



The Tarot of the Bohemians

CHAPTER V.

THE KEY TO THE MINOR ARCANA.

THE KEY TO THE MINOR ARCANA.

THE Tarot is composed of 78 cards, divided as follows--

56 cards called the *minor* arcana.

22 cards called the *major* arcana.

The 56 minor arcana are formed of 4 series of 14 cards each.

The 22 major arcana are formed of 21 numbered cards, and of one un-numbered.

In order to study the Tarot with success, we must then arrange the following packets--

4 packets of 14 cards each.

14 + 14 + 14 + 14	=	56
1 packet of 21 cards	=	21
1 packet of 1 card	=	<u>1</u>
Total		78

Jon- This is actually an over simplification by Papus himself, as we will see as we get into the Key of the Major Arcana, he divides up the Major Arcana into 4 groups, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd septenaries, a group he classifies as general transitional cards, and the 0 card, which he also muses a little bit about how it should actually be the 22 card.

This packet, taken as a whole, corresponds to one of the *colours* of our pack of cards. The 4 packets respectively represent the *wands* or *sceptres*, corresponding to our clubs; the *cups* or *goblets*, corresponding to our hearts; the *swords*, corresponding to our spades; and *money* or *Pentacles*, corresponding to our diamonds.

We shall now study one of these packets, for instance that of *Sceptres*.

The packet consists of 4 figures: the king, queen, knight, and knave, and of ten cards which simply bear numbers.

The ace, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.

We must first consider the four figures--

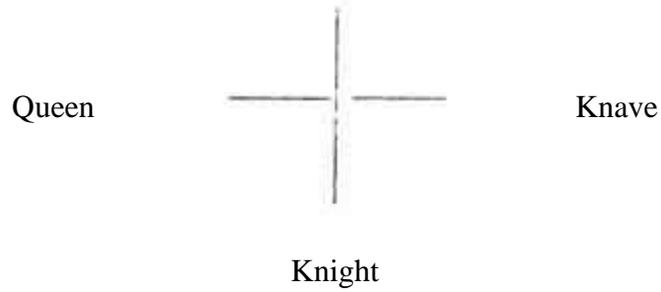
The king represents the active, the man, or male.

The queen represents the passive, the woman, or female.

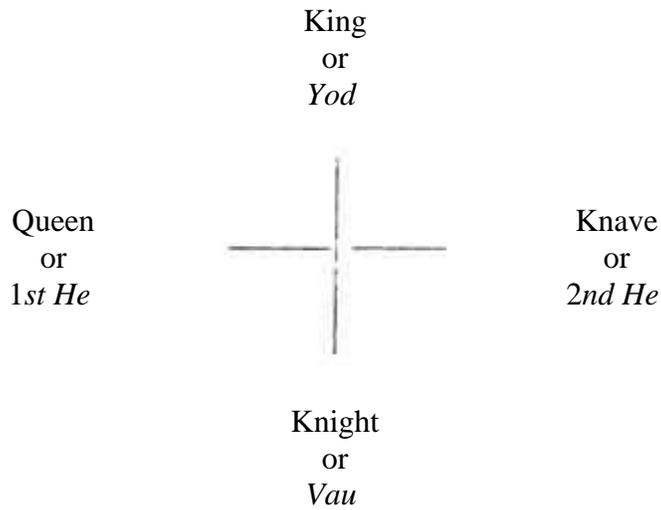
The knight represents the neuter, the adolescent.

Lastly, the knave represents the 4th term of this sequence, which may be figured in this way--

King



This sequence is only an application of the general law *Yod-he-vau-he*, which we already know, and the analogy is easily established--



The knave therefore corresponds with the *second He*, i. e. it is only a term of transition; but transition between what?

Between the four figures and the ten numbers following.

Let us now study these numbers. We are acquainted with *the Law* of numbers, or law of the sequences, which we have already stated in these terms--

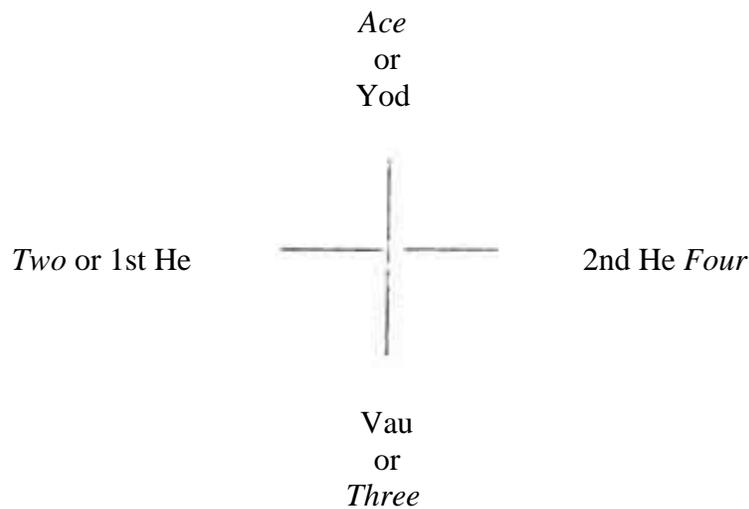
4 -- 5. 6

7 -- etc.

