

# MASONIC TAROT



**Patricio Diaz Silva**

## THE MASONIC TAROT

### ARCANNA OF ROYAL ART

This work was created by the Chilean artist and researcher Patricio Diaz Silva between 2010 and 2014. Based on his studies of Masonic symbolism and taking as models the arcana of the tarot, he imagined a synthesis to show the integration and interaction between the two systems of self-knowledge. The structure of this tarot organizes the deck in 22 Major Arcana cards and 56 Minor Arcana cards and is based on the four elements of alchemy: Earth, Water, Fire, and Air.

**EARTH.** Represented by the mallet. A tool with which the Masons symbolize work on stone, which is the hard layer of the earth.

**WATER.** Represented by the chalice. It is the container of blood or wine and represents the world of emotions.

**FIRE.** Represented by gold. This metal reaches its beauty and purification by the action of fire.

**AIR.** Represented by the sword. It symbolizes thoughts and ideas.

The symbolism of the tarot can be recognized in various facets of Masonic ritual and symbols. One is the Masonic initiation ceremony. This is a ritual in which a man or woman, blindfolded,

is led into the temple and made to go through various tests of symbolic purification associated with the four alchemical elements. Then he or she presents his/her oath and is given a symbolic representation of the light of consciousness that becomes clear after leaving behind ignorance that surrounds the so-called secular world. After purification and acceptance he or she becomes an Apprentice.

In the first stage of the ceremony, the blindfolded candidate is placed in a dark room, dimly lit by a candle. Confinement in that chamber puts the person in touch with the Earth element. Isolation and silence leads him to reflect on himself. Then he is taken from the premises and conducted to the temple where he has to make what are called the Three Journeys of Mystery, which are symbolic experiences of contact and purification through the other three elements.

The first of the mysterious journeys starts when the Worshipful Master, who presides over the ceremony, loudly orders, "*Take the candidate to his first mysterious journey to be purified by Water.*" Then two officers lead the candidate inside the temple and stop in front of a bowl of water. They assist the person to dip his hands to symbolize the effect of ritual purification by water, then he is returned to the starting point. Once

there, he again hears the voice of the Worshipful Master, who exclaims, "*Take the candidate to his second mysterious journey to be purified by Air.*"

Always accompanied by the official, the candidate walks to each of the four corners of the temple, and while he does so, the brothers make noise by wielding their swords together as if it were a battle. Swords are symbolic representations of Air. Next, the Worshipful Master proclaims that the candidate must make his third mystery journey to be purified by Fire. The candidate is walked to a point near the scales of the Worshipful Master and put in front of a small pot containing fire. The official assistants run the hands of the candidate over the tongues of fire to symbolize purification through this element.

The four alchemical elements and corresponding astrological symbols also appear at other times of initiation. When the candidate is made to drink a concoction called the "cup of bitterness" he or she is being put in contact with the element of Water in the glass. The bitter water symbolizes a purging of the emotions and represents the troubles of life.

During the ceremony, the recipient kneels before the altar where an open Bible is placed. At that time, he is asked to put one hand on the book

while his other hand holds a compass with split ends on his chest, obliging him to pronounce his oath. After the inauguration, the Worshipful Master raises his sword and his two guards cross swords at a point over the candidate's head, forming a "Vault of Steel" as the masons call it. In this evocative act of a feudal investiture ceremony—in which a king appointed a vassal knight—the sword being used has invoked the presence of the powers of Air. In the same place and position, the Worshipful Master asks the candidate, "What do you want most right now?" and he responds, "To see the light." Instantly the Worshipful Master removes the blindfold and the candidate makes contact with the light glowing from the fire.

Finally the candidate is given the symbolic tools: the mallet, the chisel, the level, and the apron, and is thus symbolically put in contact with Earth. With these tools in his hands, the initiate can work on stone and learn the art of building. The presence of stones in the Masonic temple are symbols of the Earth, and the lights are representative of Fire.

## MAJOR ARCANA

Among the Major Arcana, there are female cards and male cards; day cards and night cards; positive cards and negative cards; active cards and passive cards. These classifications are made by taking into account the energy or the value represented in each of these mysteries. They are briefly noted at the end of each card's description.

### **THE FOOL**

This is the card without a number that is outside the system. The Fool wanders outside any order, unless he decides to get into the system to mimic and impersonate another arcana. He could take any position within the pack and play a role, even if for him it is only a circumstantial and transitory game. His essence is marginality.

The Fool is an imaginative, creative, avant-garde that breaks the mold. He is not insane or mentally disabled. He is a lucid being who has the ability to see what others never see. His original perspective makes him a unique person. He can be the comedian of the party—the most irreverent, the boldest, the most risky, and even sometimes the most reckless. When being sarcastic the sharpness of his comments are his weapon, and therefore the powerful prefer to have him as a friend and will provide

protection. He has problems with those representing power, authority, laws, bureaucracy, order, system, and traditions. He will laugh at those who live tied to their material goods and social hierarchies. He will laugh at those who live enslaved by work, subjugated by the regulations and tied to the family. He only cares about what is essential, the spirit of things.

In the Masonic Tarot the Fool is dressed as a mountebank or charlatan. On his hat is the symbol of infinity and a headdress of three feathers. A sack over his shoulder bears his unique material belongings.

In his left hand he holds a compass and in his right he wields a staff with rattles to attract attention and gather people for whom he will perform a show. He walks on a beach with the intention of addressing a fragile vessel with sails. His feet tread on a sprig of acacia, symbol of immortality. Behind him is a dog biting his heels. In some tarot decks, the dog represents the vulgar profane world, but in other decks, it is interpreted as a symbol of faithful company.

In the background we see a vast sea at sunset. Beside the setting sun is a bird in flight and a symbol of the lucky star that protects the mad and saves all from imprudence.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water

*Vital projection:* Emotion

## I ✨ THE MAGICIAN

This card represents creativity, ingenuity, cunning, intelligence, and audacity. The Magician has the power of the artist, scientist, inventor, and innovator. He is the alchemist. He knows the elements and their properties and knows combinations to make a new and unexpected product. By learning the secrets of transmutation he brings forth the rough stone gold. The Magician wins convincingly through his playful and creative nature.

In this deck, the Magician appears in a dark suit and a top hat with the symbol of infinity. His clothing is that of a Master Mason: apron, collar, and cuffs. He stands in front of a table covered with a purple cloth—the color of transmutation. On this, there is the mallet, the sword, and a cubical stone that symbolizes the perfection to which every Mason aspires. The product of their work is represented by the cornucopia filled with gold coins. He is running a spell to transfer the energy of ether to his compass and his other hand is attempting to magnetize the liquid in the chalice. The compass touches some branches of acacia, symbolizing immortality, wisdom, and the Earth element. On a wall there is a bottle containing a liquid as a symbol of the blood of the alchemists. The yellow background of the picture makes ref-

erence to gold and the sunset. Behind the figure is a ball of light with which the concept is symbolized to all. Above is the bright Sacred Delta with the all-seeing eye. Below is a garden with plants and flowers, including a four-leaf clover.

