

# THE TAROT AND THE ROSY CROSS

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Before proceeding to a study of the Tarot Symbols in the Paths of the Tree of Life, it seems desirable to state that the attributions with which we are familiar are not found in that transcript of the Cipher MSS. on which we depend for our guidance in respect of the Order of the Golden Dawn, and which was transcribed from the originals by our G. H. Frater ARYABHATHA, [the Revd. W.A. Ayton] who has entered into his rest in the Lord. The fact is not surprising in itself as they do not belong to the Outer Order, being communicated in the Portal of the Rosy Cross.

It so happens, however, that Frater F[INEM] R[ESPICE, Dr. R.W. Felkin] has an indifferent and indeed a very bad copy of the Ciphers; it is one of uncertain origin, but is believed to connect with the Temple which a few brethren once attempted to found in Weston-super-Mare, and failed therein. It contains, after a piecemeal fashion several things of which we do not know otherwise except through the early Rituals. Among these there is the attribution in question, and it forms an integral part of the originals, I do not understand how it came to be omitted by so careful a maker of copies as my late Co-Chief. The miscellanea among which it is found do not carry with them much conviction as to their original integration in the Ciphers; they include the position of Officers and Members in a Temple opened for Neophytes, notes on Hebrew names of Grades and so forth. The attribution with which we are concerned is not itself under suspicion; it is correct on the evidence of the Ciphers up to and including the 4<sup>o</sup>=7<sup>o</sup> Grade of the First Order, and there is no question that what follows in the ascent of the Tree is in absolute accord with the prevailing numeration of the Tarot cards, save for one substitution or reversal of Strength and Justice, by which the one is allocated to the 19th and the other to the 22nd Path. The actuating reason is obvious, because the attribution of the Zodiacal Signs proceeds downwards, from the 15th path and in their order Leo = Strength below to Path 19, while Libra = justice is referable to Path 22. I should add that for the beginning of the Zodiacal arrangement there is authority in the Cipher Rituals, while the allocations of the Tarot cards throughout the paths of YETZIRA being founded also on the Ciphers it follows almost certainly that the Fool is at the summit of the Tree, because it has not been placed at the foot according to the usual procedure. Whether there is another arrangement of the Tarot Symbols possible at certain points within the measures of Order symbolism is another question. There are no cards attributed to the World of ASSIAH, and this is of necessity because ASSIAH, the Fourth World, is ascribed to MALKUTH in our symbolism, while the Tarot cards are referred to the Paths only. The SEPHIROT are degrees or states attained and the Paths are modes of ascent thereto. As various SEPHIROTIC stages are Grade also in the order of the ROSY CROSS, we have to determine whether the allocations of certain cards to certain Paths is explicable in an adequate manner

by methods of progress through the various Grades, or whether there is a deeper meaning within them which has dictated mode, of progress. This is one point of view, and the most comprehensive from which the subject can be approached, but it is a question only concerning the way of the soul's return, as this is delineated in the scheme of the Tree of Life, and there is an alternative question whether the Tarot cards have anything to tell us respecting that outward journey by which the soul entered into manifestation. The relation of the cards to the worlds in which they are placed is a further subject on which we should expect to get light. For this and for other reasons, it is desirable to begin with a brief retrospection concerning the Worlds and the Paths.

The ascent from one World of Kabbalism to another is always by a vertical Path; it is the 32nd Path which leads from ASSIAH to YETZIRAH; the 25th Path goes from YETZIRAH to BRIAH, or from the Order of the GOLDIN DAWN to that of the ROSY CROSS, and the 13th Path ascends from BRIAH to ATZILUTH. Now, three out of the four Worlds, this progression takes the Postulant—understood as the Seeker after Eternal Life—to the Lowest SEPHIRA of that World wherein he is called to enter; from MALKUTH, which is ASSIAH, into the YETZIRATIC sphere of YESOD, from YETZIRAH into TIPHERET of BRIAH according to the arrangement of the Tree it would seem that the travelling of the 13th Path should bring the Postulant at once into KETHER, the first and the highest of the Supernal SEPHIROTH, so far as there can be said to be degrees in a Triad which is also an Unity.

