

# CHRYSALIS TAROT

*by Toney Brooks and Holly Sierra*



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## FOREWORD

When the Chrysalis Tarot was awarded the Tarosophist Award 2014 for Best New Deck, it received plaudits for its accessibility, vibrancy and novelty, particularly with regard to its alternate naming of the Court Cards and the suits. Others praised its diversity and scope by its incorporation of the widest range of myths, images and pantheons. I fell in love with the brilliance of the deck—both in colour and concept. So I was delighted to be asked to write a foreword for this companion book.

My first experience with the Chrysalis Tarot was remarkable. I often get asked about productivity, and how one can sustain a highly creative life whilst also managing everyday life in the mundane world. I decided to turn to the Chrysalis and pull one card to test its ability to immediately answer a real question. The card I drew from the deck was the Empress.

Whilst I was familiar with its usual interpretations, the image created by Toney Brooks and Holly Sierra provided a rich field of further meaning. In it I saw first that she was drawn as Gaia, and the Little White Booklet (LWB) spoke of the card as representing new ideas and beginnings. However, the depth of the image also provided several creatures; the snail, bringing patience; the mouse, bringing trust; the butterfly, bringing transformation, and also a flower—the Lotus Flower, signifying purity of heart.

These living symbols are found in summary in the simple Robins eggs within a nest cradled by Gaia herself. So I was able to discover that creativity is an entirely natural process when we attune ourselves and trust the world, have patience in it, and co-create our own abundance, as the LWB suggests to us. In this companion book we see how much of the deck teaches the lessons of the Personal Transformation Movement, of alignment, mindfulness and attunement to the vibrations of life itself.



## ABOUT the COVER ILLUSTRATION

For the cover, Holly designed a cosmic version of our Nine of Spirals, a card that features Aeolus, Master of the Four Winds. Wind itself is a symbol of Cosmic Breath, prana or Spirit, the primary attributes of Vayu, the Indo-Iranian wind god. Wind also symbolizes the power of continuous creation and the forging of harmony between the incompleteness of that which was and the fullness of that which shall be. The Greek god Aeolus is the Great Cosmic Organizer.

One of Chrysalis Tarot's tenets is belief in an emerging Aquarian paradigm characterized by unprecedented change. Aeolus, therefore, represents a perhaps overdue reexamination of your own worldview. He ushers in a new belief system distinguished by cooperation rather than competition, of wholeness rather than separateness, and of cosmic consciousness and a rational spirituality unbounded by stale materialist thinking. He is, in short, the perfect icon for the book you are holding.



I began to appreciate this gentle wisdom of the deck as I used it for self-discovery and insight into matters both mystical and mundane. I was also able to appreciate how it wove seamlessly the spiritual essentials drawn in other decks, particularly the presence of the *Shekinah*, such an intrinsic yet barely mentioned mystery of the Waite-Smith and Waite-Trinick Tarot images. I am impressed by how such concepts are here raised from religious constraints and placed in a space from which we can all draw, universally and compassionately, through the images of the deck.

Toney and Holly have indeed set out with this deck to transform tarot by opening it out to a wider world and range of interpretation. In this companion book you will learn about the relationship of all things in all symbols; a living universe and rich tapestry that is found in the deck. You will experience with your readings that you are connected to this tapestry in both subtle and direct ways.

Tarot, when most profound, takes us entirely out of time. As the authors say to us; “We are all connected. This means not only everything in the *present* universe is connected, but everything that has *ever existed* in the universe in the *past* is also connected.”

In this book, you will also read about Anne Baring’s *Dream of the Cosmos* and one particular dream in which she encountered the vision of the net and the spinning wheel. These motifs are to be found throughout the deck in various guises, as they speak of that interconnectedity and timelessness which is at the true heart of all mystical and spiritual experience.

The deck calls us to explore a living universe, not a dead one. As we read, “In a living universe, separateness is an illusion. Everything in a living universe is interconnected, independent and woven into the fabric of a cosmic web of life.” I agree here that in a dead universe, tarot would be nothing more than a card game—for tarot to work it must exist in a timeless and connected space, one which is woven invisibly into this world. As we say here at Tarosophy Towers, tarot must be to “engage life, not escape it.”

In fact, Toney has written elsewhere on our shared vision to “restore the spiritual dignity of tarot,” and it is this vision that you will find deeply written into every card and every line of this book.

