

# Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell

## *A Seventeen-Part Video Lecture Series*

### Part VII: The Fives

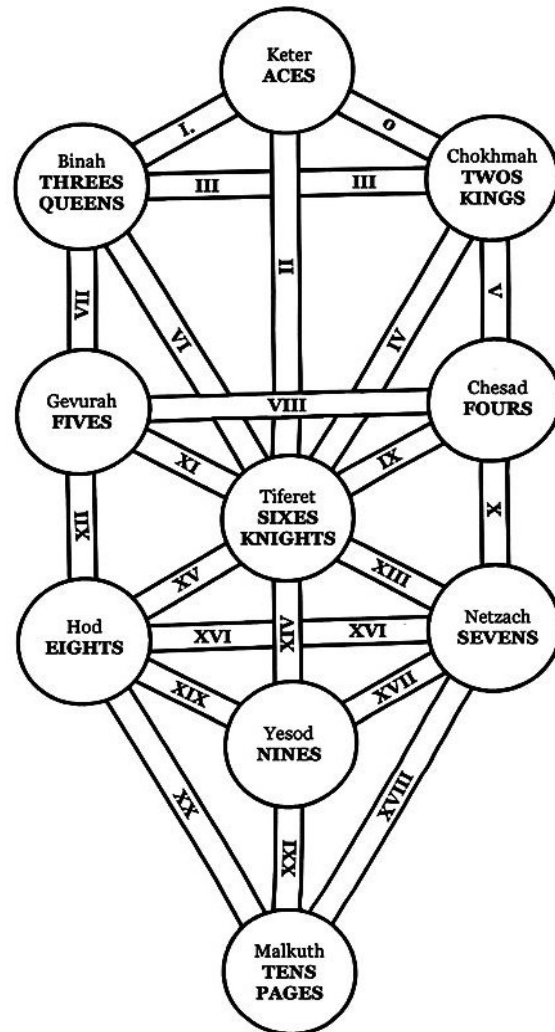
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Welcome to Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell. Closed captioning is provided for all videos in this lecture series.

#### INTRODUCTION

We're going through the cards in reference to the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and started with Keter, the ineffable and infinite Divine Source of all elemental Flow, to study the Aces. After the Aces, we studied the Realm of Twos, Dominion, Love, Peace, and Change, in Chokhmah, a divine active and assertive principle. From there we moved into Binah, the realm of the tarot Threes, a divine receiving power, receiving is to manifest fruition. Then back to Chokhmah we went to study the other residents here, the tarot Kings. This is Divinity Expanding. And then the return to Binah, to study the tarot Queens. This is Divinity Deepening. And with that our module on the Supernal Triangle of the Kabbalistic Tree was completed.

We then studied how the Divine Source flowed below the Abyss, a crossover of the threshold that Crowley describes as "complicated," and enlivened Chesad, where we covered the tarot Fours. It was in Chesad that your Higher Purpose in terms of material works is revealed to you, and you realize what it means to live a Good Life, for you.



## THE FIVES: AN OVERVIEW

In this video lecture, we're moving from Chesad to Gevurah where we will be studying the tarot Fives. Gevurah is a feminine term for dynamic power, clout, and might. This sephirah is also called Din, the masculine term for governance, having to choose, make choices, and decisions. Having to make a judgment call. This is severity and limitations. This is the Biblical Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah, grandfather to the Twelve Tribes. Where the Fours and Chesad that we covered in the previous video was the Right Arm, this here with the Fives and Gevurah would be the Left Arm.

In the Book of Thoth, Crowley makes reference to the Naples Arrangement, which is basically this particular configuration of the tarot architecture onto the Tree of Life. It's in fact the arrangement we've been working with all along. Here's what Crowley tells us about the four Fives in tarot.

In the Naples arrangement for the Tree of Life, the realm of Fives, which I've highlighted in yellow on screen for you, is a state of flux, when matter is put into motion. This revolution of matter makes it unstable. That's why this is the realm of storm and stress.

But destabilizing, stressful forces should not be confused with "evil," Crowley reminds us. No, the realm of Fives isn't about evil or evil-doing. In fact, Crowley gives us a lovely analogy. You know the feeling you get when you're at the office and your lunch break is over, and you've got to go back to work? Yeah. That feeling of bleh— I have to go back to work now, my lunch break is over— that feeling perfectly describes the Realm of Fives in tarot, Crowley tells us.