We should expect therefore that there is some well marked break at a certain point in the manner of attaining ATZILUTH according to the ceremonial symbolism of the Order supposing that ATZILUTH is attained; and though it is impossible to explain its nature—actual or hypothetical—within the limits of the Grade of TIPHERETH, some tentative intimation can be given. There is a Portal of the Golden Dawn, which is the Court of the Temple in MALKUTH, and this Temple has Holy Place beyond it. They symbolise together the external Church and the literal sensed doctrine in every faith and age. It is the ASSIAH side of religion. Beyond these things the initiate of the Order enters the YETZIRATIC World and the First Grade therein brings him into the Holy of Holies, the creative principle which has developed external religion into the realm below; but it is only in the high YETZIRATIC Grades that the seeker is brought into communication with the first expounded mysteries of the Secret Doctrine and the hidden sense of the Law. There is also a Portal of the Second Order, which is the Court of the Temple in TIPHARETH and a Gate of Entrance into the Christ-life realised by practice in the personality. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that there is a Portal of the Third Order. Now, the Portal of the Golden Dawn is not a SEPHIRA, but, as I have said, is the Court of MALKUTH. The Portal of the Rosy Cross is not a SEPHIRA, but the gate of TIPHARETH.

And again, it is reasonable to infer that the Portal of the Third Order is not a SEPHIRA.

The mode of progress from Order to Order is, however, by a vertical Path, as we have seen, and it is not this rule which can be broken in the way of ascent to ATZILUTH. The reason is that the Middle Path which is called in the Grade of Zelator “the straight path” that “turneth not to the right nor to the left,” the “Path of Equilibrium” is “the way of return to the height.” From SEPHIRA to SEPHIRA the scheme of the Tree of Life is traversed in various directions, but there is always a going back to its centre, the Path of Benignity concerning which it is said in the ZOHAR that SHEKINAH is above and that SHEKINAH is also below it. The SHEKINAH in transcendence is really referred to BINAH, but we are told that in the Supernals there is no distinction between Her and the Holy One; and in the Altar Diagram belonging to the Grade of Practicus KETHER, CHOKMAH and BINAH are placed within a great circle, where they are covered by the wings of AIMA ELOHIM, that is the wings of SHEKINAH—under which the souls of the just abide in the worlds beneath.

If the Tree of the SEPHIROTH were delineated according to the true spirit of the Rosy Cross, it would appear as the Rose-Tree of SHEKINAH, she being the Rose of all the worlds. In MALKUTH, she is the Rose of manifested things; in the Supernals she is the Mystical Rose of Heaven; in TIPHARETH she is the Rose of Purified Life; and all the remaining SEPHIROTH are states or phases of the archetypal Rose, which is she who is the mystery of womanhood in all her grades and degrees. We shall recur to this intimation presently.

It should be observed in the meantime that in order to reach TIPHARETH the Postulant re-enters YESOD, whence he proceeds upward to the threshold of the Second Order; and so it may be gathered—by the virtue of another inference—that the point of departure for the entrance into the Third Order will seem to be TIPHERETH of necessity. But if the Postulant enters ATZILUTH by the help of a Portal it is not assuredly that of KETHER, which would involve overstepping BINAH and CHOKMAH, as if these were not stages of his progress; and the Portal of the Third Order must be therefore in the Path itself. In certain delineations of the Tree of Life there is the indication of a middle point in the Path of GHIMEL, which point passes under the name of DAATH, or Knowledge, and one reason—though of an exceedingly presumptive kind—why it may be the Portal of the Third Order is that DAATH—like the Portal below—is not a SEPHIRA, but the centre of influence coming from CHOKMAH and BINAH. It is that which they produce between them, and there is a sense in which it stands for them both.

That DAATH is or may be the Portal of the Third Order is of course only one further matter of inference, and we have to recognise that there are many interventions which are likely to transform the face of speculations made only in TIPHERETH. Yet the notion is based on materials which have been long in your hands and it seems to explain at once why our system of Grade-progression suggests the number 11 rather than the ten of SEPHIROTH. From one point of view it is, however, a false suggestion. The addition of the alternative numbers ascribed to each Grade in the Order would produce 11 invariably, but they are connected by the sign of equality and the literal meaning is explained in the

