

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 4 - Death and the Underworld
Lesson 4: The Underworld and the Abyss

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QVAREIA

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

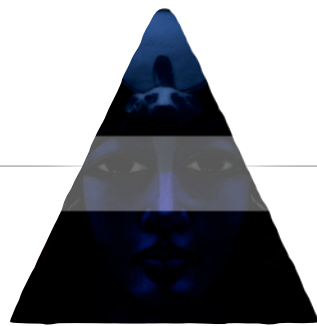
The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding – everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

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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 4: The Underworld and the Abyss

With an understanding of fate and death under your belt, it is now time to learn a bit more about the underworld. In texts it is mainly touched upon in relation to death, but it is much more than that.

The underworld, in its deepest, most abstract form, is the compression of manifestation. As consciousness crosses over the threshold into manifestation, the body that houses that spirit/consciousness begins its long march to destruction and breakdown. We talked briefly in the module on creation about how the Divine Breath issues out an energetic impulse that, as it moves towards manifestation, is slowed down by the beings that interact with that energy so that it can manifest.

That same action of slowing down continues throughout the physical manifestation until it becomes so slow and dense that it eventually ceases to be a vehicle for living consciousness: the spirit releases and the body/substance composts, finally becoming dense substance. We see this in geology and archaeology, and from a magical perspective we call this process the Underworld.

If we look at it from a different angle, we can also see this process in action in the inner desert: the realm where nothing lives. This is the back room of creation and destruction, and the template for time, manifestation, and destruction is held in the inner desert. When you stand in the inner desert in

vision, ‘up’ is the future, the desert is the present, and beneath the sands is the ‘past’ (the underworld).

If we look at the underworld from the point of view of our physical existence on the earth as magicians, the underworld is beneath our feet and is the realm of ancient deities, ancestors, the death landscape, the sleepers, and vast beings from the distant past.

Magicians access this realm for many reasons: working in death, connecting with the ancient powers of the land, working with ancient deities, ancient temples, and our distant long gone relatives of humanity. There is also another very important reason why magicians work with this realm: it is an anchor. One of the dynamics you have already begun to learn about is the energetic balancing that occurs for a magician if they go into the past before they go into the future, and if they go ‘down’ before they go ‘up’.

Magicians also learn about the various types of beings that can be found in the underworld, beings that are often treated with fear and revulsion, usually because of a lack of knowledge and direct experience. What some call demons can be accessed through the underworld and the abyss, but the term ‘demon’ is laden with misunderstanding, fantasy and fear. We will look at demonic beings (along with angelic beings) a bit later in the apprentice section. Suffice it to say that although these beings are dangerous and should not be lightly messed around with, they are not ‘evil.’ The whole concept of good and evil that has been promulgated by some more recent religions (Christianity for example) is designed to steer you away from danger, but it has also instilled a simplistic duality into the minds of generations which only serves to cut people off from the deeper aspects of creation and destruction.

So let us have a look at the different layers of the underworld, what one would expect to find there, and how a magician would work there. Then we will look briefly at the abyss, a connected realm that links directly into the underworld. In this lesson you will also visit the underworld in vision to begin your first real connections with this realm, but you will not be going down the abyss just yet: to access such a place needs knowledge and skill to keep you from destruction—it is not a place to play in.

The Threshold of the Underworld

The first layer of the underworld is the threshold between the living and the dead. It is also a layer that appears in the inner landscape of a land, and is the place where the dead, the living, faery beings, and land spirits all interconnect and intersect. This is the layer of the underworld most known to various types of magicians and which is worked with to access the faery realm, recent ancestors who have remained connected to the land (rather than go in to rebirth), and to access the first layer of older deities.

This aspect of the inner realm is very interesting and is a space where magicians are very active. If a magician wishes to learn about the land around them, its fairly recent history, or about the faery beings and land beings that are all around us, the magician would work in this threshold place.

It is pretty close to our own consciousness, therefore the rules of safe engagement are very close to the rules you would apply in your everyday physical life when you are in a place unknown to you. The threshold of the underworld can be accessed through the inner landscape of the land: they overlap and are of one another. In this crossover space, we find faery beings, land beings, ghosts, recent ancestors, and all manner of different beings. You have already begun to work in the inner landscape, and if you move into the inner landscape with intent to interact with this crossover threshold, it will open up to you. We will spend a bit more time looking at this crossover place and the beings within it (mainly faery beings) in another lesson.

Faery beings are not nice little sweet things with wings: they are strange, powerful beings with a twisted sense of humour and no particular love of humanity. But once the magician earns the trust of these beings, and learns to work sensibly with them, they can become powerful allies in your life and magical work.

If in your work as an apprentice you cross paths with one of these beings, be very honourable, honest, straightforward, and respectful—regardless of how you are treated or approached by them. These beings will test you, harass you, or try to beguile you to see what your deeper self is like. They will watch how you treat the land and creatures around you, how you interact with the land, the elements, animals, birds, spiders, etc., and they

will form their opinion of you from how you act towards everything around you.

The difference between land beings and faery beings is the difference between a reptile and an ape: one is much closer to us than the other in terms of consciousness. Again, this is something you will learn more about in lessons to come, and is not something you need to be dipping your toe into just yet.

The other type of being you are likely to come into contact with in this threshold space is the sleeping dead. Basically, there are two different types of sleepers that you will encounter upon the land and in this realm: working sleepers and waiting sleepers. A working sleeper is usually an ancestor that is deeply (tribally) connected to a land area, and went into death, sometimes ritually, with the intent to work as an interface between the land and the tribe. The instance of these sleepers is getting rarer as archaeologists dig more and more of them up.

Not every ancient burial is a sleeper; it is often just a body. But sometimes they are, and if you wish to work with an intentional tribal sleeper, you need to know the rules of engagement; something you will learn fairly soon. Most countries have some sort of intentional sleeper present upon the land, as this was a widespread practice in many different cultures.

