

Chapter 15

Consulting the Tarot

Pages 185-186

When the instrument is known it becomes possible to make use of it. One is tempted to treat the Tarot like an ordinary game of cards and to spread out the cards as fortune-tellers do after shuffling them and having them cut by the person consulting. No rule stands, but from Sanisals de Guaita we have a method which Joséphin Péladan pointed out to him and which is distinguished both by its logic and its extreme simplicity; here is the principle of it.

When a question has been asked the answer is provided by four arcanas drawn in succession from the Tarot, as will be seen below.

The first arcane drawn is seen as affirmative; it pleads in favor of the cause and in a general manner what is 'for'.

On the other hand, the second arcane is negative and represents what is 'against'.

The third arcane drawn depicts the judge who discusses the cause and determines the sentence. This sentence is pronounced by the arcane drawn last of all.

A fifth arcane completes the throwing of light upon the oracle which it synthesizes, for it depends upon the four arcanas drawn. Each of these bears the number which marks its rank in the series of the Tarot (the Fool, who is not numbered, counts for 22). When these numbers are picked out, it is enough to add them together to obtain, either directly or by theosophic reduction, the number of the fifth arcane (22 indicates the Fool, 4 the Emperor, 12 The Hanged Man etc).

Now let us go into how it works in detail. Before anything else we should guard against frequent use of hasty consultations, reiterated at every turn, at the slightest whim and without any need. Those people who once consulted the oracles did not come forward with empty hands. The rule is restraint, but the strictest requirement is that there should be no self-interest on the part of the diviner. The consultant therefore, will impose upon himself the sacrifice of a modest offering, but not entirely insignificant as far as he is concerned. A collecting box whose contents will go to the poor will make the divination less frivolous.

This preliminary ritual gives the consultant the right to a serious reply. It is equivalent to the conclusion of the classic part of divination, a pact concluded under the auspices of good deeds.

But what does he want to know? It is of capital importance to pose the question when divination is to be made on a definite object, rather than to leap into the vague spheres of fortune telling. "Tell me what is going to happen" is not an acceptable formula. The consultant must always relate his question as much as possible to the present. Does he wish to be guided towards a decision to be taken? Is he right or wrong to persevere with such a plan? Can he hope to succeed in what he has just undertaken? Does such a person deserve his confidence?

The consultant is not obliged to explain himself exactly on what he asks and the diviner will not demand to be initiated more than is useful into the secrets of the consultation. The request can therefore be made in general terms, not revealing its precise object; however the diviner must know enough about it so as not to go astray in his interpretations. Therefore it is in the interest of the consultant to speak without reticence and make the diviner's task easier limiting his effort in divination. When the fixed question is agreed upon with diviner he then shuffles the cards composed only of the 22 arcana, and invites the consultant to tell him the first number which comes to his head equal to or below the number 22.

The number called intuitively by the consultant is used for cutting the pack, showing the number of cards which are to be taken out of the shuffled pack. The last one is put back: this is the affirmation arcane. The number which bears in the order of the Tarot is noted; then all cards are put back and shuffled a second time.

The consultant says another number, which is indicative, by the same procedure, of the negative arcana whose number in turn is written down. Then the reassembled pack is shuffled for a third time, the consultant states a third number which reveals the reply of the oracle. Finally a fourth and last turn is made determining the statement.






The numbers of the drawn cards (which must not be confused by the numbers which occurred to the consultant) are added up. If the total equals, or is below 22 the synthesis is the Fool or the arcana to which the sum total corresponds in the numerical order of the Tarot. If the total is more than 22 then its two numbers are added together indicate the synthesizing arcana (23=2_3=5) (57=5+7=12 etc).

The four cards drawn and their synthesis make up the silent reply of the Tarot. When set out before the consultant, it takes the form of a cross.

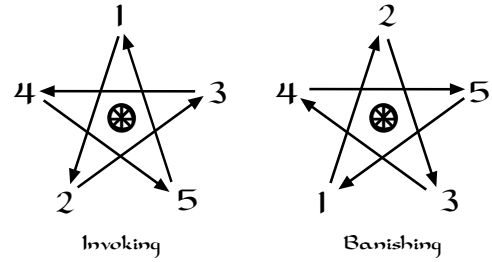
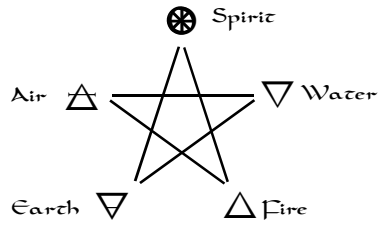
	3 Discussion Judge	
1 Assertion For	5 Synthesis	2 Negation Against
	4 Solution Sentence	

Elemental Spread Worksheet

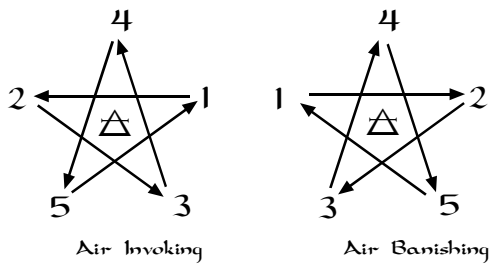
Consider the elemental aspects of your question to create positional meanings.

