

The following is an excerpt from *The Book of Maps*, the companion guidebook to the *Spirit Keeper's Tarot*, a hand-illustrated black and white tarot deck crafted with practitioners of the mystic arts in mind. The pen and ink drawings were inspired by woodcut prints from the late Renaissance. Symbology called upon is based predominantly on medieval European alchemy, astrology (the Sacred Seven), Hermeticism, Zoroastrianism, Abrahamic angelology, Kabbalah, Catholicism/Christianity, Sufism, and Egyptian mythology.



For more information about the deck, go to:

<https://benebellwen.com/spirit-keepers-tarot>

Minor Arcana: Seven Upper Realms

In lay terms, the Upper Realms relate to conception and the first signs of growth or development. The Aces are the divine seeds that are implanted into our minds and hearts, which we then channel outward to materialize. The Tens from the Lower Realms are linked to the Aces because, after the material pinnacles that the Tens represent, what had manifested is returned to dust, back into the intangible realms from where they first sprung—and that’s the Aces. The cycle continues, and what is in the intangible realm of the Aces will begin to manifest in the Realm of Twos. The Threes, then, give birth descending from the Upper Realm to the Lower Realm, and the first sign of what has materialized having function is in the Fours.

MINOR ARCANA KEYS WITH TRINITARIAN PRIMORDIAL INFLUENCES

Lower Realm	Upper Ream			Lower Realm
Ten	Ace	Two	Three	Four
Key 1 Key 10 Key 19	Key 1 Key 10 Key 19	Key 2 Key 11 Key 20	Key 3 Key 12 Key 21	Key 4 Key 13 Key 0

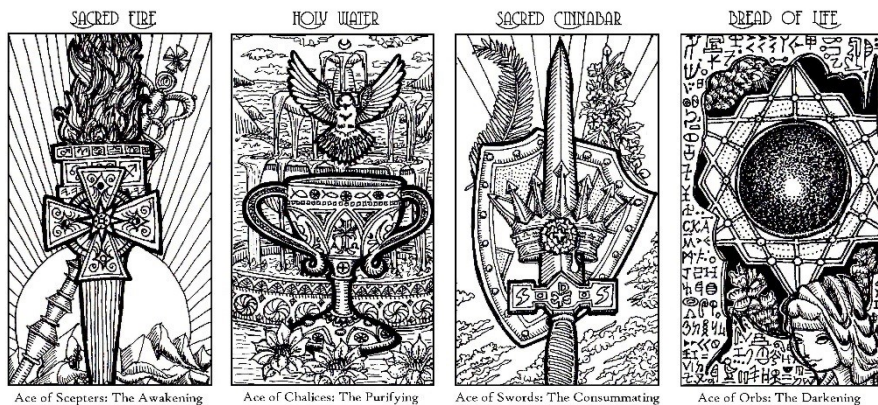
Note that only the Aces, Twos, and Threes in the Upper Realms and the connecting point between the two realms of the Minors—the Tens and Fours—are the sets with three numerological progenitors from the Major Arcana. All other numerological sets in the Lower Realms are linked to only two progenitors from the Majors.

NUMEROLOGICAL FAMILIES IN THE MAJOR ARCANA KEYS

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	5	6	7	8	9
<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	14	15	16	17	18
<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>					

The energetic path of Divine Will flows from the Primordial Realm into the Aces, the seeds that are planted and sowed, that take root, grow, and move from Aces to Threes, then their Holy Guardians are given Life, and then into the Lower Realm entering with the Fours. However, since the path of Humanity in receiving revelations of the Divine Will flow from understanding the Primordial Realm, then dwelling in the realm of Fours, the Lower Realms were addressed first in this book.

Realm of Aces: Nucleic Seeds



There are four elemental worlds that the One Creator bore from Logos, the four letters of the Creator's name. From those four elemental worlds, we can see the 22 facets of the Creator, which are the 22 primordial spirits of the Major Arcana. To then materialize from the spiritual realm into the material and corporeal realm, four nucleic seeds are planted, and those are the Aces.

In the *Book of Thoth*, Crowley noted that the Aces are not materialized forms of their respective elements but are the root from which materials of their respective elements will spring from. The Ace of a suit is the formless essential nature of the element, which is needed for the forming of that elemental realm.

