

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 4 - Death and the Underworld

Lesson 1: Overview

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QVAREIA

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

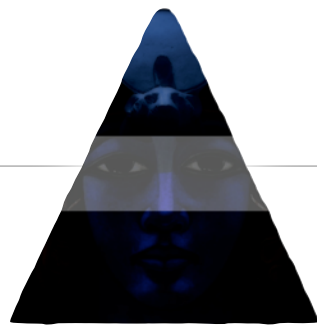
The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding – everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

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So remember - in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.

Yours,

Josephine McCarthy



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Module 4 - Death and the Underworld

Lesson 1: Overview

Before you move on to working with enlivened magical tools (your next module), and before you also begin the process of stepping into the inner realms in any depth, it would be wise to learn about the other side of the coin of creation. That opposing side of creation has two aspects: death, and destruction. Because they are so complex, I will address them in two separate modules. We will look at destruction a bit later in the apprentice section. In this module, we will look at and work with death and the underworld.

The reason it is so important to look at this subject matter before you get to tools, temples, beings etc. is that understanding death is a major protector for a magician, and it helps you to spot those 'death hotspots' in your weave. When you wield an enlivened magical tool, you become visible to beings and powers that you were previously invisible to.

Interactions with those beings can inadvertently trigger one of those hotspots, and although triggering one will not necessarily put you in a death pattern, it can make your life a misery as it will cause discord in your pattern. That discord comes from not knowing certain powers that are coming at you, not understanding how to operate around those powers, and not being properly rooted.

The rooting of a magician is a key element in training that again, like many other aspects of magic, is woefully lacking in modern magical training. That rooting comes from understanding death, and magically going into the underworld within life, so that you understand and are familiar, through practical magical experience, with the underworld and the powers that flow in and out of that realm. Through the rooting action, you are strongly anchored in the foundation of your ancestors, and anchored with an aspect of yourself in the underworld: you have to go ‘down’ before you can go ‘up.’

You have touched very briefly on this mechanism both in vision and in ritual, but now it is time to learn this aspect of magic in more depth, both in practical and theoretical terms. Once you come to wield magical tools properly, and step deep into the inner worlds, you will then understand why you had to do this work before you came to play with cool things like swords, wands, and all the glittery things that make magic so fashionable: if you are going to do it, do it properly!

Most (not all) of today’s magical training puts tools into your hands in your apprentice stage, and does not begin to teach these deeper mysteries until much later (and most frequently these days, not at all). I have found that to be a self-defeating folly: know the powers before you work with them.

Many magical systems train their initiates with these tools without the initiate being rooted, and without gnosis of what each tool truly is: what tends to happen in such circumstances is that either the work quickly devolves down into ritual drama with no power, or the magician slowly starts, mentally or emotionally, to fall apart. The other dangerous thing that happens, particularly if the initiate is a natural magician, is that they find themselves suddenly visible to all manner of beings, some of whom aggressively challenge them, and they have no knowledge of what to do, how to deal with it, or even what it is that is challenging them.

When you learn about and then work with death and the underworld, it changes you at a very deep level: it completes a loop of power while you are still in life. That loop of birth and death is a pattern of all living things, but when a magician completes that loop in life, in gnosis, it takes them out of the uncontrolled endless pattern and puts them on a very different path. Passing through death while in life as an Initiate is a deep visionary process, and is one that is essential for any serious magician to do. The preparation for that visionary work comes during the apprentice phase of training.

I used to throw early students into the death vision when I trained groups, but I found that by doing it too early, it had a negative affect on their progress. Now, in hindsight, I have learned to tread a bit slower with students, to get them firmly anchored in mind, spirit and body so that when they do step into the death realms as an initiate, they are truly solid and ready for work.

These days, many magical training groups have forgotten that the death-in-life work is an actual magical act, and instead they approach it as a 'self development' psychological ritual of a 'new start.' That is all well and good, but it is not the magical death within life.

As an apprentice, you learn to connect, recognise, and work with the beings that work in death; you learn to connect and work with beings that operate in the underworld; and you learn to grow roots like a tree that hold you firm in the face of destructive power. These skills and keys put helpers and guardians in your path, and you learn to navigate, recognise, and work with the stronger powers, beings and deeper realms in a productive, safer way.