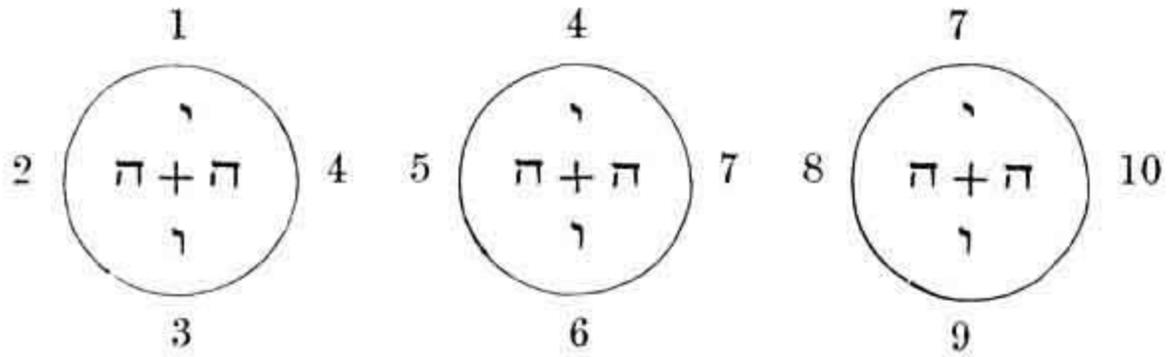
The ten cards cannot escape from this law, and we can at once arrange them in series.

The first series will be formed of the ace, or 1, representing the *active*, of the 2 personating the *passive*, of the 3 for the *neuter*, and lastly of the 4, which represents the transition from one series to another.

1, 2, 3, 4 therefore correspond also with the *Yod-he-vau-he*, and are thins formulated--



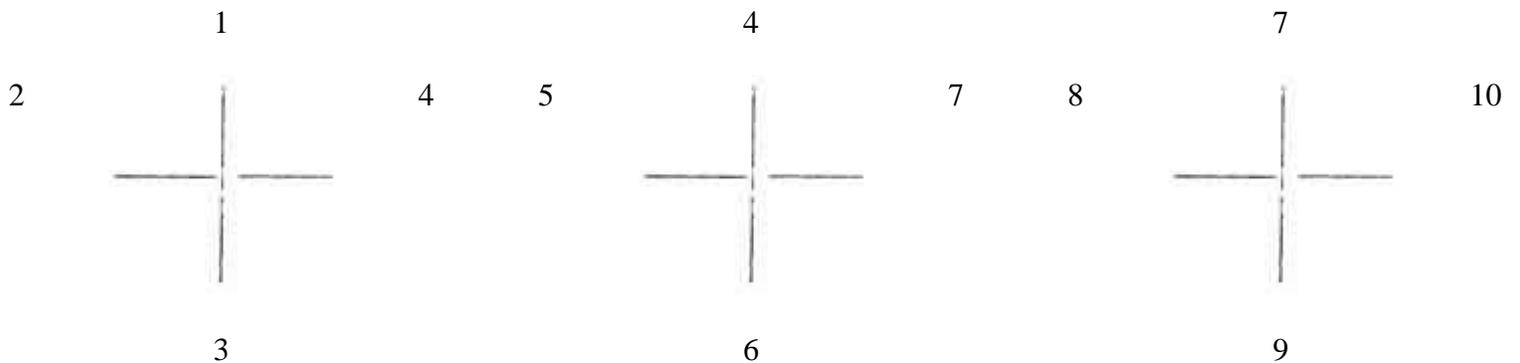
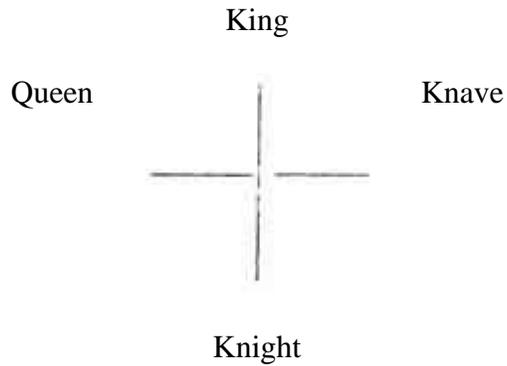
The other series follow the same rule exactly, the *second He* of the preceding series becoming the *Yod* of the following, series: thus 4, the fourth term of the first series, becomes the first term of the second series; 7, the fourth term of the second, becomes the first term of the third, as follows--



We see that the same law, *Yod-he-vau-he*, can be applied to these series. Since this law is also applicable to the four figures, we can make a comparison based on the following proposition--

Two terms (the numbers and the figures) equal to a same third (the law *Yod-he-vau-he*) are equal between themselves.

THE SEQUENCE IN ONE COLOR



AFFINITY BETWEEN THE FIGURES AND THE NUMBERS.

We have already studied both the figures and the numbers separately, let us now see what connection exists between the figures and the numbers.