Another type of ancestral consciousness you will potentially come across in this threshold space is the waiting sleepers. These are people who upon death believed that they had to stay asleep in the land until the time of judgement arrived. This is particularly common in pre-twentieth century Catholic communities. The religious pattern was so strong in the life of the person that upon death they immediately fixed themselves to their body in burial and simply stayed there.

One way to spot this in a culture is where the idea of cremation or exposure of the body to the elements is abhorrent. In the Catholic communities, it was felt that keeping the body as preserved as possible would enable them, upon judgement, to rise in body and ascend to heaven. In terms of the death realm, they would not really appear, or only appear in that realm briefly as they held on tightly to their bodies in the belief that this would guarantee them a place in heaven.

As an aside, but one very relevant to you, there is a strange phenomenon that I have observed that is probably the fragmented root of this belief. Over the last few years I have observed waves of ‘judgement’ flowing over the land of the living, and other people who are sensitive have also been picking up on this. It seems to affect those who do pick up on it, triggering an impulse to either magically engage with the lesser judgement in life, or triggering an unconscious impulse to ‘clean their act up.’ In the northern hemisphere it seems to trigger once a year, and over the last few years it has gotten stronger and stronger.

I became very curious about this, as so many magicians from around the world were contacting me about this experience, and were seeing what I was seeing. So I decided to investigate further. I worked in the inner realms to try and watch this impulse as it flowed out onto the land, and asked a being standing beside me what the hell was going on. This was an angelic being, a type very close to humanity (a Noble One) and therefore easy to converse with.

The being showed me cycles of this type of event happening every few thousand years, usually when large parts of humanity had become ‘rotten.’ Essentially, what the being conveyed was that as a nation or group of nations devolves (which is a natural progression in most nations), the people engage less and less with any mystical, religious, tribal, or magical patterns. Some who are removed from such patterns still live in relative balance for generations, and some do not.

The groups that do not live in balance tend to react in a particular way in death: they are fearful and immediately grab for another life without going through the process of the scales, or even attempting to evolve towards that process. When there are large amounts of people circumventing this natural process, it causes a deficit, an imbalance of some sort, which in turn automatically triggers a deep energetic response.

That imbalance seems to be the result of not enough people going through the natural progression in death, which in turn results in too many living humans in general (if they are not going through the full death process, which slows them down), and too many that are deeply unbalanced: the species becomes self-destructive. That response is, to put it bluntly, if you will not come to us, then we will come to you.

The process of balance through the scales flows out of death and into life instead, and affects every living thing. I asked the being to show me the process, but what I was shown didn't really fully translate for me: I didn't fully get it and still don't. But I will outline for you what I did understand and what I observed, so that you can ponder over it for yourself.

What I was shown was waves of energy sweeping over the land, and the humans it flowed over seemed to be deeply affected by it. Some were affected physically, and some were swept into death. Some I observed seemed to recognise what was happening and intentionally engaged in the lesser judgement process, and in those cases, the wave of energy seemed to enliven them.

As I write this, (Sept 2014) we are currently in a phase of this 'wave' and just chatting lightly to the local villagers where I live, many are having sleepless nights, some are feeling a sense of doom and others are furiously 'spring cleaning'. Interesting. I have been working with the self assessment process as have other magicians I know, and the energy does seem to get up behind that conscious engagement.

It is not a wave of 'Gods punishment'; rather it seems to be a very natural response to the state of our species at this time. We really need to get away from this dualist and simplistic religious dogmatic thinking that infects everything that we do as magicians.

Observing this process, and also thinking about it, it makes me wonder if this natural response/process is behind some of the biblical stories that run along similar veins, and also the ideas of the Essenes, who felt that judgement was at hand.

The Essenes felt that they needed to prepare for Judgement and therefore had to live their lives in a particular way. If we take the religious dressing out of the picture, what we are left with is a group of people who were picking up on this wave of the judgement process and tried to live their lives in a way that would positively engage it. But as always with everything connected to humanity, dogmatic thinking quickly moves in and the process begins to fall apart.

And in that, I think, is a major lesson for us at this time in our own history: do not try to box, organise, and systematise too much. We all need some structure, but there has to be fluidity in thinking that allows the con-

consciousness of an individual person to connect fully with these inner impulses in their own way. That translates to walking your own path in gnosis: we are truly unique as individuals, and what is the right approach for one may not be the right approach for another person.

Back to the underworld. (By the way, these little diversions are intentionally put into these lessons so that they cannot be easily found by those simply dipping into the text out of curiosity. What an apprentice can take away from these texts is vastly different to what a casual reader will understand.)

The First Layer of the Underworld

The first true layer of the underworld is where you find deities that are still active in the outside world, deities that are connected to the underworld in terms of death, destruction, the cycles of species, etc. It is also the layer where the magician finds access to the realm of death.

This is also the realm where we find the ancient dynamic of prophecy: going into an underworld cave to meet an oracle or goddess who heals, curses, or prophesies is an ancient pattern indeed. In most ancient cultures in the northern hemisphere, we have many examples of stories of underworld goddesses who sit at the first layer of the underworld and interact with the living world. The goddess Sul in Bath, England is a prime example. She is also known as Sulis Minerva, and was a goddess of cursing, blessing, and healing. Glastonbury in England is another place that is an ancient entrance to this first layer of the underworld.

Sadly, these days fantasy has overtaken reality in regards to Glastonbury, and it abounds with Merlins, people dressing as faeries, and various women play-acting in a generic ‘goddess’ community. Glastonbury is an entrance to the realm of death, to the underworld, and to the powers that surface into our world from the underworld: the power of destruction. These days it is covered with a crust of commercial messiahs, wannabe ‘wizards,’ and tons of escapism.

One way to sidestep a lot of this type of ‘crust’ that seems to cover the underworld, and one of the major keys to working with this realm and the

deities, powers, and beings that inhabit this realm, is to work with the beings without attaching 'names' or dogmas to them. One way to do this, and it is an ancient way of working, is to work with and connect with the beings as they appear, without all the dogmatic dressing, and to not work with 'known names' but to address them in relation to their function. A goddess of the underworld is just that. She does not need the names that humans have given her, nor the dressings that they have attached to her. Before we move on, let's just look a bit closer at these different goddesses of the underworld, as you will be soon meeting one.

