

COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

Instructional Letter  
First Degree Series - No. 4

Introduction To Scrying

One of the basic methods of magical practice used in the Golden Dawn tradition is an exercise known as "Scrying in the Spirit Vision." It makes use of the imagination as a vehicle for perceptions of the sort some traditions describe as "clairvoyant" or "visionary" in nature.

An important concept in the magical theory of the human microcosm is the idea that the imagination, like all of the faculties normally classed as mental by our culture, is capable of being used as a means of perception and action in the nonphysical levels of the universe of human experience. The functions of imagination, in other words, are not necessarily limited in their effect to the inside of the imaginer's head. Rather, acts and perceptions of the imagination interact with what Western magical tradition calls the astral plane, or the plane of concrete consciousness, and some currents in modern philosophical thought have come to call the imaginal realm.

This realm or plane, again, is not simply a product of the contents of one's own psyche. While these personal factors do play a role in the experience of astral reality, there are other factors generated by the thoughts, dreams and imaginings of other human beings, and others still which appear to have no human source at all. These last are of particular interest to the practicing magician, because they correspond closely to certain energies which play an important part in magical workings of a wide range of types. Of these energies, the four elements are among the most important, and it was traditional in the Golden Dawn and its successor orders to begin work in the imaginal realm with symbols of the elements.

The exercise covered in this letter, which begins this process, is part of the work of the First Degree of our Order and must be completed by each Initiate Companion before he or she may be advanced to the first of the Elemental Grades, the Grade of Earth. The practice of scrying as presented here also plays an important part in the work of all four Elemental Grades, as well as in the Second Degree.

In order to carry out these exercises, it's necessary to have a Tarot deck with the standard assortment of cards -- that is, 22 Trumps or Major Arcana, and 56 small cards or Minor Arcana divided into four suits, with ten number cards (Ace through Ten) and four court cards (King or Knight, Queen, Knight or Prince, and Page or Princess) in each suit. Each Companion should choose a deck that suits his or her own taste and preferences. For ease

in certain other kinds of Tarot work, Companions may wish to make use of a deck which uses the Golden Dawn system of attributions; however, this is not vital for the work covered by this letter. (The Diviner of your lodge can provide more information on the attributions of different decks.)

For the scrying exercises of the First Degree, the four Aces are the only cards which will be used. In this work, as in many other kinds of Tarot-based work, the Aces represent the primal powers of the four traditional elements. The following table shows the correspondences involved.

<u>Suit:</u>	<u>Element:</u>	<u>Name of God:</u>
Wands, Staves or Rods:	Fire	ALHIM (Elohim)
Cups:	Water	AL (El)
Swords:	Air	YHVH (Yehowah)
Pentacles, Disks or Coins:	Earth	ADNI (Adonai)

The Aces should be studied in detail, so that you can visualize each of them as clearly and precisely as possible. When you have reached this point, you may proceed to the practical work of scrying, which is done as follows:

1. Enter your usual position of meditation, make the opening gesture, and center yourself with a period of rhythmic breathing.
2. Visualize before you the image of one of the four Aces, large enough to serve as a door. Spend some time building up the image, especially in your first few practices with each card; see it as clearly and concretely as possible.
3. When you have done so, imagine the card dividing vertically in the middle, like a double door, and opening away from you. You may see imagery behind it; if not, visualize a tunnel or passage through the substance of the element. (For example, the Ace of Swords might open onto a pathway through billowing clouds, while the Ace of Pentacles might open onto a cave leading down through rock.)
4. Now visualize yourself rising to your feet, stepping forward, and passing through the doorway into what lies beyond. Once you are there, imagine yourself vibrating the Name of God assigned to the particular element (as given in the table above) four times; imagine the sound of the vibration echoing outward through the substance of the element. This often has the effect of making the imagery more solid and tangible.
5. At this point, begin to explore the realm into which you have entered. You may encounter beings of various kinds. If they approach you or speak to you, ask them if they come in the Name \_\_\_\_\_, using the Name of God ruling the element; this will chase away potentially hostile presences, which sometimes manifest through the astral imagination in this kind of work. Pay careful

attention to everything you see and hear, and -- while in the vision -- treat the things and beings you encounter as though they were objectively real. (The time for analysis and critical thought comes after the vision is done.) Along the same lines, it's wise to consider yourself a visitor in a realm that is not your own, and to treat the beings you encounter with courtesy and respect.

6. It's a good idea to limit your first exploration of any given element to a short time, and gradually extend the length and extent of your astral journeys. When you have finished, return the way you came until you reach the doorway, and pass back through it into your practice space. Visualize yourself sitting down on your practice chair, and then see the two sides of the door closing again, forming the image of the Ace. Hold the image for a short time, and then erase it with a conscious act of will. After a few more cycles of rhythmic breathing, make the closing gesture to finish the practice. If you have any difficulty getting your awareness back down to the material level, perform the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram in the space where you performed the scrying, and then eat a meal.

As many of the details of each working as you can remember should be noted down in your practice journal. After you complete one scrying, and before going on to another, these details should be used as topics for discursive meditation. Treat them as though they were elemental symbols -- which, in point of fact, they commonly are; try to see how they relate to the element as you understand it, and what they have to teach you. As a rule of thumb, plan on spending at least three days meditating on the symbols and events of each session of scrying, and as much more as you find useful.

Using this method, the elements should be explored in turn. Start with a session working with the Ace of Pentacles, and then go on to Cups, Swords and Wands, in that order, one session each. Repeat the cycle in the same order as you continue your elemental explorations. A minimum of twelve sessions of scrying -- that is, three sessions devoted to each of the elements -- is required for advancement to the Grade of Earth, and you should be prepared to discuss your experiences in detail during your examination.