



QUAREIA—THE INITIATE

Module IV—Birth, Death, and the Underworld, Part II

Lesson 1: The Vision of Death

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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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Lesson 1: The Vision of Death

In Apprentice Module IV you looked at death in terms of myth, magical pattern, and text to give you a background understanding of the various facets and dynamics of death from a magical perspective. In this module you will look more actively at death from a magical perspective. Throughout the module you will work in vision and ritual, and there will also be further learning and research to give you a deeper layer of the understanding of death, the Underworld, and birth.

Previously you looked at mythologies of death from Egypt and various other cultures in order to gain an overview of how death was approached within the ancient Mysteries. In this lesson we will look at the *Death Vision*, what it shows, how it works, and how as a magician you operate within that Mystery.

Working with the magical Death Vision is a major stage for the initiate and part of the process of the magician's *death in life* stage. Rather than being a single initiatory ritual, the process of *death in life* for a magician works in octaves: it is something one goes through in different forms and layers depending on one's steps and stages.

Part of this process is visionary. The rest visits the individual magician at various stages on their path and can sometimes manifest as a very close

shave with death. It can also manifest in the form of dreams, memories, and deep understandings.

Like all magic you never completely 'get it'; rather you move in spirals of ever-deepening awareness which bring up new and more profound facets of magic with every step you take. Just when you think you have got it, another layer of learning comes along to sweep you off your feet and tell you that in fact you know nothing. We are constant beginners, all of us, and the more we delve, the more we find. Magic is an endless, bottomless cauldron that we can spend a lifetime exploring and still only scratch its surface.

Doing the Death Vision as an initiate action triggers the process of really learning about death rather than just reading about it. As you progress you will find that the dynamics, powers, and actions within the Death Vision are also the same powers that you work with in ritual and magical vision: all magic tracks back to the vast powers of creation and destruction.

The vision you will work with in this lesson is a pattern that sits on top of the Ancient Egyptian Mysteries, but is not directly *of* those Mysteries: the Death Vision is something that grew out of that phase of development. It is something worked with by the Greeks, and you will see many references to aspects of the Death Vision in various Greek and Roman texts. Once you have read about and worked with the Death Vision a few times, you will also start to spot aspects of it in various other cultures: different vocabulary, same power and process.

The one thing to remember with the Death Vision is it is not a tourist site. You do not go there to simply gawk and satisfy your own curiosity. After you have worked with it in this lesson it is something you will keep in your visionary toolbox for future work. And you *will* be put to work with it at some point. It can be used in disasters when a lot of people are dying at once, or it can be used to work with people who are close to you, like friends and family who have just died. You can also do the vision in your mind while sitting beside someone who is dying. The resonant effect of the vision done in your own mind will also affect the dying person.

This vision uses a lot of energy, and quite a few things can go wrong if it is overused or misused, so use your common sense. Don't get evangelistic about it and run around 'saving everyone' in death. For the most part the processes and stages that people go through in death are their business and their own path of development. The magician intervenes

only when it is truly necessary¹ or they are strongly pulled by inner contacts.²

In the past I have been called to work when a large group of people have suddenly been killed. Other times I have been told to mind my own business. I have assisted various members of my family, lovers, and friends through death; other times I was told to keep out of their way and let them get on with it. So it is very individual to the person who has died and also to the magician.

When in doubt, always default to common sense and feeling into the situation, a skill you began learning in the last module. Often all the distressed dead need is time to adjust. When they are in a total mess, then is the time for intervention, particularly if indicated by inner contacts.

As an adept this vision can also be used to bridge a living person into death to say their goodbyes to someone they have lost. This is done when the living are not healing naturally from the shock of their loss.

Before we get to the practical visionary work let us go through the stages of the Death Vision and look at its different aspects. Then when you do the vision you will have a good idea of what you are looking at. But remember, the visual presentations were created by generations of magicians and magical priests; it is a *vocabulary* that we can use to *interface* with. The dead experience it in their own unique way. In my book *Magical Knowledge II* there is a chapter dedicated to this subject, but if you do not have the book, then the information you need is here.

