

## Tarot read with Christian spectacles.

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The Tarot deck has a bad reputation in many Christian circles. It is looked upon as superstition. The cards are used for fortune telling, and fortune telling is condemned in the Bible. Thus many Christians speak of the images of the tarot deck as the picture book of the Devil.

But not everyone working with tarot uses the cards for fortune telling. To many the cards are read as an instrument for personal and spiritual growth. And the verdict that the tarot deck is demonic does not take its history into account. Several of the images of the trumps have their origin as illustrations to Christian books such as The Divine Comedy of Dante. The Tarot had a renaissance a little more than a hundred years ago, when they were interpreted in the light of Jewish-Christian

mysticism, especially the so-called Tree of Life in the Qabalah.

The images of the trumps may therefore function as images of meditation and as a help to understand, how God reveals Godself in creation, and how God shows us a way back for fellowship with Godself. The images of the Tarot also reveal how the nature of God is mirrored in human nature.

I have the last three years or so have a great benefit of using the images for such a meditation. These meditations often lead into a silence in which I receive an inspiration from God, almost a direct speech or thought from God, Jesus or The Holy Spirit in my thoughts, or as an intuitive insight which needs for me to express.

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### Tarot – what is it?

Tarot looks like other decks of playing cards. It has four colours, and may be the colours of the ordinary playing cards come from the Tarot. The four colours have 10 numbered cards, but four court cards in each colour. The colours are wands (clubs), cups (hearts), swords (spades), and disks (diamonds). The numbered cards and the court cards are called Minor Arcana. The special characteristic of the tarot is the trumps. The tarot has 22 trumps, one marked "0", the others marked with Roman numbers I – XXII. The trumps are called Major

Arcana. Arcanum means secret. The cards have a secret message.



The oldest tarot cards are from Italy, about 1320, called *tarochini*, i.e. Tarok or Tarot. Some say that the word is an anagram for *rota* (= wheel); as such it is seen in trump no. X, Wheel of Fortune. Others speculate on an Egyptian origin, and say that the images of Major Arcana are the pictorial form of the secret book of Thot, the God of the art of writing. In this connection it is said that Tarot comes from Egyptian *ta-rosh*, which should mean "the royal way".

As an example let's look at the tarot trump no. IX, the Hermit.



The Hermit has its place in the Tree of Life as the path uniting two of the symbols for God's self revelation, "Hesed" (grace, love, favour) and "Tipheret" (beauty). When I meditate on the image it will thus give me an idea of how

these two aspects of God's revealing Godself work together, thus creating a deeper recognition of God as well as of my own growth in the meeting with God. "Tipheret" is often understood as the heart of the Tree of Life, and is sometimes called the Son. To the Christian this indicates the Son of God who in Jesus Christ became the Son of Man.

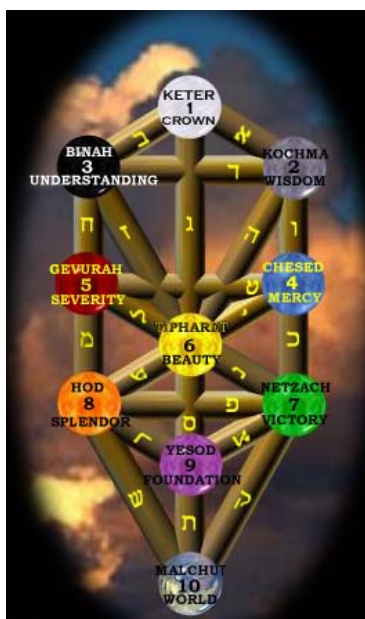
The image of trump no. IX thus tells us, how the grace of God is accomplished in the heart of existence and how grace crowns life with beauty. Or it tells, how we find this co-operation of grace and beauty.

The person in the image of trump no. IX walks in the high mountains. He is alone, has a staff in one hand and a lantern in the other. The light of the lantern comes from the star of David, the six-pointed star, which is a symbol of the Messiah, i.e. the Christ. Mountains are like the desert the place for the revelation of the presence of God. On a mountain God met Moses and called him to free the Israelites of their slavery in Egypt. On the mountain Moses received the word of God, the Law, which would help his people to live according to the will of God.