The framework is composed of the two columns of the Masonic Lodge, marked with the letters B and J and supporting an arch showing the sun, moon, and stars, representing the cycles of time, day and night, the passage of hours. This symbolizes the working cycle in a Lodge: "From noon to midnight."

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Action

## II ❧ THE HIGH PRIESTESS

This card represents the silent power of the feminine world. The High Priestess is endowed with sensitivity and intuition and has the ability to see the greater good through the eyes of the heart. She sees the horizon of the future, both the setting sun sinking into the water and the glow of dawn. Woman is the muse who inspires the artist and guides the lost; she heals the wounds of the warrior. She heals the sick, comforts the fallen, and cares for the elderly. The High Priestess is the mother who

protects the child, grows flowers in her garden, and kneads bread which when baked she carries and serves at the table of her home.

The High Priestess is the matriarch of the tribe. Prudent and reserved, she never says everything she knows, neither does she express everything she feels. Her words and gestures are minimal and given as subtle signals only for the intelligent and perceptive person.

The High Priestess seduces through her presence. Her subtle fragrance pervades environments, silently leaving an aura that bends pride and invites followers. She is the mirror of the moon and the cup containing the flashes of the stars. She understands universal secrets and can read the patterns of time. She is the wisdom of the night and the light for the traveler. The card shows us the High Priestess seated on her throne with the great Book of Life. Her delicate white dress symbolizes purity and elegance. This harmonizes with the fabric veils falling from the bar. The veil is a symbol of wisdom that is only revealed by hints. Before her is a table covered with a red cloth on which stands a compass and a scroll containing astrological knowledge. There is also a cup containing the noble blood of the Passion. Opposite it is a small container of smoking incense

and a sprig of seven acacia leaves. Behind the throne an illuminated night sky is shown and the Sacred Delta with the all-seeing eye. Beside the table are the columns of the temple. Above, three branches of acacia on each side reiterate the symbolism of wisdom.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water, symbolized by the cup

*Vital projection:* Emotion and silence

### III ❖ THE EMPRESS

Unlike the High Priestess, whose sovereignty is over the inner world, the Empress governs and shines in the eyes of the outer world, drawing attention rather than being secretive. Her voice is heard in commanding tones: “I could never be ignored and must always be respected in the social rank.”

The Empress is brightness that dazzles. She is a seductive woman who men want to serve. She represents wealth and ostentation. She represents the power of her lineage, economic progress, and expansion of her territory. She is a leader and authority who gives categorical judgments and holds firm positions. She governs and protects her people with the same force, facing enemies without hesitation. She leads with elegance and security. She appre-

ciates orderliness—for her, nothing should be confusing or ambiguous.

She cares about how wealth is gained, and she requires respect for the procedures, traditions, and hierarchies. Her actions are thoughtful and precise, not carried away by impulses. The Empress is a strategist and diplomat who always brings intelligence to emotion.

In the card she is sitting on her throne wearing a white dress. Her bulging belly is a detail present in many tarot decks, and is usually interpreted as fertility, conception, or generation. It is also interpreted as representing a hidden treasure, a good fortune to appear with her. It does not refer only to the conception of a biological child.

The Empress raises her right hand wielding a sledgehammer as a symbol of her authority. A golden crown on her head shows the sacred triangle. Her left hand holds a shield with the double eagle of her government and hierarchy. She wears a Masonic apron that covers her lap. The throne is framed by columns bearing the letters B and J, which are found throughout the Masonic temple.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, day

*Element:* Earth

*Vital projection:* Stability and progress

## IV ❖ THE EMPEROR

The Emperor rules over the earth and men. His power lies in the strength of his armies and the gold of his kingdom. More than a mortal and yet perishable and prone to human weaknesses, the Emperor is the institutionalization of the ruling power. The power subdues the man and makes him lose himself. Around every ruler there is always an entourage of courtiers who make up the party and participate in the banquet. Amid the crowd there are also cheering sycophants who clear their path.

In the card we see the Emperor standing in throne room with decorated walls of a Grand Master Mason. He wears a dark suit and a blue wing-shaped cloak. His hair and beard are gray, and his face looks mature. In his right hand he holds the mallet in an attitude of authority, while in the other he raises a golden square, symbol of Masonic righteousness and the tool with which he has to measure all Masons of his empire. Near the square we see a rising sword touching its tip with one that comes from the back to form a "Vault of Steel" over the head of the Grand Master.

Lighting the sky background are seven lights flashing their rays. The largest of them corresponds to the sun and is located right on a gold-

en column, symbolic of the wisdom of Solomon. In the shaft of the pilaster, a flaming sword point toward the sun. The floor of the dais is covered by a red carpet, the color of royalty and blood. The yellow borders of the card bear ornamentation composed of squares and branches of acacia on both sides. At the top there are two letters annotated with Masonic abbreviations— G:. and L:.—meaning “Grand Lodge.” In the four corners there are gold coins with the imperial Sphinx. The number four means stability and materiality. It is the necessary foundation for the building and is the regular face of all cubic stone, on which the solidity of the temple is based.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Action and authority

## V ✠ THE HIGH PRIEST

The High Priest is the highest spiritual authority in a moral or spiritual organization. Although Freemasonry is a brotherhood in which prevails an agnostic vision of transcendence, the vision of a superior being and creator is called by the title of Great Architect of the Universe. The creation of the universe is also linked to the Master Hiram, who appears in the Bible as responsible for building the Temple of Solomon.

The High Priest is a man detached from material things and ambitions of the human ego. He lives closer to the stars than to the earth. He is aware that he will soon leave the underworld. His gaze is oriented toward transcendence. Still, he feels a moral duty to pass on his experience to his disciples. In some tarot decks, the High Priest (or Hierophant) is surrounded by disciples to whom he is imparting his teachings. He represents spiritual maturity and kindness.

In the card we see the High Priest as an old man, with grizzled hair and beard. He seems to be an astrologer or magician able to summon the powers of the universe. His dress resembles that worn by the highest executive of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, honored with the title Sovereign Grand Commander. Clad in a white robe and purple cloak, he wears a red collar with gold edges and a smock or apron emblazoned with the distinctive double-headed eagle of the Freemasons. His right hand holds a compass, their ends projecting into the sky. Before him is a cubic stone on which is placed the Book of the Sacred Law.

In the background, the night sky is lit by 33 stars and in the center shines the Sacred Delta with the eye in the center. At the top, two medallions are marked with the letter G, which stands for the

concept of “gnosis” (knowledge), but is also understood as the abbreviation of the name of the “Great Geometer of the Universe.”

*Arcane classifications:* Male, night

*Element:* Air, symbolized by the sword

*Vital projection:* Transcendental thought

## VI ❧ THE LOVERS

The Lovers represent love, determination, and loyalty to a transcendent solemn commitment. In the card we see a pair of lovers swear their union within a Masonic temple in which columns, chains, and other symbolic elements are shown. The scene is inspired by the Masonic tradition of enshrining the conjugal union through the rite of ratification or consecration marriage. It also represents the consecration performed to join Freemasonry.

