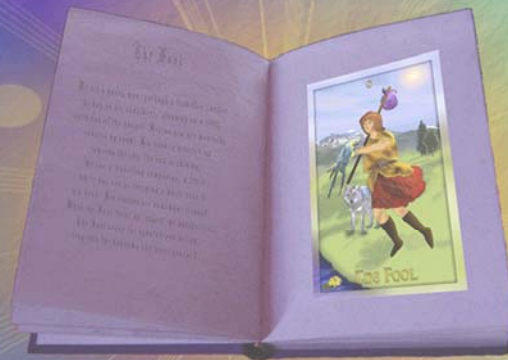


AWAKENING TAROT COURSE



OEPRHEBIA



History & The Fool

It is very difficult to know where the Tarot comes from. Nobody knows for sure and historians continue to argue over its origins and purpose.

One such belief is that the Tarot derived from ancient Egypt where people used symbolism to express their religious beliefs and their every day life.

This tendency to derive the Tarot from Egypt was the work of a Frenchman at the end of the XVIII century by the name of Court de Gebelin, who published his masterpiece “Le Monde Primitif” in 1781. In his book De Gebelin linked the compilation of the major arcana with the Book of Thoth. Thoth was the Egyptian God of Wisdom, Science and Occultism.

Aleister Crowley’s Thoth Tarot Deck seems to emphasise the belief of an Egyptian Mystical origin of the Tarot.

A second belief is that gypsies introduced the Tarot when they reached Europe in the XV century. Gypsies have been said to descend from Aryan/Indian.

The earliest preserved set of Tarot cards is the Visconti-Sforza deck produced in the mid XV century. Another tarot deck from probably the same period is housed in the archives of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and is believed to be from Venetian origin.

However, as early as the VIII century, a form of the Tarot was allegedly used by the Saracens.

A very interesting theory is that the Tarot contained the coded symbols that could communicate the Templars secret teachings to their novices without arising suspicion from the Catholic Church.

Unfortunately, during the persecution of the Templars the true purpose of the cards was apparently revealed and the Tarot was declared a heretical device and outlawed.

In the XIX century, the Tarot was linked to the Kabbala by French occultist, Eliphas Levi (real name Alphonse Louis Constant), who pointed out several correspondences between the Major arcana and the Tree of Life of the ancient Hebrew Kabbala (some scholars believe that the Kabbala is in fact ancient Egyptian lore imported by the Jews).

By the XX century, the Tarot was used in a number of esoterical, theosophical and secret societies.

Up to the XX century, the minor arcana were represented by their numbers and their suit symbols (Cups, Pentacles, Swords and Wands). However, this changed when E Waite and Pamela Coleman Smith designed the minor arcana with pictures of people along the symbol of the suit.

The Tarot throughout its history has seen many changes of design and purpose, but overall its essence remains identical, it is the link between our conscious and unconscious and a primal connection between mankind and the universe going as far back as ancient Egypt and probably beyond.

Introduction to the Tarot

A standard Tarot deck contains 78 cards subdivided in 2 groups of Arcana:

☉ **22 Major Arcana** as follows:

0	The Fool
I	The Magician
II	The High Priestess
III	The Empress
IV	The Emperor
V	The Hierophant
VI	The Lovers
VII	The Chariot
VIII	Strength
IX	The Hermit
X	Wheel of Fortune
XI	Justice
XII	The Hanged Man
XIII	Death
XIV	Temperance
XV	The Devil
XVI	The Tower
XVII	The Star
XVIII	The Moon
XIX	The Sun
XX	Judgement
XXI	The World

☿ **56 Minor Arcana** subdivided into 4 suits:

- Cups
- Pentacles
- Swords
- Wands

Each suit comprises 10 cards numbered 1 to 10 + 4 court cards (Page – Knight – Queen – King).

Spread out the twenty two major arcana in front of you and write down spontaneously how you feel about each card and what they mean to you, using keywords or short sentences. Please note that there is not right or wrong answer, this little exercise is aimed to see how “intuitive” you are.