If we group the similar terms according to the identical *Law* which rules them, we shall find them as follows--

The King is the	<i>Yod</i>	of	1. 4. 7
The Queen ---	<i>He</i>	of	2. 5. 8
The Knight ---	<i>Vau</i>	of	3. 6. 9
The Knave---	<i>2nd He</i>	of	10

The sequence of the figures is reproduced *three times* in the series of numbers, that is to say, that each series of numbers represents a conception of the figures in each of the three Kabbalistic worlds.

The series 1, 2, 3, 4 represents the emanation of the sequence king, queen, knight, knave in the divine world.

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The series 4, 5, 6, 7 represents this evolution in the human world.

The series 7, 8, 9, 10 represents this evolution in the material world.

Each colour is a complete whole, formed after the manner of beings.

Of a material body:

(Knight---7.8.9)

Of a vital force:

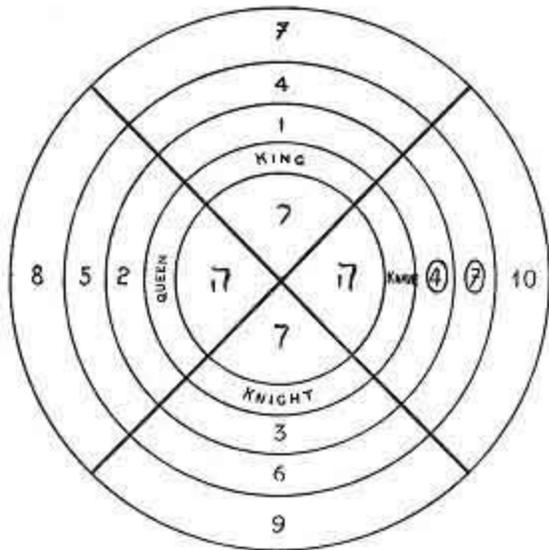
(Queen---4.5.6)

Of an intellect:

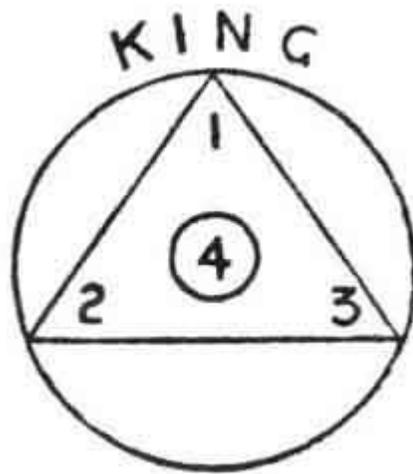
(King---1.2.3)

Of reproductive organs:

(Knave---10)

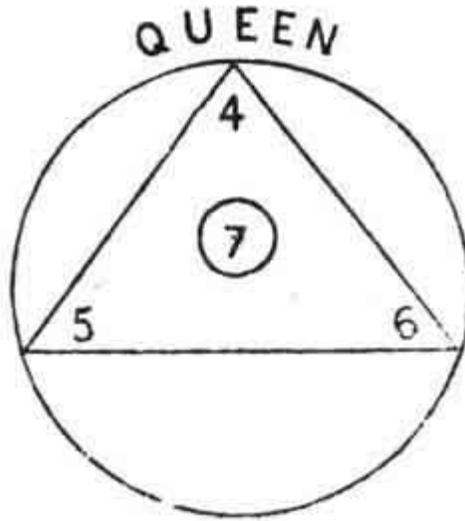


FIGURATION OF ONE COLOR



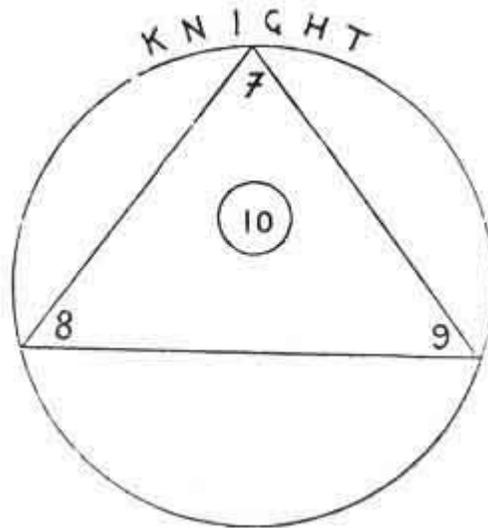
Head--Spirituality

Divine World



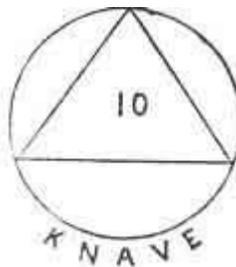
Chest--Vitality

Human World



Body--Materiality

Material World



Transition from one being to another

Transition from another one world to

STUDY OF THE FOUR COLOURS.

Supplied with these data, let us continue our study, and apply the same principle to the other cards.

The laws which we have defined for the constitution of one colour, apply in the same way to the other three colours.

But when we consider the four colours of the Tarot, new deductions will be called forth. We must remember that these four colours are: the Sceptre, the Cup, the Sword, and the Money or Pentacles.

The Sceptre represents the Male or the Active.

The Cup is the image of the Passive or Feminine.