When Crowley makes reference to the Buddhist doctrine of Sorrow, I think he means Dukkha, which is the Buddhist principle that all of life and existence is suffering, that everything in the material world is impermanent, and therefore susceptible to suffering. The Fives in tarot encapsulate Dukkha. And suffering, Crowley wants us to know, is a sacrament. Every phenomenon is a sacrament.

So now let's take a look at the suffering expressed in the Four Fives.

The **Five of Wands**, in terms of a general description of its core properties, will denote contentions relating to one's social status or professional standing.

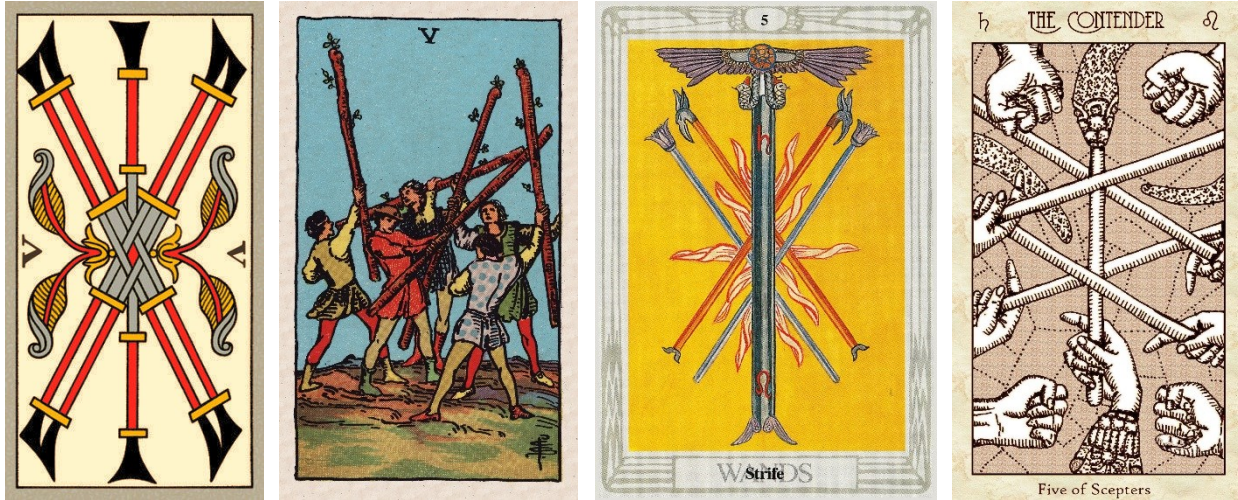
The **Five of Cups** is about losses, disappointments, or obstacles when it comes to your domestic sphere. That's love, relationships, or family or even community, tribe related.

The **Five of Swords** reveals strong antagonistic forces at play, and portends that one side is going to win big, and the other side is going to lose big. When you win, you win. When you lose, you lose. It's a lot of taking on one side, and a lot of losing on the other.

The **Five of Coins, Pentacles, or Disks** is interesting here. Classically, it has two meanings both of equal weight for your consideration, and those two meanings are quite different. First, this card can mean financial or property losses, and you see that in the older texts on Tarot de Marseilles

and also Waite's deck. But, both of these systems also mention that the Five of Coins or Pentacles can mean complicated love triangles, or drama getting stirred up by a mistress.

Now pause here and take some time to scan these cards. Study them intently. Look for patterns. How are you reading these cards based purely off what you see?



## **FIVE OF WANDS**

Here's the Five of Wands, the Lord of Strife up close. In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot, this is The Contender. The core meaning here was contentions relating to one's social or professional status in life. Now let's see how each of these four systems interpret that core meaning.

### **TAROT DE MARSEILLES: FIVE OF BATONS**

In the Four of Batons, we saw along the top and bottom edge of the card design flowers, lovely blossoms, suggesting something, you know, happy, good, joyful, but that has transformed into another baton, another fighting stick in the Five of Batons. Oh, and if you're an RWS tarot reader, you're gonna have to calm down when I give you the card meaning for the TdM Five of Batons. Just...relax. You're going to be all right. I know this is different from what you're used to.