¹Remember the power of necessity.

²You just end up there without meaning to.

The Death Vision in detail

The River

The Death Vision begins with a long walk across a hot, flat desert landscape.³ In the distance is a river which the dead person is drawn to. Other people are often walking too, and some can be found sitting by the river. The dead person will be very thirsty and they rush towards the river to drink of its water. As they drink it begins to affect their ability to remember their newly-lost life. The more they drink, the more they forget.

This is why initiates in the Mysteries were trained to control their thirst and their inner actions. It was drummed into them from the very beginning of their advanced training not to drink of the River of Death. This allows them, when they die, to cross through death and retain the memories of who they were. The training of self-discipline and valuing necessity over desire in the Mysteries is far more than discipline for its own sake: it is a vital aspect of navigating the inner realms.

The act of not drinking and thus remembering is one of the ways an adept becomes an *inner* adept: they remember, and as such can choose to carry that knowledge deep into the inner worlds or to return to life in gnosis to do a job. The more initiates of the Mysteries were taught how to remember, the more *reincarnation with intent* became commonplace.

I do not think this is always healthy; some forgetting and letting go is important for the soul's development. The continuance from one life to the next in a conscious line of work can become corrupted very quickly.

The balance for an adept is to drink only a tiny bit from the river, which lets you keep enough memory to recall your hard-earned wisdom and knowledge. The tiny sips will, however, wipe away most memories of partners, loved ones, worldly power, etc. This will allow the soul to move forward and understand the deeper rules of attachment: one must not be attached to anything or anyone.

When you die, all the people you loved no longer exist for you. For your sake and theirs you must let go and move on. By letting go you

³Familiar?

eventually will be able to reconnect with these people under different circumstances and different forms of relationships, but only if it is appropriate.

At this stage of the vision a person sits at the side of the river and ponders their lost life: they begin the process of shedding and accepting. Often angelic beings will make themselves available to help people through this stage of the transition. These beings guard the Bridge and the River, allowing only those who should to cross.

These beings will often cross-dress so as not to frighten people. They often appear as their aunt Betty, or as Jesus, Buddha, or whichever Deity, saint, or family member the deceased person would reach out to. This is not to deceive them; this is only to help those who are so traumatized that they cannot move forward without real, practical help. And angels appearing in their own guise would frighten the socks off most people, so they dress up.

In some cultures a dead person is held *in vigil* and priests or priestesses recite a guide to them, telling them what to look out for, which beings do what, and what to avoid. The Tibetan culture has this sort of guidance in their death texts which are read to the dead person's body—don't forget, dead people can often still perceive communication to their bodies for a short while after death.

I encountered a good example of cross-dressing beings in some inner work I did for a family a few years ago. A young friend of my daughter had a snowboarding accident and ended up with severe injuries. He was in a deep coma and the hospital informed his parents that he would not recover. They planned to wait a week and then turn off the machines that were keeping him alive.

My daughter asked if we could sit in meditation when they turned off the machines and do the Death Vision for him. I said yes. The day before this was due to happen I was suddenly told by inner contacts to sit down with my daughter and do the Death Vision straight away—so we did.

I saw the boy standing by the river. He was in shock. He refused to move in any way. He would not believe he was dead and refused my efforts to get him to move forward to cross the Bridge: crossing the Bridge would enable him to move on to the next, deeper stage of death.

In desperation I asked one of the angelic beings for help. A few seconds later a beautiful young girl with rather large breasts strutted over

the Bridge towards the boy. His eyes nearly popped out of his head. He forgot his fears and immediately agreed to take her arm and walk across the Bridge with her, so off he went. The angelic being had dressed as a beautiful young woman to assist this boy. We later found out that he died naturally just as we were doing the Death Vision, thus saving his family from the terrible trauma of having to turn him off.

