

Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell

Part X: The Eights

Video Transcript
<https://youtu.be/P3LrTcQB9eQ>

Welcome back, after a long hiatus, with the next installment in the series, Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EIGHTS & REVIEWING PAST LECTURES

We are now on to the Eights, comparing and studying the Tarot de Marseille, the Rider-Waite-Smith, and the Thoth, alongside the deck I created, the Spirit Keeper's Tarot. Going forward, we'll be focusing on the full-color Revelation Edition of the SKT.

Since The Aces, Video 1, we've been on a journey descending down the Qabalistic Tree of Life, first exploring the Supernal Triad of sephiroth above The Abyss, where emanations are still at a cosmic level, then continuing on the descent to the Moral Triad formed by the Fours, Fives, and Sixes, before crossing The Veil into the mundane dwellings of the lower triad. In the previous Sevens video, I erroneously said the next lecture would be the Knights. Plot twist. Nope. We're going to stay below The Veil, or Paroketh to move laterally to the Eights.

With this corrected order of study, we're maintaining a balance as we journey the polarities between the Pillar of Creation, the Masculine pillar to the right, and the Pillar of Destruction, the Feminine pillar to the left. In Freemasonry, these twin pillars dark and light, Jachim and Boaz, signify the sun and moon, to symbolize the Works of the Master Builder of the Temple, the free-thinking and spiritually liberated Mason.

After this lecture on the Eights, exploring the sephirah Yod, we will have completed the magical construction of the two pillars in our astral temple, now our portal, our gateway to fully enter the Mysteries.

The Sevens that we previously covered was the realm of Reasoning, province of the Philosophers and the Mentalists.

The Sevens were our first touch-down point below The Veil. The Veil of Paroketh in Hermetic Qabalah is a liminal space between that which is accessible to all, without any magical training needed, which you'll find in the sephiroth below The Veil, and the upper realms of Mystery concealed behind the curtain of the tabernacle, or in Hermetic Qabalah, the Magus's altar table.

From Netzach, the Sevens, to Hod, the Eights, we take the path of Key 16: The Tower. In the Book of Thoth, Crowley espouses that the Eights will have the same (quote) "defects" (end quote) as the Sevens to their parallel positioning on the Tree. By the way, between my last video in this Card Meanings series

on the Sevens and this one on the Eights, I created a whole new edition of the SKT, now in full-color, all while traversing that Tower path. Crazy, huh?

Below the Veil is where those who do not pursue the Path of Light will dwell. And from here, there are but three paths of ascension to transcend The Veil of Paroketh, through Key 15: The Devil, Battling the Typhon, Key 14: Temperance, that center path to Tifereth, by knowledge and conversation with one's Holy Guardian Angel, and Key 13: Death, the Passage to Initiation.

Oops, the correct order I should have shown the paths in is right to left. The Path of The Reaper, Key 13, then the Path of The Angel, or Temperance, Art. Key 14. And finally, the next path we'll be taking after this video, the Path of The Demon, Key 15.

I refer to the Eights as the Realm of Manifesting, because its correspondence to Mercury through the sephira Hod in the Kabbalah means this is potent mentalism at work. And so this is the realm of the Manifestor as an archetype, the Shapeshifter, and the Shadow Master. These are the forces of untapped, unrevealed personal power.

Hod is the sephira below The Veil in the feminine Pillar of Severity, of destructive forces, though the word itself is a masculine noun. We are in the Lower Triad comprised of Hod, Netzach, and Yesod, the Instinctual Triad, where in Netzach, the earlier Sevens, we learned how to overcome obstacles and finetune our intentions.

Here in the sephira Hod, in the Pillar of Severity, the emanation of our experience is that of Surrender. This is acknowledging what is Divine, accepting, yielding, and giving way to receiving the Divine. And in doing so, be restored. Thus, Hod is associated with Majesty and Splendor. We explore Yod through the Realm of Eights in the tarot.