Use the table below (next page) to write your answer.

MAJOR ARCANA	KEYWORDS
The Fool	
The Magician	
The High Priestess	
The Empress	
The Emperor	
The Hierophant	
The Lovers	
The Chariot	
Strength	
The Hermit	
Wheel of Fortune	
Justice	
The Hanged Man	
Death	
Temperance	
The Devil	
The Tower	
The Star	
The Moon	
The Sun	
Judgement	
The World	

Take time to observe the cards and write down one card you like and one card you dislike. Try to explain briefly, why.

As we now know, the Tarot contains 22 major arcana cards which represent our psyche (unconscious), our secret thoughts, and they are the heart or essence of the Tarot. The cards are depicted with symbols which are universal, generally ignoring language or background, we will understand their meanings. For example, a skeleton is the ultimate symbol of death, no matter which country you come from. These symbols are humanity's collective unconscious and Jung referred to them as Archetypes.

We begin our journey into the Tarot using the Fool's eyes to look through, we will observe the many different situations involving the major arcana, some happy, some difficult, others contemplative extending to all ranges of human emotions and these situations will not leave you indifferent. Slowly a deeper perception will awake. When this will occur, you will know that you are on the path of understanding the essence of the Tarot.

Now, it is time to start our journey!

The first thing to do is, make yourself as comfortable as possible, in order for you to concentrate on this part of the lesson.

To help you to unwind, you can do some breathing exercises, meditation, yoga etc. in fact any method which helps you to relax and induce a receptive state of mind.

You should prepare yourself mentally at the beginning of each lesson. It is part of the "ritual" you will have to do each time you will come to use your cards. A clear mind is more receptive to any suggestion than a cluttered one. After having done your mental spring-cleaning, be ready to encounter our first character:

The Fool - Major Arcana 0

We see a young man, perhaps a traveller (notice the bag on his shoulder), standing on a cliff, oblivious of the danger. Behind him are mountains covered by snow.

His head is directed up towards the sky, the sun is shining. He has a travelling companion, a little white dog and he is carrying a white rose in his hand. His clothes are somewhat elegant.

To help you to understand the Fool, we should look at the symbolism of the card:

- ☯ The white sun (forever at 45 degrees and never able to reach the Zenith) represents the Spiritual self. It symbolises humanity unable to reach its spiritual zenith, we are humans and less than perfect.
- ☯ The cliff on the same level as the mountain peaks represents the completion of the past, the end of a circle of activities.
- ☯ The cliff also represents the danger of the unknown; the jump into the darkness and the Fool seems oblivious to the danger.
- ☯ Because the Fool is standing on his past (the cliff), he feels restless and is looking for new challenges or adventures (his head is turned toward the sky)
- ☯ The bag represents his past actions, his past experiences and knowledge.

- ☯ The bag is carried on a black stick which in fact is a wand, representing the magical power which is the energy of life before consciousness defines its boundaries.
- ☯ The white rose is the symbol representing rebirth and innocence.
- ☯ The white dog represents his lower (base) animalistic instincts.

Exercise A

Study the card carefully and describe what you see, take into account details such posture; colour, accessories etc. pay attention to any pattern of thoughts which may occur during your study of the card. Write them down in your notebook.

To summarise

The Fool is a young innocent man having completed the first stage of childhood and moving forward to the next stage (adulthood) with pure eyes and confidence. His path is unknown to him and may lead to danger if he is not careful, but he does not care, he is full of energy. He is confident that life will support him and provide him with help. Contrary to the tradition of the jester in the kings' court, the Fool is not mad. Nor is he a fool! He is outside conventionality and people may see him as a Fool because they do not understand his vision and his faculty to see well beyond the realm of reality.

He is impatient to experience life and has an inquisitive mind. The best way to achieve experience is for him to travel and during his fantastic travels he will meet teachers, gurus and learn his place in the universe.

On a divinatory level

When the Fool turns up in a reading, clearly you can expect the unexpected. Perhaps a major decision will have to be made without knowing for certain where it will lead you. The best course of action is to take the leap into the unknown and trust yourself.

