CODEX OF INVOCATIONS

A manual of ritual practice: the circle, the weapons, the names and the work on oneself

VILLUMINATIONS

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ABOUT THIS WORK

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The material it starts from belongs to the **common tradition**: the formulae, the names and the ritual structures discussed here have been transmitted in writing for centuries in works in the public domain and are nobody's property. What is offered here —the writing, the chapter structure, the practices, the entries and the illustrations— is original work and is protected as such.

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How to read this book. What is practised here is a *symbolic language*: an old way of ordering attention and intention. It is not a predictive science and not a promise of results. Nothing that follows announces future events, diagnoses illnesses or replaces the care of a registered doctor or psychologist.

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

This is a manual of ritual practice. It is worth saying on the first page, and without circling, in what frame it is offered — because the material that follows has for centuries been presented wrapped in promises it cannot keep, and that wrapping has done more harm than good.

WHAT THIS BOOK CLAIMS

Ritual is a technology of attention. A set of gestures, words and objects arranged in a fixed sequence, repeated regularly, that produces in whoever carries them out a mental state different from the ordinary one: more concentrated, more deliberate, more present. That effect is real, it is reproducible and it needs no supernatural explanation. It is the same mechanism by which a musician tunes up before playing and a surgeon washes their hands in an invariable order: the sequence prepares the operator.

WHAT THIS BOOK DOES NOT CLAIM

- It does not claim that rites produce physical effects in the outside world. Nothing described here moves objects, cures illnesses, modifies other people's behaviour or alters events.

- It does not claim the existence of entities independent of whoever invokes them. When these pages speak of «the four guardians» or of «the name», they speak of structures of one's own mind that the rite personifies in order to be able to work with them — and it will be said so every time.
- It does not replace medical or psychological treatment of any kind. If you are going through a crisis, take psychiatric medication or have a history of dissociative episodes, the intensive practice of visualisation and sensory deprivation is not for you without professional supervision. This is not a formality: it is meant.
- It asks for no faith. You can carry out everything that follows while considering it deliberate theatre and you will get the same result. The rite's effectiveness does not depend on your believing its cosmology.

WHY KEEP THE OLD LANGUAGE, THEN

Because it works better. All of this could be rewritten in the vocabulary of cognitive psychology and it would come out more respectable and less effective. The traditional images —the circle, the weapon, the name, the guardian of the east— are built to be memorable and to mobilise attention, and they have been refined for centuries to that end. They are kept because they are good tools, not because any power of their own is attributed to them.

WHERE THE MATERIAL COMES FROM

Everything this book develops comes from sources in the public domain or from the common tradition, and which one will always be said. Éliphas Lévi's «Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual», published in 1856, is the main modern source: it has long been in the public domain and its author has been dead since 1875. The «Key of Solomon», compiled through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, has no known author and circulates in old translations that are also free. The tables of planetary correspondences —day, metal, colour, hour— are the shared patrimony of European astrology and alchemy. The number squares are arithmetic, and arithmetic belongs to nobody.

What is original here: the whole of the writing, the book's structure, the order of the operations, the formulae in the vernacular, the psychological framing, the six plates drawn for this edition and the recording exercises. No text by any modern author is reproduced.

HOW TO READ IT

1. Read the whole of the first part before carrying anything out. It is three chapters and it saves you the mistakes made out of impatience.
2. Study the second part with the plates in front of you. The instruments have to be understood before they are used.
3. Carry out the third part in order. The lesser rite of the pentagram before anything else, for a month, every day. Without that base, the rest is collecting.

4 Keep the journal from the first day. It is the part that separates a practice from a pastime.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRADITION IT COMES FROM

It is worth knowing where what you do comes from, if only so as not to attribute to it an antiquity it does not have. The history of this material is shorter and far more interesting than it is usually told.

THE GRIMOIRES: BETWEEN THE FOURTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

The manuals of ritual operation we now call grimoires are compiled in Europe between the end of the Middle Ages and the Baroque. The «Key of Solomon» is the most influential: a body of texts of unknown authorship attributed by convention to King Solomon, describing circles, pentacles, names and timetables with the meticulousness of a technical manual. It is not an ancient book, whatever it says of itself, and that is its first lesson: the magical tradition always legitimises itself by inventing a genealogy. It is worth knowing that and reading on.

Alongside it circulate Agrippa's «Occult Philosophy» (1533), which arranges the correspondences in tables systematically for the first time, and dozens of lesser manuscripts that are copied, mixed and contradict one another without the slightest embarrassment.

LÉVI, 1856: THE MOMENT EVERYTHING IS REARRANGED

Alphonse Louis Constant, a French priest who signed himself Éliphas Lévi, publishes «Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual» in 1856 and changes the matter completely. What he does is twofold and both things matter.

- He synthesises. He takes the scattered material of the grimoires and orders it into a coherent system, crossing kabbalah, tarot and the planetary correspondences into a single architecture.
- He internalises. And this is the decisive part: Lévi is the first to write clearly that the operations act not on the world but on the operator. His magic is a discipline of the will and of the imagination. Everything this book asserts in its first chapter is already in him, in a different vocabulary.

> **THE SENTENCE WORTH REMEMBERING**
>
> Lévi insisted that the instrument of the operation is the operator themselves and that without work on oneself the ritual apparatus is furniture. A century and a half later it remains the best possible summary of what all of this is for — and the best filter for telling a teacher from a salesman.

THE GOLDEN DAWN: RITUAL BECOMES METHOD

At the end of the nineteenth century a group of British occultists takes Lévi's system and turns it into a syllabus: grades, examinations,

rituals written with the precision of a score and a new insistence on daily practice. Out of that kitchen come the lesser rites of the pentagram and of the hexagram as they are performed today almost everywhere. It did not last long and ended, as these things do, in schism; but it fixed the form.

Almost everything published today on Western ritual practice descends from that line: medieval grimoires, Lévi's synthesis, the Golden Dawn's method. So does this book, and it says so.

WHAT IS INHERITED AND WHAT IS DISCARDED

AN HONEST BALANCE SHEET OF THE INHERITANCE

KEPT	The ritual structure: circle, quarters, weapons, names, opening and closing. It is an extraordinarily well designed frame for attention.
KEPT	The planetary correspondences as a mnemonic system. They order the week and give each operation a recognisable context.
KEPT	The requirement of a written record. The Golden Dawn made the journal compulsory, and in that it was entirely right.
DISCARDED	The initiatic hierarchy and the secret grades. They produce dependence and they do not produce practice.
DISCARDED	Every claim about physical effects, cures or influence over other people. There is no evidence and the potential harm is real.
DISCARDED	Secrecy. Nothing in this book needs to be hidden; it only needs to be well explained.

CHAPTER 3

THE VOCABULARY OF THE CRAFT

The terms that are going to appear, defined before they are used. It is a chapter to come back to.

A – E

BANISH · DISMISS	**Closing an operation by undoing what was opened. As compulsory as opening, and far more often forgotten.**
CIRCLE	**The delimited space of the operation. It protects from nothing outside: it delimits the operator's attention. It is the most misread piece in the whole system.**
CORRESPONDENCE	**A symbolic link between a planet, a metal, a colour, a day and a function. A system of classification, not of causation.**

F – P

GUARDIAN	The figure placed at each quarter. In this book it is always understood as the personification of a function of one's own: body, breath, will, memory.
HEXAGRAM	A six-pointed star formed by two triangles. It is used for work with the seven planets.
KAMEA	A number square associated with a planet. Every row, column and diagonal adds up the same. It is arithmetic and it serves as a support for concentration.
NAME	A vocalised formula sustained on a single exhalation. Its effect is respiratory and attentional, and it is explained that way here.
PATH	Each of the twenty-two lines joining two sefirot.
PENTACLE	A disc or plate with a design traced on it. In this book, the weapon of Earth.
PENTAGRAM	A five-pointed star: four elements and the upper vertex. It is traced in two directions, one for opening and one for closing.
PLANETARY HOUR	An unequal division of the day: twelve parts from dawn to dusk and twelve from dusk to dawn, each with its ruler.

Q – Z

QUARTER	Each of the four cardinal points of the circle, with its element and its guardian.
SEFIRAH	Each of the ten numbers of the tree. Plural: sefirot. Ten stations of a single journey, from abstraction to the body.
SIGIL	An abbreviated stroke designating a planet or an idea. The seven planetary ones are used throughout this book.
TEMPLE	The place where you operate, whether a whole room or a square metre of cleared floor.
TRIANGLE	A figure placed OUTSIDE the circle. In this book it is the place where you put whatever you want to examine without identifying with it.
VIBRATE	Sustaining a vocalisation in the chest until the air runs out. A breathing technique, described as such in chapter 10.
WEAPON	Each of the four ritual objects: wand, cup, sword and disc. They represent the operator's four functions, not four powers.