Think about how diverse and how different the individual, detailed parts of Creation truly are, and appreciate, in unity, the splendor of it all. That's emanation of Hod. Our perceptions are so different, and yet wisdom is knowing they, we are all One, and Sacred.

Gratitude and humility are the keys to appreciating Hod. Here is also an emanation of Prophecy, and surrendering to the Divine to receive Prophecy.

When we study the tarot through the frameworks of esoteric systems and disciplines such as the Kabbalah, we are studying the sciences we need to be proficient in when we take upon the task of the mason and build our inner temple. The tarot becomes a language tool we use for communicating with the Divine, and for journeying through our inner temple and the greater astral world. Western occultists and ceremonial magicians such as Eliphas Levi and Aleister Crowley also considered tarot and Paths of Light through the I Ching of East Asian traditions.

In Crowley's reconciliation of the I Ching trigrams and the sephiroth of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, he connects the trigram Wind with the Realm of Eights. This is citing from The Equinox, but put a pin in that for now. We'll revisit this Kabbalah and the I Ching plus tarot diagram per Crowley in the next lecture.

It's important to note that the trigram correspondences I'm espousing differ from Crowley's. Instead of looking for equivalence in the numerology, I went for equivalence in the elementals. And so the Eight

of Wands, or Scepters, corresponds with the trigram Thunder. The Eight of Chalices, or Cups corresponds with the trigram Wind. The Eight of Swords corresponds with the trigram Lake, and the Eight of Pentacles, or Orbs, corresponds with the trigram Mountain.



EIGHT OF WANDS

Let's cover some of the common meanings assigned to the Eight of Wands, or Eight of Scepters in historical texts on the Marseille, typically where the pips aren't narratively illustrated as they are in the Rider-Waite-Smith, the more popular system of tarot.

Papus says the eights are about an oppositional force, and so the exerted force only achieves partial success. Combine that with the correspondences for the element Fire in the Scepters and you get the meaning extenuating forces that bring partial success to an enterprise or creative undertaking. This is enlightened intelligence, according to MacGregor Mathers, and so the Eight of Wands prophesies that the who, what why, and how of something will soon be made clear to you.

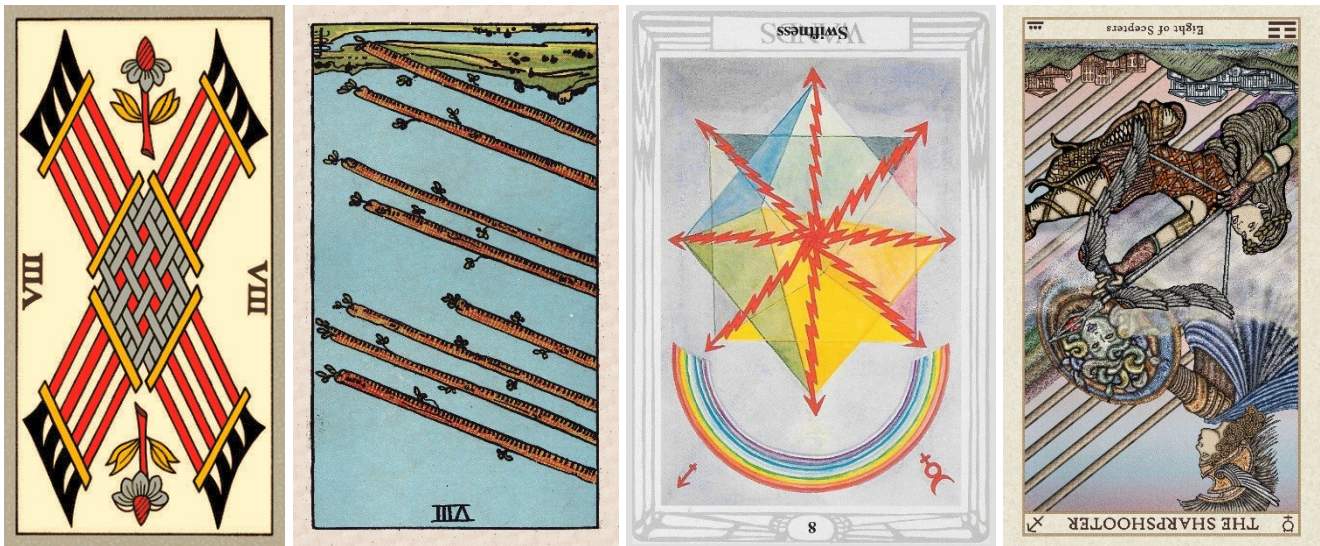
Dr. Yoav Ben-Dov, author of *The Open Reading*, a great text on reading the Marseille, assigns the keyword Regulation here, given the order and symmetry of the pattern and arrangement. Thus, this card could indicate a controlled environment, or rules and order in excess. Compare that to Waite and Smith's depiction of the card, which Waite describes as a flight of wands through open country arriving at their destination. Whatever is meant to happen is going to happen, and very soon. Swiftmess is the message, and the ending bodes well.

