

---

# LECTURE NOTES

*for*

## Chapter 1: The Candidate

---

These lecture notes are provided for the purpose of accessibility. Five generous volunteers took these notes on all our behalf. Notes for the supplemental video after Chapter 11, “The Magic Chain and the Witch’s Power to Bless,” and Chapter 12 are provided by me. I may add further points of clarification after the notation “**BW Addition:**” in these lecture notes where, in retrospect, I feel like I wasn’t clear enough in the video and now want to add more commentary.

I recommend that you take notes on these notes—extract what you want from these notes and either write them into the margins of your workbook or print out passages of notes you want to keep and tape those print-outs into your workbook.

Video Lecture & Reading Assignment Downloads:

<https://wp.me/p32or0-55j>

**Western Witchcraft I: The Fundamentals and Doctrinal Basis**

*Learn more about the online course here:*

<https://wp.me/p32or0-4kw>

*Video Lecture Length: 49 minutes 1 second*

**Written By: Sophia**

This chapter corresponds to Key 1 of the Tarot: the Magus or the Magician, and Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Note that in Golden Dawn associations, Key 0: The Fool corresponds to Aleph and the Magician corresponds to Beth, which Waite notes in his translation of Levi and points out that Levi is wrong in the association. His rationale is that this chapter is about initiation, and therefore should correspond with the theme of initiation more often associated with The Fool.

Benebell, however, thinks the correspondence is fitting, because Levi is talking about abstract initiation into the greater mysteries. It is more about being a candidate to receiving the universal agent (likened to *Chi* or life force; it's mentioned throughout the text).

Thus, the Key 1 and Aleph association here to Chapter 1 makes rational sense, since Levi is not talking about initiation as in new beginnings. He is talking about the Candidate as a person with the potential to receive the sanctum regnum (the four powers of the magus) related to the four elements on the Magician card.

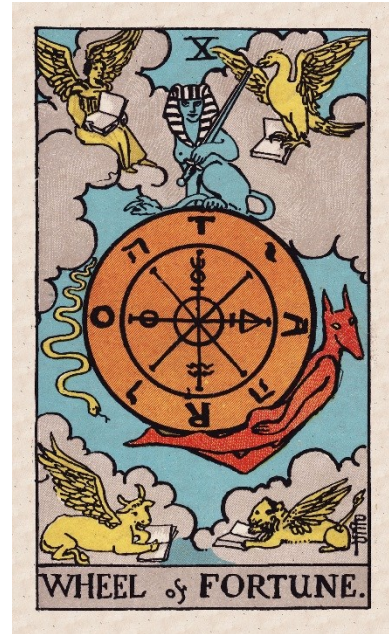
The difference between a Candidate and an Initiate is, that the Candidate is only someone who has the requisite qualities for initiation. This chapter talks about what those qualities are. The Initiate is talked about more in Chapter 9, but is someone who has the lamp, the staff and the cloak. Those are also the three main symbols in Key 9 the Hermit of the Tarot.

There is a parallel between Key 10: The Wheel of Fortune and Key 1: The Magician due to them being numerologically related. The four powers of the magus, talked about in this chapter, are what gives you the forces required for magical operations and the source of this is from the four mysterious rivers (the rivers of Eden: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates).

Guarding the Tree is the Biblical sphinx. Turn to page 265 and look at the image there (also shown in the video at timestamp 37:06) the image shows the cherubim of Ezekiel and Ezekiel's Wheel from the Wheel of Fortune: This is a sigil to tap into the cherub of Ezekiel as an access point to the Tree of Life. See the subsequent page for the illustration shown in the lecture.

Levi begins the chapter by quoting Descartes: "I think therefore I am" and calls this quote a revolution. He juxtaposes it to the Book of Exodus from the Bible, where Moses asks who God is and God answers "I am who I am."

Levi is distilling from Key 1 the importance of words and of Logos: "In principio erat verbum." "In the beginning was the Word" (and the Word was with God, and the Word was God), John 1:1.



The human perspective is “I think therefore I am” while that of divinity is “I am who I am.”

Levi talks about the magus creating their own reality and traveling from one sentiment to the other. This does not equate human with God; he is just saying there will be a journey to transcendence from “I think, therefore I am” to “I am who I am,” “I create what I create,” “I will be what I will be,” — To speak is to create.

The magus is thus the creator of the little world (Microprosopus) while the Macroprosopus is divinity (Keter on the Tree of Life) (drawing shown on the video at timestamp 17:10). This again shows the journey from “I think therefore I am” to “I am who I am.”

The prerequisites for a candidate are mostly generally accepted character qualities, such as “you cannot be enslaved by worldly passions/prejudice” and “don’t love your opinion more than you love others.” Those qualities are important for keeping you safe in ritual practice: do the work, critique yourself so you know your shadow, you know your inner beast. According to many traditions, baneful forces get to you and defeat you by knowing your shadow, your weaknesses. This is common even in conflicts between people, so it is important to know your weaknesses and constantly work on them, so they no longer are weaknesses and so you’re prepared to navigate a situation where they’re used against you.