The deck is also shamanic, particularly with regard to its healing and holistic intent. The authors see healing as “an incremental aspect of spiritual growth” and much work goes on in the chrysalis, if we are to change and heal. We see this clearly in the Healer card, the Page of Mirrors, a renamed Page of Cups, where we should “collect honey from the many blossoms of your experience and turn it into a mystical balm of healing.” I believe too that we all grow “strong in our broken places,” to quote the title of the Alice Miller book on the subject of healing childhood trauma.

Whilst the mindfulness of the deck may take us to self-awareness and encourage transformation through recognition of the synchronicity of life, the deck is not without representation of the shadow side of life. The Five of Spirals is here found showing “the repressed feelings of resentment, unhealthy desires and self-centredness or greed.” In this book, we discover more about shadow work, incorpo-

rating compassion, unconditional love, and personal accountability. Most of all, we come to learn about forgiveness, about letting go by acknowledging and utilising these aspects of our experience.

Profound transformation may unsettle those embarked on such a journey. This deck and book is an effective companion in guiding you through a labyrinth of not only discovery, but towards a destination—a destination which is the centre of your being, the connection between your spirit and matter.

Tarot is above all about story-telling, and this is a story-tellers' deck, a deck aware of tradition and the importance of passing on a tradition with the transformation necessary to reach each generation. These cards are new pictures for ancient stories, and those stories are still those we tell ourselves every day. Our ancestors are written into us and we use our tarot to access their wisdom.

During this hero's journey, the quest for higher consciousness, you will encounter what Toney and Holly have cast as "the Troupe." These are the Chrysalis counterparts to the standard Court Cards in tarot. It appears that these were the most "talkative" of the cards, and they all certainly have a role to play, from the Acrobat (Page of Pentacles) who is our messenger, to the Watcher (Queen of Cups) who speaks of mysticism and contemplation.

I wonder which member of the Troupe will call you to follow them in their journey.

My favourite member of the Troupe—and perhaps this tells you something about me—is the Page of Scrolls, here named the Pilgrim. She shares certain of the shamanic qualities you will discover throughout the deck, and is someone who is able to embark on a journey with a load upon her back. She stands on the doorway between the worlds, having been—or about to be—experienced in both worlds. She is the mendicant, the voyager, the journeyer, and the deck unfolds before her like the wings of a butterfly, promising not only transformation but flight.

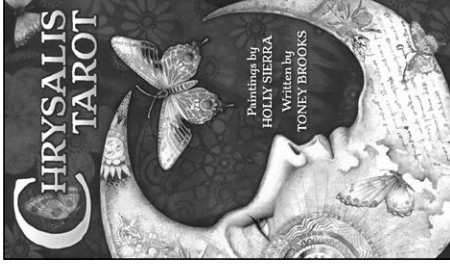
Many are the characters we will meet on the way, drawn from Arthurian myth; ancient civilisations; the Celts and Romans, the vast continents of Africa and Australia; but most of all, drawn deeply from our primal selves. This journey is a story of each of us, told on the grand scale but also on a personal stage, in which the spotlight falls upon us.

Tarot tells a story; it is a fable of the soul's only fallacy: that there is something between us and the universe, between our own self and the divine. As we approach that realisation, the cards unfold before us in a constant message; we live a life of service like the Storyteller or Hermit card; we are each Oneida, the *Shamanika*, healing and using tarot to connect us to all stories. Every question, every situation for which we read our cards, is an opportunity for invoking rejuvenation and restoration in our lives and the lives of our querents.

This deck is indeed a story-tellers deck. This book is for learning to read stories in the world through our cards. It marches to a different drum and it is important that we are "aware of the stories that we read and tell," because these stories shape our world. Tarot should be dangerous in that it should change us, challenge us, uplift us and empower us.

I leave you now in the capable hands of the *Chrysalis Tarot*, recalling that "a tarot deck after all is a metaphysical looking-glass, designed to pinch the higher realms of reality."

Tali Goodwin, Tarosophy Towers, April 2015



## INTRODUCTION

by Toney Brooks

The creation of a tarot deck is a transpersonal process that can take years. Holly Sierra and I spent over 3 1/2 years creating Chrysalis and during those months learned many things. Above all else, we learned that our creative process stood on invisible shoulders.

During the 42 months we spent co-creating Chrysalis, I personally had frequent, imaginary conversations with the characters in our *dramatis personae*. In retrospect, I realize the conversations were not so imaginary after all, at least not entirely. So I embarked on an effort to understand more about what actually went on. This two-part book is not only about Chrysalis Tarot but is also the result of my efforts to uncover hidden realities of the universe that shape our lives and compel us toward destiny.

