

New Hermetics Tarot Descriptions

When beginning to explore the archetypal images of the Tarot in the Practitioner level, you may wish to read some of the traditional correspondences of these images. You can find quite a lot of useful food for thought in Robert Wang's "Qabalistic Tarot," as well as Aleister Crowley's "Book of Thoth" and "777."

I also thought I would provide these descriptions of the New Hermetics Tarot. The following are brief descriptions of the 22 images of the New Hermetics Tarot to give the barest sketch of what they are all about.

The Major Arcana

These cards are an attempt to represent pictorially the relationship between inner planes magical/mystical work and the images of the Tarot. These cards show the inner steps on the path from the beginning of spiritual exploration to godhead. These are the 22 paths of the Hebrew letters, the paths between the ten sephiroth. The ten sephiroth themselves are of course depicted by the numbered cards.

In this deck, most of the figures in the major arcana are fairly neuter in sexual valence with a few exceptions. Often, the gender is vaguely implied, but without much emphasis. There are two main reasons for this. The first is because I wanted the reader to recognize that the sexual gender in the cards in this deck is an issue of energy, feminine or masculine, passive or active, rather than actual gender. Second, I wanted people to be able to project themselves into the cards, both identifying themselves as the figures and interacting with the figures in imaginal dialogue. By keeping the features and forms vague, your subconscious and superconscious mind will be able to fill in the details as you experience them in your practical work in the Aethyr.

The colors in these cards are from all four of the color scales of the Golden Dawn system.

The World

The world here represents the exploration of the inner planes, the Æthyr. The figure in the center represents the body of light, or the soul, surrounded by the four elements. The design of the card also alludes to the inner temple that is a central part of the New Hermetics work.

Inner Experience: Exploring the Æthyr

Archetypal Ideas: anima mundi, dancer, æthyr, astral light, four elements, material world, universe

Hebrew Letter: Tau "Th"

Yetziratic Symbol: Earth, Saturn

The Last Judgment

This is the awakening to the inner eternal life of the spirit. It is a baptism, an inner death and rebirth. The dead figure represents the old self, inert, lifeless, as the shadowy figure of the body of light emerges into the light of cosmic awareness.

Inner Experience: Death and Rebirth

Archetypal Ideas: resurrection, baptism, eternal life, apocalypse, Hades, ecstasy, release

Hebrew Letter: Shin "Sh"

Yetziratic Symbol: Fire, Spirit

The Sun

This card represents the awakening of the energy centers of the body as well as our own awakening into an empowered sense of self.

Inner Experience: Invoking Light of Self

Archetypal Ideas: self, ego, day, animus, extrovert, youth, child, aesthete, performer, left-brain, solar powers, energy

Hebrew Letter: Resh "R"

Yetziratic Symbol: Sun

The Moon

This card depicts the inner exploration of archetypal ideas. It represents our work within our own personal mythologies, which can be challenging, but ultimately deeply rewarding. It is a world of shadows and confusion. A small figure travels a winding path with the seven 'planetary' Tarot cards looming along the path.

Inner Experience: Past Lives, Archetypes

Archetypal Ideas: illusions, dreams, night, subconscious, unconscious, fantasy, mystic, trance, right-brain

Hebrew Letter: Qoph "Q"

Yetziratic Symbol: Pisces

The Star

This card is the opening of our consciousness to the infinity within, expanding to infinite awareness of the infinity within and without.

Inner Experience: Expanding Consciousness

Archetypal Ideas: meditation, revelation, nature's beauty, imagination, scientist, freedom, unfolding of creation

Hebrew Letter: Tzaddi "Tz"

Yetziratic Symbol: Aquarius

The Tower

Here the tower is the tower of our thoughts and ideas about ourselves and the world, which is, at this stage, destroyed by the force of our own awakening cosmic awareness.

Inner Experience: Silencing Thought

Archetypal Ideas: nature's power, tower of Babel, dark night of soul, phallic energy, catastrophe, eye of Shiva

Hebrew Letter: Peh "P"

Yetziratic Symbol: Mars

The Devil

The devil's one eye alludes to the phallic mysteries that the goat symbol has always represented. This card depicts the direction of magical force toward manifestation through talismans, as well as the release of inhibition, represented by our 'fear of the devil,' to empower and awaken higher levels of consciousness.

Inner Experience: Talismanic Work

Archetypal Ideas: Pan, matter, material force, world father, Baphomet, demiurge, Satan, oppressor, redeemer

Hebrew Letter: Ayin "O"

Yetziratic Symbol: Capricorn

Temperance

This card simply depicts the body of light, rising ever upward toward the light of cosmic consciousness.

Inner Experience: Rising on the Planes

Archetypal Ideas: alchemy, teacher, guide, art, guardian angel, Great Work, transformer, philosopher

Hebrew Letter: Samech "S"

Yetziratic Symbol: Sagittarius

Death

Here transcendence comes through renunciation, it is basically the opposite of the Devil. While the Devil represents transcendence through indulgence, excess, and libertinism, Death represents transcendence through austerity fasting, purity and asceticism.

Inner Experience: Transcendence

Archetypal Ideas: angel of death, transformation, snake, scorpion, eagle, reincarnation, reproduction, completion

Hebrew Letter: Nun "N"

Yetziratic Symbol: Scorpio

The Hanged Man

The hanged man represents the meditative soul, radiating love out into the universe.

