

THE TUNNELS OF SET

Presented at STARWOOD 1989, by Linda Falorio and Fred Fowler

These cards are of our Shadow energies: instincts/ emotions from that remote time when humans held discourse with Ereshkigal's Dark Realm and all manner of magickal being existed on the earth.

With ancient name at the bottom, corresponding number above, (subtract 11 for the corresponding Major Arcana), each card opens a gate into unexplored territory in the psyche. The images facilitate accessing the psychic space, providing entrance to the darkness of our natures, to darkness of instincts, archaic past, to our heritage of power sucked from the bowels of the earth. Here is the sign of the vulture bird of Maat, the Double-Wanded One, Daughter of the Dark, Higher power of the Moon, Dark Moon, Moon of Blood. Here is entrance to the realm of Pluto/ Ereshkigal, to the Backside, the Nightside of the Tree. Thus, while "regular" tarot cards depict the familiar world of ego-consciousness, in this dark tarot, each sigil evokes the ancient interdimensional shadow forces. Each painting provides a means of positive integration/ acceptance of potentially explosive /corrosive dark material into the personality without shattering its fragile vessel.

The method of producing the images was to paint the ancient magickal sigil -- probably of Sumerian origin or older, resurrected by Crowley in Liber CCXXXI -- of the qliphoth of each dayside Path, then immerse in the energies for weeks or months via meditation/ tantra. Rather than ascending by way of Malkuth as in dayside explorations by Golden Dawn techniques, one explores the underlying tunnels by projecting consciousness through Daath -- "the gateway of the manifestation of non-manifestation" -- entrance to the Nightside of the Tree of Life.

Kenneth Grant has elaborated upon this in his Nightside of Eden, drawing upon Aleister Crowley's Liber CCXXXI, "The Genii of the 22 Scales of the Serpent and of the Qliphoth", speaking of "the Tunnels of Set", "a network of dream cells in the subconscious mind", the "backside" of the Tree of Life -- the "Nightside" of consciousness, as opposed to "Dayside" reality.

Thus we begin to integrate these archaic atavisms, the world of the Nightside of the Tree, of the Shadow, with emerging adumbrations of who or what we might become through the inner alchemy accomplished by treading the Path of the Shaman into the earth -- the Tunnels of Set -- to have our bones replaced with bones of gold, bones of silver, bones of steel.

The ultimate evolution of individual human consciousness into enlightened planetary consciousness, the very survival of our life-web, depends upon our bringing into awareness, positively integrating/ readmitting these potentially explosive/ corrosive energies into our psyches. Far from being "negative", or "dark" in any pejorative sense, years of working with the concepts and energies of these rather beautiful labyrinthine tunnels, have brought the realization that though largely unacknowledged, culturally repressed, this shadow side of deep instinctual life remains for us a source of tremendous vital power. When owned as the most relevant, alive, truly whole/ holy parts of ourselves, these most basic "dark" life energies can be wonderfully daimonic, transforming us into vibrant, creative, fully actualized human beings. It is only when they are denied, cut-off, repulsed, repressed, that their darkness can become demonic, twisting, exploding destructively into consciousness, swamping ego-rationality in mass psychoses, and in the small daily horrors that assault us.

Yet working in this shadow-realm should not be undertaken lightly. It is inadvisable to dive into these immense inner geographies until the magician's dayside consciousness has become fully integrated, the ego-boundaries strong, for this realm of the Ancient Ones is filled with terror, filled with power, and She, Goddess without a Face, The Faceless One, Bearer of the Blood, is the dark repository of those mass primordial instincts ever lurking behind our ego-generated illusions of individual humanity.

Emerging from the psyche disguised as archetypal dreams, fantastic nightmares, our gods and demons are deep memories from that remote time when humans directly apprehended the Ancient Ones -- those great cosmological interdimensional Beings who are the essence of the Universe. That awing comprehension rolled like a tidal wave across humanity's young mind and newly developing sense of self-awareness, stunned consciousness into retreat from mysteries too great to be contained within the nascent psyche.

Though the breakdown of the bicameral mind and isolation of right brain/ left brain function has allowed for technological development and civilization of instinctual life, the gods no longer speak directly to us as once they did. Long ago we locked the gates against this knowledge of a vast universe whose Intelligence cares little for our warm mammalian concerns.

Consciousness turned inward, retreated to worship of the safely distant stars. Sacred sites were so aligned to focus the light of a single star upon darkened inner altars. The Zodiac sprang into being as the universal template of the Soul. Consciousness evolved, the focus shifted, the sacred calendar was reckoned by the Moon, the principal deities were feminine, the Great Goddess in her myriad aspects revered above all. Woman was the source of life, the inheritance of blood reaching back through the matriarchal line to the very dawn of humankind.

Patriarchal solar phallic consciousness developed as a necessary balance/ evolutionary step beyond the matriarchal realm and relative savageness of lunar-feminine forms. The inheritance of blood passed through the father's line, great states rose up. Solar-phallic consciousness became exalted above instinctual lunar-feminine forms, nature tamed, exploited; the Feminine in all her forms subdued, earth-based instinctual life sacrificed to soulless greed of blind technology.

In the dialectic of balance, the pendulum once more has swung and consciousness moved up the evolutionary spiral. Our survival as a civilized race capable of reaching heights of psychic/ spiritual awareness and transcendence depends upon our moving beyond mass instinctual consciousness rooted in the tribe, the clan, the holy blood: Sangraal. We spiral back to reclaim the potent forces that form our vital human core. Seeming to recapitulate the older, feminine right brain forms, we are in reality in process of creating a higher-order synthesis. By redefining these primitive energies of consciousness, we access and use the primordial power coiled within our DNA, bringing about willed mutation of the species to fully conscious, individual participation in/ identification with the planetary Gaia.

[Music courtesy of THE HOPE ORGANIZATION, P.O. Box 239, Pittsburgh, PA 15230;
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*** For THE SHADOW TAROT: the 22 card set, and/or the 71 page chapbook ***

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