Grade of Zelator, where it is said that MALKUTH is the 10th SEPHIRA on the way of descent from KETHER but it is the 1st on the way of return. This method of comparison obtains throughout the scheme—at least until the great dividing line is reached upon the threshold of ATZILUTH. But the numeration is deceptive of set purpose—always suggesting 11 but always producing 10, because of DAATH, which would be an eleventh SEPHIRA, if it were a SEPHIRA properly: it is on the verge of that position but does not attain it in the convention of Kabbalism, and so with their mode of numeration—which offers therefore a certain air of subtlety. It has also an important implicit, though it may not have entered previously into the consciousness of the Second Order at large. This is the doctrine of unity through the whole SEPHIROTHIC scheme, in virtue of which the things which are below are not only in correspondence with those which are above but are identical as to the roots therewith.

And because the SEPHIRA MALKUTH is outside the three Triads, alone in a place that is lowest, it is mentioned especially concerning it that the vestige of KETHER is therein, so that it is properly and fully incorporated; and all that is above is within it and it is contained by all that is beyond. In particular it is assumed into the Second Reflected Triad by the scheme of ceremonial advancement which obtains in the Outer Order. Of the unity which prevails therein I have no occasion to speak. So also in the Second Order there is an intimate mystical marriage between the Grades and SEPHIROTH, and they are all summarised in TIPHARETH. But in the Supernal Triad there is that quality of union which is transcendent as the world to which it belongs, and all unions below are its reflection or shadow.

If  $8^\circ=3^\circ$ ,  $9^\circ=2^\circ$  and  $10^\circ=1^\circ$  all this is preliminary within the measures of the Supernal Triad, and it is thence that the Law is projected into the worlds that are below. Wheresoever in the region instituted ceremonial ATZILUTH may be expressed in ritual—if indeed anywhere—we may be very sure that it is under a law of unity with which other pageants of the Rosy Cross can be called scarcely in comparison.

I may seem to have spoken very plainly of the things which lie without the measures of the Grade of TIPHARETH, but I have really preserved the covenants and have not lifted more than a corner of the veil, so that you may understand better where you are in respect of the symbolism of the Tree.

What I have protected from your view at the present stage is the genuine distinction between that which takes place in TIPHERETH before the Path can be opened to the Portal of the Third Order, as compared with that which takes place in YESOD before the Postulant is drawn between the Pillars to the Portal of the Rosy Cross. As another instance of an essential difference or break between the Second and Third Orders, remember always that BIAH is the First Reflected Triad, but ATZILUTH is not a reflection. In YETZIRAH and BIAH the mode of progress is indicated naturally by the position of their SEPHIROTH, the inverted apex of each reflected triad being the lowest SEPHIRA of the series—YESOD in the one and TIPHERETH in the other case. But BIAH and CHOKMAH are at the

ends of the first horizontal or reciprocal path, and the natural entrance to BINAH as lowermost of the Supernal Triad is either from GEBURAH or from TIPHERETH and is not in the hierarchic Order because the true ascent is only by the Middle Path. On the other hand, no transition is possible from CHESED to BINAH, as there is no path between them.

Now, we have seen that in respect of the Middle Path the SHEKINAH is a Spirit which is above, and in this sense it draws upwards; that it is also a Spirit which is below, and in this sense it leads to the height. If we look at the Tarot cards as they are allocated on the Tree of Life we shall find that in one or other of her aspects she is the guardian of the gates of entrance—actual or speculative—to the several worlds of advancement represented, on the authority of Kabbalism, as the various Orders of our Fraternity. As the SHEKINAH in transcendence she manifests in the vestures of a High Priestess keeping the Path of GHIMEL, because she is religion in attainment. The Book of the Secret Doctrine is in her hands, and it lies open on her knees, seeing that she is Divine Law wherein is the process of attainment. She is clothed with the sun, and this signifies that she is the Moon in astronomical symbolism, being also the Queen of Heaven. Her light comes from the Eternal. She is the Guardian of the Gate of DAATH. Below she is pictured as the personified Spirit of the universe. She is Virgin, Bride and Mother, because she is the splendour of purity in all her states and planes. She is Anima Mundi; Divine Immanence in MALKUTH, as she is the Spirit which leads to the recognition of these in unity. There is much which might be added to her description in the Grade of Theoreticus, but I will say only that in so much as she is the creation adorned with the perfection of its beginning, it must be said that she is her own builder, or the power behind the manifest. For us, however, and for our concerns, she is the restorer of worlds. It is for this reason that she is the Gate of YETZIRAH, or the Guardian who stands thereat.