For this overview introduction lesson, we will look briefly at the various aspects of this subject matter that will then be addressed and worked with in detail in the lessons of this module, and you will be given some reading suggestions on some of the topics. I do not think it necessary, at this stage, for you to read in depth the various heavy tomes of death and the mysteries (that is something you can do later, as and when you feel it is necessary), but it is necessary at least to be aware of the various writings, and have a basic idea of their approach, the reason for the writings, and a general understanding of the methods used in death (from a magician's perspective) by various ancient and not-so-ancient cultures.

This in turn will prepare you for the coming lessons of this module that go into depth on the subject, so that you can get deeper into the subject matter, both in theory and in practical magical work: once you have a good basic understanding of the subject matter, you will find the coming lessons a lot easier to understand and work with.

In these short overviews, I will not go into explanations or discussions as such; rather it is just to outline the subject matter and give you chance to do a bit of your own research before you are plunged magically into the death mysteries.

Death in general

Before we get into the magical mysteries of death, let's just ensure we are all on the same page, as there is so much bullshit written about death, and also so much religious programming that is warped and twisted.

The current western religious view on death is that death is something to be terrified of, and that whether or not you were 'good' will determine where you 'go': either up, or into holding, or 'down.' There is also an idea that if you confess your 'sins' on your deathbed, all will be well—which is not true.

Death is seen as abhorrent, and very few Westerners have ever seen a dead body. When a person dies, they are whisked away, sanitised, held in a freezer, and then suitably disposed of without further family contact with the body. This is all very unhealthy for the living and the dead.

Most modern secular thinking is that after you die, it's lights out and goodbye. On the other end of the scale is the belief that you will 'pass down a dark tunnel' and emerge in a happy landscape with all your loved ones, and live a surreal life with no mortgage. These different religious and secular views are degenerate, and they show just how low we have sunk into a magical/mystical dark age.

There is also a view of reincarnation that either plays into power games ("it's your lot to be poor; shut up and suffer") or into fantasy: "I was Mary Queen of Scots, you know..." The number of times I have heard that is enough to give me eye strain from rolling my eyes. Moving in magical circles, I sometimes have to venture into areas that wallow in New Age fantasy. In Glastonbury, for example, the number of folks who think they are the reincarnated 'Jesus,' Merlin, Morgan le fey, etc., is hysterically funny and depressing at the same time.

As a people, we have become disconnected from the experience of death, and of the experience of the mysteries that lie beyond it. This disconnect becomes very apparent in magicians who have not managed to step outside of this soup of ignorance, and many leave themselves prey to fake mediums, spiritualists or seers (which are many), New Age nut-jobs, religious idiots, and wishful thinking. Some magicians and magical groups do work in

death properly, but they are in the minority and tend to work under the radar.

We can also track, like many other things about the Mysteries, the evolution and devolution of death gnosis by looking at the texts, myths, belief systems and artistic expressions of cultures. From the powerful mystical evolution expressed in the Pyramid texts, through the less balanced results magic of the Papyrus of Ani, to the degeneration in Christianity and beyond. This same evolution and devolution can also be tracked in Judaism, Greek mysteries (before and after Greece's dark age), Tibetan, Indian, and so forth.

In lesson two, we will talk about death in general. We will look at the dying process from a magical perspective, track the post-death process from a magical perspective, and look into dismantling some of the dogmas we have clung to that serve only to bring difficulty and ignorance.

To help you prepare for that, look into different cultures and how they act with the body after death. Some cultures bury the body straight away, take down pictures of the dead person, and refuse to mention their name. Some cultures dig up the bones of their ancestors once a year to have dinner with them (yes... interesting). Some keep the body in the house and go through certain rites over a period of days before they are finally buried (how I grew up).

Get on the internet and find out what you can about different approaches to death. Look at different cultures, but not at New Age/modern magical death stuff, which is mostly psychology and modern constructed religious feel-good babble. You don't need to do any deep reading, just get an overview.