The Marseilles Five of Wands denotes gains and riches. It's about a fortune in play, and perhaps even high society pedigree. But more money, more problems, because this card is also about high society drama. This is about having to fend off temptations. Generally, when this card shows up, it's a sign of affluence. I call it the "First World problems" card or rich people's problems. There is an underlying sense of combat or challenge here, as noted by Papus. The Five of Wands could suggest having to face obstacles in a professional enterprise or in a work and career matter, but it's the good kind of challenge, like fighting for a promotion, doing the work so you advance in ranking.

Reversed the Five of Wands denotes a legal matter, or judgment that is about to come down. This could indicate confrontations with the law, or the presence of a lawyer or even tribunal, a court of

law. A reversed Five of Wands might indicate a violation of law or a moral code, an offense or sin. This is about lacking prudence and behaving in ways that demonstrate a lack of prudence.

### **RIDER-WAITE-SMITH: FIVE OF WANDS**

Waite tells us that in the Five of Wands, we're looking at a posse of youths brandishing staves, as if in sport or strife. They're mimicking warfare, he says.

This card can indicate a sham fight, or cut-throat competition. It's about a struggle in search of fortune and glory. This card is the Battle of Life, says Waite.

Waite makes reference to what Mathers says about the Five of Wands: this card is about gold, gains, and opulence.

Reversed, this card denotes Litigation, a lawsuit or dispute of a legal nature. But be very careful: there's trickery, and people are being contradictory.

### **THOTH: FIVE OF WANDS**

Where the Thoth Four of Wands was about completion of a cycle and balance, the Five of Wands is about strife. Saturn in Leo, the decan correspondence for the Five of Wands, can suggest a clash of egos. It's self-destructing ambition; creativity pursued in such a way that the inevitable is it will self-implode.

Reversed, the Five of Wands in the Thoth is the card meaning amplified, or exacerbated. It is strife that will inevitably lead to a fall.

Now, something I'd like to direct your attention to. The top of the card depicts a Seal featuring the Seventh Star of Babylon, and a sacred symbol within the Thelema tradition founded by Crowley. You also see the twin serpents, and the Zoroastrian symbol of the Winged Sun. This is a sign of divinity and power. It's rulership or sovereignty by divine right.

The twin serpents, by the way, is also referred to as the Uraeus, or Uraei (plural). It's the Egyptian cobra signifying divine authority and the presence of the goddess Wadjet, protector of countries and pharaohs.

The seven-pointed star here reminds us of the Law of Seven and the Scarlet Woman, or Great Mother of Thelema. Note the zodiac sign of Leo here, Leo for the beast, Leo from the Major Arcanum Lust, and here, Leo with the seven-pointed star and uraei to prophecy the Whore of Babylon.

### **SPIRIT KEEPER'S TAROT: FIVE OF SCEPTERS**

In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot, The Contender signifies a zero-sum game. This is about facing a battle or contentious fight for domination. Someone will come out the winner, someone will come out the loser. Yeah. It's very Game of Thrones. The fists that you see are playing a game of rock-

paper-scissors, a Chinese hand game that dates back to the Han Dynasty, 200 BC, though it was sword, not scissors, and a Japanese version features the three as kitsune, fox spirit, the chief, or a village leader, and the hunter.

Why? Like the hand game, the Five of Scepters is about the illusion of having some sort of cunning strategy in place, but really, who wins and who loses is a matter of chance, of drawing lots. Keeping in theme with the Five of Wands this card is about trickery. The only way anyone controls winning is underhanded tactics of deception.

Also notice the hand gesture here, circled in red on screen for you. It comes from the medieval Chinese and Japanese version of this hand game, which signifies the snake.

When The Contender card in the SKT appears to you upright, you win the game of chance.

When it appears to you in reversed, assuming you are reading with reversals, then the cards are programmed to show loss in the game of chance.

Yes, the meaning here is in the same ballpark, but admittedly a divergence from what you might be used to for the Five of Wands, but also, not really. This card is still about struggle, conflict, Waite's "Battle of Life." It's about professional or career strife, maybe snakes and fierce competition at the workplace.