THE GODDESS IN THE CAVE

The goddess in the cave is an ancient expression of the female deities that reside in this first layer of the underworld. It is a visionary interface that I have used with students for decades as it is so stable and predictable. It is not 'one' goddess that is connected to when magicians work in vision with this being; rather it is the female deity of a particular land that is contacted.

Overall, though, the interface is the same throughout the northern hemisphere (I have no idea if the same pattern exists in the southern hemisphere) and that is to say: cave, goddess, pool or river of water. It seems to be a particular pattern that allows the individual female deity of a particular land to interface through. So for example, if you have been working with the goddess in the cave on your own land for a while and then move to another country, it is likely that the same visionary pattern would work, but the actual being you meet, while still being a goddess, is different. They are heavily interwoven with the landmass, and seem to be expressions of the female power within that land.

By using the stripped-down interface, the magician is able to use that pattern to connect with the goddess in the land where they are and work with them without having to resort to using names/dogmas or human constructed patterns. It is very much a fashion these days to take goddesses out of their natural environment and shoehorn them into a modern role which is often far removed from who and what they actually are. And while some goddesses do 'travel' i.e. you can connect to the exact same goddess regardless of what landmass you are on, there are many who do not travel. The usual rule of thumb is the deeper in the underworld they reside, the more

likely they are to travel. This is for a lot of reasons which we will cover later in another lesson.

The reason the magician connects with these ‘goddesses in the cave’ is that such a connection helps to open up a lot of the underworld for the magician, makes it more accessible, and also can afford a deep level of protection: you work for her, she will work for you. The work trade-off changes somewhat according to where you live and what exact power it is you are tapping into. And even within your own land, there are various layers of these goddesses.

For example, where I live there is a layer of this cave goddess that is very specific to the valley that I live in. If you go just a few miles down the road, she vanishes. But if you go a little deeper into the first layer of the underworld, where I live, you hit another layer of goddess that is specific to the island of Britain, but does not appear, for example, in the USA.

So it would seem we are connecting with various frequencies and more surface expressions of a deeper power, and it is that deeper power that we will look at next.

The Deeper Underworld

Once you pass through the first layer of the underworld and continue moving downward, you come to a deeper layer of the underworld where ancient powers reside and are still accessible to the magician.

These realms work very much along the lines of ‘as above, so below,’ in that the patterns and layers mirror each other. Just as the magician reaches ‘up’ and finds primal deities, mediators of Divinity, angelic beings, etc., so the underworld, too, has its own mirrored layers. The deeper underworld and the powers that reside there mirror the deeper powers of creation that flows into manifestation.

In practical terms of an apprentice and initiate, that means finding and being able to work with powerful deities that once were widely worked with in the ancient world. Although some of these deities still have a presence in their temples in the manifest worlds, their roots and deeper selves

reside in the underworld, anchoring them as they bridge between the past and the present.

The ancient deities, and also the roots of the ancient temples that are still partially or fully operating in the manifest/surface world, create a bridge between their outer existence in the surface world, their original outer structure in the underworld, and their inner templates in the desert. The surface world is a fulcrum for them, and the power flows in a constant stream from the inner world, out into the surface manifest world, and then flows down into the underworld.

This constant stream of energy creates a highway for power and consciousness to travel along. We as living humans can flow into the inner realm as magicians to access the inner temple, and we can also flow down into the underworld to reach the patterns of its original existence. This pathway of power is also utilised by spirits, and this is demonstrated, for example, by the vision of Ayr that you read in Plato.

These pathways can be utilised not only to access these powerful deities and their temples, but they are also highways to realms that these temples and deities are connected to and plugged into. So now you can begin to see how knowledge of this realm is so vital to the work of a magician. They are more than just realms in themselves; they are also highways to the depths of creation and destruction itself.

Rather than ramble on for hours about this realm, it will be easier for you to just visit it in vision, passing through the layers, and going into an ancient temple to stand before one of the very powerful goddesses that reside in this deep realm. This interaction triggers the creation of your deep tap root that anchors you in the depths of the underworld in order to prepare you for the work to come in the future.

Before you get to that practical work I want to also outline another major aspect of this subject matter for you (though it will not be something you visit or work in for quite some times in your studies... for safety's sake), and that aspect is the abyss.

The Abyss

There has been quite a lot written about the abyss over the last century, but most of it is vague, or is written from a place of ‘not knowing,’ where the writer draws on other texts and forms a theory based upon them. Others have written about the Abyss, inspired by Crowley, and place personal psychological meaning to the abyss and the magical act of crossing the abyss. Still others deny it altogether as they have not had any experience of it, and the writings they have read make no sense to them. There are some modern writings out there on the abyss that actually do tackle it from the writers’ direct experience, but for the most part, much of what is readable and truly is about the abyss can be found in ancient and mystical texts.

It is not that magicians don’t know about it: many do but they choose, for good reason, to be silent about it. I thought long and hard about how best to approach this for the apprentice section, as I have written about the abyss before, which has helped some people but has also triggered truly disastrous experiments in others. I came to the conclusion that it would be wise to give the apprentice an overview, with the appropriate health warnings, so that the apprentice at least has a basic understanding of what it is, why it is, and how it works.

Later, in your adept level of training, you will learn how to work in the abyss and how to cross the abyss, and most important of all, why a magician crosses the abyss, what it does, and what effect it has on the rest of your life. Too many people play around magically in and around the abyss, and the result of such curiosity and experimentation tends invariably to result in death or mental illness.