The Thoth's keyword assigned to the Eight of Wands is Swiftmess, echoing Waite's ascribed meaning for the card. This is swiftmess of manifestation of something through the power of your mind, mentalism—the law of attraction in full force. There's an electrified charge here. You'll see that the astrological correspondence is Mercury in Sagittarius. Crowley notes that the Fire sign Aries is the rush of fire, while the Fire sign Leo is lightning. Sagittarius, then is the rainbow.

In the *Book of Thoth*, Crowley describes the Eights as being free of the error of the Sevens. So how do we apply that in interpreting these cards? The Seven of Wands was Valour. So how is the Eight of Wands

free of the error in this card? Valour described the requirement of courage and facing obstacles. There had to have been challenges for there to have been valor. So being free of that error meanings an easy win. The challenges are behind you, and there is nothing left to battle. You don't have to fight anymore. How would you compare interpreting this card if you were using the RWS deck vs. if you're reading with the Thoth? Are the card meanings interchangeable, transplantable?

How about comparing the Thoth with the Marseille? Pause the screen when you get to these card meanings slides, assess, consider, and decide for yourself.



What about the meanings in reverse, or ill-dignified. Ill-dignified meaning the innate energies this card indicates isn't coming forth as strong or is being obstructed, challenged in some way.

Common Marseille attributions for the Eight of Wands or Scepters in reverse: civil or domestic disputes, intense quarreling, and discord. Waite echoes these card meanings. Reversed, the arrows are leaving the earthly plane. Not only is this card about quarreling and fighting, it can represent the arrows of jealousy. Emotions felt here are remorse and regret.

Just as the Eight of Wands upright can indicate incoming news or receipt of message, in reverse, it can indicate receipt of the wrong information. Faulty intelligence.

As for the Thoth, I feel like you can migrate the reversed card meanings for the Marseille and RWS over. I might also add that the Eight of Wands in reverse can indicate the law of attraction gone awry. In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot, I combined the RWS and the Thoth, but then also went in my own direction. Here you'll see Athena and Artemis, Athena is wielding the Aegis adorned with the head of Medusa. Below them you see Athens and Sparta.

There's the rainbow in the back, and the way the wands are arranged in the composition, a nod to the two parent decks.



EIGHT OF CUPS

Now let's consider the Eight of Cups. We'll look at the Marseille and RWS side by side. Waite's first given meaning for this card aligns with the picture you see—this is about abandoning that which had once made you happy. You'll find this same meaning in the Marseille Eight of Cups—abandoned or partial success in a matter relating to love, spirituality, or personal happiness.

But then Waite admits that the depiction on the card is also antithetical to what this card denotes. Because this card is actually also about joy and the bestowing of honor. That's right. It's in the Pictorial Key if you don't believe me. Waite's pulling that from traditional card meaning assignments though. Traditionally the Eight of Cups pip is about festivities and developing relationships. In fact, the keyword that Dr. Yoav Ben-Dov assigns seems to be antithetical to the common imagery we associate with this card, which is what you see in Waite's deck. The keyword here is Involvement, which feels quite contrary to Abandonment.