## FIVE OF CUPS

We're moving on to the Five of Cups, Lord of Disappointment in the Thoth, and the spirit known as The Grotesque in the SKT. This is about feeling pain and suffering as it relates to something that has happened in the realm of love, interpersonal relationships, family or your clan, your tribe, or matters of the heart. This can be isolation, rejection, dejection, or feeling displaced and disappointed.

## **TAROT DE MARSEILLES: FIVE OF CUPS**

In traditional fortune-telling with the Marseilles, there are some conflicting card meanings attributed to the Five of Cups. MacGregor Mathers says the Five of Cups upright is an omen of a union or junction. This card portends a marriage or inheritance. It's about an alliance that's going to happen, and heck, in today's world, you can interpret this card as social networking. It's about your social contacts that turn out to be harmonious and fruitful. You know the cliché business advice, "Network, network, network"? Yeah. That's basically what this card means.

On the other hand, Papus says the Five of Cups presents obstacles in matters of the heart. Specifically, it portends obstacles when it comes to your relationships. There can also be spiritual obstacles. Perhaps a relationship isn't in spiritual alignment with you.

Reversed, the Five of Cups shows the five chalices emptying out whatever was in them, so that's the image I conjure up in my mind to remember that the reversal indicates something that's going to get dumped on your lap. The reversed Five of Cups also reminds me a bit of thumbs down, so that's how I remember that the sense here is negative. Something is headed toward you, news that's going to surprise you, and probably not in a positive way. It can also indicate a project that starts, but won't likely finish, due to faulty beginnings.

## **RIDER-WAITE-SMITH: FIVE OF CUPS**

This is the Four of Cups, transitioning into the Five of Cups, where we see a dark cloaked figure looking sideways at three overturned chalices while two remain upright behind him. Waite alerts us to the bridge in the background, leading to a small keep.

This is a card of loss, but not a total loss; some things remain intact. This might suggest inheritance, patrimony, something inherited from the father.

Waite tells us: "Some interpret this as a card of marriage, but not without bitterness or frustration." Reversed, the Five of Cups predicts something relatively positive: alliances, affinity, consanguinity, meaning sentimental and positive ancestral connections, and ancestry. If you're open to the idea of ancestor spirits, perhaps one is present.

As for that bridge in the background of the RWS Five of Cups, you've seen it before, and we've covered it in a previous video. The Four of Wands. You want to think about how you interpret the symbolism of the bridge. To me, it signifies connection and an omen of progress. In the Five of Cups, it's saying things will turn up, things will get better, but you've got to cross that bridge. You have to move, and move on. In the Four of Wands, the bridge is a sign of achievement.

Think about what a bridge symbolizes to you, and integrate that significance into how you read these cards.

## THOTH: FIVE OF CUPS

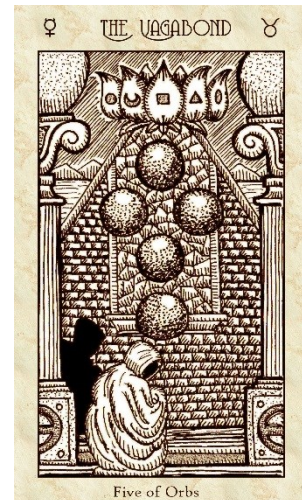
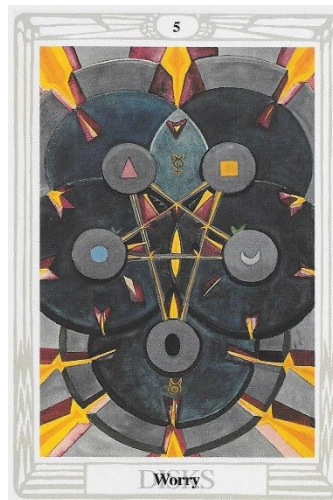
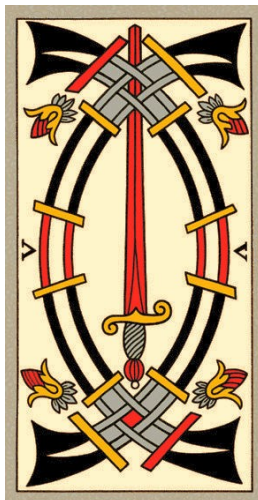
In the Thoth Four of Cups, luxury here implies indulgence, a theological principle of reducing punishment despite transgression. It's a sense of mercy, and also epiphany. The Five of Cups, then, is disappointment. Crowley describes the image here as two wilting flowers and the five chalices enchaind or bound to the inverted pentagram. There is a Fire-Water elemental clash here, with fiery Mars in watery Scorpio, and that clash begets misfortune. This card in the Thoth, broadly speaking, is a bad omen.