So what is the abyss? Moving away from all previous writings, the following is what I have discovered through decades of magical visionary work. My earliest encounter with the abyss was as a young magician. I was working down in the underworld in ritual vision when a being appeared and guided me down a tunnel which opened out over what appeared to be a vast crack that ran through all the worlds. Something within me knew what it was and what I had to do. I knew that what I was about to do could potentially kill me, but I also knew deep inside that it was something I needed to do. I had to step off the cliff I was standing on, and put my trust in my own

soul and in Divinity. I crossed the abyss by stepping out into the nothing and not falling, but reaching the other side. It changed my life in every way possible.

After that event, I spent years exploring and discovering the abyss, and then more years of working in service both down and up in the abyss. I finally had to stop working in the abyss when I hit the menopause, as my body could no longer handle the huge physical and energetic impact that such work involved.

So now let's go over what I found, so that you have a good idea of what it is we are talking about. As an aside, for a time after my first experience, I did not realise that what I was working with was the abyss—it was only after lengthy discussions with Jewish Kabbalists and mystical visionaries that they finally drilled into me what it was I was doing and looking at. In retrospect, I was very lucky to survive unscathed: I was very young and foolish, but I was also well grounded and was working deeply with the Noble Ones. I think I owe my life, or at least my mental health, to their attentive guidance in those early years.

The Highway of the Abyss

The abyss is found in the inner desert, and appears to us in a visionary context as a vast, seemingly bottomless crack in the earth. If you look up (it took me some years to realise that there is an 'up' also) the crack also runs through the 'sky': it is a separation that runs through the whole pattern of the desert.

The other side of the abyss appears misty: the knowledge of what lies beyond is obscured with mist. If you look down the abyss, you will see ledges and tunnels, and sometimes you will also see beings looking back at you. If you look up, it tends to be obscured by mist: most of the time you are only able to see the desert (our own time) and down (our past). And that brings me to the dynamics that flow through this place: up is future, surface is now, down is past. What is coming into formation (life, substance, time) flows down from above, and also concurrently from across the abyss (Divine utterance across the abyss): those two streams of power meet on our side of the

abyss and immediately filter through a pattern which begins the process of shaping something for creation (something you will learn a lot more about in the Initiate section).

When something is breaking down, it stays in the manifest world and sinks into the underworld. If it is a power or energy or being/soul that should not be coming back into manifestation, it sinks deeply into the underworld and finally passes into the abyss. The abyss is a place where manifestation is suspended: beings sleep here, or are bound here, to keep them out of the circulation of physical life or the manifest world.

When a being (or species, even) is or becomes very imbalanced to the point of being overly destructive, it is withdrawn from the cycle of birth/death and is essentially put into storage. This also makes me wonder if this is where the ‘second deathers’ go. The beings found down the abyss are not just humans pulled out of circulation, but also many other types of beings that are destructive and seriously out of balance, or simply do not fit in the pattern of life any more.

Very ancient deities can be found sleeping or even bound into the abyss, as are demonic beings, i.e. beings that are solely destructive and no longer have a role in the composting/necessary destruction process in life, along with the consciousness of ancient dangerous diseases, the spirits of ancient sentient beings that have been taken out of the loop of creation (like some dinosaurs for example)—you get the idea.

The layers of the abyss that are nearest to our layer of the desert (fairly recent past—last few thousand years) have beings that are not fully locked down or sleeping, but they cannot leave the abyss. These beings can be worked with in times of major crisis, as they hold ancient knowledge and have excellent guarding skills. However, a magician who does that really needs to know what they are doing and have a very good reason for doing it. If one of these beings bridges through a human (hitches a ride) and into the manifest world, our world, they can do untold damage: as it is with disease, so it is with these beings. If they have been out of circulation for a few thousand years and are suddenly inadvertently released back into the world, we have no natural immunity to them. The consequences of that can be horrifying.

The abyss has a vast angelic being that is essentially the ‘doorkeeper’ of the abyss. For some reason, some magicians seem to think that this being is

a demon... no it is not, it is just a vastly powerful non-fluffy angelic being that keeps and guards the threshold. When as magicians you come to learn how to work with the abyss, first you will learn to work with this keeper, who will ensure you do what you are supposed to do and don't do what you are not supposed to do.

On the other side of the abyss is the source of Divine Breath: the Universal Power of Divine Being. The other side of the abyss is the realm that has no time, no structure of manifestation; it is a place beyond creation, a place of eternal being, and is the source of the impulse that crosses the abyss and begins its journey into creation and manifestation. Heavy stuff indeed! So let us get back to the topic of the underworld and on to the practical work.

Practical Work

The practical work in this lesson, for the most part, will be visionary work. It is important, really important, for your own safety that you do not step out of the boundaries of the vision and go off exploring on your own. When worked with correctly, this visionary work is perfectly safe and will give you more information on some aspects of the underworld that a pile of books could not. However, if you step outside of or over the thresholds outlined in the vision you are very likely to injure yourself: this is where the apprentice has to be a responsible adult and not a curious, foolish teen.

The act of doing these underworld visions will trigger the establishment and growth of your own 'tap root' that will seat strongly in the underworld, giving you a strong foundation and anchor for your future work. It will, for some, also trigger the slow process of 'remembering' for those of you who have stepped into the inner worlds in other lives. If this triggering happens, do not get hung up on it and start to identify with that remembering. You do not make a big deal out of your childhood memories, and these are the same. It is past; remember and then move on.

Advice: Do these visions when you have time to relax or sleep afterwards. Plan ahead, and ensure that you have plenty of time to process the vision work through your sleep and through your body. After you have been in

the underworld, eat something solid that will ground you. Do this every time you go into the underworld, as it will help your body to deal with the impact.

Have your journal to hand in the room with you so that you can take notes as soon as you come out of vision. Always write up your findings, impressions, and consequent dreams, and also note any bodily effects afterwards, or strange happenings around you. Write them in a computer log so that they can be submitted.

Like all other visions on this course, learn the key elements and steps to the vision before you attempt it. Read it repeatedly, like a story, until you are familiar with each part of the vision. Then and only then, if you wish, record the vision so that you can listen to it as you work and have it guide you. If you do record it, make sure you put in the breaks of silence where you are doing something (like climbing) that will take a bit of time. Do not add anything to it, do not embellish or dress the vision in any way. It is a specific map to follow, not a psychological pathworking.