The Fool also stands for spontaneous action, take the risk and live for the moment. It will always be time to reflect and be cautious. This can be a great challenge: caution versus spontaneity.

Usually new beginnings or change of direction can be expected when the Fool is unmasked! Trust yourself and your natural instincts, no matter how "foolish" it may appear.

Keywords

- ★ Innocence and purity of heart
- ★ Spontaneity and non-conformism
- ★ Changes
- ★ Unexpected action or decision
- ★ Youthful energy
- ★ Naiveté
- ★ Carefree attitude
- ★ Fresh beginning
- ★ Originality
- ★ Exciting time ahead

Exercise B

Time for the visualisation. Read the following and then start your visualisation.

Close your eyes and imagine you are walking in the mountains on a joyful summer's day. The air is limpid and a gentle breeze caresses you. You can smell the precious scent of wild flowers around you. The sun is shining with magnificence and seems almost white in its glory. The sky is blue without any clouds to obscure it. The perfect day for a walk!

The sounds of little animals are audible and birds are singing with passion their little melodies. You feel that life cannot be better and that all your worries are behind you.

You continue walking for a while, when a sound attracts your attention, like the yapping of a dog somewhere near, apparently coming from behind a bunch of trees. You decide to investigate. As you walk briskly towards the trees, you arrive to a clearing which ends at the edge of a cliff.

You see a young traveller with his belongings wrapped to a staff walking toward the edge of the cliff without noticing the danger. A little white dog tries to attract the traveller's attention, but he does not seem to notice.

Finally he turns and looks at you. You run towards him and try to tell him that he just escaped a great danger. The traveller looks at you with a bemused smile, and you feel quite amazed by his reaction, he doesn't seem insane or blind and you are wondering what this is all about.

The traveller introduces himself as the Fool, he tells you his story, how he decided to wander the world and encounter different feelings, to experience life. He tells you that he is a free spirit and that he believes that life will provide what is needed to undertake his travels.

It seems that his only luggage is his trust in himself and in life. He explains to you that he does not want to know what will come tomorrow, he wants to experience moments in life when things do not belong to the past exactly but do not belong to the future either, what we call in our human language: the present!

To demonstrate his theory, he talks about your intervention to prevent him from leaping into the unknown. To him this is the proof that life will provide him with help and wisdom to pursue his goals. You begin to understand his point. As you talk to him, you realise that his youthful view on the world can be quite refreshing and challenging.

You ask him why he has such a fragrant white rose in his hand. Amused he hands you the rose and as soon as you touch it, waves of sounds and colours envelop you. You experience purity in your heart and in your soul. Innocence and joy are filling both your body and spirit.

Take time to fully appreciate this unique experience. Give the rose back to the Fool and thank him for his time shared with you. The Fool may let you to keep the rose. If he does, thank him for his generosity.

In your own time:

Open your eyes, how do you feel? Touch your imaginary rose when you want to experience the non-conformism of the Fool and feel like a free spirit.

Write in your notebook your thoughts after this first visualisation. Compare with your note (A) and see if there are any noticeable differences.

If you cannot do the whole visualisation straight away, try again until you feel comfortable with it. Visualisation can be a powerful aid to train your imagination and intuition to memorise the essence of the cards.

After this first visualisation, you have just taken your first step into the magic of the Tarot!

Alternatively you can close your eyes and try to memorise the card itself with its symbols, colours etc and keep this visual card as long as you can in your mind.

This exercise should help you to memorise the card and get accustomed to its essence. However, it is less powerful than a visualisation.

Each lesson will contain a visualisation. It is your choice to do it or not. With patience and practise you should be able to visualise without trouble.

Exercise 1

- ☺ Submit the table about the twenty two major arcana and your notes about the cards you like and dislike.
- ☺ As per exercise A, describe the symbols, accessories etc you may have found in the card. What could be a possible interpretation of these objects?
- ☺ If the Fool was to be the outcome of a reading, what would you say this card could represent or mean for the querent in a:
 - relationship situation
 - work situation
 - generally?