CHAPTER 4

THE CIRCLE AND THE FOUR QUARTERS

The circle is the first piece and the worst understood. The popular image —the operator shut inside a chalk line so that what they have called cannot reach them— is nineteenth-century literature and does not survive two minutes of examination. If nothing external comes, there is nothing to be protected from.

What the circle does is something else, and it is far more useful: it establishes an inside and an outside. While you are inside, this is what you are doing; when you step out, you have finished. A physical boundary turns a blurred intention into an act with a beginning and an end, and that conversion is half the work.

PL. 1 The circle with its four quarters, each with its element, its function and its hour. At the centre, the operator. On the right, outside the line, the triangle of examination.

THE FOUR QUARTERS

Each cardinal point has an element assigned to it, and each element names a function of the operator. The correspondence is traditional and has remained remarkably stable since the Renaissance.

THE FOUR QUARTERS AND WHAT THEY NAME

EAST · AIR	**Breath. Breathing, the word, thought as it takes shape. Hour: dawn.**
SOUTH · FIRE	**Will. What is decided and held to. Hour: noon.**
WEST · WATER	**Memory. What is felt and what is remembered. Hour: dusk.**
NORTH · EARTH	**The body. What weighs, what tires, what holds up everything else. Hour: midnight.**

Going round the four quarters in an operation is not decorative: it is an inventory. You pass through breath, through will, through memory and through the body, and at each stop you check what state they are in. Done attentively, the round alone already changes the state you started from.

THE TRIANGLE, AND WHY IT GOES OUTSIDE

The grimoires always place the triangle outside the circle: what is summoned goes there, in view and at a distance. Read psychologically, the gesture is remarkably precise. Putting something outside the circle is looking at it without being it: naming a fear, an obsession or a rage, placing it opposite and examining it from a position that is not its own. It is exactly the opposite of identifying.

THE RULE OF THE TRIANGLE

You never examine something from inside it. If, on putting a matter in the triangle, you notice that you are still inside the matter —your pulse speeds up, you start arguing in your head— that day's operation is over: close and come back tomorrow. Forcing it does not produce lucidity, it produces agitation.

HOW IT IS TRACED IN PRACTICE

1. Clear a space in which you can turn with your arms outstretched without touching anything. A metre and a half across is enough.
2. Locate the east. If you do not know where it is, any phone compass will do; and if it makes no difference to you, decide on one and never change it.
3. Mark the four quarters with something minimal and stable: four objects, four candles, four marks on the floor. What matters is not the material: it is that they are always in the same place.
4. Trace the circle by walking it. One complete turn clockwise, beginning and ending in the east, with the right hand extended towards the edge.
5. When the operation ends, undo the circle by walking it the other way. The space becomes a room again.

CHAPTER 5

THE FOUR WEAPONS

Four objects, one per element. The tradition surrounds them with prescriptions about woods, metals and lunar phases that may or may not be observed; what is not optional is that each one is associated with a function and that the operator knows which.

PL. 2 The four weapons with their element and the function they name. The drawing is schematic on purpose: what matters is the association, not the model.

THE FOUR AND WHAT THEY HOLD

THE WAND · FIRE	**Will. It is gripped to decide and to direct. It is used by pointing.**
THE CUP · WATER	**Feeling. It is held in both hands and it is used by receiving, not by directing.**
THE SWORD · AIR	**Thought. It cuts, distinguishes, separates what was mixed. It is the weapon of analysis.**
THE DISC · EARTH	**The body and the concrete. It rests, it is not lifted. It is the weapon of the result.**

WHAT TO ACTUALLY USE

None of this requires purchases. A straight, smooth branch is a perfectly worthy wand; a plain glass used for nothing else is a cup; a letter opener or even a metal ruler serves as a sword; a wooden disc, a flat stone or a floor tile serves as a pentacle. What makes an object work as a weapon is not its price: it is that it is dedicated exclusively to this and that it is always in the same place.

> **THE ONLY RULE THAT MATTERS**
>
> A ritual object that is also used for something else stops being a ritual object. That is the whole secret of consecration, and chapter 14 will say nothing deeper than this: exclusive dedication is what charges an object with meaning, because every time you pick it up your head knows what it is for.

THE ORDER OF THE FOUR

The weapons are always taken up in the same order and that order is a map. Sword, wand, cup, disc: think, will, feel, do. Or in the reverse order, when the work goes from the concrete to the abstract. What is never done is to take them up at random: the sequence is part of the information.

THE MISTAKE OF THE WEAPONS

There is a very frequent trap that costs a great deal of time: confusing the equipment with the practice. It is enormously comfortable to spend months making beautiful instruments, because making is pleasant and practising is boring. The operator with four magnificent weapons and three weeks of journal has not begun. The operator with a branch, a glass and eight months of daily record has.

CHAPTER 6

THE PENTAGRAM: THE TWO DIRECTIONS

The five-pointed star is the central figure of modern Western practice, and its whole interest lies in a detail that is almost never explained properly: it is traced in a single movement, and the order in which the five points are gone through changes what the figure does.

PL. 3 The two directions of the stroke. The dot marks where you begin and the arrow, where the first movement goes. The resulting figure is the same; the route is not.

THE FIVE POINTS

Four points are the four elements and the fifth —the upper one— is what the tradition calls spirit and this book calls, with less poetry and more precision, the attention that observes the other four. Body, breath, will and memory below and to the sides; above, whoever looks at them.

ATTRIBUTION OF THE POINTS

UPPER	**Spirit · the attention that observes**
UPPER LEFT	**Air · breath and thought**
UPPER RIGHT	**Water · memory and feeling**
LOWER LEFT	**Earth · the body**
LOWER RIGHT	**Fire · will**

TO INVOKE: FROM EARTH TO SPIRIT

The opening stroke begins at the lower left point —Earth, the body— and rises towards the upper vertex. The gesture says something very concrete: you start from where you are, which is a body in a room, and you go up from there. Any practice that begins at the top is skipping the only starting point available.

TO DISMISS: FROM SPIRIT TO EARTH

The closing stroke reverses the first movement: it descends from the upper vertex to Earth. You return to the body and to the room. It is the gesture of finishing, and it is the one most often left out and the one

most needed: without a closing the operation does not end, it dissolves — and what dissolves leaves residue.

> **WHY THE CLOSING IS NOT OPTIONAL**
>
> A session of intense concentration that ends without a transition leaves the operator in an intermediate state: absorbed, somewhat irritable, with the feeling of not being entirely in what they are doing. Anyone who has come abruptly out of four hours of deep work recognises it. The closing rite is a landing procedure, and it works for the same reason a runner does not stop dead.

THE STROKE, STEP BY STEP

1. Standing, facing the quarter in question. Right arm extended, index and middle fingers together, the rest folded in. Or the corresponding weapon.
2. Place the five vertices mentally in an imaginary frame the size of your own body: the upper point at the height of your forehead, the lower ones at the height of your hips.
3. Begin at the left hip and rise to the forehead. That is the first stroke and the one that sets the direction of everything else.
4. Continue: forehead → right hip → left shoulder → right shoulder → left hip. Five strokes, without lifting the hand.
5. Close the circuit by returning to the starting point and hold the hand there for an instant before lowering it. The figure is closed; a half-traced pentagram is no good.

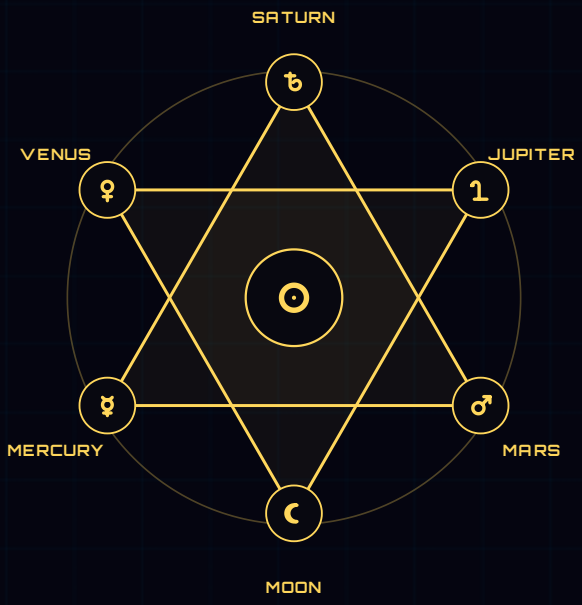
ON VISUALISATION

It is recommended that you see the figure traced in light. If you do not see it —and many people do not visualise, which is a normal variation and not a defect— it is enough to hold the intention and carry out the gesture precisely. The effectiveness lies in the motor sequence and in sustained attention, not in the quality of the mental image.