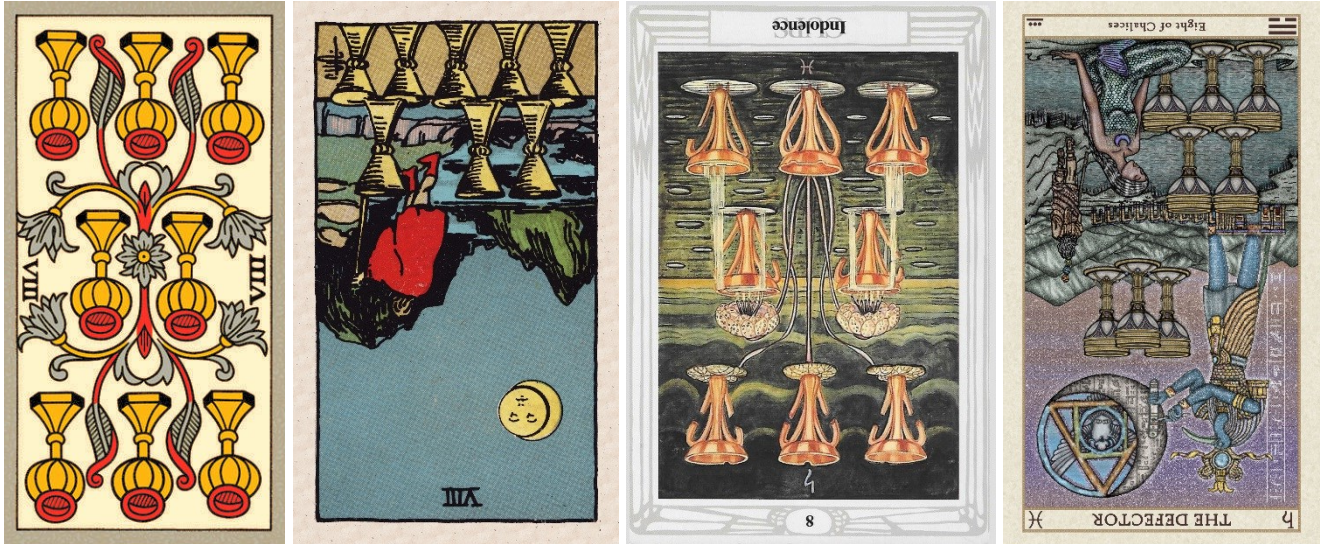
The Eight of Cups in fortune-telling can also prognosticate a fair girl, a blonde. Returning to the RWS, this is about something that has already peaked. The high point is now in the past, and the matter is in decline. That's another way to read the Eight of Cups that reconciles the Marseille and the RWS.

Otherwise, as you can see on screen, the card meanings historically assigned to this card vary wildly. In the Thoth, the keyword here is Indolence, or idle powers. "This is the very apex of unpleasantness," writes Crowley about the Eight of Cups. This card reflects sorrow, lacking the energy to change your own circumstances, lacking the resolve or willpower to improve the situation. He doesn't bring up joy or festivities at all, the way you saw in the Marseilles, for sure, and the way Waite vacillated on the issue in the Pictorial Key.

But how is this card an improvement on the Seven of Cups? How is it free of the error of the Seven of Cups, the Lord of Debauchery? Being idle, I suppose, is better than being self-destructive. The Lord of Indolence is about losing your heart at the last minute. You could say that meaning can be construed from what you see in the RWS, too, right?

And now compare the Thoth card meanings per Crowley to historically documented attributions for the Eight of Cups.

Can you interpret “a blonde girl, tenderness” from that Thoth Lord of Indolence? Do you see the shadow master and sorrow in the Marseille Eight of Cups?