The Sword represents the union of the two by its crucial form.

Lastly, the Pentacles represent the second He.

The authors who have philosophically studied the Tarot are all unanimous in asserting the analogy that exists between the tetragrammaton and the four colours. Guillaume Postel, [1](#) and above all Eliphas Levi, [2](#) have developed these studies with great results, and they show us the four letters of the tetragrammaton applied in the symbolism of every cultus.

We must pause one moment to notice the analogy, between these letters and the symbols of the Christian religion.

The Yod or Sceptre of the Tarot is represented by the episcopal crosier.

The 1st He or Cup is represented by the Chalice.

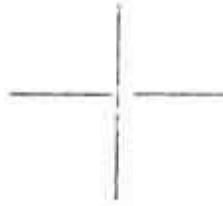
The Vau or Sword by the Cross, bearing the same form.

The 2nd He or Pentacles by the Host, the transition from the natural to the Supernatural world.

The series which we have studied in one colour is defined equally strictly in the four colours regarded as a whole, thus--

Sceptre
or
Yod

Cup or *He*



2nd *He* or Money

Vau
or
Sword

The 4 Kings	= <i>Yod</i>
The 4 Aces	
The 4 Fours	
The 4 Sevens	
The 4 Queens	= <i>He</i>
The 4 Twos	
The 4 Fives	
The 4 Eights	
<small>p. 46</small> The 4 Cavaliers	= <i>Vau</i>
The 4 Threes	
The 4 Sixes	
The 4 Nines	
The 4 Knaves	= <i>He</i>
The 4 Tens	

The material body of the minor arcana:

The 4 Knights
The 4 Sevens
The 4 Eights
The 4 Nines

The vital body of the minor arcana:

The 4 Queens
The 4 Fours
The 4 Fives
The 4 Sixes

The intellectual body:

The 4 Kings
The 4 Aces
The 4 Twos
The 4 Threes

Reproductive organs:

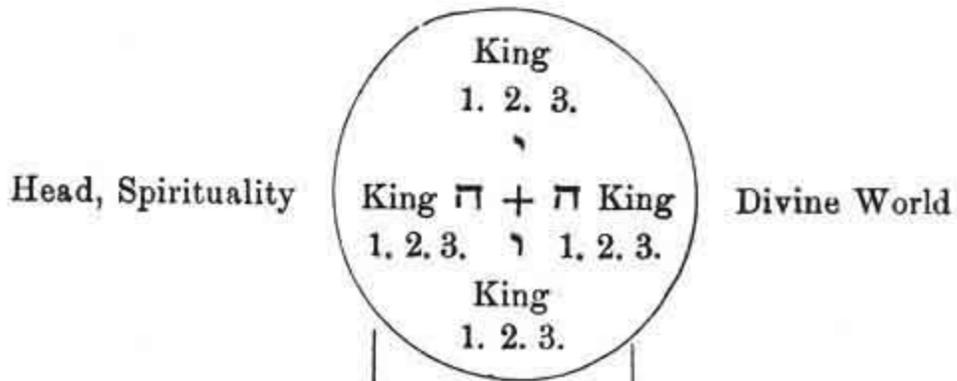
The 4 Knaves
The 4 Tens

The *Pentacles*, responding to the second *He*, indicates a transition.

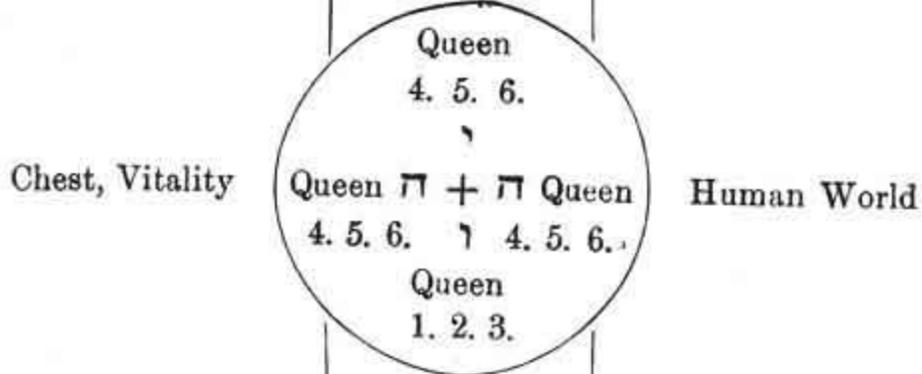
Between what?

Between the *minor and major arcana*.