Back to the side of the river. At this stage people are often confused, bewildered, and angry. They are angry that death was not what they expected: there was no choir of angels to herald them into heaven and no endless supply of ice cream, sunshine, and all the other trivial things that were promised to them...yes, people can be that dumb. So they sit at the side of the river and wait. At this stage some of them realize that their imagination can take them back to the people they left behind. Some become particularly skilled at this and refuse to move further into death, choosing instead to haunt their lost loved ones or their lost property.

The longer they stay in death, the more the living world becomes a sort of inner world to them; that is to say, where they are becomes their total reality and the living world is accessed through their imagination. For us it is the other way round.

It is at this stage where you also sometimes find people who are in deep comas. They have a foot in death and a foot in life. They hang between the two and while their body is still alive in the living world their spirit sometimes begins the death journey and they find themselves at the side of the River. They cannot go any further until their body is dead. So they hang out, confused and afraid.

They have to choose whether go back or let go of their body. If they cannot go back, if the body is too damaged, then they must learn to let go and allow their body to die.

The Sands

Some do not make it to the River; rather they become trapped in the Sands⁴ where they will stay for however long it takes them to slowly unravel. This often happens when a person was completely shut down in life and clung on to everything, or if they were totally out of control in some way, or if their spirit is unable or too weak to make the journey through death. They are held in the sands of restriction until they begin to move towards balance within themselves.

⁴Restriction.

However this process is not clear and straightforward: I have seen all sorts of beings and human spirits trapped in the Sands, and the reason is not clear at all. Usually when I get too close to them an angelic being tells me to go away and mind my own business. I am naturally curious as I want to learn, but sometimes we need to know boundaries and not interfere. Sometimes actions taken through curiosity can have far-reaching effects, and in such cases you are usually steered away or a guardian will confront you. When that happens, know to leave well alone.

The Bridge

The Bridge is a crucial part of the Death Vision; if a dead person doesn't cross the Bridge in one way or another they cannot continue with the death process. These people appear to stay at the River and can access the living world, which means they are ghosts. They remain frozen in a half-life world somewhere between life and death.

Crossing the River by way of a bridge is our way of seeing a process whereby the spirit severs connections with life and commits to moving forward in their cycle of development. Most spirits cross when they are ready, but some sleep in the Sands⁵ while others vanish without crossing.⁶

The Bridge can appear to us as being guarded by angelic beings. They stand on either side of the entrance and act as gatekeepers, keeping out those who for whatever reason must not cross.

As magicians we can cross the Bridge safely, though it is best not to return that way. Once we cross the Bridge, if we wish as living beings to come out of the vision, we have to exit either from the top of the Mountain or continue and complete the whole cycle of rebirth.

The reason we do not return over the Bridge is that there is always the risk of some being who does not belong in life hitching a ride on you unnoticed. To avoid such cases, which do indeed happen, be sure either to climb the Mountain or pass through an angelic being or a threshold protected by, and created of, angelic consciousness. You can do this by approaching one of the beings working in the Death Vision and asking them to let you pass through them to get home. The thresholds of the Mountain and the Abyss are protected thresholds which only allow those who should to pass.

⁵*Sleepers.*

⁶I have no idea where they go, I have never followed them.

The Bridge is portrayed in Egyptian texts as the Scales: the Bridge is a *fulcrum point* where the next stage of the spirit's journey is determined by their tread upon the Bridge. The Bridge itself is a being that *weighs* their footfall.

The Plains

As the spirit begins its journey towards the Mountains it enters into a phase of letting go at a much deeper level. The spirit's physical appearance, and all that was attached to that form, begins to dissolve as they walk across the Plains towards the high mountains. This often appears to us as things falling off the person as they walk. They may appear to drop baggage, clothing, heavy weights, even limbs as they draw closer and closer to the Mountain. This is described by the Egyptians as the phase of the *choppers*: beings who cut things from you as you pass by.