If RWS readers aren't experiencing cognitive dissonance yet, here goes. Historically, the Eight of Cups reversed, when reading with the Marseille, means gaiety, feasting, joy, and pleasure. Self-indulgence. Heck, were you RWS readers aware that Waite pretty much says the same thing about his Eight of Cups in the Pictorial Key? Reversed, this card is about great joy, happiness, and satisfaction. A welcomed change is coming.

I'll share my opinion. Conceptually, rationally, that makes sense, because the card upright is that mopey dopey walking away vibe, so in reverse it should mean the opposite, right? Yeah, well, intuitively, that's not the conclusion I reach myself, or the reaction I get from seeing either that RWS or Thoth Eight of Cups. I still feel mopey dopey and all bummed out. Not feasting, joy, and festivities. I dunno. Maybe I can force myself to see it in the form of libations in that Thoth Eight of Cups.

In the Eight of Chalices for my deck, you'll see the god Thoth (Tehuti) in the background, rising from a temple dedicated to him and in the front, the Mesopotamian mermaid goddess Atargatis. You'll see as if confined behind the crescent moon, also featuring the Squared Circle, a sign of the Great Work, the dove from the Ace of Chalices.

What I was going for here was not just a story, but a novel, with chapters. Different progressive layers of this composition are different chapters to that novel.

By the way, I won't be going in-depth into the way I've depicted each card in the SKT or SKT card meanings, since I provide that in so many other places, from the SKT video orientation course series to the Book of Maps to even the Little White Booklet that comes with the deck.

Instead, we'll focus on these three card systems and then you can integrate them into how you read the SKT, with the added layer of the spirit guides, gods, and goddesses that bring you divine omens.



EIGHT OF SWORDS

On to the Eight of Swords. What's interesting here is the composition is symbolically similar, isn't it? In the Marseille, the blossom is trapped and enclosed within the curved swords. In the RWS, as Waite describes it, the woman is bound and hoodwinked, with the swords of the card about her. Heck, this has become what everyone expects to see in any iteration of the Eight of Swords. You leave out any aspect of that description for the Eight of Swords and people get big mad.

This card is about a partial misfortune, an interference. It prognosticates a minor setback. It can also indicate sickness or injury. Notably, this is about injury to reputation, such as a false accusation, censure, or defamation. The keyword here is Defenses. Guards are up, or over-use of defense mechanisms, over-rationalizing to justify a bad decision. What Waite has to say about this card stays pretty true to classical Marseille attributions.

What sometimes gets missed in modern times is the nuance that the crisis here isn't severe. And it's temporary. No permanent damage will be done.

How does Crowley's meaning for the Eight of Swords, Lord of Interference, compare to the RWS? This card prognosticates unforeseen bad luck. You try to advance, but each time you get pushed backward. Crowley says something here that's poignant. This is the error of being good-natured when being so is disastrous. This is the suit of Swords, he reminds us. You've got to be a little more hardened, prepared to combat the darker side of human nature.

To be free of the error in the Seven of Swords, Lord of Futility, the Eight of Swords, Lord of Interference is not a permanent, long-lasting loss the way the Seven of Swords is. Here, the setback is temporary, similar to what you saw in the card meaning for both Waite's deck and the Marseille.

And now to compare the Thoth Eight of Swords to the Marseille Eight of Swords. Here, I do see a lot of parallels, and similar enough where one could be transplanted into the other.



Reversed, Papus says that the Eight of Swords ill-dignified portends treachery that happened in the past, that's still affecting you, keeping you from progressing forward. Trauma. The meaning here is similar to the card's meaning upright. Not a whole lot of change here, and not opposites.

Waite says the Eight of Swords in reverse is about a disquiet mind, difficulties, perhaps even predicting an accident. He goes so far as to say the Eight of Swords in reverse could indicate a fatality.

The Eight of Swords in the SKT is The Captor, not the captive, but the captor. See, this card isn't about her. It's about you. First person point of view.