The Lovers in this card are an apprentice, dressed in a fresh white apron decorated with the symbol of the First Degree of Freemasonry, and a lady in a purple dress with the pattern of a master. Both appear with eyes closed in an act of reverent submission and deliverance. Facing them, on the red surface of the altar, is the Book of the Sacred Law with its open white pages, and a red rose, a symbol of love.

Behind the Lovers, on columns, is a frieze bear-

ing within it the Chain of Fraternal Union. The columns are different in style: Behind the lady is the Ionic column, which refers to the feminine form. Behind the man is the Doric column, symbolizing masculine force. Between the columns the triangle with the eye observes their purity of heart and commitment. In heaven, the moon (female) and the sun (male) symbolize the passing of days and nights. This card reflects the inner world, feelings, and commitments.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water, symbolized by the cup

*Vital projection:* Emotion

## VII ✥ THE CHARIOT

The Chariot represents action, force, motion, and direction. This arcana directs success, power, travel, buildup of confrontation, and social position. It also announces the solution of problems and shows the forces that are opposed and need to be united in one direction. The horses represent the duality of instincts and emotions. The driver is the higher consciousness, intelligence; reason has to discipline the forces to lead man decisively toward a specific goal or objective.

In the card we see the advance of a chariot drawn by two horses, one white and one brown. If the divergence of the two is maintained, the force is

canceled and the chariot will not progress and may even be destroyed. The driver, dressed in black with Masonic decoration, clutches a mallet in one hand as a symbol of authority, while the other holds the reins of the steeds. He is the representation of the Worshipful Master trying to drive the progress of his Lodge. The trappings of the white horse show a plummet, representing Apprentices; the trappings of the brown horse show a level, representing Fellows. The duty of the leader of a Lodge is to add strength and direction to the energy of advancement.

This card is the number of perfection and the Masonic degree. Seven is the most positive number of all. It is never negative. In all philosophies and religions it has a similar connotation.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Action and strength

## VIII ✥ STRENGTH

The Strength card represents the power of the will. It is the abilities of domination, action, and temperance. It is the sovereignty of the higher consciousness over instinct, brute force, and the inertia of things. Strength brings courage and warrior-will to face the challenges imposed on us by forces of the profane world. It represents

the fatiguing work of taking on those challenges. In most tarot decks, this card is represented by a woman opening or closing the jaws of a lion. The lion represents the animal instinct, the strength of the lower passions, and the woman represents the power of wisdom and beauty that is imposed on the beast.

The Masonic Tarot identifies the topic of force with the teachings of the Second Degree of Freemasonry and the task of building as an allegory of the construction of the Temple of Solomon. Here a group of workers has joined forces to lift a heavy stone cube using a pulley at the top of a tripod. The three workers appear dressed in fellows' aprons. On another block of stone rest the tools of the respective grade. The right fluted column is marked with the letter J and the figure of a level is shown.

In heaven, there is a ladder with five steps ending in a sphere, and in the center the letter G is inscribed. This is taken from the biblical legend of Jacob's dream of a ladder leading to the sky. The number 8 corresponds to the points of a cubic stone, which is the basis of building materials.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Earth, symbolized by the mallet

*Vital projection:* Work

## IX ✠ THE HERMIT

This card represents the removal of worldly concerns to find the Hermit and receive enlightenment. It is the final journey to the inner world, a lonely journey into silence and the dark night of the soul. In a sense, this card symbolizes the twilight of life. It announces the abandonment of a stage of earthly life or a project or work that has consumed a significant portion of time. In numerology, 9 is associated with performing a great work throughout life; the number 9 is 3 times 3.

In this card we see an old man walking up the mountainside in a slow ascent to the summit, where a temple of astral light holds the real secrets of the soul. The Hermit with his long beard is dressed in a simple white robe, symbol of purity, and a garnet-red robe, the color of wisdom. His left hand grasps a staff that serves to support his frail and tired body. In his other hand he holds a lamp as a symbol of his inner light.

The broad sky and magical night giving the card atmosphere are illuminated by the Sacred Delta with an eye in the center, a symbol of the hidden wisdom of Master Hiram, and the nine stars that correspond to the number of this card.

The card borders show other symbols associated with the mastery of a Mason: the compass, the square, and the branches of acacia.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Air, symbolized by the sword

*Vital projection:* Thoughts

## **X ❧ THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE**

The Wheel of Fortune represents sudden changes. It refers to unexpected events that at any moment may alter the order of a person or environment. Although the card is named Wheel of Fortune, it is not only about understanding changes in the economy. Nature goes through cycles such as day and night, and the succession of the seasons. Cycles of the movement of the stars influence people in one way or another. According to the context in which the card appears, it may mean the advent of fortune or the loss of it. The wheel turns to the right going up and sinks by turning to the left.

In the Masonic Tarot, an astrological chart shows a wheel in the center guided by the sun. The inside ring shows four divisions with the four suits of the deck; gold, sword, chalice, and mallet. In the outer ring 12 divisions show the 12 zodiac signs. The order of this zodiac wheel is right to left to right—the same as the zodiacal signs that

are posted in all Masonic temples of the world. Its direction is contrary to the pointers of the clock.

In the right pane are allusions to the new day, upward movement, and prosperity, while on the left are symbols representing night, decline, and death. On the right is a rising sequence of a chalice filled with blood, symbol of life, followed by six gold coins whose peak is marked by a radiant sun, expressing the fullness of that cycle. On the left there is a falling sequence of a waning moon, six silver coins, and below, a human skull in a niche as an expression of death. Between the skull and the chalice is a glass mosaic pavement which represents good and evil, light and darkness, day and night—the duality of life.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Action

## **XI ✎ JUSTICE**

Justice represents the rebalancing of things, the perfect order, cleanliness, determination, sobriety, austerity, and clarity. It is contrary to subjectivity, ambiguity, or uncertainty. Justice is more an act of momentous consequence than a process in either direction.

Justice is the constant and perpetual will to give

everyone his due. Its rulings are projected over time. Justice makes her considered decisions in the still hours of the night. No pressure is allowed by the plight and circumstances, but slow procedure can cause anxiety for an innocent and abet a culprit.

The Lady Justice on the card sits on her throne with her eyes blindfolded and wearing a purple dress with Masonic decoration. In her hand she holds a sword upright that, when the time comes, is used to cut the chains that oppress the innocent or curtail the basis on which the culprit is based. Her other hand holds a golden scale with two dishes in a balanced position, where she weighs both guilt and innocence.

Her throne is framed by two columns. At the foot of one of them are the square and compass, on the other the symbol displayed is the Rose Cross.

The top of the arch shows the symbol of the Sacred Delta with an eye at the center. The stone material surrounding Justice represents the solidity and permanence of the value she embodies.

As part of a consultation, this card portends absolute definitions to situations that are on hold.

It means determination of punishment for the guilty and compensation for the innocent. This may be a court case or the resolution of a conflict.