Reversed, the Five of Cups signifies water putting out the fire. There's renewal, hope, and a chance of recovery after much loss. In both cases, upright or reverse, the Five of Cups denote the tides of change, or turning of the tides.

## SPIRIT KEEPER'S TAROT: FIVE OF CHALICES

The Grotesque in the SKT is about loss and disappointment, having lost something of emotional value to you. Not only that, but this loss leaves you feeling like there's something wrong with you, like somehow it was all your fault, so you also feel grotesque, you feel disfigured. However, the true message of this card is that your feeling of disfigurement is in fact your own unseen power rising. The very thing that makes you feel disowned from society, that thing that others say they disapprove of is the very thing that will catapult you to greatness.

Reversed, the Five of Chalices is a positive omen. What had been concealed will finally be revealed in terms of your personal power and divine gifts. You're coming into ownership of exactly that which makes you great. This is a strong sign of self-empowerment, but there is a message here with all those inverted pentagrams that you see when the card is reversed: how will you use your newfound power? Don't become the punisher. Do not let your rage control your ambitions.



## FIVE OF SWORDS

The Five of Swords is the Lord of Defeat, and in the SKT deck, known as The Hector. The one thing we know for sure has happened or will happen is defeat. Which side are you on will depend

on the context clues from the full tarot reading. Here, the Five of Swords is about one side winning big and the other side losing big. Clear winners and losers.

How would I compare this to the Five of Wands? In the Five of Wands, we're looking at conflict in active motion, and while there may be some pretty strong bets as to who will win, nothing is set in stone. This is the battle, claws out, to see who can get to the top.

The Five of Swords is the aftermath. The battle has already been won or lost, and now we're going to talk about the consequences. After that point of no return, what are we seeing?

### **TAROT DE MARSEILLES: FIVE OF SWORDS**

Recall the Four of Swords and the center ornamentation: a blooming flower. Now transitioning into the Five of Swords, that center design changes to a sword, which is puncturing through the top. Now, recall the Two of Swords. It featured a floral design at the center. Now the Three. Center design is a sword. And the Four. Center design is a flower. And then the Five now, a sword. So we alternated from flower to sword, flower, and back to sword again here in the Five. Interesting, huh?

The Five of Swords here portends sadness, the grieving process. It's indicating a state of mental distress and misery, because there has likely been a calamity, some form of great misfortune, serious injury, or adversity experienced. Something is causing the seeker a great deal of mental or bodily pain. There may be persecution or harassment involved. Papus tells us that the Five of Swords is about having to confront an adversary or antagonistic force, so same meaning, but spun to push you to be a little more proactive, to be prepared for battle.

Reversed, the Five of Swords will have the same card meaning as it does upright, according to the Marseilles texts we're consulting.

### **RIDER-WAITE-SMITH: FIVE OF SWORDS**

In the Four of Swords, which we covered in a previous video, this card from the Rider-Waite-Smith was about respite after exhaustion, defeat, or illness. It's about needing recovery, and also faith. Compare that to the Five of Swords, the card that comes sequentially after the Four. Here, in Waite's own words, we have a disdainful man look behind him at two retreating and dejected figures. Their swords lie on the ground. The man in the foreground, with that smirk, carries two swords over his left shoulder and his right hand wields a third sword, pointing to the earth. He is the master of possession of the field.

What does Waite mean by that? This is just a player playing the game, someone who has bested the system or outsmarted the rules and is now exerting dominance. The implication here is it's being done in a dishonorable way. This is the breakdown of what had been stable. This is a humiliating trauma, plans thwarted. It's an outcome you had expected to be positive that you now realize has been revoked or annulled in some way.