I picked up the exact coloring in the background of the Thoth Eight of Swords for my blood moon and, well, it's got the classic RWS imagery, though no, she is not blindfolded, and that's the whole point. You know who *is* blindfolded? The Blind Seer from the Two of Swords, and you'll see the Lighthouse of Alexandria in the background of both cards. Pictured here, by the way, is Hypatia of Alexandria.



EIGHT OF COINS / DISKS / PENTACLES

The Eight of Coins and Eight of Pentacles do in broad strokes align with each other. Though it is interesting to note that I've often heard modern readers describe that column of pentacles hung on the wall as rough drafts, and heck, that's how I interpret them, too, to an extent, but Waite describes those exhibited pentacles as "trophies." This card is about work and gainful employment. Applying the Papus method of interpreting the pips, the Eight of Coins is about partial success in a money matter or commercial venture.

A common keyword applied to the Marseille Eight of Coins is uniformity, which makes sense, given the composition. This is about routine work that yields success, progress, and achievement. Hard work pays off. In terms of timing though, Waite describes this card as denoting something still in its preparatory phase, so you're far from the finish line still. The Eight of Pentacles is you realizing you've still got a lot more untapped potential, so it's back to work.

Remember the Eight of Cups and how historically in fortune-telling with the tarot, this card could indicate a fair girl, perhaps a blonde? Well then, the Eight of Coins indicates a beautiful dark girl, perhaps a brunette, writes Papus and Mathers.

In terms of the arrangement of the coins or pentacles, Waite went in his own creative direction, and didn't follow the uniformity of the eight coins commonly found in predecessor decks.

Compare the Marseille arrangement of coins to the arrangement in the Thoth deck, where here, Crowley remarks on the significance of this specific pattern and how it's integral to the interpretation of the card. This arrangement is the geomantic figure Populus, and the meaning of this geomantic figure is baked into the Eight of Coins, Eight of Disks card in tarot. So, in theory, you can read the appearance of that card as indicating, say, twin paths, a multitude, a gathering of some sort to come. Now throw in the elemental correspondence of money matters. A conference or meeting that's business related, united for a purpose. A professional alliance. In all, it's a card that bodes well, and timing wise, things will all come to head in a couple of months.

Now let's compare the Thoth Eight of Disks with the RWS Eight of Pentacles. This card is the Lord of Prudence, which is one of the cardinal virtues, and I don't think Crowley would have titled this card Prudence without a significant, symbolic acknowledgement of it as a virtue. This is the exercise of discretion and frugality in how you work your powers of manifestation and mentalism.

Whereas earlier a historical attribution to the Eight of Coins was a dark, beautiful girl who is chaste and innocent, maybe a brunette, Crowley connects the Eight of Disks with a stable, well-to-do figure.

Acknowledging Crowley's theory that the Eight of Disks, Lord of Prudence, is free of the error of the Seven of Disks, which was the Lord of Failure, because the eights rectify the sevens, Prudence rectifies Failure. Hard work pays off.

Interestingly, Crowley kind of implies that this is a privilege card, in that this is someone who gets good income, is well-to-do, and yet is maybe born into it, or doesn't seem to have to work too hard for the good luck. Sure, let's not discredit their hard work, frugality, and prudence in managing their fortune and good luck, but still. This is going to indicate someone who has it easy, not someone who has it hard. When you look at the bright colors of that Thoth Eight of Disks, you can see it. But can you transfer that meaning over to the RWS Eight of Pentacles?

Returning to a comparison of the Thoth and the Marseille head to head, there seems to be more cross-over here, than between the Thoth and the RWS. You can pause the video to compare.



Reversed, common historical meanings assigned to the Eight of Coins are, well, this is worth taking note, because it's not totally intuitive. When reversed, this card reveals a loan shark, someone who is price-gouging or exploiting the innocent in a way that is financially harmful. Instead of a beautiful, innocent, and naive, dark-haired girl, we see a cunning, intriguing dark-haired girl. There's also a warning of voided ambition here, or cunning that isn't going to get as far as the puppet master would like.