Justice, despite being symbolized by a woman, is a man's card. Decisive action toward his relentless mission is able to mark a before and after in the life of a person. The symbol of the sword also has a manly character.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Air, symbolized by the sword

*Vital projection:* Thought and relentless determination

## **XII ✠ THE HANGED MAN**

This card represents dependence, submission, and lack of freedom. It is inaction, castration, the temporary cancellation of all its capabilities. The Hanged Man is a prisoner of external circumstances and the will of others. He is subjugated, exposed to humiliation, and depreciated. His survival depends on others, who go off and give him the opportunity to stand up again. Only then could he regain his natural movements and dignity. But as it happens, the hours and time elapse slowly to immerse him in the sleep of death.

This card predicts ruin, humiliation, castration, prison, misfortune. The only positive aspect attributed to this arcana is the idea that the submission of the Hanged Man could be a voluntary act, an act of giving, sacrifice, sustained confidence in faith and love. As the religious renounc-

es his sexuality and has a life free of attachments in order to gain heaven; or as a husband and wife give up their freedom for a pact of fidelity, the Hanged Man's self-denial is given in pursuit of a value or higher ideal. In this sense, the card could represent humility, surrender, chastity, altruism, moral discipline, and spiritual penance.

In the card we see a man hanging by a foot. He wears the white dress and apron of an Apprentice. His intertwined legs recall the position to be taken by the candidate during initiation when he offers his oath before the altar of the Lodge. The initiation ceremony is an act of surrender and submission. The setting of the card corresponds to a Masonic temple.

In most tarot decks, the Hanged Man appears supported on a beam that rests on two trees with mutilated limbs, details which are interpreted as a symbol of castration. In this case, the trees are replaced by columns.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Air, symbolized by the Sword of Damocles

*Vital projection:* Thoughts, stillness, waiting

## **XIII ☿ DEATH**

The Death card represents explicitly physical death. Yet its meaning is broader and also rep-

resents the absolute culmination of a process or existence. This card predicts radical changes in the life of a person and also changes of far-reaching consequences.

The subject of death is repeatedly present in Masonic symbolism. Initiation ceremonies are an allegory of death—death of the profane and the birth of the initiated. The founding myth of Freemasonry is the legend of the death of Master Hiram Abiff, builder of the legendary Temple of Solomon. When the Master Hiram was building the temple commissioned by King Solomon, he organized his workers in three groups according to their level of experience in the art of building: learners, peers, and the teacher. Among the peers were three ambitious men who, eager for power and vanity, wanted to take the knowledge from the teacher. One night the teacher was kidnapped and tortured, and when he did not reveal his secrets, they killed him. They took his body to the top of a hill and buried him, then planted over the grave a sprig of acacia. This is the theme represented in this card. In the center we see a red fire niche containing a black coffin within which is a human skull. About this coffin fall acacia leaves. Above the window is the symbolic Sacred Delta—the place where the teacher hid the secrets of his sacred science. The grave is in the middle

of a stone wall half-built and flanked by two columns. At the top of the hill, visible in the background, is the sprig of acacia. The night sky shows a star and moon.

The card's frame shows the chain, symbol of fraternal union that represents the unity of all the brothers. When a Mason dies, he is said to have broken that iron chain; in one of the details at the bottom of the card, the cut link can be perceived.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Earth

*Vital projection:* Death, the end of a cycle

## **XIV ❧ TEMPERANCE**

This is the card of patience, waiting, ripening. It represents the inner work, contemplation of emotions, self-control to achieve balance, moderation, and transmutation of bad feelings for those inspired by love and charity. Strong feelings are like blood—fluid that moves inside the body, awakening inactive areas and creating new levels of consciousness. Thus, the understanding of our mind expands. It strengthens the character and the heart becomes kinder.

This card depicts a woman who is transferring a liquid from one cup to another. The liquid corresponds to blood, representing emotions that go from a silver cup to gold, transmuting from cold

to hot. The transition from silver to gold symbolizes the alchemical evolution. The lady with her white garment represents purity. Her clothes are wet, symbolizing a bath, cleansing the body by water, and purification by emotions. Her garment is decorated with a Fellow's Masonic apron. Her left foot—the emotional side of the body—rests on a cubic stone block that is in the water. The cubic stone is a symbol of reason not only for the hardness of the stone, but also because of its geometric shape. Her other foot, low in the flowing water, represents emotions that pass and pass again. The surrounding countryside is fed by the waters of a river coming down from the mountain. Beside it three flowering irises and a tree stand as symbols of life.

The scene takes place at dawn. In heaven some stars are displayed and on the horizon the light of a new day is announced. It is the harbinger of good weather to come as a result of inner work. In the bright sky background the Sacred Delta is displayed. The ladder to heaven is the vision Jacob disclosed to his colleagues, and is one of the lessons of this degree.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water

*Vital projection:* Emotion

## XV ✠ THE DEVIL

The Devil is the symbol of the infernal darkness. He is the archetype of domination and punishment, whose vain and perverse personality demands veneration.

This card represents the initiation test to dive into the realm of darkness and return to the light and air. Wisdom and temperance are only achieved after passing through and defeating the kingdom of darkness.

The card shows us a dark and demonic being installed on a throne which evokes the seat of a Worshipful Master. With his right hand he raises a mallet as a symbol of authority, while his left hand holds a torch which burns the acacia, symbol of a wise Master Mason. His back is covered with a mantle that resembles the wings of a bat. Behind him is a spider web that he weaves every night to catch his victims and also to climb to the heights and corners of power.

There are two characters tied to the Devil by chains locked around their necks. In the context of a Lodge, these could represent the columns of Apprentices and Fellows respectively. The left, nearly naked, shows his venomous tongue, which is the weapon of intrigue and slander. He is the man walking the corridors spreading adulation about his master and infamies about who

poses a threat. The message of intrigue is reinforced by the symbol of snakes running through the edge of the box. On the left column we see a lizard crawling upward, symbol of a servile and cringing man looking to easily rise. At the top is perched a black vulture, which symbolizes the ambition of the scavenger.

The right is the bureaucrat, who through his prim appearance works more sophisticated operations to strengthen the rule of his master. This is the symbol of the apparent, the external, formal, and hypocritical conservatism. The formal bureaucrat overcomes the spirit and surrenders freedom for obedience. His white-gloved hand holds a note on which is written the name and the sentence of an enemy. Behind him is his column with two symbolic animals: a bat representing the world of infectious inner darkness; and a mandrill, representing the ambition of those who jump constantly looking for higher positions.

Hellfire is displayed in the background. Under the throne are seven steps on which are inscribed the "Seven Deadly Sins of a Lodge." They are: lies, anger, greed, betrayal, conspiracy, intolerance, and sectarianism. These are the sins against which all must fight to avoid being possessed by the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of the Devil.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, night

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Domination and destruction

## **XVI ✠ THE TOWER**

Undeniably tragic, this is a card that presages destruction, death, war, bankruptcy, earthquake, fire. It is a sudden event that changes everything: a tragedy, the end of a dream or project. The Tower predicts problems force the person to re-think life in various aspects and to begin anew on more solid foundations. It is the challenge to rise again assuming that life will never be the same. In most tarot decks, the tower is being affected by an external force, which symbolizes that the destruction comes from causes not subject to the nature of the person it affects. Rather, it shows the affects of karmic causes or metaphysical order, of which the actor could hardly have understanding or know to be cautious.