VISION ONE—THE ACCESS TO DEATH THROUGH THE UNDERWORLD

Before you start the vision, open the directions, see the contacts on the thresholds, and then sit before the central altar with your back to the east, so you are facing west with the central flame before you. Do not lie down for this work: it is very important that you stay awake.

Meditate for a few minutes to still yourself, and when you are ready close your eyes and see the central flame in your inner vision. Hold the clear intention that you are going to go into the underworld to visit the threshold of death. As you watch the flame, an entrance to the land beneath you opens up, and the flame falls down into the underworld.

In vision, stand up and look down the hole that has appeared in the room. It will be dark, and you will just be able to see the light of the flame in the darkness. You will also see rough stone steps leading down into the darkness, and they curl around the hole to form a stone spiral stairway. Step onto the first step, holding your hand to the wall for support, and begin to climb down the steps. Even though it is dark, you will be able to just see enough to climb safely down.

Climb down and down, moving deeper and deeper into the darkness. Take your time and run your hand over the rough stone walls as you climb down, feeling the stone, its moisture, and the occasional tree root. Eventually you come to an area where there is a floor, and an entrance covered in fabric and moss.

Pull the fabric to one side, and step into a cave that seems to be dimly lit by a light of its own and which has a pool of water in it. The water seeps out on the far side of the cave, vanishing down a dark tunnel, and the wall on the opposite side of the cave has a large stone high-backed seat that is naturally formed out of the rock. Upon the seat sits an old woman who is asleep. Her long hair grows into the rock beside her and down into the floor like roots. Around her, upon her lap, in her arms and tucked into her clothing are many creatures and birds, also fast asleep. You also begin to notice the occasional human also sleeping on the floor beside her and curled around her feet, and in the edges of her long cloak that spills out onto the floor.

Tiptoe quietly towards her as you intend to pass by her and into a tunnel that leads deeper into the underworld. As you get closer to her you recognise her: you have already met her, given her a gift and honoured her. When you draw close to her, lean or kneel down and touch the hem of her cloak to honour her: this is the mother, the goddess who holds the threshold between the living land and the underworld. As you touch the hem of her cloak, she opens one eye and looks at you. Bow to her and ask her permission to pass beyond her and into the tunnel of the underworld.

She nods her permission, closes her eye, and goes back to sleep. See the tunnel that leads into the darkness, and as you step into the tunnel, you realise you are walking in ankle-deep water. Walk along the streambed and listen carefully for any sounds that you may hear. Take your time walking down this tunnel.

The tunnel eventually opens out in a vast cavern that holds shallow water and ancient trees growing out of the water. The place is lit with strange green light that flows from the trees, the water, and the very air in this strange place. This underworld forest is the head of the river of death that flows through the underworld and emerges in the plains of death. Wade through the water, walking among the trees, and as you walk, sing. The trees are the guardians of the river, and the thing they love above all else is the

sound of singing. Single lullabies, childhood songs, or simply hum as you weave in and out of the trees. Take your time walking through the forest.

Should you develop a thirst as you walk, do not drink of the water at all. Be disciplined and continue walking. As you make your way further into the underworld forest, you begin to see a faint light that grows brighter the closer you get to it. As you emerge from the forest, you see a large opening, an entrance of the chamber you are in, and it opens out onto a bright, sunny desert where the waters of the underworld come together to form a river. Do not step out of the underworld cavern; do not step over the threshold of the cavern into the desert. Stay within the cavern, but draw close enough that you can see the desert, the river, and everything in that landscape.

As you look out over the desert, see the river flowing from the cavern, and see it flow into the desert and off into the horizon. See people gathered by the river, and look closely at the people. Some will look ‘different’ energetically: they are the angelic beings that work in death and ‘dress up’ to appear human in order to connect with humans more easily. Watch for other beings coming and going; watch what the people do, how they are, how they are reacting, what actions they take, if any. Take as long as you need to observe.

When you are ready to leave, step back and turn around. Look at the vast cavern with the underworld forest and all the water, and look around the edges of the cavern. You will see, off to one side and partially hidden, a rough stone stairway that climbs up the side of the cavern and vanishes up into the darkness. Climb onto the stone stairway and ascend to the top of the cavern. Take your time and watch your step as you climb. Once you reach the top you will find a tunnel with yet more stairs leading up. Climb those too, with the intention of returning to the surface world.

As you climb those steps, you will hear voices or mumbles, and the stone walls of the stairwell begin to turn to compacted earth and tree roots. Climb slowly, and listen as you climb: there are various voices one can find in this space. Some are ancestors in the land; some are faery beings. Do not try to connect with them, just be aware of them as you climb. As you climb, you begin to see light up above you. Climb towards that shaft of light, and you will find yourself emerging out of a hole in your working room. Climb out of the hole and as you step out of it, the hole closes up and all that is left is the central flame burning in the centre.

Before you open your eyes, go over in your mind everything you saw and experienced. Ensure you have recalled the memory, and once you are clear, open your eyes and write down key words or notations in your journal that will remind you once you come to type up the details on computer.

Always, whenever you do involved visions like this, have your journal before you and write down notes as soon as you come out of vision, as often visionary contact fades in the memory much quicker than ordinary memories do. From those notes you can then type up in more detail and keep it in a computer file.

This vision took you down through the cave of the goddess; this is a place you can visit often if you wish, to go be there, talk to her, sleep, wash, learn, observe. When I was a young magician I visited her often, and learned a great deal from talking with her, from watching, or just being there.

From her cave you moved into a slightly deeper part of the underworld, which often appears as a partially submerged underground forest: the head of the river Lethe. This is also a place you can work regularly to observe (nothing more) as spirits of many different species pass through on their journey in and out of death. There are quite a few different rivers that flow from this place, but simply stay with the one that you have worked with and now know. Don't try to over-organize it in your mind—it is tempting to decide what rivers flow out of this place and what their names are (there are quite a few ancient texts about this place). That is a bad road to go down early in your magical training: learn to keep an open mind that is about direct experience, and don't try to map these realms. They will eventually reveal themselves to you directly over time.