## The Qabala

Qabala is Jewish mysticism. The Qabala works with the meaning of numbers and letters. They are symbols for the self revelation of God. The interrelatedness of the forms of revelations are expressed in a symbol, which is called the Tree of Life. The Tree pictures 10 forms of revelation joined together by 22 paths. These paths correspond to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 22 Tarot trumps.

The 10 symbols for God's self revelation in the process of creation are: Keter (crown), which symbolises the unity of God that is the limit for our knowledge of God. Then follows Hochma (wisdom) and Binah



(Understanding, intelligence or the insight in the plenitude of creatures) until we at last face Malchut (kingdom), which is the Kingdom of God, or God's presence in the world (also called Shekinah). When the trumps are connected to each one of the 22 paths, they represent in an image the connection and cooperation between those two forms of God's self revelation which they join together and the mirroring in creation thereof. Every path is numbered with a letter from the Hebrew alphabet. Thus the letters of the paths and the numbers of the trumps give way to an interpretation according to a mysticism of letters and numbers.

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Jesus after his baptism went out into the wilderness, and later on in his life he withdrew to the mountains or the wilderness to be alone with God, his Father. The calling and purpose of his life as well as his relationship to the Father was confirmed during his retreat. It was thus in the wilderness, that the initiation to service and ministry was confirmed and tried in such a way that Jesus could be the Christ, the Light which enlightens the darkness.

Also we need the retreat, the withdrawal from everyday life, the silence and the solitude to meet God and find our calling, our ministry and to understand our lives. Silence, as we withdraw to the wilderness or the mountains, away from ordinary life, may become the time of our initiation. The Hermit may find himself in the darkness of rebirth. In the Qabalah "9" is said to be the number of initiation, because it fulfils the row of numbers of one digit (1-9). However the card is also numbered by a Hebrew letter "jod" with numerical value of 10, the number of fulfilment, which at the same time suggests a new beginning. "10" contain "0" which is the number of the trump with the name, the Fool, who is the spiritual seeker; and it contains the number "1", which symbolises the unfolded beginning.

He or she who has found the solitude with God, is capable of being alone in the world;

he or she is free of the verdicts and judgements of the world and is not himself or herself judging anyone. He or she is made free from any prejudice, because he or she rests in God. Such a person may become a spiritual guide, maybe a wise man as on the image, one who shows the way to the seeker, because he and she already has walked it.

### **An inspiration received while meditating on the image of the trump.**

As said above, my meditation often releases an inspiration. This is an inspiration from the Master Jesus:

***"Follow me into the desert, says the Master Jesus, follow me. Do not be afraid of the desert, of being alone, of silence and a time without distractions. Withdrawn from everything that distracts, all of your tasks, chosen or assigned, - when you have laid all aside by which you seem to acquire an identity as you, you are faced with that which you consider your "I". An empty shell, a form of nothing. Every illusion has gone. Even your thoughts are revealed as senseless noise. Frightening – until you find yourself as you really are.***

***You will have to disclothe yourself of all your false self images, every identity founded on what you feel other people think of you or on what you are compared to others. You will have to disclothe a false personality founded on your dependency of others, co-dependence, submission, power, superiority, inferiority, hate, jealousy, desire.***

***Only one attitude toward others is true: Love unfolded in service, received and given in confidence.***

***When you have put aside the illusions of who you are in your withdrawal or silence, and you seem to have lost everything, there will be room for my voice, the voice of the***

*Father in mine, and for the life giving breath of the Holy Spirit.*

*This is the insight of the wilderness. Without the desert and the silence, without the disclosure, without the solitude you will never become who you really are in the depth of your being – and you will not find yourself as you are when someone loves you. The insight of the wilderness is the emptiness of losing your idea of “I” – the emptiness which turns into being, because you find yourself as you in the presence the One being I AM THAT I AM.*

*The person who have received the insight of the wilderness and who have found herself as the beloved of God at the deepest level in the centre of her person is alone, but not lonely, - alone, but not deserted, - alone, but present to other humans and living creatures. Alone meaning to be who you are in the assurance of always living and being face to face with my Father in Heaven.*

*Follow me into the desert, into silence – and be found by God.”*