Death and the Mysteries

This is where death starts to get interesting. A magical understanding of death, and the ability to pass into the realm of death in order to work, is a major stepping stone for a magician. Every Mystery system around the world has, at some point or other, discovered, worked with, and then written about the realm of death. The realm of death is not a 'stand alone' realm; rather it is a part of a much bigger picture of a realm that exists within,

around, and which is woven into the manifest world: it is the inner world of which the outer world is a physical manifestation.

Some ancient cultures worked within the inner realm as a part of their physical mystical life, while others strived to leave the physical world behind and step into the inner world as the 'real world.' The Greeks and early Christians were some who took this escapist approach. As an understanding of the guardians and gates of this realm became more known, the magician priests and priestesses of certain cultures figured out how to try and dodge these guardians and bypass natural spiritual evolution.

Whenever this manipulation appeared in a culture, that culture then began its descent into ignorance. The key is not to dodge, lie, trick, or bully your way through these guardians by having the right names, the right tale to tell, or the right ritual actions, but to enter these realms in a clear and balanced way so that the guardians recognise you and let you pass voluntarily.

One thing that does become apparent in virtually all of these ancient cultures is a similar attitude to rebirth: that reincarnation is for the lesser mortals. As one ancient Egyptian text put it, "being trapped in the net of souls (rebirth) is for the common man." The key was (and is) to develop well as a magician and a human being, to become recognised as such by the inner world guardians, and to flow through the inner worlds in magical work until you have a deep soul level understanding of how balance works (this is why the scales feature so strongly in some ancient mysteries).

Then, when the magician dies, he or she can make a choice, a conscious choice born out of necessity, and decide where and how they wish to move forward: do they need for some reason to come back into life, or do they wish to stay in the inner realms on the threshold of the manifest world in order to work with the living, or do they need to move deeper into the inner worlds and step out of the pattern of the manifest world completely?

Not only is it important, vastly important, for the magician to learn about death in life for his or her own death, but also because of the massive unfolding that triggers as a result of that work in the magician's life: essentially it is one of the key actions that plugs you in. This is why the 'death in life' features so strongly in ancient mystery cults, where it either shows as death visions/rituals, or a 'passing into the underworld and traversing of the stars.' Remnants of that can be seen in the well-meant but essentially use-

less psychodramas around death that we see in today's modern 'mystery cults.'

Recommended Reading

Here is a list of things to read/look up. These are just a small selection of texts from around the world: should you wish to delve deeper/wider into more ancient cultures, read the list below first, as it will then help you to spot the mysteries in other cultures.

Browse through them so that you get an idea of what approach that particular culture is taking at that time. Some of the text and images you will now begin to recognise; many you will not at this stage of your training. Don't try to psychologise or philosophise around the texts; just let them sit with you and let the imagery surface in your mind, and compare it with what you already know. And you do not have to study these in depth—that is not necessary, and in my opinion would be counterproductive to you at this stage. Just look them over, dip in where you are drawn, and then ponder on the words.

1- THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD: THE GREAT LIBERATION THROUGH HEARING IN THE BARDO

This is a compiled book that tries to codify and organise what are essentially very different writings. When Walter Evans-Wentz came across these various writings, like every organised Westerner, he had to control it, bring it into order, and make it fit things he already knew.

So this book, which is presented as a coherent path through death, is not how it is, or was, used. Interactions between the living and the dead, and between the living and the inner worlds, are not neat and tidy, and do not follow a linear path that is easily mapped.

So when you come to look through this book, keep it in mind that these writings were, and are, used in a more fluid way (and the same goes for the Egyptian ones), and not all were used; nor is it a 'bible' of Tibetan

death mysteries. Each area and each lineage had their own version, and in truth it is a series of scattered writings that are drawn upon.

Note, however, in the title the emphasis on ‘hearing.’ Knowing what you now know about sound, utterance, and the power of the word, that will give you more insights. These texts are spoken to the body of the dead person, as the spirit/soul stays near the body for quite some time. Not only do they tell the spirit what to do, but the utterance of a mystery also changes the web, the power, and the space around the newly dead person’s spirit: it is also a form of assistance.