Inner Experience: Power through Sacrifice, radiating love

Archetypal Ideas: sacrifice, illumination, crucifixion, masochist, victim, martyr, beneficence, dissolution

Hebrew Letter: Mem "M"

Yetziratic Symbol: Water

Justice

The figure has a scale or balance within, weighing the polarities to establish equilibrium.

Inner Experience: Balancing Forces

Archetypal Ideas: balance, karma's action, balance of opposites, judge, adjustment, equilibrium, mediator, truth

Hebrew Letter: Lamed "L"

Yetziratic Symbol: Libra

The Wheel of Fortune

Here the figure is shaking off the karma of life, taking the form of the three alchemical principles, or the three gunas of yoga philosophy.

Inner Experience: Undoing Past Experience

Archetypal Ideas: luck, karma, fate, gambler, cycles, wealth and lack, chance, expansion, success

Hebrew Letter: Kaph "K"
Yetziratic Symbol: Jupiter

The Hermit

The figure here is cloaked and retired, developing and strengthening connection with the cosmic consciousness that has become the center of life.

Inner Experience: Absorbing Power
Archetypal Ideas: loner, sage, path of initiation, pilgrim, inner knowledge, secret seed, secret light
Hebrew Letter: Yod "I, J, Y"
Yetziratic Symbol: Virgo

Strength

Here the figure is working actively with the power of cosmic consciousness, discovering the manner and methods of handling this force.

Inner Experience: Learning to Use Power
Archetypal Ideas: lover, power, vitality, lust, domination, strength of love, sorceress, fascination
Hebrew Letter: Teth "T"
Yetziratic Symbol: Leo

The Chariot

Here, the force that was mastered in Strength, has now split into its essential polarities. The figure is connected to this force, recognizing that each experience in life is a particular dealing of cosmic consciousness with the soul, and giving up all sense of self for an ultimate understanding of the universe. In alchemical terminology, this card depicts the stage called Separatio.

Inner Experience: Giving all for Wisdom
Archetypal Ideas: grail bearer, receptivity, reconciliation, transport, the ark, containment
Hebrew Letter: Cheth "Ch"
Yetziratic Symbol: Cancer

The Lovers

In alchemical terms, this card represents Coniunctio, the polarities coming together, recognized as equal and opposite parts of the one whole they come together with a new awareness that is neither of the individual components and both.

Inner Experience: The Chymical Wedding

Archetypal Ideas: twins, lovers, attraction of opposites, polarity, two halves of the brain

Hebrew Letter: Zayin "Z"

Yetziratic Symbol: Gemini

The Hierophant

The process of outer initiation from the power of the inner planes is represented here. The Hierophant is the master who can lead either polarity of consciousness into balance by presenting its opposite current as the path toward initiation. The darkness must yield to the light, the light to the darkness.

Inner Experience: Power to Initiate

Archetypal Ideas: master, teacher, high priest, spiritual rules or laws, interpreter of the mysteries

Hebrew Letter: Vau "V, U"

Yetziratic Symbol: Taurus

The Emperor

Here is simply represented power, energy, the alchemical principle of Sulphur, the active force.

Inner Experience: Cosmic Strength

Archetypal Ideas: all-father, conqueror, father, creator gods, husband, alchemical sulphur, warrior

Hebrew Letter: Heh "H"

Yetziratic Symbol: Aries

The Empress

Here is love, the attraction of the polarities, one to the other. She is alchemical salt, the binding, solidifying, precipitating energy.

Inner Experience: Cosmic Love

Archetypal Ideas: Mother Nature, mother, manifestor, love, wife, Demeter, queen, goddess, alchemical salt

Hebrew Letter: Daleth "D"

Yetziratic Symbol: Venus

The High Priestess

This card represents the starry presence of the ultimate divine, which is the body of the star goddess. The vision of divinity is the infinite splendor of manifest existence.

Inner Experience: Divine Presence

Archetypal Ideas: priestess, wise woman, yoni, gnosis, Isis, the hidden sanctuary, beauty

Hebrew Letter: Gimel "G"

Yetziratic Symbol: Moon

The Magician

The magician is alchemical Mercury, the sattva principle of yoga philosophy, the state of illumination. The figure directly touches the light of cosmic consciousness above, and transmits that light through his wand to the world below.

Inner Experience: Cosmic Knowledge

Archetypal Ideas: Prometheus, trickster, wizard, inventor, artist, creative will, magic power, Hermes

Hebrew Letter: Beth "B"

Yetziratic Symbol: Mercury

Fool

The fool is the enlightened being who is taking a final step into the unknowable. The cliff in this image represents the edge of duality, as if you were walking off the sharp end of the yin yang symbol, moving from duality into non-duality. The figure is identical to the dead figure in "The Last Judgment" card, because although a great journey has now been traveled on the one hand, on the other, nothing has really changed. The same being still walks the earth, only perspective has shifted, and simplicity has replaced the complexities of life, represented by the lotus flower.

Inner Experience: Cosmic Ecstasy

Archetypal Ideas: divine folly, jester, joker, babe in the egg, The Green Man, spirit, chaos, mad genius, Dionysus

Hebrew Letter: Aleph "A"

Yetziratic Symbol: Air