willful creation of peace, the intentional elimination of what caused the conflict, and the practice of non-violence. That may be the advice given to the consultant.

Peace at Last is the general character of this card, as is absence of conflict.

Do not overlook the possibility that the window is the message of this card, and spiritual peace should be sought or the spiritual means of bringing about peace should be engaged in. It may even be telling the consultant that peace is to be found

in religion and taking refuge in spirituality and faith .

Five of Swords



This is a strategy card—strategy that results in total defeat of enemies and opponents without loss to the winner, and perhaps even gain.

It can indicate the triumph of diplomacy (no doubt a tough front kind of diplomacy.)

The man in the foreground holds three swords while two swords lie on the ground. Two men—owners of the two swords on the ground—are walking away in defeat. The one furthest away is obviously in profound grief.

The two are thoroughly vanquished.

Yet they were not killed or even injured, so destruction is not indicated here.

Rather, the “victor” has outwitted them and achieved a bloodless triumph as well as taken their weapons for himself, which is why he is looking after his opponents with a smile.

The main figure may be the message, indicating that patience and cleverness will bring about success without any damage or significant difficulty. It can mean that simply showing willingness to fight and confidence in winning is sufficient to do just that.

The two defeated figures may be the message, which could include leaving the battlefield, or even refusing to fight, devoid of the will to fight.

Certainly defeat is in this card. There is no amicable settlement with everyone ending up friends.

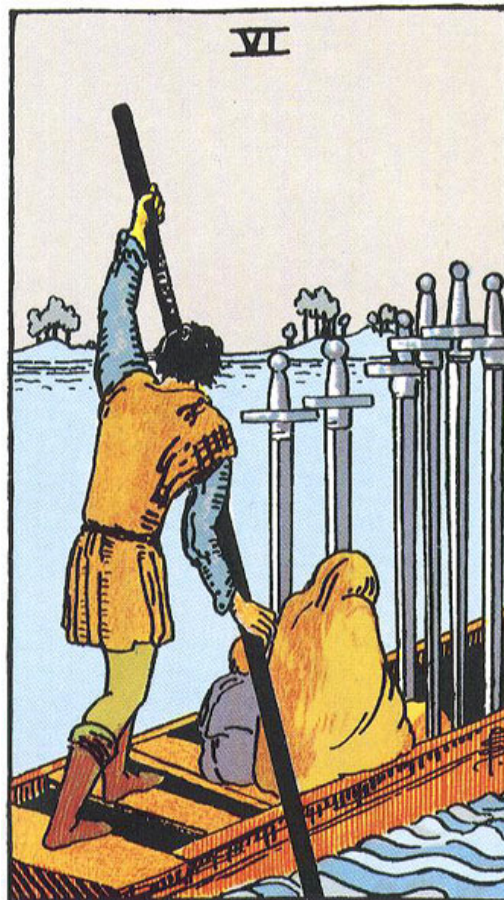
You will need to determine if the consultant is the winner or the defeated, or which advice he is being given.

Did the winner take the two swords from the defeated, or did they throw them down and go away?

This card can mean a mistaken giving up—actual self-defeat through refusing to engage in conflict or struggle.

Conversely, it can mean Winning Through Intimidation.

Six of Swords



This is also a kind of defeat card: of having to leave somewhere or something in sorrow and regret.

This can mean any kind of move, including one that does not please the mover.

A man poles along the boat. That may be the ability to move or something or someone that is precipitating or motivating the move.

A woman shrouded in grief is in the boat. Is this the consultant or someone

affected by him?

Or is it simply sadness at a move of some sort?

A small child is also in the boat. Does this indicate being helpless in the matter? A victim? Misery by association?

Certainly an involuntary move or departure—even some form of exile or expulsion—may be shown in this card.

This card can be simply one of forced or involuntary change of any kind.

This may be a card of dispossession of some kind.

It is not impossible that the woman and child are being rescued or delivered in some manner.

Does the placidity of the water on the left side of the boat and the choppiness on the right side indicate that they are going into tranquility or into difficulty? That they are leaving one or the other? Or going into both?

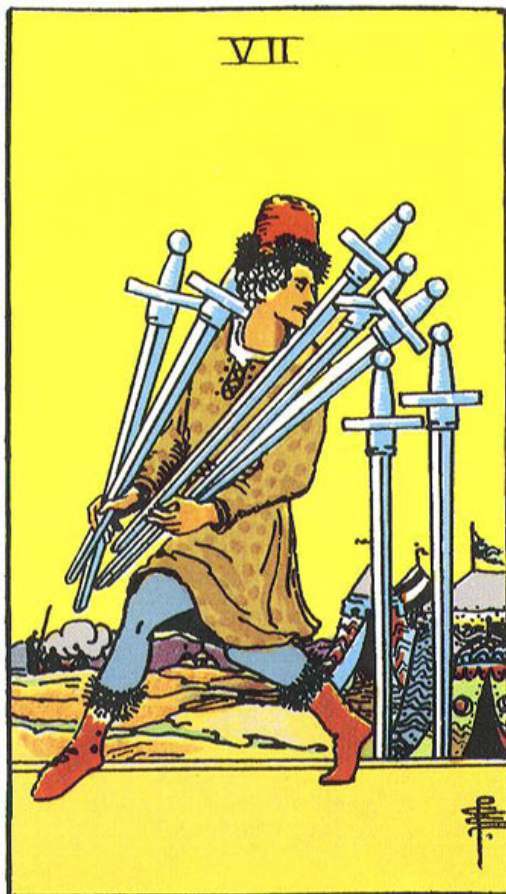
Is there both peace and conflict together in this card?

This may be a card of simple disappointment and discomfiture.

This may be a strategy card, too, though not an enjoyable one.

Obviously it may be completely psychological, even indicating a change of thought or orientation.

Seven of Swords



This is also a strategy card, though perhaps a bit sneaky—certainly subtle and unexpected and perhaps stealthy or even hypocritical.

A man is carrying several swords away from an encampment (military?), looking backward at the place where he got them. He, too, is smiling—he is pleased with himself and with the results. So for some consultants this is going to be a happy card.

How he managed all this we do not know, but he did.

And it was through intelligence and cunning, not brute force. Quietly and easily. “Softly, softly catchee monkey,” according to the old saying.

Here, too, we have a situation in which no one is physically harmed, no conflict, no struggle. A peaceful and easy victory.

On the left in the background we see a group of people obviously in earnest conversation, and equally obviously unaware of the man with the swords. So this may be a warning of sorts to be vigilant and alert, letting nothing distract from careful observation.

The group may be the message with the warning just cited.

But I have often thought they were wandering nomads, not part of the camp and therefore uninterested and uninvolved in the theft of the swords.

Though the group is small, I have more than once thought of Moses with his staff and the cloud that led him and the Hebrews through the desert. So that should be taken into account if it strikes you.

Eight of Swords



This is a card of a total impasse, trapped, overwhelmed, utterly helpless, bound tightly and inescapably.

The tranquil expression on the face of the woman makes me wonder if she is only partially aware of her plight or is thoroughly numbed by the experience.

Her blindfold may indicate incomprehension of her situation on all levels.

Although the design is arranged for artistry, the idea conveyed is that of being completely encircled by the swords—imprisoned. So being “in prison” in some form may be the sole meaning of the card.

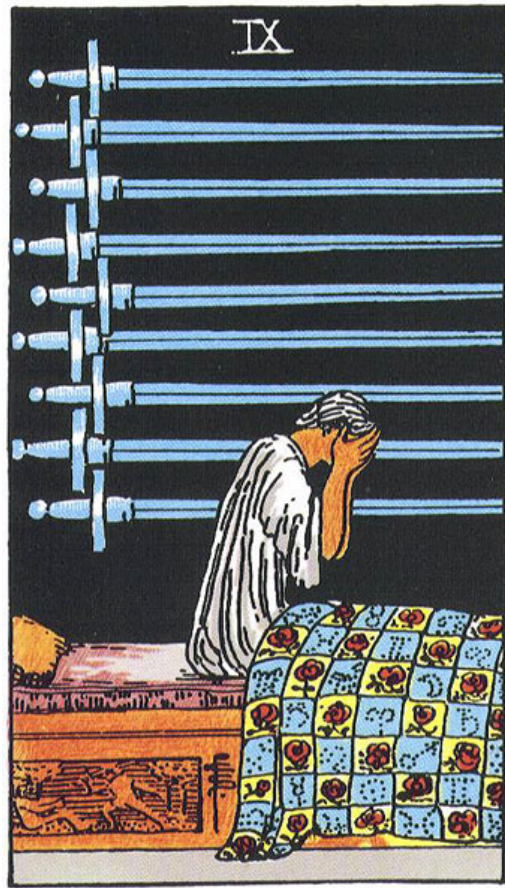
Naturally this is a card of misery, suffering, frustration, isolation, incomprehension, paralysis, hopelessness and helplessness.