The threshold between the underworld forest/cavern and the plains/river of death is a good place to go and observe. You can watch the dead as they go through their various processes, and also observe the angelic beings that work in depth from a safe distance. Do not be tempted at this stage in your training to step over that threshold. Be patient, learn to observe, and learn to rein in the curiosity or impulse to step over into the death realm.

Notice that you did not return the way that you came. This is slowly introducing you to a very interesting dynamic in visionary work whereby you always have to take your time going to a realm, letting the

body, mind and spirit adjust to the different energies, and also ensuring that the right steps take you to the right place. But coming back sometimes does not need to take such a convoluted route. You needed to go through the cave of the goddess to trigger her protection, but to get home from the underworld, you simply go ‘up.’

So now let us move on to the second vision in this lesson, which is to go deeper into the underworld and connect with the very ancient and powerful goddess power that resides there. Notice that in this lesson you are connecting with goddesses and not gods: you are learning about the power of the vessel before going on to learn everything that the vessel contains. There are male powers also in the underworld, of course, and once you have learned one side of the coin, then you will learn the other and balance the two together.

VISION TWO—ACCESSING THE ROOT ANCIENT TEMPLES

This vision takes you down into a very ancient layer of temple culture so that you can interact with the consciousness still residing there. As an aside, these ancient temples are also found in the inner desert: the underworld version is on ‘our’ side of the fence, the remnants of the physical manifestation of the temple. And the temple found in the desert is the remains of the inner construct of the same temple that is found in the underworld—the inner desert version is the back room, so to speak, of the physical temple.

The more you work in the desert and the underworld (and upper worlds) as the course goes on, you will find that mirror images of places, beings, and people appear not only in the various realms, but also in the desert. To access the manifest history or future potential of a place or being, you go to the realms that hold the outer pattern. To access the timeless inner construct, spirit, or consciousness of a place or being, you go to the desert.

Over the span of the course, you will learn carefully how to access these different realms individually and eventually learn how to work with them together. But to stay solid, safe and sane, you need to learn, visit, and interact with these different aspects in slow, careful steps.

This next visit is a key step in that process. This specific ancient temple that you will be visiting has roots far back in human history, and over the millennia has become a composite made up of different temples that worked

with the same power. This composite action happens to places and also beings when there is a vast span of time where they have been or still are active. So for example, the powers you experience and interact with in this temple will be recognisable when you then go to visit (in the flesh) some of the still-standing very ancient temples that worked with the same deep goddess power.

It took me a while to figure this out. After working in depth for a few years with these places, and then going to an ancient temple site, I immediately recognised the power signature and aspects of the building. But then I went to an ancient site of the same power but in a different land, and the same thing happened. It took me a while to realise that over time, as the inner aspects of the temples sink into the underworld, those that were working with the same power fused together somehow and became a 'root' temple.

In the vision I will not name the goddess you are going to work with, as there is more than one name for her. But once you have worked with her, you will recognise her in slightly different forms, and one of those forms will gravitate to you in your magical work.

The other thing to understand about working with this deep temple is that this particular vision is the one that really roots you into the underworld and gives you a powerful anchor to work with. The deeper you go 'down' in your practice, the further you will then be able to go 'up' in your ritual visionary work.

THE VISION

Prepare yourself in the same way that you did for the previous vision, but for this vision sit with your back to the central altar, facing north. The ground will open up the same way, but this time it will be the north flame that falls down into the underworld.

In vision, follow the flame in exactly the same way, and take the same route through the cave of the goddess and through the underworld forest. When you get to the forest, walk through the water again with the intention of going to the deep, ancient temple of the goddess in the underworld. (Your clear intent and focus allows the entrances to appear in the vision—the beings know from your intent where you want to go.)

As you walk through the underworld forest, keep a lookout for the temple guardian. This guardian can appear in many different forms, but you will know them when you see them. When you find the guardian, bow, tell them who you are, and ask permission to enter into the deep underworld temple of the goddess. The guardian will look at you, and you will notice that they have quite a few eyes around their form that open and look at you in detail. The guardian will see that you have already worked with the goddess in the cave and are therefore suitable to access deeper into the underworld.

When the guardian is happy with what they see (that you are who you say you are) the guardian will either point you to a hidden entrance, or they will take you by the hand and lead you to an entrance you would not have seen had you not been shown it. The entrance will have water from the forest flowing into it, and will most likely be partially submerged. Get into the water and dive down under the water, swimming forward towards a light that will have appeared. You will swim under the entrance and emerge in a tunnel with low light and lots of ancient paintings on the walls of strange-looking demon guardians.

Stand up in the water and follow the tunnel, staying within the shallow water, and look at the paintings as you walk. As you follow the tunnel, you will notice that the water is starting to get deeper again. Continue to walk until it has become too deep, and you can no longer see anything in front of you. At that point, dive back down into the water, swimming forward underwater again towards a light.

When you reach the light, swim up to the surface and you will find yourself in an underground lake with stone steps at the side that you can use to climb out. Once you are out and have stood up, you realise you are standing at an entrance to a vast stone temple with a doorway so big you can barely see the capstones. It looks like it was built for giants.

Pass through the entrance and walk into the rectangular outer court which has huge columns on either side of you. As you continue, you see a slightly smaller doorway before you with vast wooden carved doors covered in strange signs and symbols, faces and shapes. Place your hands upon the door so that the door can feel you. After a moment, the doors swing slowly open and you feel like you are propelled forward with an invisible push from behind.

You are pushed into a vast inner sanctum of the temple. It is cubic in shape, with a ceiling almost a hundred feet high. At the far end sits a vast statue upon a throne. The statue is of a black lioness goddess seated upon a stone throne, with two bronze doors between her feet and a bowl of fire before her. The power emanating from this statue is so strong that it takes your breath away. Take a moment to simply stand in its presence and let your mind, spirit and body adjust to the power of this goddess.