CHAPTER 7

THE HEXAGRAM AND THE SEVEN

Where the pentagram orders the four elements, the hexagram orders the seven planets. It is the figure for work with the most general functions: the limit, expansion, drive, identity, the bond, the word and rhythm.



PL. 4 The six planets at the points and the Sun at the centre. The two interlaced triangles are the same figure seen twice: what ascends and what descends.

WHY SIX OUTSIDE AND ONE INSIDE

The seven classical bodies do not fit into a six-pointed figure, and that apparent clumsiness is in fact the best part of the design. The Sun goes at the centre because it is not one more function: it is the reference point in relation to which the other six are ordered. In this book's vocabulary, the centre is the operator's identity and the six points are the functions that orbit around it.

THE SEVEN AND WHAT THEY NAME

SATURN	**The limit. What ends, what gets structured, what says no. Lead. Saturday.**
JUPITER	**Expansion. What grows, what opens, what is granted. Tin. Thursday.**
MARS	**Drive. What cuts, what insists, what defends itself. Iron. Tuesday.**
SUN	**Identity. The centre, vitality, what is recognised as one's own. Gold. Sunday.**
VENUS	**The bond. What attracts, what values, what reconciles. Copper. Friday.**
MERCURY	**The word. What is said, ordered and translated. Quicksilver. Wednesday.**
MOON	**Rhythm. What fluctuates, what remembers, what repeats. Silver. Monday.**

THE TWO TRIANGLES

The triangle with the point upwards and the one with the point downwards are traditionally read as what rises and what falls: aspiration

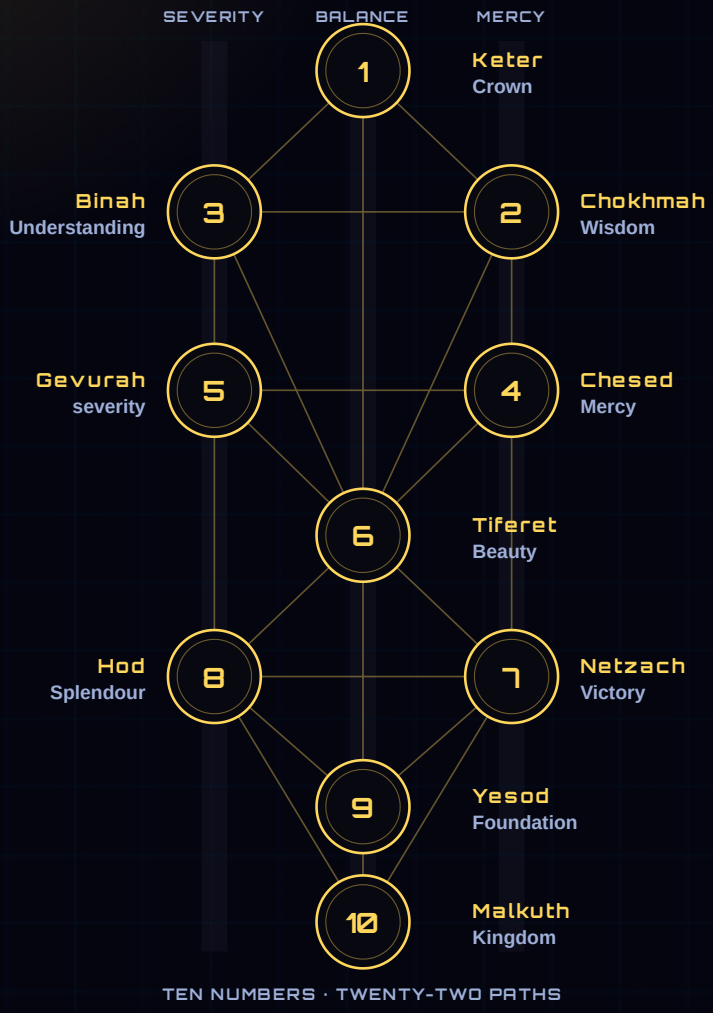
and manifestation, fire and water, what you want and what you do. That they are interlaced and not simply superimposed is the important part of the drawing: you do not choose between the two.

> **WHEN THE HEXAGRAM IS USED**
>
> After the pentagram, never before. The pentagram puts the operator's four elements in order; the hexagram works more general functions on that already ordered base. Doing it the other way round is like tuning up after the concert: you can, and it is no use at all.

CHAPTER 8

THE TREE OF THE TEN NUMBERS

Kabbalah gives the Western system its backbone: a diagram of ten stations and twenty-two paths that organises everything else. What follows is a practical presentation, not a theological one, and it confines itself to what is of use in operating.



PL. 5 The tree: ten numbers distributed in three columns and joined by twenty-two paths. On the left severity, on the right mercy, in the centre balance.

TEN STATIONS FROM THE ABSTRACT TO THE CONCRETE

Read from top to bottom, the tree describes a descent: from the undetermined to the determined, from the idea to the object, from the impulse to the fact. Read from bottom to top it describes the reverse path, which is the one the operator travels. Both directions matter and the diagram serves for both.

THE TEN NUMBERS

1 · KETER	**Crown. The impulse before it has form.**
2 · CHOKHMAH	**Wisdom. The spark that has not yet been bounded.**
3 · BINAH	**Understanding. The form that bounds the spark.**
4 · CHESED	**Mercy. What is given and what expands.**
5 · GEVURAH	**Severity. What is cut back and put in its place.**
6 · TIFERET	**Beauty. The balance of the two before it; the centre of the tree and the place of the conscious operator.**
7 · NETZACH	**Victory. What persists, the sustained impulse.**
8 · HOD	**Splendour. The finished form, the detail, the style.**
9 · YESOD	**Foundation. Where everything above gathers before taking concrete shape. The imagination.**
10 · MALKUTH	**Kingdom. The body, the fact, the world. Where an operation is verified or is not verified.**

THE THREE COLUMNS

The right-hand column expands, the left-hand one limits and the central one balances. It is the same structure that appears in the pentagram —will against memory, with attention above— and in the hexagram —Jupiter against Saturn, with the Sun in the middle. The system repeats its basic figure at every scale, and that coherence is what makes it usable.

> ### HOW TO USE THE TREE WITHOUT STUDYING KABBALAH FOR TEN YEARS
>
> To operate, one thing is enough: knowing that every operation begins in Malkuth, the body and the room, and that if the result does not come back to Malkuth the operation has not happened. It is the best defence against drawing-room spirituality. If something changed, it shows in concrete life; if it shows nowhere, it did not change.

THE TWENTY-TWO PATHS

The twenty-two lines joining the numbers traditionally carry the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the twenty-two major arcana of tarot attributed to them. It is a vast and beautiful system of correspondences, and it stays outside this book for a practical reason: it is not needed for anything proposed here, and putting it in without developing it would be decoration. If you carry on by yourself, that is the next step.

CHAPTER 9

THE PLANETARY SQUARES

Each planet has associated with it a square of numbers in which every row, every column and the two diagonals add up to exactly the same. These are the kameas, they appear in Agrippa and in the later grimoires, and they have the peculiarity of being the only piece in this book that can be verified with a pencil.

♄ SATURN 3x3 · SUM 15

8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2

♃ JUPITER 4x4 · SUM 34

16	2	3	13
5	11	10	8
9	7	6	12
4	14	15	1

♂ MARS 5x5 · SUM 65

17	24	1	8	15
23	5	7	14	16
4	6	13	20	22
10	12	19	21	3
11	18	25	2	9

☉ SUN 6x6 · SUM 111

32	29	4	1	24	21
30	31	2	3	22	23
12	9	17	20	28	25
10	11	18	19	26	27
13	16	36	33	5	8
14	15	34	35	6	7

EVERY ROW, EVERY COLUMN AND EVERY DIAGONAL ADD UP THE SAME

PL. 6 The first four squares: Saturn of three, Jupiter of four, Mars of five and the Sun of six. Each with its constant sum. Those of Venus, Mercury and the Moon follow the same logic in seven, eight and nine.

THE SEVEN SQUARES

SATURN	3×3 · numbers 1 to 9 · constant sum 15
JUPITER	4×4 · 1 to 16 · sum 34
MARS	5×5 · 1 to 25 · sum 65
SUN	6×6 · 1 to 36 · sum 111
VENUS	7×7 · 1 to 49 · sum 175
MERCURY	8×8 · 1 to 64 · sum 260
MOON	9×9 · 1 to 81 · sum 369

The progression is no accident: the order of the square follows the Chaldean order of the planets, from the slowest to the fastest. Saturn, the slowest, gets the smallest square; the Moon, the fastest, the largest. And the constant sum of each is calculated with a simple formula you can check for yourself: for a square of order n, the sum is $n \cdot (n^2+1)/2$.