It may be that this card indicates how the consultant sees the situation, but is mistaken. If so, another card will need to be opened up to learn the actual character of the situation.

At the same time this may be The End Of The Line card: No Way Out.

So it can mean the absolute ending of something.

Nine of Swords



Few things are as desolate as grief, pain, suffering and misery in the depths of the night. And that is depicted here.

The person has awakened overwhelmed—perhaps from a dream that has brought the sorrow back vividly.

The astrological symbols on the quilt may indicate the reaping of karma or seeming to be at the mercy of the forces of the universe and helpless before them.

Carved on the side of the bed there seems to be a picture of two men fighting with swords. So even the place of rest is filled with unrest.

Helplessness is in this card, and having no idea of a way out of the situation.

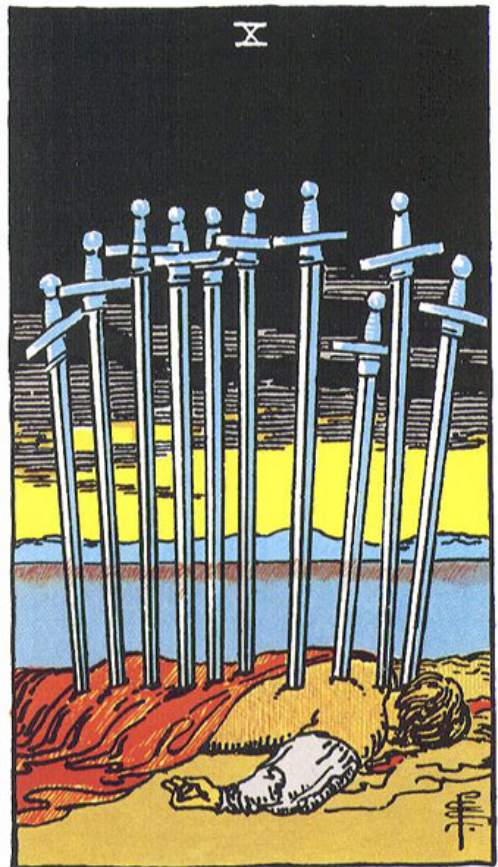
Utter Pessimism is the keynote of this card.

Inability to be soothed or brought to ease is also part of this card's message.

I expect we have all had dreams whose mood or effects lingered on for a while after we awoke. Then we shook it off and were no longer “under the influence.” This card may be showing that, telling the consultant to wake up and get out of the dream.

It is also an awakening to, or into, sorrow.

Ten of Swords



Now this is a death card if ever there was one. Dead is the keyword of this card, perhaps preceded by terrible pain.

You cannot get more irrevocable than that. So in a reading it may be a dead project, idea, hope, strategy, etc.

It seems to me that the man died trying to make the sign of the cross, so that might have some meaning. Does it mean that the death will be a benediction, that all the grief will yet be a blessing? Or that no positive thing, deed or attitude can deliver from the inevitable destruction?

This is certainly the ultimate state of the suit of Swords. It is the Absolute End.

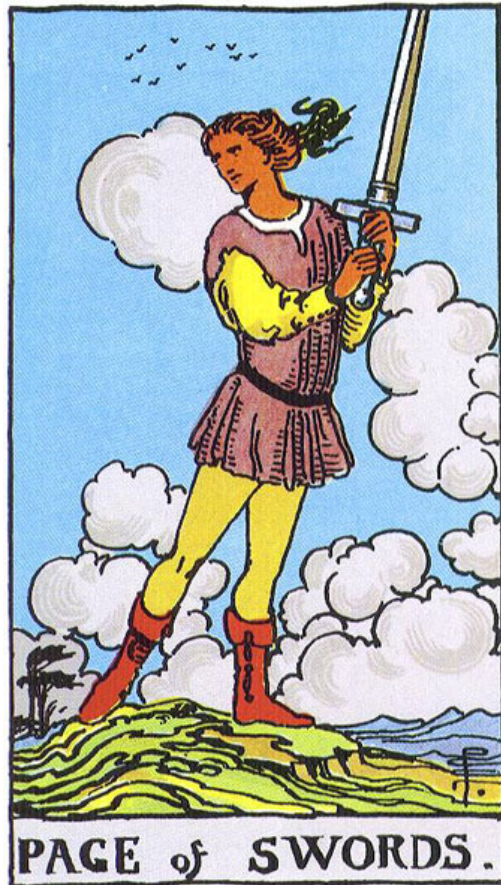
This is a card of total vanquishment, as he is pinned to the earth with ten swords. Nothing can be more final than that.

This card depicts total disaster, death and destruction of something. There is nothing that can be done about it.

This is the supreme death card, great tragedy, greatly destructive—and there is a great deal of emotion here.

But it may be what will be avoided!

Page of Swords



Since Pages represent thoughts (not actions), discussion or plans about what their particular suit entails, this card relates to: conflict, opposition, disruption, anger, hostility, aggression, hatred, injury, destruction and violence (even war), pain, grief, suffering, frustration, despair and offence.

This card can be advice for, or against, thoughts, discussions or plans involving all these things.

At the top of the card we see a flock of birds in flight. At the beginning of the Sword section I mentioned that Swords can mean swift action, and the birds underline that.

So this card can simply mean fast action, or even a rapid departure.

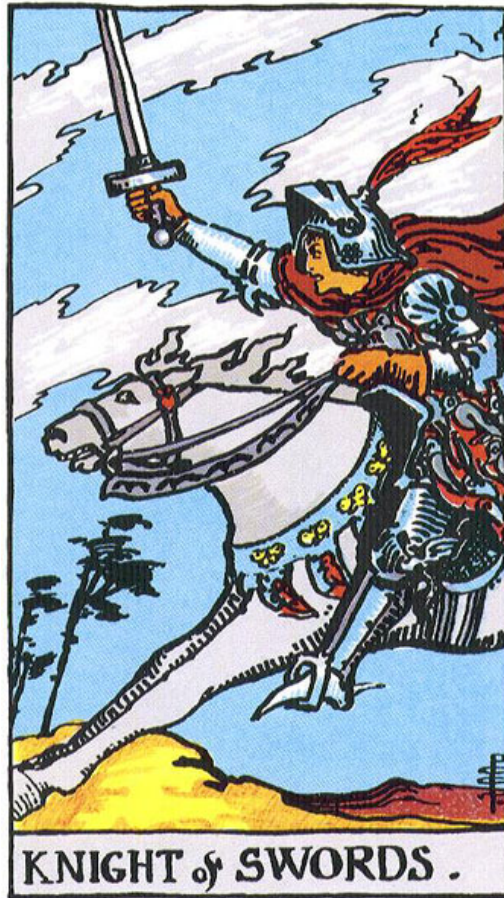
Or it can mean to be like the birds: fly high and away from the conflict below. Do not go through it—go over it. Get above it. Take the high road altogether.

It may also mean: go high and from there see what is really going on below. Understand it and plan accordingly.

The Page is facing into the wind, looking in its direction as he holds his sword in readiness. And he is poised ready to step forward. So this is a card of *en garde*, of facing the matters relating to Swords and being ready to engage in them.

As much as is possible, this card indicates mastery of the situation—at least before the “battle” starts.

Knight of Swords



This is a card of rapid, even precipitate action: plunging into the midst of things. Certainly it is an aggression card.

So you will need to know if this is advice for or against it. Of course it may be telling what caused the present situation.

The Knight is certainly giving himself totally into the battle effort. Is this to be done, or not to be done?

Is the horse looking back at him, or only in panic? Does this mean something regarding control, guidance or “reining in” in relation to the situation?

He, too, is heading into the wind.

There could be a time when all this card means is intense or total concentration.

There are birds in all four face cards of this suit, so that indicates the predominance of the air element in the things dealt with in Swords. It also indicates a mercurial and rapid element in things, as well.