The most talkative of our characters during the process, and perhaps now as well, were the members of the Troupe. These 16 cards are Chrysalis Tarot's stand-ins for the familiar Court Cards—the kings, queens and so on. Since our Troupe characters were new creations,

we expected they might be a wordy lot and have many suggestions to offer. Their suggestions, by the way, were immensely helpful. In effect these characters defined themselves, revealed their personalities and disclosed their functions within Chrysalis. It became readily apparent that the Troupe characters were also archetypes.

Archetypes are pure potential that acquire meaning, definition and resonance through us. Since many Chrysalis archetypes are new to tarot, they learn about themselves just as the universe and everything in it learns about itself: through a feedback, feedforward information (energy) loop. This energy-based network connects everything in our universe, and therefore unifies everything synergistically. The network is holistic and greater than the sum of its parts.

A tarot deck after all is a metaphysical looking-glass designed to pinch the higher realms of reality. In this regard, tarot is a good deal like shamanism. This companion book will acquaint you with the higher realm we call the Otherworld and, hopefully, help you befriend it, learn to communicate with it and listen to it. Hopefully, you will allow the Otherworld to inform you just as you, in turn, inform it. Given the crazed world we live in today, there can be no better time to expand your mind, grow the quality of your consciousness and reexamine your views on the nature of reality.

I personally believe that if something unseen or imagined resonates with consciousness then it is real. Any author who creates a character that subsequently becomes an archetype, such as George Lucas' Darth Vader, will tell you the character is indeed very real. As you write, characters say and do things that surprise the writer. Our mythologies are filled with living characters that resonated in the past and now, as archetypes, transport treasured truths into future ages from one to the next.

Today, perhaps more so than ever before, we humans inhabit a compacted reality in a wounded world. Every time we think we have it completely figured out, we realize that we only found another

piece of the puzzle. Today's cobbled together puzzle is defined by the primacy of matter, separation, and duality, which is a polarity of opposites in pairs such as masculine vs. feminine, good vs. evil, light vs. darkness and separate vs. unified. Unreconciled opposites and the fallacy of separation are egocentric illusions that beget war, pestilence and senseless destruction of planet Earth.

Fortunately, reality isn't set in stone; we changed our perception of it before and we can change it again. Our human nature intuits when profound change is blowing in the wind and readies us to make sense of it. Today, the world around us is experiencing birth pangs that herald a new reality and worldview. What possibly could be more exciting than to experience the birth of a global awakening?

Our unique deck of 78 tarot cards was crafted to help midwife this new existential reality, a reality we describe at times as *holistic consciousness* and at other times as *cosmic consciousness*. They imply the same thing. We symbolize this new consciousness throughout Chrysalis Tarot with beautiful butterflies and striking symbols of personal transformation. Chrysalis marches to a different drum. It seeks to help you forge a pathway to destiny and cosmic consciousness. The pathway is the ageless Hero's Journey, the monomythic quest for unity.

Holistic consciousness, a dimension of higher consciousness, resonates at the highest possible frequency because it is characterized by pure, unconditional love—immaculate love for self, neighbor, the Earth and the Cosmos. The new reality awaiting the conclusion of the Hero's Journey is an experience of spirit *and* matter; unity *and* separateness, divine Self *and* divine other. The philosophy of the new age prefers the term *both/and* rather than *either/or*.

Profound change is unsettling and frustrating, especially to those ill prepared for it. We designed Chrysalis Tarot to help mitigate the stressful tremors of troubled times. When we evolve our

understanding of reality and learn to abide by it, we are able to lower the inevitable stress brought about by change.

So what exactly is going on in this world of ours? That's a question we put to Chrysalis cards. We asked, "Who shall represent these winds of change?" The Nine of Spirals responded. This card depicts the ancient wind god Aeolus who symbolizes cosmic organization. Wind itself symbolizes the invisible spiritual energy that forges new paradigms. Humanity has been on the cusp of this new paradigm, or new age, since the Enlightenment of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Aeolus is pictured on the Nine of Spirals with an astrolabe, a device used at sea for navigation. An astrolabe measures not the speed or direction of the wind, but rather the position of heavenly bodies such as the moon and stars. On the Nine of Spirals, the astrolabe foresees the gentle breeze of the Age of Aquarius entwined with the last snarling gusts of the Age of Pisces. The ramifications of such a shift are stupendous!