WHAT THEY ARE FOR, HONESTLY

The tradition uses them to build sigils: you trace a line joining the numbers corresponding to the letters of a name and the resulting stroke becomes the sign of the operation. It is an elegant procedure and it has no power in itself.

Their real usefulness is something else and it is not small. A magic square is an exceptional object of concentration: it demands sustained attention, verifiable and with an immediate reward —the sum works out or it does not. Going through a nine-by-nine square adding up each row

is a first-rate exercise in attention, and unlike almost every attention exercise, this one tells you whether you did it right.

1. Choose the square of the planet whose function you want to work with.
2. Copy it by hand into the journal. By hand: the gesture of writing each number is half the exercise.
3. Check the rows, then the columns, then the two diagonals. If something does not work out, you have copied it wrongly — and finding where is the other half of the exercise.
4. Trace on it the line of your operation, joining in order the numbers you have decided to associate with it. Keep the stroke. It is your sign for that operation and it does not have to mean anything to anyone else.

> **BEING HONEST ABOUT SIGILS**
>
> A sigil works the way a signature or a knot in a handkerchief works: it is a memory anchor. Every time you see it, you recover the whole context of the operation at a stroke. That is a great deal, and it is all. Attributing more to it is unnecessary and it also belittles what it does do.

CHAPTER 10

THE NAMES AND THE VOICE

The vocalisation of names is the part of the practice most wrapped in mystery and the one with the cleanest explanation. It deserves a whole chapter because, done well, it is the most effective technique in the repertoire, and done badly it is a noise.

WHAT EXACTLY IS DONE

You take a short formula —a traditional name, a word, a phrase of four or five syllables— and you sustain it low and deep for a whole exhalation, until the air runs out, feeling the resonance in the chest and not in the throat. You repeat it between three and seven times, with a full inhalation between each.

WHY IT WORKS

For three reasons, all of them checkable and none of them supernatural.

1. The prolonged exhalation. Making the out-breath longer than the in-breath is the simplest breathing manoeuvre for lowering physiological activation. No name at all is needed for it to work; the name simply gives you something to do with the air.
2. Thoracic vibration. A note sustained in a low register produces a physical sensation localised in the chest. That sensation is a somatic

anchor: it gives attention a concrete place to settle, and attention with a place is far more stable than attention without one.

3. Measured repetition. A fixed number of repetitions turns a diffuse practice into a task with an end. You know when you have finished, and that eliminates drift.

> **THE QUESTION OF WHICH NAME TO USE**
>
> The tradition uses Hebrew divine names, one per quarter and one per planet, and this book keeps them because they are short, sonorous and charged with centuries of use. But the truth should be told: the technique's effectiveness lies in the breathing, the vibration and the repetition, not in the particular word. If religious vocabulary makes you uncomfortable or feels alien, choose formulae of your own with four or five open syllables and they will work just as well. What does not work is changing them every week.

THE FORMULAE OF THE FOUR QUARTERS

The ones used in this book, with their meaning and their distribution. They are given in English spelling, so that they can be pronounced without knowing Hebrew, and with the warning that every transliteration is an approximation.

ONE FORMULA PER QUARTER

EAST · AIR	**YEH-VEH-HOO · «the one who is». Four open syllables, very comfortable to sustain.**
SOUTH · FIRE	**EL-O-HEEM · a plural translated in the singular; the tradition associates it with power.**
WEST · WATER	**EL · the shortest of the four; it is sustained on a single long note.**
NORTH · EARTH	**AH-DOH-NYE · «my lord»; the one of the four that resonates best in the chest.**

THE TECHNIQUE, STEP BY STEP

1. Standing, shoulders down, jaw loose. Posture matters more than volume.
2. Breathe in through the nose to a count of four, filling the abdomen before the chest.
3. Vocalise the formula low and deep, spreading the syllables across the whole exhalation. You do not shout: you sustain. If you run abruptly out of air at the end, you went too fast.
4. Leave a second of silence with the lungs empty before breathing in again. That silence is part of the formula.
5. Repeat three times per quarter in daily operations; seven in long operations. Never more than seven in a row: hyperventilation is not an altered state, it is dizziness.

A SPECIFIC WARNING

If you notice tingling in the hands or around the mouth, a sense of unreality or dizziness, stop immediately and breathe normally. They are signs of hyperventilation, not of progress. If you are pregnant, have epilepsy, uncontrolled high blood pressure or a panic disorder, consult your doctor first: intense breathing exercises are not harmless in those conditions.

CHAPTER 11

THE COMPLETE TABLE OF PLANETARY HOURS

Chapter 11 explained the system of hours and gave the distribution of the seven days. Here is the whole table: one hundred and sixty-eight cells, the twenty-four hours of each of the seven days with their ruler. I have not found it printed in full in any modern manual, and it is the piece that turns the system from a curiosity into a usable tool.

	1	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24
	HOUR OF THE DAY · 1 AT DAWN · 13 AT DUSK								
☉ Sunday / Sun	S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E								
☾ Monday / Moon	L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U								
♂ Tuesday / Mars	M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E								
☿ Wednesday / Mercury	M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A								
♃ Thursday / Jupiter	J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O								
♀ Friday / Venus	V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U								
♄ Saturday / Saturn	S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A S O V E M E L U S A J U M A								

24 ÷ 7 = 3 REMAINDER 3 · THAT IS WHY THE WEEK MOVES IN THREES

PL. 7 The 168 planetary hours. Each row is a day; each cell, one hour from dawn. The vertical line separates the twelve daytime hours from the twelve of night. Highlighted, the four hours of each day that belong to the planet the day is named after.

HOW TO READ IT

1. Find your day in the left-hand column.
2. Count the hours from dawn, not from midnight. Hour 1 begins when the Sun rises; hour 13, when it sets.
3. Remember they are not sixty-minute hours. Divide the real length of the day by twelve and that of the night by twelve: in summer the daytime ones are long and the night ones short, and the other way round in winter. They coincide only at the equinoxes.

4 The highlighted cells are the hours of the day's ruler. There are four per day —the 1st, the 8th, the 15th and the 22nd— and they are the classical moment for that planet's operation.

> **THE FACT THE TABLE PROVES ON ITS OWN**
>
> Look at the first cell of each row and then count twenty-four. The twenty-fifth cell —which is the first of the following day— always falls on the following day's ruler. Sunday begins with the Sun, its hour 24 is Mercury, and the 25th is the Moon: Monday. That is the whole explanation of the order of the week, and the table contains it without needing to argue it. The generator of this plate checks precisely that before drawing it: if hour 25 did not fall where it must, it would refuse to write the file.

WHY THE FOUR PROPER HOURS ARE WHERE THEY ARE

Because seven does not divide twenty-four. If the Chaldean cycle has seven places and the day has twenty-four hours, the day's ruler comes round again at hour 1, hour 8, hour 15 and hour 22 —every seven— and hour 24 always falls two places short of closing the round. All the system's apparent irregularity comes from that remainder of three, and once seen it is not forgotten.

THE FOUR PROPER HOURS OF EACH DAY

HOUR 1	**At dawn. The most used of the four and the easiest to locate without calculation.**
HOUR 8	**Mid-morning or noon depending on the season.**
HOUR 15	**Already night: the third hour after sunset.**
HOUR 22	**Deep night. The one the tradition reserves for long work.**

AND THIS CHAPTER'S HONESTY

None of these hours has any property whatever. What it has is structure: a fixed, public and verifiable distribution that lets you decide when to do what without having to decide it again every week. That is the value, and that is why this book gives the complete table instead of hinting that there is something more.

CHAPTER 12

THE TWENTY-TWO LETTERS AND THEIR NUMBERS

The Western system inherits from kabbalah an alphabet of twenty-two letters that are at once signs, numbers and categories. It is the piece that allows you to go from a word to a number and from a number to a stroke on the planetary square, and without it the chapter on the kameas is left half done.

LETTER	VALUE	IT CORRESPONDS TO
Aleph	1	Air
Beth	2	Saturn
Gimel	3	Jupiter
Daleth	4	Mars
He	5	Aries
Vav	6	Taurus
Zayin	7	Gemini
Cheth	8	Cancer
Teth	9	Leo
Yod	10	Virgo
Kaph	20	Sun

LETTER	VALUE	IT CORRESPONDS TO
Lamed	30	Libra
Mem	40	Water
Nun	50	Scorpio
Samekh	60	Sagittarius
Ayin	70	Capricorn
Pe	80	Venus
Tzaddi	90	Aquarius
Qoph	100	Pisces
Resh	200	Mercury
Shin	300	Fire
Tav	400	Moon

3 mothers · elements 7 doubles · planets 12 simples · signs

THE TWENTY-TWO VALUES ADD UP TO 1,495

PL. 8 The twenty-two letters with their numerical value and their correspondence according to the three-seven-twelve division. In yellow the three mothers, in orange the seven doubles and in grey the twelve simples.