Because of her purity the Hegemon, who is her representative in the Order of the Golden Dawn, wears a white robe which represents innocence sanctified. Her picture in the 21st card is naked—on account of the perfection which resides in innocence—save indeed for a scarf that flows over her, as if naturally and undesigned, and this is because there is a mystery of divine possibility which lies behind innocence, being the mystery of nuptials as the completion thereof in nature, sealing it with holiness to the Lord. Earthly womanhood is the type of SHEKINAH, and this is one aspect of the Isis of Nature shewn in her unfallen beauty in the Altar-Diagram of the  $3^{\circ}=8^{\circ}$  Degree.

In respect of the 21st card, it should be observed further that the physical centre is intimated after an especial manner, though under an art of concealment for modesty, by the erect position of the figure: it is the only Tarot card which exhibits womanhood in the fulness of her erect stature, the reason is given in Gen. 2, 25: *Erat autem uterque nudus, Adam scilicet et uxor ejus; et non erubescabant* (And they were both naked: that is, Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed). The position and all that is implied thereby—including the mystery of the state of

wifehood which lies on the surface of the text—should be contrasted with the Diagram of the 4°=7° Degree, where the woman of the 3°=8° Degree appears in the fallen state and is shewn stooping, so that the physical centre is indrawn by an operation of shame, as it is written: *Cognoviscunt se esse nudos* (They knew that they were naked—Genesis 3: 7); and again: *Et timui eo quod nudus essem, et abscondi me* (I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself—Genesis 3: 10). This emblem is the antithesis of the 21st Tarot card as well as of the Practicus Diagram; it is this which keeps the Portal of earthly life for all who enter therein. Of every son and daughter of man who comes to that Portal, bearing the titles of admission, it prays that the fallen SEPHIRA MALKUTH may be raised up in his or her person, so that once again the figure may stand erect—if only in them.

Here is another aspect of the work indicated by the Portal of the Rosy Cross, when it is said that “it is in ourselves and so only that the SEPHIROTH which fell in us also are raised”; but the inherent difficulties of exegesis in this most secret field have closed up the mouth of research so far as TIPHERETH is concerned. When the body of imperfection is dissolved in the halls of GEBURAH it shall be possible to speak more plainly, that the true stature of adeptship may be attained in CHESED.

As a conclusion to the 21st card: in the great oval which encompasses it, and in the four external angles, we behold a symbol of that eternal truth which Nature exists to manifest—the indwelling and encompassing powers of the Divine, signified by TETRAGRAMMATON, and by the extended Name which abides in all quarters of the universe. It is in virtue of this knowledge that the Postulant begins the return journey of the soul. Because of these Divine Powers within and without, the Isis of Nature is also the Bride of the Apocalypse, understood as the Church of Christ. For Nature is a great Temple in which GOD is manifested to man, and in proportion as man can read the messages that Temple is assumed, becoming a great sanctuary for the administration of redeeming sacraments. It was said of old by Zoharic writers that all things are in MALKUTH; the Church which is of GOD is not therefore apart from the Temple that is Nature, and the office of man in his election is so to work at his own inward transmutation that he shall manifest the Divine on all planes of the Cosmos, making that new Heaven, that new Earth, wherein the former things have passed away. This is why the Isis of Nature, the unfallen universe, is shewn to the Postulant as he enters the Gate of YETZIRAH. As the soul returns to GOD, it takes Nature with it, but the archetypal Nature. The restored and redeemed world is also before the soul; the spirit thereof, the Bride and Queen of the Kingdom, stands at the Gate and opens, while, from the furthest point of the Path, the great height, the Spirit and the Bride call it into that region where there are communicated the “Waters of Life freely.”