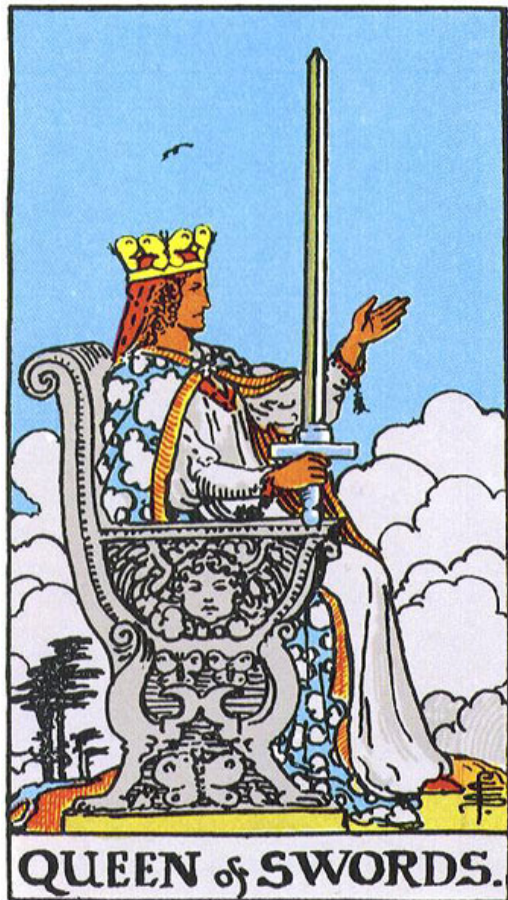
On the Knight’s reins, besides birds there are butterflies. What a seemingly incongruous element! Butterflies figure in the Queen and King cards, as well. So an element of subtlety is being introduced, perhaps even gentility and lightness (delicacy). Is it diplomacy?

The Knight's face shows total absorption in his movement forward. Certainly this indicates thorough determination and uncompromising will. He is oblivious to everything but his onward movement.

Strong wind blows against, him, but it has no effect at all.

There is no doubt an air of ruthlessness about this card. Its key phrase is Damn the Torpedoes!

Queen of Swords



First question: Is this a person, a situation or an attitude or a state of mind?

High up we see a single bird. Does its solitary character convey a message, such as the need to stand alone, to strike out on one's own? Or is it that our perspective must be "from on high"?

The tree in the gale may indicate background stress of some kind.

What does the butterfly crown mean, if anything?

This is a card of wisdom and teaching, even warning in a very positive sense.

In her right hand the Queen holds the upright sword. It is in readiness, but in no way threatening or seeming about to become hostile. It means vigilance, caution, circumspection, and even awareness itself.

Her left hand is raised in exhortation—in intelligent reason which may even

preclude the need for anything to do with Swords. Her entire demeanor is tranquil, so this is very much a teaching, directing and revealing card.

The rosary around her left wrist is the only time such a symbol is found in the entire deck. It symbolizes reflection, even contemplation, and spiritual wisdom and stability.

There is no doubt of the Queen's benevolence, though there is an unmistakably stern and even severe expression of determination and resolve on her face. She is not to be taken lightly or ignored.

The sky and clouds on her cloak betoken subtle and higher awareness and insight. She speaks to us from that level. The cherub's face on her throne underscores this, as do the butterflies beneath.

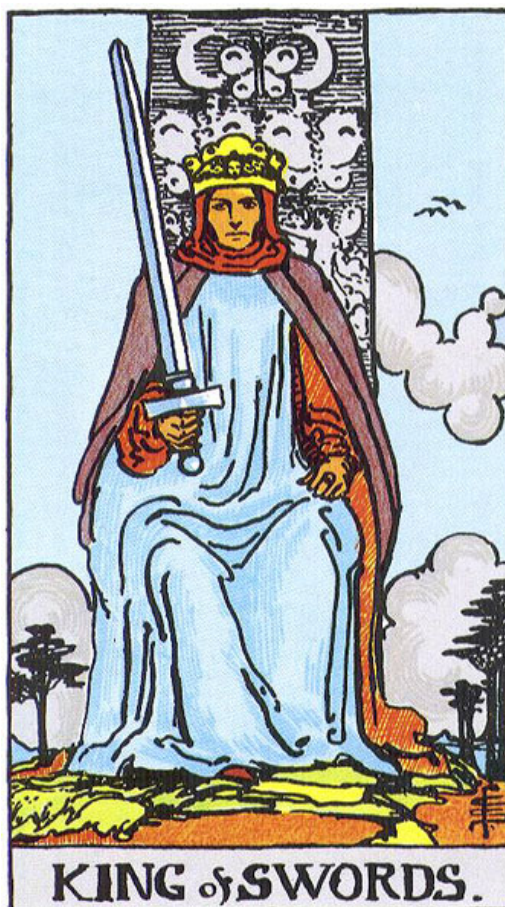
Yet the throne has lions' feet. Strength and power are never far away.

Do the butterflies indicate the potential for new life, new order, new understanding?

Certainly they can mean a new cycle obtained through wisdom and awareness of that which can harm or destroy.

This is actually a very spiritual card and may be the wisdom that brings conflict to an end.

King of Swords



This is quite a different card from that of the Queen, which is a communication card par excellence, whereas this is more of a Take A Look and Work It Out kind of card.

Discipline is here, not reliance on reason alone. We see that the King is stolidly silent. His hand is not extended to us. He just looks us in the eye. And that is how we will get the message.

There is a cherub on his crown, so intuition and inspiration may be involved here.

Butterflies are on the back of the throne and birds in the sky. See what they say, if anything.

Two crescents are on either side of the butterfly at the top of the throne. Are they the sun and moon, each partially eclipsed? Or are they partial development of the solar and lunar forces involved? Do they represent cyclical tides in the fortunes of men? Might one be waning and the other waxing, indicating meaningful changeover of some kind?

Is the figure over the king's shoulder pointing something out to the king? Is it messenger, a guide of some sort? And to or for who? Does the guide have wings of a butterfly?

The King, too, holds an upright sword, but his hand is held closed and relaxed. (Does his ring have meaning?) So he is waiting for the observer to Get The Idea. We can hope that you, the reader, will do so, and also the consultant.

In a sense this is a power card, but the power of understanding, of comprehending the meaning and effect of those Sword matters which are involved

The Queen is active benevolence and the King is silent, inactive benevolence. In them wisdom has transmuted the characteristics of the Sword suit. Wind is blowing in the trees of the background, representing some force or agitation, but it is just in the background—perhaps part of the matter dealt with in your reading.

Peace is the prevailing quality of both cards.

Are both the swords of the Queen and King the sword of wisdom?

Both cards embody very real Authority—authority backed by power.

Pentacles

Pentacles are in some decks called Coins and can represent money, finance, property, possessions and material gain of any kind. They represent wealth, both in a very concrete or in an abstract manner. They also represent attainment of something. They can even represent the mere possession of something, either material or non-material, and can also represent resources.

Ace of Pentacles



Aces can be the strongest cards of the minor arcana because they represent the very principle of the suit they initiate. Certainly they can represent the beginning of something—and a powerful beginning. They can also indicate an abundance of what their suit represents.

Therefore the Ace of Pentacles indicates a strong presence or force of money, finance, property, possessions and material gain of any kind. It is indeed a Go Ahead card.

It also indicates the ability to hold on to what has been gained.

On occasion it means that there is great potential for gain and can mean that the

consultant will discover abundant and sure resources for what is desired.

The design at the bottom of the card says that fulfillment is right at hand, symbolized by the lilies and roses, but that more lies beyond, and may be advising the consultant to right away move onward and further afield to find what he wants. Even the path leading beyond is golden.

The mountains can indicate that high fulfillment is possible or that the consultant will have to scale high and difficult paths to find what he wants. And it surely will sometimes mean both.

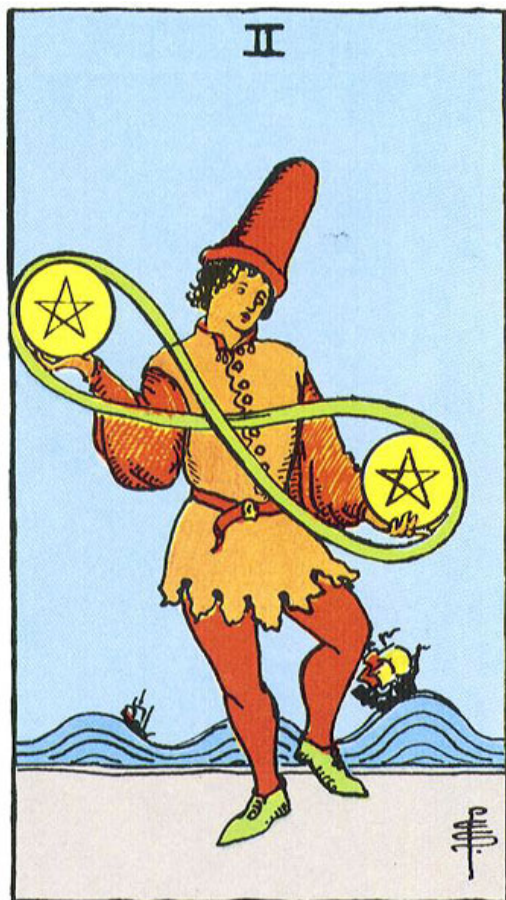
Since the hand holding the pentacle is coming out of a cloud we can be sure that the intention and power of the cosmos is behind whatever is the subject of the consultation.