In the card we see a circular tower with various levels has been destroyed by the impact of lightning discharges; stone blocks are popping off the top of the tower. Beside these blocks, projected through the air, are symbolic tools used in the rituals of the brotherhood: the Worshipful Master's mallet, the trowel, square, rule, level, and plummet. The two columns of the temple have been

thrown down. There are also fragments of the Chain of Fraternal Union representing the dissociation of brotherhood.

The Tower on its facade shows a porch preceded by three steps and within which fire is seen. Above, on the first level, corresponding to the Chamber of Apprentices, there is a sequence of three windows. At the second level of Fellows, five windows are observed, and at the third, where Masters meet, seven windows are displayed. In the latter, it is where the fire causes the most damage. This detail means that the greatest catastrophe occurs when the beam of destruction affects the head of the tower and not the base.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, night

*Element:* Fire

*Vital projection:* Destruction, martial force

## **XVII ✨ THE STAR**

This card represents youth, purity, beauty, sensuality, disinhibition, and harmony with nature. It is receptivity, surrender of the heart, and innocence. It is the generosity of spirit and radiant love that always ensures the protection of others. It is also about taking time to plant learning and offer selfless work now in service for benefits tomorrow. It is the fate of luck. Rudeness will al-

ways bend before innocence and beauty.

In the card we see a naked young woman emptying the water from two vases. One pours its liquid into the waters of a stream, and the other empties its contents onto the meadow. The water contained in the vases—as we saw in the Temperance card—represents the inner world, the world of emotions. In that card, the liquid flowed from one vessel to another; here both are poured to nature.

In partnership with Masonic symbolism, the card identifies with the Apprentice, who at the time of initiation was stripped of his clothes in a ceremony symbolizing his renunciation of social roles and material possessions to enter the fraternity of the Lodge and its teaching.

Beside the stream there is a column as a symbol of beauty on which is perched a dark vulture—in most tarot decks this detail represents that beauty and innocence can be perishable and fragile. The vulture represents the threat, the danger that hangs over innocence.

In the background is a temple of Hellenic inspiration that is home to the superior wisdom and worship. In the sky is a large star with seven other stars casting their light on the young naked woman.

At the edges of the card are branches of acacia. The left side is marked with the letter B and the

right side displays the plummet, both representing the degree of Apprentice.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water

*Vital projection:* Feelings

## **XVIII ❧ THE MOON**

The Moon represents the time of waiting that exists within the cell of our solitude. It corresponds to the time of night, which is when our thoughts and anxieties torment us, keeping us from a serene and hopeful rest. The buzz of the night, the howling of animals, and the uproar of outdated thoughts disturb us, and tragic events are foreshadowed in our mind. At night the shadows enlarge, sounds become more expressive. Our steps become uncertain. However, under the moonlight and in the silent hours of the night we descend into the well of our consciousness and understand the designs of the time rather than the light from the busy day. The secrets of uneasy conscience become visible only by the glow of the Moon.

This card represents the moment in which the candidate for initiation has been placed in the narrow Chamber of Reflection. In that dark room, his eyes covered by a blindfold, he is left alone to address his face in the mirror of his conscience.

In the card, we see the candidate dressed in an old white robe that represents purity and poverty. He is blindfolded, with a rope tied around his neck, and sits at a table covered with a red cloth decorated with a death's head skull. Profane death gives new birth to the initiate. On the front of the table is a crab trying to climb to the surface. The crab is a recurring symbol in the Moon card in different decks, and represents wealth, the treasure that lies beneath the earth or in the pit of sewage but is soon to emerge. It is the harbinger of something positive. When the night ends and the first rays of dawn appear, the crab will be visible from the road the disturbed man should take.

The environment, where the young aspiring initiate waits, corresponds to a cell with high walls framing a great vantage point through which you can see two towers against the silhouette of the hills. The sky occupies a large part of the picture; it highlights a crescent moon that casts its light on the beleaguered head of the meditator. In the lower part of both corners there are two separate dogs that howl—these are the aggressive voices of the profane world. On the side of the card are the footprints of a walker. Lost steps represent the candidate for initiation when he must walk forward though blindfolded.

*Arcane classifications:* Female, night

*Element:* Water

*Vital projection:* Emotions

## **XIX ☼ THE SUN**

The Sun represents innocence, purity, brotherhood, friendship, and filial love. It is the affinity of heart, mind, or destination between two people who must walk together.

The card predicts the beginning of a path that may be at work, in school, or just in life. It is the model of the good society. The message projected is an opportunity to find a partner with whom to establish a mutually beneficial partnership.

The Masonic symbolism associated with this secret fraternity is shown in these spontaneous Apprentices. They represent the beginning of the road, the symbolic age of three years. They are linked by the heart. Bless them and the sun shines.

In the card, we see a couple of young Apprentices wearing the same white costume used for the initiation ceremony and the white apron. Their feet are shod with sandals. The two workers labor at the task of breaking rocks and use the most basic tools for that Masonic age. One holds the 24-inch gauge and the plummet, while the other holds the mallet. Below, along with some rocks,

the chisel used to shape stone can be seen.

The environment shows a construction in its infancy. On the floor is installed the mosaic pavement and at the left stands a clean fluted column. Behind a wall, is being built. In the background is a river and beyond that a fertile field that extends to the snowy mountains.

In the sky a great astrological sun, citing the Tarot de Marseille, stands out, and along with its rays are projected twelve drops of gold on the young ones, for each month of the year and representing the blessings of heaven. Fortune is spilling over the brotherly couple.

The Sun predicts success in receiving the blessings of heaven, and its protection ranks first those who are pure of heart. This arcana announces the arrival of a new day, a new phase of life with harmony and spiritual balance.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Fire, symbolized by gold

*Vital projection:* Passionate action

## **XX ❧ JUDGEMENT**

This is the arcana of victory and glorious reward. It represents the evaluation of the works that have been made in life. On a scale from heaven the heart and its virtues are weighed. Its symbolism represents an initiation ceremony of life and

death. It can also mean an appearance in court, an accusatory judgment, or a judgment of drastic consequences. The card could also announce the arrival of a ceremony of triumph, awards, and social recognition, such as a graduation ceremony, marriage, baptism, or the conclusion of a major contract.

In this card, we identify Judgement with the act of initiation. It is the process of moving from darkness to light. It is to resurrect and rise from the grave to walk down new paths.

We see the back of a man dressed in white facing east toward a newly rising light. The character is the same one in the narrow cell of the Chamber of Reflection as seen in the Moon card. He is surrounded by the mosaic pavement and before him are two columns topped with spheres. Above his head three swords cross, representing the “Vault of Steel,” the symbolic arch expressing fraternal protection. At the apex is seen the Sacred Delta holding the all-seeing eye. Before him is an open doorway through which shines a radiant light.