Geographically, per Crowley, the Ace of each suit also corresponds with a geographical region of the world: Root of Fire, or Ace of Scepters, for Asia; Root of Water, or Ace of Chalices, for the Pacific Ocean; Root of Air, or Ace of Swords, for the Americas (North and South); and Root of Earth, or Ace of Orbs, for Europe and Africa. The German theologian and occultist Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa associated Fire with the Orient, Water with the North, Air with the Occidental West, and Earth with the South.

In the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, the Realm of Aces arises from the sefirah Keter, the Crown, and that which is beyond the human mind's comprehension. It is the primordial intentions of Ein Soph, or the infinite void from which God manifested.

The four elemental Aces are also the tools upon the Keeper's altar. By the Ace of Scepter, you Create. By the Ace of Chalices, you Preserve. By the Ace of Swords, you Destroy. By the Ace of Orbs, you Redeem. And so it is told by Crowley in *Liber B vel Magi*.

Ace of Scepters: Sacred Fire

ANGELS OF THE SHEM HAMEPHORASH

<i>Upright:</i>	Vehuaiah	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Metatron
<i>Reversed:</i>	Jeliel	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Metatron

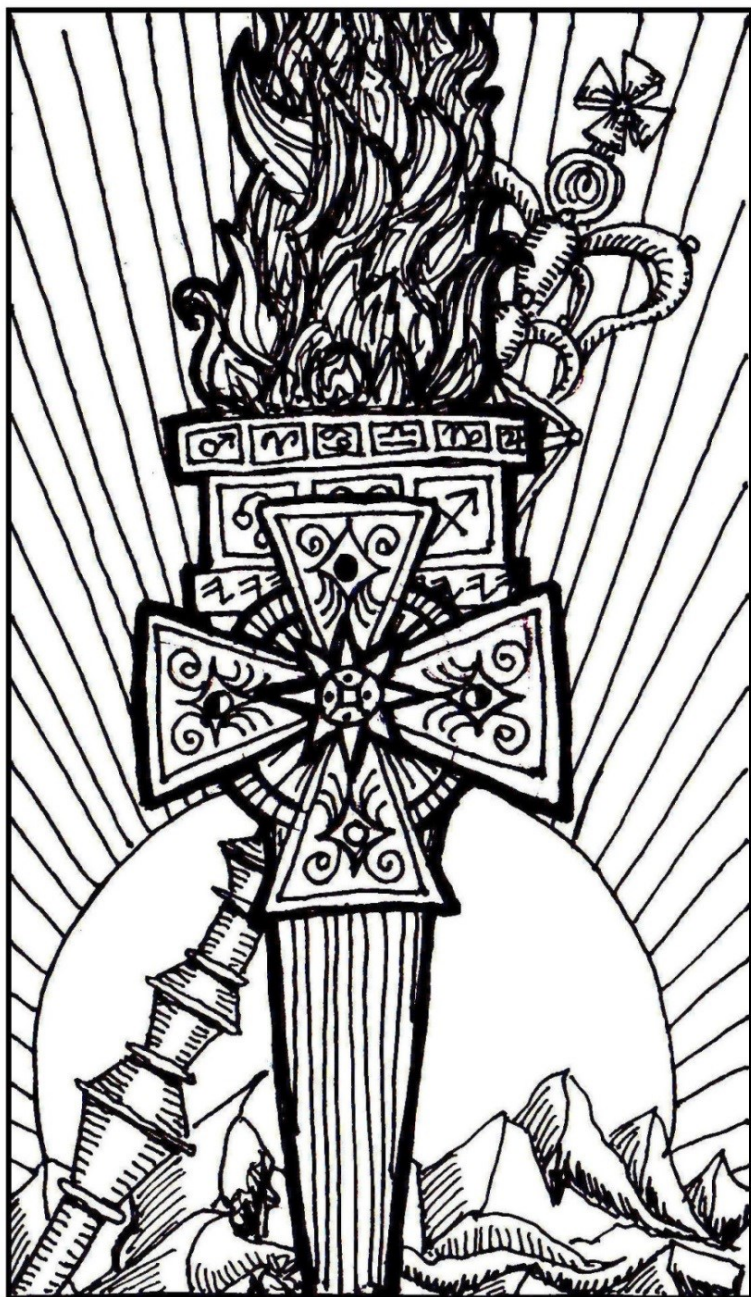
Above the Celestial Lights is an Incorruptible Flame, always sparkling, the Spring of Life, the Formation of all Beings. This Flame produces all things—and so states the Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster.