A reversed Eight of Pentacles can warn of embezzlement, or greedy behavior. Both the Marseille and RWS construe the reversed Eight of Coins as indicating someone who is mediocre, more bark than bite, and therefore someone easily defeated.

Here we have The Journeyman, the title being both a reference to a skilled worker in a particular trade or craft of masonry, not yet a master craftsman but somewhere slightly graduated from apprentice, and also a play on the word journeyman, as in shaman, someone who journeys between worlds.

We are among the Muisca confederation in what is now modern-day Colombia. The Muisca were well known for their metal-working, especially with gold. The legend of El Dorado is believed to have been sourced from the conquistadors' observations of the Muisca culture and their impressive, ornate uses of gold. Where the conquistadors saw gold as money, the Muisca saw gold as a medium for art.

CLOSING REMARKS

We started this series showcasing the First Edition black and white and this Vitruvian sepia-toned Spirit Keeper's Tarot, but I'm going to finish off the series with the full-color Revelation, and not dwell too long on the older editions, because that would make each video way too long.

Plus, you read the deck the same exact way. What had been unseen implications of the presence of gods before is now revealed in the full-color Revelation. See that Eight of Chalices with the ibis flying in the night sky? In the latest edition, the ibis is revealed to be Thoth.

Whereas the previous depictions showed the core essence, the raw energy of each spirit, the Revelation Edition manifests that spirit in a specific time and place, even with specific faces. The purpose of showing these cards in this series is to increase familiarity with the card imagery, not to deep-dive into the symbolism. For that, please refer to the Book of Maps.

How do I read reversals with the SKT? As ill-dignified characterizations of the core energy. If you're working with reversals, then reversed cards indicate that the flow of that specific energy represented by the card is blocked or weakened and that's worth trying to understand. That's it! It's that simplistic!

In the same way the Twos and Threes in the upper Supernal Triad of sephiroth form a pair, bonded to each other by the Path of Key 3: The Empress, exemplifying the Hermetic principles of the binary and the trinity, the Fours and Fives in the Ruach, Realm of the Soul below the Abyss are interconnected. And what bonds this pair is of great debate in the Western occult world. Is this the cardinal virtue of Justice or is it Fortitude, Strength?

We've now descended below The Veil and completed our journeys through the Sevens and Eights. What you see on screen is the Naples Arrangement of the Tree of Life in Hermetic Qabalah, often found in Christian Qabalah, or Christian mysticism. Here you'll see on screen the Kabbalistic Tree of Life diagrammed with the Ari Paths.

Animated on screen you're seeing the road map for where we've been and where we're headed from here in terms of exploring the ten sephiroth while we study the Minor Arcana of the tarot. After the Eights in Hod, we're ascending back up through the Veil to the Knights in Tifereth, then descending back down to the Nines in Yesod, and then to the Tens, and finally the Pages.

Maintaining that symmetry between the polarities is why we didn't go to the Knights in Tifereth after the Sevens, but rather, took the Tower path to the Eights in Hod.

Our next destination is a return to the Middle Pillar

If you want to see this Tarot Card by Card series completed, and completed more expediently, then you've got to reciprocate the giving energy. Like, subscribe, leave a comment, and share this video series with other tarot enthusiasts.

NEXT LECTURE: KNIGHTS/PRINCES

And that concludes your lecture on the tarot Sevens.

The next video lecture in this series will ascend back up for a return to Tiferet, where we will study the Knights, or as it's titled in the Thoth, the Princes. You're going to notice that these are the court cards featuring the chariots. Although, there is also a dissenting school of thought that says the Knights should be equated with the, well, Knights in the Thoth, ya know, the ones depicting horses. It's complicated. We'll talk about it in the next episode.