Slowly walk to the feet of the statue and touch them lightly with respect and recognition. As you touch the foot it moves, and you realise this is not a statue but a living being. You step back, and the doors between her feet open: out walks a priest or priestess of this temple, and they stand before you. Bow to the priest/priestess, tell them your name, who you are, what time you come from, which land, city, and that you are there to make connection with this ancient place. Tell them that you are studying as an apprentice in magical training and wish to learn.

The priest/priestess may talk to you briefly, and try to remember what they say. The contact then points down to your feet and asks you to take off your shoes or socks. Even if you are physically sat with nothing on your feet in this vision, see your everyday footwear on you in vision, and take them off until you are standing on the stone floor in bare feet. Feel the sense of your skin on the stone. Feel the temperature (hot or cold?) and feel the energy of this place through your feet.

The contact then points up to the roof. Be aware of your upper body in the surface world while you are still standing in the underworld. Imagine your upper body in the surface world and your feet/legs in the underworld: get a sense of stretching between the two places. Take as long as you need to in order to get this sense, and don't worry about the visuals—simply recover the feeling or sense of this stretched position: your feet upon the stone in the underworld and your body in the surface world; imagine it as if you were stood up.

Once you have a sense of the stretch, now bring your focus back to the contact and the goddess before you. The priest/priestess tells you that this ancient lioness goddess is vital for the northern hemisphere of the earth: she is the guardian and protector of balance, or Ma'at. She is fierce, destructive, and yet compassionate and healing: whatever is needed to bring balance.

The contact reaches out and gets a hold of your left arm, and begins to draw out a small number of shapes, sigils or hieroglyphs on your skin. It will be a fairly simple shape or shapes, and work very hard to see them and remember them. Once that is done, the contact leads you back to the foot of the statue and asks you to once more place your hands upon the foot of the goddess. Keep your hands there and feel her power: it is a very specific power that has a very distinct feel or sense to it. Remember that feeling or sense.

When you are ready, remove your hands, bow to her, and step back. Kneel down and look at the floor. It is dusty. Write your full name in the dust, the name you were born with. In the dust you see a small but very sharp blade. Pick it up, cut your finger, and drip a few drops of blood on your name written in the dust: you are leaving your unique identity at her feet, deep in the underworld.

Once you have done that, the great goddess moves, leans over, and places her hand by you in order for you to step up onto her hand. The priest/priestess bows to you and tells you that you can come back here as often as you like simply to be in the presence of this power, to root yourself, and also to come here if you wish to learn about your own need for balance: the priesthood here will place within you the knowledge that you need in order to facilitate that balance. That knowledge will then appear in your mind unbidden when it is needed.

Step onto the hand of the goddess, and hold on as she holds you up to her face. Feel her lion breath upon your face; see the endless stars in her eyes, the sharp power of her teeth, and the softness of her fur. She looks into your eyes and blows gently over you: the breath of the goddess. She then holds you up, higher and higher to the roof of the temple, where you see a small opening to a stair well cut into the stone. Climb onto the stairs and ascend without looking back.

As you climb, you come to a break in the steps which you recognise as the stairway from the underworld forest to the surface world. Keep climbing up and up until you emerge back into your workspace, and step gently back into your body. Before you open your eyes, once more remember the shapes that were drawn upon your arm. Once you have a sense of them, open your eyes and draw them in your journal.

Once you are finished and are ready to close the workspace down, when you come to stand before the northern altar, before you blow out the candle, stand for a moment in silence with your eyes open. Be aware of the sense of your feet upon the stone, deep in the underworld before the goddess, and your upper body here in the surface world. From now on, every time you still yourself to light the first candle in the ritual space, do this brief meditation of your feet on the stone in the underworld and your body in the temple.

Tasks

The shapes that were written on your arms may very possibly become working shapes for you in the future. For some, simply having them written on their skin in vision is enough; for others the images will be useful in meditation or to use as seals in work related to that specific goddess power, or they may be shapes that directly mediate power to you for you to work with. They can also be ‘marks’ left upon you that will identify you in other realms and mark you as ‘protected by the great lioness goddess.’ These are magical working marks. So you need to learn what to do with them

The first step is to write them in your journal and then redraw them over and over until you can draw them from memory, accurately. If you cannot work out what the shapes were and cannot retrieve the memory, don’t panic. That also happened to me years ago. Many years later I saw them on a temple wall in a ruin that I was exploring while on holiday. The wall was full of different symbols but two, very insignificant ones, suddenly lit up and I remembered. A year later, it became very apparent to me what they were doing on me, why they were there, and what they did. They had been asleep up to that point, and then they suddenly leapt to action. So just go with the flow.

Once you have a clear image of them in your mind and can draw them with ease, then you need to do a series of readings to find out what the next step for them is. If you get no clear readings and cannot interpret them properly, just give it time for the dust to settle, and then revisit the reading exercise in the future. But do not skip over this task of doing the readings. Not only is it important to know what to do with the symbols, but you must prac-

tice your reading skills regularly: don't be put off from lack of skill.... it does not drop out of the sky, it comes with practice and focus.

Readings

Use the tree of life layout for the following questions and write up each reading on your computer log.

- Are these symbols already active in my energy field?
- Do I need to do anything with them at this point in my training?
- Do I need to draw them out and place them near the north altar?
- Can I use them as a protective seal (on a talisman, or on a door for example)?
- Should I just leave off working with them for now and let them surface later?

If all of the answers are negative, then you simply wait and move on in your studies. Not everyone works with these signs; simply having them on your inner pattern is enough. And always with magic.... if you are in doubt, wait—do not take a magical action if you are not clear about what you are doing or it does not feel right. Learn to work with your instincts.