Our universe is made of vibrating energy. All that exists in the universe is "energy, frequency and vibration," according to the renowned physicist Nicholas Tesla. All matter is vibrating energy. This book, for example, vibrates at a specific frequency. The furniture around you vibrates at a specific frequency. And your personal energy vibration or *energy signature*, which is affected by your mood and state of mind, broadcasts a specific frequency. Personal energy signatures *resonate* when they come into contact with complementary frequencies, such as other like-minded individuals.

To visualize resonance, imagine a tuning fork. When you tap it, it produces sound at a specific frequency. Say you have two identical tuning forks and you tap one of them, the other fork vibrates at the same frequency and you can hear it.

A radio also comes in handy when visualizing resonance. We know radio stations broadcast on assigned frequencies. When a radio set is tuned to a particular station, the station's frequency resonates

with the radio, which then produces sound you hear through the speakers. If you change frequencies by pushing a button, the sound from a different station begins to resonate.

This companion book to Chrysalis Tarot details a mental and spiritual journey of resonating frequencies. Tarot refers to this journey as *The Hero's Journey*, a catchall that has been a feature of humanity's stories and mythologies since the time of Gilgamesh nearly 5,000 years ago. In our own time, the whole of humanity is embarking on an epic journey of self-discovery and a collective re-examination of values and priorities. Once accomplished, this paradigm shift will redefine humanity's role in a living universe.

This book divides this epic journey into two parts. Part One examines Chrysalis Tarot and other forms of magic, which are the manipulation of subtle energy, and the role they play in the epic. We will examine new ways of thinking. By opening minds, we will learn how the universe really works. Much of what we were taught in school is incorrect. In just the last several decades, new ways of thinking opened the frontier for a New Physics and New Science that present a much clearer and more elegant view of the way the world works.

Part Two of this book provides an in-depth interpretation for each of the 78 Chrysalis cards. The interpretations also include anecdotes written by Holly that include her inspiration for each card's art with images of her original black and white sketches.

In Chapter 1, titled *Elpi's Cosmic Insights*, we'll review, in layman's terms, the New Physics and various scientific discoveries that turned our worldview upside down and inside out.

We'll examine two different views of the universe. The present view is of a cold, mysterious, foreboding place created out of nothing some 14 billion years ago. The greater universe, aside from our own solar system, doesn't appear to serve much purpose or to have much direct bearing on everyday life on Earth in this worldview. We've been taught that it's mostly dead, empty space.

The alternative, and I believe correct view of the universe, differs considerably. While it may indeed appear cold and foreboding, it most certainly is not dead, empty space.

In Chapter 2, *Papa Legba's Unseen Travels* expands upon what we at Chrysalis call the Otherworld, or Collective Unconscious. Chrysalis archetypes depicted on the first 22 cards in the deck are said to exist in this Otherworld, a realm of non-ordinary reality. As we mentioned, the 16 Troupe characters also inhabit this Otherworld.

When a particular Otherworld archetype resonates with your unconscious mind, your imagination and intuition are inspired. You know new things inexplicably. The tarot reading becomes something like a radio that's happened upon an unfamiliar but entertaining station chocked full of information.

Chapter 3, *Merlin's Great Matter*, addresses resonance and the transformation to higher consciousness, the ultimate goal of the Hero's Journey. The word *chrysalis* itself implies either biological metamorphosis or spiritual transformation.

When you read Chrysalis Tarot, you invite the Otherworld into your daily decision-making and discernment to help you make better informed choices. You also become happier, less stressed, more confident, better balanced and, as the frequency of your energy signature rises, so too does consciousness awareness.

We devote Chapter 4, titled *Storyteller's Vision Quest*, to healing. Diseases may be *cured*, psychological disorders may be *treated*, but when subtle energy vibrations become disordered they must be *healed*. Various names for what is called *subtle energy* include *chi* (also spelled *qi*) and *prana*, the Sanskrit word meaning "life force." This energy is subtle only because we lack the technology to measure it.

We'll also discuss the etiology of subtle energy disorder, the telltale symptoms of illness one might encounter and the many effective healing modalities available, which includes Chrysalis readings. We also touch upon chakra work and other forms of subtle energy healing.

Chapter 5 is titled *Morgan's Cauldron of Rebirth*. Morgan le Fay is Chrysalis' sorceress. It's about the magic that happens when you activate your Third Eye, also known as your sixth chakra.