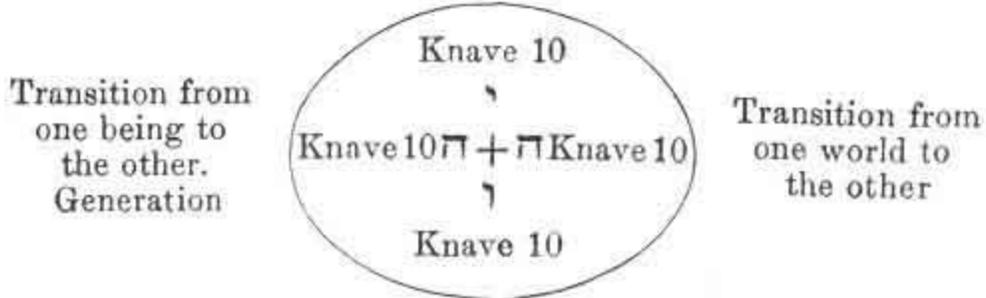
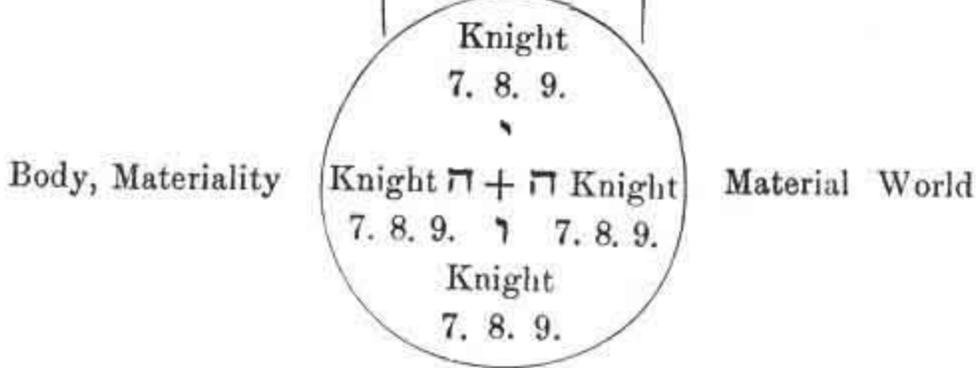
SCEPTRES



CUPS



SWORDS



PENTACLES

The Key to the Major Arcana

Jon-

Papus organizes the Major Arcana in 4 groups. There are three Septenaries

1st

The Juggler
The High Priestess
The Empress
The Emperor
The Pope
The Lovers

2nd

The Chariot
Justice
The hermit
The Wheel of Fortune
Strength
The Hanged Man

3rd

Death
Temperance
The Devil
The Towers
The Stars
The Moon

And then he has this group of cards that signify general transition

The Sun
judgement
The Fool
The World

Okay, to complicate these things even more, each of the three septenaries have a positive and a negative. Once we start looking at them. That is to say there are three cards that are positive and three cards that are negative. And there is a whole new dimension to the way we have been diagramming this yod he vau he configuration. Because there are three and three, three positive and three negative, we are taking our cross and turning it into this triangle again.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KEY TO THE MAJOR ARCANA.

The Major Arcana--1st Ternary--2nd Ternary--1st Septenary--2nd Septenary--The Three Septenaries and the Ternary of Transition.

THE MAJOR ARCANA.

THE fundamental difference which exists between the minor and major arcana, is that in the latter the figures and numbers are united, whilst in the former they are distinct.

There are 22 major arcana, but one of them bears a 0, so that, in reality, there are only 21 great or major arcana.

Most of the authors who have studied the Tarot have devoted all their attention to these 22 cards, without noticing the others, which, however, contain the real key to the system.

But we will leave these digressions and commence the application of the law *Yod-he-vau-he* to this portion of the Tarot.

A little reflection will suggest to us that there should be *some sequences* in the major arcana as well as in the minor arcana. But how are we to define the limits of these series?

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Each card of the minor arcana bears a symbol which easily connects it with the whole scheme (Sceptre, Cup, Sword, or Pentacles); it is different in this case. Each card bears a *different symbol*. Therefore it is not *symbolism* that can guide us here, at all events for the moment.

Besides the symbol, each card expresses an idea. This idea is already a better guide, for it is easier to classify than the symbol; but this guide does not yet offer all the security that we could desire, for it may be read differently by various persons. Again, the idea proceeds from the action of the symbol upon the other term expressed by the card, *the number*.

The number is certainly the most reliable element, the easiest to follow in its evolutions; it is, therefore, the number that will guide us; and through it we shall discover the two other terms.

Let us now recall our explanation of the numbers, and we shall easily define the series of the major arcana.

However, from the commencement we must make one great reservation. The series which we are about to enumerate are the *most usual*, but they are not the *only ones*.

This said, we will now study the four first major arcana.

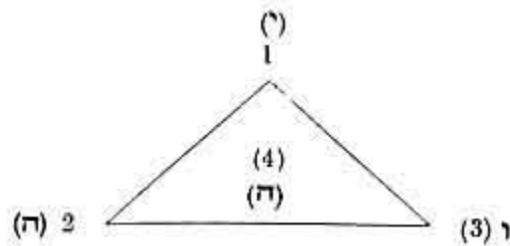
The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 at once indicate the classification to be adopted and the nature of the terms.

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | corresponds to | <i>Yod</i> , | and is active. |
| 2 | ---- | to <i>He</i> | ---- passive. |
| 3 | ---- | to <i>Vau</i> | ---- neuter. |
| 4 | ---- | to the 2nd <i>He</i> , | and indicates transition. |

This 4th arcanum corresponds to the Knave and to the 10 of the minor arcana, and becomes Yod in the next or following series.

