

## Strength

When I first started to take the Tarot seriously, there were three cards which I found I really loved and resonated with very strongly. They were “The Lovers”, “Strength” and “The Star”.

Later on when I studied Numerology, I discovered that all three cards were connected with my date of birth being 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1945.



Using the Pythagorean method to determine the Life Path, the day, month and year are individually totaled and reduced to a number between 1 and 9.

Thus 1945 becomes  $1+9+4+5 = 19/10/1$  and my Life Path is  $8+8+1 = 17/8$ .

So that explains why Strength and The Star appeal, but what about The Lovers? Well for Kabbalah based numerology, the numbers are added in a slightly differently way,  $1945+8+8 = 1961/17$ . The paths on the Tree of Life go from 11-32 and have associations with the 22 Major Arcana cards, and lo and behold “The Lovers” is connected to path 17! So all three cards are connected to the number 8 and its composite number 17. The Golden Dawn allocated elements, planets or zodiac signs to each of the Major Arcana<sup>1</sup> cards including Leo to Strength or Fortitude, which categorically locked me under its vibration, as my astrology chart shows me to be a triple Leo (Sun Moon and Rising sign). I learned Tarot with the Rider-Waite deck and when I spread my wings further to investigate other decks, I was at first puzzled, then later overcome by a feeling of wrongness about the decks which had transposed Strength with Justice making it Trump XI instead of Trump VIII.

No one could explain this to me and the TGA committee suggested I research it and prepare a talk on it as it had such a strong effect on me. There was a general perception that Arthur Waite had in fact transposed Trump VIII and Trump XI due their being the other way round in the most famous Marseilles deck. He also quoted in the book about his deck produced with Pamela Coleman-Smith<sup>2</sup>: “For reasons which satisfy myself, this card has been interchanged with that of justice which is usually numbered eight. As the variation carries nothing with it which will signify to the reader, there is no cause for explanation.”

However when I made an analysis of the Major Arcana in the earliest references and decks of Tarot, prior to the Golden Dawn, it became obvious that there was considerable variation in the naming and numbering of the trumps, particularly those known as the “virtues” (Temperance, Fortitude and Strength) There is certainly no evidence of Justice being usually Trump VIII as stated by Waite.

Steele Sermon	Rosenwald	Metropolitan Museum Ferrara	Bertoni Poem	Susio Reference	Tarocco Bolognese	Tarot of Marseille	Vieville
1480	1500's	1500	1550	1570	1500-1600s	1500-1600s	1600's
Fool	Fool	Fool	Fool	Fool	Fool	Fool	Fool
Bagatto	Bagatto	Bagatto	Magician	Bagatto	Bagatto	Bagatto	Bagatto
Empress	Popess	Empress	Empress	Empress	Papess	Papess	Popess
Emperor	Empress	Emperor	Emperor	Papess	Empress	Empress	Empress
Papess	Emperor	Popess	Popess	Emperor	Emperor	Emperor	Emperor
Pope	Pope	Pope	Pope	Pope	Pope	Pope	Pope
Temperance	Love	Temperance	Temperance	Love	Love	Love	Love
Love	Temperance	Love	Chariot	Justice	Chariot	Chariot	Justice
Chariot	Justice*	Chariot	Lovers	Chariot	Temperance	Justice	Tyranny
Fortitude	Fortitude*	Fortitude	Strength	Fortitude	Justice	Old Man	Fortitude
Wheel	Chariot	Wheel	Wheel	Wheel	Fortitude	Wheel	Wheel
Old Man	Wheel	Old Man	Hunchback	Old Man	Wheel	Fortitude	Old Man
Traitor	Old Man	Traitor	Traitor	Traitor	Old Man	Traitor	Traitor
Death	Traitor	Death	Death	Death	Traitor	Death	Death
Devil	Death	Devil	Devil	Temperance	Death	Temperance	Temperance
Fire	Devil	Fire	Devil's House	Devil	Devil	Devil	Devil
Star	Lightning	Star	Star	Fire	Fire	Fire	Lightning
Moon	Star	Moon	Moon	Star	Star	Star	Star
Sun	Moon	Sun	Sun	Moon	Moon	Moon	Moon
Angel	Sun	Angel	Angel	Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun
Justice	World	Justice	Justice	Angel	World	Angel	Trumpets
World	Trumpets	World	World	World	Angel	World	World

I prepared this table based on information from a variety of sources<sup>3</sup>, Justice and Fortitude were both numbered eight in the Rosenwald deck.