	 <p>Card 4. North-Pentacles-Winter: Health, home, finances, material things, resources, daily life, stability, & work.</p>	
 <p>Card 3. West-Cups-Water: Emotions, love, Empathy and relationships.</p>	 <p>Card 5. Center-Major Arcana-Spirit: Your spiritual path, spirituality and self-awareness.</p>	 <p>Card 1. East-Swords-Air: Mind, thoughts, ideas, communication, plans, and beliefs.</p>
	 <p>Card 2. South-Wands-Fire: Energy, intuition, creativity, self, inspiration, will, career, actions.</p>	

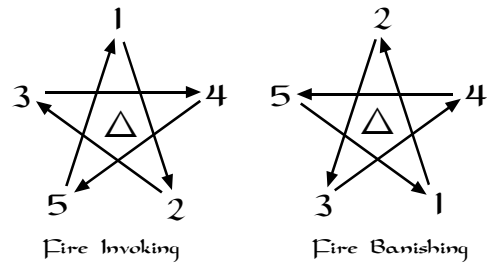
Elemental Pentagrams



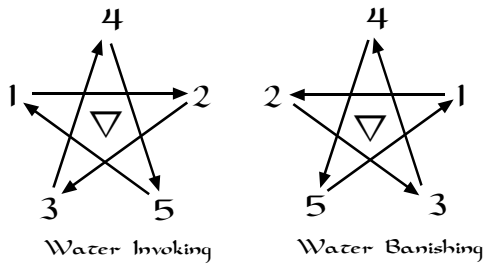
Air



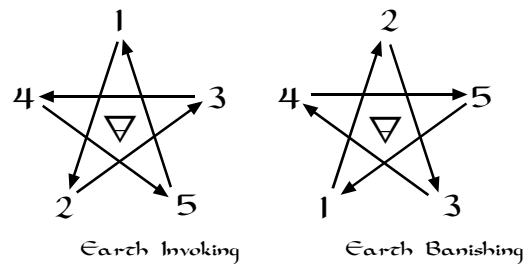
Fire



Water



Earth



Excerpt: Past-Life & Karmic Tarot



THE INVOKING PENTACLE SPREAD

The Invoking Pentacle spread is one of the simplest in this book. It is designed to give you a broad overview of the facets of your past, the inherited inner traits that combined to make you who you are today. This may not only encompass past lives, but incidents from your current life that have created issues or karma that remain unresolved.

This spread's name comes from the five points of the encircled star known as the pentacle. In the early twentieth century the pentacle became the adopted symbol for many of the Wiccan religious sects, but its history as a spiritual symbol far predates modern Wicca. The symbol has been found on two-thousand-year-old currency in western Europe. It represented the five wounds of Jesus on the banners of the twelfth-century Crusaders, and it can still be seen adorning the chancery of the elegant Essex Cathedral in England.

Contrary to prevailing opinion, an inverted pentacle is not a symbol of evil nor is it a portal for negative energy (see Figure 1). Evil people have taken the pentacle, perverted it, and used it for evil, but that does not detract from it as an archetype of positive forces any more than inverting a symbol from any other spiritual path would be automatically evil unless used for evil.

The inverted pentacle can be used for many magickal and mystical operations. In the case of this tarot reading, it represents that which has come down to us in this present life from various other lifetimes, the symbol of a sort of karmic stew that makes us what we are today.

Shuffle your cards in your usual manner, cut the deck, and then lay the cards out according to the pattern shown in Figure 2. Read them in the same order in which you placed them, keeping in mind that the energies being revealed may come from several past lives, not just one.

Card 1

The first card in the spread is related to the element of earth and speaks to us of our physical selves, our occupations, our animals, our finances, our homes, and our families.

Card 2

This is the card of the water element and gives us insight into the spiritual, intuitive, and psychic forces that have combined to make us who we are.

Card 3

Card 3 is governed by the element of fire. Fire's energy is that of passion, courage, stamina, and transformation. A strong card in this position is indicative of positive change; a weak card is indicative of stagnant thinking or obstinacy.