2- THE PYRAMID TEXTS

These are early texts from Old Kingdom Egypt, and display quite clearly the knowledge of how to traverse the inner realms and step from mortal life into the deep realm of the deities. The fact that they were written down (inscribed on the walls of the tomb of King Unas) tells us that Unas, the last ruler of the 5th dynasty, knew that things in his culture at that time were falling apart.

When a mystery cult is at its height, its secrets are handed down mouth to mouth, and its magic is uttered but never written. Only when the culture or religion is on a sharp descent are the mysteries written down and sent into the future so that they will be waiting for the next period of renewal (something that is also a feature of the Tibetan mysteries).

We see this by the events that followed the reign of Unas: discord, conflict and famine came as a result of the imbalance in the structure of Ma’at within the kingship. We will look into this in more depth in the lessons, as it is an important mystery dynamic. In lesson two we will look at the mystery behind the Pyramid texts, as they are an ancient wisdom regarding magic, death, and death/life existence.

To prepare for that, as well as your own browsing of the Pyramid Texts, look up the following excerpts from the Pyramid Texts of Unas (I am using Raymond O. Faulkner’s version, but there is also a very good book on the Pyramid Texts by James P Allen): utterance 224 plus the postscript, and utterance 690. Once you have worked with the mysteries in the lessons, come back to these excerpts, as you will understand them better

<http://www.pyramidtextsonline.com/>

3- THE BOOK OF COMING FORTH BY DAY (PAPYRUS OF ANI)

You have already visited this text in the last module. Now you will look a bit deeper, but ensure that you have looked at the Pyramid texts first. Whereas the Pyramid texts outline the passage of the Divine Transformation of the King, and that transformation is very dependant on the king's upholding of Ma'at in his life and spirit, the Papyrus of Uni, covering the same death/underworld passage, approaches it more from of an aspect of magical manipulation. It outlines how to dodge the guardians, how to lie, cheat, and use magic to get past the various threshold keepers.

This Papyrus also reflects the change from the exclusive passage of the Divine King, to the passage of anyone who can afford to pay the magician priests to give them the secrets and have them inscribed on their tomb walls. This is the mid-point of the descent of the mysteries of Egypt.

Pay particular attention to the forty-two Negative Confessions. Remember your work with the Grindstone and the Unraveller, with the Threshing Floor, and the practice of reviewing your mistakes and learning from them, so that you learn to self-limit in life? The forty-two Negative Confessions tell the dead person how to answer the challenges of the Keeper of the Scales, and the texts also hold a spell to stop the heart (spirit) from telling the Keeper that you are lying (the living consciousness will lie, but the deeper spirit (heart) always tells the truth—which is why it is the heart that is placed upon the scales).

You start to see the degeneracy from living in balance to pretending to have lived in balance. You can track this degeneracy, and how it affected the nation and the religion, by looking at the various mystery texts in parallel to the chaos in the nation: conflict, famine, etc.

The Book of Am-Tuat “He who knows these words will approach those who dwell in the Netherworld. It is very very useful for a man upon Earth.”—concluding text of the second hour.

The Book of Am-Tuat (Duat) tells the dead king about the various thresholds and guardians in the underworld, so that he may traverse them safely and ascend into the sky to traverse the sky like/with Ra.

This text first appeared as a complete work on the walls of the tomb of Thutmose III (18th Dynasty, New Kingdom) and unlike the Papyrus of Ani,

the book of Am-Tuat was reserved for the king. So we see an attempt to return to the inner progress of the Divine King, and yet it is still littered with the ‘results’ magic that we see in the Papyrus of Ani.

Look through the text, which tells the king what, and who, resides in the Underworld, and see what you think about what was going on in the Mysteries at that time in Egyptian history.

Working magically in death while alive

One of the things we will explore and work with at an apprentice level is working with and in death while still being alive. Although you will not step into death fully until you are at Initiate level, standing on the thresholds, observing, and seeing the beings that work in death are a major part of your leap forward in the mysteries.