THE THREE, SEVEN AND TWELVE DIVISION

The «Sefer Yetzirah» —a very short text, of disputed date and in any case much earlier than the year 1000— divides the twenty-two letters into three groups, and the division is of a remarkable economy: three mothers for the three elements that are not earth, seven doubles for the seven planets and twelve simples for the twelve signs. Three, seven and

twelve: exactly the three figures on which everything else in this book is built.

THE THREE GROUPS

THREE MOTHERS	**Aleph, Mem and Shin · Air, Water and Fire. Earth receives no letter: in this scheme it is what results from the other three, not a fourth element.**
SEVEN DOUBLES	**Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Pe, Resh and Tav · the seven planets. They are called doubles because in Hebrew they admit two pronunciations, one hard and one soft.**
TWELVE SIMPLES	**The remaining twelve · the twelve signs, in the order of the wheel, from He for Aries to Qoph for Pisces.**

THE NUMBERS

Each letter is worth a number, and the series is of total regularity: the first nine run from one to nine, the next nine in tens up to ninety, and the last four in hundreds up to four hundred. Nine units, nine tens, four hundreds: twenty-two letters covering the whole system of numeration.

The sum of the twenty-two values is 1,495. It is a fact checkable with a calculator and it serves as a verification: if you copy the table into your journal and do not get that figure, you have copied a row wrongly.

WHAT IT IS FOR, SPECIFICALLY

1. Write the word or the name of your operation in transliterated Hebrew letters, or simply assign to each letter of your own alphabet

the value of the equivalent Hebrew letter. The second is less orthodox and perfectly usable.

2. Add up the values. You get a number.
3. Reduce that number to the range of the square of the planet you are working with: if the square is 3×3, the numbers run from 1 to 9; if it is 9×9, from 1 to 81.
4. Trace on the square the line joining, in order, the numbers of each letter. That stroke is the sigil of your operation.

WHAT THIS PROCEDURE IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

It is a technique of condensation: it turns a long intention into a short stroke that can be taken in at a glance. It works as a memory anchor, and that was said in chapter 9. What it is not: a procedure for obtaining the true names of anything, or a system of correspondences with demonstrated value. Gematria is a very old and very fertile combinatorial game, and treated as a game it pays; treated as proof, it does not.

CHAPTER 13

THE SCALES OF THE NUMBERS

I close the section on instruments with the most ambitious table of the Renaissance tradition: the one that orders EVERYTHING by number. Agrippa published it in 1533 and it is, at bottom, the idea that holds up the whole system — that the same figures repeat on every plane, and that recognising the figure is recognising the plane.

THE SCALE FROM ONE TO FOUR

THE FIRST FOUR

ONE	**The indivisible. The point, the centre of the circle, the operator. In practice: the single intention of each session.**
TWO	**The first division and the first tension. The line, the axis, day and night, invoking and dismissing.**
THREE	**What resolves the two. The triangle, the three mothers, the three groups of the alphabet. In practice: the three movements of any rite — open, work, close.**
FOUR	**The stable form. The square, the four quarters, the four elements, the four weapons, the four weeks. It is this book's number in almost everything practical.**

FROM FIVE TO SEVEN

THE NEXT THREE

FIVE	The pentagram: the four elements plus whoever observes them. The number of chapter 6 and of the daily rite.
SIX	The hexagram and the balance of opposites: two interlaced triangles, six points around a centre.
SEVEN	The planets, the days, the metals, the squares, the Chaldean order. The number that structures time throughout the system.

FROM EIGHT TO TWELVE

THE LAST FIVE

EIGHT	The phases of the Moon and the square of Mercury. The number of the cycle that repeats.
NINE	The square of the Moon and the nine spheres of ancient cosmology. Three times three: the closed form.
TEN	The ten sefirot of the tree and the decimal system. The number of the complete scale, from abstraction to the body.
ELEVEN	The number with no place. It has no figure, no planet, no group. The tradition treats it as an excess of ten and a shortfall of twelve, and it is worth noticing that the table has an acknowledged gap.
TWELVE	The signs, the months, the hours of each half of the day, the twenty-four divisions of the cycle. The number of the year.

HOW NOT TO USE THIS TABLE

By looking in it for an explanation of why things are as they are. The scale of numbers is a magnificent mnemonic and it is not a physics. That four appears in the elements, in the quarters, in the weapons and in the weeks does not prove that there is a fourfoldness in nature: it proves that whoever built the system had judgement and applied it consistently. Recognising that does not take value away from the system; it takes away the superstition, which was the only thing it had too much of.

AND WHAT IT IS REALLY FOR

For navigating. When you come across a list of seven in any classical treatise, you already know you are in the register of the planets and of time; one of four, in that of the elements and of form; one of twelve, in that of the year. The scale turns a scattered library into a catalogue with shelf marks, and in that —and only in that— it is a first-rate tool.

CHAPTER 14

THE PREPARATION

Nine out of ten failed sessions fail before they begin. Preparation is not a preliminary: it is half the operation, and it is the part where the beginner saves time and the practitioner does not.

THE PLACE

- Always the same one. A corner of the same room is enough. It is the constancy of the place that makes entering it already mean something.
- Genuinely clear: nothing on the floor, nothing switched on, nothing that can make a sound. A phone alert in the middle of an operation does not interrupt it: it cancels it.
- With the quarters marked in a stable way. If you have to decide where the east is every day, the east is nowhere.
- In half-light. Neither total darkness —which produces drowsiness— nor working light, which stops the gesture from feeling different from any other.

THE BODY

- Neither just after eating nor hungry. Two hours after a meal is the comfortable interval. Operating on a full stomach gives drowsiness and operating hungry gives irritability; neither of the two is a mystical state.

- Without alcohol and without anything that alters perception. This point admits no nuance: ritual practice seeks precision of attention, and everything that reduces precision works against it.
- Washed and in clean clothes kept for this. The preliminary bath appears in every grimoire and it is not superstition: it is a sensory transition that tells the body something else is beginning.
- Bladder empty, phone in another room, and whoever lives with you told. It sounds prosaic and it is exactly what separates a session from an attempt.

THE HOUR

The tradition prescribes planetary hours —the system of twelve unequal divisions from dawn to dusk, each with its ruler— and they are usable if the detail interests you. But for daily practice, the hour that works is a far simpler one: the same one every day.

THE SEVEN DAYS AND THEIR FUNCTION

MONDAY · MOON	**Rhythm, repetition, memory, the domestic**
TUESDAY · MARS	**Drive, what one puts off, what has to be cut**
WEDNESDAY · MERCURY	**Word, order, study, what has to be said**
THURSDAY · JUPITER	**Expansion, generosity, what should grow**
FRIDAY · VENUS	**The bond, reconciliation, what is valued**
SATURDAY · SATURN	**Limit, closing, review, what has to be let go**
SUNDAY · SUN	**Identity, centre, real rest**

WHAT THE FIXED HOUR REALLY DOES

There is no astral quality whatever in seven in the morning. What there is is a perfectly well known mechanism: a behaviour repeated at the same hour in the same place stops requiring a decision, and a behaviour that requires no decision survives the bad weeks. The whole effectiveness of the ritual timetable is there, and it is more than enough.

THE MINIMUM PREPARATION SEQUENCE

1. Three minutes before: switch off and put away the phone, tell whoever needs telling, close the door.
2. Two minutes before: wash your hands and face. Put on the clothes you operate in.
3. One minute before: standing in the centre, arms at your sides, count ten full breaths without doing anything else.
4. Begin. And if during the ten breaths you have decided that today is not the day, close the door and leave: a session carried out grudgingly teaches the body that this can be done grudgingly.

CHAPTER 15

THE DAILY RITE

This is the central chapter of the book and the only one that has to be carried out without fail. It is a short operation —between seven and ten minutes— built on the lesser ritual of the pentagram that the Golden Dawn set down in writing, with the formulae in the vernacular and this house's framing. It is done every day for a month before attempting anything else.

THE STRUCTURE

Four movements, always in the same order. Learning them by heart is the first task: as long as the book has to be consulted, there is no attention available for anything else.