Another important lesson on safety is to not be dogmatic. If you are too rigid it’s easy to break you, it’s harder if you’re flexible and able to move with the wind. Be like reed or water. To stay safe, use reason truth and justice. Think about them as what holds you up and what you work toward.

The most important takeaway from Chapter 1 is Levi’s historic contribution to western occultism, which would be the four directives: To know, to will, to dare, and to keep silent. Today those directives are also known as the witches’ pyramid.

To attain the sanctum regnum, in other words, the knowledge and power of the magi, there are four indispensable conditions:

An intelligence illuminated by study,  
An intrepidity which nothing can check,  
A will which nothing can break, and  
A discretion which nothing can corrupt and nothing intoxicate.

TO KNOW, TO DARE, TO WILL, TO KEEP SILENCE: such are the four words of the magus, inscribed upon the four symbolical forms of the sphinx.

Those four words together create the power of the magi, so Chapter 1 is a whisper of the great mysteries, how the 4 is actually the 1 and the 1 is the 4. To understand and attain the 1 you first need to attain the 4.

You need to master those four qualities to get the keys to the holy kingdom, as talked about in Chapter 0, you need to master that which is contained within the 4 letters to get access to the holy kingdom. You will find bullet points at the end of the chapter, which contains mentions of the four directives in Levi's text as written from Benebell's point of view. Flag this page spread and review it often. Use it as a personal commitment promise. If you want to dig deeper into those four directives, check out Benebell's advanced Tarot course "Tarot and the Four Pillars."

An important quote in the chapter is this:

"The form is proportional to the idea; the shadow is the measure of the body calculated with its relation to the luminous ray; the scabbard is as deep as the sword is long; the negation is in proportion to the contrary affirmation; production is equal to destruction in the movement which preserves life."

Here, Levi is starting to teach us the key principles of magic. The Form is proportional to the idea means the product of a spell will only be as good as the idea. This is related to the principle "to Know." You cannot produce something if you can't imagine it, and you need to expand and deepen your education and experiences so that you can command ideas.

The scabbard is as deep as the sword is long. The sword is the symbol of truth, so what truths will be revealed to you is only to the length of how far you are willing to go. This is related to the principles "to Dare" and "to Will." You need to produce the scabbard before the sword in this case.

The scale of creation and good you are capable of is equal to the scale of destruction and evil you are capable of demonstrates the importance of forbearance: just because you can doesn't mean you do. Heed here the principle of "to Keep Silent." As easy as it is to do good, it is also as easy to wreak havoc.

All of those aren't dogma however; they're guidelines given to structure your craft. Levi points out there is only one dogma:

The visible is the manifestation of the invisible: whatever you see, there is an invisible aspect you don't see.

Always keep this in mind. This reminds me of dark matter and dark energy in quantum physics, since those forces are always pushing and pulling us to keep us stable and produce creation. Understand that this constant energy of push and pull is the only dogma in magic.

There is, however also faith required of the Candidate, though not in the typical way as one might think: "I will never believe in a thing which I do not know." That lack of faith is what is detrimental to a Candidate.

Being a Candidate instead requires a very specific viewpoint: "My imagination can conceive that there exists a science in complete possession of the divine truth and I hereby seek to see the reflections of the invisible."

Being able to get behind this is required to successfully move on with the Book and this course, so make this viewpoint a part of you and internalize it.

Another important quote in this chapter is: "Imagination applied to reason is genius." This is also important to the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel as seen in the *Spirit Keeper's Tarot*. Benebell equates the Holy Guardian Angel with your inner genius. She sees it as an aspect of the self but the best way to commune with this aspect is to personify or even project it and make it something external. Your great work or higher purpose is manifesting your genius to achieve your great miracle. For this you need to apply imagination to reason.

Magnetism, or mesmerism at the time, comes up again and again throughout the text. This is a predecessor to the law of attraction. Levi asserts the mind of the magi, who has achieved the directives, is able to produce and modify physical reality.

In summary of Chapter 1: before you can begin to understand the universal agent (unseen energy) you need to achieve mastery over your life and yourself.

This does not mean you need to be rich, as initiation is about mastering "the good life," feeling in control and being conscious and confident of your personal power.

Let's look at the title of the Book: "Transcendental Magic." The original title uses the word "Haute." Today this is often translated as "High Magic." Benebell thinks, however, that "transcendental magic" fits better because "Haute" has a cultural implication of eminence and something highly regarded with a subtext of "by invite only." Transcendental implies movement, which High does not.

At the end of the chapter is an image from *Key to the Great Mysteries* by Eliphas Levi, showing the malefic or demonic aspects of the planets of Wednesday and Thursday: Mercury and Jupiter. Every planetary spirit has a demonic and an angelic aspect. Shown are sigils for how to combat the demonic aspects. The sigil for Jupiter reminds us not to look down on people as you progress.