While the spirit is in this phase, anything not dealt with by the River will be forcibly cut away from them. Some will be very disorientated and will be drawn by instinct to the mountains before them. The Bridge and the walk to the mountains is like a filter for spirits: some are torn apart,⁷ some are already clear of their last life and are ready to climb, some know what they are doing and can maintain some semblance of their last lives without being held back by it,⁸ and some continue to transform.⁹

The Mountain

The Mountain is the final hurdle that the soul must encounter within the Death Vision. The Mountain is the deep spiritual programming and the spiritual evolution that has happened to a person during their lives. Any religion they have been raised with, any cultural baggage they may have, and any deep-seated ideals are challenged at this point. The more spiritual evolution there has been in a person's life, the less steep of a climb the Mountain becomes.¹⁰

This manifests in a couple of ways: the more dogma is entrenched in a person, the higher the Mountain is and the harder it is to climb. Once a person begins to climb they will start to hear many voices, some reciting sacred text, some praying, some political voices, some cultural voices, and some of their own ponderings. The voices will be loud and annoying

⁷Second Death.

⁸The goal of the magician.

⁹Those encountering the choppers.

¹⁰The Ladder.

as they try to climb beyond the programming that happened during their lifetime.

When the person hears the voices they will begin to be aware of them as something *outside* of them: they are things they acquired during their lifetimes when they had a body, but they are not part of them. The awareness that such thoughts are not of the spirit but a product of humanity can be a shock to some people—and the harder the shock, the harder the climb.

Such a letting go is probably the hardest: it is releasing everything you have ever held deep in your consciousness as being real, as being right. It shows a person the falsehood of their society, their religion, and their reasoning. It is a frightening and exhausting experience that weighs heavily on the shoulders of a person who is struggling with such a difficult transition.

Some do not make the climb and fall off part way up; others are picked off by beings if they have tried to force their way through the stages of death by magic—remember the spells from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*?

By the time the spirit reaches the top of the Mountain they are exhausted and ready for sleep. There are many beings who work in this section of the Death Vision. Their duty is to guard, nurture, and prepare the soul for the renewal of life, for service in the inner worlds, or for passage deeper into Divinity.

The top of the Mountain appears as a plateau with a grassy flat area where people lie down to rest. The beings wander in among the sleeping people, singing to them and stroking them as they sleep—weaving them into a pattern. The spirit lies down and the angelic beings arrange them so they can sleep comfortably. They are laid out in a ritual position of one arm outstretched and the opposite leg outstretched. The other leg and arm are bent into the body. This position can be seen on some traditional tarot decks as a man curled round the Wheel of Life. It is also mirrored in some decks in the Hanged Man.

Spirits who are not going to reincarnate, who are going to pass into the inner worlds in service as an inner contact or teacher or step deeper into Divinity, do not lie down. They are urged to a far, dark side of the plateau where the Mountain falls away down a bottomless crevice or Abyss. The spirit stands on the edge of the Abyss and makes the ultimate initiation move by stepping off the cliff. Each spirit pulled to this place will have practised this action many times during their life in visions.

The spirit steps out into the Mystery of the Abyss and vanishes into the mist. They will emerge in the inner worlds, ready to work or teach and guide humanity in a spirit of service, or they will step off the cliff and fully cross the Abyss to join with Divinity.

This is also a get-off point for you as a visionary should you wish to exit the Death Vision with esoteric purpose. By going through the Death Vision to this point and then stepping off into the Abyss, you fully complete the death initiation of the ancients. But rather than cross the Abyss, you will emerge in the sanctuary of the Inner Library.

The Awakening into Rebirth

At some point all the angels face east as the sun rises and they begin to call out the names of those spirits whom they have guarded to awaken. The spirits awaken and are immediately pushed down the opposite side of the Mountain, which is a gentle, grassy slope.

The spirits roll round and round as they tumble down the hill towards an Abyss guarded by an archangel. The angel appears as a woman with hair that flows in all directions, and her long arms reach out to slow the spirits as they roll down the hill. This angel is also a deity, and we know her as Ananke.

Once they come to a halt the spirits uncurl and walk to the edge of the Abyss. The angel holds a protective arm out to stop them falling as they explore the power of this place. As they look over the Abyss they slowly become aware of potential lives that could relate to them. There is no past or present, as such concepts have no place where there is no matter. But all the lives that are within their field appear on the other side of the Abyss, and they can watch them.