An activated Third Eye stabilizes your frequency so it may resonate *at will* with the unseen world of archetypes and discarnate beings, such as spirits, angels and the ancestors. Fairies, unicorns and fantastical creatures from mythology also populate this imaginal Third Eye theater.

Perhaps of utmost importance, when consciousness is tuned to this stabilized frequency you will also resonate on many levels with fellow human beings committed to evolving beyond the dead-universe materialist paradigm.

Part Two of the book expands on interpretations of Chrysalis cards detailed in the small booklet (*Little White Booklet*) that comes with each deck. In addition to the card interpretations, Holly's inspirations for her Chrysalis art are included along with her original black and white sketches for all 78 cards.



## PART ONE

## ELPI'S COSMIC INSIGHTS

*If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration. ~ Nikola Tesla*

If you haven't already met Elpi, she's the archetype pictured on our version of tarot's traditional Star card. Elpi herself is a minor deity from Greek mythology. As the personification of hope, Elpi remained behind when Pandora opened the jar known to us as Pandora's Box. Pandora's curiosity allowed good and evil to escape into the world. Aesop tells us, "Elpi is still found among the people promising she will one day bestow upon them all the good things that got away."

Each evening, and true to that promise, Elpi keeps hope alive by flying into the heavens to coax the stars from their daytime hiding spots and set them ablaze with her Golden Censor. Nightly treks across the Milky Way have taught Elpi a great deal about the true nature of the Cosmos. That's valuable information that will help us understand how tarot works. It also provides a cosmological framework for the new living universe paradigm.

Elpi's job was rather simple back in the days of Aristotle, when the universe was thought to be a finite sphere. Stars adorned the ceiling—the sphere's outermost boundary. After the Copernican Revolution an astrologer named Giordano Bruno, who was also a monk, put forward the radical notion that the universe knew no boundaries. It was infinite. The stars were other suns, perhaps even orbited by planets similar to planet Earth.



At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the existing worldview was overthrown once more, this time by Relativity and Quantum Mechanics. For the first time in human history no comprehensive mythology or scientific worldview could neatly explain everything. But Elpi assures us there is hope.

## ELPI'S ENERGY SIGNATURE

Contrary to popular belief, the universe is not empty space. It's true that the observable matter in the universe accounts for only about 4% of the stuff in outer space, but the remaining 96% is not empty. It's filled with small packets of energy called quanta. This energy can be imagined as tiny vibrating bubbles.

"Empty space," incredibly, contains more energy than everything else in the observable universe combined. Considering there are 100 billion galaxies in our universe each with over 100 billion stars, that tallies up to a massive amount of "empty space" energy.

It's important for us to learn about this vibrating energy because it accounts for how tarot, the interconnectivity of everything in the universe, and perhaps even consciousness itself, actually work.

This energy is called zero point energy, *prana*, *chi* or *aether*, among other terms. It occupies not just all the empty space in the known universe, but also all the empty space inside every atom—and that's a lot of empty space too. Atoms themselves are 99% empty space; therefore you, me and all matter are comprised of 99% empty space. But we're also vital links in a dynamical system that connects everything in the universe to everything else.

Elpi's energy signature vibrates at a specific frequency. If emotions are hopeful, positive and optimistic, energy signatures vibrate at a high frequency. If Chrysalis archetypes like Elpi evoke positive vibrations, they are said to *resonate* with us. But let's say we're having a slightly off day and aren't feeling very hopeful. Our energy then vibrates at a significantly lower frequency. Love has the highest

vibration frequency. Fear, on the other hand, vibrates at a very low frequency in the same range as anger and hate.

With the twinkle of a distant star that's Elpi's energy signature. The more you believe Chrysalis Tarot cards are a lot more than beautiful pieces of cardboard, and the more you energize them with your own positive thoughts, the greater the effect will be on a card's resonance, and hence its ability to lift your spirits and heal your psyche.

## THE DEAD UNIVERSE WORLDVIEW

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to viewing the universe holistically is the physics of the existing dead universe worldview that divides the universe into two broad groupings: the large objects we can see like planets, stars and galaxies; and the small objects that account for everything else, such as atoms and protons that we can't see.

Classical physics explains the big things; quantum physics explains the small things. Since there is no widely accepted "theory of everything" combining a rational spirituality with science, we naturally view the universe as a dead universe having little relevance to everyday life on Earth.