This is the card of primordial Fire. It is the Awakening stage of the Initiate's path to achieving the Magnum Opus. Alchemically, the Ace of Scepters corresponds with Sulfur. It first descends down to manifest on the physical plane during the season of Cardinal Fire, or the vernal equinox. The color associated with the Ace of Scepters is yellow, symbolizing the transmutation of silver into gold, or the yellowing of lunar consciousness. It is the Initiate realizing the inner Solar Light.

A torch features a power cross and upon it, emblems counter-clockwise for the four moon phases. This is the Torch of Knowledge and Wisdom, the quality of Synergy. At the center, an eight-ray sun and at its center, a square within a circle, for the union of heaven and earth. Inscribed upon the torch, just below the flames, are the glyphs for Mars and Jupiter on either end—the Fire planets—and then in between, Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn—the Cardinal signs. Below it, the three astrological glyphs for the Fire signs of the zodiac. The letter Yod appears in the third row.

Behind the torch at a diagonal, a sovereign's scepter. It features a spiral sequence reminiscent of the eye of a peacock's feather. Concealed behind the torch and upon the scepter is the formation of the cubic stone. There are in effect two different scepters represented here to symbolize the balance, the dichotomy, and sometimes even the innate tensions between spiritual authority and temporal authority. It is also to signify the Double Wand of Power, as first referenced for Key 20. Mountain peaks are at the base and from it, a rising sun with rays illuminating the skies a citrine orange and yellow. The Ace of Scepters marks the Seeker's personal Spear of Destiny, which manifests your courage and audacity. It imparts knowledge, which then becomes wisdom, and it fosters your utmost creativity, willpower, and ability to innovate. It infuses everything that you do with passion and zeal.

SACRED FIRE



Ace of Scepters: The Awakening

(continued from *Ace of Scepters: Sacred Fire*)

Those who find their figurative Spear of Destiny will achieve the pinnacle of career success and productivity in their lifetimes. The Ace of Scepters and Sacred Fire gives rise to the spring equinox.

Ace of Chalices: Holy Water

ANGELS OF THE SHEM HAMEPHORASH

<i>Upright:</i>	Leuviah	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Zaphkiel
<i>Reversed:</i>	Pahaliah	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Zaphkiel

This is the seed of primordial Water. It is the Purification stage of the Initiate's path to achieving the Magnum Opus. Alchemically, the Ace of Chalices corresponds with Water. It first descends down to manifest on the physical plane during the season of Cardinal Water, or the summer solstice.

The color associated with the Ace of Chalices is white, symbolizing the washing away of impurities. This is about first separating the Initiate into two oppositional principles, then later coagulating the oppositional principles to create a unity of opposites (forthcoming in the Ace of Swords, or The Consummating).

A three-tiered fountain contains the essence that is the *prima materia*, or first matter to begin the Great Work. The top tier pours forth three streams of the alchemical primes, or *tria prima*: sulfur, mercury, and salt. The crescent moon symbolizes alchemical water. The second tier pours forth the five elements of life: fire, water, air, earth, and ether (or Quintessence). The third tier: streams for the Sacred Seven (the seventh is unseen, in the back). In alchemy, the flying dove symbolizes the spiritual force that tempers the opposites—it is the spirit of Divine Union. The dove emerges and ascends to heal; it submerges and descends to purify; the Ace of Chalices is the quality of Fluidity. Here, the dove symbolizes the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The Grail is inscribed with the ichthys, and the circular ichthys symbol (ΙΧΘΥΣ), for Christ consciousness. Embedded into the detailing is also signs for the triple goddess. Three lotus blossoms lay at the foot of the Grail. In the back: the Mystic Sea. The Ace of Chalices marks the alchemist entering the White Stage of the Work, or White Work. It is purification of the subconscious and realization of lunar light. White Work is meditation, channeling, and the magus as a receiver of divine communications.