Reversed, says Waite, the Five of Swords means generally the same thing as it does upright, except it also indicates an obsequy. What's an obsequy? A funeral rite or ceremony. Last rites. And think of that as a metaphor. It's about having to say your final farewell to something that may have been a comforting constant in your life. So it's about really big changes, and usually in a way that causes grieving and destruction. Also, remember the nuance. It's not about death, but post-death. Meaning, it's not about the end of something; this is after the end. After the apocalypse. Post-apocalyptic and now having to come to terms in a ceremonial way with what you've lost, what has changed.

When the Five of Swords shows up, the core meaning here is this: The system you're operating under is stacked against you. And the only way to win is by sheer cunning. You have to figure out a way to outsmart the system. There's a post-apocalyptic theme when this card appears in reverse.

### **THOTH: FIVE OF SWORDS**

From the Four of Swords in the Thoth, keyword Truce, and note the geometric pattern in the background, we progress into the Five of Swords, keyword: Defeat. Depicted here are pomegranate seeds forming an inverted pentagram.

Let's revisit one of Aleister Crowley's tips on reading tarot: if the Five of Swords comes up in your reading, you also want to consider the significance of the neighboring cards, the Four of Swords and the Six of Swords, because neighboring cards are diplomats.

The Five of Swords signifies insufficient power to maintain the armed peace, or truce, of the Four of Swords. So now, a quarrel has broken out. Defeat is an interesting keyword here. Are we talking about your defeat or your opponent's defeat? Well, it depends. Who wears the crown? The Five of Swords in the Thoth upright is the defeat of the incumbent. The one who had been wearing the crown will be overthrown. Who or what had dominated, becomes defeated.

Reversed, the Five of Swords will show defeat of the challenger. The one who had been wearing the crown stays at the top, stays victorious.

### **SPIRIT KEEPER'S TAROT: FIVE OF SWORDS**

The Five of Swords in the SKT is named The Hector, after the greatest warrior of ancient Troy. This is the Key of indomitable strength, but at what cost? Any cost. If you think about the earlier Five of Cups as someone who feels demeaned for who they are, and the reversal of that card showing that true inner power finally coming out to reveal itself, and you also consider the previous card in this suit, the Four of Swords, which we covered in the previous video, then the Five of Swords is someone really powerful and undefeated, with a chip on their shoulder, so it's like they fight because they have to overcompensate for something. You know what I mean? That kind of psychology?

But here's the hidden message of the card: The one predicted to be at first victorious will be the one who ends in defeat if important lessons of wisdom and forbearance are not learned. You have won the battle, but can you win the war?



## FIVE OF PENTACLES

Finally, the last card in this Realm, the Five of Coins, or called the Five of Pentacles, Five of Disks, or in the SKT, the Five of Orbs: The Vagabond. Remember classically there are two meanings to this card. In one direction, this is about a loss or disappointment when it comes to money matters, your assets, or even property loss. In another direction, this card might point to a love triangle.

## TAROT DE MARSEILLES: FIVE OF COINS

The Five of Coins in Marseille also takes on a different meaning from what modern RWS tarot readers are going to be used to. This card upright indicates a lover or mistress, but there doesn't seem to be a negative moral judgment attached. There's an energy of sweetness, tenderness, affection, and according to Mathers, a "pure and chaste love." There's a positive implication of polyamory here.

Etteilla keeps it a bit more general. This card indicates someone the querent loves. Papus, on the other hand, gives a card meaning that's a little bit more familiar to us, and feels in line with the theme of the suit of coins. The Five of Coins is about money troubles.

Reversed, this card will mean broadly the same thing, but take on a more decidedly negative coloring. Here, we see indications of disgrace, imprudence, or acting recklessly.

## RIDER-WAITE-SMITH: FIVE OF PENTACLES

Waite describes the Five of Pentacles image as "Two mendicants in a snow storm passing a lighted casement." A casement is a window that has hinges, so you know it opens. The window being able to open and shut, I think, is symbolically significant. Divinity is inviting your faith, and if you receive that faith, your fortunes will change.

The card foretells of material trouble, in a nutshell. There's a scarcity issue, or a lack mentality. There's deprivation or feeling deprived of something that you need for sustenance.