The scene is surrounded and guarded by the Chain of Fraternal Union.

*Arcane classifications:* Male, day

*Element:* Air, symbolized by the sword

*Vital projection:* Thought and ceremony

## XXI ✨ THE WORLD

This is the last card in the series of the Major Arcana. It is equal to three times seven—three times the perfect number. The World completes the three cycles with a flourish: an overall win.

It is the most powerful and positive card. It represents the culmination of a lifelong process, the joyful satisfaction crowned with economic success. It represents the fullest energy of your natural state. The World is the result of the perfect combination of all strength. It's the perfect alignment of the stars.

In many tarot decks this secret it is represented by the image of a naked woman in the center of a wreath of triumph, and the four corners hold images of a lion, an ox, an eagle, and an angel, figures that in the Christian world symbolize the four evangelists. They also correspond to the four alchemical elements and are the basis of the four branches or suits in which the cards are divided. Taking the presence of these four elements, one could say that the secret of the World is the synthesis of the entire deck. The lion is Fire, the ox is Earth, the eagle is Water (not because it moves in water but because it is representative of the blood).

This tarot card features a naked woman on cubic stone pedestal, the symbolic representation

of Masonic perfection and teaching. The stone is itself a symbol of the Earth element. The woman with her feet on this foundation is showing her connection to the land. She looks straight at the viewer in triumph. In her left hand she holds a golden compass, open and directed toward the cosmos to capture its vibrations. Her right hand holds the gavel of Masonic power and authority in the underworld, which in this context refers to Fire. The delicate blue veil passing over her naked body is the symbol of Water, which like water from a river flows and purifies.

## MINOR ARCANIA

The Minor Arcana consists of 56 cards consisting of two groups or bodies called the Hierarchies of Nobility and the Masonic Numbers. Both are grouped by the four elements as follows.

### EARTH: SYMBOLIZED BY THE MALLET

Earth is the densest of the four elements. Its nature is concrete and material. People influenced by this element are more stable than other characters. Quiet and introverted, slower in their processes, they prefer to be methodical. They defend tradition and the norm. Their perseverance can overcome any obstacle. They are consumerist and experience pleasure with owning property. Defined by the statement "I use."

**Ace of Mallets.** It represents the triumph and power over the material world. It is leadership at work. It is the productive and organizational capacity of a community. It is the power of perseverance.

**2 of Mallets.** It symbolizes the union at work. Perfect and productive society.

**3 of Mallets.** It represents the product of a material work performed by a student under the guidance or help from their teachers.

**4 of Mallets.** It represents the strength of the material and productive work. Announces the fruitful alliance of people working together to achieve a greater work.

**5 of Mallets.** It represents the fruitful collective work even in conflict. It is the projection of the building but not the culmination.

**6 of Mallets.** It shows the harmonious and balanced complementation in the material realm. Predicts a good performance at work. Harmony and concrete progress through willpower and perseverance.

**7 of Mallets.** The master at work. It represents leadership on a team who strive to realize a common task. It is the perfection of the work.

**8 of Mallets.** It is the construction of a work for the common good. It is the stability and solidity of the work that protects us from the outside world.

**9 of Mallets.** It represents the silent and persevering work that is resulting in a beautiful and perfect work.

**10 of Mallets.** It is the culmination of a material work on which we worked collectively.

**Knave of Mallets.** He is the young worker laboring on stone with mallet and chisel. He is a construction worker. It also represents perseverance and humility.

**Knight of Mallets.** He is the construction foreman who transmits the king's instructions and oversees the harmony and efficiency of collective work.

**Queen of Mallets.** She is the matriarch of the family. She represents the material power within a community. She oversees the food and welfare of the community. Her attributes are work, order, and perseverance.

**King of Mallets.** He is the material and temporal power within an organization. His emblem is the will, perseverance, and discipline. He watches the formal aspects of the work and the community he leads.

### **WATER: SYMBOLIZED BY THE CHALICE**

Water is the second densest element after Earth and has a sensitive and changing nature. Water expands your whole body with any stimulus. It is a mirror that reflects light and colors, and doubles the landscape. It is able to conduct electricity and sound. Water running rampant envelops, embraces, and drags everything in its path. Water invades everything.

People influenced by water are a bit unstable, shifting, easily persuaded. They are more sentimental than other persons. They live in a world in which moods become import-

ant. They are receptive, compassionate, selfless, and faithful. Defined by the statement “I feel.”

**Ace of Chalices.** It represents the triumph of emotions and deep feelings. It is the fraternal leadership and restoration of honor.

**2 of Chalices.** It is the duality in the field of affection, the couple, and the love of two people. Perfect match. Fruitful society.

**3 of Chalices.** It represents a work product concocted by two people united by affection. Parents who beget a son, or teachers who educate their pupils.

**4 of Chalices.** It represents emotional stability. Soundness of commitments and realization of projects with a partner. Announces an alliance between people who seek to create environments of fraternity.

**5 of Chalices.** It represents a spiritual plane of a labor of love. It is the fertility of the affections. It is the strengthening of a community space.

**6 of Chalices.** It represents emotional complementation of a set of people. It is stability and harmony. Lovers will prevail.

**7 of Chalices.** It represents mastery and domination in the world of emotions. Learn the secrets of love.

**8 of Chalices.** It represents the stability of affections in a community. It shows leadership that protects and creates favorable conditions for the weakest environments.

**9 of Chalices.** It represents wisdom and spirituality reached by one who has followed the silent way of his heart. It is love that spills over others.

**10 of Chalices.** It represents multiplication of brotherly love and protection. They open new roads and a new stage begins.

**Knave of Chalices.** He represents the emotions caused by the bitterness of love sought and not found. It is the heart condition during the night.

**Knight of Chalices.** He is the messenger and promoter of fraternity. He works with emotions and facilitates the flow in the middle of the night.

**Queen of Chalices.** She is the mother who cares for and feeds her children and younger siblings. Her virtue is comforting the sad or hurt back to health and self-esteem.

**King of Chalices.** He is the protective strength of feeling, fatherhood and generosity of the heart. It is a hospital listening to the sorrows of others and comforting the weak. He expresses protection, affection, fraternity. Good advice and discretion.

## FIRE: SYMBOLIZED BY GOLD

Fire has the power to transform and consume. Its greed can be fast and unforgiving. Gold reaches its peak when it is purified by fire. People influenced by this element are extroverted and upfront. They are enthusiastic, dynamic, and have great willpower. They have achieved leadership in every environment. Reckless and independent, they believe more in themselves than in others. They are arrogant, impatient, and self-centered. More adventurous and risky than other persons. They do not fear the unknown. Defined by the statement "I am."

**Ace of Gold.** It represents the leadership of the inner fire and passion. Brings good fortune. It is a stroke of luck that makes a better fate. Proclaims a victory in the field of business and expansion of projects.

**2 of Gold.** Announces an alliance between two people who decide to pursue a common project. The drive and the joy of working together. Predicts success and economic progress.