HOLY WATER



Ace of Chalices: The Purifying

(continued from *Ace of Chalices: Holy Water*)

The Ace of Chalices marks the Seeker's personal Holy Grail, which manifests as not only your connection to the spiritual universe around you and the unseen energies that influence that which is seen, but the Grail is what nurtures and feeds your soul, that saves your soul, that brings alchemical concord to your life, your emotional wellbeing, your interpersonal relationships, and your internal sphere. Those who find their figurative Holy Grail will achieve an unshakeable sense of inner peace and spiritual conviction.

The Ace of Chalices and Holy Water gives rise to the summer solstice.

Ace of Swords: Sacred Cinnabar

ANGELS OF THE SHEM HAMEPHORASH

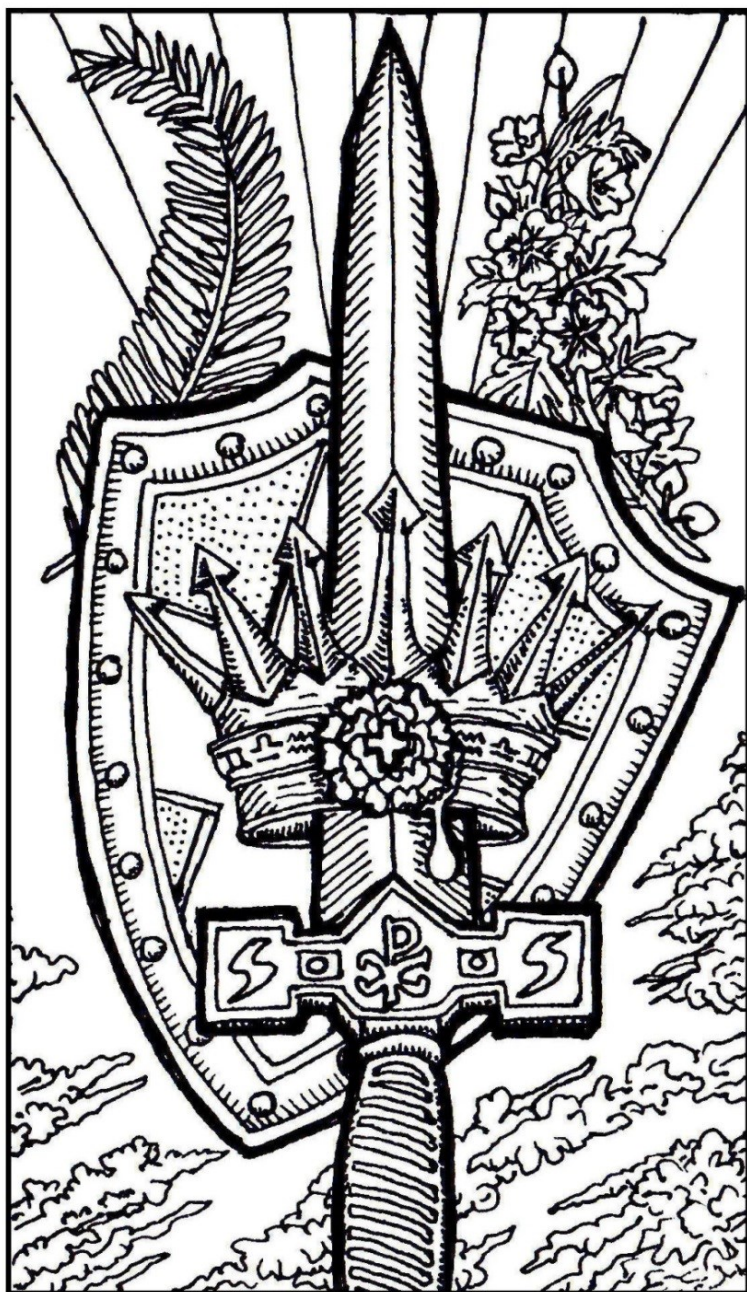
<i>Upright:</i>	Aniel	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Kamael
<i>Reversed:</i>	Haamiah	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Kamael

A sword is encircled by a gold and silver crown. The crown—symbolic in Hermetic Qabalah as Keter, for completion of the Great Work and access to the Initiate's most potent source of personal power—is adorned with the mystic rose: a cross at the center, a ring of three petals for the *tria prima*, or three primes of alchemy; a ring of five for the elements of life—fire, water, air, earth, and quintessence; and twelve for the zodiac, the confluence of space and time. The rose is bleeding a single drop of blood, a symbol of Rubedo, the alchemical stage of success.