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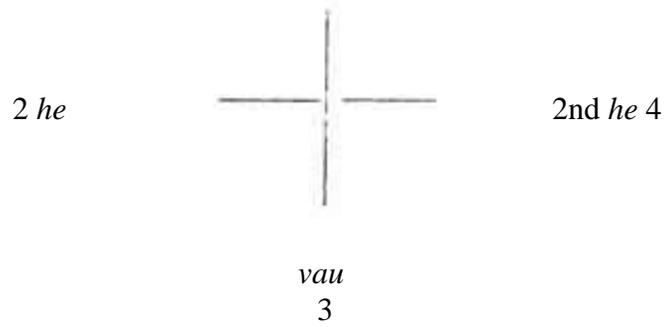
If we wish to make a figure of the first ternary 1, 2, 3, we should do it in this way--



The active term 1 is at the head of the triangle, the two other terms are at the other angles.

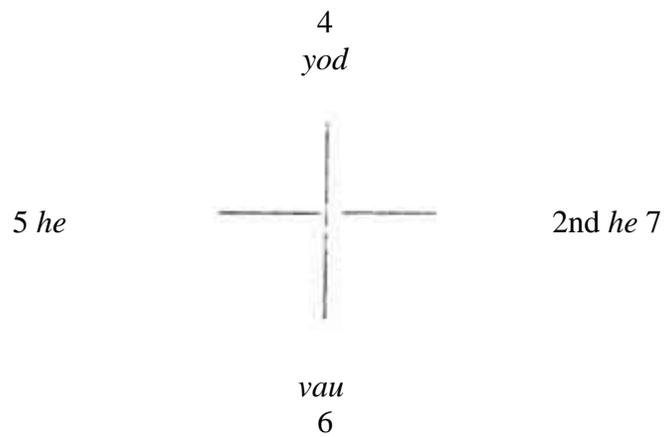
This ternary can also be represented in its affinities with *Yod-he-vau-he--*

1
yod



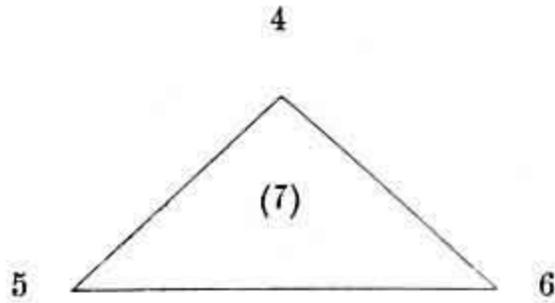
SECOND TERNARY.--We have stated that the 4 becomes the Yod or active term in the following sequence.

This is realized in the figure below--



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The 4 representing the Yod, therefore, acts with regard to 5 and 6, as the 1 acted with regard to 2 and 3, and we obtain another ternary.



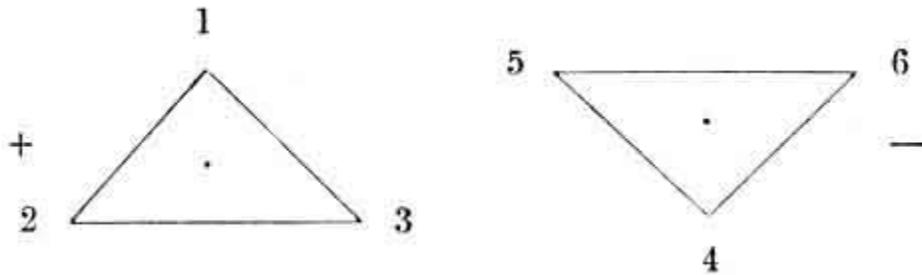
The 7 acts here as the 4 acted previously, and the same rule applies to all the series in the arcana.

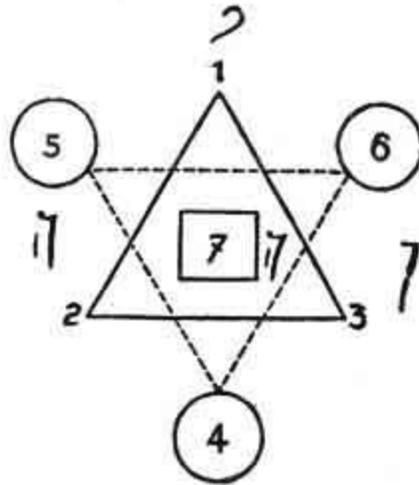
FIRST SEPTENARY.--The application of one law to very different terms has led us so far; we must not abandon this system, but persevere and say--

If in one ternary exist an *active* term = *yod*, a *passive* term = *he*, and a *neuter* term = *vau*, resulting from the two first, why should not the same result be found in several ternaries taken together?

The first ternary is active and corresponds to *yod*; the second ternary is passive and corresponds to *he*; the reaction of one ternary upon another gives birth to a third ternary or *vau*.