Confidence and assurance are key characteristics of this card. Reach Out And Take is the message.

Strong power (including karma) for gain and general success is indicated.

Though a card of beginning, a lasting future is part of the message.

Two of Pentacles



This card is very interesting because the symbol of eternity in the hands of the figure—no doubt a juggler—and the towering waves in the background indicate

continual flux. The figure is itself doing a kind of two-step dance to keep everything in balance.

This card shows a complete lack of confidence or stability.

It may mean that the consultant must learn to juggle and strategize, but usually it will mean that there can be no positive outcome and certainly no stability at any time in the future in relation to the question or subject being consulted on.

See the precarious state of the ships in the background. If this juggler's ship ever comes in it will doubtless be in pieces—a wreck. But that it never will come in is most likely the situation.

This is a warning card telling the consultant that if he goes ahead with his plans he will end up like the juggler. And if he already is in that fix, it is telling him to cut his losses and run—fast and drastically.

This is a card of hopelessness—of a hopeless mess.

Now it may be telling the consultant to juggle for the moment and things will be better in the future, but be sure that is what it means before you relay it.

It can also mean that flexibility is needed to stay afloat.

Even after all his juggling and dancing about the man will still only have two pentacles. But that may be the message: juggle and dance and keep what he has.

Whatever this card may be talking about, it is more trouble than it is worth, more effort than any gain could be worth.

Ships in earlier days were symbols of mercantilism and investment. Surely this card is warning the consultant away from either beginning or continuing such a venture. Yet it can also be saying that in time the ships will come in.

Instability and possible loss are cardinal meanings.

Three of Pentacles



The figure on the left is holding the kind of mallet used by stoneworkers. The two on the right, one of whom is a cleric, are showing him a sketch.

The question here is whether they are comparing his work with the sketch or if they are asking him about a possible future project. Either way, it means a work in progress which may be faulty, or may need to be approved, or something to be done in the future.

It is definitely showing that work must be done to a pattern or in some specific order.

So this is a card about work and its checking or planning. It can mean: 1) Something is faulty with the subject of the consultation. 2) The work can be continued because it is correct. 3) A future project should be considered that ought to be done first. 4) The present project should be abandoned altogether.

Perhaps the consultant is being told to do things according to previous agreement, or according to the right pattern of things, or to stop a faulty project, or to correct it.

It can also mean that some part or person in the project is incompetent and should be dismissed. On the other hand, it can be a message to find a competent worker and engage him.

It may just be saying: Stop And Think Things Over.

It can even mean that we must follow previous instructions or even follow traditional “patterns.” The rules must be followed.

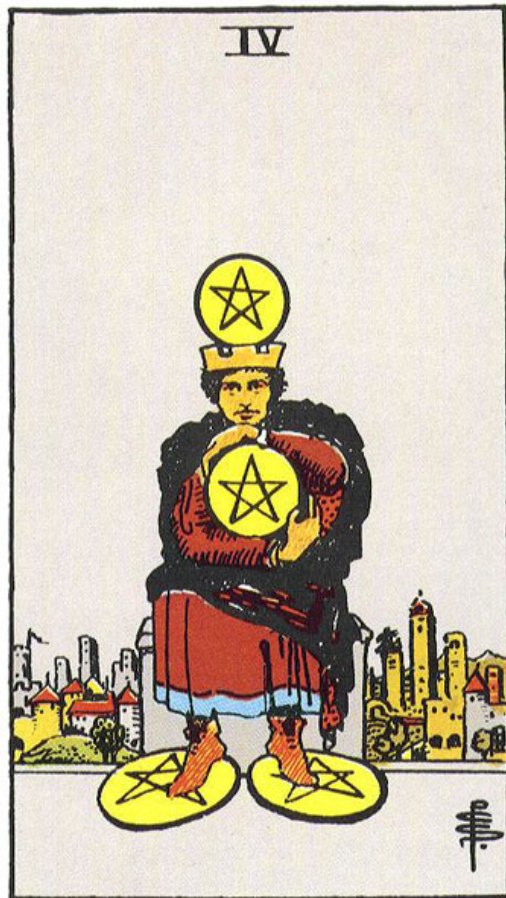
In a business reading this could mean that the consultant or his project must scrupulously follow the legal requirements and regulations no matter how irksome or silly they seem.

Following the rules and playing according to the game is the message. Sometimes the card will be telling the consultant to do it, and at other times it may be telling him that not following the rules was foolish or the cause of difficulties.

It is not a very dynamic card, and often means rote work, though it may be advising creativity in some aspect of life.

Or it may mean that the consultant’s plans are correct and he should continue the project or endeavor.

Four of Pentacles



The meaning of this card is quite obvious: possession and possessiveness. It may show over-attention to such matters, even obsession with material concerns. This man’s whole life seems focussed on material things.

Certainly the man does not look very comfortable in hanging on to his

pentacles/coins; difficulty is shown here.

He has put them in the only possible places which are very limited, and this usually means that the card is dealing with either limited resources or deliberate frugality.

There is also a feeling of uncertainty in this card as the man seems about to reverse the pentacle in his hands. It may even be a prediction of some kind of reversal.

This is definitely not a card of abundance, but of limitation. There is no gain here, but an indication of being able to hold on to what is already possessed.

Anxiety is a major characteristic of this card. So is concern and effort for stability. Or insecurity and instability.

Just holding on and keeping what one already has is the dominant trait of this card. There is no promise of increase, just maintenance.

Five of Pentacles



This is not a happy card. It is definitely Being Out In The Cold. And the Out part is likely not going to change.

It is a poverty card, a prediction of impoverishment and deprivation, even failure. Also hopelessness.

Misery of some sort is depicted here, including being “crippled” in some

manner. It may sometimes be a card of irrevocable loss, of being reduced to nothing.

It is a card of beggary and desperation. One of the two people may be the dominant factor, and you should study what they are showing.

The man is certainly crippled, but the bell may indicate he is a leper. He swings along—but toward what? Crazy as it may seem, on occasion I have heard the bell around the man's neck ringing the moment I looked at the card. That means something is going on to call attention to the situation for its alleviation.

The woman is completely barefoot and obviously suffering tremendously from the cold. Her clothes are certainly inadequate, and inadequacy may be the meaning for the consultant.

The glowing window above the beggars mostly serves to underline what they are exiled from: safety, security, comfort and abundance. But once in a reading it was the prediction: that the consultant would attain the safety, security, comfort and abundance the beggars are deprived of. So it was a card of comfort rather than misery.

This card can mean being an outcast, a reject or exile of some sort, of something being closed to the consultant. Rejection is also a possible meaning.

The man's crutches may indicate some compensation or arrangement for survival—even a strategy of some sort.

Six of Pentacles



More beggars. But these are being given money—at least one is. So you will need to determine whether both are being helped or only one. In the second case, this card may indicate not receiving what is needful or for which a request has been made.

So you need to tell if just one of the figures is part of the card's message: being helped or being denied help.

The scale in the benefactor's hand means that what is being given is measured carefully. So there is a limit to it and a principle of practicality and sensibility behind it. The scale may also be a symbol of justice or appropriateness in the giving. Only those who deserve it receive help, and only to the extent they really need it.

The extended hands of the beggar(s) may be telling the consultant to make his needs known.

It may also be telling him to be sure he is capable of being helped by what he receives, that he will be responsible and capable in putting the assistance to use.

The beggar's fully open hands may mean the consultant should be open and ready to receive something.

In some readings the consultant may be the benefactor, and he is being told to only give to the deserving—and then only what is really needed.

This card could even be a simple advisement of good sense in an action. For example, it could be talking about a possible investment, saying to only go ahead after having weighed and balanced all the aspects of the matter.

It could even be a card indicating financial risk—investing in something that will not be of profit in the final outcome.

This could be a warning against being a spendthrift, or being irresponsible in handling money or other resources.

Seven of Pentacles



This is a very peaceful card of fulfillment.

Satisfaction and accomplishment are its key words. The man is standing looking at the fruits of his labors. He leans comfortably at rest on his staff, having accomplished what he wanted. His endeavors have paid off.

Yet between his feet is one pentacle, indicating that something may be lost or overlooked. Sometimes that is the key of the reading.