The dead universe worldview is responsible for many of the problems we face today on planet Earth. Here's today's conventional wisdom that goes to the heart of the matter: Inanimate matter is considered to be dead. The visible universe is made of matter that has no purpose. Matter has no consciousness. In a nutshell, this perspective describes the material worldview, the worldview of a dead, meaningless, fragmented universe. Put another way, the universe is a machine.

In a dead universe, tarot can be nothing more than a card game. Meditation and yoga are self-indulgent "Eastern" folderals. Everything in a dead universe is matter made of particles that obey mechanical and physical laws. Everything that is real can either be seen or measured. In a dead universe, there is no room for metaphysics, tarot or other anomalous phenomena such as extrasensory perception, near

death experiences or energy healing. In a dead universe, such notions at these are considered insubstantial and ephemeral.

Today's dead universe worldview legitimizes wholesale exploitation of the planet, wars for control of Earth's natural resources, plus a lack of sincere compassion for other humans. Worst of all, separation and contrived political and religious boundaries bolster the notion of a dead universe, separating us from nature and from each other.

## THE LIVING UNIVERSE WORLDVIEW

When Elpi streaks through the heavens each evening she sails on a veritable sea of fluctuating subatomic energy. We can't see this energy, but then neither can a fish in the ocean grasp the vastness of the water it swims in. As we noted, one cubic centimeter of space contains more total energy than all matter in the known universe combined. The energy from one cubic centimeter of space could power everything on Earth for years!

In a living universe, separateness is an illusion. Everything in a living universe is interconnected, interdependent and woven into the fabric of a cosmic web of life. We no longer regard the world as a place of objects but as a place of relationships. We view Earth through the holistic lens of deep ecology where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and each part has the responsibility to preserve the vitality of the whole. In a living universe, we evolve from a model of competition to one of cooperation. In a living universe, everyone matters.

These notions are incremental to understanding not only reality but understanding tarot and other forms of anomalistic phenomena. We'll further examine this subject in Chapter 5, *Morgan's Cauldron of Rebirth*.

## THE COSMIC WOMAN

We conclude Elpi's chapter on the cosmos with the story of a life-changing dream that author Anne Baring recounts in her mag-

num opus, *The Dream of the Cosmos*. Baring dreamt she fell into a deep valley and landed in a vast net somewhat like a spider's web. When she raised her eyes she beheld a beautiful "Cosmic Woman" who seemed to fill the entire cosmos. The woman had an immense, revolving wheel in her abdomen that reminded Baring of the famous labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral.

Of course, the wheel is a universal symbol for the spinning cycles of birth, death and rebirth as well as a symbol of the Mother Goddess. The wheel's cosmic energy permeates all planes of existence. It also symbolizes the body's seven chakra centers of consciousness, which are discussed in the following chapter.

When Baring glanced down at her own body, she discovered she too had a revolving wheel, except hers was slightly askew to the left. The Cosmic Woman indicated to her that her wheel should also be centered, although she didn't indicate how to go about doing it.

Centering the wheel, Baring later realized, meant becoming fully conscious and aligning her own human consciousness with the woman's superior cosmic consciousness, who she now recognized as a personification of the Divine Feminine. Baring also recognized the net in her dream as Indra's Net, a sutra from Hindu mythology and prominent symbol of the interconnectedness of creation.

Stephen Mitchell further explains Indra's Net in his book *The Enlightened Mind*: "The Net of Indra is a profound and subtle metaphor for the structure of reality. Imagine a vast net; at each crossing point there is a jewel; each jewel is perfectly clear and reflects all the other jewels in the net, the way two mirrors placed opposite each other will reflect an image ad infinitum. The jewel in this metaphor stands for an individual being, or an individual consciousness, or a cell or an atom. Every jewel is intimately connected with all other jewels in the universe, and a change in one jewel means a change, however slight, in every other jewel."



– CHAPTER 2 –

## PAPA LEGBA'S UNSEEN TRAVELS

*One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries to comprehend only a little of this mystery every day.*

~ Albert Einstein

Papa Legba is the Grand Shaman of Chrysalis Tarot. He can frequently be found in liminal space—the betwixt-and-between of the crossroads that separate the visible realities of the world from the invisible realities of the universe. Liminal space is the threshold between what we experience through our five senses and what we experience through intuition, dreams and active or creative imagination.