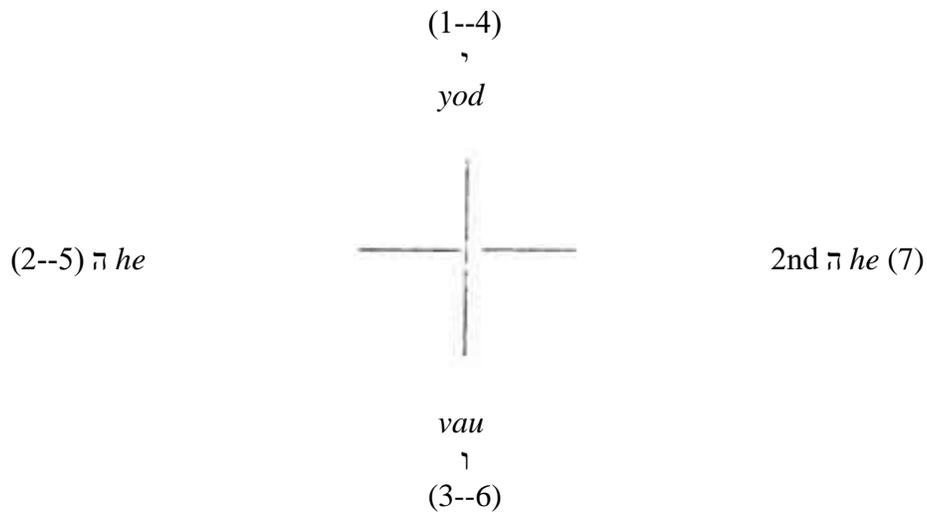
Let us make a figure representing this--





The 7 therefore forms the element of transition between *one septenary* and another.

If we define the analogy between this first septenary and the *Yod-he-vau-he*, we shall find--



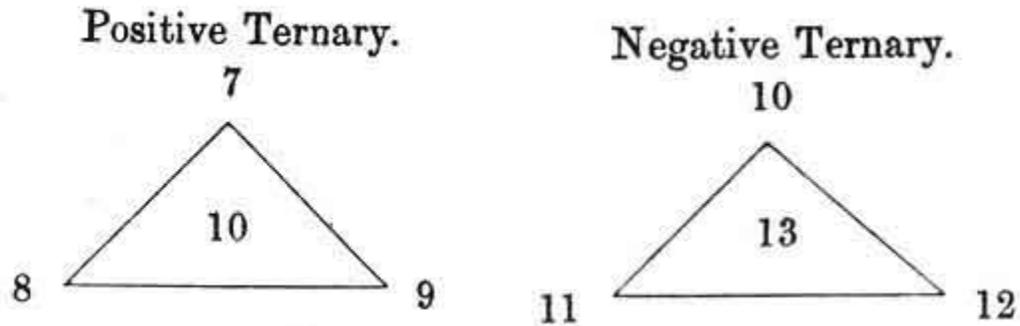
A deduction may be made in passing, from which a great deal of information may be derived, if it be carefully studied: the 4 being only the 1, considered *negatively*, the 5 is only the 2 considered negatively, whilst the 6 is the negative of 3. It is always *the same number* under *different aspects*.

We have therefore defined a first septenary, formed of two opposing ternaries.

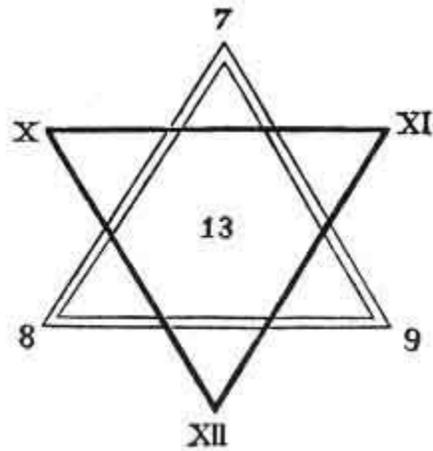
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We have seen that this septenary also reproduces *Yod-he-vau-he*.

SECOND SEPTENARY.--The law that applies to the first ternaries is also true for the others, and following the same method we obtain a second septenary, thus formed--

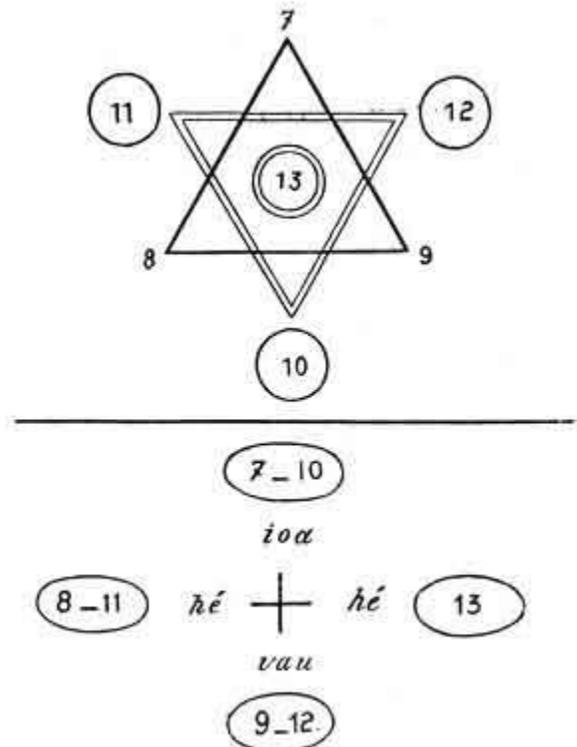


The two ternaries, positive and negative, will balance each other to give birth to a second septenary and to its term of transition 13. Thus--



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General figure--



But if the two ternaries respectively act as positive and negative, why should not the two septenaries do the same?