This card may be telling the consultant what he should work toward, or it may be saying that he has attained it already or be a prediction of what will result if he goes ahead with a project or some strategy.

Eight of Pentacles



Whenever this card comes up in a reading I hear in my mind the song of the seven dwarves in *Snow White*: “We dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig in our mine the whole day through. To dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig is what we like to do. It ain’t no trick to get rich quick. If you dig, dig, dig with a shovel or a pick.”

In this card the man is tapping away at his engraving tool, but the idea of the whole card is the same: steadily working until the project is done. It is a picture of the proverb very common in India: Working, working-made! or Doing, doing-done! Keep at it and the desired result will come.

Skill and workmanship may mean much to the consultant. Or the message can be that without work, without effort, nothing is accomplished or gained. Keep on working can be the advice. Also that something must be brought to completion.

Is the pentacle under the bench one that has been discarded because it is defective—not perfect? Or is it a finished one that accidentally rolled under the bench and needs to be picked up and put with the completed pentacles? So the card may be warning against loss or advising that anything imperfect should be discarded. On the other hand it may be pointing out that the consultant is missing something or that something in the subject of the consultation has been overlooked. Something may need to be discarded; something may need to be retrieved.

Trustworthiness is indicated here, too, and insistence on perfection.

In the background we see a golden pathway leading into a walled city. That may

be the significant part of the card, so its possible symbolism should be considered, such as finally getting somewhere, or “getting in” in some manner, or coming to the end of an endeavor and reaching the goal and “getting home.”

Nine of Pentacles



Like the Seven of Pentacles, this is a very happy and contented card, and certainly an indication of abundance—material, mental or spiritual.

The woman is the embodiment of tranquility and freedom from all care. So this is a powerful prediction when her figure is dominant in your perusal.

The hooded bird (falcon or hawk) on her left hand is very often the key to the card's message. It can mean being blind to something, being unable to fly and be unrestrained; being bound or inhibited in some way. The message may be: Take off the hood. Or it can be a warning against being predatory.

The glove on the woman's hand to protect it against the claws (and perhaps the sharp beak) of the bird can indicate prudent measures for self-protection, or the need for such protection.

Her right hand resting on a pentacle indicates that everything she wants is at hand and in her control and possession.

The pentacles are fruits of the vines, but so are large bunches of grapes that also

indicate abundance and prosperity. But look closer: there are little blue foxes in hiding peeping out at us. The Bible speaks of “the little foxes that spoil the vines,” and that is what they signify: things that threaten the continued health and fruitfulness of the vines. So there is hidden danger that this card may be warning us about.

A tiny snail crawls along unnoticed. That may mean some little detail should be taken into consideration that might easily be unobserved by us. Or it means that we are taking much too small a view of what this card is about.

As with all the cards, it may mean something we are being warned against, advised to seek, predicted as coming in the future or already present to some degree. Always keep these possibilities in mind when considering every card in a reading.

Ten of Pentacles



This is the card of complete attainment and experience of all that pentacles represent.

In a palace we find people immersed in abundance and possession. The coats of arms show they are aristocracy.

The man in the foreground sits wearing a robe embroidered with flowers and

grapes and symbols of wealth and assured prosperity. His hand rests on the head of an affectionate hound.

The man in the background holds a staff whose top shows that it is really a magical wand. On the other hand, it may be a spear badly drawn!

So this family has everything that wealth and knowledge can provide. Usually it is material wealth, but it can be intellectual and spiritual abundance as well. More than this cannot be attained in the realm of that which pentacles represent.

The child is shyly looking at us, and may at any moment hide behind his mother. So there is some element of doubt or unsureness in this card, though no doubt negligible.

The card can simply mean a totally harmonious, contented and prosperous family or environment.

All future prospects are secure, assured and positive. This card stands for quiet happiness with everything gained, nothing more needed, and all positive and worthy desires fulfilled.

Page of Pentacles



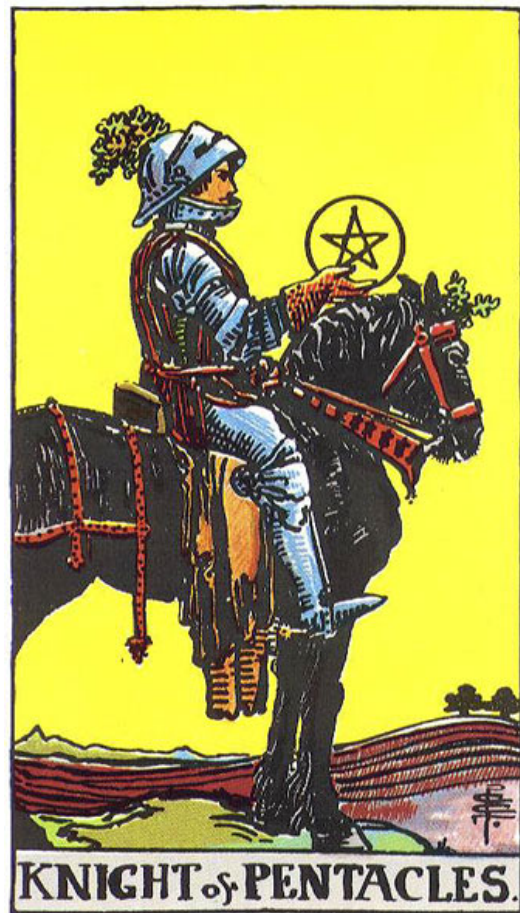
In all the suits, pages are thoughts or plans about the things the particular suit deals with. That is why the Page of Pentacles is very still and looking intently at a

pentacle almost as though he were scrying, trying to see the future of what the pentacle represents.

And what can it represent? As I said at the beginning: Pentacles represent money, finance, property, possessions and material gain of any kind. They represent wealth, both in a very concrete or in an abstract manner. They also represent attainment of something. They can even represent the mere possession of something, either material or non-material, and can also represent resources.

So interpret this card accordingly in the context of the reading.

Knight of Pentacles



The Knight of Pentacles represents actual action taken regarding those things represented by the Pentacle cards.

Just like with the Page of Pentacles: Pentacles represent money, finance, property, possessions and material gain of any kind. They represent wealth, both in a very concrete or in an abstract manner. They also represent attainment of something. They can even represent the mere possession of something, either material or non-material, and can also represent resources.

So interpret this card accordingly in the context of the reading.

Queen of Pentacles



This is a card of abundance and has an abundance of symbols.

The roses forming an arbor over the Queen of Pentacle's head signify attainment and the potential for attainment.

Her throne of carved stone is very interesting:

At the top is the face of an angel (cherub) representing intuitional inspiration and guidance.

On the back and the front various fruits are depicted representing abundance.

On the front of each arm is a ram's head representing strength.

On the side we can see there is an ornamental carving of a young woman looking out at us. She seems to be holding a child. Children sometimes mean ideas or inspiration that we "give birth" to. What it may represent is up to your intuition to discover.

The Queen is absorbed in contemplation of a pentacle she is holding on her knees. This can mean possession, control and knowledge—insight of all things relating to Pentacles.

Hardly visible against a background of the same color, a rabbit is moving forward in the bottom right corner. A rabbit can be a symbol of material fecundity and fertility, but I have had readings in which the rabbit represented a skittishness, timidity or outright fearfulness of a rabbit—even cowardice. It can also indicate that

something in the reading is temporary, even fleeting.

This card certainly represents the good things of earth and their possession or attainment. Everything about the background indicates this as well, especially the flowers, many plants and two rivers.

It may be a message that like the Queen we must be intent on the things of Pentacles and their pursuit, that we must be focussed and not careless or negligent. We must really want what we think or claim we want.

Usually page, knight, queen and king represent qualities or states of mind. I have never had them represent an actual person, but they certainly could in any of the suits. Queens and kings could easily represent personality traits or actual people in whom the qualities of the suit are the dominant traits in their personality.

King of Pentacles



This is the most powerful card of the Pentacles' suit. The rams' heads on the King's throne attest to this.

He is crowned with flowers, gold and laurel leaves indicating the breadth of his dominion and his rulership of that dominion.

Nevertheless his eyes are closed in interior contemplation. The Yoga Sutras say that when a person is completely indifferent to and untouched by everything material, then even the hidden treasures of the earth seek him out and offer

themselves to him. Is this shown by the King's demeanor? Certainly, indifference to the very things he rules and offers can be shown by this card.

The profusion of grapes and leaves on his robe indicates the highest degree of prosperity and achievement.

In his right hand he holds a heavy gold scepter crowned with a gold sphere representing the sun, the source and goal of all life on the earth.