From there you learn to work with the newly dead in this realm, and also in the death realm. It is part of the work of a magician to work with the newly dead where needed and appropriate, and before you can get to that level of work, you first need to know how to ascertain if a newly dead person needs help, and when it is best to leave them to it.

Not quite on this topic, but related to everything within this module is a short piece of writing by Plato that is very pertinent to this subject matter. That piece of writing is called ‘The Vision of Ayr the Armenian,’ which appears in Plato’s Republic. You may have already read this. If you have, then read it again in the context of the subject matter of this module. If you have not already read it, then now is the time to do that. It is not a long piece at all, but it is packed with very illuminating aspects.

The Dead in the living world

One of the things that is really useful for a magician to learn about and work with is the knowledge of the dead in the world of the living. The most common ones that we in the Western world encounter are ghosts, sleepers, and ancient ancestors.

We will look at the issues around hauntings, the various problems that arise when a spirit stays around the living, and how to recognise when there is a problem.

The Underworld and the Abyss

Knowledge of and practical familiarity with the realm of the underworld is essential for all magicians, and the earlier you connect with it, the better. Volumes have been written about the underworld and abyss in modern terms, but few of those tomes even begin to touch on what the underworld and abyss is about.

In ancient writings you have to stretch back pretty far to find a good outline of this realm, but another way of having a preview of it before we get to that lesson is to sit and look at the paintings of William Blake. In fact, the works of William Blake are a wonderful example of magical art: he was touching into some very deep visions and realms with his work. The filter they flow through is Christian: Blake had a strong connection with the Divine as connected with via the Christian filter, and yet he considered the church and its structure to be not worth the time of day (sensible man). He was an eccentric, and a visionary: for you as an apprentice magician to spend time looking through his paintings would be time well spent indeed.

The paintings will not tell you directly about the underworld and abyss (or the inner worlds and angelic beings, of which he painted many), but the true inner knowledge and power that flows through these paintings will touch you deeply indeed.

The lesson on the underworld will take you on your first steps of visionary descent into the underworld so that you can begin the preparation process that will lead to the act of stepping into death while in life: something that you will do as an initiate.

Inner Contacts and inner Adepts

The lesson on inner contacts and adepts will take you through the process of how these people come to step into the inner worlds in service. These people, who once lived as adept magicians and priests/priestesses, are an invaluable source of support, advice, assistance, and guidance to any magician wishing to work with any level of power. You will also learn how to work in vision with these contacts, how to connect with them, and how to access and operate through the inner structure known as the Inner Library: a central and critical visionary interface for magicians.

The Bound Ones

The last lesson in the module looks at the phenomenon of the Bound Ones, humans and other beings who are bound up and held within the desert and the sands of death. Although as an apprentice you will not work around this issue, it is an important one for apprentices to know about: it directly links in to what you learned in the last module and will deepen your understanding of some of the powers and dynamics that flow through life and death.

Summary

Read and take notes from the suggested texts, and as I said earlier, there is no need to read all of the texts completely (other than the Vision of Ayr—read that whole vision, which is quite short); rather it is just a matter of getting used to the texts. It is also simply about getting more of an idea of what particularly cultures were working on in terms of the mysteries and death, and looking at how they approached them, for good or bad.

Once you have read what you need to read and have taken some notes for yourself, then it is time to move straight to the next lesson. Have your notes and the texts handy. If you can acquire, or already own the Pyramid Texts (of all the books listed in this lesson, this is the one to own ‘in the flesh’), keep it close to you throughout this module, and if you wish to experiment with sleep/dream learning, place the book over your head (on a shelf) or under your pillow at night: sleep with the book.

