30   The Art and Science of Oracles

Since prehistoric times mankind has wanted to find ways to solve the problems he faced or to peer into the future and see how a situation would develop.   The basic reasons for this are doubts and fears because of uncertainty.   Essentially people often found it difficult to make a decision about what to do in circumstances where they considered the outcome particularly important.   So they sought a method of obtaining advice from a wise man, shaman, or possibly a sign from the environment that would provide a clue as to the best course of action.

The wise man or shaman also often turned to some way of recognizing a clue in the world of that moment.   In a hunting and gathering society, it sometimes became a practice to kill game and inspect its liver or entrails.   A member of such a society had a trained eye to observe the movements of animals, subtle changes in the weather, and other indications of "which way the wind was blowing".   In ancient China the tortoise was a specially respected animal, because of its longevity and ability to hibernate in creative ways.   So experts devised a system of using the plastron (flat lower belly part of the tortoise shell) as a tablet on which they carved an oracle question and then applied hot coals to the shell until it cracked.   They prepared the plastron before hand by drilling it thinner in a location so that the crack would not be totally random.   They could then get a crack that indicated at least a yes or a no answer.

From prehistoric times children and adults devised games and toys for amusement.   In certain types of games -- particularly board games -- they found that the "field" of the board and the playing pieces as well as the random method of using knucklebone dice or throwing sticks added a random element within a structure that mimicked life in many ways.

The ancient Egyptian Senet Game Board was ideal for this, because it had 30 squares, and a pathway for moving pawns that resembled a journey.   Symbolic images became associated with the squares, and these were then associated with various "gods".   A "god" in ancient Egypt was called a "neter".   This word is the same as our modern word "nature", and meant that the "god" represented an archetype or principle of Nature.   Thus the game board became a miniaturized map

of the World we live in, not just recording mountains and rivers, towns, and temples, but the spiritual layout of the ecosystem.

The fundamental principle of ancient Egyptian civilization (and many other ancient cultures) was that the universe is a wholeness.   It was a holistic vision.   It also included the idea that the whole universe is represented in every part of the universe, large or small.   You could see a world in a grain of sand.   All you needed was close observation and a heightened level of intuition (the ability to grasp the whole within the part).   This notion has arisen again in modern science with the discovery of holography, a technological outgrowth of the scientific principle of phase conjugation, a major insight into how nature works that people would do well to learn more about.

Another principle the ancients discovered is that wisdom is present everywhere.   It is just a matter of opening the mind, and every speck of creation is a pathway to illumination and wisdom.

The weirdness of quantum mechanics is actually present everywhere. We discussed how the double-slit experiment reveals that very small particles reveal a non-local quality as they pass through the slits.   They form into wavy bands.   The individual particles are distributed in an apparent completely random fashion onto a screen, but over time the individual locations of the particles form into an orderly wave pattern. Mathematically this pattern is called a wave function.   It is completely orderly, but the individual locations of the particles as they arrive are completely random.   This identity of order and chaos is quite remarkable and boggles the mind.   Yet it is found that when a system moves from order into chaos, periodic orderliness is always present at subtle levels. Orderliness is found within chaos, and chaos is found within order.   They are forever in balance, and this gives the universe a dynamic quality of change while maintaining an underlying orderliness that never varies.

The problem a person facing a problem has is that he or she is stuck in the problem due to a subjective viewpoint that considers the issue very important.   Nature does not consider any aspect any more important than any other aspect.   It all just is the way it is.   So the subjective viewpoint hampers a person from seeing other aspects of the situation that might contain solutions or just open up a new viewpoint in which

the situation is not such a crisis or might even be quite acceptable.   This is a window into wisdom.   The beautiful aspect of including a random process of a game procedure into an oracle is that it makes the oracle more objective.   It stimulates the questioner to explore a new point of view that he or she may not have considered.   By packing the "game" with the highest wisdom of a culture at every point, the oracle ensures that there is a positive outcome to each answer.   It is not just a simple yes or no answer.   You can flip a coin and take no responsibility for the answer.   In a true oracle, you are responsible for interpreting the answer and deciding what to do about it.   The oracle offers an "objective" (i.e. random) answer with a wisdom viewpoint.   It is up to you to recognize how reality is always OK, and there are any number of ways of resolving a situation, but the most important step is to identify with the ability of Nature to always be OK under any circumstance.