The band around the crown features the Air signs: Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius. Upon the hilt of the sword, at the ends, are the symbols for the Hebrew letter *Yod*, symbolizing twin drops of Heaven's Dew. This is the divine spark of creation, which can also induce the Initiate to become filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. At the center of the hilt, the symbol for Chi Ro, symbolic of just cause and the incarnation of Christ (the preexistent divine Logos).

To either side of the Chi Ro, spherical rubies. At its tip, the sword emanates with eleven rays of alternating colored light. Behind the sword, a shield with a cinnabar red cross bordered in white.

SACRED CINNABAR



Ace of Swords: The Consummating

(continued from Ace of Swords: Sacred Cinnabar)

Cinnabar is the key to producing the philosopher's stone. Above to the sword's right is a palm leaf symbolizing victory; to its left, red hollyhock for ambition. At the base of the image, clouds across a pale blue-gray sky. Courage and strength are the final measures to produce Sacred Cinnabar; the Ace of Swords is the quality of Enforcement.

This is the card of primordial Air. It is the Actualization stage of the Initiate's path to achieving the Magnum Opus. Alchemically, the Ace of Swords corresponds with Mercury (cinnabar is refined mercury in a brilliant scarlet form—hence, the phase name Rubedo). It first descends down to manifest on the physical plane during the season of Cardinal Air, or the autumnal equinox. The color associated with the Ace of Swords is red. The Ace of Swords signals alchemical success.

The Ace of Swords marks the Seeker's personal Sword of the Spirit, which helps you to achieve knowledge of all things, a knowledge and wisdom that advances what was attained through the Spear of Destiny, and empowers you to become an indomitable spirit, to be undefeatable and to achieve the penultimate of sophistication.

The Ace of Swords and Sacred Cinnabar gives rise to the autumnal equinox.