Waite's proponent Aleister Crowley authored the next most well known deck to emerge from the work of the Golden Dawn and it's accompanying work "The Book of Thoth". As well as linking the Major Arcana to the stars above the Golden Dawn allocated each card to a letter from the Hebrew alphabet and associated the pair to a path on the "Tree of Life". Crowley had Strength as Trump XI and called it

“Lust”, he also changed the allocation of the Hebrew letters claiming that he channeled that “tzaddi” path 28 was not The Star<sup>4</sup>.

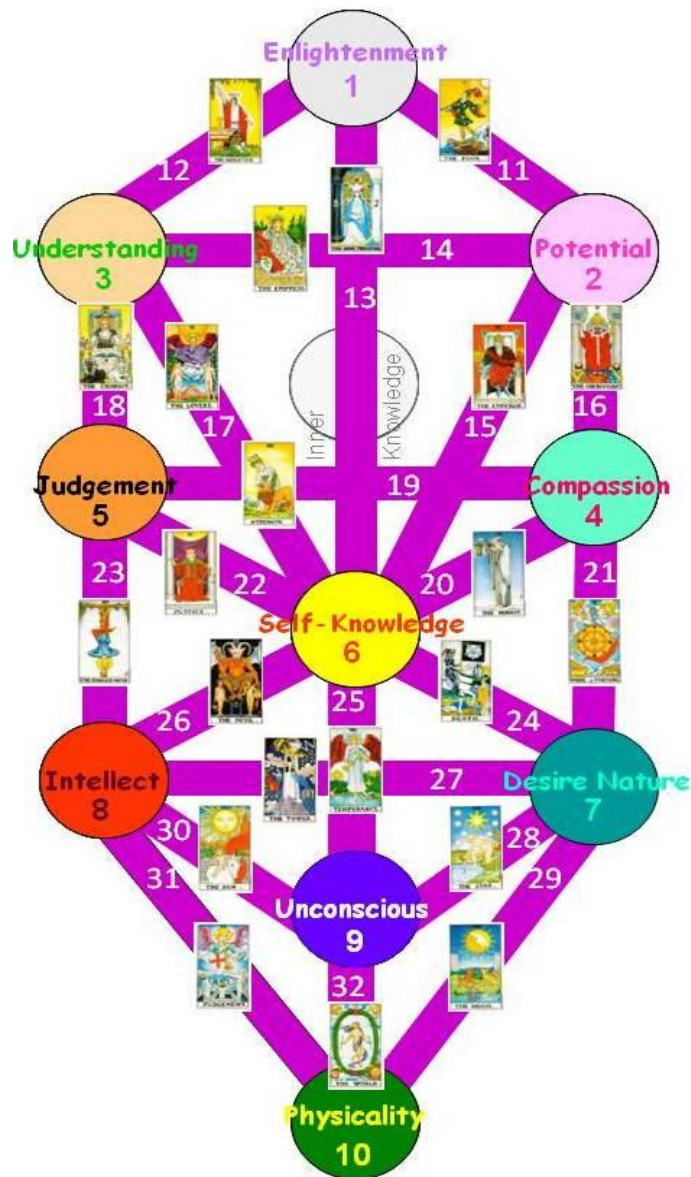
Kabbalist Tarot author Robert Wang<sup>5</sup> points out that this was indeed true as the oldest decks called Trump XVII “The Stars” and it unmistakably has eight stars pictured not one! Crowley decided to transpose the Star and the Emperor’s positions on the Tree and within the Hebrew alphabet, which makes no sense from the point of view of either structure or spiritual enlightenment!