Card 4

This card is governed by the air element and is related to our thoughts, studies, intellect, and powers of communication. The thoughts and communication shown by this card are not necessarily truthful or correct, but they are a part of our past and helped make up the energies and events that shape our current self.

Card 5

This is the card that represents your relationship to the fifth element of spirit. Spirit is your inner center, a place where all the other elements meet and blend within you. If one or more of these elemental energies are weak or excessive it can pull you away from your proper place-in your spiritual center seeking guidance from your higher consciousness or your spirit guides. This card should give you insights into how this may best be accomplished. If your current you is not to your liking, take steps now to make positive changes. Use Cards 1 through 4 to help pinpoint the areas in which you may be most in need of rebalancing, then ask spirit to help you find your way back to your center.

Card 6

Card 6 gives you an overall impression of the current you as shaped by the four elements and spirit. If you are out of balance with the elements, or have moved away from your center or spirit, this card may at first seem inconsistent with the others. Be open to what it is trying to show you. If you don't understand it today, you may tomorrow or next week.

Example Reading

Card 1: Strength, reversed

In our physical past our subject had the opportunity to display strength in both body and character and to know the limits of those strengths. In a reversed position this card can mean he allowed the powers of hatred

or jealousy to consume and weaken him. In *The Complete Book of Tarot Reversals*, Mary K. Greer writes that, in its reversed position, Strength can indicate a time of being overwhelmed by life and by forces that seem beyond the seeker's control. This position is related to the element earth, which grounds and stabilizes us. When connected to Card 2 we can see a pattern emerging of past lives when the seeker dreamed too much, didn't take positive actions, refused to accept self-responsibility, and allowed life's difficult day-to-day issues to swamp him with their pressures.

Card 2: Four of Swords

In the position corresponding to the element water we find a card of repose. This card is usually an indication that more time was needed in creative contemplation rather than idle daydreaming. The catafalque, on which the feminine figure reclines, evokes death imagery which, in the tarot, indicates a need for or a time of profound change for the seeker. Taking the time to look within and reassess his life and goals is essential to the future happiness of our subject.

Card 3: Ace of Cups, reversed

This position corresponds to the element fire, which boasts transformation as its dominant power. In an upright position the ace of any suit represents a variety of new beginnings. In this case, the cup is shown overflowing with an abundance of love, peace, and luck. These would all be welcome transformations for anyone. But note that the card is reversed, allowing the energy of the transformation to come pouring out without control. Caution is indicated to correct this karma with self-responsibility.

Card 4: Seven of Cups

This card is in the position governed by the air element, which relates to thought, study, and communication. The card in the deck I use depicts a young woman daydreaming about riches, love, fame, glory, and all the good things in life that the young see as possibilities for their lives. Because it is in the air position, this is a card of thought, but it indicates those thoughts are scattered and personal energy is squandered on things that will not make the seeker happy in the end. This is an indication that a karmic thread has come down to our subject's present life because he did too much daydreaming and not enough communicating about his wants and needs, and he did not take action to get them. Creative visualization is a powerful tool for change, but it cannot work without some serious physical-world backup by the dreamer.

Card 5: Six of Swords

The so-called fifth element is spirit. Its power is that it unifies and coalesces all the other elements into a single working unit. The Six of Swords in this position depicts a young man sailing in a swanlike vessel to a distant shore. In Celtic mythology-birds, cranes, and swans in particular-represent transition to the afterlife or the otherworld realm where one can attain the wisdom of the deities. In many tarot decks the male figure is overseen by a transparent, shadowy figure in a hooded cape who is guiding the boat. The common interpretation of this card is that it is time to look toward the gifts of the spirit rather than those of earthly things. In this transition to a higher state of consciousness we can find wisdom, but we first have to trust in the power of spirit to lead us in the right direction, even when we want to travel elsewhere.

Card 6: The Hanged Man

This is the perfect card to end this example spread. The Hanged Man represents all things that are static within and around the life of the seeker. If you look closely at the card you'll see the hanging man does not appear to be suffering, nor are his legs and feet bound so that he cannot unhang himself if he chooses. Careful thought and looking to higher consciousness or deities for assistance is the way to break out of this cycle of inaction, which is the dominant karmic bond in this example spread.

Other Indications

The overall interpretation of this spread is that many small karmic bonds are still with you, preventing you from gaining the forward momentum you need to continue growing in wisdom and in spirit. The message is to look within and to your Higher Self and spirit helpers to lead you on to a more positive pathway.

Alternative Spread

If you wish to explore any of these karmic elements in more depth, use the card representing your karmic issue as a signifier card and use it as the foundation card in any other simple past-life spread found in this book. Focus on your goal of understanding this specific aspect of your past. Your new spread should provide more insight into your specific issue with each element and its karmic bond.