**3 of Gold.** It is the inner fire that is projected on the passionate and courageous, able to guide the action of others. Also represents the economic result.

**4 of Gold.** It represents the consolidation and expansion of an economic, social, or political ven-

ture. Announces support and recognition from the community.

**5 of Gold.** It shows the social and economic projection of a common task. Also it announces possible conflict of egos between people of the same community.

**6 of Gold.** Harmonious complementation of passion in entrepreneurship. Leadership and strength of conviction. Announces material prosperity.

**7 of Gold.** It is the passion in action taking on a creative and lucrative work. Projected strength, wealth, and expansion.

**8 of Gold.** It is the inner purpose to carry out a project. Predicts strength and economic power.

**9 of Gold.** It is the power of-fire transmuted rock that turns into bright noble metal. It is the culmination of a period of expansion.

**10 of Gold.** It is the glorious culmination of a collective work process. The accumulation of wealth and expansion of fame. Luxury and power.

**Knave of Gold.** He represents joy, beauty, and passion of youth. It is the enthusiasm to undertake and implement any idea that identifies you.

**Knight of Gold.** He represents the impetus of youth. The heir of the cohort. His projection is to the social and mundane world.

**Queen of Gold.** She represents beauty, passion, and vanity. She awakens the admiration of men

and the envy of ladies. She loves herself and her vanity becomes a virtue.

**King of Gold.** He represents the power of wealth and inner fire. He is an attractive and flamboyant leader. It also represents the vanity and egotism expressed in his lifestyle.

### **AIR: SYMBOLIZED BY THE SWORD**

Of the four elements, Air is the only one that is invisible and silent. It moves and invades every corner without being noticed. People influenced by this element are immersed in thought. They are balanced and are not interested in attention. They value their independence and prefer not to take leadership positions. They form ideas for others to carry out. They are noted for their mental alertness, analytical ability, and abstraction. They are also known for aesthetic sensibility. They appreciate the simple and flee the mundane. They make drastic and final decisions. They are people of honor and value. They feel superior and act with verticality.

They have little passion, excitement, sociability, or affection. They look with disdain on the world of the everyday. They are cold and distant people, who like to get in and out without dragging commitments. Their personality is defined by the statement "I think."

**Ace of Swords.** It represents leadership in the world of ideas. It is the rule of reason. It imposes clarity, morality, and spiritual rectitude. Regency of ethics. Rule of law.

**2 of Swords.** It represents cooperation in the intellectual field. They share the same ideals and values. They work together on a project or common mission. Both are supporters of the same cause.

**3 of Swords.** It represents intellectual work done by two people. Project to develop an idea into a community.

**4 of Swords.** It represents loyalty in honor commitments. Emphasizes loyalty to the values and alliances between people who defend the same cause. They are the four guardians of the temple.

**5 of Swords.** It represents the projection of intellectual work. It is the consolidation of ideas in the social sphere. Announces inspiration and revelation.

**6 of Swords.** It represents harmony and balance in the battle of ideas or shielding to uphold the law and values.

**7 of Swords.** It symbolizes the expertise in the field of thoughts and ideas. It is also the defense of principles and values.

**8 of Swords.** It represents the ability to work constructively by keeping the balance and order.

**9 of Swords.** It represents the top masters inspired by the knowledge of the occult, and faith of the transcendental. It is protection and defense.

**10 of Swords.** It represents the multiplication of the forces acting in defense of a common cause. It represents the rule of law and justice. It means consecration and intellectual recognition.

**Knave of Swords.** He represents youthful idealism. It is the defense of the values and the traditions which he swore to serve.

**Knight of Swords.** He is the news messenger. He flies along the roads carrying his sword as a symbol of courage and determination. He is a warrior in the battle, and protector of families. Take care of his empire sovereignty and its borders.

**Queen of Swords.** She represents the lightness of principles and rigor of the law. She imposes moral conduct and fair balance between the rights and duties of each. She promotes conservation of manners, discipline, and order.

**King of Swords.** He represents intelligence and the eloquent word. He knows the law and traditions. His sword is a symbol of clarity and separation between good and evil. It represents determination and courage.

## TAROT READINGS

These readings are based on Masonic esotericism and are useful for different types of questions. They can be done using only the Major Arcana or using all the cards in the deck.

### READING: THE APPRENTICE MASON

This reading, based on the number 3, helps to find a clear answer to a particular question.

The querent should shuffle the cards, then put his hands on the deck and pronounce his question or silently ask it. Then the querent divides the deck into three piles. The diviner collects the three piles from left to right, putting the second group on the first and the third on the second. Then he takes the first three cards from the top of the deck and places them on the table next to each other as in the diagram.

1. The first card portrays the current state of the querent. It reflects the present situation or problem.
2. The second card shows the factors for or against the situation.
3. The third card reveals the most likely outcome if the present circumstances remain unchanged.



### READING: THE FELLOW MASON

This reading is done with five cards, based on the number of the Fellowcraft.

The querent divides the deck into five piles and leaves the piles in a row on the table. Moving from left to right, the querent draws the top card from each pile and places the cards face down in the pattern shown in the diagram. Four of the cards are at the four cardinal points, according to the plan of a Masonic temple. The fifth card at the center represents the altar of the Masonic temple.

Turn the cards over one at a time. The meaning of the cards based on the location of each is as follows:

**1. West: Portal of Lost Steps.** This card represents the dark and the profane world. It shows unfavorable elements or those that are contrary to a desirable solution to the problem.

**2. North: Apprentice.** This card represents innocence. It reflects the querent and his question.

**3. South: Fellow.** This card represents the value of camaraderie and solidarity. It shows those positive factors that are in favor of solving the problem in the desired way.

**4. East: Master.** This card represents the light and judgment. It shows the most likely outcome of the reading, what will happen if all follow the same path.

**5. Center: Altar.** This card represents the Council. It reveals the emergence of the way forward for the querent, the path to success in the matter.



## READING: THE MASTER MASON

This is a seven-card reading, based on the number of the Master Mason.

The querent shuffles the cards and concentrates his mind on the subject on which he wishes guidance. Then he hands the deck to the diviner, who separates the cards into seven piles and then brings them together from left to right. The diviner puts the deck face down and the querent draws seven cards and lays them face down in the pattern shown. Read the cards one at a time as follows:

**1. Card of the Initiate.** It represents the querent and his question.

**2. Card from the Junior Warden.** It shows the energy or factors that are favorable for solving the problem raised in the question.