Path	#	Letter	Meaning	Waite			Crowley		
				Trump	Astrology	Name	Name	Astrology	Trump
Kether to Chochmah	11	Aleph	Ox	O	Uranus	Fool	Fool	Air	O
Kether to Binah	12	Beth	House	I	Mercury	Magician	Magus	Mercury	I
Kether to Tipharet	13	Gimel	Camel	II	Moon	High Priestess	Priestess	Moon	II
Chochmah to Binah	14	Daleth	Door	III	Venus	Empress	Empress	Venus	III
Chochmah to Tipharet	15	Heh	Window	IV	Aries	Emperor	Star	Aries	XVII
Chochmah to Chesed	16	Vau	Nail	V	Taurus	Hierophant	Hierophant	Taurus	V
Binah to Tipharet	17	Zain	Sword	VI	Gemini	Lovers	Lovers	Gemini	VI
Binah to Gevurah	18	Cheth	Fence	VII	Cancer	Chariot	Chariot	Cancer	VII
Chesed to Gevurah	19	Teth	Serpent	VIII	Leo	Strength	Lust	Leo	XI
Chesed to Tipharet	20	Yod	Hand	IX	Virgo	Hermit	Hermit	Virgo	IX
Chesed to Netsach	21	Kaph	Palm of Hand	X	Jupiter	Wheel of Fortune	Fortune	Jupiter	X
Gevurah to Tipharet	22	Lamed	Ox-Goad	XI	Libra	Justice	Adjustment	Libra	VIII
Gevurah to Hod	23	Mem	Water	XII	Neptune	Hanged Man	Hanged Man	Water	XII
Tipharet to Netsach	24	Nun	Fish	XIII	Scorpio	Death	Death	Scorpio	XIII
Tipharet to Yesod	25	Samekh	Support	XIV	Jupiter	Temperance	Art	Jupiter	XIV
Tipharet to Hod	26	Ayin	Eye	XV	Capricorn	Devil	Devil	Capricorn	XV
Chesed to Hod	27	Peh	Mouth	XVI	Mars	Tower	Tower (War)	Mars	XVI
Netsach to Yesod	28	Tzaddi	Fish Hook	XVII	Aquarius	Star	Emperor	Aquarius	IV
Netsach to Malkuth	29	Qoph	Back of Head	XVIII	Pisces	Moon	Moon	Pisces	XVIII
Hod to Yesod	30	Resh	Head	XIX	Sun	Sun	Sun	Sun	XIX
Hod to Malkuth	31	Shin	Tooth	XX	Pluto	Judgement	Aeon	Spirit & Fire	XX
Yesod to Malkuth	32	Tau	Sign of Cross	XXI	Saturn	World	Universe	Saturn & Earth	XXI

Strength is Path 19 on the Tree of Life, it is the second path that traverses the Tree challenging us to bring the male and female parts of ourselves into balance. We need to find a middle way between Compassion (Chochmah) and Right & Wrong (Gevurah). Learn how to make the right boundaries around giving in life, but learn to give from our hearts for the right reason, not give to manipulate others into loving us, but because the giving brings happiness to our heart. Strength also involves being honest about ourselves, owning up to our shadow side and loving ourselves despite it. When this card comes up in a reading it is often about relationships. We draw the people to us in relationship who will thrust our lessons in our face and teach us our lessons through the mirror of projection. It forces us to deal with the animal instincts that rise from within, how to deal with our darker emotions, possessiveness, jealousy, attachment and fear. At a basic level strength is about having the courage to face the more difficult challenges in life, to persevere and keep going when all seems lost, but how to do so in balance, acknowledging our feelings not merely repressing them. In numerology 19/1 is a karmic number around misusing our power, not being able to see another’s point of view, yet alone empathise with it.

Interestingly John Howard, Tony Abbott and Tom Cruise are all travelling on Path 19 this time round! It is around being able to rise above our ego, which after all is only based on fear of getting lost.

Many attempts have been made to link Strength to archetypes from Greek Mythology but none seem to be a really meaningful fit. To me the answer came on my pilgrimage to Egypt and my encounter with Sekhmet the Lioness goddess, who is both a warrior archetype and a mother archetype as well as having associations with healing. Ra sent her to sort out his subjects when they got too big for their boots and didn't honour the Gods as they should. But Sekhmet got too carried away with vengeance and didn't want to stop killing and spreading Ra's wrath around on earth. The Gods had to soak the earth in beer flavoured with blood to tempt her and get her to sleep off her rage. She woke up forgetting all about that dark side of her nature and went back to being loving and helping them pick up the pieces and get back in balance.....



1. Book T <http://www.hermetics.org/pdf/gd/t.pdf>
2. The Pictorial Key to The Tarot – Arthur Edward Waite page 100
3. The Encyclopedia of Tarot – Stuart Kaplan, The Game of Tarot: From Ferrara to Salt Lake City – Sir Michael Drummett, [www.tarot.com/about-tarot/library/boneill](http://www.tarot.com/about-tarot/library/boneill) (Dr Robert O'Neill), [www.tarotheermit.com](http://www.tarotheermit.com) (Tom Tadfor Little), [www.geocities.com/a\\_pollett/cards3.htm](http://www.geocities.com/a_pollett/cards3.htm), [www.geocities.com/cartedatrionfi](http://www.geocities.com/cartedatrionfi)
4. The Book of Thoth – Aleister Crowley
5. Qabalistic Tarot – Robert Wang

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