Summary

There are many different aspects to the underworld, and in magical terms you have barely scratched the surface. These vast realms can take lifetimes to learn about in full, but the key aspects that you have learned about in this lesson will give you a good, simple, but very powerful foundation to stand upon as a magician. The cave of the goddess, the threshold between the underworld forest and death, and the deep temple are major elements in magic, and before you go on to learn about any other aspect of working in

the underworld (or the abyss) you need to have a strong solid connection to these places.

Practice

Go into both visions each week for four weeks. (You should still be doing your daily meditations too!) Get used to going in and out of these places, learn to observe, to acknowledge the contacts and be respectful of the goddesses you encounter there: these are ancient and very powerful beings, so watch your manners. They are not figments of your or anyone else's imagination, and they operate in very different cultural ways to what we are used to. Respect is a major thing for these goddesses, and any disrespect will potentially be met with aggression (which will affect your physical as well as mental health).

The priesthood contact in the deep temple will probably be willing to guide you gently in how to be around these goddesses, but do not treat that contact as 'support' or badger them with questions, or ask them to do things for you that you should do yourself. They will immediately close down on you and 'sorry' does not cut any ice in this place. Your job is to learn to get in and out of these places, to learn how to be there and observe only (no work, at all), and to learn how to stretch yourself (feet in the underworld). Do not try and skip ahead in your actions, by exploring or pushing boundaries in this deep place—you will regret it.

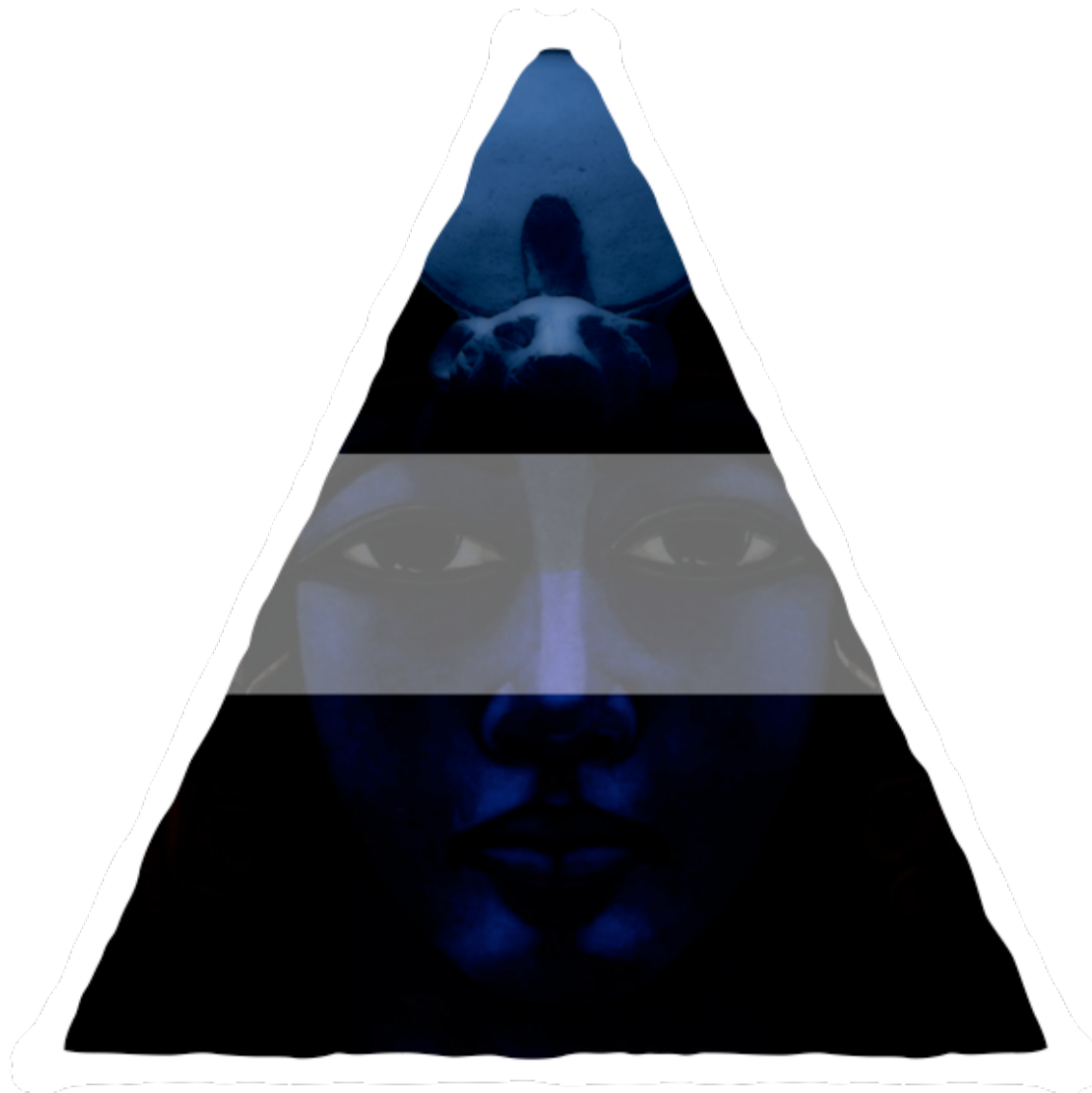
GODDESS

You may, after working with these visions a few times, come across an image or a statue of a goddess that triggers the same sense/feeling of the power of the lioness goddess in the underworld. Do not go searching for one, but should one cross your path, take her home and have her in the north of your working space. You do not need to do anything special (it is best and safest at this point just to let her be) other than find a space for her, cleanse the space with frankincense smoke, and occasionally burn frankincense before the image.

This is about tuning, clearing and establishing. There is no deity worship—you are a magician, not a priest. But there is a deep respect, honour, and awareness of her presence. Rather than thinking in religious terms, think in terms of having a very old professor with old-fashioned ways of doing things sat in the corner of your room. You would make sure they are happy, listen to them with respect, and treat them with the honour they deserve: she is the elder of all elders.

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