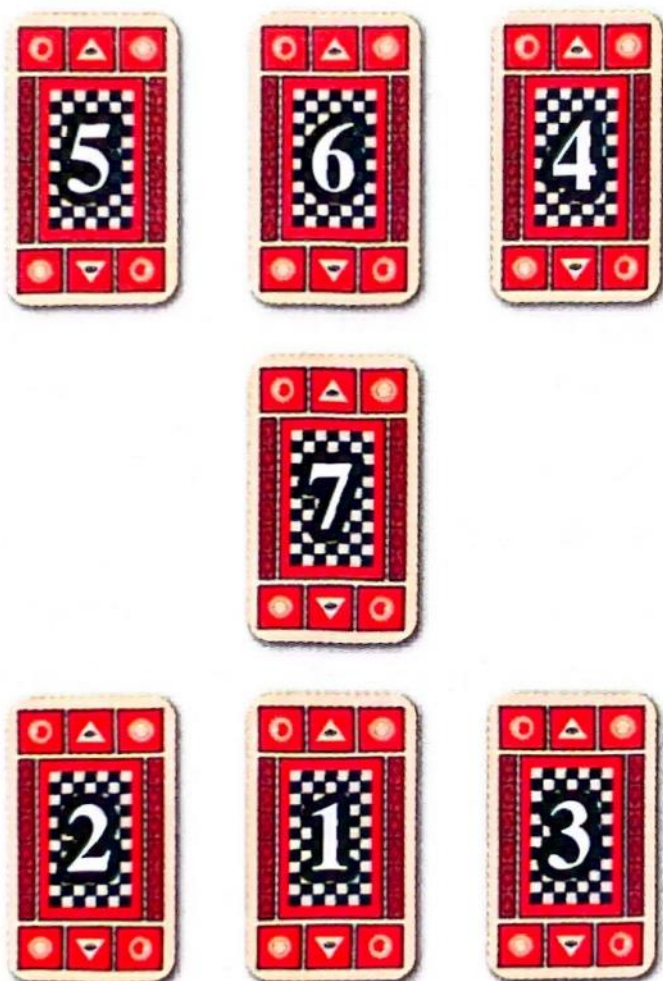
**3. Card from the Senior Warden.** It reflects the dark energies that are operating against the querent and his question.

**4. Card from the Speaker.** It delivers advice to be followed to succeed in the issue or problem.

**5. Card from the Secretary.** It represents the most recent factors that affect the querent and his question.

**6. Card from the Worshipful Master.** It delivers the judgment or answer to the question posed.

**7. Card from the Altar.** It reflects or represents the energy in the environment.



## GLOSSARY OF MASONIC CONCEPTS AND SYMBOLS

In the Masonic world, symbolism is the basis of knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation. It is present in rituals, in the organization of a Lodge, and in the decoration of the temple. The symbols that identify Freemasonry have been collected from many ancient traditions and cultures, but the majority are based on Judeo-Christian tradition.

The symbols associated with the art of building originated in the medieval world. Taken as a model for spiritual union, builders and their tools are seen as symbols of virtue. Among the best known are the square, the compass, the 24-inch gauge, the mallet, the chisel, the plummet, the level, cubic stone, and rough stone.

To better understand the Masonic symbolism of the Tarot, we present here a brief glossary of symbols and concepts.

**Acacia.** Represents mastery. Alludes to the death of Master Hiram. The biblical legend says that when the builder of the Temple of Solomon was assassinated, his murderers hid his body on top of a hill and to mark the exact location of his burial they planted a branch of acacia.

**Apron.** Worn by ancient stonemasons to protect their body from stone shrapnel. Evoking the work of those builders, modern Masons use an apron as a distinctive feature of the degree they hold within a Lodge.

**Ara.** Inn or altar at the center of all Masonic temple. Where you put the Book of Sacred Law, and upon this, the square and compass.

**B and J.** Pillars that are located at the entrance of every Masonic temple. To the left is a column marked with the letter B. Next to it are the seats where learners must sit in a Lodge. The other, located to the right and marked with the letter J, marks the spot where the Fellows sit.

**Book of the Sacred Law.** A symbolic book that represents wisdom, usually shown with its pages open. It is located on a table or altar inside the temple. Whenever the ritual session starts at a Lodge, the book must be opened and the square and compass put on their pages.

**Chain of Fraternal Union.** A chain representing the universal brotherhood. Each brother is a link in that chain. When one dies it is said that the chain is broken and has lost one of its links.

**Chisel.** Tool used with the mallet to shape the rough stone, symbol of the imperfections of personality. It represents the intelligence with which the apprentice must work on perfecting himself.

The work to be done with discretion and prudence.

**Coffin.** Mystical death symbolizes what the initiate must undergo to be reborn to a life of greater refinement and moral elevation.

**Compass.** Symbolic tool of harmony, perfection, and spirituality. As the square represents materiality, the compass represents spirituality.

**Cubic stone.** The symbol of perfection. Result of a job well done. The cubic stone, for its perfect shape, serves to wedge with others and thus, overall, build a strong wall.

**Cup of bitterness.** Cup which is given to drink the bitter brew to represent the bitterness of life. The cup is the symbol of water and blood representing the value of nobility.

**Gavel.** The mallet symbolizing authority, used by those who lead a Masonic meeting, such as the Worshipful Master, and each of the two Wardens when leading their respective chambers.

**Letter G.** Located in the east part of the temple, represents the Great Architect of the Universe, which is the way Masons represent any notion of God or higher power. It is also stating that geometry is the most highly considered and perfected art, and the initial of the word “gnosis,” meaning knowledge.

**Level.** Tool whose function is to make the hor-

izontal perfectly level. Symbolically defines stability, equality, and companionship. It is the symbolic tool of the Fellows. The Senior Warden wears it in his collar.

**Mallet.** A hammer that works with the chisel in rock-cutting work. In Freemasonry represents the will and tenacity of work. It symbolizes the work they must all do as brothers to smooth the rough imperfections of personality. The mallet is the virtue that teaches how to withstand and endure hardships with fortitude.

**Mosaic pavement.** All Masonic temples have a mosaic floor composed of black and white squares. This symbolizes the duality between good and evil, light and darkness, day and night that make up the life of a man.

**Plummet.** Tool to measure the correct vertical position of a beam or wall. For a Mason this is a symbol of righteousness. The plummet is a symbolic Apprentice tool and is worn by the Junior Warden in his collar.

**Sacred Delta.** An equilateral triangle inside which is an eye. It is the symbol of divinity, wisdom, and light. The eye set within the triangle symbolizes all-seeing vision.

**Scale.** Represents the connection that must exist between heaven and earth. It also symbolizes the ascent; the elevation of consciousness for

the Masons, who, in their evolution, will join the supreme spirituality that is normally represented by the figure of the Sacred Delta.

**Square.** The symbol of Masonic righteousness. The square is also the jewel worn by the Worshipful Master and represents his obligation to be upright and impartial in his judgments and to be an example to others in his habits.

**Sun and moon.** Both are elements always present in all Masonic temples as well as on tarot images. They represent day and night. The symbolic day in which Masons must work is "from noon to midnight."

**Trowel.** The symbolic tool that represents tolerance, patience, and forbearance that should guide the Mason in all circumstances. The ability to overcome adversity, mend fences, and bring people together who have been in conflict.

**24-inch gauge.** Represents the right measure of things and the organization of time. Twenty-four hours must be divided into three sections of eight hours: one to work, one to rest, and one to cultivate brotherhood and practice charity.

NOTES