In his left hand he easily and naturally holds a pentacle by its top, not its bottom, to indicate that he is in touch with the highest levels of those things ruled by Pentacles. It is as though the "things" of this suit are but a small part of his domain and occupy a much lesser part of his attention and thought. This card reminds me of Janaka the great philosopher-sage of India, who was both the most enlightened and the wealthiest man in the entire land, and of Saint Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, who was the richest man in Israel throughout his life.

Obviously the consciousness of the King is a completely spiritualized involvement with all external things, however desirable they are to human beings. This card does not mean that they are worthless, but that once higher consciousness dawns in the individual they are of much smaller value to him than they were before.

He has a mailed foot and it is resting upon a stone head emerging from the earth. The earth element is ruled by gnomes, and this looks like the head of a gnome that has been turned into dead stone by the touch of the King's foot. Materiality has no power whatsoever over him and is fit only to lie beneath his foot.

So this is a card of tremendous materiality and yet complete freedom from material consciousness--and therefore freedom from material bonds and influences whatsoever.

This is a card of Spirit over Matter.

A Final Word

It must be realized (and experienced) that the more you read the cards the more you will learn, that reading the cards itself teaches you what you might never find in books like this one or from a teacher, however well-intentioned.

It is extremely important to calmly scan a card and see what is alive in the picture, or what draws your attention.

The reader must be calm and relaxed. Meditation is related to this this, since it is the higher Self through intuition that is communicating with us. If understood completely, then we realize why it is called “the sacred Tarot.” The Tarot is definitely initiatic—it initiates us as we read and as we take it seriously and even reverently.

It is not amiss to meditate or pray for a few moments before beginning a reading.

About the Author

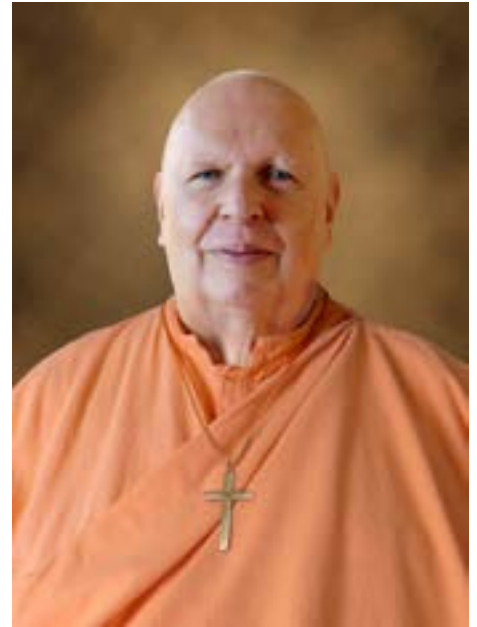
Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke) is the founder and director of the Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA.

In his many pilgrimages to India, he had the opportunity of meeting some of India's greatest spiritual figures, including Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Anandamayi Ma. During his first trip to India he was made a member of the ancient Swami Order by Swami Vidyananda Giri, a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who had himself been given sannyas by the Shankaracharya of Puri, Jagadguru Bharati Krishna Tirtha.

In the United States he also encountered various Christian saints, including Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco and Saint Philaret Voznesensky of New York. He was ordained in the Liberal Catholic Church (International) to the priesthood on January 25, 1974, and consecrated a bishop on August 23, 1975.

For many years Abbot George has researched the identity of Jesus Christ and his teachings with India and Sanatana Dharma, including Yoga. It is his conclusion that Jesus lived in India for most of his life, and was a yogi and Sanatana Dharma missionary to the West. After his resurrection he returned to India and lived the rest of his life in the Himalayas.

He has written extensively on these and other topics, many of which are posted at OCOY.org.



Atma Jyoti Ashram (Light of the Spirit Monastery)

Atma Jyoti Ashram is an esoteric Christian monastic community for those men who seek direct experience of the Spirit through meditation, sacramental worship, discipline and dedicated communal life, emphasizing the inner reality of “Christ in you the hope of glory,” as taught by the illumined mystics of East and West.

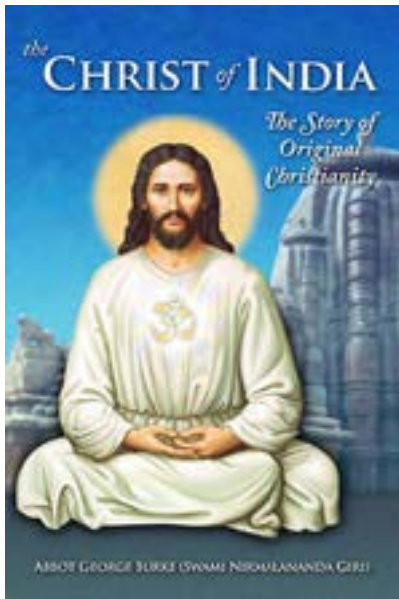
The public outreach of the monastery is through its website, OCOY.org (Original Christianity and Original Yoga). There you will find many articles on Original Christianity and Original Yoga, including *Esoteric Christian Beliefs*, *Foundations of Yoga* and *How to Be a Yogi* are practical guides for anyone seriously interested in living the Yoga Life.

You will also discover many other articles on leading an effective spiritual life, including *The Yoga of the Sacraments* and *Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet*, as well as the “Dharma for Awakening” series—in-depth commentaries on these spiritual classics: the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada, and the Tao Teh King.