Tarot master Rachel Pollack has lectured about how the five pentacles here look like the upper five sephiroth on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. I did something with this reference in my Spirit Keeper's Tarot Five of Orbs, which you see on screen.

Reversed, the Five of Pentacles can suggest discord, a breakdown of harmony and cooperation. This is fighting over resources, having disagreements over, say, money matters, panic, fighting over a scarce amount of things. This is in-fighting within a tribe as a result of a lack-mentality.

Waite also says the Five of Pentacles reversed is about profligacy, or wasting your resources. This is about being in excess and therefore becoming extravagant. It's lacking restraint, it's reckless abandon. This is the card of wasting what's already a limited resource.

### **THOTH: FIVE OF DISKS**

Remember the Four of Disks here? Well, the soft quiet of the Fours has been completely overthrown in the Five of Disks, the Lord of Worry. Worry, here, Crowley tells us, means strangling, harassing, the way dogs worry sheep. This card denotes a broken-down economic system, the degeneration or moral bankruptcy of social order.

Things that were going fine, in order, disciplined back in the Four of Disks, is now reduced to chaos, toward destruction and disintegration.

Reversed, the Five of Disks is the overthrow of worry. This is the querent surviving pain, suffering, or trauma. It's a key of resilience. Reversed, the Five of Disks in the Thoth is an omen of divine protection and safeguard through trials of adversity. It's spiritual or supranatural assurance that there's a purpose, a rhyme and a reason to what you're going through. And that light, that epiphany is coming.

### **SPIRIT KEEPER'S TAROT: FIVE OF ORBS**

There was a delineation of hoarding in the Four of Orbs, someone who is a privileged "have" who is holding on to a stockpile. In the Five of Orbs, we see the opposite, a "have not" who has no sense of belonging, not feeling attached to your belongings. It's indicating that you feel unsettled, insecure. You're still wandering around trying to figure out where exactly you belong. It's lacking a sense of place.

Reversed, the same essential meaning is preserved, except it's coming to an end, arriving at its conclusion soon enough. In that sense, the reversed Five of Orbs is a positive omen. You'll see the light at the end of this dark tunnel soon enough. You cross the threshold.

The Vagabond in the SKT is the spirit of alienation, someone who feels alienated. The crown of five lotus petals at the top of the temple symbolizes the five aggregates of suffering: sensation, consciousness, physical form, perception, and thought form. This is also the sign of feeling like you don't know yourself. You don't feel a strong sense of personal identity. Or community. Where

is your community? Where do you belong? This is the spirit in search of deeper meaning. The Vagabond is also the spirit who teaches you how to be tough and resilient.

By the way, you'll find the symbolism for the Buddhist five aggregates of suffering expressed by the Five of Orbs, or Disks, not something I came up with, but something I replicated from the Thoth Five of Disks. Aleister Crowley incorporated quite a bit of Eastern metaphysics into his tarot deck. Here, the five aggregates in the arrangement of the pentagram also, in Eastern esoteric tradition, symbolizes the cycle of destruction, the five changing phases changing toward destruction.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

We are now focusing our study on the nodules below The Abyss. The previous video was Chesad, the Fours, we just finished exploring Gevurah, the Fives. In the next video lecture of this series, we are heading from Gevurah to Tiferet, where we'll cover the tarot Sixes. In Pythagorean numerology, Six is the Number of the Soul. This is the Realm of Nurturing. This is Heart Consciousness, beauty and balance, because in beauty we see the harmony of heaven and earth.

Take some time to study what you see on screen, to get a sense of how four different tarot systems interpret the Fives. Pathwork to Gevurah on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life through the picture windows you see on screen. By the way, please do forgive my terrible pronunciation. I...tried. I did. I tried.

How will you confront Strife, Disappointment, Defeat, and Worry? How do you face and integrate The Contender, The Grotesque, The Hector, and The Vagabond?

## **Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell**

*A Video Lecture Series*

### **P A S T L E C T U R E S**

The Aces	20:02 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>
The Twos	34:41 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>
The Threes	22:15 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>
The Kings/Knights	42:40 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>
The Queens	53:26 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>
The Fours	42:22 minutes	<a href="#">Video</a>	<a href="#">Blog Post</a>