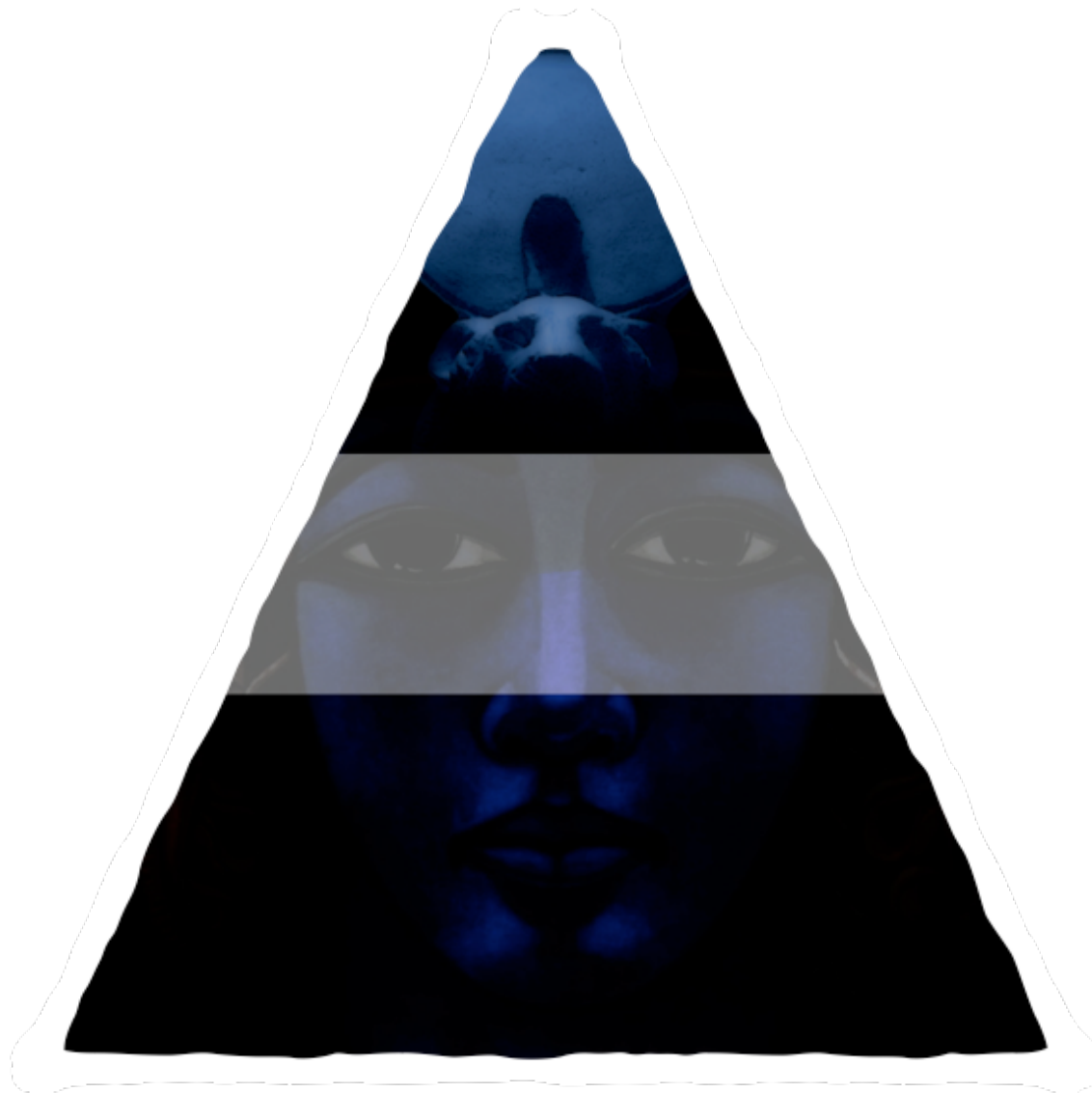
This is a very old-fashioned way of working, and one which recognises that some texts, just by their sheer subject-matter, carry power and connection with them. I used to do this in my twenties when I could not penetrate the meaning of a text. I would sleep each night with the book, and slowly but surely a sort of strange understanding of the book began to surface in my mind.

It was not that I ‘read’ the book in my sleep; rather it was that my spirit interacted with the energies of the book and the energies of the mysteries portrayed in the text: I ‘got it’ at a deep level. It works for some folks and not others, and can be a fun experiment.

Write down any pertinent things that come to mind, any ‘ah-has,’ and any understandings that come to you from reading the texts and looking at the pictures. Later, you can compare those understandings with what you have learned and discovered by the end of the module.

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