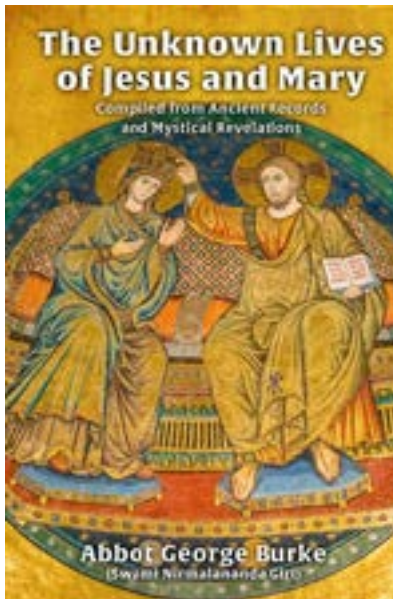
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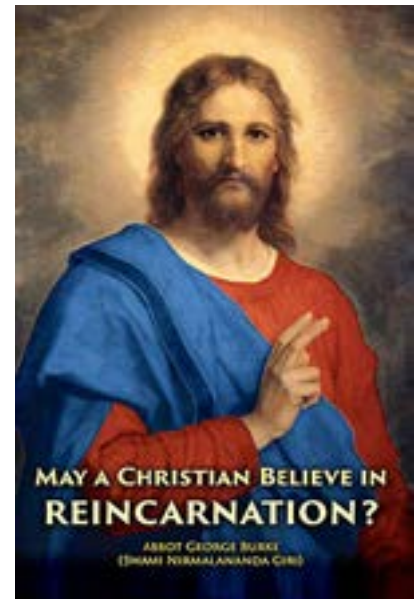
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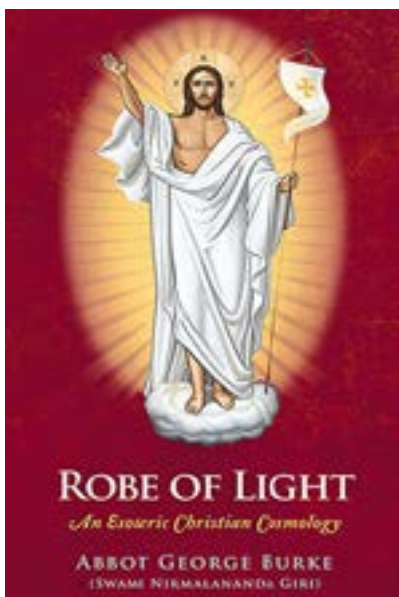
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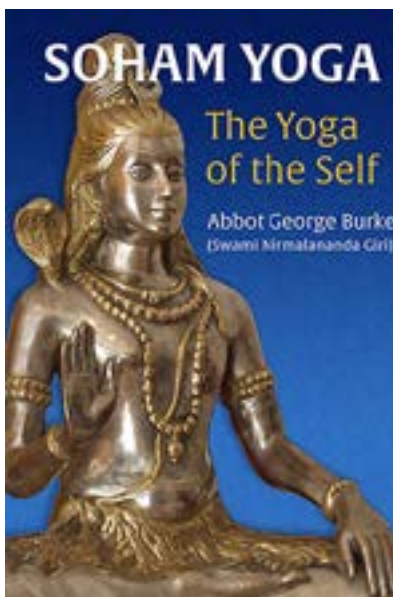
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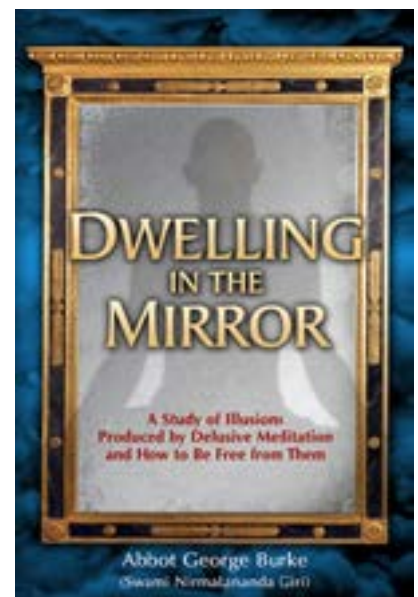
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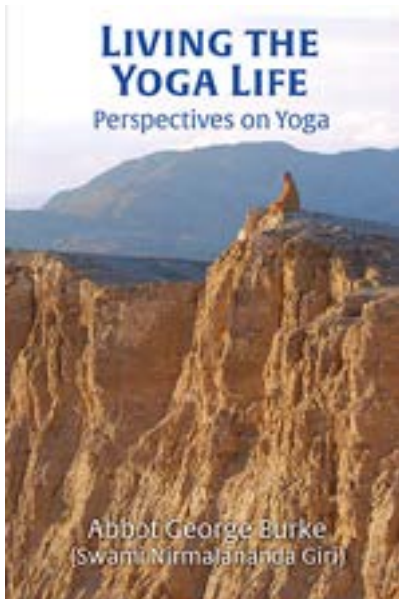
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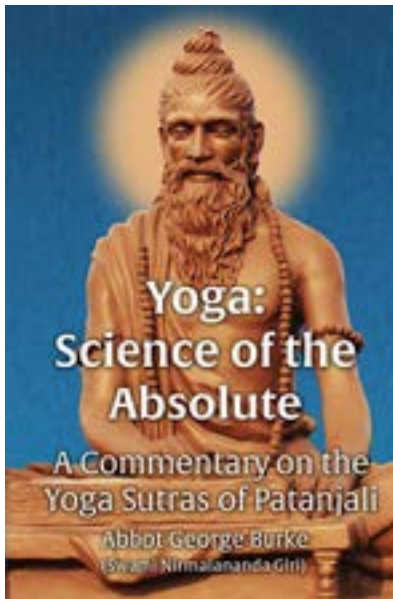
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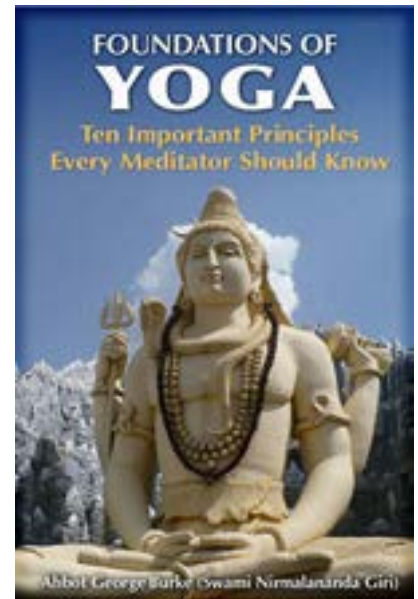
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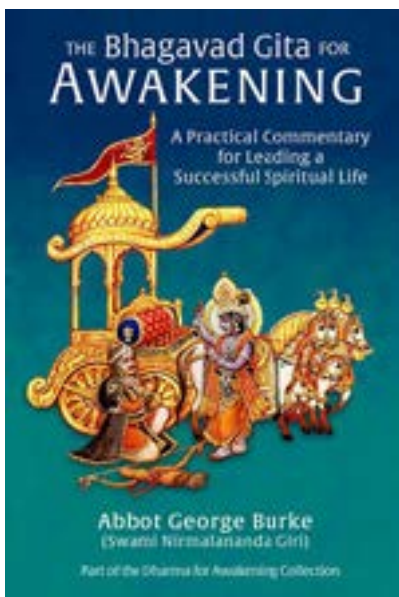
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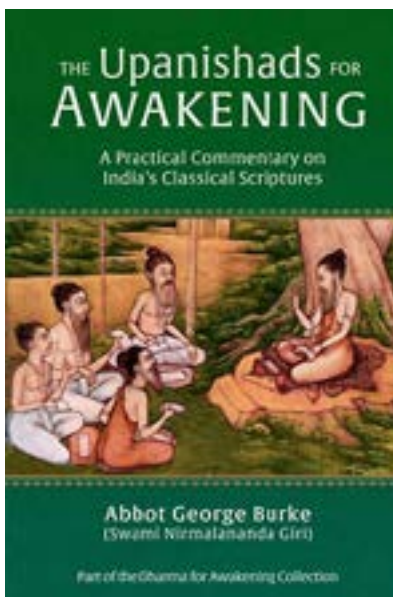
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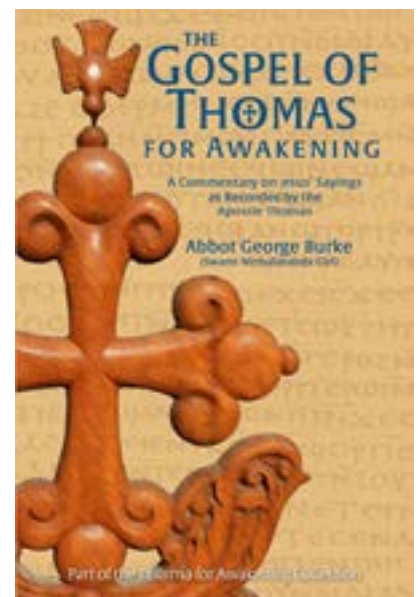
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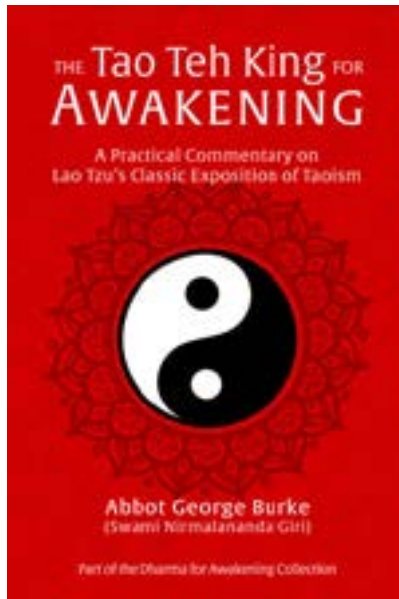


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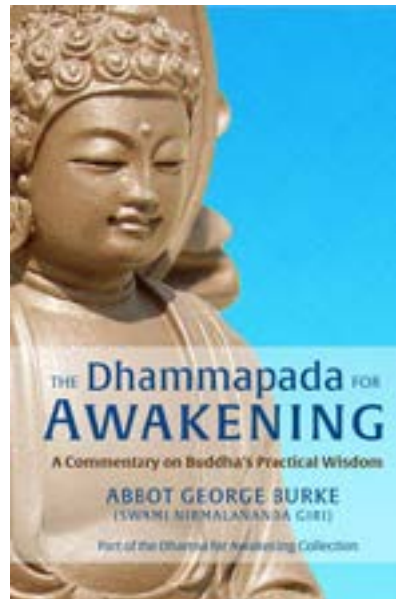