As a result a true oracle is always "right" and always positive.   There is no bad news.   Even death is discovered to be only a psychological block due to attachment to a certain kind of identity and resistance to that identity's natural process of dynamic change within the eternal stable structure of a cosmos.

So we can take a modern Tarot deck of cards, shuffle the cards, and then spread them out on a table face down.

This "spread" of the cards forms a wavy shape (the mathematical wave function of quantum mechanics).   The information in the wave is hidden, because the observer has not yet "peeked" at the cards, yet it is all present in the spread.   If you reach down, intuitively pull a card from the spread, and turn it over, you reveal information that is in that wavy spread of cards.
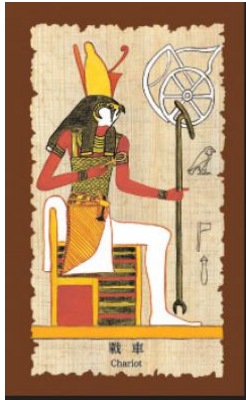
In this case the card we pulled happens to be the Chariot.   This is the card of a decisive warrior.   The suggestion is that it is up to you to make a decision of what feels right for you and for your community and then do it.   You take responsibility for your own life and do what is best for your "tribe" and your entire world.   A true oracle never asks a person to surrender responsibility.   Advice from an "expert" is still only advice. You are responsible for what happens to you and the people associated with you.   Surrendering your power of responsibility to an adviser is abdication from your throne of existence.   You always make the ultimate decision.   This is not to say that one goes against expert advice, it is just that one learns to take responsibility for the final decision and not leave that to the expert adviser or consultant.

You could one by one pull many or all of the cards and read the sequence, but that is not necessary, the first card or two tells you a lot, probably enough to get some good ideas of how to proceed.

A person who reads oracles for others must be aware of this principle of allowing full responsibility to the querent (questioner) and not asserting authority over the querent's life decisions.   The reader reads with a sense of compassion and support, encouraging the querent to take charge of his or her own life.

A oracle based on wisdom is always right, but a person's interpretation of the oracle may be wrong or biased.   Experience will show how the person's view point needs revision.   It is useful to keep notes about questions and the oracle interpretations to see how well the oracle was understood.   The Greek historian Herodotus told many stories of how kings consulted oracles, but then were surprised at how they turned out,

usually because of a lack of proper interpretation or innate subjective bias.

I once studied the **Book of Changes** with a Chinese master.   He said that in the beginning a person can sort the sticks or toss coins to determine an oracle.   With experience confidence grows, and a person can do the "calculations" mentally without sorting or tossing anything. Eventually a simple observation of circumstances in the moment intuitively reveals the appropriate path of action, just as a martial artist subtly tunes his perception to the flow of energy in the moment and knows without thinking exactly what his next move is to be.   It looks like an automatic reflex action, but is actually extremely precise and deals with the issue of the moment with a broad intuitive vision of long term consequences.   So it is not necessary to be an expert "reader" to consult oracles.   The process of interpreting archetypal symbols and matching them to real world experiences can serve as an excellent learning tool to develop intuitive skills for managing life.

30 Study Questions

*   How did the practice of consulting oracles arise in ancient times?

*   What is the fundamental principle of ancient Egyptian civilization?

*   What is the second fundamental principle of ancient Egyptian civilization?

*   How are board and card games useful as oracles?

*   What is the role of quantum weirdness in the reading of oracles? Review the article about quantum weirdness and study the principles of modern scientific investigation of phase conjugation and chaos theory.

*   What is the attitude a card reader should take toward a questioner when doing a reading?

*   How is it that an oracle can always be "right"?

*   What is important for a person consulting an oracle to keep in mind?

* Why is an oracle's information always useful?

* Name two qualities of awareness that are worth developing with regard to facing issues in life (with or without an "oracle")?

* How does this article relate to the Series Overview?