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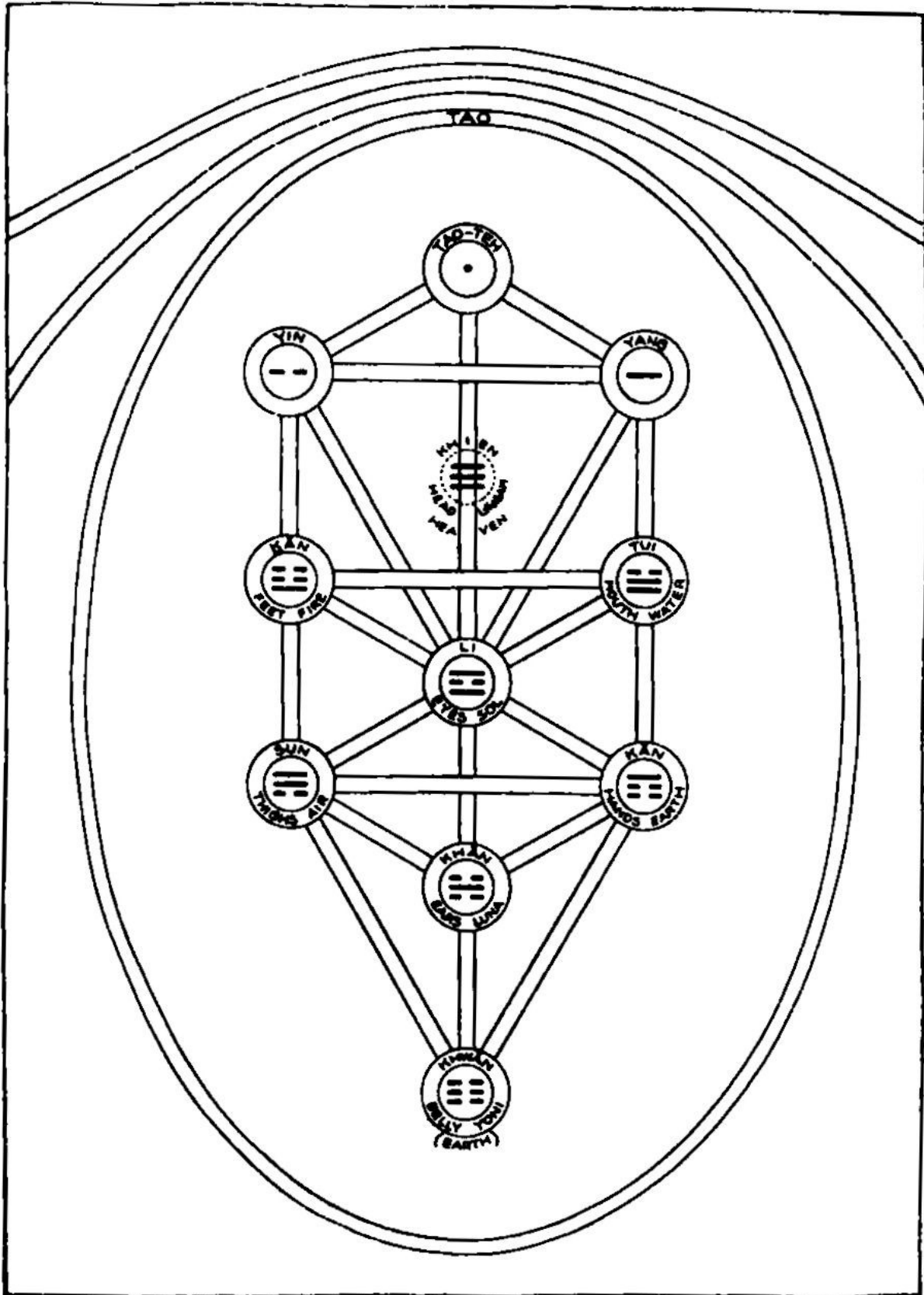
A Video Lecture Series

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BENEBELL WEN is the author of *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth* (North Atlantic Books, 2015). Learn more about her work and access free educational and business downloads at www.benebellwen.com.

THE CHINESE COSMOS.



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TREE OF LIFE & TAROT (NAPLES ARRANGEMENT)