Other shamanic spirit guides in Papa's entourage include Storyteller, Celtic Owl, Ariadne, the Watcher and the Visionary, however many other cards also have shamanic attributes, such as the Nine of Stones, Eight of Mirrors and the Pilgrim. Additionally, threads of shamanism are woven throughout the Chrysalis fabric by our weavers, the Seven of Mirrors and the Weaver. When any shamanic styled cards appear in a reading, it confirms resonance and a strong connectivity with the Collective Unconscious, which we call the Otherworld. We could say that Chrysalis was heavily influenced by shamanism.

## THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

In order to comprehend the vastness and meaningfulness of the Collective Unconscious, it is first necessary to grasp the full implication of the living universe axiom: "We are all connected." It means that not only everything in the *present* universe is connected, but that everything that ever existed in the universe is also connected. The Collective Unconscious is a living system of connectivity and a dynamic memory bank.

The Collective Unconscious is also a dynamic energy field whose organizing principles are universal archetypes such as those pictured on tarot's 22 Major Arcana cards. In the case of Chrysalis Tarot, we consider the 16 members of the Troupe also to be archetypes.

The Collective Unconscious is often referred to by other names such as the Akashic Record, Cosmic Mind or Universal Mind. However conceptualized, the Collective Unconscious can be summed up as the confluence of world mythology and spiritual tradition. Chrysalis honors all these traditions with a rich holistic cultural diversity.

In the alchemy of Chrysalis Tarot, a reading represents spiritual resonance with the Collective Unconscious that takes the form of intuitive dialog. The specific purpose of such dialog is to increase your knowledge of Self.

## A COSMIC TOUR WITH PAPA LEGBA

In the previous chapter we discussed empty space, which quantum theory proves is not empty at all but filled with energy. This energy was called *aether* until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Space indeed is filled with a super-dense, superfluid energy awash with an infinite number of fields of information. One of these fields is the Collective Unconscious.

Renowned scientist Sir Arthur Eddington wrote, “To put the conclusion crudely, the stuff of the world is mind-stuff.” There are several promising theories that propose space is not only full of energy but is also full of consciousness. A cornerstone of the living universe theory is that consciousness is nonlocal. In other words, consciousness does not arise from matter (the brain), but is pervasive throughout the universe. Consciousness can be called the Ground of All Being.

Philosopher Ervin László reported that in altered states of consciousness (ASC), “Many people experience a kind of consciousness that appears to be that of the universe itself.” Such altered, non-ordinary states of consciousness could also explain near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences and, of particular relevance to us, how tarot readers *connect* with the Collective Unconscious and evolve to the state of *cosmic consciousness*.

A giant step in the evolution of consciousness is anticipated by the Aquarian paradigm.

## GAIA

Another dynamic energy field in space particularly relevant to users of Chrysalis Tarot is the Gaia Theory of Mother Earth. James Lovelock developed his revolutionary Gaia Hypothesis in the 1960s. It asserts that the Earth is a living, self-regulating organism that maintains optimal conditions to support life in our biosphere, one of Earth’s four geologic subsystems. Lovelock’s hypothesis has become a scientific theory named Gaia Theory.

Gaia’s energy field also sheds some light on the extensive array of ley lines (earth energy meridians) and sacred monuments that dot the landscape in many areas of the globe. Indeed, our Ace of Stones depicts a menhir or megalithic standing stone. Even today many consider sacred megaliths (large stones) to be unimportant curiosities constructed by “primitive” ancient civilizations. Like religion, archaeology is blindly dogmatic about these matters.

Morphic resonance is a hypothesis conceived by biologist Rupert Sheldrake in the late 1960s. It theorizes that memory is not stored in the brain but is inherent in nature and all natural systems. Future generations depend not so much on inherited traits as on the collective memory from previous generations—an information system similar to the Collective Unconscious. Morphic resonance benefits all species of life.

Morphic resonance is relevant to Chrysalis because it accounts for the strong influence our ancestors have in tarot readings and day-to-day life. Indeed, there are specific cards in Chrysalis designed to represent and call upon ancestral energies. These include the Four and Eight of Spirals.

## COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND WHY IT'S VITAL

Rumi wrote, “In form you are the microcosm; in reality you are the macrocosm.” Is that endearing platitude or scientific fact? Well, it’s both. As human beings, we can be described as a microcosm; the living parts of a greater whole. But in reality, we are not only connected to all other living parts but to the totality of the whole, which exists in the center of our being. When the Great Cosmic Woman appeared to Anne Baring that was the essence of her message: by centering ourselves and tuning our consciousness we become one with all the information contained in the cosmos. We are both microcosm and macrocosm, as Rumi wrote.