1. The axis. Standing in the centre, facing east. You go over your own body from top to bottom and from side to side, naming each point.
2. The four pentagrams. One at each quarter, beginning in the east and turning clockwise, with its formula vocalised at each one.
3. The four guardians. Back at the centre, arms outstretched, the four functions are named in their places.
4. The axis again. The first movement is repeated and it closes.

FIRST MOVEMENT · THE AXIS

Standing, feet parallel, shoulders down, facing east. With the index and middle fingers of the right hand you touch each point and name it quietly as you touch it.

> **Forehead — what is above me.**
> **Chest — what is below me.**
> **Right shoulder — what is on my right.**
> **Left shoulder — what is on my left.**
> **Hands together at the chest — and I, here, at the centre.**

The movement takes less than a minute and does something very concrete: it locates. An operator who does not know where their own body is in space cannot sustain attention on anything else.

SECOND MOVEMENT · THE FOUR PENTAGRAMS

You walk to the east. You trace the opening pentagram —from the left hip to the forehead and from there the complete route—, you point at the centre of the figure with the two fingers and you vocalise the formula of the quarter. Then you turn to the south, the west and the north, in that order, repeating the same thing.

THE ROUTE AND ITS FORMULA

EAST	**Opening pentagram · YEH-VEH-HOO · three times**
SOUTH	**Opening pentagram · EL-O-HEEM · three times**
WEST	**Opening pentagram · EL · three times**
NORTH	**Opening pentagram · AH-DOH-NYE · three times**

> **THE DETAIL ALMOST EVERYONE GETS WRONG**
>
> Between one quarter and the next the arm stays extended, tracing a line at shoulder height with the fingers as you walk. You do not lower your arms until you have closed the fourth circle in the east. It sounds like fussiness and it is not: keeping the arm extended is what stops the round from turning into four loose gestures.

THIRD MOVEMENT · THE FOUR GUARDIANS

Back at the centre and facing east, arms extended in a cross. Each function is named in its place, without turning, leaving a couple of seconds between one and the next.

Before me, the breath: what I breathe and what I say.
On my right, the will: what I decide and hold to.
Behind me, the memory: what I feel and what I remember.
On my left, the body: what holds me up and grows tired.
And at the centre, whoever looks at the four.

WHAT THE GUARDIANS ARE AND WHAT THEY ARE NOT

Nobody is being called. What is being done is naming aloud and in a fixed order the operator's own four functions, placing them in space so that they can be looked at one at a time. It is an inventory, and doing it aloud and standing works far better than doing it by thinking, for the same reason a written list works better than a remembered one.

FOURTH MOVEMENT · THE CLOSING

The movement of the axis is repeated, exactly as at the beginning, and it ends with the hands together at the chest and three full breaths. Then you walk the circle anticlockwise, one turn, and you step out.

And that is it. Between seven and ten minutes, every day. The temptation to add things will appear in the second week: pay it no attention until the month is up.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE FIRST MONTH

- First week: clumsiness and a feeling of absurdity. That is normal and it means nothing. You carry it out anyway.
- Second week: the sequence starts coming out without thinking about it and boredom appears. It is the stretch where people give up, and it is the stretch that has to be crossed.
- Third week: the first real sign. Entering the place already produces a change of state before you have done anything. That is conditioning at work, and it is the whole effect the rite promises.
- Fourth week: you notice when it is missing. That is the indicator that the practice is installed, and the moment to move on to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 16

THE PLANETARY OPERATION

With the daily rite installed, you can work on a specific function. The planetary operation is a longer session —twenty to thirty minutes— devoted to a single one of the seven functions, on its day, and with an objective written down beforehand.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION

1. The complete daily rite. Without exception: it is the opening.
2. The planet's hexagram in the east, with its sigil traced at the centre of the figure.
3. Vocalisation of the planet's name, seven times.
4. The work: twenty minutes on the chosen matter, with the planet's square and the journal in front of you.
5. Closing of the hexagram and the daily rite again, complete. The session does not end until this is done.

THE SEVEN OPERATIONS

One per function. The objective column is what gets written down before starting: without a written objective the session turns into rambling by candlelight.

SATURN · SATURDAY

FUNCTION	The limit and the closing
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What has to be finished, let go of, or refused
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«I am going to close ___» or «I am going to stop ___»
SUPPORT	3×3 square · sum 15 · colour black or lead grey

JUPITER · THURSDAY

FUNCTION	Expansion and generosity
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What ought to grow; what one holds back for no reason
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«I am going to open ___» or «I am going to give ___»
SUPPORT	4×4 square · sum 34 · colour purple or blue

MARS · TUESDAY

FUNCTION	Drive and defence
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What gets put off out of fear; the limit that never gets set
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«Today I am going to do ___» or «I am going to say ___»
SUPPORT	5×5 square · sum 65 · colour red

SUN · SUNDAY

FUNCTION	Identity and the centre
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What is recognised as one's own; what is done on somebody else's orders
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«I am going to acknowledge ___» or «this is not mine: ___»
SUPPORT	6×6 square · sum 111 · colour gold

VENUS · FRIDAY

FUNCTION	The bond and worth
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What has been neglected in a relationship; what is really valued
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«I am going to attend to ___» or «I am going to repair ___»
SUPPORT	7×7 square · sum 175 · colour green or copper

MERCURY · WEDNESDAY

FUNCTION	The word and order
WHAT YOU WORK ON	What has to be said and is not said; what is left unsorted
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	«I am going to say ___» or «I am going to put ___ in order»
SUPPORT	8×8 square · sum 260 · colour orange or mixed

MOON · MONDAY

FUNCTION	**Rhythm and repetition**
WHAT YOU WORK ON	**The habit that is missing and the one too many; sleep; the house**
THE OBJECTIVE IS WRITTEN LIKE THIS	**«I am going to repeat ___ for ___ days»**
SUPPORT	**9×9 square · sum 369 · colour silver or white**

THE RULE OF VERIFICATION

Every planetary operation ends with a concrete action in the world, fixed before closing and carried out within the next twenty-four hours. A phone call, a sentence said, a drawer emptied, an hour more of sleep. Without that descent into the concrete the session has not happened — it is the rule of Malkuth from chapter 8, and it is what stops all this from turning into entertainment.

CHAPTER 17

THE DEDICATION OF THE WEAPONS

The grimoires devote whole pages to the making and consecration of instruments: woods cut on a given day and hour, molten metals, prepared inks, ceremonies lasting hours. It is fascinating material and here it is deliberately reduced to what has an effect.

WHAT HAS AN EFFECT

That the object is used for nothing else. That is all, and it is a great deal. A glass touched only inside the circle becomes, within a few weeks, a reliable trigger: picking it up brings with it the whole state of the operation. A glass that also holds the water on the bedside table triggers nothing, even if you consecrated it at the new moon with seven candles.

THE MINIMUM CEREMONY

1. Choose the object and decide that it is that weapon and no other. If you hesitate between two possible uses, it is not the object.
2. Clean it physically. Water and a cloth. It is not symbolic: it is that you are looking at it closely for the first time.
3. Inside the circle, after the daily rite, hold it in the quarter that belongs to it and say aloud what it is for and what it is not for. In your own words, with no borrowed formula.

4. Vocalise the formula of the quarter three times with the object in your hand.
5. Write it down in the journal with the date. That entry is the consecration: it is the proof that there was a before and an after.
6. Put it away in its place and use it for nothing else. This is where the hard part begins, and it is the only part that really matters.

> **IF YOU BREAK THE RULE**
>
> It happens: one day the cup gets used to drink water because it was within reach. There is no magical consequence and there is a real one: the object has lost part of its capacity to trigger. It is repaired in the only way possible, which is to repeat the dedication and to write that down too. A journal that records only the successes is of no use whatever.

THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARE DEDICATED

One a month, and in this order: disc, cup, sword, wand. From the concrete to the abstract. You begin with the body because that is where you are, and you end with the will because it is the least known. Four months for four objects sounds slow and it is exactly the right pace: the aim is not to own the complete kit, it is that each object should have had time to mean something.

CHAPTER 18

WHAT IS REALLY INVOKED

This chapter tackles head-on the question the book's title raises and that it would be dishonest to dodge. When an invocation is carried out, what comes?

THIS BOOK'S ANSWER

What comes is a part of the operator that is not normally available. Neither more nor less than that — and it is worth seeing that «nor less» is a strong claim, because what is not normally available is most of us.

The ritual operation does three things at once: it fixes attention with a motor sequence, it saturates the channels of distraction with gesture, voice and breath, and it personifies an internal function by giving it a name, a place and a voice. That last step is the one that produces the phenomenon the tradition describes as presence. By addressing your own anger as though it were somebody standing opposite, you gain access to information about it that does not otherwise appear, because ceasing to be something is the condition for being able to see it.