The first septenary, taken as a whole, will therefore be *positive*, relatively to the second septenary, which will be *negative*.

The first septenary corresponds to *yod*, the second to *he*.

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THIRD SEPTENARY. The third septenary is thus formed--

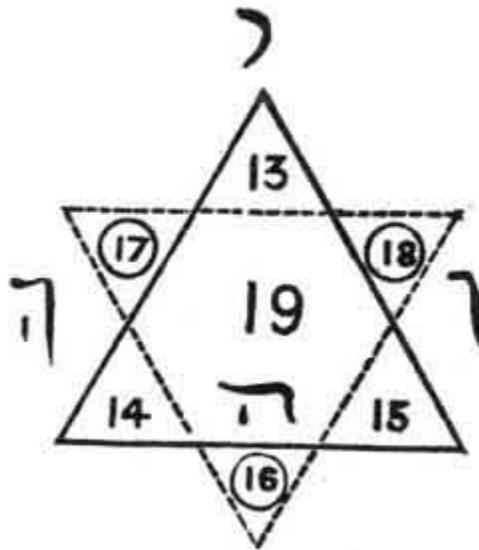
(13--16)
yod

(14--17) *he*



he (19)

vau
(15--18)



If the first septenary is positive and the second negative, the third will be neuter, and will correspond with *vau*. We should have therefore, definitely--

- 1st, A POSITIVE SEPTENARY = *Yod*.
- 2nd, A NEGATIVE SEPTENARY = *He*.
- 3rd, A NEUTER SEPTENARY = *Vau*.

Yet each septenary contains one term which belongs to the preceding septenary, and one which belongs to the following septenary.

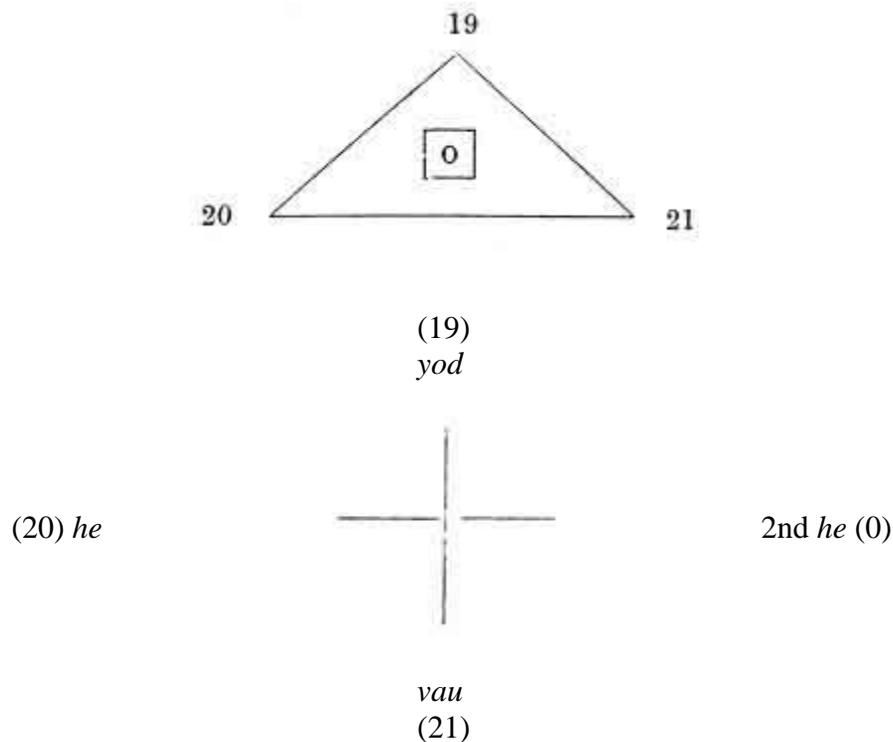
Thus the 7 is the 7th term of the first septenary and the 1st term of the second. 13 is the last term of the second septenary and the 1st of the third, etc.

The result is that three terms remain to be classed. These are--

19 ---- 20 ---- 21

These three terms form the last ternary, the ternary of transition between the *major arcana* and the *minor arcana*, a ternary which corresponds to the second *he*, and which may be thus represented--

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The last numbered card, which ought correctly to bear the number 22 (or its Hebrew correspondent), closes the Tarot by a marvellous figure, which represents its constitution to those who can understand it. We will return to it presently. Therefore, in the major arcana, the great law is thus definitely represented. (See next page.)

The first septenary corresponds to the Divine World, to God.

The second to Man.

The third to Nature.

Finally, the last ternary indicates the passage from the creative and providential World to the created and fatal world.

This ternary establishes the connection between the *major* and *minor arcana*.