When designing Chrysalis Tarot, Holly and I agreed on several objectives. We wanted a deck that promoted *mindfulness* because mindfulness increases synchronicity in our lives as well as self-awareness. We wanted a *healing* deck because healing is an incremental aspect of spiritual growth; one must become whole to grow spiritually. The healing efficacy of Chrysalis Tarot resides in its shamanic qualities and energy. But most of all we wanted a deck that would evolve consciousness and be *transformative*.

We wanted Chrysalis to be aligned with the Personal Transformation Movement. This movement includes yoga, meditation and other centering and grounding methods, along with an acute environmental awareness. The Personal Transformation Movement seeks to end *competitive* “us vs. them” thinking in favor of a *collaborative* model that is holistic and interdependent.

If there’s a stumbling block to cosmic consciousness, it is the fact we have never had an accurate model of how the universe actually works. A person’s worldview, which must include cosmology, up to now has been a mixture of mythology, metaphor and science. This mixture has been stultified by dogma, both religious and scientific. It’s little wonder we see ourselves as separate from the universe and from one another; there are too many fragments and divisions, the antithesis of holism and Oneness.

Cosmic consciousness anticipates replacing belief-based dogmatic versions of reality and science-based dogmatic versions of reality with a foundational vision that transcends both. Moreover, to heal divisions and end the illusion of separation with a paradigm that explains how things really are.

## EXPERIENTIAL SPIRITUALITY

One great advantage tarot holds as a tool for personal transformation is that it does not depend on memorizing correct beliefs, rather it relies on empowering personal experience. When traveling through

the unseen world with Papa Legba, we experience a sense of the numinous, which is far more rewarding and instructive than reading someone else’s account of their experience. Their experience is their truth, not yours. Chrysalis Tarot actively seeks to create such an experience of the numinous (Collective Unconscious) for our readers to help them discover their own personal truths.

Spiritual alchemy is defined as a conversation with the numinous. It is the hallmark of every Chrysalis reading, meditative exercise, chakra clearing and transpersonal ritual. As you progress in spiritual awareness and learn to journey deeper and deeper into the center of your being, you will hear echoes from great sages; you will transcend boundaries of ordinary physical reality and discover the holy grail of true happiness and compassionate well-being.



– CHAPTER 3 –

## MERLIN'S GREAT MATTER

*According to this mythology there is no fixed law, no established knowledge of god, set up by prophets or priests that can stand against the revelation of a life lived with integrity in the spirit of its own brave truth.*

~ Joseph Campbell

In the quote above, Campbell, the world's best-known mythologist, references the Quest for the Holy Grail, which he termed “the founding myth of Western Civilization.” Grail mythology lies at the heart of the Hero's Journey, the journey of self-discovery that leads to spiritual transformation—the journey that is the essence of tarot.

In Chrysalis Tarot, our journey begins with Merlin who, in his stand-in role as the archetype of Self, accompanies and guides you on your own personal Hero's Journey through the cards. Merlin, the mystic and legendary guardian of the Holy Grail, is the world's best-known spiritual alchemist. The Quest for the Holy Grail as told by Chrysalis is Merlin's Great Matter and your *summum bonum* or highest good. The Grail legends are about growth, which is the reason we are here.

Merlin plays the role of your alter ego or best friend forever in Chrysalis. In every reading, Merlin the Mystic stands at your side to coach, comfort and nudge you forward. He speaks through your inner voice, your robust imagination and inspired intuition. The two most important qualities on the Hero's Journey are active imagination and mindful attentiveness. This way, you can't possibly miss a thing.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

Grail legends trace their roots to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, a tumultuous period in British and Celtic history. No longer able to “defend the limes,” Rome's auspicious legions were yanked out of Britain. Within only a few years the Saxons, Angles and other tribes invaded from across the channel. This sent many native Britons reeling and fleeing to safety in the Celtic countries of Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and Brittany. What history calls the Dark Ages began when Rome abandoned British soil.

The Dark Ages were dark because the history of the period was not recorded in written form; the northern peoples were storytellers and kept oral histories. Stories were told and proud legends embellished about a young king named Arthur and his mentor, Merlin. They halted the Anglo-Saxon advance in Wessex at the Battle of Badon Hill and thereby ushered in a long period of peace called the Golden Age of Camelot. Our humble Chrysalis Merlin was cut from the same cloth as his famous namesake—he desires only what is best for you and always eschews personal glory.