THE TECHNICAL NAME FOR THIS

Contemporary psychology has been working with this mechanism for decades under different names: dialogue between parts, the empty chair, work with internal voices. They all share the basic finding: giving voice and place to an internal content produces a shift of perspective that silent reflection does not produce. The ritual tradition arrived at the same thing several centuries earlier and with better staging.

WHAT THIS RULES OUT

- It rules out the entity's having an existence of its own, intentions of its own or knowledge the operator does not possess. If information you did not have turns up in an operation, check where you got it from before attributing it to anybody.
- It rules out the pact, the command and the binding. Nothing can be compelled because there is nothing external to compel; the whole literature on the subjection of spirits is, read this way, a fairly exact description of the struggle against oneself.
- It rules out influence over third parties. No operation in this book acts on another person. If that is what you are after, this is not your book and what you are probably after is a conversation.

AND WHAT IT ALLOWS

It allows a great deal more than it seems. It allows you to examine an obsession without being inside it. It allows you to give voice to the part

that resists and to hear what it says, which is almost never what you assumed. It allows you to separate an emotion from the interpretation that comes with it. With persistence it allows a degree of knowledge of your own workings that informal introspection never reaches, because informal introspection is done by the very person being examined and with no structure to prevent it.

THE LIMIT, AND IT IS A SERIOUS ONE

Personifying internal contents is a powerful technique and it is not harmless for everybody. If you have a history of psychotic episodes, of dissociation, of an identity disorder, or you are in an acute crisis, this kind of practice can destabilise and must be done, if it is done at all, with professional support. There is no merit whatever in going through alone what requires help, and this book is not going to suggest otherwise.

> **The single rule of this practice:**
> **if when you finish you cannot come back to the room,**
> **it was not an operation. It was an episode.**
> **You close, you write it down and you seek advice.**

CHAPTER 19

THE TRIANGLE: THE WORK OF EXAMINATION

The most useful operation in the book is also the most uncomfortable, and it consists in putting something of your own outside the circle in order to be able to look at it.

THE OPERATION

1. The complete daily rite.
2. Write on a sheet of paper, in a single sentence, what you are going to examine. A specific anger, a specific fear, a behaviour you repeat and do not understand. One single thing and in one single sentence: if it does not fit in a sentence, you do not yet know what it is.
3. Place the sheet outside the circle, in the east, on the triangle if you have one drawn or simply on the floor if you do not.
4. Come back to the centre. Look at it from inside the circle, in silence, for five minutes. Without analysing and without solving: looking.
5. Speak to it aloud. Ask it three things: what it wants, what it protects you from, and what it would need in order to loosen its grip.
6. Answer aloud, as though it were the one answering. This part is embarrassing and it is the part that works.
7. Go back to silence for a minute. Then pick up the sheet, write down in the journal what was said and close with the complete daily rite.

> **THE THREE QUESTIONS, AND WHY THOSE**
>
> «What it wants» uncovers the intention, which is almost never the one ascribed to it. «What it protects you from» uncovers the function, because almost every pattern sustained for years protects against something that was needed at the time. «What it would need» uncovers the way out, and it tends to be far smaller than expected. In that order: intention, function, way out.

FREQUENT ERRORS IN THIS OPERATION

- Examining two things at once. It does not work: they mix and the thread is lost. One per session.
- Arguing with it. This is not a trial, it is an interview. The operator who argues is inside it again.
- Looking for a conclusion in the first session. A twenty-year pattern is not examined in twenty minutes. Three or four sessions on the same matter, weeks apart, yield far more than one long session.
- Not closing. This is the serious error. An examination session that ends without the closing rite leaves the matter open and turning over for the rest of the day. You always close, even —above all— when it has gone badly.

WHEN TO STOP

When crying appears that cannot be held, when the pulse does not come down, when the session stops being an examination and turns into reliving. In any of those three cases you close immediately, write down

what happened and do not go back to that matter alone. It is not a failure of the technique: it is the technique reporting that this material needs another person in the room, and that person is a professional.

CHAPTER 20

THE CLOSING AND WHY IT IS NEVER LEFT OUT

Every manual insists on the closing and hardly any practitioner does it properly. It deserves a chapter of its own because it is the point where a healthy practice is distinguished from one that wears you down.

WHAT THE CLOSING IS

A fixed sequence that undoes what was done, in reverse order and without haste: the quarters are dismissed, the pentagram is traced in the opposite direction, the axis is repeated, the circle is walked the other way round and you step out. Three minutes, always the same three.

WHAT IT DOES, IN VERIFIABLE TERMS

- It marks an end. With no explicit end, an intense session carries on diffusely through the rest of the day: your head stays in the operation without being in it.
- It gives you back your body. The closing sequence is physical and it ends in the room, with your hands on your chest and three breaths. It is a landing procedure.
- It teaches the nervous system that this has limits. An altered state known to be reversible is explored with far more freedom than one

that is feared. The closing is what makes the opening safe.

- It protects the practice in the long run. People who give up after months almost always give up through accumulation: sessions that never ended and left a residue. Closing is maintenance.

> **THE RULE WITH NO EXCEPTIONS**
>
> If you opened, you close. If you are interrupted, you close — even if it takes thirty seconds and you do it standing. If the session has gone badly, you close with more care, not less. If you fell asleep halfway through, you close when you wake. There is no case in which leaving without closing is the right option.

THE EMERGENCY CLOSING

For when you have to leave right now: somebody is at the door, an alarm goes off, something has gone wrong. Twenty seconds, standing, in the centre.

> **Hands to the chest.**
>
> **«This is now closed.»**
>
> **Three full breaths, long ones.**
>
> **One step outside the circle, facing north.**
>
> **And you write it down afterwards, even if it is one line.**

It is not as good as the complete closing and it is infinitely better than nothing. That an emergency procedure exists at all is, besides, what lets you operate calmly, knowing you can get out.

CHAPTER 21

THE OPERATOR'S JOURNAL

If you could keep only one practice from this book, keep this one. The journal is not an accessory to the practice: it is the instrument that turns loose sessions into accumulated knowledge.

WHY THERE IS NO PRACTICE WITHOUT A JOURNAL

For a very simple and fairly humbling reason: memory for your own internal states is dreadful. Two weeks on you do not remember how a session went, and what you do remember has been rewritten by what has happened since. With no written record you cannot know whether anything is working, and therefore you cannot correct anything. You are repeating, not practising.

WHAT GETS WRITTEN DOWN

MINIMUM ENTRY PER SESSION

DATE AND TIME	The actual time, not the planned one
DURATION	Actual minutes
OPERATION	Daily rite / planetary / examination / dedication
STATE BEFORE	One word. Not a paragraph: one word
STATE AFTER	Another word
WHAT FAILED	Forgetting, interruption, haste, reluctance
WHAT TURNED UP	Only if something did. Almost nothing ever turns up, and noting that nothing turned up is a datum too
THE CONCRETE ACTION	What you are going to do in the next 24 hours

> **AGAINST THE LITERARY DIARY**
>
> The temptation to write nicely ruins the record. Useful entries are short, ugly and precise: «17/03, 7:10, 9 min, daily rite, before: scattered, after: same, haste in the north was what failed». That, repeated a hundred times, reveals patterns no elegant paragraph reveals.

THE REVIEW, WHICH IS WHERE THE VALUE IS

1. Every Sunday, reread the whole week. Ten minutes.
2. Count the sessions done against the sessions planned. The number, with no excuses beside it.

3. Look for the pattern in the failures: it is always the same day, the same hour, the same movement that fails.
4. Every three months, reread the whole quarter and write half a page. This is where you see what no individual session shows.
5. Every year, reread the year. It is the most uncomfortable practice in the book and the one that teaches most.

CHAPTER 22

THE BEGINNER'S MISTAKES

Set down without mercy, because they are predictable and they cost years.

THE SEVEN ERRORS

1. Collecting instead of practising. Reading ten books, buying four weapons, learning twelve systems and never having done thirty days in a row of anything. It is the commonest error and the most comfortable, because studying is pleasant and repeating is not.
2. Starting with the complicated. The spectacular operation before the daily rite. With the base not installed there is no attention available for anything elaborate, and the elaborate without attention is fancy dress.
3. Changing system at the first sign of boredom. The boredom of the second week is not a sign that the system is no good: it is exactly the stretch that has to be crossed, and changing method at that point guarantees never crossing it.
4. Hunting for phenomena. Expecting visions, voices, sensations. Practice done properly produces above all one very unshowy thing: more attention available in ordinary life. Whoever goes looking for a spectacle ends up convincing themselves they have seen one, and that is where self-deception begins.