We have so far dealt with the SHEKINAH in two aspects—as she stands at the door of YETZIRAH and at the concealed Portal of ATZILUTH. On the threshold of BRIAH, at the Gate of the Second Order, in the Portal of the Rosy Cross, she appears as Temperance, the Keeper of the Middle Way. As it was said by a great master in the theurgic path of crucifixion, we must even be content with what we

have, but the symbol as it is presented commonly and under the name which I have mentioned here seems far from our high purpose. I should rather write about another figure such great words of paradox as “Ego dixi in excessu meo, Omnis Homo Deus” (I said in my excess [or ecstasy], Every Man is God), because in the proper understanding of our symbolism the strait path does not lie exactly between the evil and the good. This is the thesis which has come down to us, but in the higher Degrees we must give the higher meaning, and the complexion of the path upward, as we proceed further in our course, has more of the aspect of ecstasy than that of Temperance. All that is possible, however, within the measures of the Portal of the Rosy Cross, has been done to uplift the symbol, and it is of all truth that it represents the principle of sacramental life, the ascent of human nature. It is said further, and very truly, in respect of the SHEKINAH as she is seen under this aspect, that it is she who brings forth to life. This is in our old records, but the reason in its fulness lies beyond this Grade. The same memorials call her the Daughter of the Reconcilers, and it is assuredly she who leads therein. She is the Guardian of the Gate of BRIAHA, calling into perfect reconciliation. The essences, elements or elixirs which she mingles in her chalices, and which are called in the Ritual of the Portal the influences of CHESED and GEBURAH, signify the union of the inward and outward states, indrawn and manifest, the mystic life and the life of man in the world, by which alone it is possible to attain the perfect manhood of adeptship. As she stands at the threshold of TIPHERETH she signifies by her symbolic action the true counsel which may be derived from those who are prepared from the higher Grades of the Second Order.

We have now completed our study in summary form of the manifest cards of SHEKINAH on the Tree of Life. It should be noted, however, that each emblem is the synthesis of the world to which it guards the entrance and into which it leads the Postulant. The High Priestess before the door of DAATH, representing at once the Path of Descent from KETHER and of going back thereto, is really in the position of AIMA ELOHIM, covering with her wings the three Supernal SEPHIROTH, as she is shewn in the Diagram of the 3 = 8 Degree. Above her is that state wherein there is no distinction between SHEKINAH and the Holy One. The Angel of Temperance is termed in the Portal of the Rosy Cross the synthesis of TIPHERETH, and TIPHERETH in its turn is the synthesis—as we know otherwise—of the whole Second Order. So also the Divine Presence represented by the 21st card, is typical of that state which is delineated by the work of YETZIRAH in the Order of the Golden Dawn—the re-making of manifested man, male and female, in the likeness of ELOHIM, the restoration of man in the perfect terms of the archetype.

Fratres et Sorores, I have mentioned there and here the Divine Name TETRAGRAMMATON, and this has been allocated after several manners to the Tree of Life in the old theosophy of Kabalism. I give you hereby and herein, for the first time in the history of our Holy Order, the mystery which appertains to its descent through the Four Worlds.

YOD, HE, VAU, HE are KETHER, CHOKMAH, BINAH, the HE final abiding in DAATH, at the centre of the Path of GHIMEL. This is the Daughter of the Voice, who according to the symbolism, is begotten by the Eternal Mother from the Father Eternal and is nourished by the Begotten Son for the maintenance of the Eternal Covenant between all that is Divine and all that comes forth therefrom. Hereof is the world of the Supernals; and this Daughter is the High Priestess. YOD, HE, VAU, HE: CHESED, GEBURAH and TIPHARETH, with the Portal of the Rosy Cross. By CHESED the world was made; by GEBURAH it is re-made in Christ; and TIPHARETH is the working of those forces which lead to the new birth. Hereof is the first Reflected Triad, and the second HE, or the Daughter, is the Angel whom we call Temperance, standing at the Gate of Adeptship. YOD, HE, VAU, HE, the Second Reflected Triad, or NETZACH, HOD and YESOD, and the Portal of YETZIRAH looking towards the Pillars of MALKUTH. Therein the Daughter—she who is the Second HE—is represented by the Angel of the Presence in things manifest, and this is the 21st Key of the ancient Tarot cards. In ASSIAH, as you know, the four parts of human personality are modes of the utterance of the Divine Name in man—the imperfect and halting expression—and it is the object of our research to uplift it into a true image of the Word. This is so far as regards the Two Orders of the Rosy Cross, but after it is a Divine Silence, wherein the Word reflects upon itself.