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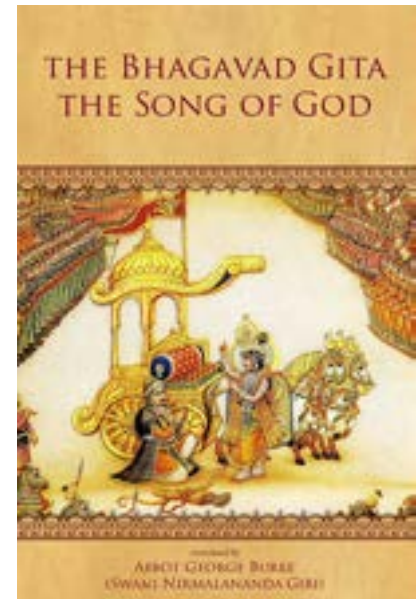
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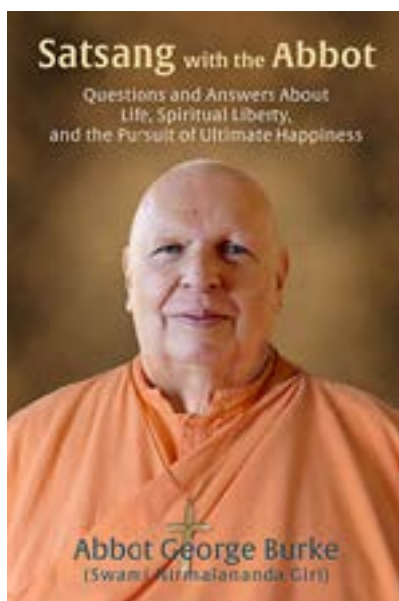
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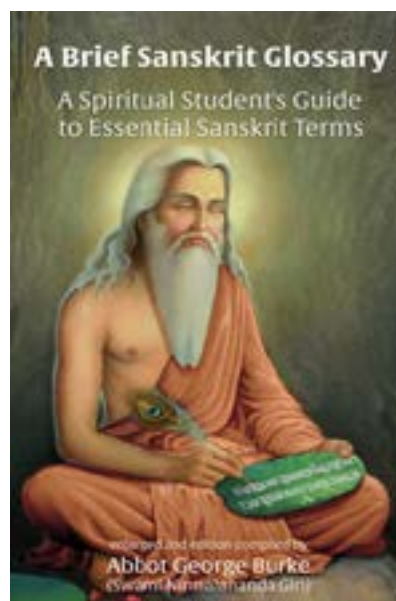
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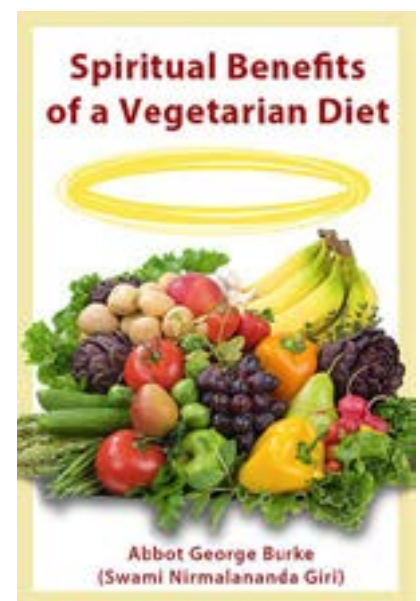
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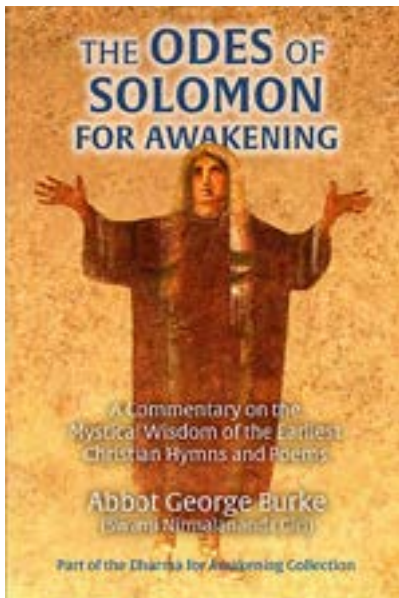
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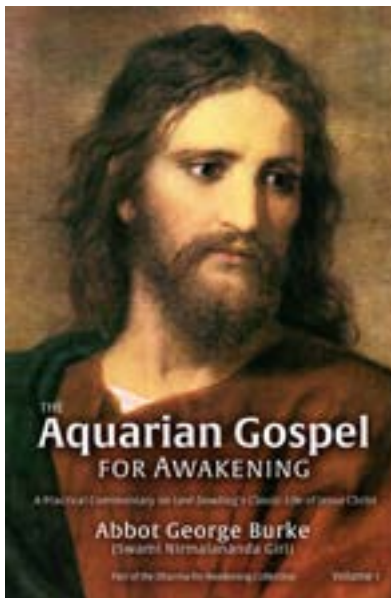
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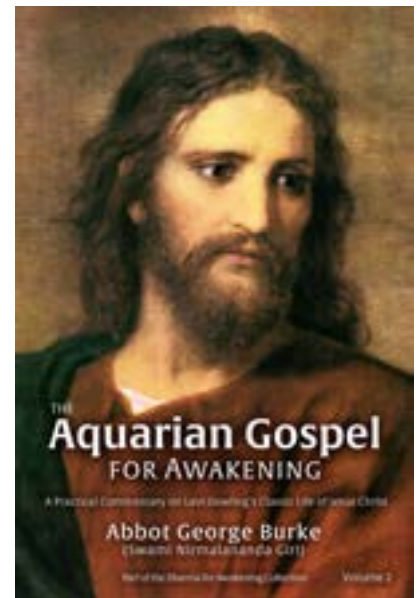
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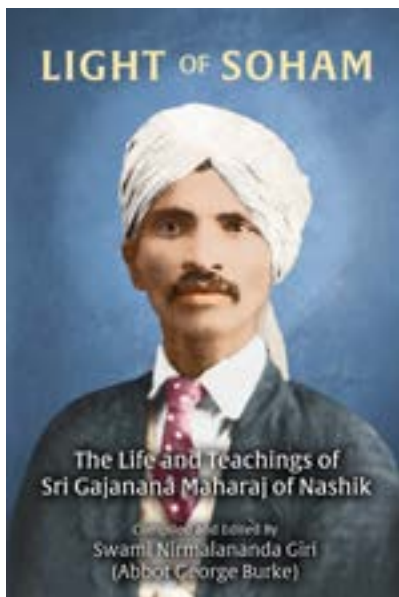
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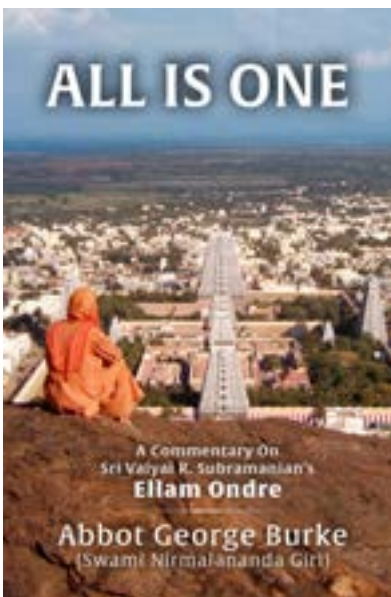
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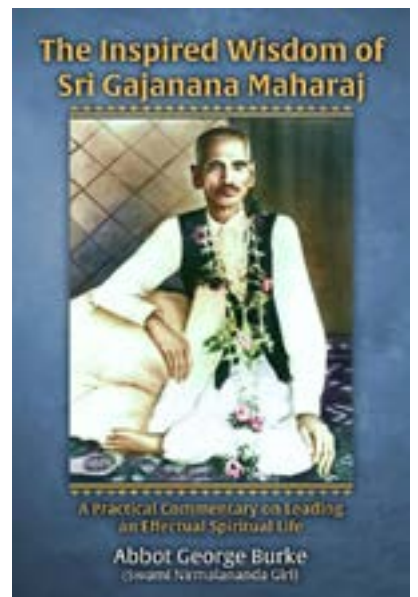
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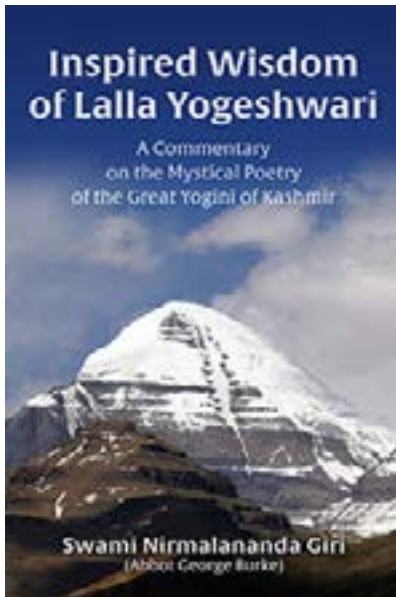
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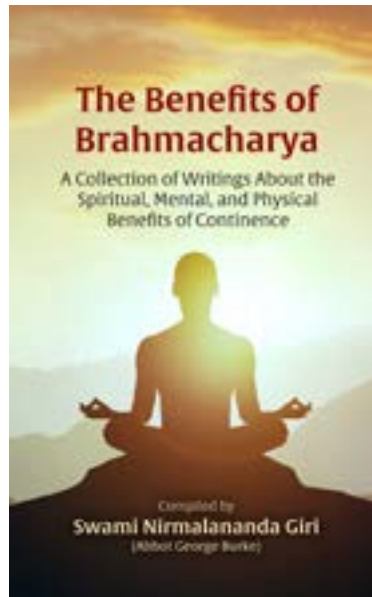
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