5. Not closing. Already said in chapter 17, and repeated because it is the error that wears you down most in the long run.
6. Practising in a crisis. Intensive practice is not the place to resolve an acute crisis; at best it does not help and at worst it amplifies it. In a crisis you cut back to the minimum, keep up the short daily rite and look for help.
7. Secrecy and superiority. The feeling of belonging to a minority that knows something is the oldest trap in the trade. It is pleasant, it is false and it isolates. Everything in this book has been in print since the nineteenth century.

THE REALITY CHECK

There is a very simple way of telling whether a ritual practice is doing its job, and it has nothing to do with what you feel during the session. Ask whoever lives with you whether they notice you are different, and how. If you have six months of daily practice behind you and nobody around you has noticed anything in any direction, something is not happening where it ought to be happening.

AND THE REVERSE TEST

If what they notice is that you are odder, more isolated or more irritable, the practice is doing harm and it has to be stopped and reviewed. A discipline of attention carried out well makes people more present and easier to deal with, not less. Any path that takes you away from your own people and convinces you that this is progress is badly built.

CHAPTER 23

THE OPERATOR'S BODY

The grimoires prescribe fasts, vigils, abstinences and baths, and that part of the material tends to be read as devout folklore. That is a mistake: they are prescriptions about the operator's physiological state, and what they were after —by feel and with no physiology— is still exactly what is needed.

> **HOW THIS CHAPTER IS FRAMED**
>
> What follows are common-sense habits aimed at having attention available. It is not a dietary plan or an individualised training programme, and it does not take pathologies into account. If you have a medical condition, take medication, are pregnant or have a history of eating disorder, nothing in this chapter applies without your healthcare professional reviewing it first. Fasting in particular is contraindicated in several cases and that is not negotiable.

SLEEP, WHICH COMES FIRST

There is no technique of attention that makes up for sleeping badly. It is the heaviest factor in this whole chapter and the most ignored, because it has no esoteric appeal whatever. An operator on five hours of sleep has no attention to direct: they have a deficit.

- A fixed bedtime, weekends included. Regularity weighs more than the total amount.
- The last hour with no screen and no work. If you can change only one thing in this chapter, change this one.
- A cool, dark room. It is cheap and it works.
- If the session is in the morning —which is what is recommended— you get up half an hour earlier; you do not trim sleep off the other end.

FOOD, IN TERMS OF ATTENTION

The criterion here is not body composition: it is stability. What matters is avoiding the two states that ruin a session, which are post-meal drowsiness and the irritability of hunger.

- Operate two hours after a meal or before breakfast. In both cases the stomach is quiet.
- Protein and vegetables in the preceding meal; fast sugar, no. The slump afterwards falls right in the middle of the session.
- Caffeine, if used, early and in a fixed amount. It is the habit that most distorts the perception of your own state, and a practice that consists in observing your own state does not sit well with that.
- Water within reach and drunk beforehand, not during. Getting up for a drink halfway through an operation is the silliest interruption and the commonest.
- Alcohol, no. On the day of the session and the day before. Not for the sake of purity: because it wrecks deep sleep and the effect shows the next day.

THE TRADITIONAL FAST, REVISITED

The old manuals prescribe fasting before important operations. What a short fast produces is a slightly heightened state of alertness that does indeed favour concentration. What it also produces, past a certain point, is irritability, poor emotional regulation and worse decisions. The usable version is the most modest one: operate fasting in the morning, before breakfast. That is all. The three-day fasts of the grimoires do not produce lucidity, they produce hypoglycaemia — and in several medical conditions they are dangerous.

MOVEMENT

The tradition says nothing about this and it ought to. A twenty-minute session standing, turning, with the arms extended and the voice sustained demands a minimum of physical condition, and an operator who tires stops having any attention to spare. Nothing heroic is required.

- Walk forty minutes a day. That is the base, and it is enough for what is asked here.
- Shoulder and hip mobility before operating: three minutes. Arms held out during the round of the quarters make themselves felt in the trapezius by the second week.
- Some strength work twice a week, with whatever you have. A sustained standing posture is a demand for strength, not for flexibility.
- Breathing: the exercises from chapter 10, outside the session, three minutes a day. That is what keeps the vocalisation from running short

of air.

WHAT THE TRADITION PRESCRIBED AND WHAT IT ACTUALLY WAS

THE BATH BEFOREHAND	**A sensory transition. It works, it is kept.**
THE FAST	**Heightened alertness. Kept in its short version; long fasts are discarded.**
THE NIGHT VIGIL	**Sleep deprivation. Discarded: it damages exactly what is being sought.**
ABSTINENCE	**A reduction of stimulus. Kept as a voluntary and temporary reduction of distraction, not as a moral rule.**
THE SET-ASIDE CLOTHING	**A conditioned trigger. It works very well, it is kept.**
INCENSE	**An olfactory anchor, which is the most powerful of all. Kept, with ventilation.**

THE CHAPTER IN SUMMARY

Sleep at the same time, eat two hours before, drink no alcohol the day before, walk every day and operate in the same place at the same hour. That is ninety per cent of the bodily work of the trade, and there is absolutely nothing mysterious about it. The mysterious part is that hardly anybody does it.

CHAPTER 24

THE YEAR OF PRACTICE

A twelve-month plan, for whoever wants one. It is not compulsory and it is better than improvising.

THE FOUR QUARTERS

MONTHS 1–3	**Only the daily rite, every day, and the journal. Nothing else. The disc is dedicated in month 2 and the cup in month 3.**
MONTHS 4–6	**One planetary operation a week is added, beginning with Saturn and working down the Chaldean order. The sword and the wand are dedicated.**
MONTHS 7–9	**One examination operation a month is added, on a single matter, three sessions apart. The planetary ones continue.**
MONTHS 10–12	**Everything above is kept up with nothing added. The last quarter is the one that really tests whether there is a practice: it brings nothing new.**

THE THREE INDICATORS

How to tell whether the year has been worth it. None of the three has anything to do with what you feel during the sessions.

1. The number. Sessions done against sessions planned, taken from the journal. Above seventy per cent there is a practice; below fifty, there is an intention.

2. Recovery. How long you take to come back after a week's interruption. At the start it is weeks; with the year installed it is days. That is the most reliable indicator of all.
3. Other people's testimony. What the people who live with you notice, asked directly and without prompting the answer.

AND A WARNING ABOUT THE SECOND YEAR

The risk in the second year is not giving up: it is comfort. A rite performed perfectly and with no attention at all is a motor habit, not a practice. The warning sign is no longer writing down «what failed» because nothing ever fails any more. When you get there, change something: the hour, the place, the formula. Discomfort is part of the method.

CHAPTER 25

RECORD NOTEBOOK

These pages are for writing on. The part of this book that produces results is not the part you read.

STARTING RECORD

BEFORE YOU START

START DATE	_____
PLACE CHOSEN	_____
WHERE EAST IS	_____
FIXED HOUR OF THE SESSION	_____
WHAT I EXPECT FROM THIS	_____
WHAT I FEAR ABOUT THIS	_____

> **ABOUT THE LAST LINE**
>
> Write it down. Hardly anybody does and it is the most informative of the six. A year from now, rereading it will explain a fair amount of what happened in between.

SESSION TEMPLATE

COPY ONE A DAY

DATE AND ACTUAL TIME	_____
MINUTES	_____
OPERATION	daily · planetary · examination · dedication
BEFORE / AFTER	_____ / _____
WHAT FAILED	_____
ACTION WITHIN 24 H	_____

QUARTERLY REVIEW

EVERY THREE MONTHS

SESSIONS PLANNED / DONE	_____ / _____
THE FAILURE THAT REPEATS MOST	_____
WHAT HAS CHANGED IN CONCRETE LIFE	_____
WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED AND I EXPECTED TO	_____
WHAT I CHANGE NEXT QUARTER	_____

CLOSING THE YEAR

AT TWELVE MONTHS

ADHERENCE PERCENTAGE	_____
TIME TO RECOVER AFTER AN INTERRUPTION	_____
WHAT THE PERSON I LIVE WITH HAS SAID	_____
THE OPERATION THAT COST ME MOST	_____
THE ONE I AM STILL DOING A YEAR ON	_____
WHAT I STOP DOING AND WHY	_____

One last note, and with that the book has done its work. Everything here is built to produce one single thing: more attention available in ordinary life. Not power, not secret knowledge, not membership of any enlightened minority. Attention — which turns out, when you look closely, to be the only thing we ever had to spend.

If at the end of the year you have twelve months of record written in your own hand and the people around you find you a little more present, the trade has worked. And if on top of that you have realised that not one of the six plates in this book did anything on its own, then it has worked completely.

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