In fine, as regards the Four Worlds, the entrance into ASSIAH is through the sacred body of womanhood, as into the Garden of Venus, but is now a ravaged garden, and the SHEKINAH therein is at best a clouded splendour, because she is in exile with the Israel of GOD: while in a certain very deep sense of Zoharic theosophy she has been cast out with him.

But when the Postulant comes to the Portal of the Golden Dawn, desiring in his own person and with his proper personal eyes to gaze upon her unveiled countenance, till the world is restored therein—he in that and that of truth in him—there is opened for him a Gate of Entrance into another mode of ASSIAH, and she who stands thereat, his Guide through all the Paths, is the SHEKINAH manifested as the Hegemon of our Holy Order. She is the Guardian of the Gate of ASSIAH.

We may summarise at this point as follows; on the hypothesis that we came forth from the centre, which centre is also the height, or the world of ATZILUTH in Kabalistic symbolism, there is Zoharic authority for saying that our descent into manifestation was by the central Pillar of Benignity and the paths comprised therein. According to the symbolism of our Order, we came down, therefore, through those doors by which, in the same symbolism, we go up on the return journey. But this is another way of saying that we enter into objective existence by and through her who is SHEKINAH, for there should be no need to affirm that our mystical paths are not distances between two points in space and that our doors are not of this literal understanding.

She who is the Guardian of the Gates is really both Gates and Paths, because she is the Mother of souls, who brings them into individual being in virtue of her



divine womanhood, even as the womanhood on earth brings children into the life of flesh.

Lastly, as the wings of AIMA ELOHIM cover the Supernal SEPHIROTH in the world of ATZILUTH, she is the synthesis of that world and is represented as such in the Tarot card of the High Priestess. In her substituted form of Temperance she is called—as we have seen and know otherwise—the synthesis of TIPHARETH, and TIPHARETH is the synthesis of BIAH. As the Isis of Nature in the 21st card, she is the synthesis of YETZIRAH; and in ASSIAH—which is the world of things as they are, the earth and the fulness thereof—she is represented in our Outer Temple by a human being, the Hegemon of the Golden Dawn, who from one point of view should be therefore always a woman, save and except that in the truest and highest sense the male is not without the female nor the female apart from the male, each implied in each and both expressed in either.

I pass now to a brief consideration of the Tarot cards which are allocated to the Paths within the several worlds—but in separation from those which belong to the Pillar of Benignity—and are the modes of progression in the Order from world to world. It is obvious that the Rituals of the Golden Dawn comprise all that can be said as regards the symbols in YETZIRAH. They are memorials of the soul's legend, of her quest and the way of attainment. The Angel of Judgement calls to the risen life in the place of purity in soul; and the Path of SHIN is the path of heart's desire towards all high ends of being. The fire therein is reflected into the Kingdom of this world for the conversion of our material part. Into the Path of RESH is reflected a certain light from the glorious sun of TIPHARETH, and it falls upon the world of mind. The symbol of the Moon is connected with the Path of RESH, as the light of wisdom and of will reflected from the state which is in Christ shining on the earth of our mortality. The spirit of the Great White Star in the Path of TZADDI is SHEKINAH under another aspect, directing the waters of life to the great world of intellection and keeping the ways thereof. But the symbol of the riven Tower in the Path of PE indicates the work of him who enters the Grade of Philosophus and the region of the dedicated will. It is the way of the King in Israel, of him who is earning his titles to reign in BIAH.

Before the Portal of the Rosy Cross are the symbols of the Path attributed to the letters NUN, SAMECH and AYIN, and here again you are acquainted with their meanings. The Paths lead from YETZIRAH, but one of them alone is traversed because SHEKINAH is the way to the heights. The three symbols comprise the last counsels conveyed on the threshold of Adeptship, so that what is externally a ceremonial title may become an essential and inward gift. That which they teach might be summarised in brief words as follows: (1) Those who escape from the toils of that death which is in sin shall not see death for ever. (2) For those who cast out the evil from within them Satan becomes the emissary Goat, a sacrifice for those who go up the Path of reconciliation, path of purified life and way of redemption. They shall rest under the wings of SHEKINAH.

Beyond these things, my Brethren, are the Grades and the Paths to the Grades beyond the life of TIPHERETH, but these remain in the hiddenness, awaiting that due season when the call shall come to each.