Ace of Orbs: Bread of Life

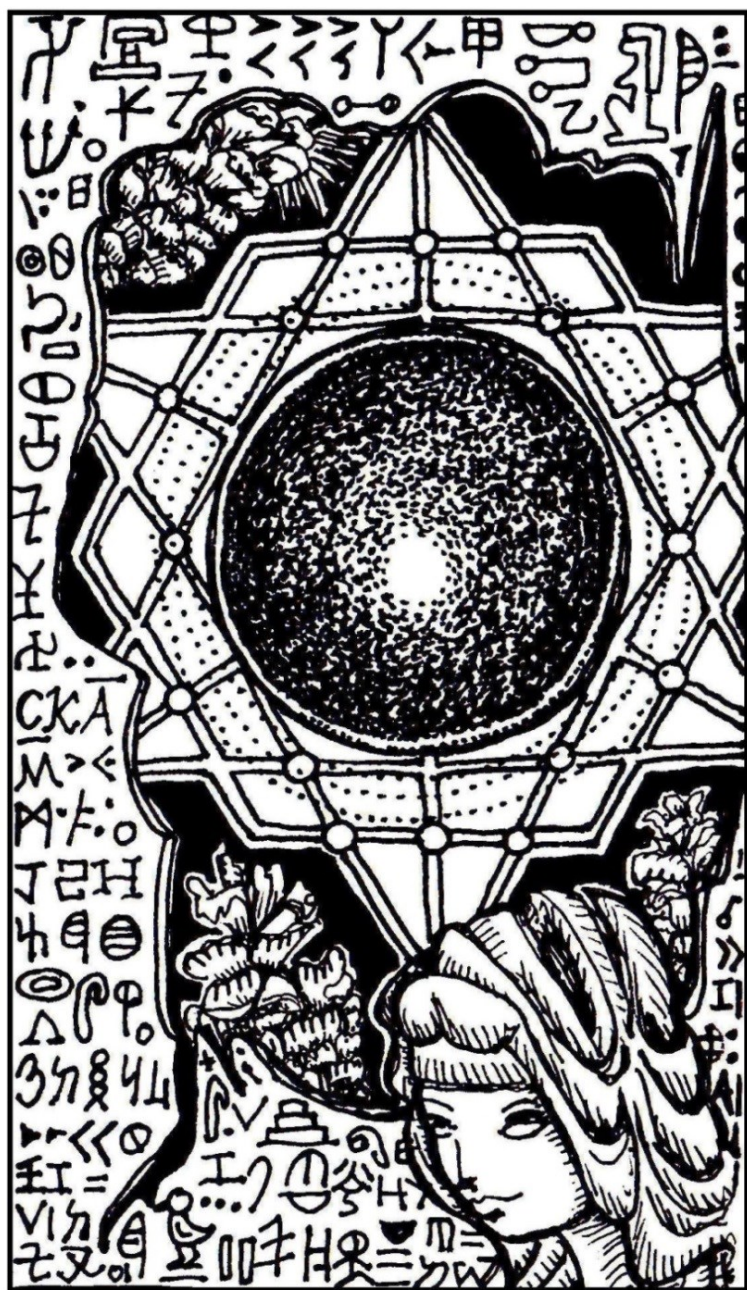
ANGELS OF THE SHEM HAMEPHORASH

<i>Upright:</i>	Mebahiah	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Haniel
<i>Reversed:</i>	Poyel	<i>Ruling Angel:</i>	Haniel

This is the card of primordial Earth. It is the Darkening stage of the Initiate's path to achieving the Magnum Opus. Alchemically, the Ace of Orbs corresponds with Salt. It first descends down to manifest on the physical plane during the season of Cardinal Earth, or the winter solstice.

In the bottom right, there is the image of an illuminated virgin mother. She is at the entrance of a dark cave. The outer walls of the cave are etched with the letters from various ancient ideographic writing systems: pre-Columbian Aztec/Nahuatl logograms; Egyptian hieroglyphs; Chinese oracle bone script; Old Persian cuneiform; ancient Aramaic; the Proto-Canaanite alphabet; the Ge'ez script from the Horn of Africa; Old Nubian; Elder Futhark runes; and Hebrew.

BREAD OF LIFE



Ace of Orbs: The Darkening

(continued from Ace of Orbs: Bread of Life)

The wall of ancient languages makes reference to some of the essential natures of Air and from the realm of Swords that beget Earth and the realm of Orbs: in the Opening of the Four Worlds in Creation, Air begets Earth: The Intellectual Plane to the Material Plane, the Formative World opens the Active World. “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Inside the cave is the sacred orb, the essential ingredient in the recipe for the Bread of Life. The orb is set within a hexagonal six-pointed geometric pattern, symbolizing God’s role as a sacred geometer. This is the geometric blueprint for the origins of the universe. Within the pattern are sixteen nexus points that encircle the sacred orb. In Biblical numerology, sixteen symbolizes agape love. The way the light hits the orb, it is clear what illuminates it: you. It is the onlooker who is the light shining into the dark cave, onto the orb.

Also, inside the cave, two at the bottom and one in the top left corner, are three pine cones. The pine cones symbolize enlightenment and the Sacred Seed within that can be nurtured into divinity. The pine cone is an emblem of Divine Wisdom, spiritual ascension, and immortality.

The Ace of Orbs endows the Keeper with access to the Sacred Mysteries and the Gift of Prophecy. The quality of this card is Fruition—the fruit born after the achievement. The color associated with the Ace of Orbs is black, for putrefaction. It is the state of decomposition and decay. It is black matter. The Ace of Orbs represents the Initiate’s Black Work, a necessary stage prior to accomplishing the Initiate’s Great Work.

The Ace of Orbs marks the Seeker’s personal recipe for the Bread of Life, which is what brings you access to a plenitude of resources, always. It is what avails to you at all times the abundance in all things that you need. It is your physical health, your material assets, your industry, and the physical accoutrements of your dominion. The Bread of Life feeds you in such a way that you always have the physical capability to do what you seek to do.

The Ace of Orbs and Bread of Life gives rise to the winter solstice.