The spirit fixes on one life that seems to connect with them more than the others. It is not a conscious choice but an instinctive one. All the cultural and religious programming that would have affected such a choice has long gone: all that is left is deep spiritual reaction and instinct.

Once the life has been chosen the angel removes her arm and the spirit falls into a whirling mass of air that appears like a whirlwind. The soul falls down and down, swirling round the directions as it falls towards a couple who are making love.

Now that you have an idea of the vocabulary and stages of this Death Vision, it is time for you to do the vision yourself. Walking through death

and stepping off the top of the Mountain is a major step for the initiate. Do this vision when you are not tired and when you will not be disturbed. And ensure that you have the basic map of the vision in your head so you can find your way there without forgetting: as with all visions in this course, learn the key stages by heart. To make it easier, as this can be a difficult vision, I will outline this vision in simple stages, as you have enough experience by now fill in the gaps.

The Death Vision

Set up your workspace, light the lights, open the gates, and do the Fulcrum ritual. When you are ready, sit down before the central altar and be still. Once you are still, start the vision.

Go to the Underworld Forest via the cave with the goddess in it. Walk alongside the waters until they form a river and flow out into the Desert over the Underworld threshold. Step over the threshold into the desert scene and watch people walking towards the River.

Go to the side of the River. Observe people waiting, and look for the Bridge. When you see the Bridge and its guardians, watch people crossing over the Bridge. Sit at the side of the River for a while and think about how it is necessary to let go of everything and everyone upon death. Think about your Scales: what you need to rebalance in your life and what you need to let go.

When you are ready, get up and go to the Bridge guardians. Ask them to let you over the Bridge while you are still in life. As you cross the Bridge, think about how you balance your life and any changes you still need to make: you are *walking the Scales*.

When you get to the other side, walk towards the Mountains and observe any people walking near you. When you reach the bottom of the Mountain, start climbing the path up the side of the slope. Pay close attention to what you see and hear, and how difficult or easy it is for you to climb.

When you reach the top, observe the people lying down and observe what the angels do around the people. Ask the angel if you can stand and watch people rolling down into life. If they allow it, when you are

finished one of the angels will point into the distance to you, to the edge of the Mountain obscured by mists. Walk towards the mists. As you walk through the mists you will come to steep cliff edge. You will not be able to see what is around you at all: all of your vision will be obscured. You will have to step out and take the risk.

As you step out you will find yourself stepping over a threshold and into a sanctuary that is a part of the Inner Library. The sanctuary is like a cave church or temple, with many lanterns hanging from the ceiling and a stone altar that you have to walk round. The sanctuary has many men and women there who are of a priesthood. They may ignore you or greet you. Commune with them, and when you are ready walk through the doors at the far end of the sanctuary, which will take you into the main Inner Library. From there, make your way back to your work space.

The reason this vision is so cut down is not only to give you easy references without too much to remember, but also to let you have your own experiences. This is the first real step towards crossing the Abyss, which you will do later in the course: it is the first step in that process and trains your spirit for the bigger leap to come.

As soon as you come out of vision, write your notes in your journal and later write up a full summary on computer of what you experienced. If you are being mentored, this will be assessed. If not, it will still be a valuable record for you to look back on for your future work.

This is not a vision to do regularly, but it is something you need to maintain understanding and proficiency in, as you will be called to do it in service from time to time. Use it wisely and don't let yourself devolve into inner tourism or develop a 'saviour' mentality with it.

Task: Research

Look back over the various texts on death that you have read, and the images from ancient Egyptian and other sources around the theme of death. Take your time with this and look deeply. Once you have done the vision, the knowledge of its Mysteries will be embedded within you. Looking back over the texts will help you gain a deeper understanding of what happens during this process. Just remember that each culture has its own vocabulary, but if you look closely you will the same dynamics in action. Take your own notes and keep images so that you can keep going back to them, as the understanding of this death process will deepen within you over time.

QUAREIA

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